California Urban Forest Advisory Committee
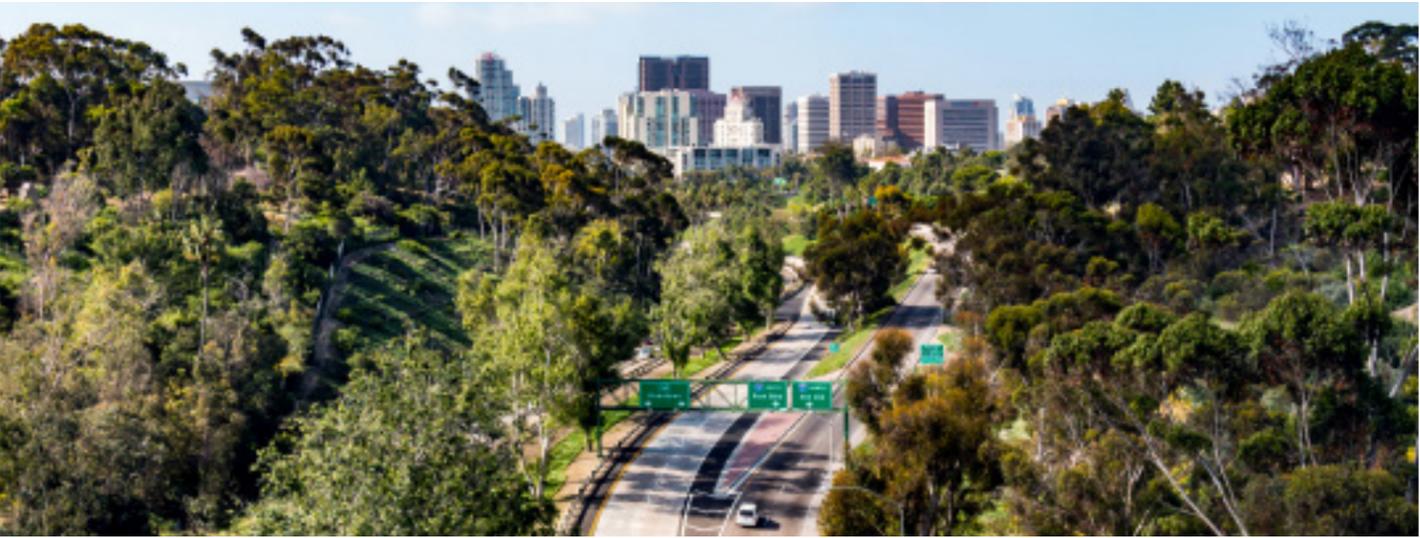# CAL FIRE Urban & Community Forestry Program
— STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024 —

Urban forests fulfill a critical role in the lives of Californians. Research documents significant correlation of urban forests to human health, social equity, economic vitality, as well as environmental quality and habitat. This Strategic Plan for the CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) program describes the goals, objectives, and strategies for effective management of California's urban forests.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Program is one of the largest and most complex programs of its kind in the United States – while also being one of the most innovative and highly regulated. Primary functions of the U&CF Program include administration of Federal and State grants, technical assistance, education and outreach, and encouraging best practices to be applied by local governments and industry practitioners. CAL FIRE also places significant emphasis on serving under-resourced, low-income communities to increase the urban forest canopy and associated benefits for all Californians.

The Urban Forestry Act [Public Resources Code (PRC) 4799.06-4799.12] describes key issues that guide functions of the U&CF Program and suggests requisite funding and staffing. Collaboration is essential to implement the broad and varied goals, objectives, and strategies of this plan.

California is the most populated state in the nation, estimated at 39.5 million people in 2018. California is also a national leader in economic output, environmental protection, and social equity programs, often establishing innovations and regulations that are adopted by other states and at the national level. The U&CF program works within the framework of these values and has a strong potential to effect positive outcomes across many types of environmental and human benefits.

U&CF CORE VALUES

LEADERSHIP: Promote urban forestry resources to increase integrated, multi-benefit projects in urban communities.

COLLABORATION: Deliver efficient urban forest programs in cooperation with statewide and regional organizations and associations, other private and public entities or persons, and appropriate local, state, and federal agencies.

QUALITY OF LIFE: Champion environmentally responsible urban forest management activities that enhance the quality of life in urban communities.

ACRONYMS:
ANSI: American National Standards Institute
BMP: Best Management Practices
ISA: International Society of Arboriculture
TCIA: Tree Care Industry Association
UFEI: Urban Forest Ecosystems Institute

CUFAC MEMBERS

Chair Person
Walter Passmore, City/Town Government

Members
Brian Biancardi, Electric Utility Industry
Cindy Blain, Statewide Urban Forest Nonprofit
David Cox, Nursery Industry
Nancy Hughes, Professional Society
Miranda Hutten, USDA Forest Service
Kevin Jefferson, Town of 150,000 or more
Dan Kida, Electric Utility Industry
Igor Lacan, UC Cooperative Extension
Vince Mikulanis, Urban Forestry Private Industry
Jeff Reimer, Academic/Researcher
Suzanne Remien, Water Agency
Elizabeth Rhoades, County Government
Bruce Saito, State Government
Oscar Sanchez, Urban Forestry Consultant
Nancy Sappington, Town of 150,000 or less
Jon Swae, Urban/Environmental Planner
Jim Williamson, Local Urban Forest Nonprofit

U&CF VISION

CAL FIRE envisions urban and community forests that are healthy, extensive, and well-managed, providing a wide array of optimal benefits to all Californians.

