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A. Municipal Information Form

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- **Municipality**: Bernards Township
- **County**: Somerset
- **Address**: 1 Colbyer Lane, Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

- **Contact Name and Title**: Randy Santoro, Chairperson; Mark Hrabecian, Vice Chairperson
- **Phone**: 908-672-4279, 908-334-8093
- **Fax / E-mail**: randsantoro@att.net, mhrabeclan@outlook.com
- **Organization Name**: Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission
- **Mayor/County Freeholder’s Signature**: 
- **Date of Management Plan Submission**: December 2007
- **Time Period Covered in Management Plan**: 2008-2012

- **Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP)**
- **Practices Identified in Management Plan**
  - 29 CSIP #1 Plan Preparation
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**Official Use Only Certification**

The above named municipalities having submitted formal application to the New Jersey Forest Service: I also pleased to advise you that after our review, the NJ Forest Service has concluded that this plan meets the standards set forth by the State and the N3 Community Forestry Council and is approved for the period covered.

Signed: [Signature]

Date: [Date]  
Approved Date: [Date]
II. Introduction

A. Scope
This plan has been designed to demonstrate the manner in which Bernards Township currently manages the community tree resources under its jurisdiction including trees along streets, in parks, rights-of-way and around township buildings and other holdings. This plan will also outline how Bernards Township intends to further improve this system over the next five years.

B. Mission Statement
Bernards Township desires to maintain and promote a healthy, safe and sustainable shade tree resource that will physically and aesthetically benefit the community and its residents in the most cost effective manner possible.

C. Goals and Objectives
The following is a list of goals of Bernards Township’s Community Forestry Management Plan.

1. Continue to expand the diversity of trees and shrubbery planted in the township to provide for the long term coverage of public lands, parks and recreation areas.
   a. Maintain the yearly planting program along local streets (municipal) and on recreation lands following the guidelines of an established list of trees developed with consideration of the size of the plant at maturity, the local climate and environment (clay soil, rocky, or wetland conditions).
   b. Revisit plan for the cooperative planting program along Somerset County and State rights-of-way in conjunction with the municipal efforts. This goal was established in the original five year plan. Due to turnover of the entire volunteer commission, this was not accomplished.

2. Enhance the ongoing maintenance program for the trees along township rights-of-way by working more closely with the DPW and our Certified Tree Expert (CTE)/consultant. Also continue communication with county, state and utility company maintenance divisions to ensure compatible procedures.

3. Compile an inventory of tree resources on all local, county and state roads, lands and parks beginning with planting lists from the previous five years and information gathered in previous windshield surveys.
   a. Identify maintenance deficiencies and propose corrective action.
   b. Establish a priority list for the implementation of corrective action.

4. Revise tree ordinances as necessary to define responsibility for maintenance, removal and replacement. Previously, commissioners were unable to achieve this goal of the
five year plan.

a. Develop policies for the ongoing maintenance of community shade tree resources. Establish where the greatest liabilities lie and address these areas.

b. Propose policies based on the need to promote the safety and welfare of the community.

c. Review and revise the current approved tree list used for planting in township easements.

5. Create new opportunities for educating the public about trees and their importance to the entire community.

a. Update the map of community tree resources and add more points of interest. i.e. Historical trees and State Champions

b. Maintain Tree City USA status, strive to achieve Growth Awards, and promote the program throughout community.

c. Develop a plan for a tree education site. Identify community partners to assist with project funding and plan objectives. Promote through local publications.

d. Continue to hold an annual Arbor Day Celebration, advertise the event in local papers and seek more involvement from the community.

e. Publish tree related articles and related events in local paper.

6. Expand Bernards Township’s shade tree resources and take a more proactive role in establishing the aforementioned goals.

7. Identify hazardous trees, develop and implement a plan to remediate hazardous tree conditions. Continue windshield surveys by zone with the help of a NJ Certified Tree Expert.

8. Ensure that the goals of the Community Forestry Management Plan are compatible with the Master Plan and Open Space and Recreation Plan.

9. Expand the educational opportunities and training for Shade Tree Commission Members and Public Works Employees.

a. Continue to send 1 or 2 members for CORE training and seminars at the NJ Shade Tree Federation Annual Meeting.

b. Attend training sessions for proper pruning, tree identification and hazard tree identification etc. at Rutgers and other appropriate venues.
10. Investigate updating the local land use ordinance to make provisions for a site plan review by a Shade Tree Commission Member.

**D. Liability Statement**

Bernards Township recognizes the benefits provided to the community by its tree resource. As trees are living entities, it is inevitable that as they mature they eventually require care, maintenance, removal and replacement. Bernards Township must, however, work within a reasonable budget and may not be able to meet every demand. Therefore it is the intent of this plan to focus available resources to reduce tree hazards.

Since it is impossible to predict or prevent all hazardous conditions that may arise, Bernards Township is developing this plan to become more proactive in its tree maintenance. Proactive tree management should reduce the occurrence of unexpected events.

Following this Management Plan will demonstrate that Bernards Township is devoting reasonable levels of resources in a planned manner to reduce the number of tree related accidents and thereby reduce it’s exposure to liabilities and increase public safety.

