



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet American Samoa 2024



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2023 Estimate
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$90,000
Forest Legacy	\$0
Forest Stewardship	\$100,000
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$0
State Fire Assistance	\$0
Urban and Community Forestry	\$200,000
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$0
Total	\$390,000

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

The American Samoa Forestry Program, along with its Forestry Advisory Council, local government, agency partners, forest landowners, village representatives, and communities have identified goals and solutions to the protect and sustain the islands forests and natural resources. These goals include: 1) Increasing carbon sequestration; 2) Reducing the forests susceptibility to insects and diseases; 4) Improving the forest's ability to contribute to clean water quality and quantity needs; 5) Mitigate and adapt to climate change; 6) Improving community health and well-being; and more. Through partnership and collaboration, along with the support from the United States Department of Agriculture - U.S Forest Service (USFS), American Samoa will carry out these goals to address the following issues: 1) Sustainability of urban forests; 2) Protection of coral reefs; 3) Conservation of wetlands; 4) Maintaining freshwater quality; and 5) Conservation of native flora and fauna. Specific and major issues that the Forestry Program is currently focusing on are the little fire ants (*Wasmmania auropunctata*), Fue lautele (*Merremia peltata*), coastal erosion in urban forests, reforestation and agroforestry management in private and communal forested lands, and others. The goals and issues listed here are also listed in the islands Forest Action Plan. Throughout this fiscal year, the Forestry Program managed to accomplish numerous projects and activities, and they are all highlighted here in this State Fact Sheet report.

Program Goals

- 1) Provide technical assistance to landowners and communities in managing their forest lands;
- 2) Promote and encourage Forestry Advisory Council meetings and all other meetings to improve program efficiency;
- 3) Work closely with other environmental agencies in conserving, protecting, and managing the islands forests and natural resources;
- 4) Secure partnership, support, and resources for program trainings, conferences, and nursery activities;
- 5) Build local staff capacity and education

Key Issues

- 1) The Forestry Program is seeking additional assistance from USFS and other funding sources to increase program staff members and interns;
- 2) Rising sea levels have eroded the islands urban forests that are near the coasts;
- 3) The island needs arborists and urban tree inventory training;
- 4) Little fire ants, along with other invasive species, have been and will always be a critical issue in the islands;
- 5) Village communities are in need of more assistance in managing their forests

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2023 Accomplishments	Value
Population	49,710	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	124
Acres of Forest Land	39,156	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	3
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	27,312	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	2
Number of NIPF Landowners	621	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	0
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	0	State Fire Communities Assisted	0
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	0	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	0
Number of Rural Fire Departments	2	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	0
Cities and Towns	91	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	8
Forest Based Employment	0	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	16,405
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	0	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	328
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	230,000		

Program Highlights

5 Year Program Review

One of the main highlights for this fiscal year was the 5 Year Program Review. This review is facilitated by the USFS, and was held from May 30th to June 1st, 2023. A total of five USFS Region 5 officials, and 1 Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) official, visited American Samoa and the Forestry Program. These officials were: USFS Region 5 State & Private Forestry Director Sherry Hazelhurst, USFS Region 5 UCF Program Manager Miranda Hutten, USFS Region 5 FHP Program Manager Stacy Hishinuma, WFLC Communications Director Sara Goodwin, USFS Cooperative Fire Program Manager Lance Noxon, and USFS Region 5 Fire & Aviation Manager Sean Johnny. The Forestry Program, ASCC, and the landowners and partners of American Samoa were extremely humbled and grateful for their visitation. They have provided excellent and helpful information, guidance, and assistance for the island. Last but not least, this was the first review where the Forestry Program had zero findings! A major and remarkable accomplishment for the program.

Forest Health Protection

The American Samoa Forest Health Program (FHP) continues to implement invasive species control, outreach education, and forest health management efforts across the islands. The Mexican rubber tree (*Castilla elastica*), Tamaligi (*Falcataria moluccana*), and African Tulip (*Spathodea campanulate*) are some of the common invasive trees that can dominate forested areas and negatively impact native habitats. The Forestry Program continues to control these in various villages and forested areas. More than 400 invasive seedlings, 300 saplings, and 100 trees were controlled in this fiscal year. Invasive little fire ants (*Wasmania auropunctata*) were detected in American Samoa for the first time in late 2018, and efforts to control them are continuing. The use of insecticidal baits and procedures developed by the University of Hawai'i's Hawai'i Ant Lab have proven effective against little fire ants (LFA) in American Samoa, and the ants have been controlled in five of the initially detected infestations with treatments continuing on the sixth. In the past two years, however, several additional, much larger, infestations have been detected, some of which extend into native forest. Delimitation surveys to map these infestations are ongoing. In addition, in collaboration with the USFS Region 5 and the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition, LFA infographics were developed for educational and awareness, and to distribute to the public. Lastly, through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding, FHP was able to work closely with the National Park of American Samoa and villages in controlling the Fue Lautele (*Merremia peltata*). This vine is invading more forests, especially montane forests, and require a vast amount of labor and collaboration to control. More than 9 acres of Fue Lautele have been controlled. Although FHP has been doing a great job at all its invasive species control efforts, there is still a need for additional support and collaboration for more control efforts.

