



Urban and Community Forestry Society Annual Conference Program

Monday & Tuesday, November 17-18, 2025 | The M Resort, Henderson, Nevada

[Register for the UCFS and/or Partners in Community Forestry Conference!](#)

Monday, November 17

1:00-4:00pm – Pre-Conference Tour – Climate Resilience Through Smarter Landscapes

Meeting Location: To be announced

Pre-registration required. Fee of \$50 for UCFS Members, \$55 for non-members

Join the Urban and Community Forestry Society (UCFS) and City of Henderson Parks and Recreation for a half-day bus tour exploring how urban forestry practices are evolving to meet the challenges of a hotter, drier climate. This tour is designed for practitioners, planners, and policymakers interested in practical, replicable strategies for building climate-resilient urban landscapes with limited water resources.

Throughout the tour, we'll explore how cities can proactively adapt to aridification by redesigning public spaces, rethinking irrigation systems, and collaborating across departments and with community partners. Expect a balance of big-picture strategy and actionable detail. [See website for more details.](#)

5:00-6:00pm – UCFS Fun Run, Walk, or Watch

Location: Meet in the hotel lobby.

Additional \$30 registration fee

Help raise money for the UCFS Urban Forest Foundation plus have fun and get some fresh air! The annual UCFS Fun Run/Walk (approximately 2 miles/3.2 km for the Run and 1 mile/1.6 km for the Walk) will be held on Monday, November 17 from 5:00-6:00pm—and anyone is welcome to come hang out and watch. Proceeds will go to the UCFS Urban Forest Foundation, which supports scholarships for MFI and the UCFS Arborist Exchange program. Registered participants also receive a T-shirt!

6:00-8:00pm – Municipal Forestry Institute (MFI) Reunion

Location: To be announced

Additional fee of \$25 per ticket with payment accepted at the door.

Join the Municipal Forestry Institute Reunion on Monday, November 17 from 6:00-7:30pm to reconnect with friends in your MFI class and meet MFI grads from other years. Bring a friend who might be interested in participating in a future MFI class! New this year – a portion of your ticket price will go to support the UCFS Urban Forest Foundation, which provides scholarships for urban foresters to attend MFI!

Tuesday, November 18

NOTE: This agenda is still being finalized. Exact timing of talks and various details may change.

7:00am-4:00pm – **Registration**

7:00-8:00am – **Breakfast with the Exhibitors**

7:00-8:00am - **First-time attendees Breakfast with UCFS Members and Friends**

Morning General Session

Main stage

8:00-8:10am– **Welcome**

Jamie King, Director of Coaching and Consulting, Field Delivery, American Forests, and UCFS Board of Directors President

Leslie Berckes, Executive Director, Urban and Community Forestry Society

8:10-8:40am – **Welcome from the Host City**

Preston Goodman, Municipal Forester, City of Henderson, Nevada

Planting trees in the desert takes determination and ingenuity. As our climate changes and increasing heat impacts us all, the need for trees has never been greater. With that comes a high demand for water to ensure the trees thrive. So, how does this desert city make it work? Learn more about this and other urban forestry challenges and triumphs in Henderson.

8:40-9:20am – **Developing a Tree Preservation Ordinance during a Housing Shortage: A Case Study from Durham, North Carolina**

Robin Schultze, Principal Planner/Arborist, City of Durham, North Carolina

Durham is one of the fastest growing areas in the US; this has led to a rapid increase in new residential developments (and by extension, thousands of acres of land mass graded and tree canopy lost). This presentation will seek to provide insight into how the Durham Planning Department worked with other City departments, elected officials, environmental groups, and development professionals to write a new tree preservation ordinance. This process revealed the tension in attempting to balance the need for housing while still trying to meet the community's adopted tree canopy goal of 55% canopy coverage within our Urban Growth Boundary.

We're still ironing out the details, but this session will be followed by time for table discussion or Q&A with the presenter.

9:25-10:00am – **Break**

10:00-10:45am – **“Branching Out: Five Years of Data, Growth, and Lessons from a City-led Tree Giveaway Program**

Jessie Farris, Arborist Project Coordinator, City of Dallas, Texas

This session explores five years of data from Branch Out Dallas, a city-led tree giveaway program. Branch Out Dallas is the City of Dallas's annual residential tree giveaway program launched in 2019 to expand the urban canopy, promote equity, and engage residents in climate action. Over five years, more than 10,000 trees have been distributed, but until now, little research has examined the long-term outcomes of this widely replicated model. Learn how demographic trends, community surveys, and species tracking informed program improvements. Discover actionable strategies for equity-focused outreach, public education, and long-term success in building resilient urban forests through community-driven stewardship.

