

REQUIRED VOLUNTEER and CEU HOURS FOR CITIZEN FORESTERS AND CERTIFIED CITIZEN FORESTERS

For time to qualify as counting towards meeting these requirements, the work must be focused on publicly owned trees. These are trees owned in the Cross Timbers region by the State of Texas, a county, a city, a school district, a flood control district, or other similar governmental entity. However, time spent educating the general public that may be useful to private owners also counts.

Currently we are using a software package called VicNet a feature of Volgistics to inform Citizen Foresters of activities and for Citizen Foresters to record their time. Once you graduate from the training, you are expected to utilize VicNet, to find volunteer opportunities, to sign up to participate in events, and to record your time. Access to VicNet is through the ctufc.org website. This is a necessary aspect to participating in the program.

TRAINING

There are currently two Citizen Forester training programs being offered. `

Traditional 6 Month Path: These requirements do not apply to those who take the Alternative 10 Month Path. A total of 36 hours of instruction and field exercises are scheduled over a 5-month period. Although perfect attendance is highly preferred, if after attending a minimum of 30 hours of this training, the students earn the title of Citizen Forester.

To earn Certification:

1. if your class was held during the spring, twenty-five additional hours of supervised volunteer time must be completed during that calendar year to achieve Certified Citizen Forester status. These 25 volunteer hours cannot include the field exercises during Citizen Forester training during that initial year. The volunteer can begin accumulating these 25 hours of service as soon as classes have begun. No additional classroom training will be required during this first year.
2. If the class is held during the fall, the requirements listed above will be required during the following calendar year.

Alternative 10 Month Path: A total of 10 six-hour class days scheduled over a ten-month period. A total of 60 hours of instruction and field exercises are included in this training. Although perfect attendance is highly preferred, if after attending 9 of the 10 classes and participating in the field exercises, students will graduate as Certified Citizen Foresters. If at least 6 of the training days are completed, students will graduate as Citizen Foresters and will be eligible to earn Certified status in the following year by meeting the requirements as outlined below.

CITIZEN FORESTERS

Each year, to be considered an active Citizen Forester, a minimum of 10 hours of volunteer time must be completed within the calendar year. December and January will be “swing months”. You can count your December hours in the following year, or you can count your January hours in the previous year, if you so choose. It is necessary for you to inform the VicNet System Operator at sklatham96@gmail.com by February 15 if you wish to make this choice. Otherwise your hours will be recorded in the year they occurred.

CERTIFIED CITIZEN FORESTERS

The following describes the requirements for becoming, and maintaining status as a Certified Citizen Forester:

1. For those completing the Alternative 10 Month Path, no additional activities are required in the first year to achieve Certified status. You will graduate as a Certified Citizen Forester if you have properly completed the requirements outlined above.
2. For the years after the initial period, at least twenty hours of volunteer time and five hours of continuing education (CEU) must be completed each year to achieve the status of Certified Citizen Forester.
3. December and January will be “swing months”. You can count your December hours in the following year, or you can count your January hours in the previous year, if you so choose. It is necessary for you to inform the VicNet System Operator at sklatham96@gmail.com by February 15 if you wish to make this choice. Otherwise your hours will be recorded in the year they occurred.

If for some reason these hours cannot be earned, and the volunteer has at least 10 volunteer hours, they go to Citizen Forester status. Therefore, volunteers can go back and forth between being a Citizen Forester and Certified Citizen Forester depending on how many hours they earn each year.

If a participant fails to achieve at least Citizen Forester status for 2 consecutive calendar years, they will be removed from our VicNet software, will no longer receive notices about Citizen Forester Activities. And they will need to retake the training to regain their status as a Citizen Forester. The trees need to know that you haven't forgot anything they deem important and the VicNet software pricing is based on the number of volunteers.

TIME RECORDING

See the guidelines below to help determine what will count as acceptable volunteer time and continuing education time. If you have questions, submit them to your area coordinator. We primarily rely on the honor system for you to determine and report your time.

