

UCFS Board Member Profile: Rachel Comte

Name: Rachel Comte

City, State/Province, Country: Newport KY (Cincinnati Metro Area)

Place of Employment: Urban Canopy Works, LLC

Job Title: Co-Founder and Owner

Educational level and major field: Masters in Urban Planning

List any professional certifications: ISA Board Certified Master Arborist & TRAQ

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

LinkedIn profile link: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/rachel-comte-a21b8/>



Brief bio:

Rachel Comte leads *Urban Canopy Works (UCW)*, a woman-owned business dedicated to advancing trees and the tree canopy in urban and developed areas. As an ISA Board Certified Master Arborist, and urban planner, Rachel has a foot in both worlds of technical arboriculture and urban planning and is considered a leading authority on urban forestry.

She has spent more than a decade managing urban forestry master planning, urban tree policy, analysis, action plans, and multi-year tree planting projects. Rachel has consulted to cities across the United States. Cities include New York City, Columbus (OH), Boston (MA), Knoxville (TN), Charlotte (NC), Greenbelt (MD), Atlanta (GA), Tallahassee (FL), Largo (FL), Louisville (KY), Lexington-Fayette County (KY), and Philadelphia (PA).

As an ISA Board Certified Master Arborist and an expert in tree biomechanics, Rachel also works on the technical side of arboriculture, providing tree risk management services to campuses and municipalities nationwide, utilizing advanced tools like resistograph and sonic tomography. This includes annual tree risk assessments on the US Capitol Grounds in Washington, DC. Rachel and her staff also serve as city foresters for multiple small municipalities throughout the Cincinnati metro area, where UCW is based.

With this combined 30 years experience in private, public, and not-for-profit sectors, Rachel has created a firm and team that advances and supports urban forestry in a wide array of roles.

What makes you happy about being an UCFS member?

I love the community. Oftentimes we are on an island in the places we serve as city arborists, so getting connected and supporting each other as urban foresters is the best part of UCFS. I am hosting a UCFS Women in Urban Forestry virtual meet up this month with more than 60 attendees! There is no other group like UCFS.

What got you interested in the field of urban forestry?

After a first career in marketing and communications, I came to a “is this all there is” moment in life. When I thought about what I would do if money didn’t matter, I just wanted to work with plants. After working for a season at a garden center making minimum wage, I was hooked. I pursued horticulture and landscape design at a local community college, working at tree nurseries and as a horticulturist at a country club, eventually landing a landscape design position at a local tree service where I got my ISA certification. After designing properties and doing some tree sales for 5 years, I left to pursue a masters in urban planning, coming out the other side as an arborist and a planner. And I love it.

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?

As someone with a background in marketing and communications, one of my focuses in my work is improving ways we convey to the public the roles trees play in our communities. I hope to guide and assist UCFS both in attracting members, but also in helping our members do this very thing in their own communities.

Favorite tree and why?

Tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) is my favorite tree. Not only is it the KY state tree, but it grows quickly with big leaves and a beautiful yellow fall color.