



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet

South Carolina 2018



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2017 Final
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$508,482
Forest Legacy	\$0
Forest Stewardship	\$75,785
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$288,165
State Fire Assistance	\$1,543,688
Urban and Community Forestry	\$124,500
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$213,988
Total	\$2,754,608

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 among the State of South Carolina, the USDA Forest Service and many other private and government entities. These programs protect and promote the health and productivity of forestlands and rural economies. Emphasis focuses on timber and other forest products, wildlife, water resources, rural economies, and conservation practices.
- 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 timber volume, increase forestland value, and improve sustainability, and the programs do so in a voluntary and non-regulatory manner. The programs are a significant aid to retaining working forests.

Key Issues

- The State continues to focus on two key initiatives: protecting South Carolina forest resources and further developing the awareness of the contributions these resources make to the economy and quality of life for SC citizens.
- Other key issues include invasive species, natural resource sustainability, population growth and urbanization, changing landowner goals, endangered and threatened species, physical/social/mental health benefits, urban canopy cover, forest parcelization/fragmentation, and scenic resources/outdoor recreation.
- Wildland fire emergency response capacity declined in recent years due to funding cuts. With the improving economy and funding, more firefighters have been added and additional new equipment (enclosed cab tractors, transports, firetracks and engines) has been purchased. A major initiative was launched in 2013 to replace all open cab tractors and restore numbers of firefighters to a sufficient level for an average fire season. Forty-nine percent of tractors have been replaced.

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2017 Accomplishments	Value
Population	4,625,364	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	2,324
Acres of Forest Land	12,931,384	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	18,893
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	9,712,000	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	7,814
Number of NIPF Landowners	301,000	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	500
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	926,000	State Fire Communities Assisted	75
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	12,730,912	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	2,500
Number of Rural Fire Departments	539	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	305
Cities and Towns	269	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	75
Forest Based Employment	35,116	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	2,485,905
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	3	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	9,305
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	34,915,155		

Program Highlights

Cooperative Fire Protection

State Fire Assistance (SFA) provides funding to support the wildland firefighting operations throughout the state. Preparedness funds are used to supply Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), water handling equipment and supplies, training (wildland and leadership), air operations support, and upgraded communications equipment. The SC Forestry Commission's (SCFC) Computer Aided Dispatch System (CADS), consistently recognized as one of the best in the country, is also maintained with these funds. SFA mitigation funds in the amount of \$194,830 were used by the SCFC to provide assistance to 23 communities in the wildland urban interface (WUI). SFA mitigation funds in the amount of \$67,590 were used for fuel mitigation on 26 tracts which treated 1,394 acres. Wildfire Hazard and Risk Assessments were completed for 15 communities. Over 212 Community Wildfire Protection Plans have been developed covering approximately 708 communities. The Firewise Mobile Exhibit was used on 6 different occasions by the SCFC and USDI Savannah River reaching over 2,000 people. The Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) program helps rural fire departments support their fire prevention and suppression efforts by building capacity to respond, especially in the wildland urban interface. \$187,158 of VFA funds were allocated to 60 fire departments. There are 514 CARs (Communities at Risk) that VFA grants have helped protect. The Federal Excess Personal Property Program (FEPP) is another way the SCFC works with rural fire departments to increase their firefighting capacity by providing equipment and vehicles on loan from the USDA Forest Service. There are 812 pieces of equipment on loan to approximately 275 departments throughout the state, valued at \$16.3 million. SCFC also administers the Firefighter Property Program (FPP) to make additional equipment available for fire response organizations. There are currently 112 items, with an acquisition value of \$6.3 million, in service.

Forest Health Protection

In 2017 southern pine beetle (SPB) activity increased with Pickens, Oconee and Anderson Counties, based on spring trapping data. A late summer 20% survey revealed seven spots in Oconee County and the adjacent county in Georgia. All of these spots were on Forest Service land and had factors that increased the risk of SPB outbreaks, including overstocking, susceptible species (shortleaf pine), and drought. We are working with the Forest Service in the State of South Carolina to use management strategies on these spots, as well as identifying other areas at risk and applying mitigation strategies. Approximately 128 acres of forest susceptible to SPB were thinned pre-commercially. 2,461 acres of pines were planted at reduced densities to decrease susceptibility to SPB. Oak wilt continued to be a problem in water oaks in Aiken, Barnwell and Lexington Counties. Conversations with landowners strongly suggest that the outbreak of oak wilt started after the 2014 ice storm; broken limbs allowed insect vectors carrying the fungal pathogen into the vascular tissue of the tree. Cogongrass infestations have

been detected in 13 SC counties, but only five of these were active in 2017, covering less than 20 acres. Hurricane Matthew caused little immediate damage, but pines on the barrier islands suffered from salt deposited during the tidal surge. Many of the pines on the barrier islands are 80 years old or more and are starting to succumb to a variety of stresses and the hurricane probably hastened the process. The summer of 2017 was a dry year and we continue to see spotty mortality of susceptible trees from the sandhills to the piedmont region.

