



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet

Arkansas 2018



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2017 Final
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$364,490
Forest Legacy	\$0
Forest Stewardship	\$285,347
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$91,526
State Fire Assistance	\$1,372,003
Urban and Community Forestry	\$214,000
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$256,996
Total	\$2,584,362

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

Program Goals

- The cooperative programs are administered and implemented through a partnership between the State of Arkansas, the USDA Forest Service and many other private and government entities. These programs promote the health and productivity of forestlands and rural economies.
- The overarching goal is to maintain or improve the health, ecological viability, and economic productivity of urban and rural forests, as well as to protect the forests and citizens of the state. State implemented forestry programs leverage cost efficiencies 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

- The 2007 downturn in the economy is continuing to have impacts despite indications of recovery and forest industry growth. For example, growth exceeded harvest by about 40% in the last year continually overcrowding forests, which depend on limited resources (soil nutrients, sun, water), and this leads to an unhealthy, stressed and weak forest.
- Population growth, conversion of forests to other uses, and development patterns continue to complicate forest management.

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2017 Accomplishments	Value
Population	2,915,918	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	1,872
Acres of Forest Land	19,039,798	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	45,339
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	10,983,000	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	27,875
Number of NIPF Landowners	345,000	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	109
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	3,177,500	State Fire Communities Assisted	0
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	15,309,771	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	2,680
Number of Rural Fire Departments	1,000	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	937
Cities and Towns	502	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	67
Forest Based Employment	28,057	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	1,125,285
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	3	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	17,558
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	23,155,988		

Program Highlights

Arkansas' 2nd Biennial Statewide Forum on Forestry and Drinking Water

This forum and a similar one in 2015 were initiated and supported by the U. S. Endowment for Forests and Communities, the Southeastern Partnership for Forests and Water and the Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Committee. The forum's purpose was to strengthen regional, state and local watershed collaboration focused on the connection between forests and drinking water. The Arkansas Forestry Commission secured a US Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration Grant in 2016 to continue the work of the Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Committee and to support the forum.

Cooperative Fire Protection

The AFC, with partners, funded, organized and provided instruction for the annual Arkansas Prescribed Burn Academy. The AFC similarly participates in the annual Arkansas River Valley Wildland Fire Academy with an average annual attendance of over 300 students from all wildland fire agencies attending National Wildfire Coordinating Group courses.

The AFC Aviation Department has fifteen fixed wing aircraft. Thirteen aircraft are single engine airplanes which are used primarily for fire detection. These aircraft are also used for forestry related surveys such as insect/disease infestation, storm damage and Best Management Practices (BMP) flights. Two AFC aircraft are twin engine aircraft that are used primarily for an Air Attack platform that flies with the Single Engine Air Tankers. The AFC recently purchased a 1972 Cessna 182. The aircraft received new paint, interior and avionics upgrades prior to the purchase. This aircraft is replacing a Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) aircraft. With the help of grant funds digital radios were purchased and are now in the process of being programmed and installed in each aircraft. With the help of the AFC Communications Department, the Aviation Department has been testing our new digital capable radios. All testing has gone well and the remaining installations will be completed during the next quarter.

AFC training instructors conducted 83 eight-hour Wildland Fire Suppression Training classes for 1,830 firefighters representing 661 volunteer fire departments. Fire departments are provided information on state and federal grants and assistance and meet with fire equipment vendors.

The Federal Excess Personnel Property and DOD Fire Fighter Program assisted Arkansas in acquiring and placing 114 firefighting vehicles and financed 18 interest-free loans to rural communities for equipment. The Volunteer Fire Assistance Program awarded 62 Volunteer Fire (WVVF) grant-related suppression kits.

Firewise

Arkansas continues to be the leader in Firewise Communities with 175 certified communities at the end of

2017.

