



Executive Director's Fall 2021 Report

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As we move to the end of 2021, we continue to navigate the uncertainties of Covid and the difficulties of engaging with communities safely. Fortunately, some of our work involves research and writing and we also have field work that can be done in the woods and marshes without human contact. We've also acquired all the best technology for webinars and studio quality productions! Check out our website's events page for upcoming workshops and also our resources page.

At right, Matt Lee investigates a natural area and we find a Bard Owl calling to its friend across the forest in James City County Virginia where we are mapping the county's natural and cultural assets. The owl reminds us that many species depend on us protecting their habitats – even in fast growing counties and densely populated cities!



We continue to enjoy our new offices in Scottsville, VA along the James River. This past summer, our two landscape architect interns Zac Walrod and Jessica Huang assisted the town with designs to add new habitats to the town's boat landing.

In September 2021, we also welcomed a *new fulltime landscape designer Lauren Doran*. Lauren has worked at landscape architecture firms in North Carolina and Virginia for the last ten years, where she has done master planning, commercial design, residential and garden design, as well as design for public art projects. In graduate school, she investigated the intersection of culture, art and landscape, as well as ways to engage communities. She studied abroad for a summer in Tanzania learning about Tanzanian architecture and culture. Ms. Doran has a BA degree in Anthropology from the University of Delaware and a Masters degree in Landscape Architecture from Virginia Tech. In addition, Lauren is a photographer and artist with a love for research and writing. She is currently working on retrofits for the state of Virginia's properties to help Virginia comply with the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan. For full staff bios see <http://www.gicinc.org/staff.htm>



Current Projects

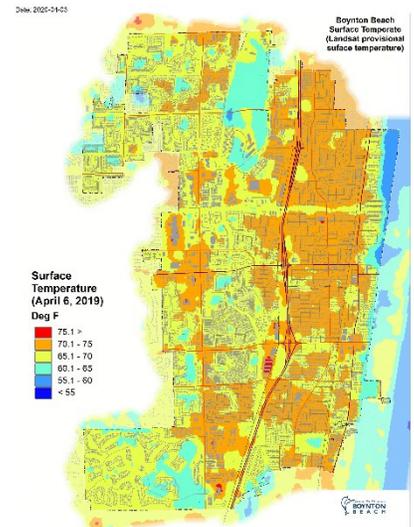
Resilient Coastal Forests Project

The Green Infrastructure Center (GIC), Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF), Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) and South Carolina Forestry Commission (SCFC) are evaluating threats that impact coastal forests and developing management actions to avoid or mitigate those threats to healthy forests and communities. The Resilient Coastal Forests (RCF) project is funded by the US Forest Service. Coastal forests are impacted by various threats - from development, to insects, to changes in weather, to fire risks. The RCF project is looking at the condition of our coastal forests and the actions we can all take to ensure our forests are healthy long into the future. Each state region has a local advisory committee who will carry ideas forward. This is a model process that can be replicated by any coastal community. GIC is now working with local governments to develop the management actions to expand forest resiliency, which will be completed early in 2022.



Urban Forest Planning and Planting Campaigns: GIC is now completing its guide on decision making for urban forests, funded by the USFS Southern Region. The guide explains how plan for urban tree canopy and how to justify planting campaigns based on the many environmental benefits those trees provide.

Social equity is also major element of the guide. Tree canopy is often lowest in minority and low income communities, making those residents more susceptible to heat stress and respiratory diseases. Using GIC's recent data from 14 communities across the south, we are demonstrating that minority communities are often hotter with far lower canopy cover than affluent areas. This has major health implications, especially for young children and seniors. Our first results led the City of Boynton Beach to expand their canopy goal by 30% and to commit to planting trees first in low income minority communities.



We launched tree planning and planting campaigns with three cities as demonstrations: Greenville, Georgetown and Irmo, SC. Key messages have been developed to appeal to a diversity of audiences and engage them in planting for the future (see example above left). Many trees are being planted right now – stay tuned for final results!

Canopy Coaching – Why pay someone to map your tree canopy when you might learn to do it yourself? Under a grant from the SCFC, GIC created a course to teach five communities in South Carolina how to map their own tree canopies and set goals. This builds capacity in local government to do more! We are currently wrapping up this work for the City and County of Charleston, SC.

Tree Inventory and Storm Planning Tools –The GIC is partnering with Dovetail Partners and Forest Metrix to train people to do their own tree inventories. This project helps smaller cities and towns who might not otherwise afford to do this work. GIC also developed guidance on how to plan for storms and recovery as part of this project and we tested these ideas in Niceville and Marianna in the Florida Panhandle region – both cities were hard hit by hurricane Michael in 2018. For a free copy of the storm planning guide visit http://www.gicinc.org/storm_mit.htm

Toolkit for Forest Policies SC – The GIC has wrapped its work on the Forest Planners' Toolkit for South Carolina and its available free on our website. It covers all the tree and forest policies and codes that a county, city or town should have. Although written for South Carolina, these codes apply everywhere! It covers everything from trees in parks to parking lots to help cities prevent tree losses.



GIC Resources

Map and Plan the Natural World with GIS 2019 by Esri Press. The book covers the science behind habitat modeling and describes how to use Geographic Information Systems to determine priorities to conservation across landscapes. The book describes the science behind habitat mapping and how to use data for conservation and restoration! <https://green-infrastructure.esri.com/AssetFinder/index.html>

Design Guide for Forest Connectivity in the Developing Landscape GIC designed two conservation subdivisions in the Carolinas in partnership with local land trusts to show how to conserve large areas of woodlands on lots slated for development. The guide provides arguments and steps for true conservation design and technical references for any planner, developer, elected official or citizen to adapt. Download free: http://www.gicinc.org/PDFs/DesignGuide_final.pdf

Trees to Offset Stormwater: A 12 City Study

GIC studies 12 cities and one county to determine the role of trees in mitigating stormwater runoff in VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, and AL. The GIC and the states obtained funding from the USFS Southern Region. The 12 case study booklets for each city are on GIC's website. – get them on line at www.gicinc.org Summary report http://www.gicinc.org/trees_stormwater.htm

Learn more and support our work at <http://www.gicinc.org> All donations are 100% tax deductible and help communities. Donate at <http://www.gicinc.org/donate.htm> Contact: GIC, 320 Valley Street, Scottsville VA 24590 (434)286-3119 Check us out on Facebook too!

