

# Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Council Handbook

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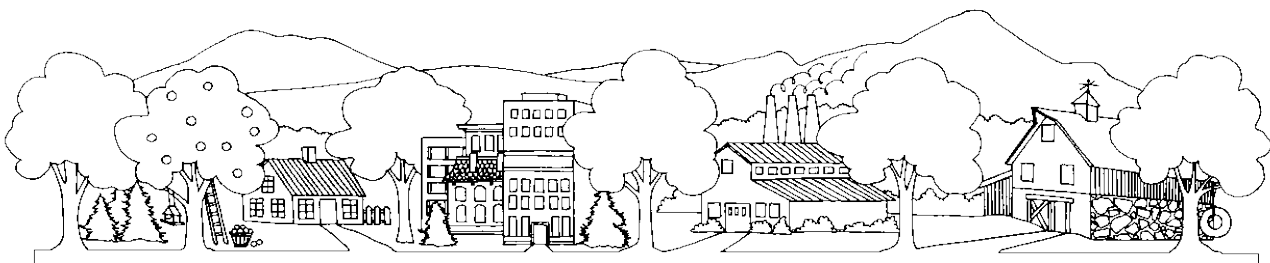
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**Council Listserve: [ucf@list.state.vt.us](mailto:ucf@list.state.vt.us)**  
**Program website: [www.vtcommunityforestry.org](http://www.vtcommunityforestry.org)**

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# Overview

The Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Council was formed in 1991 as an advisory group to assist the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation in developing an Urban and Community Forestry Program to meet the needs of communities and volunteer groups around the state.

During the intervening years, the Council has been instrumental in developing five-year action plans which directs program activities, providing guidance and oversight to the competitive grants program, and constantly monitoring program activities for effectiveness.

Council members, appointed by the Director of Forests, represent groups and organizations which have roles in urban forestry activities around the state. Membership is limited to 20. Meetings are held quarterly, where members share information on group activities, hear program updates from the state, and offer direction and guidance on current or new program opportunities. Communication among members and staff is facilitated by a council listserv: [ucf@list.state.vt.us](mailto:ucf@list.state.vt.us)

The stimulus behind forming the Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Council came from the U.S. Congress when it enacted the 1990 Farm Bill. Under the Cooperative Forestry Title and the section dealing with Urban and Community Forestry, states were required to meet several program guidelines to receive federal financial assistance. One of these requirements was forming an advisory body to assist states in program delivery. Individual states have taken different paths in meeting this guideline. Not-for-profit groups have been formed, in-house advisory teams utilized, but the most common approach is an advisory board.

Members are listed on the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program's website: <https://vtcommunityforestry.org/our-team/urban-community-forestry-council>.

# Program Vision, Mission, and Supporting Definitions

## Vision

This vision of Vermont's Urban & Community Forestry Program is:

*"Vermont's forests and trees are integral to the health and well-being of our communities and are valued as critical community infrastructure. Community members, government, and businesses collaborate in planning for, investing in, and maintaining these resources and the ecosystem services they provide, for this and future generations."*

This vision recognizes that urban forests are an essential feature of the urban ecosystem that provides valuable services; to maintain this system and services, responsibility lies with us all.

## Mission

To achieve this long-range vision, the program identifies its role this way:

*"To lead community members, businesses, and governments in understanding the value of urban and community forests and promote public responsibility for and participation in the stewardship of these resources for this and future generations."*

## Supporting Definitions

We define urban and community forests, and urban and community forestry this way:

Urban and community forests comprise the trees and associated ecosystems in and around human settlements, specifically those along streets and in town-owned forests, transportation and infrastructure corridors, parks, village greens, school yards, cemeteries, and private yards.

Urban and community forestry entails stewarding, cultivating, and managing trees and associated ecosystems to enhance the benefits trees provide, and empowering community members to work toward these objectives.

# Council Bylaws

## ARTICLE I. ORGANIZATION

**Section 1. NAME.** The name of this organization shall be the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Council (hereinafter referred to as Council).

**Section 2. PRINCIPAL OFFICE.** The principal office of the Council shall be in the State of Vermont at a location determined by the Executive Committee.

**Section 3. FUNDS.** Any funds or property contributed to and accepted by the Council shall be held, administered, and disbursed or disposed of as the donor may direct, provided that any such direction is consistent with the purpose of the Council. In the absence of any such specific direction, such funds shall be held, administered, and disbursed or dispensed of by the State of Vermont, Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (hereinafter referred to as FPR).

## ARTICLE II. MISSION & PURPOSE

**Section 1. MISSION.** Through the collaboration of its members, the Council will advise and assist the Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program to lead community members, businesses, and governments in understanding the value of urban and community forests and promote public responsibility for and participation in the stewardship of these resources for this and future generations.

