



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet Florida 2020



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2019 Final
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$619,918
Forest Legacy	\$6,560,000
Forest Stewardship	\$170,857
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$117,600
State Fire Assistance	\$1,462,841
Urban and Community Forestry	\$693,460
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$376,937
Total	\$10,001,613

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

Program Goals

- Cooperative programs are administered and implemented through a partnership between the Florida Forest Service (FFS), the USDA Forest Service and many other private and government entities. These programs promote the health and productivity of forestlands and rural economies. Programs emphasize forest sustainability and the production of commodity and amenity values such as wildlife, water quality, and environmental services.
- 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 forestland value and sustainability, and do so in a voluntary and non-regulatory manner.

Key Issues

- FL experienced unprecedented timber damage this year when Hurricane Michael hit one of the more heavily timbered sections of the FL Panhandle. Due to the severity of damage, FFS crews provided immediate response and are still providing hurricane recovery duties. Over 2.8 million acres of forest were impacted, equating to 1.29 billion dollars in damaged resources and impacting approximately 16,000 private forest landowners. Forest recovery will take years.
- The population of FL is experiencing sustained growth. This influx of new residents and new developments has continued to increase wildland urban interface areas in the state. The increased use of the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment and the Community Assessor tool and their data shows how the understanding of wildfire potential and the need for mitigation has become more mainstream. Smoke management remains a critical issue for prescribed burners and may impact hazard fuel reduction goals.
- Prescribed fire in Florida is still a very robust management tool with an average of 2.3 million acres burned each year. In order to sustain and increase these numbers, Florida is implementing proactive improvements to its prescribed fire program including the use of the Air Quality Index (AQI) and new state of the art weather and smoke modeling programs.
- Two items that will affect wildfire activity this upcoming year are the impacted areas of Hurricanes Irma and Michael and the lack of rainfall received so far and forecasted for some of the same areas. The amount of vegetation that was brought down after the storms and the amount of the state that they impacted will provide increased fuel for potential wildfires. Dry conditions will restrict hazardous fuel reduction burns increasing hazardous fuel loading.
- Florida's forests are continually threatened by the introduction and spread of invasive insects, pathogens, and non-native plants. The FFS works closely with partner agencies and organizations to detect new problematic non-native species, monitor their occurrence and impacts, develop and implement management methods, and communicate with the public about these issues.

- Florida's forests overall are sustainable across species and timber products with a statewide sustainability index (ratio of net timber growth to removals) of 2.02, even when the 10 counties impacted by Hurricane Michael are excluded. However, in some counties, especially for pine pulpwood, the sustainability index is below 1.0 (more pulpwood being removed than produced) due to high levels of industrial timber demand for pine pulpwood.
- Annual reforestation acres are about one half of what they were 25 years ago. There is a critical need for increased reforestation, especially incentives for private landowners, as competition from other land uses such as agriculture and urban development continue to impact Florida's forest's continued sustainability.
- A changing forest landowner base challenges the FFS in providing the most effective outreach. Efficiency gains in landowner assistance include new landowner incentive programs, the Florida Land Steward website, blog, Facebook page, Land Management Calendar, workshops and newsletters, and a Forest Stewardship & Conservation Plan template. These accomplishments are the result of a continued strong partnership between the FFS, USFS, NRCS, FSA, FWC, Tree Farm, UF, NFWF, NWTf, TNC, and others.
- Funding through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has given FFS the opportunity to administer a Longleaf Pine reforestation and stand improvement program for landowners in Florida. This funding was the first time residents in all 58 counties of longleaf pine's historic range in Florida were eligible for the program.
- Planning in the face of change, the role of urban forestry, rapid urbanization, and increased climatic fluctuations have led to decreased urban canopy and an increased risk of flooding. Florida's urban forests can be decimated by dramatic storms. Cities can better care for, manage, and restore their urban tree canopy by linking trees to existing programs for community resiliency. Urban Forestry Emergency Plans address potential disaster situations.
- FFS has partnered with the Arbor Day Foundation's Community Tree Recovery program to assist the Florida Counties most severely impacted by Hurricane Michael. Through funding provided by cooperate sponsorships, FFS and the Arbor Day Foundation have hosted seven Community Tree Recovery events and have given away or planted 12,000 trees in the Hurricane Michael impact area. More events are scheduled for the next two years.
- Trees generate key secondary social and ecosystem services in their communities. Urban tree programs advance the psychology of sustainability. They are an essential resource helping cities become more livable by reducing urban heat islands and thus reducing energy bills. Surface water, free from pollutants and sediment, is essential. Urban forest management is critical to restoring and protecting forest systems to maintain tree canopy and water quality.

