

A Brief History of the Urban Forest Strike Team Program

Urban Forest Strike Teams were implemented in 2007 at the request of state U&CF coordinators (Leslie Moorman, and Paul Revell) to provide appropriate tree risk, woody debris, and recovery response by urban forestry professionals following urban natural disasters. The concept was based on the Gulf Coast Tree Assessment project developed by ISA, SMA, Davey Resource Group, and the USDA FS (Region 8) following Hurricane Katrina. Since then, the program has been supported by the Southern Group of State Foresters through the region's Urban & Community Forestry state coordinators and has been implemented in the Northeastern Area by John Parry and Rob Clark (USDA FS).

Training:

2007 Kinston, NC

Training for Task Specialists was held at the Ralph Winkworth Forestry Center in Kinston, NC. The City of Kinston provided park and neighborhood (street) sites for field exercises. Leslie Moorman (U&CF Coordinator) organized this training event. NC Emergency Management, City of Kinston, and NC Division of Forestry fire staff provided guidance during this initial training.

2008 Providence, VA

Team Leader and Task Specialists were trained at the New Kent Conference Center near Providence, VA. Colonial Williamsburg and William & Marry College provided sites appropriate for field exercises. The Northeastern Area (USDA FS) sent 5 representatives for Task Specialist training. Barbara White (U&CF Partnership Coordinator) organized this training event. FEMA representatives from Region 2 (Philadelphia) and Virginia Emergency Management's debris manager attended. David Stone and Jim Clark (VA Department of Forestry) assisted with this training. Field exercise Team Leaders included: David Stone (VA), Doug White (NC), Barbara White (VA), Paul Revell (VA), Gerald Crowell (VA), Dennis Gaston (VA).

2009 Brooksville, FL

During the week of July 22nd 9 additional Team Leaders and 24 Task Specialists completed training at the Withlacoochee Training Center near Brooksville, Florida. Charlie Marcus, U&CF Coordinator for the Florida Division of Forestry, organized the training event and coordinated with local communities for street, cemetery, and park exercises (Brooksville and Inverness).

Barbara White and David Stone of the Virginia Department of Forestry assisted with the training. Team Leader trainees represented 6 states and began their training on Monday afternoon. Task Specialists began on Wednesday morning and included trainees from 9 southern states. Also assisting with Task Specialist training were Erik Filep (VA), Chris Frey (NC), Hugh Whitehead (VA), and Daniel Wescott (GA) who all completed Team Leader training that week and had response experience on multiple disasters.

2009 Leominster, MA

In September, Paul Revell and David Stone (VA Department of Forestry) assisted the Northeastern Area (USDA FS) with their first UFST training in Leominster, Massachusetts. Urban Forestry South shipped data collection equipment and provided current training materials.

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2010 Arkansas

The UFST Advisory Committee, Arkansas Forestry Commission, and Urban Forestry South conducted a UFST workshop during the week of August 9th at the Arkansas 4-H Center near Little Rock. This workshop was open to Northeastern Area (i.e. New England and Midwest) applicants.

Patti Erwin (AFC U&CF Coordinator) and John Slater (AFC Partnership Coordinator) organized the training event and coordinated with the City of Little Rock for park exercises.

We continue to use our experienced Team Leaders as instructors and field exercise leaders. Five Team Leaders assisted with various aspects of the week long workshop: Jason Ellis (TFS), Daniel Wescott (GFC), Doug White (NCDFR), John Slater (AFC), and David Stone (VDOP).

Two additional Team Leaders were trained and one returned for refresher (all from Virginia DOF). Twenty-six new Task Specialists were trained in Little Rock.

Also joining the workshop were two GIS Specialists (Allen Smith, TFS, and Charles Bailey, GFC) who will begin working with UFST to help strengthen GIS training, data collection and handling, and reporting over the next year.

