



## State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet Alabama 2025



### Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2024 Final
Community Forests and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$384,027
Forest Legacy	\$3,750,000
Forest Stewardship	\$191,504
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$0
State Fire Assistance	\$1,347,589
Urban and Community Forestry	\$300,000
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$398,654
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,371,774</b>

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

### Program Goals

- The Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) is committed to protecting and sustaining the state's forest resources using professionally applied stewardship principles and education. The AFC utilizes cooperative programs to maximize cost effectiveness through the use of partnerships in program delivery to increase forestland value and sustainability and does so in a voluntary and non-regulatory manner.
- The cooperative programs are administered and implemented through a partnership between the State of Alabama, the USDA Forest Service, Auburn University, Alabama A&M University, Tuskegee University, the Alabama Forestry Association and many other private and government entities. These programs promote the health and productivity of forestlands and rural economies. Emphasis focuses on forest sustainability and the production of commodity and amenity values and benefits.

### Key Issues

- Even with a historically robust forest industry, FIA data shows the average annual rate of growth-to-removals ratio for all species continues to increase. The Alabama Forestry Commission has hired a full time economic development representative to focus on expanding markets for Alabama forest products.
- Fragmentation and parcelization has led to smaller tracts of forestland. Reaching more landowners with assistance specifically designed to meet their individual needs is a key to growing the number of acres under multiple benefit forest management in the state.
- Better technology has improved river and stream channel delineation, increasing the number of miles that the AFC tries to protect from 77,242 miles to 132,419 miles – almost doubling what we thought existed. Through education, site assessment, and complaint resolution, the AFC and forest industry can make a strong case that silvicultural operations with properly implemented BMPs do not degrade water quality in the state.
- It is imperative to maintain a strong forestry water quality program through the use of forestry BMPs. Through education, site assessment, and complaint resolution, the AFC and forest industry can make a strong case that silvicultural operations maintain and/or improve water quality in the state.
- Prescribed burning is important to Alabama's fire-adapted ecosystems. A significant portion of Alabama's land area is subject to a wildfire threat.
- Invasions, including new species of non-native plants, pathogens and animals into forests continue to spread. These non-native invasive species, some of which are new to Alabama, increasingly erode forest productivity, hinder forest use and management activities, and degrade diversity and wildlife habitat.

- Under certain circumstances, forest insects and diseases have a significant impact on forest health and productivity through the effects of excessive defoliation, progressive decline, significant decay, root damage, stem dieback, species alteration, or outright mortality.
- Despite the rather mild climate, Alabama is prone to numerous adverse weather events such as hurricanes, tornadoes, ice storms, and droughts.

## Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2024 Accomplishments	Value
Population	5,024,279	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	17,643
Acres of Forest Land	23,064,350	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	31,705
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	16,563,891	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	12,677
Number of NIPF Landowners	139,863	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	970
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	687,000	State Fire Communities Assisted	0
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	27,720,994	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	750
Number of Rural Fire Departments	986	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	0
Cities and Towns	462	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	110
Forest Based Employment	40,837	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	2,350,081
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	2	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	19,341
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	21,728,209		

## Program Highlights

### Cooperative Fire Protection

In 2024 the AFC performed two Hazardous Fuel Reduction burns in high fire danger areas. These burns were:

400 Acres in Cleburne County at Mt Cheaha in the Talledega National Forest, and 400 Acres in Baldwin County at Gulf State Park near Bon Secure Wildlife Refuge.

During this time frame AFC suppressed 1,731 fires for a total of 34,010 acres.

### Economic Action

The AFC contributes to forest products marketing and economic development in a significant number of ways. The AFC is critically involved with the USDA Forest Service's Forest Inventory & Analysis (FIA) program. FIA provides vital statistical data pertaining to Alabama's forest resources. Consultants, forest industry representative, and economic development practitioners utilize FIA data to make important decisions with regards to where to locate new wood products mills and where to make expansions to existing mills, and often they receive this data from AFC personnel. The AFC's involvement with the FIA program consists of forest resource data collection by field crews and the fulfillment of forest resource data requests by the FIA Coordinator.