**III. Community Overview – FIVE YEARS OF PROGRESS**

**A. Achievements**

During the past five years, the Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission coordinated the planting of 50 to 100 new trees each year, throughout the Township. The diversity of tree species was increased by planting various types such as; 'Valley Forge' American Elm, 'Autumn Flame' Red Maple, 'Autumn' Blaze Maple, Scarlet Oak, Swamp White Oak, 'Skyline' Honey locust, 'Ruby Slippers' Amur Maple, London Plane Tree, Canada Red Cherry, American Hornbeam, 'Celestial' Rutgers Dogwood and Rutgers 'Stellar' Pink Dogwood on public lands, parks and recreation areas.

A major objective in the first five year plan was to divide the township into tree management zones. Eight zones were created and assigned to BTSC members. It is the responsibility of the assigned member to be the liaison for the residents with DPW, outside Certified Tree Experts, tree planting vendors and the Somerset County Shade Tree Commission.

The maintenance program for the trees along township rights-of-way was continued by conducting windshield surveys in 2007 of four of the eight Township zones with outside consultant, David Welch CTE. The results included lists of identified maintenance needs and a priority list for corrective actions which were submitted to DPW.

Although the BTSTC has had a 100% turnover in membership, the structure and
objectives of the original Forestry Plan were maintained by DPW and the township's consultant/ CTE. The Township continued to conduct windshield surveys to identify hazardous trees, and resident inquiries and concerns were handled by the procedures set forth in the Plan. Township residents were not adversely impacted by the BTSC turnover because the processes defined in Forestry Plan were followed in the absence of commission leadership.

A public education outreach program began with presenting information during the annual Bernard’s Township Community Charter Day. Informational flyers are distributed and training seminars are held by Shade Tree Commissioners as well as an outside CTE consultant. New planting site suggestions are taken from residents as well as identifying potential tree hazards within the Community. Seedlings are also distributed free of charge to residents.

In 2006 a map of community tree resources and important points of interest was developed and distributed at the Community Charter Day. The map describes a walking tour of twenty different trees near the center of town to encourage residents and visitors to our unique diversity of trees and learn about their historic importance to the community.

The Shade Tree Commission expanded and updated its online presence to achieve a more comprehensive webpage on the Bernards Township website which is constantly updated to reinforce the goals and objective of Shade Tree efforts in the community. The site is located at: http://www.bernards.org/Default1.aspx?Item=Shade%20Tree%20Commission

An annual Arbor Day celebration has been organized each year as well as achieving Tree City USA status. The BTSTC also designed a 9/11 Memorial with Bernards Township officials. The goals of BTSTC include continuing to promote tree efforts throughout the community with these and other functions.

The Shade Tree Commission has continued to expand Bernards Township's Shade Tree resource. The BTSTC has been working closely with David Welch, CTE, on a consulting basis, regarding difficult issues and identifying “best practices” being conducted by other townships.

The Shade Tree Commission continues to identify hazardous trees with windshield surveys by BTSTC members and has developed and implemented a plan to remediate hazardous tree conditions by coordinating results with Bernard’s Township DPW.

The BTSTC is now working closely with the DPW to review the township Master Plan and the Open Space and Recreation Plan. There is also a Township Commissioner liaison with BTSTC to review other Plans within the Township.

The educational opportunities and training for Shade Tree Commission Members and Public Works Employees have been expanded. BTSTC has sent 1 or 2 members
for CORE training annually for the past five years. Some members have also attended the Rutgers Cooperative training classes as well as classes at the annual meeting of the NJ Shade Tree Federation. Training classes on proper pruning techniques were conducted by a CTE at the 2007 Charter Day festival for residents and BTSTC members.

B. Problems Encountered and New Issues

The BTSTC has had a 100% turnover since the first plan was written. The problem has been educating new members, bringing them up to speed and understanding the goals originally established. Currently, new members are given a copy of the plan to review. Goals and realistic timetables are reviewed at monthly meetings with the entire committee. Tasks are delegated to the entire membership, instead of one member handling multiple duties as was done with the past membership.

The Nursery project initiated for the Geier Tract was started with great enthusiasm, but ultimately failed. Approximately 200 seedlings were planted to start the project. Unfortunately, because of budgetary and water restraints, the new nursery area could not be fenced and properly maintained. The deer destroyed the seedlings. It has since been determined that our resources are better allocated towards areas with a more immediate impact on the public such as a memorial walk and educational trails.

Due to the complete turnover of members there has not been continuity in the managements of the tree management zones. Also we have eight zones and seven members. We found that assigning a zone to the Township Committee Liaison was not a workable solution. We have recently changed our Shade Tree ordinance to include two alternate members on the Commission. This will allow the zones to be covered more effectively.

The hiring of a part time forester to help oversee the Community Forestry Management Plans goals was not done. This position could not be justified within our budget. We have handled the goal by having volunteers on the BTSC with Forestry education and experience.

Adding a secretary has enabled more efficient communication with residents, the DPW and town officials. This position is a more appropriate use for our limited funds than a part time forester would be at this time.