The mission of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is to serve and safeguard the people and protect the property and resources of California.

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▼ GOALS   ▼ OBJECTIVES   ▼ STRATEGIES

1 — Optimize the benefits *all* Californians receive from urban & community forests

Objectives

A. **Increase awareness** of the value of urban forests for **all Californians**.

B. **Make available** urban forestry resources to local decision-makers and the public.

C. **Focus tree planting support in underserved communities** with low tree canopy.

D. Encourage local decision-makers to fund **urban forests as essential community infrastructure**.

E. **Ensure recognition of U&CF staff** as a primary resource for urban forestry information, outreach, & technical assistance.

Strategies

1. Communicate urban forest benefits through education and training.

2. Improve public accessibility of CAL FIRE and other available urban forest resources.

3. Emphasize using trees as multi-benefit mitigation tools.

4. Promote expanded role of regional foresters as premier resources.

5. Increase collaboration with federal, state, county, and nongovernmental organizations.

6. Increase emphasis on greening for improved health, quality of life, and urban livability, especially in disadvantaged communities.

7. Advocate for continued research in the structure, function, value, and costs of urban forests, as well as development of new tools for users to assess benefits and costs.

8. Inform municipal leaders that urban forest education and outreach efforts complement, rather than compete for, limited municipal funds.

9. Efficiently scale CAL FIRE program capacity based on administrative requirements.

10. Publicize the role of Regional Foresters as primary contacts for Urban Forestry information, training, and technical support.

2 — Strengthen the urban forest industry workforce

Objectives

A. Promote the **importance of urban forestry related jobs** and the benefits of professional standards.

B. **Foster diversity** in the urban forest workforce.

C. Communicate the **contribution of UF industry jobs** to the California economy.

D. Promote urban forests as a **critical resource and essential infrastructure** that requires continual maintenance.

E. **Advance innovation and leadership** in the urban forest industry.

Strategies

1. Encourage professional practice through ANSI standards, BMPs, and other resources.

2. Support educational and vocational opportunities for those interested in entering the U&CF profession.

3. Facilitate job creation through on-the-job training and job creation granting programs.

4. Increase awareness about job pathways related to urban forestry: research, education, technology, tree care, wood utilization.

5. Leverage funding opportunities for training and hiring underserved community members.

6. Work with other state agencies to further inclusive workforce development.

7. Improve hiring practices to recruit a more diverse workforce, and encourage partners to do the same.

8. Publicize urban forestry job benefits via local news outlets.

9. Identify current & new job markets, including associated industries.

10. Promote research to communicate benefits of urban forestry programs and jobs.

11. Increase public awareness of social, environmental, and economic benefits of the urban forest.

12. Advocate for locally supported urban forestry programs.

13. Increase emphasis on using trees as multi-benefit mitigation tools.

14. Identify innovative research or projects that support statistical analysis, performance evaluation, and comparative benchmarks of Urban Forestry programs.

15. Continue to identify new ways to conduct education and outreach.

16. Improve online resources and innovative opportunities for internal and external stakeholders.

3 — Improve the health and management of the urban forest

Objectives

A. **Champion effective management** of urban forests.

B. Promote the **highest standards of tree care** based on best available science and practice.

C. **Increase the resilience** of urban forests to climate change, environmental effects, and resource limitations.

D. **Advance practices and policies** that optimize the health and management of urban forests.

E. Establish or enhance existing **statewide key performance measures** for the health and management of urban forests.

Strategies

1. Monitor legislation and policy that affects urban forest management at the local, state, and federal levels.

2. Advise local governments of the importance of inventories and management plans.

3. Provide guidance on local urban forest related ordinances and policies.

4. Promote Best Management Practices (BMPs) at nurseries.

5. Interact with Licensing Boards to promote professionally recognized BMPs and standards.

6. Consolidate resource access on CAL FIRE's website with links to industry BMP sites such as ISA, UFEI, Trees Are Good, and TCIA.

7. Collaborate with various stakeholders for statewide water use messaging that benefits urban forest assets.

8. Encourage greater use of water from recycled or reclaimed sources, or water capture and storage.

9. Continue to research, develop, and use appropriate non-traditional tree species suited to various site and climate challenges.

10. Guide and comment on legislative activity to ensure alignment with intent of the Urban Forestry Act.

11. Solicit, review, and adopt innovative ideas or research to improve and expand urban forest assets.

12. Use statewide urban forest canopy data as a basis for performance trends and to prioritize work.

13. Develop consistent performance measures on California's urban forests to include condition and survival metrics, ecosystem services, canopy coverage, and municipal program capacity.

14. Coordinate with municipalities across the state to report on performance measures that are useful at the local, regional, and statewide levels.