2011 Delaware (in planning stage)

The Northeastern Area (USDA FS) is developing a UFST workshop for late summer in Delaware. This workshop will be open to Southern applicants. UFST experienced Team Leaders from Region 8 will used as instructors and field exercise leaders. Both Team Leader and Task Specialist training will be provided as interest warrants.

2011 Oklahoma (in planning stage)

The Southern Group of State Foresters assisted by Urban Forestry South is developing a UFST workshop for late June in Tulsa. This workshop will be open to NA applicants. UFST experienced Team Leaders will used as instructors and field exercise leaders. Mark Bays, Oklahoma U&CF State Coordinator(OKAG) is organizing this training session. Both Team Leader and Task Specialist training will be provided as interest warrants.

Other Training in FY 2011

Team Leaders will be provided several opportunities for more advanced GIS and data handling training to support UFST responses during 2011..

On-line refresher classes are being developed for both Team Leaders and Task Specialists. During 2011, UNRI will host monthly UFST webinars designed for previously trained team members (both Task Specialists and Team Leaders)

Following the Little Rock workshop, Urban Forestry South, in consultation with Team Leaders, is revising training for both Team Leaders and Task Specialists. The revised material will be used and evaluated at the Tulsa and Delaware workshop.

Current Capacity:

Team Leaders

The Southern Region now has **20 Team Leaders** trained for post-storm risk assessment and woody debris estimation. Seventeen of these TLs have been deployed to at least one

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UFST response. All of these except 1 (Fairfax County, VA) are employees of state forestry agencies.

Task Specialists (Southern Region)

The Southern Region now has **65 Task Specialists** trained for post-storm risk assessment and woody debris estimation. The majority of the UFST members are employees of state forestry agencies, but several municipalities (Fairfax County, VA, and Escambia County, FL) and consulting urban foresters have also been trained. Many of these TSs have been deployed to at least one UFST disaster response. In addition, 8 FEMA and state Emergency Management staff have gone through at least a portion of the training.

Task Specialists (Northeastern Area)

The Northeastern Area now has **41 Task Specialists** trained primarily from Delaware, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.

State U&CF Coordinators

U&CF coordinators are a critical component in any UFST response and act as the liaison between the UFST Team Leader and each municipality and often as the Logistics Chief (using the ICS designation) for the incident response. At the 2009 SGSFs' Summer Meeting (Wilmington, NC) and 2010 SGSFs meeting (Biloxi, MS) the coordinators were briefed on their role in the UFST response protocol.

U&CF coordinators (and other state agency staff) have been involved with planning and logistics for several UFST responses. These responses include: Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, Kentucky, Texas, and Virginia.

Municipal & Consultants

Fairfax County (VA) and Escambia County (FL) arborists, Extension Foresters, and consulting urban foresters/arborists have also been trained and are included in the counts indicated above. In the Northeastern Area, trainees include Tree Wardens, Cooperative Extension, practicing and consulting arborists, and USDA FS personnel.

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Southern Region State Capacity¹:

	Team Leaders	Task Specialists ²	GIS ³	Total
Alabama		1		1
Arkansas	1	5		6
Florida	1	2		3
Georgia	1	7	1	7
Kentucky		6		6
Louisiana				
Mississippi		3		3
North Carolina	5	6		11
Oklahoma		2		2
South Carolina		5		5
Tennessee		1		1
Texas	1	18	1	20
Virginia	11	9		20
Total	20	65	2	86

Responses:

Ice Storm, January 2008 (Oklahoma)

Response included a pre-team (Paul, Dudley, Mark & Alanna), and two full teams. UFST assistance was primarily to Tulsa Parks, but teams also worked in Nichols Hills, Edmond, and Bixby. Most significant (UFST) outcome was the development & acceptance of the Tulsa inspired "FEMA Cost Sheet" which became the basis for debris contracts between FEMA and the municipality.