Development of new homes has slowed over the past five years. The municipal tree resource has grown, but in a more structured way. There are more developments with houses having one or two street trees. Because of this the BTSTC has taken on a larger role of maintaining existing trees, locating hazards and identifying tree replacement opportunities.
C. Statement of Benefits

The Five Year Forestry Management Plan has benefited the community by establishing methodical goals, timelines and procedures. The credibility of the BTSTC has been enhanced by implementing the Plan objectives. Structured tasks and adequate training of members has lead to quicker decision making and more satisfied residents regarding tree maintenance and replacement of trees throughout the community. With this plan, communication has improved by having documented common goals shared by DPW, BTSTC and town officials. This results in less tree problems throughout the community and in a coordinated effort to resolve issues.

IV. Community Forestry Program Administration

The Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission advises the Township Committee, Planning Board, and Zoning Board on Shade Tree concerns on public property and along public rights-of-way. The following chart depicts the relationship of those involved in the shade tree management process.

A. Flow Chart – Shade Tree Management Process

A. The Township Committee
1. The Township Committee is responsible for appointing members of the Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission.
2. The Township Committee reviews the policies and plans of Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission.
3. The Township Committee approves annual budgets for the Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission and the Department of Public Works.
4. A member of the Township Committee acts as a liaison to the Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission.
B. Township Administrator/CFO
   1. Reviews plans and policies submitted by the Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission and makes recommendations to the Township Committee.
   2. Recommends the annual budget of the Shade Tree Commission to the Township Committee.

C. Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission
   The Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission is a seven member volunteer board appointed by the Township Committee. In 2008 the Township Committee amended the Shade Tree ordinance to provide positions for two alternate members of the Shade Tree Commission. The goal is to fill these new positions in 2008.

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<th>MEMBER</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>TERM EXPIRES:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Randy Santoro</td>
<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>12/31/2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Harabedian</td>
<td>Vice Chairperson</td>
<td>12/31/2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy O’Connell</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>12/31/2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Spitzer</td>
<td>Twp Committee Liaison</td>
<td>12/31/2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred Burgerhoff</td>
<td>Regular Member</td>
<td>12/31/2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Cunion</td>
<td>Regular Member</td>
<td>12/31/2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Gray</td>
<td>Regular Member</td>
<td>12/31/2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terri Laird</td>
<td>Regular Member</td>
<td>12/31/2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris McManemin</td>
<td>Regular Member</td>
<td>12/31/2010</td>
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   They are the advisory agency for all community trees on municipal streets, rights-of-way, parks, or other properties. Their duties include:

   1. Provide advice regarding the planting, removal and general maintenance of Township trees.
   2. Develop and recommend the policies and goals that will preserve and develop Bernard’s tree resource.
   3. Perform public outreach to foster better understanding and care for Bernard’s trees on both public and private properties.
   4. Propose tree related items for inclusion in the annual township budget.

D. Department of Public Works
   1. Reviews some requests for tree planting, removal or maintenance and makes the necessary inspections in conjunction with the Shade Tree Commission.
   2. Inspects work performed by private contractors for the township.
   3. Develops annual plans and budget requests for tree maintenance.
   4. Maintains through public employees and private contractors all trees on public property concerning tree hazards and other problems.
   5. Responsible for tree removal, pruning and brush clean-up along municipal roadways and on township properties.

E. Township Engineer
1. Inspects all the work performed by utility contractors on Bernards Township’s properties.

F. Environmental Commission  
   1. The Environmental Commission cooperates with the Shade Tree Commission in tree related projects.

G. Department of Parks and Recreation  
   1. Responsible for upkeep of newly planted and young trees in Township Parks i.e. mulching, watering, fertilizing, trimming

H. Recreation, Parks & Pathways Advisory Committee  
   1. Recommends and reviews resource allocations for the diversified opportunities of leisure interests provided by the parks, pathways and physical infrastructure of Bernards Township.

I. Private Tree Contractors  
   Generally, most tree care and maintenance activities are done by outside vendors except emergency situations as they arise, which may be handled by the Department of Public Works, Somerset County or utility tree crews. Private contractors are responsible for the following:

   1. Provide proof of appropriate insurance, certifications and licenses as necessary to the appropriate department heads.  
   2. Report prior to and following all work performed to the appropriate department supervisor.  
   3. Complete all work in a safe and timely manner according to all applicable safety standards set by OSHA or ANSI, as they pertain to tree care operations.  
   4. Follow all current arboricultural practices and recommendations.  
   5. Report all hazards or problems directly to appropriate department head immediately.

J. Utility Contractors  
   1. Must notify the Bernards Township Director of Public Works prior to the start of any non-emergency work in the township.  
   2. Must follow all current arboricultural practices and recommendations.  
   3. May assist Public Works Department Tree Crews in clearing trees to a safe distance from their facilities when necessary.

K. General Public  
   1. Continue to report all requests for planting, removal or maintenance to the Department of Public Works or the Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission.  
   2. Assist in follow-up care to the newly planted trees on adjacent properties or in County or Township rights-of-way.
L. Somerset County Tree Crews
   1. At the request of the Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission or DPW will remove dead trees on county rights of way.

M. NJ DOT Tree Crews
   1. Responsible for maintaining trees on state roadways.

N. Basking Ridge Garden Club
   1. Assist with tree plantings and beautification projects throughout the township.

B. **Tree Service Request Process**

Planting, removal, or pruning requests can be made by any department or individual residing in Bernards Township so long as the property in question is one owned and maintained by Bernards Township. All requests must follow this procedure.