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2019 Accomplishments	Value
Population	18,801,310	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	12,463
Acres of Forest Land	17,052,566	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	35,329
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	9,652,000	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	29,817
Number of NIPF Landowners	509,000	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	60
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	0	State Fire Communities Assisted	205
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	21,214,675	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	7,000
Number of Rural Fire Departments	525	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	0
Cities and Towns	411	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	240
Forest Based Employment	124,104	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	15,027,117
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	5	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	60,682
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	103,314,159		

Program Highlights

Cooperative Fire Protection

State Fire Assistance continues to fund and support firefighting resources throughout Florida, including the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans. The Federal Excess Personal Property and Firefighter Property Programs assist Florida in acquiring and placing fire equipment in rural communities throughout the state. This past year we acquired 2 trucks and other materials valued at over \$786,000. In addition, the FFS administers Volunteer Fire Assistance Program funds to support the fire prevention and protection efforts of rural community fire departments which, this past year, assisted 50 volunteer fire departments with purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE) and other equipment valued at over \$575,834. Through our mitigation and prevention grants, we successfully reduced the hazardous fuel load on over 20,720 acres and delivered 1,188 programs covering Firewise, Community Wildfire Protection Plans, "Ready, Set, Go," and wildfire prevention.

Fire Adapted Communities

The FFS embraces the development of fire adapted communities (FACs) throughout the state that can withstand the otherwise devastating effects of wildfire impacts on communities in the wildland/urban interface (WUI). The concepts of FAC align well with existing local efforts, including the Local Mitigation Strategy, Community Wildfire Protection Plans and Action Plans, and Firewise Communities. The increased use of data from the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment and the Community Assessor tool is an example of how these concepts are being used to make communities more fire adapted. The Florida Forest Service also actively partners with our federal cooperators, fire departments, and other local stakeholders to successfully implement wildfire mitigation efforts, such as annual cleanup days, fireline installation and maintenance, and prescribed fire assistance on private, state, and federal lands.

Florida Forest Sustainability Report

The State of Florida recognizes the importance of sustainable forest management and the FFS is tracking a statewide sustainability index of Florida's forests. The revised 2016 Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) data indicate that Florida's forests, overall, are sustainable across species and timber products with a statewide sustainability index of 2.02, after excluding 10 counties impacted by Hurricane Michael in October 2018. This indicates twice as much timber growth compared with timber removals.

Florida's BMPs

Silviculture Best Management Practices (BMPs) are forest land management guidelines designed as the minimum standards necessary for protecting and maintaining water quality and wetland ecosystems during forestry activities. Silviculture BMPs were first established in Florida in the mid 1970's and were adopted into Florida Administrative Code in February 2004 (Rule 5I-6). Currently there are nearly 5.7 million acres enrolled in the Silviculture BMP program

Wildlife BMPs: Adopted in October 2014 as Rule 5I-8 of the Florida Administrative Code, the Forestry Wildlife Best Management Practices for State Imperiled Species (WBMPs) were established so that applicants who properly implement WBMPs will no longer be required to obtain a permit authorizing the incidental take of State Imperiled Species during normal, ongoing forestry operations. Also, they will not be subject to any fines or penalties associated with an incidental take. Currently there are over 3.7 million acres enrolled in the wildlife BMP program.

Technical assistance for BMPs is provided by the Forest Hydrology Section primarily through site assessments, courtesy checks, and implementation surveys. BMP Foresters provided 73 technical assistance visits to private landowners.