SEE [HTTP://WWW.URBANFORESTRYSOUTH.ORG/RESOURCES/ICE-BLOG](http://www.urbanforestrysouth.org/resources/ice-blog)

Hurricane Gustav, September 2008 (Baton Rouge)

Response included two full teams. UFST assisted the City Arborist (5,498 street trees; 500+ miles) and to BREC (Baton Rouge Recreation; 1,882 park trees and 208 stumps). Most significant (UFST) outcome was the development of UFST Team Leader capacity from state agencies (NC Division of Forest Resources and VA Department of Forestry).

SEE [HTTP://WWW.UFST.ORG/RESOURCES/STORM-RESPONSE-BLOGS](http://www.ufst.org/resources/storm-response-blogs)

Ice Storm, February 2009 (Northern Arkansas)

Response included one team. UFST assisted 7 communities. Most significant (UFST) outcome was the use of standardized data collection equipment.

SEE [HTTP://WWW.UFST.ORG/RESOURCES/STORM-RESPONSE-BLOGS](http://www.ufst.org/resources/storm-response-blogs)

¹ Includes: State Agency, Municipal, Consulting, Cooperative Extension, and non-UFS Federal.

² Team Leaders and UFS (2) can function as Task Specialists.

³ One GIS is also a Certified Arborist and qualifies as Task Specialist.

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Ice Storm, March 2009 (Western Kentucky)

Response included one full team. UFST assisted 6 communities. Most significant (UFST) outcome was the use of standardized data collection equipment and continued Team and continued stat agency Team Leader development (VA Department of Forestry).
SEE [HTTP://WWW.UFST.ORG/RESOURCES/STORM-RESPONSE-BLOGS](http://www.ufst.org/resources/storm-response-blogs)

Other Activity:

2008 SGSFs' Summer Meeting

U&CF Coordinators received initial support from Southern Group of State Foresters.

2008 Northeastern Area Meeting

Dudley Hartel and Eric Kuehler (both USDA FS SRS) met with John Parry and Rob Clark from USDA FS Northeastern Area to discuss development of UFST capacity in the NA.

2009 FEMA Region IV Meeting

Paul Revell (TS 2007, TL 2008, OK Ice, Baton Rouge, VA Tornado, KY Ice), Leslie Moorman (TS 2007, TL 2008), Steve Scott (TN State Forester), Ed Macie (USDA FS), John Caffin (USDA FS), Eric Kuehler (USDA FS), and Dudley Hartel (USDA FS) gave a presentation to FEMA Region IV in March.

2009 SGSFs' Summer Meeting

Continued support from Southern Group of State Foresters. U&CF Coordinators briefed on state coordinator role in UFST response.

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2010 CARPDC, Alabama Emergency Management, and Alabama Forestry Commission

Rachel Barker (CARPDC Urban Forester) and Dudley Hartel (UFS) meet with AEM and Alabama Forestry Commission to discuss UFST response for in-state responses. (07Jul10)

2010 Baton Rouge City Arborist and Baton Rouge Parish Emergency Management

Steve Shurtz (City Arborist) and Eric Kuehler (UFS) meet with parish Emergency Manager to discuss parish disaster response, planning, and debris estimation. (20Sep10)

2010 Virginia Department of Forestry and Virginia Emergency Management

Paul Revell (U&CF Coordinator) and Dudley Hartel (Urban Forestry South) meet with George Roarty and Neilia Dabney (both VDEM) to discuss MOU for in-state disaster response (tree risk and FEMA debris), planning, and debris estimation. (21Sep10)

2010 U&CF Briefing

Dudley Hartel (UFS) briefs Jan Davis (USDA FS U&CF Program Director) and Keith Cline (USDA FS U&CF Program Manager) on current status of UFST (24Sep10).

2011 Meeting with Alabama Emergency Management

On February 17th, Dudley Hartel meet with Michael Johnson and Bill Atchison of AEM to discuss the EMAC system, cost reimbursement, and Mission Ready Packages (MRP).

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SMA Presentation

Daniel Wescott (TS 2008, TL 2009, Baton Rouge) gave a presentation on the UFSTs to the Society of Municipal Arborists in Savannah (GA) in October, 2009.

