1. Full name of your Program Work Team (PWT):
Community Forestry

2. Please list names, affiliations and e-mail addresses of the PWT Co-Chairs: (With an asterisk [*], please indicate the co-chair responsible for finalizing this report.)
*Nina Bassuk, Department of Horticulture, Cornell Campus, nlb2@cornell.edu
Stephanie Radin, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Dutchess County, sradin@cornell.edu

3. Please identify your PWT’s activities, accomplishments, and, most importantly, outcomes and impacts over the past year.

The purpose of this PWT is to assist community managers in creating management plans for their public trees and green spaces. To do this we conduct tree inventories in communities in New York State. There are two teams that do this: The SWAT team (Student weekend Arborist Team) located on campus in Ithaca and the Hudson Valley SWAT team. The campus SWAT team trains students to carry out tree inventories while the Hudson Valley group train Master Gardeners to carry out tree inventories in eastern NY.

Tree and site information is collected using hand held computers and GPS units. After the data is collected, we analyze it; write a report summarizing the findings and make recommendations for planning purposes. We also run the data through the iTree Forest Service program to quantify the benefit of each community’s trees for stormwater capture, energy conservation, carbon sequestration, air pollution reduction and increased property values. We visited each community to present our findings to the appropriate municipal agency.

In 2012, the campus SWAT team conducted inventories in the town of DeWitt, the city of Elmira and the city of Batavia. The Hudson Valley SWAT effort, which had lost funding, was refunded by a grant from the New York State Department of Conservation Urban Forestry Program. Their work began in the fall of 2012.

Many communities were especially interested in inventories because of the threat of the Emerald Ash Borer, an invasive insect that kills all ash species. By knowing how many ash trees were on the public streets communities could plan for ash treatment or removal when the borer reaches their community.

Data generated by the SWAT teams from 2002-2011 was used in a PhD project to extrapolate the tree inventory findings from 140 communities to encompass the entire urban and community forest population of New York State encompassing 915 communities. This was partially funded by the New York State DEC and was funded by the US Forest Service beginning in 2012 to use this methodology in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Communities that have been in the SWAT program have been successful in procuring grants to grow their
urban tree programs. Many have constituted tree boards to help manage their tree resources. Several communities have increased their tree budgets and are planting more appropriate, diverse trees to reduce the threat of invasive pests.

Resources:
Our website was updated see: http://www.hort.cornell.edu/commfor
Summary reports were prepared for each community