We're still ironing out the details, but this session will be followed by time for table discussion or Q&A with the presenter.

10:45-11:30am – **Trees and Construction - How to Make It Work for Everyone**

David Lefcourt, City Arborist/Tree Warden, City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Trying to avoid damage to trees during construction is a constant battle in many municipalities. Learn how the City of Cambridge's Urban Forestry program has reduced tree damage in regard to construction throughout the city. From pre-construction walks and meetings, tree protection, air spading and plant healthcare to preventative tree pruning and innovative construction methods, the City has managed to reduce damage to trees. Practices that seem routine now took years to get accepted and implemented by other City departments and contractors. David Lefcourt, City Arborist and Tree Warden, will share his experiences with trees and construction during his 17+ years with the City.

We're still ironing out the details, but this session will be followed by time for table discussion or Q&A with the presenter.

11:30am-1:00pm – **Lunch and Awards Ceremony**

Canopy Conversations

Main stage and side rooms

1:00-3:00pm

UCFS Member and Friends are a wealth of knowledge. During these Canopy Conversations, participants will be able to pick from a variety of topics that they most want to learn about and discuss with fellow participants. Each topic area will be led by an expert in the field who will briefly present on the issue. Then, it's time to learn from one another! A moderator will lead the group in discussion. Share what has worked—and not worked—in your experience.

Each Canopy Conversation will be 30 minutes long with 10 minutes for wrap-up and transition. Participants will have the opportunity to choose three topics in this time frame.

Descriptions will be posted soon.

Canopy Conversation Topics

Topic	Conversation Leader
IRA and funding loss	To be announced
Managing trees with limited water	Nicole Gillett, City of Tucson, Arizona
Tree protection ordinances	Lee Mueller, Davey Resource Group
Urban wood	To be announced
Volunteer training and community engagement	Joe Wheelock, Heartland Tree Alliance
Nursery/growing your own trees	Meridith Perkins, Forest ReLeaf of Missouri
Partnership development	Jamie King, American Forests
Wildfire/urban canopy	Ian Appow, Upper Willamette Soil & Water Conservation District
Non-profit/government relationships	Maggio Laquidara, North Carolina State University
Student/youth engagement	Emma Stammer, Treasure Valley Canopy Network

3:00-3:30pm – **Break**

Panel Session

Main stage

3:30-4:30pm – **Panel: Protecting Our Urban Forests: Climate Adaptation for Tree Canopies**

During this session, three panelists will discuss how your work can ensure your trees are climate-ready. Group discussion and Q&A will be included.

Becky Schwartz, Director, Urban Forestry Innovation, American Forests

As forest health challenges continue to grow with a changing climate, American Forests presents a best-in-

class, climate-forward resource to bridge the urban forest health resource and resilience gap across the US. This resource, developed by American Forests with the US Forest Service, is a new Forest Health section on Vibrant Cities Lab.

Camille Shoaf, Lead Campus Planner, Purdue University

A nationwide survey indicates that while communities are taking steps to adapt urban forests, tree managers feel that more should be done. Communities whose level of concern aligns with their leadership show higher adoption rates. Understanding these factors can help tree managers prioritize resources for healthier future urban forests and communities.

Jim Clark, Managing Consulting Arborist, HortScience Bartlett Consulting

Urban foresters are challenged to identify species that will be adapted to future climate conditions. Responding to this challenge requires 1) understanding what those conditions will be, 2) evaluating an existing species palette for adaptability to those conditions, and 3) identifying new species adapted to the future climate. Jim will describe a process for identifying tree species—through local, regional, and national assessments—that will be adapted to future climate conditions. .

4:30-4:45pm – **Closing**

Jamie King, Director of Coaching and Consulting, Field Delivery, American Forests and UCFS Board of Directors President

5:00-6:00pm – **Annual UCFS Member Meeting**

Jamie King, Director of Coaching and Consulting, Field Delivery, American Forests and UCFS Board of Directors President

Urban and Community Forestry Society Members are invited to the annual member meeting. Hear from Society leadership on the status of the organization, new initiatives, and the long-term strategic direction of UCFS. Members will have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss issues that are of importance to them.

6:00-7:30pm – **Post-Annual Meeting Get-together**

Details to be determined.

7:00-8:00pm – **UCFS Affinity Group, LGBTree Social**

Join a meet-up and social for LGBTQIA+ urban forestry professionals!