SEE <http://www.ufst.org/resources/presentations/UFST%20Presentation%20to%20SMA%20Savannah.ppt/view>

UNRI Webcast

Leslie Moorman (TS 2007, TL 2008) gave a UNRI webcast with Steve Shurtz (City Arborist, Baton Rouge) and John Parry (USDA FS, Durham, NH).

SEE <http://www.unri.org/webcasts/archives/november-2009-2/>

Emerging Issues Conference

Daniel Wescott (TS 2008, TL 2009, Baton Rouge) gave a presentation on the UFSTs at the conference in Atlanta (GA) in April, 2010.

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee currently consists of: Leslie Moorman (NC), Paul Revell (VA), Barbara White (VA), Pete Smith (TX), Charlie Marcus (FL), and Tom Chamberlain (MA). Dudley Hartel, Eric Kuehler and John Parry (NA) serve as Forest Service technical support. The Northeastern Area representative was added following the Leominster workshop.

www.UFST.org Website

UFS and Team Leaders continue to support the UFST website.

Equipment & Supplies:

Data Collection

During the 2009 ice storm responses, Urban Forestry South leased and then purchased necessary data collection equipment to support one full team during a response. The package includes: TDS Nomad data collector, Garmin 17 backpack GPS, and SOLOforest data collection software. We have six of these packages at the Athens (GA) Regional Cache. This package is used by several state forestry agencies for forest management activities, is reliable, and offers excellent urban productivity for the teams.

Beginning with Brookville (2009), UFST Team Leaders and Task Specialists are trained on the same equipment that will be used for future responses. In 2010, the Northeastern Area purchased one UFST data collection package for development, training, and response.

GIS Specialists are investigation Open Source data collection and GIS software following the 2010 Little Rock workshop.

Safety

Hardhats and vests that meet safety standards and requirements have been purchased and are required for all training and response events.

A UFST-specific JHA (Job Hazard Analysis – USDA Forest Service) is being prepared by Urban Forestry South that will be used by Team Leaders for daily safety briefings.

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Laptops for Responses

Urban Forestry South has purchased two laptops and software (Open Source and licensed) to be used exclusively for UFST responses. These laptops were tested during Team Leader and Task Specialist training in Arkansas and are ready for deployment.

GIS Specialist have developed data folder and file naming conventions based on Incident Command System fire response. The use of a standardized naming system and file structure allows for easy transitions between teams on the same incident, logical data storage and retrieval, data integrity and safety, and documentation of incident progression.

Draft folder and file naming conventions have been setup on the UFST laptops (18Sep10).

Southern Regional Cache

Urban Forestry South has developed a UFST Regional Cache at their office in Athens, Georgia. The cache includes data collection and safety equipment, and other supplies needed to support UFST responses and training throughout the eastern US. Final equipment purchases will be completed in 2011 to support the teams. The equipment can be shipped as needed for training or disaster response.

Agency Acronyms:

AEM	Alabama Emergency Management
AFC	Arkansas Forestry Commission
AIFC	Alabama Forestry Commission
CARPDC	Central Alabama Regional Planning and Development Council (Montgomery, AL)
EFS	Emergency Support Function (FEMA); ESF-3 is Public Works
EMAC	Emergency Management Assistance Compact
FDF	Florida Division of Forestry
FS	see USDA FS
GFC	Georgia Forestry Commission
KDF	Kentucky Division of Forestry
MRP	Mission Ready Packages (EMAC)
MFC	Mississippi Forestry Commission
NA	Northeastern Area, USDA Forest Service (Durham, NH)
NC DNR	North Carolina Division of Forest Resources
OKAG	Oklahoma Agriculture, Food and Forestry
TFS	Texas Forest Service
UFS	Urban Forestry South (Athens, Georgia; USDA FS)
USDA FS	US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
VDEM	Virginia Department of Emergency Management
VDOF	Virginia Department of Forestry