



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet

Virgin Islands 2018



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2017 Final
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$0
Forest Legacy	\$0
Forest Stewardship	\$80,634
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$0
State Fire Assistance	\$80,000
Urban and Community Forestry	\$98,115
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$0
Total	\$258,749

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

The forestry programs in the US Virgin Islands have three primary goals. Goal One is contiguous forest conservation and management, which includes strategies to increase awareness of current forestry programs and develop educational materials on the importance of all forest types; collect data on wildlife usage of contiguous forest and corridors between forest patches; collect data on location and extent of wildfires; protect existing forests in important aquifers/watersheds; increase the number of parcels protected through conservation easement and fee simple acquisitions; increase number of trees planted; increase acreage under monitoring/control of invasive species; and reduce area of contiguous forests burned by wildland fires. Goal Two is urban forest management, which includes strategies to educate the public about the importance of protecting remarkable/heritage trees; identify and manage hazard trees; reduce the risk to forest health from invasive species; collect data to determine wildlife use of urban forest corridors; increase the number of trees planted in urban areas; develop and implement management plans for developed areas; train more certified arborists; and write and enact a Virgin Islands tree ordinance that implements many of these strategies. Goal Three is coastal forest ecosystems protection, which relies on the strategies of developing programs to educate the public about the importance of coastal forest ecosystems; collect data on and monitor the effects of climate change, especially on coastal forests; maximize forest cover to prevent erosion and sedimentation; and control invasive species in coastal forest ecosystems. Most of these strategies require the participation of other government agencies and programs and cannot be done through forestry programs alone. Thus, these goals, while ambitious, may be achieved through partnerships with both government and private agencies.

Program Goals

- The goals of the forestry programs in the US Virgin Islands are: 1. Contiguous Forest Conservation and Management 2. Urban Forest Management 3. Coastal Forest Ecosystems Protection

Key Issues

- The priority issues in the US Virgin Islands are: 1. Contiguous forest loss 2. Loss of transitional forests to development 3. Urban forest sustainability 4. Hazard mitigation 5. Water management 6. Degradation of coastal forest ecosystems 7. Invasive species

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2017 Accomplishments	Value
Population	108,612	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	52
Acres of Forest Land	45,163	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	131
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	54,990	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	127
Number of NIPF Landowners	1,000	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	0
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	7,500	State Fire Communities Assisted	0
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	13,824	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	0
Number of Rural Fire Departments	1	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	0
Cities and Towns	20	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	6
Forest Based Employment	125	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	8,758
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	5	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	3,275
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	180,500		

Program Highlights

Hurricanes Irma and Maria Forest Damage and Recovery

The International Institute of Tropical Forestry serves both Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands and is responsible for State and Private Forestry (SPF) as well as Research and Development Programs in this sector of the Caribbean. The Institute delivers all State and Private Forestry Programs, including urban forestry, to these governments, conduct research through two experimental forests and other research areas scattered through the islands, and in collaboration with the Forest and Inventory Analysis Program of the Southern Research Station.

PR and the USVI suffered impacts of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, 14 days apart. Irma, a category five hurricane, blasted the USVI, particularly the islands of St. Thomas and St. John and caused significant damage to Eastern PR. Maria a category four hurricane, few miles short of a category five, passed fifteen miles southwest of the island of St. Croix and made landfall on Puerto Rico. Forests and infrastructure experience significant damage caused by high winds and heavy rainfall. The Institute reports damages to research infrastructure and assets within the National/Experimental Forest. The Institute contacted SPF partners to assess damages to the urban forests and private forest stands, hazardous fuels accumulations, and forest health hazards, including fire. We estimated as closely as possible the immediate effects of the hurricanes to our programs and included resources for estimating damages to determine mitigation and recovery actions for affected forestlands, and for fire prevention. Implementation of hurricane recovery efforts will result in: Job creation, Economic opportunities to communities and government, Building community capacity, Training, Restoration of agroforestry practices-shade coffee- and urban canopy cover, Management of hazard situations, Restoration of outdoor recreation opportunities, Conservation Education and outreach, and Assessments of forest condition

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