



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet

Alaska 2019



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2018 Final
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$947,239
Forest Legacy	\$0
Forest Stewardship	\$325,000
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$0
State Fire Assistance	\$3,858,484
Urban and Community Forestry	\$263,700
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$384,675
Total	\$5,779,098

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

State and Private Forestry programs provide technical, educational, and financial assistance to landowners, resource managers, cities, and communities with a primary goal of maintaining and improving the health, sustainability and productivity of Alaska's urban and rural forests and related economies. These programs are delivered to our customers through a partnership between the State of Alaska and the USDA Forest Service, in cooperation with many private and other government entities.

Program Goals

- Increase cost-effectiveness through the use of partnerships in delivery.
- Increase values through sustained productivity of urban and rural forests.
- Utilize voluntary and non-regulatory approaches.

Key Issues

- Threats to Alaska's communities and forests from wildfire - Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) management especially where hazardous fuels build-ups occur due to spruce beetle activity. 2018 saw continued increases in spruce beetle activity in the Susitna River valley and on the Kenai Peninsula. The 2018 wildfire season was a below average year, for the third consecutive year, with a statewide total of 411,591.3 acres burned and 360 reported fires.
- Invasive and exotic species are a growing threat to Alaska's forested ecosystems and many invasive species are established in the state. Partnerships with organizations in the Alaska Invasive Species Partnership and the Alaska Pest Risk Assessment Committee increase our ability to detect and respond to new infestations.
- As communities expand so does the need to manage their natural resources. However, Alaska communities lack public and private sector arborists and urban foresters to manage public trees and forests. Providing technical and financial assistance helps communities maximize the environmental, social, and economic benefits of trees, including clean air and water, stormwater treatment, enhanced aesthetics and property values, and habitat for wildlife.
- Climate related forest health problems have already been documented in Alaska (i.e., spruce beetle outbreaks, yellow-cedar decline, and record wildfire seasons). More applied research on climate change is needed so forest managers can develop strategies to help Alaskans adapt and prepare.
- Though Alaska contains a large amount of public forestland, critical native allotments are periodically sold and developed into residential or resort housing which negatively impact fish and wildlife habitat.
- Alaska's villages need renewable energy opportunities to supplement heating and power. Woody biomass, which could be used as a source of energy, is readily available from milling residues in Southeast and as a by-product of hazardous fuel and other treatments in South Central and Interior.

Cost effective reforestation after timber harvest in the boreal forest is a challenge and will need to be addressed as harvests for wood energy are conducted.

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2018 Accomplishments	Value
Population	710,231	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	332
Acres of Forest Land	128,577,000	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	381,647
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	35,875,000	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	272,809
Number of NIPF Landowners	82,000	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	60
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	88,700,000	State Fire Communities Assisted	87
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	1,250,452	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	1,847
Number of Rural Fire Departments	256	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	0
Cities and Towns	148	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	7
Forest Based Employment	2,000	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	359,689
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	5	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	497
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	27,543,200		

Program Highlights

Cooperative Fire Protection

The Alaska Division of Forestry (DOF) protects the majority of the WUI and road-accessible areas in the state; approximately 40% of forested lands. The USFS provides assistance to DOF through three program components. State Fire Assistance (SPCF) \$3,024,643 was allocated to help hire, train and equip 1445 firefighters for state-wide and national deployments. SFA funds fire prevention/education programs, and fire program management focusing on partnerships, and interagency coordination and cooperation. In 2018, \$671.2k of SFA funded WUI hazard fuel mitigation projects in the Municipality of Anchorage (3 communities) and 3 communities in the Copper River Basin. WUI grant funding was also awarded to update 19 CWPPS on the Kenai Peninsula. SFA program dollars funded 154 prevention/education programs for schools, civic groups, youth organizations, home owners, etc. The DOF developed 2 new CWPP and updated 1. 32 consultations and/or fire-risk assessments and 7 follow-up home inspections were conducted. Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA-SPUF) funds are used to increase firefighter safety, improve firefighting capabilities of rural volunteer fire departments, and enhance protection in the urban-wildland interface. VFA funds provided \$277.1k to assist 39 rural fire departments. 735 volunteer firefighters received training from DOF. FEPP: Since 1971 DOF has acquired federal excess equipment/supplies. Some equipment is assigned to cooperating volunteer and structural fire departments. FEPP continues to migrate to the new Fire Fighter Property (FFP) program. The results will be reduced administrative workload while providing much needed equipment to the DOF and its cooperators. DOF has continued to dispose of federal excess equipment/supplies that no longer meet the needs of DOF or its local government cooperators.

