



# State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet Florida 2019



## Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2018 Final
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$483,840
Forest Legacy	\$4,840,000
Forest Stewardship	\$150,367
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$266,148
State Fire Assistance	\$1,462,841
Urban and Community Forestry	\$658,744
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$349,602
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,211,542</b>

NOTE: This funding is for all entities within the state, not just the State Forester's office.

## Program Goals

- Cooperative programs are administered and implemented through a partnership between the Florida Forest Service (FFS), the USDA Forest Service and many other private and government entities. These programs promote the health and productivity of forestlands and rural economies. Programs emphasize forest sustainability and the production of commodity and amenity values such as wildlife, water quality, and environmental services.
- The overarching goal is to maintain and improve the health of urban and rural forests and related economies as well as to protect the forests and citizens of the state. These programs maximize cost effectiveness through the use of partnerships in program delivery, increase forestland value and sustainability, and do so in a voluntary and non-regulatory manner.

## Key Issues

- FL experienced unprecedented timber damage this year when Hurricane Michael hit one of the more heavily timbered sections of the FL Panhandle. Due to the severity of damage, FFS crews provided immediate response and are still providing hurricane recovery duties. Over 2.8 million acres of forest were impacted, equating to 1.29 billion dollars in damaged resources and impacting approximately 16,000 private forest landowners. Forest recovery will take years.
- The population of FL is experiencing sustained growth. This influx of new residents and resulting new developments has continued to increase the amount of wildland urban interface areas in the state. The increased use of the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment and its data shows how the acknowledgement of wildfire potential and the need for mitigation has become more mainstream. Smoke management continues to be a critical issue for prescribed burners and may impact hazard fuel reduction goals.
- Florida's forests are continually threatened by the introduction and spread of invasive insects, pathogens, and non-native plants. The FFS works closely with partner agencies and organizations to detect new problematic non-native species, monitor their occurrence and impacts, develop and implement management methods, and communicate with the public about these issues.
- Florida's forests overall are sustainable across species and timber products with a statewide sustainability index (ratio of net timber growth to removals) of 1.93. However, in some counties, especially for pine pulpwood, the sustainability index is below 1.0 (more pulpwood being removed than produced) due to high levels of industrial timber demand for pine pulpwood and lower levels of reforestation.
- Annual reforestation acres are about one half of what they were 25 years ago. There is a critical need for increased reforestation, especially incentives for private landowners, as competition from other land uses such as agriculture and urban development continue to impact Florida's forest's continued sustainability.

- A changing forest landowner base challenges the FFS in providing the most effective outreach. Efficiency gains in landowner assistance include new landowner incentive programs, the Florida Land Steward website, blog, Facebook page, Land Management Calendar, workshops and newsletters, and a Forest Stewardship & Conservation Plan template. These accomplishments are the result of a continued strong partnership between the FFS, USFS, NRCS, FWC, Tree Farm, UF, NFWF, TNC, and others.
- Planning in the face of change, the role of urban forestry, rapid urbanization, and increased climatic fluctuations have led to decreased urban canopy and an increased risk of flooding. Florida's urban forests can be decimated by dramatic storms. Cities can better care for, manage, and restore their urban tree canopy by linking trees to existing programs for community resiliency. Urban Forestry Emergency Plans address potential disaster situations.
- Urban Forest Strike Teams can provide increased public safety, a more efficient recovery, reduced loss of the urban tree canopy, and lower disaster recovery costs.
- Trees generate key secondary social and ecosystem services in their communities. Urban tree programs advance the psychology of sustainability. They are an essential resource helping cities become more livable by reducing urban heat islands and thus reducing energy bills. Surface water, free from pollutants and sediment, is essential. Urban forest management is critical to restoring and protecting forest systems to maintain tree canopy and water quality.
- Two items that will affect wildfire activity this upcoming year are the impacts of Hurricanes Irma and Michael and the development of El Niño. The amount of vegetation that was brought down after the storms and the amount of the state that they impacted will provide increased fuel for potential wildfires. El Niño typically ushers in wetter and cooler winter weather which will restrict hazardous fuel reduction burns increasing hazardous fuel loading.

**Forest Facts and Accomplishments**

<b>Selected Facts</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>FY 2018 Accomplishments</b>	<b>Value</b>
Population	18,801,310	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	12,198
Acres of Forest Land	17,156,395	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	11,015
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	9,652,000	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	8,835
Number of NIPF Landowners	509,000	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	70
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	0	State Fire Communities Assisted	222
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	21,214,675	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	7,000
Number of Rural Fire Departments	525	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	799
Cities and Towns	411	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	181
Forest Based Employment	124,104	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	13,631,346
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	5	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	34,204
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	105,659,863		

**Program Highlights**

**Cooperative Fire Protection**

State Fire Assistance provides funding to support firefighting resources throughout Florida, including the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans. The Federal Excess Personal Property and Firefighter Property Programs assist Florida in acquiring and placing fire equipment in rural communities throughout the state. This past year we acquired 4 trucks and other materials valued at over \$1 million. In addition, the FFS administers Volunteer Fire Assistance Program funds to support the fire prevention and protection efforts of rural community fire departments which, this past year, assisted 47 volunteer fire departments with purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE) and other equipment valued at over \$456,855. Through our mitigation and prevention grants, we successfully reduced the hazardous fuel

load on over 27,885 acres and delivered 913 programs covering Firewise, Community Wildfire Protection Plans, "Ready, Set, Go," and wildfire prevention.