Forest Legacy

South Carolina was one of the first states to participate in the Forest Legacy Program (FLP) and has been a national leader in acreage and funding. To date, the South Carolina Forest Legacy Program has completed 13 fee-simple acquisition projects (65,914 acres) and two conservation easements (12,080 acres). In total, 77,994 acres of working forest land and valuable wildlife habitat has been protected across the state. The FLP is unique in South Carolina in that it resides within the SC Department of Natural Resources, specifically in the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division. A TWS Certified Wildlife Biologist is the coordinator of the program. During FY17, seven potential project tracts were visited and a total of 319 acres were acquired. The FY20 FLP Acquisition Grant chosen for submission was the "Liberty Hill Extension," which consists of one tract named "The Doughnut Hole."

Forest Stewardship

A goal of the SCFC is to conserve and manage working forest landscapes in our state to achieve multiple objectives. The Forest Stewardship Program is our primary vehicle to promote the informed management of forestlands and to provide landowners with the technical assistance they need to successfully manage their forests. The SCFC continues to emphasize Forest Stewardship Plan development and landowner recognition programs, focusing efforts on priority areas identified in the state's Forest Action Plan. Private forestry consultants have historically played a very active role in producing Stewardship Plans for private landowners across the state. However, decreased funding for the program has eliminated our ability to partner with the private sector for consultant-written plans. Thus, the number of new and revised plans completed by consulting foresters has decreased significantly.

Currently 339,167 acres are enrolled in the Forest Stewardship Program in South Carolina with 161,284 of these acres being in Important Forest Resource Areas. Implementation monitoring indicates that approximately 83% of South Carolina's current Forest Stewardship Plans are being implemented. In addition to adhering to the standard implementation monitoring protocol for FY17, SCFC included additional evaluation of specific management outcomes that have resulted from the implementation of Forest Stewardship Plans. Results indicate that Forest Stewardship plans are having a positive impact on specific management outcomes of interest in South Carolina, resulting in more retention of working forests and increased timber production which generates more forestry jobs. Results also indicate that landowners with Forest Stewardship Management Plans are significantly more likely to be engaged in active management of their woodlands than the average landowner.

Resource Development

The impact of the forest industry on South Carolina's economy has grown from \$17.4 billion in 2006 to \$21 billion as of 2015. The industry segment using small-diameter wood remains strong, while the solid wood product industry continues to recover from the housing downturn. There are 97 primary and 774 secondary, or value-added, forest product mills in the state that support 84,425 jobs.

South Carolina has an abundant resource with more standing wood inventory than ever recorded. The wood supply is balanced between hardwood and softwood forests as well as between natural pine and planted pine stands. However, wood supply projections point to a decline in small-diameter pine until tree planting increases. Projections of large-diameter pine inventory continue to increase creating an opportunity for economic growth.

The SCFC operates two forest tree seedling nursery and tree improvement facilities in support of forest landowners and tree planting. The Tree Improvement Program, headquartered at Niederhof Forestry Center, includes 1.5 generation longleaf pine and 3rd generation loblolly pine seed orchards. Taylor Nursery produces containerized and bare root pine and hardwood seedlings for forest landowners.

The Environmental Management program also falls within the Resource Development Division. Ongoing training programs have routinely resulted in 95+% compliance rates with state-approved Best

Management Practices. Specialized BMP Foresters work with landowners and loggers to minimize impacts to water quality and site productivity.

Urban and Community Forestry

Although federal funding for the SCFC's Urban and Community Forestry program this year remained near the base level, agency Urban Foresters were able to provide technical and educational assistance to 66 communities, 15 non-profit organizations, 6 educational institutions, and 30 other entities. With the assistance of a Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) grant awarded in 2015, the SCFC provided financial assistance to a Council of Governments, a non-profit organization, a county, and 2 cities to develop their green infrastructure plans. An additional LSR grant was awarded in 2016 to study the impacts of urban tree canopy on storm water runoff. The urban foresters conducted 16 programs (1,048 attendees) for a variety of organizations across the state related to topics concerning green infrastructure planning, storm water management, arboriculture and urban forestry management.

In addition, 2 arborist workshops offering continuing education credits were conducted with over 200 participants. These workshops were conducted in conjunction with TreesSC and were funded with private sponsorship in addition to federal funding. The SCFC also provided funding to TreesSC to hold an annual conference in which speakers addressed topics such as Arboriculture Best Management Practices and the history of the urban and community forestry program.

Contact Information



South Carolina Forestry Commission

Scott Phillips
State Forester
5500 Broad River Road
Columbia, SC 29221-1707
803-896-8800
kodama@forestry.state.sc.us

US Forest Service Southern Region

Ken Arney
Deputy Regional Forester
USDA Forest Service
1720 Peachtree Street, Suite 760S
Atlanta, GA 30309
404-347-4178
karney@fs.fed.us
