

Michigan Urban & Community Forestry Council Handbook



2024

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Table of contents

Overview 2
Michigan’s Urban and Community Forestry Program 3
Michigan Urban and Community Forestry Council bylaws 4
Michigan Urban & Community Forestry Council roles and responsibilities 8
UCF Program involvement by Council 10
Calendar of events 12

Program webpage: Michigan.gov/UrbanCouncil

Overview

The Michigan Urban & Community Forestry Council (The Council or MUCFC) was formed in 1992 as an advisory group to assist the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in developing an Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program to meet the needs of communities and volunteer groups around the state.

The MUCFC's inception was prompted by the Congressionally approved 1990 Farm Bill. The Farm Bill allocated funds for an Urban and Community Forestry Program within the USDA Forest Service's Cooperative Forestry unit. To qualify for Federal financial assistance, States were required to meet several program requirements, including the establishment of an advisory body to assist in program delivery and implementation. States have used diverse strategies to fulfill this requirement, ranging from creating nonprofit organizations and using in-house advisory teams to the most common approach, a volunteer advisory board, like the MUCFC.

The MUCFC plays an instrumental role in Michigan's Urban and Community Forestry program. From assisting in the development of ten-year action plans that direct program activities to offering guidance and oversight on the competitive grant program and monitoring the effectiveness of program activities.

Council members represent a diverse group of stakeholders who have an interest or role in urban and community forestry in the state. Members are nominated and elected by the Council twice per year. Voting membership is limited to 17 people. Current members are listed on the Michigan DNR's Urban & Community Forestry Program webpage.

Regular meetings are held twice per year or as needed. Meetings include program updates provided by the Michigan UCF Program Manager and program staff, member updates, and current and/or new program opportunities that need Council direction/guidance.

Michigan's Urban and Community Forestry Program

Vision, Mission and definitions

The Council supports the Michigan Urban and Community Forestry Program which has the following vision and mission.

Michigan UCF Program Vision

This vision of Michigan's Urban & Community Forestry Program:

"Michigan's urban and community forests are beautiful, well-managed, and sustainable places where residents are engaged in their care and enjoy equal access to the many benefits they provide, both today and into the future."

This vision recognizes that urban forests are an essential feature of the urban ecosystem that provides valuable services. To maintain this system and its services, responsibility lies with everyone.

Michigan UCF Program Mission

To work toward this vision, the state UCF Program identifies its mission this way:

"To promote and facilitate the effective management of trees and forests where people live, work, and play to maximize the multiple benefits they provide."

Supporting definitions

The Michigan UCF program defines urban and community forests, and urban and community forestry as:

Urban and community forests are trees for people. It comprises the trees and associated ecosystems in and around urban and community areas, specifically those along streets, parks, natural areas, transportation and infrastructure corridors, school yards, cemeteries, and privately owned areas.

Urban and community forestry is the process of managing trees and natural systems in and around urban areas for the health and well-being of trees, people and communities and it involves collaboration and engagement of multiple stakeholders to meet defined goals and objectives."

Michigan Urban and Community Forestry Council bylaws

Article I. Organization

Section 1. Name. The name of this organization shall be the Michigan Urban & Community Forestry Council (hereinafter referred to as Council or MUCFC).

Section 2. Principal office. The principal office of the Council shall be in the State of Michigan at the headquarters of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in Lansing.

Section 3. Funds. Any funds or property contributed to the Council shall be held, administered, and disbursed or disposed of by the Michigan DNR on behalf of the Council and in accordance with the donor directions, provided that any such direction is consistent with the purpose of the Council.

Article II. Council mission and purpose

Section 1. Mission. To work toward improving Michigan's urban and community forests by disseminating information and education through collaboration with partners and leveraging resources to support community efforts statewide.

Section 2. Purpose. The Council shall advise the Michigan DNR via the state forester and the Urban and Community Forestry Program (hereinafter referred to as the State) on the best strategies and actions to preserve, protect, and enhance Michigan's urban and community forests. The Council shall advise and assist the State in developing, implementing, monitoring, and revising the statewide Forest Action Plan as needed. The Council shall act as an open forum, resource, and catalyst for discussion and knowledge transfer among practitioners, researchers, and volunteers about urban and community forestry issues.