VOLUNTEER TIME

1. Participating in a Citizen Forester organized event in the Cross Timbers region that is not “formally arranged education” as described in the Continuing Education Units section below.
2. Volunteering to improve the urban forest in any public spaces of the Cross Timbers region. This includes activities like the following:
 - a. Surveying tree conditions and preparing reports. This could include things like looking for disease or insect related issues like the Emerald Ash Borer situation, finding trees affected by drought, noting pruning or removal needs, monitoring street or park tree growth and health, or the like.
 - b. Inventorying trees and preparing reports, including providing species identification,
 - c. Pruning. This should always be done with the full knowledge of the entity that is responsible for the trees so they know what you will be doing and approve it. This also includes coordinating the removal of the downed limbs.
 - d. Planting Trees. Again, all planting activities need to be coordinated with the entity that is responsible for the public land the planting is to occur on.
 - e. Working at any of the various public Tree Farms that are run by entities providing trees to be planted on CTUFC region public lands.
 - f. Any activity that is engaged in advocating for the trees owned by a public entity in the region.
 - g. Teaching tree related classes, even if the class is being presented to non-Citizen Foresters. Preparation time for putting together displays, Power Points, etc. can be included.
 - h. Volunteering to promote the Citizen Forester program. This could include things like staffing the Tree Give Away booth at Mayfest or similar events, staffing tree information tables at environmentally related events, distributing Citizen Forester promotional materials to places where tree interested people frequent, making announcements at meetings of plant focused organizations, and spending time contacting the entity that manages the publicly owned space to ascertain and coordinate Citizen Forester activities that could be useful.
 - i. Volunteering to support the Citizen Forester training events and the organization of such events.

Reasonable travel time necessary to participate in any of the above-mentioned items counts as volunteer time.

CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS (CEUs)

There are lots of resources available that claim to provide information about trees; some good, some not so good. We Citizen Foresters need to approach tree related information with a critical eye. Does what is being presented, in whatever format, line up with what we were taught in our training? If you use the resources that have been identified and are listed in the document named Tree Related Resources In the Citizen Forester Resources tab on the ctufc.org website, they will count. We'll work to keep it updated as new resources are identified. If you have suggestions for resources, please submit those to the Education Coordinator at davidcoke@gmail.com and it will be passed around to the Board and Citizen Forester Leadership Team. If approved, it will be added to the list.

1. Cross Timbers Urban Forestry Council organized education activity where the Citizen Forester volunteer is the recipient of information on trees. This includes our annual conference.
2. Formally arranged event, small or large, where the participant is educated on some aspect of trees: how to use in a landscape, planting, pruning, tree health, use for water conservation, use for water run-off, use for shade, use for food, etc. If multiple topics are covered, only the tree related portion of the time should be counted.
3. Formal lessons presented "online" that educate its participants on some aspect of trees.
4. Audio training, "books on tape", or the like that meet the criterion above will also count.
5. The reading of books, papers, or other publications that educates its reader on some relevant aspect of trees.
6. Travel time to any of the CEU events does not count like it does for Volunteer Time.

CTUFC MEMBERSHIP

January is the month to join or renew your Cross Timbers Urban Forestry Council Membership. As of December 2019, the dues are \$25/year for an individual, \$50/year for a family. Certified Citizen Foresters get a discount of \$10/year. Therefore, the dues for a Certified Citizen Foresters is \$15/year. Dues can be paid through the CTUFC website, ctufc.org. Click Membership on the left. The amounts may be modified by the Board of the Cross Timber Urban Forestry Council. Citizen Foresters are sponsored by the CTUFC and, while membership is not required to be a Citizen Forester, it is highly encouraged so that the organization has the funds necessary to support our activities. For those students participating in the Alternative 10 Month Path training, you will receive CTUFC membership for the year of your class as a part of your training fee.