1. All requests can be mailed, e-mailed or called in to the Bernards Township DPW Office, Township Clerks Office or to the Shade Tree Commission’s Secretary. Phone numbers and e-mail addresses are posted on the Township website.
2. All information pertinent to the request is sent to the Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission prior to action, except in the case of emergencies - which will be sent directly to the Director of Public Works to be handled in an expeditious manner. The Shade Tree Commission Secretary coordinates requests received from residents, the DPW and commissioners and routes the request to the commissioner assigned to the zone in question.
3. Requests from all sources are reviewed at the monthly BTSTC meeting. The review process ensures that action is taken on every inquiry and the proper feedback is given to the requestor.
4. All non-emergency work will be inspected by the Bernards Township DPW and Shade Tree Commission, prioritized and referred to the appropriate department.
5. Work requests are completed in the order in which they were received (excluding emergency or priority work) and will be completed in a reasonable time period.
6. The property owners adjacent to the requested work location and/or those making the request will be notified of any action to be taken, even if no action is deemed necessary at that time.

**Plans for Improvement:** This year, the BTSTC hired a part-time paid secretary, who is also an employee of the Township. Since creating this position, there has been a dramatic improvement in communication between the BTSTC members, Town Officials and DPW personnel. Communications with town residents are now channeled through the BTSTC secretary or DPW secretary who distributes requests promptly for action. There will be continued improvement with this process as well as continued development of the BTSTC webpage in order to improve communications. DPW personnel are also attending monthly shade tree commission meetings and assisting with plan objectives.
Develop a job description for the BTSTC secretary to ensure continuity in the event of the turnover of this position.

V. MAP – BERNARDS TOWNSHIP – with zones as described in previous 5-year
VI. Training Plan
Since arboriculture is constantly changing with fast-paced technological and scientific innovations, Bernards Township recognizes the need for a broad based and ongoing training program for individuals at all levels of the Community Forestry Management Program. From Public Works employees to Commission members and administrators, all need continued technical and managerial information to benefit Bernards Township’s tree resource.

Current Training
1. The Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission utilizes a portion of its budget for ongoing training of its members.
2. The Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission encourages and provides for its members to participate in continuing education classes and CORE training as included in the New Jersey Shade Tree & Community Forestry Assistance Act. At the time of this writing, one township employee and six of the seven volunteers are CORE trained.
3. Three members of the Shade Tree Commission and two DPW township employees have attended the Hazardous Tree Identification class at Rutgers.
4. One volunteer has attended the all day training session at the NJ Shade Tree Federation Annual Meeting for the past two years.
5. Seven members of DPW attended the Chain Saw Safety Class at the Somerset County Training Academy.
6. Three members of DPW attended the Bucket Truck Safety Class at the Somerset County Training Academy.
7. The above mentioned courses and others are available to all individuals involved in managing tree resources.

Goals and Objectives
1. To have all individuals involved in the management of tree resources CORE trained. To accomplish this, the last Commission volunteer will be sent next year to be CORE trained.
2. To increase the quality of care given to Bernards Township’s trees, the most current technical arboricultural information will be provided to tree maintenance crews and Shade Tree Commission Members.
3. To ensure the safety of tree maintenance crews and residents by providing current and advanced training in hazard tree identification, equipment safety, and electrical hazard awareness.
4. Continue annual training at Rutgers or NJ Shade Tree Federation Annual Meeting, on current techniques or new developments for Town employees and Commission volunteers.

VII. Public Education, Awareness and Outreach
Since its beginnings on August 20, 1968 the Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission has supported public education with regard to tree care. While this provides a valuable service to the community at large, it also encourages public support for the Shade Tree Commission. The Commission provides community forestry education through some of the following public outreach methods and hopes to expand this program to include each of these objectives.

A. Providing tree advice to residents at no charge.
B. Continue planting 50-75 trees per year, throughout Township.

C. Continue to conduct and promote Arbor Day plantings.

D. Participate with a booth in the annual Town Charter Day, distributing tree information, conducting information learning sessions and gathering information from residents requesting tree work and new plantings.

E. Notifying local newspapers of tree-related events when appropriate.

F. Publishing Shade Tree Commission meeting dates in compliance with the “Sunshine Law.”

G. Inviting Scouts and other youth groups to assist with planting activities and getting schools more involved with the Shade Tree Program.

H. Assisting teachers and school groups in tree related projects.

I. Working with Garden Clubs to help maintain and beautify public spaces and parks.

J. Creating a tree identification walking path in Mountain Park as an educational site for the community.

K. Advising the Planning and Zoning Boards regarding trees proposed in development applications. Develop relationships with home owner associations in local developments.

L. Installing an approved Community Forestry Management Plan on the township website.

M. Publishing tree related articles annually in the local paper.

N. Maintaining Tree City USA status on an annual basis.

O. Placing tree related information on the Township’s internet website (www.bernards.org) with a link to the Shade Tree Commission webpage.

VIII. Statement of Tree Budget

Bernards Township spends $8.27 per capita on total Community Forestry expenditures. The year 2007 budget for the Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission is listed below, along with funds allocated for the Tree Management Program by the Department of Public Works Tree Crew.