The FIA program also conducts the Timber Products Output (TPO) studies to estimate industrial and non-industrial uses of roundwood across the United States. Primary wood-using mills are sampled, by state, to estimate roundwood usage. Historically, the TPO study was a periodic 100 percent canvass of all primary mills and has moved to an annual sample design nationwide. The AFC conducts this survey annually and is tasked with the collection of data from 48 primary wood using mills in 2023.

The primary way in which the AFC contributes to the marketing of Alabama's forest resources is by the annual development of their "Forest Resource Report." This report contains valuable economic status indicators of the forest industry and forest resources.

**Forest Health Protection**

The number of southern pine beetle infestations exploded in 2024 following drought conditions in the 4th quarter of 2023. Fiscal year 2024 saw a 1,496% increase in SPB spots in comparison to 2023. Dry, hot early summer conditions added further stress to pine stands and likely aided rapid SPB infestation.

AFC pilots surveyed 65 out of 67 counties for SPB spots. Every National Forest in Alabama was surveyed as well. The annual aerial surveys began on July 8, 2024, and continued through the end of the fiscal year using both traditional aerial reconnaissance and satellite imagery surveillance. From the aerial surveys, 10,253 spots were detected affecting an estimated 3.1 million pine trees, the most beetle related mortality in Alabama history. Following aerial surveys, the AFC responded by assisting 2,034 landowners with stand management recommendations to help suppress SPB outbreaks. In addition, the AFC conducted 45 outreach presentations to the public statewide pertaining to forest health. To bolster the agency's capacity, the forest health section provided training for all new agency employees in 2024 as well as full day southern pine beetle regional trainings for county staff.

**Forest Legacy**

The Forest Legacy Program had lots of accomplishments during 2024. We completed an appraisal on FY24 Dugdown Mountain Corridor Stateline-Alabama Project and are working towards a closing in calendar year 2025. We also received funding for two additional projects: Weogufka State Forest Expansion (~402 acres) and Dugdown Connector (~9,888 acres). These projects once closed will add thousands of acres to the state forest system. The AFC proceeded with starting the appraisal process for Weogufka State Forest Expansion with an anticipated closing date in calendar year 2025.

**Forest Stewardship**

2024 was a productive year for the stewardship program. With the ANRC dissolving a new TREASURE forest committee and bylaws needed to be established. With major changes we saw an uptick in TREASURE forest nominations with a total of 20 new nominations up 7 from the previous year. Stewardship remained steady with 28 nominations only 2 lower from the previous year. The year was ended with training across the state and hopefully will increase TREASURE forest and stewardship numbers for 2025.

**Landowner Assistance**

On October 1st, 2024, the Farm Service Agency announced funding for the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) available to landowners adversely impacted by drought and pine beetles. The AFC has served as the technical service provider for this effort and at the end of 2024, the agency has completed or is in the process of providing technical assistance and stand management recommendations for 226 applications.

**Urban and Community Forestry**

The U&CF Program provides technical assistance to municipalities and other organizations within Alabama that are planning, developing, and managing urban forests. In 2024, there were 82 Tree City USA communities celebrating recognition. There were also a fifteen Tree Campus schools in the state, and one utility in the Tree Line USA program. There were 60,300 seedlings of nine species distributed to the public and more than 60 cities in 48 counties were assisted with Arbor Week events. AFC employees logged 219 urban forestry technical assists, in addition to conducting 73 urban forestry educational programs throughout the state during the period. Of the 141 Champion Trees of 130 distinct species, eleven are new champions. The backlog of Champion Tree remeasurements was eliminated during 2024. Also, traditional partners like Alabama Urban Forestry Association (AUFA), FFA, 4H, Cooperative Extension, county Conservation Districts, and both county and city Forestry Committees were also regularly engaging with the U&CF group to increase their urban forestry impact. The program was supported by three Consolidated Payment Grants (2022, 2023, and 2024) totaling \$1,046,978.

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## Contact Information



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