Forest Health Protection

No southern pine beetle (SPB) activity was detected in 2017, and two SPB were captured in Ashley County during the spring SPB trapping survey. The Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program continues to provide incentives to landowners for thinning dense pine stands. In 2017, cost-share was provided for 43 projects that accomplished work on 2,130 acres.

AFC used the tablet-based aerial survey tool known as DMSM, Digital Mobile Sketch-Mapper, to aerially survey for Ips bark beetles, jumping oak gall, and various other forest disturbances. Ips bark beetle outbreaks were limited to the Ouachita Mountains. Though SPB is not a current problem in AR, aerial survey will be considered an important tool for SPB management when the beetle becomes more abundant.

AFC continued involvement in addressing oak decline and monarch/pollinator habitat. A project area in the Poison Springs State Forest was reserved for invasive plant removal and pollinator habitat restoration.

Monitoring of emerald ash borer continued to be an important function for AFC. The borer is now confirmed in 18 Arkansas counties, and the observable ash mortality is expected to increase substantially in the near future. AFC is working with other state agencies to both detect the insect and provide information to the public.

Forest Inventory and Analysis

A valuable economic tool for Arkansas is its only continuous statewide forest inventory. The Forest Inventory and Analysis program is regularly used as a source to justify economic development and as a gauge to evaluate forest health.

Forest Legacy

Using a 2016 Forest Legacy grant, the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission purchased the 937-acre Hazel Creek tract of the Pine Flatwoods Recovery Initiative project, fee simple, for \$1,350,000. The Hazel Creek tract is located in Southeast Arkansas and is now part of the Warren Prairie State Natural Area and Wildlife Management Area. The Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission will restore the tract to forest conditions that favor the recovery plans for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker colonies in Arkansas and Louisiana.

Arkansas submitted two fee simple project proposals for the FY 2019 funding request cycle: the Pine Flatwoods Recovery Initiative – Tenmile Creek (638 acres); and the Hot Springs Recharge (790 acres).

Forest Stewardship

The AFC worked with consulting foresters to write and implement 236 Forest Stewardship Plans on 45,339 acres. Of that acreage, 27,875 acres were considered to be priority acres based on Arkansas's Forest Action Plan. There are 407,385 acres of Arkansas forestland currently covered by the Arkansas Forest Stewardship Program, with 215,132 of these acres considered to be in important forest resource areas. A total of 1,501 landowners received assistance through the Stewardship Program. AFC also hosted a series of BMP workshops for landowners in addition to the routine number of logger training sessions. The AFC also actively participates in a tree improvement cooperative to improve loblolly and shortleaf pine and select oak.

Landowner Assistance

AFC, in partnership with federal and state governments and private organizations, continued to provide landowner training and assistance, and facilitated implementation of landowner's management plans to ensure forest sustainability. Assistance is provided through programs such as the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership and the Western Arkansas Woodland Restoration Program (WAWRP), which addresses declining forest conditions in 29 counties. Thirty-six forest management plans were written covering 2,242 acres under this program. Furthermore, technical assistance was provided to 76 landowners covering 4,242 acres in WAWRP.

AFC is a key partner in a special initiative funded by the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities that focuses on improving forest management by connecting African American landowners to organized networks of forestry support including federal and state government programs, businesses, and nonprofit conservation, legal, and community development organizations. The program helps landowners solve and prevent problems of insecure land tenure caused by heirs' property and inadequate estate planning. Insecure title is a major barrier to forestry support programs and forest management.

Urban and Community Forestry

The AFC Urban Forestry Program provided educational, technical and/or financial assistance to communities and cities containing 1,283,854 Arkansans. Over 19,000 volunteer hours were accumulated by these citizens through community tree planting projects as well as tree board and workshop participation. The AFC passed through USFS grant funds to several communities. An example of which was a grant to the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service to create a demonstration bioswale to serve as an example of how infrastructure can be built to protect water quality. The bioswale was built near a tributary of the Illinois River, which flows into a drinking water supply reservoir is also an impaired stream.

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