Article III. Membership and rights of members

Section 1. Membership. The voting membership of the Council shall be composed of between nine and seventeen individuals and represent a diverse group of stakeholders from

across the state including those referenced in the core group below. Other “at large” members will be non-voting (ex officio) but should have direct involvement in urban and community forestry. Voting members shall serve staggered 3-year terms which may be renewed for as long as they desire and uphold the duties and responsibilities of their membership. Failure to attend all regular meetings either in person or by proxy for a period of six months may result in removal from the Council.

Section 2. Core group categories. The core group will continually have representation on the Council and shall consist of members from the following organizations stakeholder group categories:

- Municipal government
- Conservation District
- Michigan State University
- Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association
- Michigan Chapter, International Society of Arboriculture (ISA-Michigan)
- Registered Landscape Architect
- Council of Government or regional planning organization
- Nonprofit organization
- Citizen volunteer
- Private sector tree care industry
- Utility Company or contractor
- Tribal government
- Transportation agency

Section 3. Non-voting members. Additional members shall serve on the Council as at-large, non-voting members. At-large members serve at the pleasure of the State Forester. The Program Manager of the Michigan Urban and Community Forestry Program and other Forest Resource Division staff and representatives from the USDA Forest Service shall serve as ex-officio, non-voting members of the Council.

Section 4. Vacancies. Vacancies that arise because of resignation, death, or failure to attend meetings shall be filled by nomination and election by voting members of the Council.

Vacancies may be filled at any time. Council members may allow alternates to represent on their behalf in emergencies, but alternates do not have the rights of Council members.

Section 5. Responsibilities of membership. The responsibilities of a member of the Council are to attend the meetings and other events of the Council, to vote equally on questions that are considered by the Council, to serve on and vote in committees established by the Council, and to represent a specific group or organization within the state, communicating to and from the Council on issues and concerns. No member of the Council other than the Chairperson may speak in the name of the Council or act on its behalf without prior authorization of the officers – see ‘Officers’ below.

Article IV. Officers and duties

Section 1. Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall consist of three members, the DNR UCF Program Manager acting as permanent Secretary and two Chairpersons (Chair and Vice Chair), serving a one-year term, which may be renewed, beginning at the end of the fall (October) meeting. The Executive committee shall be responsible for setting the agenda for each Council meeting, developing, and conducting the Council’s activities during the term of office, and shall preside over Council meetings.

Section 2. Program Manager. The DNR UCF Program Manager shall serve as ex-officio, non-voting member of the Executive Committee and as the permanent Council Secretary. The Program Manager is responsible for working with the Executive Committee to set the agenda for each meeting, ensure minutes are taken and distributed, maintain, and distribute membership packets, arrange for meeting needs and locations, set the agenda if Executive Committee is unable to, and provide written quarterly program updates.

Article V. Meetings

Section 1. Meetings. The Council shall meet semi-annually, the last Tuesday in March and October, unless otherwise decided at a Council meeting or called by the Executive Committee. Meetings shall be held in-person, virtually, or hybrid. If meetings are held in-person, they will be at a place designated by the Program Manager. For the purpose of

formally making and voting on memberships and term renewals, the fall (October) meeting shall be considered the official annual meeting.

Section 2. Governing. The Council will run efficient and effective meetings and will strive to follow Roberts Rules of Order as the standard guide for best meeting practices. A quorum shall be necessary for the transaction of any business and shall consist of fifty percent (50%) representation of the Council. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson may vote on questions. A tie vote shall defeat the motion.

Section 3. Minutes. Minutes shall be recorded of all Council meetings by the Program Manager or designee, acting as the Council Secretary. Minutes will be e-mailed to all Council members within one month of the conclusion of a Council meeting.