### ***Fire Adapted Communities***

The FFS embraces the development of fire adapted communities (FACs) throughout the state that can withstand the otherwise devastating effects of wildfire impacts on communities in the wildland/urban interface (WUI). The concepts of FAC align well with existing local efforts, including the Local Mitigation Strategy, Community Wildfire Protection Plans and Action Plans, and Firewise Communities. The Florida Forest Service also actively partners with our federal cooperators, fire departments, and other local stakeholders to successfully implement wildfire mitigation efforts, such as annual cleanup days, fireline installation and maintenance, and prescribed fire assistance on private, state, and federal lands.

### ***Florida Forest Sustainability Report***

The State of Florida recognizes the importance of sustainable forest management and the FFS is tracking a statewide sustainability index of Florida's forests. The 2016 Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) data indicate that Florida's forests, overall, are sustainable across species and timber products with a statewide sustainability index of 1.93, which indicates nearly twice as much timber growth compared with timber removals.

### ***Florida's BMPs***

Silviculture BMPs: Originally adopted in February 2004 as Rule 5I-6 of the Florida Administrative Code, the Silviculture Best Management Practices are designed as the minimum standard necessary for protecting and maintaining the State's water quality, as well as certain wildlife habitat values, during forestry activities. Currently there are approximately 5.8 million acres enrolled in the silviculture BMP program.

Wildlife BMPs: Adopted in October 2014 as Rule 5I-8 of the Florida Administrative Code, the Forestry Wildlife Best Management Practices for State Imperiled Species (WBMPs) were established so that applicants who properly implement WBMPs will no longer be required to obtain a permit authorizing the incidental take of State Imperiled Species during normal, ongoing forestry operations. Also, they will not be subject to any fines or penalties associated with an incidental take. Currently there are nearly 3.8 million acres enrolled in the wildlife BMP program.

### ***Forest Health Protection***

The FFS Forest Health Section closely monitored southern pine beetle (SPB) activity in North Florida in 2018, following an increase in activity from 2015 to 2017. At least 172 infestations were detected, killing pine trees on over 401 acres. FFS staff conducted aerial and ground survey operations and advised local landowners and land managers on suppression activities. The Southern Pine Beetle Assistance and Prevention Program, which is funded by the USFS Forest Health Protection Program, accepted 93 applications from non-industrial private landowners in 2018, to provide cost-share assistance and incentive payments to conduct preventative forest management practices on over 5,730 acres. In the past year, the FFS Forest Health Section provided at least 333 assists in the form of pest identifications, disease diagnoses, and management recommendations to a wide range of private and public recipients throughout Florida.

### ***Forest Inventory and Analysis***

The FFS partners with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Program, the only nation-wide forest inventory system. The FFS based FIA crews collect inventory plot and other on-the-ground information, and then the FFS works jointly with the USFS on preparing Florida's forest reports. The FIA program is widely recognized by forest products industry and environmental groups alike as "the source" for data driven timber and forest vegetation information. Florida's FIA program dates back to 1934, when the first forest inventory information was collected in the state. In the federal fiscal year 2018, Florida FIA crews collected information on 489 plots in 62 counties. The latest Florida forest inventory data posted on USFS websites is for 2016. Maintaining full federal and state support for the rigorous core FIA program, including forest inventories, analyses and reports, is one of the top priorities for the FFS.

### ***Forest Legacy***

In July 2018, FFS received federal FY2018 grant awards for the following two (2) projects: \$2.54 million for the 721-acre Wakulla Caves Forest fee-simple acquisition, and \$2.3 million for the 3,290-acre conservation easement on Gulf Coastal Longleaf Initiative Phase 2.

The FFS proposed three projects in December 2017 for FLP FY 2019 funding. FFS has requested the following: \$2.4 million for 2,220 acres at Keystone Longleaf Preserve (2,127 acres are submitted for conservation easement and 93 acres are submitted for fee acquisition); \$4.5 million for 4,962 acres for a conservation easement on Gulf Coastal Longleaf Initiative Phase 3; and \$3.2 million for 3,290 acres for a conservation easement on Welannee Plantation. Florida hopes to receive grant funding in Spring 2019 (pending Congressional federal budget approval) for the Keystone Longleaf Preserve, as it ranked #7 in the nation at the National Panel in January 2018.

The FFS submitted two projects in December 2018 for the FLP FY 2020 funding request: Welannee Watershed Forest (4,000 acres, conservation easement), and Gulf Coastal Longleaf Initiative Phase 3 (4,962 acres, conservation easement).

