



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet

Oklahoma 2018



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2017 Final
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$144,920
Forest Legacy	\$0
Forest Stewardship	\$143,817
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$41,900
State Fire Assistance	\$694,805
Urban and Community Forestry	\$270,820
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$287,620
Total	\$1,583,882

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

Program Goals

- Oklahoma's cooperative forestry programs are administered by and implemented through a partnership between the State Forester, the USDA Forest Service and many private, non-profit, and government entities. These programs promote the health and productivity of the state's forestlands and improve rural economies. Emphasis is on conserving, enhancing, and protecting the benefits that forests provide in rural and urban areas.

Key Issues

- Wildfire prevention is an increased priority for Oklahoma Forestry Service. The last three years have shown a large increase in both the number of occurrences and acres burned by wildfire. Persistent severe drought increases tree mortality, creates extreme wildfire risks, and this complicates water quality and quantity issues while placing significant stress on plant communities.
- Forest stewardship practices at a watershed-scale help sustain water supplies, manage stormwater, and address water quality problems identified in the State's Comprehensive Water Plan and Oklahoma's Forest Action Plan. However, many landowners remain unaware of opportunities or lack incentives to manage their land. Very little publicly-owned forestland is actively managed under a long-term improvement plan.
- The health of Oklahoma's forests and woodlands is increasingly threatened or impacted by invasive plant species, pests such as the emerald ash borer and Asian gypsy moth, wildfires, weather extremes and long-term drought.
- Urbanization affects working forests, complicates land management and increases complexity in resource protection. Community forestry programs are challenged by declining local budgets.
- Eastern red cedar is encroaching on plant communities outside of its native range, degrading forest ecosystems, especially in the Cross Timbers region, and increasing wildfire risk. Markets for red cedar products have potential but staff capacity and expertise are insufficient to pursue opportunities.
- Based on a 2016 survey, the majority of Oklahomans assign the highest value of Oklahoma's forest to scenic beauty, air quality and water quality instead of timber production or wildlife. As Oklahoma Forestry Services tries to increase awareness and appreciation, we need to emphasize that scenic beauty and the quality of air and water are directly related to forest health, wildfire prevention and good stewardship.
- Continued fragmentation or loss of forests and woodlands from development pressures, fossil fuel exploration and extraction, and construction of power lines and pipelines all contribute to the loss of environmental services provided naturally by forests (such as stormwater management) that must be made up by other, more expensive means.

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2017 Accomplishments	Value
Population	3,751,351	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	787
Acres of Forest Land	12,284,180	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	16,442
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	5,952,000	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	9,479
Number of NIPF Landowners	71,000	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	500
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	926,000	State Fire Communities Assisted	201
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	5,340,376	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	50
Number of Rural Fire Departments	861	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	0
Cities and Towns	597	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	32
Forest Based Employment	6,770	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	1,800,028
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	6	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	21,308
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	14,123,847		

Program Highlights

Conservation Education

The State Project Learning Tree (PLT) Coordinator expanded teacher training and will develop PLT correlations with new state educational standards. The Youth Forestry Camp completed its 61th consecutive year in 2017, helping young people reconnect to the outdoors and explore natural resource careers.

Cooperative Fire Protection

State Fire Assistance supports wildland firefighting efforts across Oklahoma. State incident management teams were strengthened to respond to wildfires and other natural disasters. The Federal Excess Property Program provided equipment with a total value of almost \$7 million to departments across the state. The Volunteer Fire Assistance Program supports the fire protection efforts of rural fire departments by funding critical training programs. Sixty-five communities have completed or are developing Community Wildfire Protection or Firewise Plans, ranking Oklahoma 8th in the nation in this program.

Forest Action Plan

Oklahoma's Forest Action Plan (2010) was updated in 2015 and identifies critical issues, priority forest areas, and strategies for service delivery, and it now supports the State's participation in the Forest Legacy Program for protecting environmentally important forestlands. Work is continuing to improve the document and integrate it into division management.

Forest Health Protection

Forest pest monitoring (including early detection activities with APHIS) and prevention practices are reducing risks to the state's forests from southern pine beetle, emerald ash borer, gypsy moth, thousand cankers disease and other pests. Emerald ash borer was found in Oklahoma in 2016 and Oklahoma Forestry Services initiated an Action Plan to help landowners with this issue.

Forest Inventory and Analysis

Oklahoma's Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program has completed its expansion statewide for the first time and estimates there are 12.3 million acres of forests and woodlands in Oklahoma. FIA data is essential for determining trends and recruiting new industry, such as in red cedar utilization and biomass energy.

Forest Legacy

Oklahoma continues to consider its options for implementation of the Forest Legacy Program and is working with several land trust organizations and the State Forest Stewardship Committee. Our biggest challenge is our policy surrounding program implementation, specifically ownership.

Forest Stewardship

Land management planning is focused on priority forest areas and landscapes of concern, with increased successes reported in the Crosstimbers region. Other programs that continue to promote good stewardship are the shortleaf pine initiative, agroforestry (through NRCS), genetic loblolly pine improvement programs, and forest health emphasis. We continue to promote and expand the Huber Reforestation Project (initiated in 2005) which continues to provide free seedlings to landowners who are planting pine seedlings. All of these programs are intended to educate landowners and encourage them to establish stewardship plans to protect natural resources.

Landowner Assistance

Managing forests for resiliency and reducing wildfire risk is accomplished by providing professional expertise and prescribed burning services to property owners. A partnership with TreeCycler resulted in donations of over 27,250 seedlings to help landowners reforest areas for soil erosion control or to improve wildlife habitat.

Urban and Community Forestry

Tree Risk Assessment tools, training and projects continue to expand. We are showing communities the tools and educating them on their uses. This will emphasize our goal to improve community forest health. Tree plantings for "tornado relief" were completed in cooperation with the Tree Bank Foundation. Oklahoma recognizes 20 cities and towns and two Air Force bases as Tree City USA, 5 utility companies as Tree Line USA, and 7 universities as Tree Campus USA. OFS also worked with the City of Moore to plant hundreds of trees to aid in recovery from the most recent tornado.

Water Quality Protection

Well-managed forests provide the state with supplies of clean water for a large segment of the population. The state's timber industry follows Oklahoma's forestry BMP guidelines and has a high implementation rate of 92%.

Contact Information



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