**Section 2. PURPOSE.** The purpose of the Council shall be to advise the Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program, a joint initiative of FPR, and the University of Vermont Extension on policy development, program direction, a competitive grant's program, and evaluation of Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program's effectiveness within Vermont communities.

The Council shall also foster understanding and appreciation of the benefits and values of trees and forests, to ensure that the most beneficial and economical of urban and community forestry policies are adopted throughout the State of Vermont.

### **ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP AND RIGHTS OF MEMBERS**

**Section 1. MEMBERSHIP.** The membership of the Council shall be limited to twenty individuals. Fourteen members shall come from the core group, and the remaining six members shall serve “at large” but should have direct involvement in urban and community forestry within Vermont. Members shall serve, at the pleasure of the Director of Forests, 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 in proxy for a period of six months may result in removal from the Council.

**Section 2. CORE GROUP.** The core group will continually have representation on the Council and shall consist of members from the following organizations stakeholders:

- Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR);
- Agency of Agriculture, Foods and Markets;
- University of Vermont Extension (UVM Extension);
- Vermont Nursery and Landscape Association (VNLA);
- New England Chapter, International Society of Arboriculture (NE-ISA);
- VT Chapter, American Society of Landscape Architects (VT-ASLA);
- Vermont Woodlands Association (VWA);
- VT Association of Planning and Development Agencies (VAPDA);
- Volunteer Tree Groups (two);
- Tree Warden;
- Utility Company;
- Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD); and
- Agency of Transportation (AOT).

**Section 3. AT-LARGE MEMBERS.** Six additional members shall serve on the Council as at-large members. At-large members serve at the pleasure of the Director of Forests. The Program Manager of the Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program with FPR and

program staff at the University of Vermont Extension 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 the Director of Forests, based on a list of nominees provided by the Executive Committee. 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 rights 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 two Chairpersons, serving on an annual rotation, in alphabetical order by last name, on the calendar year. 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 Program Manager shall serve as ex-officio, non-voting member on the Executive Committee. 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 quarterly, the second Wednesday of the months of June, September, December, and March, unless otherwise decided at a Council

meeting or called by the Executive Committee. Meetings shall be held at a place designated by the Program Manager. The annual meeting of the Council will be held in June of each year to make formal nominations for new members.

**Section 2. GOVERNING.** The Council shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order. A quorum shall be necessary for the transaction of any business and shall consist of fifty percent 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. Minutes will be e-mailed to all Council members within one month of the conclusion of a Council meeting.

## **ARTICLE VI. COMMITTEES**

**Section 1. 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 and Forests, Parks and Recreation.

## **ARTICLE VII. AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1. 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.



# Roles and Responsibilities

## Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Council's Role

**ADVISE** on policy development, program direction, a competitive grant's program, and evaluation of the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program's (hereinafter referred to as the Program) effectiveness within Vermont communities.

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

### Council Membership: 20 voting members

#### Core members:

- Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation
- Agency of Agriculture, Foods and Markets
- UVM Extension
- Vermont Nursery and Landscape Association
- New England Chapter, International Society of Arboriculture
- VT Chapter, American Society of Landscape Architects
- Vermont Woodlands Association
- VT Association of Planning and Development Agencies
- Volunteer Tree Groups (two)
- Tree Warden
- Utility Company
- Agency of Transportation
- Agency of Commerce and Community Development

**At-large members:** Six additional members shall serve on the Council as at-large members.

The Program Manager of the Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program with FPR and program staff at the University of Vermont Extension shall serve as ex-officio, non-voting members of the Council.

**Terms:** Membership is two years. Members shall serve, at the pleasure of the Director of Forests, for as long as they desire and uphold the duties and responsibilities of their office. Members will receive a two-year reappointment letter in June on odd years. Failure to attend all regular meetings either in person or in proxy for a period of six months may result in removal from the Council.

### **Responsibilities**

- Attend quarterly meetings.
- In case of absence, designate an alternate to attend meetings.
- As Council members representing a specific group or organization within Vermont, act as liaison to and from the Council on issues of concern.
- Participate in Council programs: Grants, Arbor Day, and Tree Stewards Awards.
- Participate in developing five-year action plan, annual work plan, and plan reviews.
- Participate in sub-committee work.

### **Executive Committee Role: *Leadership team***

Has all the powers of the Council between meetings and is responsible for developing and conducting the Council's activities during the term of office, for recruiting and managing membership, and for organizing the membership toward meeting the stated purpose of the Council, provided however, that said committee shall report its actions to the Council at each meeting, and its actions shall be subject to revision or amendment by the full Council.

### **Executive Committee Membership – 2 members**

2 Chairpersons, for a —*one-year term appointed at the December meeting annually.*

**Terms:** One year appointment on the calendar year, on an automatic rotation based on alphabetical order of last name.

### **Responsibilities**

#### **Executive Committee**

- Attend quarterly leadership meetings via conference call.
- Set 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 five-year action plan, Council's annual work plan, and progress evaluation of both.