### **Forest Stewardship**

The Florida Forest Stewardship outreach program provided over 31 educational events including landowner workshops, property tours, and polycom conferences. The FFS and partners used these events to inform landowners about forest management practices and programs. Topics included invasive exotic plant control, integrating timber and wildlife management, longleaf pine restoration and management, prescribed fire, succession planning, growing timber revenue, timberland security, and forest plant identification.

### **Geospatial Technology**

Florida State University's Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) has continued its partnership with the FFS to map longleaf pine ecosystems in Florida in 2018. While previous work on the Florida Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Geodatabase (LPEGDB) mapped approximately 2.36 million acres of longleaf pine ecosystems in Florida, with most (72%) having some level of ecological condition data. A primary objective of this phase of the project was to fill the remaining data gap of approximately 4.9 million acres, mostly pine plantation, where the occurrence of longleaf pine forests was uncertain.

The Florida Forest Service, in partnership with the University of Georgia's Early Detection and Distribution Mapping System (EDDMapS), have completed development of an online tool for prioritizing invasive plant treatments. The Spatial Invasive Infestation and Priority Analysis (SIIPA) GIS application has been created with a user-friendly dashboard interface with interactive mapping and reporting tools. Final model outputs for treatment plans include the following: interactive map with results that can be printed, options to download spatial data of treatment plans, report of the results and model inputs, as well as transferring results to the user's EDDMapS Pro mobile app for use in the field.

### **Landowner Assistance**

A variety of incentive programs have been delivered to landowners during the past year. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) funded the FFS to help private non-industrial landowners, under the Longleaf Legacy and Stewardship Programs, establish or improve longleaf forestlands in two significant longleaf regions of the state. This program provided 63 applicants with \$209,920 in contract funding to treat or plant a total of 3,914 acres. Over 5,730 acres are being treated with funding from the Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program. One hundred seventy-five landowners were provided technical assistance on 5,148 acres enrolled in the EQIP and CRP programs of the NRCS and FSA. County foresters prepared 601 plans for private landowners covering 98,479 acres.

Twelve thousand high priority landowners who are not currently working with the Florida Forest Service are being contacted through a targeted direct mail campaign to encourage them to contact a county forester or consulting forester and begin to manage their forests through a written management plan. This effort began in late 2017 and is being accomplished through a USFS LASR grant in cooperation with the American Forest Foundation. The program ended in late 2018 with a total of 337 responses mailed back in. This resulted in 148 site visits with their county forester.

Florida Forest Service has partnered with American Forest Foundation to create a Landscape Scale Forest Management Plan to help private landowners in north Florida. The plan was made available for

use in late 2017 and to date 35 management plans have been written utilizing the LMP.

### ***Prescribed Burning Accomplishments on State Forests and Other Lands***

During the past year, the FFS was able to treat more than 230,000 acres of Florida state forests and Babcock Ranch Preserve with prescribed fire; up from the previous year which had a very active wildfire season. During the past year, we were fortunate to experience many days with conditions favorable for prescribed fire which allowed the FFS to issue prescribed fire authorizations for nearly 2.5 million additional acres of other forestland in the state. Prescribed fire is a safe way to apply a natural process, ensure ecosystem health, and reduce wildfire risk.

### ***Ready, Set, Go!***

The Ready, Set, Go! (RSG) program aims to teach individuals who live in high risk wildfire areas – and the wildland-urban interface (WUI) – how to best prepare themselves and their properties against wildfire threats. Its tenets help residents be Ready with preparedness understanding, be Set with situational awareness when fire threatens, and to Go, acting early when a fire starts. The Florida Forest Service along with cooperating agency partners, has incorporated RSG throughout the state of Florida and conducted 57 programs including 12 door-to-door campaigns in very large communities. RSG is a collaborative process that has been effective in improving coordination and communication between emergency response agencies and the community.

### ***Urban and Community Forestry***

Florida's Urban and Community Forestry Programs service non-profits, individuals and their communities providing outreach, instruction and technical help. Topics include planting, tree care, inventories, canopy assessments, staff improvement and developing urban forest management plans. Thirty-eight CFA foresters help citizens and municipalities across the state by encouraging stewardship, increasing storm resiliency, and promoting the value of our urban forests. Jacksonville and Miami Beach participated in a green infrastructure study about integrating trees into stormwater management programs to help comply with stormwater permits, reduce flooding, and to meet surface water quality goals. One hundred seventy-five communities participated in the TREE CITY USA program through the Arbor Day Foundation. The Energy-Saving Trees program is a relatively new program provided by the FFS and Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with local organizations and utility partners. It has impacted both individuals and entire communities, and over 15,000 trees have been planted around Florida homes to date. This is a valuable program with a need for continued support. FFS funds have been used to encourage more communities and electric utilities to participate in the Energy Saving Trees program. The FFS continued working with the Florida Urban Forestry Council and began working with Community Greening to promote urban forestry and proper arboriculture practices around the state of Florida.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Michael, Florida Forest Service partnered with the Arbor Day Foundation for initial Community Tree Recovery events in Panama City and Marianna. Additional events are being planned for 2019.

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## **Contact Information**



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