Shade Tree Commission

Annual Budget allocated for the following:

- Tree plantings $26,250
- Shade Tree Federation dues publications and training 450
- Consulting Fees for CTE 1,500
- Training 2,500
- Secretary Salary 1,300
- Arbor Day Planting and Education Site Expense 6,250
- Educational Supplies 1,000
- Advertising, postage and other miscellaneous materials 225

Total of Annual Budget $39,475

In Kind Hours
1 meeting per month x 2 hours x 7 people = 168 hours per year
168 hours x $18.04 per hour = $3,031

Special projects (Arbor Day, Charter Day, site evaluations, special meetings, training)
854 hours per year x $18.04 = $15,406
Total in kind budget $18,437

DPW Tree Budget
- Personnel costs for Tree Care $69,000
- Outside Contractor for Tree Care Services 38,000
- Recycle of brush/chips/stumps/log disposal 43,000

Total DPW Tree Budget $150,000

Basking Ridge Garden Club
400 people hours x $18.04 $7,216
-on town beautification

Total Tree Care Budget: $215,128

IX. Shade Tree Management Plan Implementation

A. Tree Assessment and Inventory

The Township of Bernards has a large and diverse tree resource. Currently there is no formal street tree plan and only a partial tree inventory. Due to the high turnover of Commission members this project was delayed. Plans for a comprehensive street tree inventory in Bernards Township will lead to the eventual inventory of traditional street trees to be included in maps and in a searchable data repository. A preliminary tree inventory, whether traditional or computerized, should begin with the most basic information within the next five years.

1. Goals
   The current goals of the tree inventory are to:
   a. Determine the overall health of Bernards tree resource.
   b. Catalogue all planted trees along roadways in the township.
   c. Catalogue all trees in township parks and on township owned properties.
   d. Identify open planting spaces in the community.
   e. Develop maintenance cycles for systematic rotation pruning.

2. Action Statements
   The following action steps will be taken to accomplish the goals during 2008-2012:
   a. Compile list of prior year’s Shade Tree Commission tree plantings in a comprehensive spreadsheet.
   b. Begin catalogue of trees planted by developers, DPW and Parks Commission in all public places along Township rights-of-way.
   c. Continue to conduct windshield surveys with a hired Certified Tree Expert which
will assist Shade Tree volunteers in estimating the range and species distribution of the Bernards tree resource.

d. As a result of the information gathered in the inventory; set up systematic pruning cycles for newly planted and established trees; and identify location for new tree plantings.

**B. Tree Hazard Identification and Management**

Bernards is dedicated to providing a healthy and productive tree resource for its residents in the safest and most cost effective manner possible. Public safety is of the highest concern throughout every aspect of the tree management program from planting to removal. A Hazard Tree Assessment was completed in 2007 through a windshield survey which covered four of the eight zones. Information gathered in that survey has been forwarded to the DPW for hazard abatement work. The remaining four zones will be surveyed in 2008-2009.

1. **Goals**
   a. To ensure public safety in relation to trees on all Bernards Township properties and thoroughfares.
   b. To establish an ongoing comprehensive plan for Hazard Tree Assessment on all Township properties and thoroughfares.

2. **Action Statements**
   The following action steps will be taken to accomplish the goals during 2008-2012:
   a. Hazard tree evaluation training will continue for all the Shade Tree Commission members and selected Public Works employees.
   b. Conduct windshield surveys covering two zones each year throughout the plan timeframe. Surveys will be conducted by Shade Tree Commissioners with a certified tree expert to identify hazard tree areas in town. The remaining four zones that were not surveyed in the previous plan will be surveyed first. Then the other zones will be surveyed again.
   c. Continue to communicate with DPW on findings of potential tree hazards through e-mail or face to face at meetings.

**C. Tree Planting**

The tree planting program as it exists now is designed to replace dead trees, fill open spaces located by the Shade Tree Commission, meet the requests of residents, and add species diversity to Township parks, streets and other facilities. Builders are also responsible to plant 3 to 3-1/2 inch caliper trees chosen from the BTSTC approved planting list for all new developments. Arbor Day and memorial plantings have also been an integral part of Bernards tree planting program. Bernards recognizes the need for diversity and stability in its aging tree population and intends to develop a formal plan to integrate young trees into areas with aging and declining tree populations. Implementation of this program has helped beautify the town and also increased the diversity of species and age of the trees in Bernards.

1. **Goals**
a. Continue to increase species diversity throughout the township.
b. Increase the number of smaller tree species in close proximity to overhead utilities, reducing future tree and utility conflicts.
c. Develop plans to work with Township Parks Commission on selected species planted throughout the Town parks.
d. Seek better ways to maintain and help establish newly planted materials i.e., water, mulch, deer guards.
e. Enhance entrance signs and hang Tree City USA signs on main roads welcoming residents and visitors into town.

2. Action Statements
The following action steps will be taken to accomplish the goals during 2008-2012:
a. Continue planting 50-75 new trees per year throughout the community.
b. With the cooperation of Somerset County tree crews and utility companies, continue removing declining and poorly or over pruned trees and replace them with smaller species around overhead utilities.
c. Find suitable tree species not currently existing on township properties, and incorporate them into new plantings.
d. Seek grants or donations to fund new plantings and beautification of township parks, including Adopt-a-Tree and memorial garden programs.
e. Solicit the help of the Public Works Department and the public in aftercare new tree plantings.
f. Annually review the BTSTC approved tree planting list.
g. Continue to apply for Tree City USA status and strive for growth awards.
h. Monitor for potential “no-net-loss” tree planting opportunities.

