



WFLC WESTERN URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY COMMITTEE 2024 Report and 2025 Work Plan

LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW

COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

The Western Urban and Community Forestry Committee leadership team for 2024 included:

- Walter Passmore (CA), Chair
- Alyssa O'Brien (NM), Vice Chair
- Christine Hoyt (NE), Secretary
- Cayenne Engel (NV), Past Chair
- Thomas Claeys (ND), State Forester Advisor
- Stephen Baker (USFS R6/R10), USDA Forest Service Program Manager Representative
- Neil Simpson, CWSF/WFLC Staff Liaison

The Western Urban and Community Forestry Committee leadership team for 2025 includes:

- Alyssa O'Brien (NM), Chair
- Christine Hoyt (NE), Vice Chair
- Madeline Burton (AZ), Secretary
- Walter Passmore (CA), Past Chair
- Thomas Claeys (ND), State Forester Advisor
- Miranda Hutten, Region 5 UCF Program Manager, USDA Forest Service Program Manager Representative
- Neil Simpson, CWSF/WFLC Staff Liaison

MISSION STATEMENT AND PURPOSE

Mission: The Western Urban and Community Forestry Committee (WUCF) provides a channel for ongoing communication and collaboration between Western states, the USDA Forest Service, and forestry partners. The WUCF Committee creates opportunities to leverage and share resources, expand the transfer of technology, and cooperate on shared goals and initiatives, including multi-state competitive grant applications.

Purpose: The committee was formed with the permission and support of the Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) to serve as a forum to share information, cooperate on program delivery, and advance urban and community forestry in the West. It provides a structure for ongoing communication between Western states and between states and partners. The committee creates opportunities to leverage and share resources, expand technical transfer, and cooperate on common goals and other efforts such as multi-state competitive grant applications.

A well-informed committee is prepared to address emerging and ongoing UCF issues at the state and national levels and to serve as a source of information and support for the CWSF and NASF. Bringing together the skills, talents, experience, and passion of Western UCF professionals strengthens every state and helps them better serve the public.

2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM 2024

- Convened annual coordinator meeting and strategic planning, February 27-29 in Sacramento, CA.
- Convened four quarterly conference calls to share information and resources, update and status checks on the work plan, and pass through information and resources from the workgroups.
- WUCF leadership attended the Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF), Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance (NMSFA), and National Association of State Foresters (NASF) Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) committee meetings.
- Chair attendance at the 2024 CWSF/WFLC Fall Meeting.
- Members attended the in-person/virtual state and federal partners meeting that was held in conjunction with the Partners in Community Forestry Conference in Chicago, IL, in November 2024.
- Published western state UCF Stories highlighting Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Success Stories for the CWSF UCF publication, to be finalized and published online by the 2024 CWSF/WFLC Fall Meeting.
- Utilized formal meeting times and informal communication to coordinate and support each other regarding IRA grants and funding. Sharing this information helps ensure the standardization of IRA program-related information delivery across the six Forest Service member regions.
- Maintained a WUCF Resource Library in Google Drive to house and share proposals, methodologies, position descriptions, and partnership development guidance for members to utilize when developing proposals or programs.
- Continued mentoring program for new coordinators and assigned mentors by identifying an experienced mentor to serve as a “go-to” for each new coordinator and provide resources including the coordinator’s manual.
- Continued partnership with the Forest Service Denver Urban Field Station staff (Travis Warziniack) to serve as a liaison to connect the committee to up-to-date Forest Service research and resources.
- Workgroup outcomes:
 - Placed hold on subcommittee functions (excluding mentorship program) until a clear and compelling need arises. Organized workgroups to accomplish specific projects such as the Strategic Plan.
 - Strategic Planning Workgroup
 - The strategic planning process began at the 2024 Annual Meeting and the workgroup was formed there. It has met eight times throughout the year and has begun developing a strategic plan to further develop the committee’s goals, action plan, and other deliverables. The strategic planning process has provided an excellent venue for information sharing and prioritization.
 - Tree City USA Workgroup
 - Continue advisory partnership with Arbor Day Foundation (ADF) in support of the ADF programs.
 - WUCF representative met with ADF throughout 2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY STATE FORESTERS

- Recommendation for State Foresters to approve the 2025 WUCF Committee Work Plan.

2025 WORK PLAN

MEETING(S) AND CALLS PLANNED FOR 2025

- WUCF Annual Meeting (Nebraska) - April
- Quarterly meetings, every three months (May, August, November) fourth Thursday, shift for third Thursday in November.
- SGSF UCF Committee Annual Meeting and NMSFA UCF Committee Annual Meetings
 - One member from the WUCF Committee leadership team will attend to provide the group with an update on WUCF Committee accomplishments and initiatives and hear how state UCF Coordinators in other regions implement the UCF program.
 - SGSF: TBD
 - NMSFA: TBD
- Chair attendance at the CWSF/WFLC Fall Meeting
- Attendance at NASF Annual Urban and Community Forestry Meeting in June

KEY ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES, AND OUTCOMES PLANNED FOR 2025

- Identify a theme, and coordinate with the CWSF Director of Communications to develop and publish an Urban and Community Forestry publication prior to the 2025 CWSF/WFLC Fall Meeting.
- Develop the CWSF/WFLC WUCF strategic plan. WUCF members will provide input and feedback at the annual and quarterly meetings and as requested. The plan will be informative rather than prescriptive and will identify alignment and strategies for Western states as well as inform CWSF of relevant state interests. The intent is for a “living” document that will be updated annually.
- Explore establishing workgroups to foster collaboration among states and address regional needs. Topics include serving small and rural communities, school greening, and plant material development.
 - If established, workgroups will establish goals and may host breakout sessions and workshops for members to discuss and share strategies, collaborate or develop multi-state programs, and evaluate program effectiveness.
- Continue to share BIL, IRA, and state-funded implementation strategies and programs by populating shareable and accessible folders and spreadsheets with program and project ideas and examples.
 - Library format will help by coordinating, assisting, and enabling storytelling of model/program development.
 - WUCF facilitates multi-state engagement, helping to leverage resources and encouraging collaboration across entities (including federal partners and others).
- Collaborate and leverage resources across BIL, IRA, state funds, programs from the Forest Service, and partners looking to benefit all WFLC members.
 - Utilize WFLC processes to provide feedback to State Foresters, Forest Service & other partners about issues we feel could be addressed. Identify mechanisms and recommendations for policies, best practices, sharing information, and identifying funding alignments to address local and regional needs and policies.
- Continue implementation of the WUCF internal mentoring program, providing startup resources and mentor assignments to new members
- In-person annual meeting to include sessions that assist state UCF Coordinators with BIL/IRA funding, State UCF Operations, state-to-state dialogue, and federal-state collaboration and communication
- WUCF members will attend the Partners in Community Forestry (or World Forum on Urban Forests) conference in 2025, and participate in the associated annual state-federal coordinators meeting.
- Increase Pacific Island engagement and resource sharing.