

**A Brief History of MCFC**  
**by**  
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The U. S. Congress included an urban forestry section in the 1990 Farm Bill. This legislation authorized the U. S. Forest Service to pass funds through to the state forestry agencies to promote urban forestry.

In addition to the funding and some matching requirements, there were three main actions that were proposed for each state:

1. The state must hire or designate an urban forestry coordinator
2. The state was encouraged to set up an advisory council for urban forestry
3. The state was encouraged to provide assistance for volunteer efforts.

At that time, the Forestry Division, Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), was already actively involved with urban forestry. They started in 1967; earlier than any other state. An urban forestry coordinator was in place since 1978, so the first item was met. As a result of the several years of providing urban forestry assistance, MDC was already cooperating very well with many of the Missouri communities, so an advisory council was not seen as a necessity. And, there was some work with volunteers, but not a direct and concentrated effort in communities.

Although Missouri was a leader in providing state supported urban forestry assistance, it was the last state to start an urban forestry advisory council. The state forester and staff determined that Missouri needed to comply with the legislation, so an effort was made to set up and establish an urban forestry advisory council.

An organizational meeting was held in Columbia. The state forester sent invitations to the first meeting to a variety of people from municipal forestry and parks departments, commercial tree service companies, other state agencies, consultants, educators and volunteer groups. Discussion groups were held and resulted in consensus agreement to proceed with forming a council. George Eib, Forestry and Parks Supervisor for the City of Kansas City, was elected as the first chairman.

The first few meetings of the council tackled issues such as makeup of the council, officers, and financial support. MDC approved funding for council expenses, but specified that no funds could be used for compensation or pay to any members or officers. It was also recommended by MDC, and approved by the Council, that the officers could not be employees of MDC. That would help to keep the council as an advisory group, rather than a group headed by MDC. Another topic covered in the early meetings was deciding on how to keep as many people as possible involved with the council activities. To meet that desire, regions were “drawn up” and the local people were asked to set up regional councils. Each region would then select two representatives to serve on the state council. In addition, the stipulation that MDC employees could not serve as chair on the regional councils followed the guidelines for the state council.

The original council was called the Missouri Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council, with the acronym of MUCFAC. After a few years, the name was changed to Missouri Community Forestry Council (MCFC). The reasoning for the change was to encourage more involvement from smaller communities. The word “urban” seemed to infer more involvement in the major urban centers of St. Louis – Kansas City – Springfield.

The Council determined that one of the activities should be the presentation of an annual meeting to promote good tree management throughout the state. The first annual meeting, and several following, was held in conjunction with the Missouri Parks and Recreation Association’s annual meeting. In Missouri, many communities rely on parks department personnel for management of the public trees, so meeting with the parks association worked well. In a few years, as the council grew, the annual conference was held as a separate entity, and continues to this day.

To fulfill the need to provide assistance to volunteer groups involved with urban and community forestry, MDC turned to the Missouri Forest ReLeaf organization. Through a cooperative agreement, and some financial support from MDC, the Forest ReLeaf organization was designated as the method to meet the need to work with volunteers.

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