

UCFS Board Member Profile: Michael Martini

Name: Michael Martini

City, State/Province, Country: Pittsburgh, PA, USA

Place of Employment: Sustainable Forestry Initiative

Job Title: Director of Urban and Community Forestry-US

Educational level and major field: Masters of Natural Resource Management Focused in Urban Forestry

List any professional certifications:

- ISA Certified Arborist
- ISA Certified Urban Forest Professional
- ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualified
- SAF Certified Urban and Community Forester
- NJ Licensed Tree Expert
- Maryland Tree Expert
- Rhode Island Arborist

List any other urban forestry, arboriculture, or related organizations you're involved with:

- Previous NJ ISA Chapter Board Member
- Previous Urban and Community Forestry Society Board Member
- Steering Committee member of Sustainable Urban Forestry Coalition
- Municipal Forestry Institute Facilitator 2022
- NJ Community Forestry Council

LinkedIn profile link: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/michael-martini0113/>

Brief bio:

Michael Martini is a dynamic leader in urban and community forestry with extensive experience at both state and local levels of government. He holds a Master's degree in Natural Resources (Oregon State University, 2024), a Graduate Certificate in Urban Forestry (2023), and a Bachelor's degree in Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources with a concentration in Environmental Planning and Design: Urban Forestry (Rutgers University).

Michael is committed to professional growth and mentorship within the field. He is a facilitator for the Municipal Forestry Institute (MFI), training future leaders in urban forestry, and has been an active member of professional organizations. He has served as Trustee for the NJ ISA Chapter Board, previously



as a Board member of the Urban and Community Forestry Society (UCFS), and continues to serve on the NJ Community Forestry Council. He co-founded LGBTree, a UCFS affiliate group advancing LGBTQ+ inclusion in forestry, and has actively supported UCFS mentorship programs to guide emerging professionals.

Currently, Michael is the Director of Urban and Community Forestry at the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, where he leads U.S. efforts to expand urban forestry capacity, with a focus on outreach to underserved communities and building strategic partnerships. He plays a central role in advancing the SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard and supporting the SFI Career Pathways Program.

Michael's career reflects a deep dedication to strengthening urban forestry programs, advancing equity, and empowering professionals at every stage of their careers. He seeks to continue contributing his experience, vision, and passion to the UCFS Board to support the society's mission and the growth of the profession.

What got you interested in the field of urban forestry?

For me, it was the intersection of people and the environment. I always knew I wanted a career that kept me connected to the outdoors, but I also wanted my work to directly impact people's lives.

During undergrad, I changed my major several times searching for that balance. It wasn't until I met Dr. Jason Grabosky at Rutgers that I discovered urban forestry. He showed me how trees in cities aren't just about ecology—they're tied to public health, community resilience, and quality of life. That connection to people is what pulled me in.

Early mentors and colleagues in the sector reinforced that passion. They helped me see how urban forestry a unique space is where science, planning, and community engagement all come together to make tangible differences in neighborhoods. That combination of environmental stewardship and human impact is what sparked my interest—and what keeps me inspired today.

In what ways do you want to contribute to the [mission](#) and [strategic direction](#) of UCFS? Are you particularly interested in a certain area of board service such as governance, policy, outreach, financial oversight, etc.? Do you see any of your strengths being especially helpful to leading the organization?

I want to contribute to UCFS by helping the organization strengthen its role as the leading professional home for urban and community forestry. My priorities would be advancing inclusive leadership development, broadening outreach to emerging professionals, and ensuring UCFS continues to play a strong role in policy conversations that impact our field.

I am particularly interested in serving in outreach and governance capacities. My experience as a facilitator for the Municipal Forestry Institute (MFI) and as co-founder of LGBTree has given me a deep appreciation for how important it is to cultivate and sustain professional networks. I see opportunities for

UCFS to expand its reach, not only to new professionals but also to underrepresented groups and allied sectors that can strengthen our collective impact.

One of my greatest strengths is bringing people together—across agencies, organizations, and perspectives—to collaborate toward shared goals. I also bring skills in strategic program development, partnership building, and fundraising, which I believe can help UCFS continue to grow sustainably and expand its influence. My background in grant management and standards implementation can also support UCFS as it navigates organizational growth and new opportunities.

Above all, I want to bring a balance of vision and practicality to the board: helping shape long-term strategy while staying grounded in what supports members day-to-day.

What makes you happy about being an UCFS member?

What makes me happiest about being a UCFS member is the passion and the people. UCFS creates a welcoming and inspiring community where diverse skills, experiences, and perspectives come together to strengthen our profession. Every time I engage with UCFS, I leave feeling re-energized and motivated by the dedication of its members.

UCFS has also been pivotal in my own career journey. In 2020, I participated in the Municipal Forestry Institute, and that experience became the launching point for my professional growth. The training, mentorship, and connections I gained not only accelerated my development but also gave me the confidence to step into leadership roles. Today, as I serve as an MFI facilitator and lead national-level urban forestry initiatives, I can directly trace my progress back to the foundation UCFS provided.

For me, UCFS is more than a professional society—it is both a community and a catalyst. It gave me my start, continues to shape my career, and inspires me to pay it forward to others entering the field.

Favorite tree and why?

My favorite tree is the dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), a living time traveler that feels both ancient and magical. To me, the dawn redwood is a perfect companion for urban foresters and arborists: adaptable, resilient, and quietly bold. It doesn't just stand in a landscape—it transforms it, bringing a touch of wonder to city streets and parks. Where others see just a tree, I see a storyteller, whispering resilience through its branches and reminding us to grow tall, bend with the seasons, and never be afraid to stand out in vibrant color.