

Alaska Community Forest Council



Role of the Council

The Alaska Community Forest Council is a nonprofit organization that promotes and supports preserving, planting, and caring for trees and forests in Alaska's communities. The purposes of the council are to:

- Encourage public education and involvement in community forestry in order to increase knowledge of, and appreciation for, the benefits of community trees and their management;
- Encourage and support outreach into Alaska's communities to ensure that the council is sensitive and responsive to the cultural, economic and geographic diversity found in Alaska;
- Promote and build effective partnerships among public agencies, industry, businesses, local governments, schools and volunteer groups;
- Provide a public forum for sharing information so that the most beneficial and economical community forestry policies and practices are identified;
- Advocate for, and provide leadership on, appropriate community forestry policies, programs, and practices in Alaska;
- Provide public recognition and support for urban and community forestry achievements in Alaska.

The council is the advisory council to the State Forester for the Alaska Community Forestry Program. Members give advice on appropriate ways to define, develop, direct, and deliver the program to Alaskan communities. The council provides advice on program priorities, and feedback on its effectiveness. It reviews the criteria and guidelines for community forestry grants administered by the division, and recommends projects for funding.

The council strives to represent the professional, geographic, cultural, ethnic, economic and community diversity of Alaska by including members from around the state. This diversity and range of interests and experiences make the council a valuable source of information

and public opinion. Members' recommendations are important to the decision-making process and their support is crucial to the success of the program.

The council has sponsored conferences and workshops on community forestry, and tree planting and care. Members also provide assistance to grant recipients, local governments, schools, and community groups.

Members are asked to make the necessary time commitment to prepare for and attend all meetings; handle the normal business responsibilities of a nonprofit corporation; serve on a working committee; participate in council discussions and work toward consensus on issues, programs and projects. Council members are also responsible for raising funds to support council activities and other urban and community forestry efforts in the state.

Members participate in an orientation before the first meeting and are provided many excellent educational experiences and opportunities for hands-on training.

Council members serve without monetary compensation, however, the Alaska Community Forestry Program covers the costs of teleconferences and travel to regular meetings.

Public Participation

The council meets all day on the second Friday of March, May, November and August, usually in Anchorage. Members of the public are encouraged to attend meetings and serve on committees to help achieve the council's goals.

Application Process

Members serve three-year terms, beginning on July 1. Applications are available during the month of April and new members are selected at the May meeting. Copies of the bylaws are available upon request.

Urban and community forests are composed of the trees, vegetation and other natural elements of a forest, plus the roads, buildings, utilities and other developments found where people live. Healthy, well-maintained trees and forests improve the quality of life in communities. However, coordinated management of the natural and built environment is necessary to maximize the benefits of each and to allow them to complement each other.

The Alaska Community Forestry Program encourages communities to provide comprehensive management of their forest resources. Program staff provide information on how to maintain community trees and forests that are healthy, attractive, productive, and safe.

The two staff members and the council work together to foster partnerships between government agencies, businesses, and community volunteers that promote and support urban forestry.