



WFLC WESTERN URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY COMMITTEE 2023 Report and 2024 Work Plan

LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW

COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

The Western Urban and Community Forestry Committee leadership team for 2023 included:

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

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

- 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

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 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.

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM 2023

- Convened annual coordinator meeting, April 11-13, in Las Vegas, NV.
- 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 work groups. Meeting times were adjusted to allow for increased engagement by U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Islands.
- Convened additional breakout discussion session on workforce development in August 2023.
 - Workforce development discussion looking at California’s model of program support.
 - Currently funded projects in CA that states can look to as models include working with post-incarcerated for nursery operations, training underserved for utility vegetation management professions, collaboration between a municipal nursery and workforce training located in a disadvantaged neighborhood, teen urban forestry education programs with internships and scholarships, and hosting urban forestry camp, among others.
 - Tara Costanzo with Davey tree gave examples of programs they’re building around Denver, and hope to branch to other states with similar models in the future.
- WFLC blog post highlighting workforce development workshop.
- 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 2023 CWSF/WFLC Fall Meeting.
- Members attended the in-person/virtual state and federal partners meeting that was held in conjunction with the World Forum on Urban Forests in Washington, DC, in October 2023. Oregon and Arizona represented the WUCF Committee with presentations.
- Released the [2022-2023 WUCF Publication](#) on the theme of resilience.
- Began coordinating 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 by the 2024 CWSF/WFLC Fall Meeting.
- Developed letter to CWSF leadership identifying requested improvements to UCF IRA roll out. The letter served as a model for other states to discuss regional approaches and draft their own feedback and strategy requests. Connects to CWSF Strategic Plan: Goal 2 – CWSF serves as a trusted and credible authority and advocates for western forestry and wildland fire priorities.
- IRA coordination and support among members. Connects to CWSF Strategic Plan: Goal 3: Partnership development, support, and synergy.
 - Convened bi-weekly/monthly group meetings to discuss state program development, rollout, and how to best serve our states and support our partners.
 - Discussed leveraging resources among states.
 - WUCF committee served as an information funnel to members, ensuring standardization of IRA program related information delivery across the six Forest Service member regions.
- Established shared folders to house proposals, methodologies, position descriptions, and partnership development guidance through state shares of examples of draft or successful programs for members to utilize when developing proposals or programs.
- Subcommittee outcomes:
 - Resource, Information, and Technology Transfer Work Group
 - Continued new mentoring program for new coordinators and assigned mentors through 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.
 - Initiated updating the methods and organization for delivery of technical resources to WUCF members.
 - o Tree City USA Work Group
 - Continue advisory partnership with Arbor Day Foundation (ADF) in support of the ADF programs.
 - WUCF representative met with ADF throughout 2023.
 - Developed Tree City USA improvement strategy, advised updated platform.
 - o Placed hold on subcommittee functions (excluding mentorship program) until clear and compelling need arises with the commitment to working groups to accomplish specific projects (like the Strategic Plan).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY STATE FORESTERS

- Recommendation for State Foresters to approve the 2024 WUCF Committee Work Plan.
-

2024 WORK PLAN

MEETING(S) AND CALLS PLANNED FOR 2024

- WUCF Annual Meeting, Sacramento, CA, February 27-29, 2024.
- 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
 - o 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.
 - o SGSF: Fort Worth, TX, January 30-February 1, 2024
 - o NMSFA: Portsmouth, NH, May 14-16, 2024
- Chair attendance at CWSF/WFLC Fall Meeting
- Linkage of the 2024 work plan to CWSF Strategic Plan
 - o Goal 1: **CWSF creates an inclusive, member centered environment to facilitate meaningful engagement and learning among members.**
 - Strategy 1: Facilitate dialogue, Networking, and learning among western State Foresters as well as state agency staff and other forestry stakeholders.
 - Strategy 2: Manage the functioning of CWSF committees and networks according to clear and consistent guidelines.
 - o Linkage to CWSF strategic plan – Goal 3: **CWSF strengthens the prominence of western forestry principles through establishment and maintenance of strong and collaborative partnerships.**
 - Strategy 2: CWSF strengthens the prominence of western forestry priorities through establishment and maintenance of strong and collaborative partnerships. - Provide opportunities for Networking, dialogue, knowledge sharing, and learning among CWSF members and partners.”
 - Strategy 4: Work collaboratively with the National Association of State Foresters, the Northeast Midwest State Foresters Alliance, and the Southern Group of State Foresters.
- Linkage of 2024 work plan to CWSF State Forester Priorities
 - o Speakers and dialogue will focus on strategies for achieving defined outcomes to meet national and state goals using effective, accurate, modern techniques. Members will share knowledge and resources on best practices, novel programs, and solicit information requests to most effectively

implement programs with measurable outcomes (supported by state, federal and other funding sources).

METHOD OF COMMUNICATION

- Committee members utilize quarterly Zoom calls, and ad-hoc email to encourage information sharing and collaboration on projects and grant proposals.
- The committee uses a Google Drive to store by-laws, working groups' documents, and meeting agenda/notes.

KEY ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES, AND OUTCOMES PLANNED FOR 2024

- Urban and Community Forestry publication with CWSF with the theme of IRA/BIL Success Stories, with the intention to be finalized and published by the 2024 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.
 - Establish work groups to foster collaboration among states and address regional needs. Topics include serving small and rural communities, school greening, and plant material development.
 - Working groups 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 serves as a facilitator for multi-state engagement to help leverage resources and encourage working 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.
 - Continued implementation of WUCF internal mentoring program, providing startup resources and mentor assignments to new members (*supports Western State Foresters priority of State Forestry Agency operations and workforce challenges*).
 - 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 (*Implementation and implications of the BIL and IRA & state forestry agency operations*).
 - WUCF members will attend the Partners in Community Forestry (or World Forum on Urban Forests) conference in 2024, and participate in the associated annual state-federal coordinators meeting.
 - Increase Pacific Island engagement and resource sharing.
-