Forest Health Protection

This program provides a wide range of assistance to forest landowners, resource managers, and others, and is a primary source of forest health expertise in the state. The program is built on monitoring native and invasive forest pests, pest management, technology development, and technical assistance. In 2018, aerial pest detection surveyors mapped approximately 1.14 million acres of forest damaged by insects, diseases, and abiotic agents within 28 million acres surveyed, a 35.7% increase over 2017. Notable activity was observed with: spruce beetle, primarily in Southcentral (592,600 acres); aspen leaf miner across the Interior (239,800 acres); invasive birch leaf miners across Southcentral (108,600 acres); and hemlock sawfly in Southeast (48,600 acres).

The spruce beetle outbreak continued to expand in southcentral Alaska in 2018. Five well-attended community meetings addressing this outbreak were conducted across the impacted area and organized in cooperation with the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service (CES). This year also marked the initiation of www.alaskasprucebeetle.org, a cooperative spruce beetle information website developed by the Forest Health Protection Program, CES, and US Forest Service – Forest Health Protection (FHP). More than 450 landowners, managers, and media contacts were provided spruce beetle-related information or assistance by the Forest Health Protection program in 2018.

In coordination with the Alaska Pest Risk Assessment Committee members, including the US Forest Service – FHP staff, US Customs and Border Protection, CES, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and others, the Forest Health Protection Program facilitated an Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) program for non-native bark beetle and woodborers at 14 high risk locations across Alaska. The program has been ongoing for more than a decade and no targeted invasive pests have been detected to date.

Forest Legacy

No Forestry Legacy Program for Alaska

Forest Stewardship

The Alaska Division of Forestry uses the Forest Stewardship Program to give landowners forestry assistance. Goals are to increase economic and environmental benefits of forested land, and to keep land productive. Stewardship Plans qualify landowners for management practice implementation funding. One landowner received federal funding in 2018 through the Natural Resources Conservation Service to reforest following a timber harvest using recommendations made in a Stewardship Plan. Additional landowners are pursuing funding through this program for spruce beetle mortality mitigation & reforestation using recommendations made in their Stewardship Plan.

Stewardship Plans address forest health, reforestation, timber improvement, & wildfire defensible space. In FY18, Stewardship Plans were completed for 38 landowners covering 1,315 acres. Defensible space & spruce beetle mitigation were two common goals for landowners. Using pass-through sub-grants, Forest Stewardship Plans were developed by Kenai Natives Association for 20,300 acres & Sealaska for 362,000 acres; a sub-grant was awarded to Goldbelt, Inc. for development of a Stewardship Plan for 29,000 acres.

Thinning, spruce beetle mitigation, firebreak construction, & moose habitat enhancement are common goals for ANCSA corporations.

Seventeen individual landowner plans & 23 Alaska Native Corporation plans (totaling more than 2.7 million acres) were monitored for progress toward implementing Stewardship Plan objectives. 83% of all plans were being implemented.

Administration of wildfire defensible space WUI sub-grants (Wildland Urban Interface grants from Council of Western State Foresters) continued leading to completion of 40 home safety improvements (spruce thinning and removal); more than 200 additional landowners were educated about the importance of wildfire defensible space. 88 individual Firewise assessments were conducted using WUI funding. Program information can be found at <http://forestry.alaska.gov>.

Urban and Community Forestry

The mission of the Alaska Community Forestry program is to help communities build effective, self-sustaining community forestry programs with strong local support. This is the only agency in Alaska that exists to provide technical and financial assistance and educational opportunities that develop and support local community forestry. Program staff provided technical assistance and/or training to local governments, agencies, organizations, businesses and individuals in 12 communities: Anchorage, Fairbanks, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Juneau, Ketchikan, Kodiak, North Pole, Palmer, Sitka, Talkeetna, Tok, Wasilla. Program staff continued work on two Landscape Scale Restoration grant-funded projects. One project is using green infrastructure to restore the Chena River watershed in Fairbanks. The other project is in Anchorage to restore a seven-mile stretch of Campbell Creek to improve water quality, forest health, fish and wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and user safety. Five local government, nonprofit, state and federal organizations are partnering on this project.

Program staff used remaining FY13 grant funds to issue contracts to edit and finalize the 2010 Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) Forestland Assessment, and to conduct an updated 2018 MOA Tree Canopy Assessment. Contracts were issued to a local consulting firm for the 2010 assessment editing project and to Davey Resource Group to do the updated canopy assessment.

Seven communities, home to more than half the state's residents, attained Tree City USA status. The

state's three major electric utilities were certified as Tree Line USA utilities, and the University of Alaska-Anchorage was certified as a Tree Campus USA.
81 Volunteers donated 508 hours to support community forestry efforts in Alaska this year.

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