



Urban and Community Forestry Program

The purpose of the Urban and Community Forestry Program (U&CF) is to establish and maintain optimal urban and community forest to help improve the quality of life of urban citizens and the quality of urban natural resources.

To accomplish this, CAL FIRE's Regional Urban Foresters provide information, education, and assistance to local governments, non-profits, private sector organizations, and the general public that help to advance Urban Forestry per the Urban Forestry Act of 1978 (PRC 4799.06 – 4799.12). The Urban Forestry Act was updated in 2010.

The U&CF Program Regional Urban Foresters engage in national, regional, and local issues in regards to urban forestry. Some examples of this are:

- Speaking at conferences and events.
- Writing articles and engaging the media when appropriate and requested.
- Providing technology transfer and Best Management Practice information to local governments, non-profit groups, and anyone who wants the information.
- Engaging in helping local governments devise policy for urban forest management.
- Administering pass through grants to help accomplish these functions.



As outlined by the Urban Forestry Act of 1978, U&CF Program staff work to:

- Promote the use of urban forest resources for purposes of increasing integrated projects with multiple benefits in urban communities.
- Arrest the decline of our urban forest resources, facilitate the planting of trees in urban communities, and improve the quality of the environment in urban areas through the establishment and improved management of urban forest resources.
- Facilitate the creation of permanent jobs in tree maintenance and related urban forestry activities in neighborhoods, local, and regional urban areas.
- Optimize the potential of tree and vegetative cover in reducing energy consumption and producing fuel and other products.
- Encourage the coordination of state and local agency activities in urban forestry and related programs and encourage maximum citizen participation in their development and implantation.

The structure and delivery of the U&CF program is built upon cooperative relationships with and technical assistance to local governments, non-profit organizations, and private companies. Partnerships include:

The Urban Forest Ecosystems Institute (UFEI – www.ufe.org), which was developed to address the increasing need for improved management of urban forests in California. The UFEI website houses SelecTree online tree selection software, UrbanWood online tree utilization marketplace, downloadable publications, current events, job listings, links to other related sites and much more.



The California ReLeaf organization, an association of 75+ non-profit tree planting groups, coordinates volunteer efforts at Urban & Community Forestry in California and offers pass through grants to non-profit partners.

The California Urban Forest Council (CaUFC), a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting urban forestry to improve communities. They achieve this through programs to improve air quality, conserve and protect water, improve quality of life and contribute beauty to California. Efforts are focused on advocacy and education at the state and local level.

The Western Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture (WCISA), a member driven organization dedicated to fostering a greater appreciation for trees by promoting research and education to advance the professional practice of arboriculture.

As one mechanism for encouraging better Urban & Community Forestry management practices, the U&CF Program provides grants with bond funds for the many economic, environmental, and social benefits that urban society gains from urban and community forests.



Grants

Local governments and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for U&CF Grant programs. The U&CF Program encourage best urban forest management practices. Grants are for activities including but not limited to: tree planting, comprehensive urban forest management plans, tree resource inventories, educational programs, and innovative ideas that promote Urban Forestry in California. Grantees must expend the necessary money and do the work. They are then reimbursed as the work is completed satisfactorily.

Climate Change

The U&CF Program takes climate change very seriously. The Urban Forestry Act is closely linked (PRC 4799.12) to the Global Warming Solutions Act. Urban forests can help to mitigate the effects of climate change on the urban populations of California by moderating temperatures on hot days, i.e. reducing the urban heat island effect (<http://eetd.1bl.gov/heatisland/>). Benefits are also realized through direct shading of buildings and other facilities by trees. You can find more information about CAL FIRE's climate change efforts at www.fire.ca.gov.

Urban Wood, Biomass Utilization and Carbon Sequestration

The Urban and Community Forestry Program embraces the concept of sustainability. A crucial part of this concept is economic viability. One way that urban forests can contribute to urban society is through utilization of wood fiber and biomass grown in urban areas. This is currently a resource that goes largely untapped in California. The U&CF Program believes that when a tree must be removed in a city, it should be used for it's highest and best purpose. This is often high quality wood products. Additionally, the U&CF Program is keeping abreast of ways that urban biomass could be utilized to develop bio-fuels or to generate electricity. The U&CF Program hosts an UrbanWood website through the UFEI website at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Visit www.ufe.org for more on this site. Additional technical assistance is available through the program's Regional Urban Foresters.



The Urban & Community Forestry Program worked with other state agencies and researchers to develop a carbon sequestration protocol and companion accounting protocol for Urban and Community Forestry in the emerging carbon credit trading market. These protocols have been officially adopted by the California Climate Action Registry and the California Air Resources Board.

These exciting utilization options add to closing the loop of sustainability in Urban & Community Forestry, and potentially to making Urban & Community Forestry programs self-funding.

Tree City USA, Tree City USA Growth Award, Sterling Growth Award, Tree Line USA and Tree Campus USA

The Tree City USA Award (TCUSA) is a program that is run by the National Arbor Day Foundation (NADF) on a nationwide basis. The U&CF Program delivers this NADF program in California. This certification shows a baseline level of achievement. The TCUSA Growth Award shows that city's Urban and Community Forestry program is expanding and improving in some significant way. The TCUSA Sterling Growth Award is achieved by achieving the TCUSA Growth Award for ten years.

Tree Line USA and Tree Campus USA are similar award programs for utilities and college campuses that show a baseline commitment to an Urban and Community Forestry program. More about the TCUSA programs can be learned at: <http://www.arboday.org/>.