### **Program's Role**

The Program Manager and staff at University of Vermont Extension (hereinafter referred to as Program Staff) shall serve as ex-officio, non-voting members on the Council.

### **Program Staff**

The Program Manager is ex-officio, non-voting member on the Executive Committee and Council, and the Program Staff are ex-officio, non-voting members on the Council.

### **Responsibilities**

- Work with Executive Committee to set the agenda for each meeting.
- Take and distribute meeting minutes.
- Maintain and distributes membership packets.
- Address meeting needs and determine locations.
- Set the agenda in the absence of the Executive Committee.
- Provide written quarterly Program updates.
- Organizes Executive Committee meetings.

# Working Agreement

## Meeting Management

- Start and end on time
- Share meeting dates in all minutes and all agendas, and once a year reminder
- Provide written program update – save meetings for discussion

## Membership Management

- Welcome packet for all new members, and send updates to current members –post online

## Agendas

- Focus agendas to support Program
- Clear objectives and outcomes for agenda items
- Agendas out at least 1 week before

## Members are Accountable

- Stay on topic
- Be on time
- Complete to dos
- Be brief – share air time
- Come to the meeting prepared and ready to work
- Let group know your attendance plans
- Be respectful

## Keep it positive and acknowledge contributions

# Council Program Involvement

## Communities Caring for Canopy Grants

Grants are announced in fall, and applications are due in December.

- ☐ Review program and application process
  - All members; June meeting
- ☐ Evaluate grant applications, and attend grant ranking meeting
  - 2 members; mid-January

## Tree Stewards Awards

This Council awards program recognizes Vermont's urban and community forestry champions in a variety of categories. Announcement to seek nominations is released in early February with an early April deadline. Awards are presented at the Vermont Arbor Day Ceremony.

- ☐ Review Tree Stewards Awards Program
  - All members; December meeting
- ☐ Promote Tree Steward Awards Program
  - All members; February - April
- ☐ Submit nominations by deadline
  - All members; February - April
- ☐ Review nominations and choose recipients
  - 2 – 3 members; April
- ☐ Attend ceremony in conjunction with Arbor Day ceremony
  - All members, late April – early May

## Arbor Day

. The Program holds an annual Arbor Day Conference in May. In addition to sessions, workshops, and networking opportunities, at this event we recognize award recipients in the Tree City, Tree Campus, and Tree Line USA programs, and our own Tree Steward Award recipients.

### ☐ Arbor Day Conference

- Promote Arbor Day
  - All members; February – May
- Facilitate workshop sessions
  - 3-4 members; at the conference in May
- Attend the event
  - All members; at the conference in May
- Present the Tree Stewards Awards
  - 1 member; at the conference in May

## Public Places Awards

This awards program recognizes special public spaces, the corridors that connect them, or networks of public spaces which have been defined or enriched by planning or design, as well as regulations that promote positive, public uses and benefits. The program is delivered in partnership with several organizations with the Vermont Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architecture (ASLA) as the lead. The awards program is run every other year.

### ☐ Public Places Awards

- Promote awards
  - All members; August – October, even years
- Review nominations and choose recipients
  - 1 member; January, odd years
- Attend awards ceremony
  - All members; March

### September Meeting Host

Our September meeting will be hosted by a volunteer from the Council's membership. The host will choose a location and will be asked to give (or organize) a short presentation on something they are working on, or involved in, that is relevant to the Urban & Community Forestry Council. The rest of the meeting will be run as usual, with the Leadership Committee and Program staff developing and running the agenda.

## Calendar of Events

### January

- Promote grant awardees
- Review Public Places Awards nominations and choose recipients, odd years

### February

- Hold Executive Committee & Staff Meeting to prepare for next Council Meeting
- Promote Tree Stewards Awards nominations

### March

- Convene Council on Second Wednesday - this is a web-based, half-day meeting
- Attend Public Places Awards ceremony – Statehouse, odd years

### April

- Review and choose Tree Steward Award recipients

### May

- Attend Vermont Arbor Day Conference
- Hold Executive Committee & Staff Meeting to prepare for next Council Meeting

### June

- Convene Council on second Wednesday - this meeting includes a field trip
- Review Communities grant category processes and applications

### August

- Hold Executive Committee & Staff Meeting to prepare for next Council Meeting

## **September**

- Convene Council on Second Wednesday – membership host location
- Promote Public Places Awards

## **November**

- Hold Executive Committee & Staff Meeting to prepare for next Council Meeting

## **December**

- Convene Council on Second Wednesday – Montpelier meeting
- Review Tree Stewards Awards Program