Article VI. Committees

Section I. Committees. The Council may, at any meeting, establish or dissolve committees to conduct research, collect information, provide direction, or conduct any other business directed by the Council. Such committees shall have representation of at least one Council member, who shall serve as chairperson, and shall report to the full Council as it so directs. Committees may additionally include people from the public.

Article VII. Amendments

Section I. Amendments. These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting by the affirmative three-fourths vote of the Council. A notice of the proposed amendment shall be presented in writing to all members at least 30 days prior to said meeting.

Michigan Urban & Community Forestry Council roles and responsibilities

Council role

Advise on policy development, program direction, competitive grant program(s), and evaluation of the Michigan Urban & Community Forestry Program's (the Program) effectiveness within Michigan communities.

Foster understanding of and appreciation for the benefits and values of trees and forests to citizens, businesses, and governments to ensure that the most beneficial and economical of urban and community forestry policies are adopted throughout the State of Michigan.

Council members are accountable to:

- Stay on topic
- Be on time
- Complete assignments
- Be brief
- Come to the meeting prepared and ready to work
- Be respectful
- Keep it positive and acknowledge contributions
- Let the group know your attendance plans

Council Membership

Voting members

- 9-17 members
- To ensure diverse representation of stakeholders, the Council shall have voting members that have affiliations with one or more of the following core group categories:
 - Municipal government
 - Conservation District
 - Michigan State University
 - Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association
 - Michigan Chapter, International Society of Arboriculture (ISA-Michigan)
 - Registered Landscape Architect
 - Council of Government or regional planning organization
 - Nonprofit organization
 - Citizen volunteer

- Private sector tree care industry
- Utility Company or contractor
- Tribal government
- Transportation agency

- **Member terms:** Regular member terms are three years beginning at the conclusion of the fall meeting. Members shall serve for as long as they desire and uphold the duties and responsibilities of their office. Failure to attend all regular meetings either in person or by proxy for a period of six months may result in removal from the Council.

- **Voting member responsibilities:**
 - Attend regular meetings (currently twice per year)
 - In case of absence, designate an alternate to attend meetings.
 - As Council members representing a specific group or organization within Michigan, act as liaison to and from the Council on issues of concern.
 - Participate in Council programs: grants, Arbor Day, conferences, and awards.
 - Participate in developing ten-year State Forest Action Plan and annual plan reviews.
 - Participate in sub-committee work.

Non-voting members:

- Additional members may serve on the Council as at-large, non-voting members.
- The DNR UCF Program Manager and other DNR Forest Resource Division staff and representatives from the USDA Forest Service shall serve as ex-officio, non-voting members of the Council.

Executive Committee role: Leadership team

The Executive Committee has all the powers of the Council between meetings and is responsible for developing and conducting the Council's activities during their term of office, for recruiting and managing membership, and for organizing the membership toward meeting the stated purpose of the Council. The Executive Committee shall report its actions to the full Council at each meeting, and its actions shall be subject to revision or amendment by the full Council.

Executive Committee membership

The Executive Committee includes the following positions:

- Chair
- Vice-Chair
- Secretary (held by the DNR UCF Program Manager)

Executive Committee Terms: The Chair and Vice-Chair shall each serve a one-year, renewable term beginning at the end of the fall (October) meeting. The Secretary position is a permanent, non-term limited position held by the DNR UCF Program Manager.

Executive Committee Responsibilities:

- Schedule and attend regular leadership planning meetings.
- Establish the agenda for each meeting, assign members to Council committees, and serve as spokespersons for the Council on issues for which the Council has taken a position.
- Recruit and manage membership.
- Develop and conduct the Council's activities during the term of office and organize membership in a manner that meets the stated purposes of the Council.
- In cooperation with the Program Manager, facilitate the development of the Program's portion of the ten-year State Forest Action Plan, and annual progress reporting

State Program's Role

The DNR UCF Program Manager and other DNR Forest Resources Division staff shall represent the UCF program and serve as technical and administrative experts and liaison between the program, the Council, and the State Forester.