Forest Stewardship

American Samoa's Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) has accomplished several exciting projects this fiscal year. With the additional funding provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) opportunity, FSP was able to install two, small forestry extension nurseries in American Samoa. The Forestry Advisory Council, FSP Specialist, and FSP Landowner Clients have identified the need for extension nurseries on the far east side (Auto Village) and far west side (Amanave Village) of the main island, Tutuila. These nurseries will cater to potential FSP Clients who have no access to transportation to visit the main Forestry Nursery at the American Samoa Community College (ASCC). In addition, this is one of the ideal solutions to promote forest and land stewardship and increase the programs clients and partnerships. These extension nurseries distributed more than 30 trees to village residents and landowners who visited the nurseries, and will be expecting to distribute more trees in the upcoming fiscal year. FSP also continues to work closely with its current FSP Clients in sustainable forest management practices such as agroforestry, wildlife conservation, and wood utilization. The program, together with these landowners, planted more than 100 native and fruit trees in their forested lands. Lastly, the main Forestry Nursery is finally completed! For the past few years the Forestry Nursery was under maintenance due to the unexpected Cyclone Gita in 2018, where the Forestry Nursery fully collapsed. Although the nursery was under mainenance, the program still managed to distribute trees and conduct nursery management using an extension plot. The Forestry Program managed to receive assistance from ASCC, and from there, have been slowly installing the new nursery. As of 2023, the Forestry Nursery is complete, but still needs a few more adjustments such as an irrigation system, storage, tables, etc.

Forestry Program Internship

The Forestry Program has continued its Forestry Internship program, which is a hugely successful program. In the previous fiscal year, the program managed to hire 14 interns who are students from the American Samoa Community College or young working adults. The goal of this internship program was to provide financial assistance to young studnets and adults, and to also increase the workforce capacity for the Forestry Program. In this fiscal year, the program managed to hire a total of 24 interns! With this amount of interns, together with the program staff members, numerous projects and activities were accomplished. The interns played a huge role in each of the programs (FSP, FHP, and UCF). With their assistance, the Forestry Program, together with partners and landowners, were able implement coastal stabilization, agroforestry, invasive species control, outreach education, and forest maangement activities. These tasks were conducted every other Saturday, where the landowners and villagers were available to assist hands on. It is crucial that the Forestry Program continues its internship program. With this, it will educate and encourage the youth to puruse forestry and natural resource careers, and to also assist the program with spreading awareness on forest protection, management, restoration, and conservation.

Urban and Community Forestry

The Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program has successfully completed numerous projects and events for this fiscal year. The program continued its subgrant award opportunity to local communities. For this year, the UCF Program awarded two school groups for their UCF projects. The Tafuna High Schools "Know Your Forest Trees" and Leone High Schools "Campus Tree Planting and Outreach" projects were selected, funded, and supported by both the Forestry Program and Forestry Advisory Council. Both school groups have successfully implemented their project activities by planting more than 50 native trees in their campuses, hosting a Forestry Banquet, posting forest education messages on social media, and more. The UCF Program will continue to provide this subgrant opportunity in the upcoming fiscal year. Another major accomplishment for UCF is the annual celebration of Arbor Week and Earth Day. The islands' 28th annual Arbor Week celebration kicked off with an Earth Day & Arbor Week morning wave, then a local radio talk show, following with an outreach education to 71 students and 4 teachers and planting 10 trees within their campuses. Other highlights include community partnership activities that involve various projects such as coastal cleanup and stabilization, and outreach education. The Forestry Program Manager also attended the 2022 Partners in Community Forestry conference, where he had the opportunity to meet, network, and discuss UCF Program ideas, challenges, and solutions with the USFS Region 5 UCF Program Manager, UCF Specialists from other Pacific Islands, and the USFS UCF Assistant Director. In Fall of 2023, American Samoa's UCF Program received a state allocation of \$750,000 in funding through the Inflation Reduction Act to further expand the program and benefit the local communities.

Contact Information



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