



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet

Florida 2018



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2017 Final
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$462,784
Forest Legacy	\$8,590,000
Forest Stewardship	\$228,265
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$254,310
State Fire Assistance	\$1,462,841
Urban and Community Forestry	\$671,333
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$338,378
Total	\$12,007,911

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

- Florida's population is experiencing sustained growth. This influx of new residents and resulting new developments has continued to increase the amount of wildland urban interface (WUI) 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 is 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 demand) of 1.97. 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 forests continued sustainability.
- The FFS is strengthening our relationship with the Department of Defense (Eglin Air Force Base) and private landowners through a competitive grant entitled "Forest Opportunities in Resource Conservation and Environmental Security" (FORCES). FORCES seek to promote long-term

conservation of private woodlands to buffer and support the military training mission.

- 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 impact of Hurricane Irma and the development of La Niña. The amount of vegetation that was brought down after the storm and the amount of the state that it impacted will provide increased fuel loadings for potential wildfires. La Niña typically ushers in warmer and drier winter weather setting up a potentially busy spring wildfire season.

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2017 Accomplishments	Value
Population	18,801,310	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	12,740
Acres of Forest Land	17,156,395	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	18,903
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	9,652,000	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	16,861
Number of NIPF Landowners	509,000	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	59
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	0	State Fire Communities Assisted	213
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	21,214,675	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	8,000
Number of Rural Fire Departments	525	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	0
Cities and Towns	411	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	167
Forest Based Employment	100,214	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	12,601,390
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	5	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	33,000
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	105,641,010		

Program Highlights

Conservation Education

The FFS is one of the founding members of the Get Outdoors Florida coalition. This organization promotes youth and family participation in outdoor recreation for health and educational purposes. This statewide organization sponsors a website (www.getoutdoorsflorida.com) that helps families find appropriate outdoor opportunities and hosts events to promote outdoor recreation. The FFS continues participation in a federally funded, multi-state redesign grant project, which has been awarded to develop and produce public outreach and education materials designed to reduce the movement of non-native invasive wood-boring pests in untreated firewood.

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 58 trucks and other materials valued at over \$14.6 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 59 volunteer fire departments with purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE) and other equipment valued at over \$397,122.

Through our mitigation and prevention grants, we successfully reduced the hazardous fuel load on over 5,902 acres and delivered 1,186 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 2015 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 1.97, which indicates nearly twice as much timber growth compared with timber removals.

Florida's BMPs

Silviculture BMPs: Florida completed the 2017 Silviculture BMP Survey which showed 99.6% compliance with forestry BMPs. This is the nineteenth such Survey since 1981, with an average of 95% compliance for the 36 year period of record. Currently there are more than 5 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. There are currently more than 3.1 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 2017, following a spike in outbreaks in 2016 and a spring trapping survey that predicted increased activity in 2017. At least 53 infestations were documented, killing pine trees on over 662 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 96 applications from non-industrial private landowners in 2017, to provide cost-share assistance and incentive payments to conduct preventative forest management practices on over 6,895 acres. The Cogongrass Treatment Cost-Share Program accepted 62 applications from private landowners, to assist with the cost of treating over 978 acres of cogongrass infestations on non-industrial private land for 2 years. The redbay ambrosia beetle and laurel wilt disease have now been found killing laurel-family tree species (such as redbay, avocado, and sassafras) in all counties in Florida. In the past year, the FFS Forest Health Section provided at least 486 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 2017, Florida FIA crews collected information on 724 plots in all 67 counties. The latest Florida forest inventory data posted on USFS websites is for 2015. The 2016 data is in the process of being approved for posting. 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

The FFS FY2017 projects received the following funding through the Forest Legacy Program (FLP): Gulf Coastal Longleaf Initiative Phase 1, \$2.29 million; Silver Springs Watershed, \$3.5 million; Wolfe Creek Forest, \$2.8 million.

Regarding the FFS FY2018 submitted projects: no determination has been made, as the federal government has not yet set the budget, and therefore the rankings of the proposed FY2018 projects have not been released either: Wakulla Caves Forest (721-acre fee-simple acquisition), Gulf Coastal Longleaf Initiative Phase 2 (3,290-acre conservation easement) or Suwannee Working Woodlands (8,262-acre conservation easement).

The FFS proposed three projects for FLP funding for FY2019. 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.

Forest Stewardship

The Florida Forest Stewardship outreach program provided over 30 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 2017. While previous work on the Florida Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Geodatabase (LPEGDB) mapped approximately 2.2 million acres of primarily natural longleaf pine stands, the current phase is targeting longleaf pine plantations, primarily on private lands. In 2017, county foresters conducted the rapid assessment field data collection for the areas identified in their counties of responsibility, with data collection ending in August. Data that was collected as part of this effort has been submitted to FNAI and is currently being processed and refined to ensure accuracy. A new version of the geodatabase is expected to be available sometime in the spring of 2018. Additionally, FNAI and FFS designed a mobile application for public land managers and private landowners to voluntarily collect data on a smartphone or tablet for their property, which would be incorporated into the geodatabase.

The FFS also continues its work on the Advanced Research Weather Research & Forecasting Model (WRF) for the Fire Management Information System (FMIS). WRF is a weather prediction model which produces multiple forecasts such as wind, barometric pressure, and temperature at selected altitudes. Results from these models are further processed to provide input into the Hybrid Single Particle Lagrangian Integrated Trajectory (HYSPLIT) model, which forecasts smoke plumes. These modeled plumes are used in the Fire Management Information System (FMIS) to grant or deny a burn authorization for a prescribed burn.

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 three significant longleaf regions of the state. This program provided 40 applicants with \$227,697 in contract funding to treat or plant a total of 2,517 acres. A multi-state redesign grant for cogongrass treatment provided funding to treat approximately 978 acres on private forestland in priority areas of the state. Over 4,858 acres were treated with funding from the Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program. Two hundred twenty-two landowners were provided technical assistance on 8,007 acres enrolled in the EQIP, WHIP, and CRP programs of the NRCS and FSA. County foresters prepared 1,315 plans for private landowners covering 170,171 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. Final results will be available in late 2018.

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.

Prescribed Burning Accomplishments on State Forests and Other Lands

During the past year, the FFS was able to treat more than 167,000 acres of Florida state forests and Babcock Ranch Preserve with prescribed fire; down from previous years in large part due to 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 2.07 million additional acres of other forestlands 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 Ready, Set, Go! throughout the state of Florida and conducted 74 programs. 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. 38 CFA foresters help cultivate stewardship, resilience, highlighting the impact of expanding forest cover and the value of our urban forests. In-state FFS Urban Forest Strike Teams deployed on both Florida coasts for Hurricane Irma response. Orange County was selected for a green infrastructure study about beneficially integrating trees into the County's stormwater management programs to help comply with stormwater permits, reduce flooding, and meet surface water quality goals. TREE CITY USA communities grew by six for a total of 179 certified or recertified, the most in Florida program history. 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. For example, over 15,000 trees were planted around Florida homes in the first two years. This is a valuable program with a future and need for continued support.

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