Program staff

The UCF Program Manager and other DNR Forest Resources Division staff shall serve as ex-officio, non-voting members on the Council.

Program staff responsibilities:

- Work with the Executive Committee to set the agenda for each meeting
- Take and distribute meeting minutes
- Maintain and distribute membership packets
- Address meeting needs and determine locations
- Set the agenda in the absence of the Executive Committee
- Provide written program updates
- Serves as liaison between the Council and the DNR State Forester

UCF Program involvement by Council

UCF Program Grants

Grants are generally announced in late summer, and applications are due in October. The Council may assist in the following activities related to UCF program grants.

- Review program and application process
 - Grants Committee members, meetings, as needed.
- Evaluate grant applications and attend grant ranking meeting.
 - 2 members; mid-October

Municipal Forestry Award

The Council annually recognizes a Michigan municipality for excellence demonstrated in the care, promotion, and management of the urban forest during the past 1-3 years.

Announcements seeking nominations are released in early February with an early April deadline. Awards are presented at the Michigan Tree City and Arbor Day Conference.

- Review Municipal Forestry Award Program.
 - All members; Fall meeting
- Promote Municipal Forestry Award Program.
 - All members; February – April
- Submit nominations by deadline.
 - All members; February – April
- Review nominations and choose recipient.
 - 2 – 3 members; April
- Attend ceremony in conjunction with Tree City and Arbor Day conference
 - All members, late April – early May

Arbor Day Conference and Tree City USA Awards

The Program holds an annual Tree City USA and Arbor Day Conference in May. In addition to sessions, workshops, and networking opportunities, this event recognizes award recipients in the Tree City, Tree Campus, and Tree Line USA programs, and the Council’s Michigan Municipal Forestry Award recipient.

- Promote conference and Arbor Day.
 - All members; January – May
- Facilitate workshop sessions.
 - 3-4 members; at the conference in May
- Attend the event.

- All members; at the conference in May
- Present the Municipal Forestry Award.
 - 1 member; at the conference in May

Calendar of events

January

- Planning for annual Tree City and Arbor Day Conference (conference subcommittee)
- Submit annual UCF program report developed by Council to DNR marketing/outreach staff for publishing. (DNR staff)
- Submit annual Council letter to state forester. (DNR staff)
- Executive committee prepares for annual DNR Forest Action Plan stakeholder meeting

February

- Chair/Vice-Chair attends DNR annual Forest Action Plan stakeholder input session
- Planning for annual Tree City and Arbor Day Conference (conference subcommittee)
- Executive Committee staff prepare for March Council Meeting
- Council members promote Michigan Municipal Forestry Award Nominations (Feb – April)

March

- Planning for annual Tree City and Arbor Day Conference (subcommittee)
- Review nominations and determine awardee for annual municipal forestry award (conference subcommittee)
- Regular Council meeting (Last Tuesday of month)

April

- Finalize details for annual Tree City and Arbor Day Conference (conference subcommittee)
- Council members promote/attend Arbor Day event(s)

May

- Host annual Michigan Arbor Day Conference (Council)

June

- Review UCF Grant process and application (Grants Committee)

July

- Grant project inspections

August

- Planning for annual Tree City and Arbor Day Conference (conference subcommittee)
- UCF Grant Application released – promote grant program (Council)

September

- Planning for annual Tree City and Arbor Day Conference (conference subcommittee)
- Promote UCF Grant Program (Council)
- Executive Committee and DNR staff prepare for Fall Council Meeting

October

- Planning for annual Tree City and Arbor Day Conference (Committee)
- Regular Council Meeting (Last Tuesday of month)

November

- Planning for annual Tree City and Arbor Day Conference (conference subcommittee)
- Executive Committee and DNR staff draft annual UCF program report with Council
- Executive Committee draft annual letter to state forester with DNR staff and Council

December

- Planning for annual Tree City and Arbor Day Conference (conference subcommittee)
- Finalize annual UCF program report (Executive Committee and DNR staff)
- Finalize annual letter to state forester (Executive Committee and DNR staff)