



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: The Wine Cellar, The M Resort

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

8:00-8:15am– **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

8:15-8:45am – **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.

8:45-9:35am – **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.

This session will be followed by time for discussion.

9:35-10:10am – **Break**

10:10-10:40am – **What's Next in Urban Forestry – UCFS's Work to Grow the Profession**

Every day, members of the Urban and Community Forestry Society (UCFS) are out there making a difference—planting, nurturing, and advocating for trees in the places that need them most. Your work shapes healthier, more resilient communities, and UCFS is here to champion and support you every step of the way.

In this session, discover fresh and reimagined opportunities designed just for you. From new resources to enhanced member benefits, we're growing right alongside you—stronger, smarter, and more connected than ever.

ISA Certified Urban Forest Professional – Emily King, City of Austin, Texas and UCFS Board Member

Formerly the Municipal Specialist credential, the Certified Urban Forest Professional is a sign to the public, employers, and peers that you have the urban forestry experience and fundamental knowledge and skills needed to manage community trees for maximum societal benefits. Here how UCFS is working to ensure you feel prepared to sit for this credential.

UCFS Accreditation – Anna Heckman, City of Kirkland, Washington and UCFS Industry Trends Committee Chair

The UCFS Accreditation Program celebrates and recognizes urban forestry programs that demonstrate leadership, innovation, and a commitment to the highest standards in the field. In response to evolving challenges and opportunities, UCFS is enhancing its Accreditation Program to reflect the latest industry standards essential for building sustainable, resilient urban and community forests. Learn what's new in UCFS Accreditation and what's next!

Municipal Forestry Institute – Darren Green, City of Alexandria, Louisiana, UCFS Board Member, MFI Education Facilitator

MFI has been the premier leadership development program for urban forestry professionals across the globe. As we celebrate MFI's 20th anniversary in 2026, we honor its legacy of empowering those who care for our urban forests—helping them grow personally, professionally, and as leaders in the field. Hear more about how this leadership program has grown and where we're going next.

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.

This session will be followed by time for discussion.

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

Canopy Conversations

Main stage and side rooms

1:00-2:50pm

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.

Canopy Conversation Topics

Topic	Conversation Leader
Navigating your urban forestry career	Cara Specht, State of South Carolina
Ready to build and sustain a career in urban forestry? This discussion will provide an opportunity to discuss how to find job opportunities, finding paths for growth, leveraging networks, managing your professional journey once you're in the field.	
Managing trees with limited water	Nicole Gillett, City of Tucson, Arizona
What does it take to grow a tree in dry climates? Well, water, of course! Join this conversation to discuss how traditional urban forestry practices can fall short in desert conditions and how to help trees thrive when temperatures are high and water is limited.	
Tree protection ordinances	Lee Mueller, Davey Resource Group
Recent legal challenges and legislative attempts aimed at preempting tree protection ordinances have demonstrated that they can be a sensitive issue. In this conversation, we'll discuss tree protection ordinance critiques, development and administration best practices, and ways to structure or administer these ordinances to avoid challenges.	
Urban wood	Jeff Carroll, Unified Wood Economy
Downed urban trees can fuel a full-circle economy. In this roundtable, you'll discuss actionable lessons for building scalable wood upcycling programs that divert wood from landfills, create jobs, and turn tree waste into products like lumber, compost, and biochar.	

Volunteer training and community engagement	Joe Wheelock, Heartland Tree Alliance
Growing an urban forest takes people of all backgrounds. Many of us are looking to find ways to engage volunteers to get more done, while building a community of tree stewards. Join this discussion to learn more about volunteer training programs, common missteps, and ways to actively engage local citizens.	
Nursery/growing your own trees	Meridith Perkins, Forest ReLeaf of Missouri
Ever thought, “it would be so much better if I could grow my own trees!” Here, you’ll discuss the building blocks for a successful tree nursery operation including how to determine the scale and scope, the successes and struggles with growing trees, finding the right location, identifying key collaborators, and balancing supply and demand.	
Partnership development	Jamie King, American Forests Ryan Suttle, HortScience Bartlett Consulting
Transformational partnerships are critical for continued industry growth. In this discussion, hear how the power of public/private partnership can exceed that of simple transactions, ways to foster innovated partnerships, and how to align urban forestry goals with community goals to grow healthy trees.	
Wildfire/urban canopy	Ian Appow, Upper Willamette Soil & Water Conservation District
The Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) is often considered primarily through the lens of wildfire risk, yet this zone offers substantial opportunities for innovative urban forestry practices that enhance community resilience. Join this discussion to talk about vulnerabilities associated with wildfire, partnered collaborations, and proactive community engagement.	
Non-profit/government relationships	Maggio Laquidara, North Carolina State University
Non-profit and municipality partnership can be a powerful force for growing trees. However, gaps in the efforts of these parties can cause urban forestry efforts to fall short. Join this discussion to learn how these two entities can form strong partnership aligned around tree health management, volunteer engagement, and common goals to grow a thriving urban forest for your community.	
Student/youth engagement	Emma Stammer, Treasure Valley Canopy Network
Active urban forestry projects with schools help to build the next generation of tree caretakers. Join this discussion to learn how to build partnerships among non-profits, cities, and schools, the best way to engage students and maintenance staff, and strategies for future plantings and removals on school grounds.	

2:50-3:20pm – **Break**

Panel Session

Main stage

3:20-4:30pm – **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**

Location:

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**

Location: Exhibitor Hall

Mix and mingle with your tree people!

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

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

Wednesday, November 19

7:30-8:30am – **VIP Breakfast for ISA Certified Urban Forest Professional Credential Holders**

By Invitation Only - Hosted by the Urban and Community Forestry Society and the International Society of Arboriculture