



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet Arkansas 2020



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2019 Final
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$418,164
Forest Legacy	\$1,417,000
Forest Stewardship	\$240,020
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$60,000
State Fire Assistance	\$1,350,995
Urban and Community Forestry	\$215,000
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$335,005
Total	\$4,036,184

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

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture – Forestry Division (formerly the Arkansas Forestry Commission, hereafter, The Division) administers the state's cooperative forestry programs. The Division has 60 work centers that operate in all 75 counties of the state. Division employees provide assistance across the state's 19 million acres of forests. The Division facilitates forest management decisions for non-industrial private landowners. When it comes to forestry products and timber production, Arkansas is nationally ranked as number six in forestry products valued at over \$6.4 billion.

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 communities.
- 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 resiliency, and do so in a voluntary and non-regulatory manner.

Key Issues

- Land use changes and development continue to complicate forest management considerations. Maintaining healthy watersheds is a priority to protect drinking water quality.
- Growing urbanization removes forests. An opportunity exists to provide education and outreach about the benefits of urban forests.
- The demographic of the non-industrial forest landowner is changing and requires new approaches to encourage forest management.
- Decreasing timber markets has resulted in an aging timber resource and a lack of utilization of small diameter trees. In addition, forests are increasingly susceptible to health and fire concerns due to the unbalanced growth vs removal ratios.

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2019 Accomplishments	Value
Population	2,915,918	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	2,384
Acres of Forest Land	18,945,404	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	36,890
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	10,983,000	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	24,272
Number of NIPF Landowners	345,000	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	149
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	3,171,500	State Fire Communities Assisted	0
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	15,247,900	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	2,050
Number of Rural Fire Departments	925	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	0
Cities and Towns	502	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	54
Forest Based Employment	28,057	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	1,175,948
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	3	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	33,930
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	28,317,293		

Program Highlights

Cooperative Fire Protection

The Division, with partners, funded, organized and provided instruction for the annual Prescribed Fire as a Management Tool School. This weeklong class raises the professionalism of prescribed burning in the state. The Division similarly participates in the annual Arkansas River Valley Wildland Fire Academy with an average annual attendance of over 400 students from all wildland fire agencies attending National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) courses.

The Division owns thirteen fixed wing aircraft that are centrally located at the Malvern Municipal Airport. Eleven 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 Division aircraft are twin engine aircraft that are used primarily for an Air Attack platform that flies with the Single Engine Air Tankers. With the help of grant funds digital radios were purchased and have been programmed and installed in each aircraft.

The Division's training instructors conducted 85 eight-hour Wildland Fire Suppression Training classes for 1,578 firefighters representing 635 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 72 pieces of firefighting equipment and financed \$341,928.22 spread across 26 interest-free loans to rural communities for firefighting equipment. The Volunteer Fire Assistance Program awarded 79 Wildfire Suppression Kits through the Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grant at a value of \$3,000.00 each.

Arkansas continues to be one of the top national participants in the Firewise USA program with 80 recognized sites throughout the state.

Forest Health Protection

No southern pine beetle (SPB) activity was detected by either ground or aerial surveys in 2019, and zero SPB were captured in Arkansas during the SPB Prediction Trapping Survey. The Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program continues to provide incentives to landowners for reducing risk to pine bark beetles.

In Arkansas, Forest Health Protection funding made possible the testing of technological efficiencies such as the integration of UAV technology and GIS enabled phone apps into ground surveys. As a service to private landowners, insect and disease infestations can be mapped with UAVs.

Forest Inventory & Analysis

Statewide forest inventory data is regularly used as a source to justify economic development and as a gauge to forest health.

Field data from Forest Inventory & Analysis recently indicated that annual gross growth of softwood and hardwood greatly exceeds annual removals. This trend can be viewed as an opportunity for the utilization of timber and biomass in new markets. For example, FIA data helped analysts determine that wood is available for the production of cross laminated timber (CLT) in Arkansas.

Forest Legacy

The Division negotiated the fee simple acquisition of a 287.82-acre tract for \$975,000.00, which will be finalized in FY2020. The tract will be designated as non-federal cost share Forest Legacy property for the Hot Springs Forest Legacy Project. The Hot Springs Forest currently consists of 361 acres and is in West Central Arkansas. Hot Springs Forest is managed by The Division along with the Poison Springs State Forest.

Arkansas submitted two fee simple project proposals for the FY 2021 funding request cycle: the Pine Flatwoods Recovery Initiative – Tenmile Creek (638 acres); and the Hot Springs Forest (1,111 acres).

Forest Stewardship

The Division works with a diverse group of partners and professionals to conserve, protect, and enhance Arkansas's forests through the Forest Stewardship Program. The program functions as a gateway for private landowners to access professional assistance managing their property to fulfill their management objective. Enrolled landowners receive a Forest Stewardship management plan which serves as a roadmap for the landowner to achieve the desired outcome for their property.

The Division worked with consulting foresters to write and implement 180 Forest Stewardship Plans on 36,890 acres. Of that acreage, 24,272 acres were priority acres based on Arkansas's Forest Action Plan. There are 373,201 acres of Arkansas forestland currently covered by the Arkansas Forest Stewardship Program, with 206,442 of these acres considered to be in important forest resource areas. A total of 1,744 landowners received assistance through the Stewardship Program. The Division also hosted a series of Best Management Practices (BMP) workshops for landowners in addition to the routine number of logger training sessions. The Division also actively participates in a tree improvement cooperative to improve loblolly and shortleaf pine and select oak.

Landowner Assistance

The Division, 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. The Division 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.

Landscape Scale Restoration

The Arkansas Forests and Drinking Water Collaborative operates as a collection of water utilities, forest industry, state and federal agencies and non-profit conservation association. These entities work together to improve collaboration between water and forestry sectors for the benefit of both. As a component of the Southeastern Partnership for Forests and Water, the Arkansas collaborative aims to facilitate conservation and encourage manage the forested watersheds that are important to drinking water. The collaborative conducts statewide forums with its members to discuss how to utilize source water protection funding sources to achieve forest management.

Urban and Community Forestry

The Division provides educational, technical and/or financial assistance to Arkansas communities and cities with a combined population of 1,175,948. Volunteers provided over 33,900 hours of service in

community forestry programs. Four urban forestry grants were awarded for community improvement projects; the communities of Little Rock, Jefferson County, Eureka Springs, and Mammoth Spring received grants totaling \$32,417, which was met with a 50/50 match by the recipients. Projects included the purchase of tree care supplies in Little Rock and Mammoth Spring, the construction of green infrastructure demonstration projects in Jefferson County, and a tree inventory and the development of a community arboretum in Eureka Springs.

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