D. Tree Maintenance and Care
Bernards recognizes that trees need general wellness care and not just emergency care. A proactive plan of routine scheduled maintenance will ensure a healthy, aesthetically pleasing and cost effective urban forest with a reduced hazard potential.

This management plan aims to provide a framework that will benefit and raise the level of care for all township owned trees and trees along township thoroughfares. Structural pruning schedules are established to train young trees to reduce future potential liabilities and maintenance costs. Continued maintenance on established and mature trees should reduce the risk of hazardous situations and increase tree life spans, generating benefits to the community.

1. Goals:
a. To install healthy, viable trees into the existing landscape and help them to reestablish as quickly as possible to insure longevity.
b. Train and develop young trees with good structure.
c. Maintain the health and extend the useful life span of existing trees.
d. Promote public safety with regard to trees on township properties and rights-of-way.
e. Maintain the maximum benefit of trees in the most cost effective manner.
f. Review and revise all tree related ordinances as necessary.
g. Educate the public with regards to trees and their benefits and care.

2. Action Statements
   The following action steps will be taken to accomplish the goals during 2008-2012:
   a. Require quality planting material from outside contractors when annual planting is conducted. Hire a Certified Tree Expert to examine and approve plant material before planting occurs.
   b. Windshield surveys have currently been completed in four of the eight assigned tree zones. At least two zones will be surveyed each year.
   c. Work with utility companies to develop a removal and replacement program to eliminate future hazards and tree-line conflicts.
   d. Seek additional funds and grants for hiring of private contractors for general tree care needs beyond the scope of county and utility cooperation.
   e. Seek cooperation from Somerset County tree crews to begin a routine pruning cycle in Bernards.
   f. Continue to work with DPW on structural pruning of young trees and remedial pruning based on information found on the windshield surveys by the Shade Tree Commissioners.
   g. Expand the Shade Tree Commission website to include FAQ by homeowners. Develop letters to the editor in local newspaper to inform the public of the Shade Tree Commission’s progress and also general tree care tips.
   h. Monitor Rutgers disease and insect alerts.

Shade Tree Management Plan Implementation

E. Timeline for the years 2008-2012

Year 1, 2008

 dez Continue the windshield survey hazard tree assessment to identify existing hazards in the remaining four zones to complete all eight management zones. This hazard assessment will be carried out by the Public Works department, The Shade Tree Commission and a hired consultant.
 dez Continue already established tree planting projects. The Shade Tree Commission traditionally hires outside contractors to plant approximately 80 trees per year plus incidental planting and special projects such as Arbor Day. Planting is also done by bonded requirements from developments.
 dez Continue yearly public relations activities, such as Tree City USA recertification, Arbor Day celebrations, newspaper articles, quarterly newsletter, Sunshine Law notifications, Charter Day and updating township website with activities. Apply for Tree Planting Grant or tree planting money from CSIP.
 dez Investigate methods to develop a comprehensive street tree inventory.
 dez Have a booth at the annual township Charter Day to provide public outreach and education as well as gather information from residents requesting tree work or plantings.
 dez Send one or two people from the Shade Tree Commission and Public Works representatives as well to the New Jersey Shade Tree Federation Annual Meeting for
CORE training and CEU’s. Continue to support the training programs for the Public Works Department with the use of outside consultants and safety trainers.

⇒ Develop relationship with Environmental Commission and attend meetings as needed. Appoint a STC member to work on joint projects with Environmental Commission.

⇒ Submit an Annual Accomplishment Report to NJ Forest Service.

⇒ Respond to resident inquiries and requests on tree issues throughout the community. Assist and coordinate with DPW and outside tree consultant on tree maintenance resolutions.

⇒ Continue monthly Shade Tree Commission meetings with site plan reviews.

Year 2, 2009

⇒ Using the assessment done in 2008, identify hazardous situations and hire a contractor to prune or remove the hazardous trees in two zones per year, beginning with the worst two zones the first year. Consider applying for CSIP Grant to fund this project.

⇒ Continue with regular tree planting of 50-80 trees per year. Consider applying for tree planting grant or some tree planting money from CSIP depending on the severity of the hazard problem identified above.

⇒ Select method for developing the comprehensive street tree inventory.

⇒ Meet with the Planning Board to review ordinances for compliance with the Municipal Master Plan and to discuss what is working and what is not. Ordinance review should include an update of the Approved Species Planting List and a review of the existing permitting process and a fine structure for failure to comply with the ordinance.

⇒ Continue yearly public relations activities, such as Tree City USA recertification, Arbor Day celebrations, newspaper articles, quarterly newsletter, Sunshine Law notifications, Charter Day and updating township website with activities.

⇒ Continue attendance at the New Jersey Shade Tree Federation Annual Meeting (Shade Tree Commission and Department of Public Works). Continue in-house training of Public Works employees.

⇒ Investigate the feasibility of applying for the Cool Cities Grant to plant trees near community buildings.

