

UCFS Board Member Profile: Steven Eyster

Name: Steven Eyster

City, State/Province, Country: Tampa, FL United States

Place of Employment: City of Tampa

Job Title: Urban Planner II

Educational level and major field: Bachelor's in environmental policy, Pursuing a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning.



List any professional certifications:

- Eagle Scout; Boy Scouts of America
- Certified Arborist; Certified Urban Forest Professional; Tree Risk Assessment Qualification; International Society of Arboriculture (ISA)
- Municipal Forestry Institute Graduate; Urban and Community Forestry Society
- Fundamentals of Code Enforcement; Administrative Aspects of Code Enforcement; Legal Issues in Code Enforcement; Certified Enforcement Professional; Florida Association of Code Enforcement
- Florida Friendly Landscape Professional; Qualified Stormwater Management Inspector; Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Introduced Reptile Early Detection and Documentation; Volunteer Management; CWCI Beach Driver Training; Florida Fish and Wildlife

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

- ISA International and State Chapters
- Member of the Young Emerging Professionals Committee, UCFS
- American Planning Association
- Florida Association of Code Enforcement
- Congress of New Urbanism

LinkedIn profile link: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/steven-eyster-388a121b2/>

Brief bio:

Steven Eyster is a Florida native from North Fort Myers who now resides in the Tampa Bay Area. He earned his bachelor's degree in environmental policy from the University of South Florida in 2016 and went on to become an ISA Certified Arborist with a Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) in 2020. In 2025, he also achieved the Certified Urban Forest Professional designation.

A lifelong conservationist, Steven's passion for nature began in the Boy Scouts of America, where he earned the rank of Eagle Scout. He later gained hands-on experience through an internship at an environmentally focused charter school, inspiring the next generation to care for the environment. Since completing his degree, Steven has built a career in municipal forestry, where he continues to grow as a professional and advocate for the urban forest.

What got you interested in the field of urban forestry?

I fell into the field of urban forestry after graduating with a passion for the outdoors and conservation. While working as an environmental code enforcement officer, I discovered my love for urban forestry and have never looked back. For me, helping weave nature's beauty into the urban landscape is both meaningful and rewarding.

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 see my strongest contributions to UCFS aligning with its priorities in communication, professional development, and outreach. As the owner of the Arborist Institute and a Urban Planner, I have developed and delivered educational programs, webinars, and training materials that make technical arboricultural and urban planning concepts accessible to a wide audience of professionals. This experience positions me to support UCFS's mission of advancing competence and professional growth within the field. I am particularly committed to fostering pathways for students and emerging professionals, ensuring the next generation of urban foresters has the knowledge and support to succeed. In addition, my work has involved building partnerships with other organizations/business as well as engaging diverse audiences, which I believe can strengthen UCFS's outreach.

What makes you happy about being an UCFS member?

The part that makes me happiest about being a UCFS member is the feeling of being heard. I have never been part of an organization as welcoming and committed to developing its members as UCFS. No matter what your goals are, professional or personal, there is something for you. Through the mentoring program, MFI, and serving on the Young Professionals Board, I've gained invaluable skills, connections, and experiences that continue to shape both my career and personal growth.

Favorite tree and why?

Living in Florida, most people would say the live oak is their favorite, but for me, growing up in South Florida, bald cypress trees have always held a special place in my heart. There's something timeless about them, the way they can live for centuries, stretch over 100 feet tall, and transform with the seasons (if you been to the south we don't get much fall color). To me, they're not just trees, but living reminders of beauty, strength, and resilience in the landscape I call home.