⇒ Reach out and develop a relationship with the local utility company to begin a proactive tree removal and replacement plan.

⇒ Work to identify an area in town for tree planting to be used as an educational and tree identification resource for residents.

⇒ Submit an Annual Accomplishment Report to NJ Forest Service.

⇒ Respond to resident inquiries and requests on tree issues throughout the community. Assist and coordinate with DPW and outside tree consultant on tree maintenance resolutions.

⇒ Continue monthly Shade Tree Commission meetings with site plan reviews.

Year 3, 2010

⇒ Using the assessment done in 2009, identify hazardous situations and hire a contractor to prune or remove the hazardous trees in the next two zones. Consider applying for CSIP
Grant to fund this project.

- Tree Planting goals remain the same as last year.
- Develop an action plan for the creation of a comprehensive street tree inventory plan using the methods selected from previous year.
- Initiate discussions with the Planning Board to gain recognition of the Community Forestry Management Plan in the new Master Plan and Open Space Plan for the municipality, which will be under review in 2011.
- Continue every year public relations activities: Tree City USA recertification, Arbor Day celebration, articles in the local newspaper, participation in Charter Day, quarterly newsletter and Sunshine Law notifications as well as updating the township website.
- Continue training program with attendance at the NJ Shade Tree Federation Annual Meeting (keep up with CORE and CEU requirements). Continue in-house training with Public Works, address any training needs that may present themselves as we work through the plan or as other things happen. Training on how to recognize and deal with Bacterial Leaf Scorch, Asian Long-Horned Beetles and gypsy moths, might be necessary.
- Continue working with local utilities to cooperate with management of tree resources within Township.
- Develop a plan for a tree education site. Identify community partners; i.e., parks or businesses in town, to assist with project funding and plan objectives.
- Submit an Annual Accomplishment Report to NJ Forest Service.
- Respond to resident inquiries and requests on tree issues throughout the community. Assist and coordinate with DPW and outside tree consultant on tree maintenance resolutions.
- Continue monthly Shade Tree Commission meetings with site plan reviews.

**Year 4, 2011**

- Using the assessment done in 2010, identify hazardous situations and hire a contractor to prune or remove the hazardous trees in the next zones. Consider applying for CSIP Grant to fund this project.
- Tree planting goals should remain the same as in previous years, with possible adjustments considering the number of removals necessary as part of the hazard removal program and availability of grant money.
- Implement the street tree inventory action plan and begin data gathering.
- Continue meeting with the Planning Board, to keep them informed of our progress and to address any concerns. Investigate and begin discussions with the Township Planning Department to incorporate the Community Forestry Management Plan into the Master Plan.
- Continue public relations activities: Tree City USA recertification, Arbor Day celebrations, Charter Day, articles in local newspaper, quarterly newsletter, Sunshine Law notifications and updating website.
- Continue training program with attendance at the NJ Shade Tree Federation Annual Meeting (keep up with CORE and CEU requirements). Continue in-house training with Public Works, address any training needs that may present themselves as we work through the plan or as other things happen.
Continue working with utility companies to remove hazardous or high maintenance trees under the overhead conductors and begin replacing them with smaller ornamental varieties.

Continue to evaluate effectiveness of the communication process between STC and DPW. Address concerns and implement improvement plan if needed.

Identify site for Tree Education grove.

Submit an Annual Accomplishment Report to NJ Forest Service.

Respond to resident inquiries and requests on tree issues throughout the community. Assist and coordinate with DPW and outside tree consultant on tree maintenance resolutions.

Continue monthly Shade Tree Commission meetings with site plan reviews.

Year 5, 2012

Using the assessment done in 2011, identify hazardous situations and hire a contractor to prune or remove the hazardous trees in the next zones. Consider applying for CSIP Grant to fund this project.

Tree planting goals should remain the same as prior years.

Continue the tree inventory process. Data entry will be started this year, and a system will be developed for working with the Department of Public Works to update the inventory.

Consider meeting with the Planning Board to involve them in the formation of the next 5 year Community Forestry Management Plan. Representatives of other committees and boards in Bernards Township may be invited to this meeting as well.

Public relations activities will remain the same: Tree City USA recertification, Arbor Day celebration, involvement in Charter Day, quarterly newsletters and Sunshine Law notification and articles in local newspaper and updates to the township website.

Based on the success of last year, plans will be made to have another resident seminar at Charter Day.

Training goals will also remain the same as last year, with a focus on any specific topics/problems that may have come up as a result of working through this management plan, or topics that may be seen as necessary to move forward through the next 5 year plan.

Continue to work with local utilities in the removal and replacement project.

Implement and develop the tree education site within the township.

Create and submit the next 5 year Community Forestry Management Plan. Apply for a CSIP grant to fund this project.

Submit an Annual Accomplishment Report to NJ Forest Service.

Respond to resident inquiries and requests on tree issues throughout the community. Assist and coordinate with DPW and outside tree consultant on tree maintenance resolutions.

Continue monthly Shade Tree Commission meetings with site plan reviews.
Some ideas for goals for the next 5 year plan

⇒ Continue to use the eight zones established in this plan. Begin this cycle again as a preventive maintenance pruning cycle, and consider also using the zones for planting plans.
⇒ Update the comprehensive street tree inventory as maintenance is done and as new trees are planted.
⇒ Continue to build the Shade Tree Commission relationship with the Department of Public Works and with the Planning Board.

X. Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP)

The thirteen items listed below as a part of the Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP) have been identified throughout this plan with current procedures or a recommended course of action.

The following is a synopsis of the suggested practices.

A. CSIP #1 Plan Preparation

This Second 5-Year Community Forestry Management Plan for Bernards Township has been funded by a New Jersey Green Communities Challenge Grant and completed with the cooperation of the Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission. Upon approval by the Community Forestry Council, implementation of the plan will begin and this plan will be reviewed and revised as necessary in the year 2012.

B. CSIP #2 Training

Currently one member of the Bernards Township Department of Public Works and six volunteers are CORE trained. It is expected that the last volunteer commissioner will be trained in 2008. Training in tree care practices for Public Works crews will also be expanded, especially with regard to hazard tree identification and equipment safety. Further detail can be found in section VI.

C. CSIP #3 Public Education and Awareness

The Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission would like to expand all public outreach and take a more proactive role in the community. The Commission recognizes that public education and support is vital to its success and intends to implement an outreach plan, which can be found in section VII.
D. CSIP #4 Arbor Day Activities
Arbor Day has been celebrated each year with the support of the Shade Tree Commission. The Commission is hopeful that Arbor Day programs will be expanded to include:

1. To continue having the mayor proclaim the last Friday in April as Arbor Day on an annual basis.
2. To sponsor tree planting programs in cooperation with the local schools or community organizations.
3. To seek the involvement of local civic and youth organizations to participate in Arbor Day programs.
4. To maintain the Tree City USA status over the next five years and beyond, striving for growth award achievements.

E. CSIP #5 Assessment and Inventory
The Township of Bernards would like to initiate a street tree inventory in 2008. Fieldwork would begin with basic information to record existing tree species, size, condition and location. Potential planting sites are also being identified. See section IX on pages 16 - 24.

F. CSIP #6 Tree Hazard Identification Plan
Tree hazard identification is a major area of concern for Bernards Township and has already been initiated with windshield surveys completed with the previous Plan. This CSIP practice is of the highest priority to Bernards Township and will continue to take priority in the Plan, to ensure public safety regarding Township owned or maintained trees. The windshield survey will continue and expanded to all zones in the community. Results will be reviewed annually to aid in the quick identification and remediation of potential hazards to the public with the help of a certified tree expert. See section IX on pages 16 - 24.

G. CSIP #7 Tree Planting
All future tree planting projects undertaken or overseen by the Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission will be guided by the goals and objectives outlined in sections II and IX on pages 4 and 18 of this plan.

H. CSIP #8 Tree Maintenance
Bernards Township will continue to evaluate the Township’s future needs for general tree care and future equipment purchases. Bernards Township has implemented a cost effective plan to care for its tree resource whether through conventional or innovative means to help newly planted materials as well as established and mature trees. The Township will continue to utilize a consultant who is a Certified Tree Expert, for guidance with tree resources and maintenance issues. Bernards Township DPW will continue to support smaller maintenance projects and purchase buckets, chippers, stump grinders, chainsaws and other necessary tree care equipment at that time. See section IX on pages 16 - 24.
I. **CSIP #9 Tree Recycling**
Bernards Township does not generate enough green waste to warrant its own recycling plant. The tree recycling program as it exists now consists of woodchips at Pill Hill throughout the year and chipping of Christmas trees. During tree maintenance and removal operations, some firewood is left for residents and woodchips are used in parks. Other debris is hauled to a private facility. Outside contractors are responsible for disposal of all materials generated during tree pruning and removal operations. There are no further improvements planned for the recycling program at this time.

J. **CSIP #10 Ordinance Establishment**
The Bernards Township Shade Tree Commission was created by ordinance on August 20, 1968. The Shade Tree Commission recently reviewed the current ordinance which was revised in 1999 and found that no update is necessary at this time. The ordinance will be reviewed before the end of this five year period and the commission will update the document to meet arboricultural practices as necessary. See section IX on pages 16 - 24.

K. **CSIP #11 Tree Care Disaster Plan**
Bernards Township does not currently have a Tree Care Disaster Plan. At present, tree emergencies are handled by Somerset County tree crews, utility tree crews, outside contractors and public works tree crews for downed trees. In case of any large-scale tree emergencies, Bernards Township would follow plans developed by Somerset County or the Office of Emergency Management. No future plans are being considered at this time.

L. **CSIP #12 Insect and Disease Management**
No formal management plan exists for trees along township roads or on other properties. Any insect or disease outbreaks are handled on a case-by-case basis. Diagnosis and consultation would be sought from NJ State Department of Agriculture, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service, or a Certified Tree Expert. In the event of an outbreak, State or Federal assistance would be requested.

M. **CSIP #13 Other**

- Tree Identification Walk
  Expand and further develop a tree identification walking path for the community in Mountain Park.

- Historic Tree List
  To further develop and chart all of the historic and champion trees in Bernards Township.

**Grants Awarded:**
2002 Green Communities Grant of $2,000 was awarded to assist in the development of the first Community Forestry Plan.

2007 Green Communities Grant of $3,000 was awarded to assist in the development of the renewal of the Community Forestry Plan.