Forest Health Protection

The FFS Forest Health Section took an active role in surveys and assessments of the area impacted by Hurricane Michael. Following the initial damage estimates from remote methods, a ground assessment survey was conducted, with data collected at 743 locations across the region. Increased activity of Ips pine engraver beetles in the affected area was monitored through a pheromone trapping survey, followed by aerial and ground surveys of affected pine stands. The annual trapping and aerial surveys for southern pine beetle (SPB) activity was also conducted as usual, but SPB activity was low in 2019, with 13 spots detected on a total of 11 acres. A total of 44 aerial surveillance flights have been flown logging over

13,000 miles during 96 hours of flight time. Total area surveyed for bark beetle surveillance flights is estimated at 43,000,000 acres.

The Southern Pine Beetle Assistance and Prevention Program, which is funded by the USFS Forest Health Protection Program, accepted 111 applications from non-industrial private landowners in 2019, to provide cost-share assistance and incentive payments to conduct preventative forest management practices on over 6,610 acres. In the past year, the FFS Forest Health Section provided at least 471 assists in the form of pest identifications, disease diagnoses, and management recommendations to a wide range of private and public recipients throughout Florida.

Forest Inventory and Analysis

The FFS partners with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Program, the only nation-wide forest inventory system. The FFS based FIA crews collect inventory plot and other on-the-ground information, and then the FFS works jointly with the USFS on preparing Florida's forest reports. The FIA program is widely recognized by forest products industry and environmental groups alike as "the source" for data driven timber and forest vegetation information. Florida's FIA program dates back to 1934, when the first forest inventory information was collected in the state. In the federal fiscal year 2019, Florida FIA crews collected information on 732 plots in 67 counties. The latest Florida forest inventory data posted on USFS websites is for 2016. Maintaining full federal and state support for the rigorous core FIA program, including forest inventories, analyses and reports, is one of the top priorities for the FFS.

Forest Legacy

In July 2019, FFS received a federal FY2019 acquisition grant award for one (1) project: \$2.3 million for the 2,220-acre Keystone Longleaf Preserve fee-simple acquisition. A few months later in September 2019, FFS received another FY2019 acquisition grant award for the Gulf Coastal Longleaf Initiative Phase 3 Project for \$4.2 million for the 4,962-acre conservation easement. FFS additionally received a FY2019 Forest Legacy Program administrative grant award in September 2019 for \$50,000.00.

The FFS submitted three projects in November 2019 for the FLP FY 2021 funding request: Wolfe Creek Forest, Tupelo Timberlands tract (1,724 acres, fee-simple), Wakulla Caves Forest, Legacy Tract (779 acres, fee-simple), and Welannee Watershed Forest, West Tract (2,348 acres, conservation easement).

Florida hopes to receive grant funding in Spring 2020 (pending Congressional federal budget approval) for the Welannee Watershed Forest, South Tract.

Forest Stewardship

The Florida Forest Stewardship outreach program provided over 32 educational events including landowner workshops, property tours, and polycom conferences. The FFS and partners used these events to inform landowners about forest management practices and programs. Topics included invasive exotic plant control, integrating timber and wildlife management, longleaf pine restoration and management, prescribed fire, hurricane recovery, succession planning, growing timber revenue, timberland security, BMPs for water quality and wildlife, and forest plant identification.

Geospatial Technology

The Florida Forest Service has been providing collaborative support for other Southeastern states on GIS training decisions and planning. Most states have been taking a train the trainer approach; training advanced GIS users in the districts who in turn train our foresters and technicians on the transition to ArcGIS Pro and/or ArcGIS Online, as well as the Collector, Survey123 mobile apps.

For invasive plant treatment plans, the Florida Forest Service has been working with the University of Georgia on grant-funded Spatial Invasive Infestation and Priority Analysis tool, which is now fully integrated into the EDDMapS website and in production. For marketing and education, the deliverables include the creation of a promotional website (<https://www.eddmaps.org/florida/siipa/#home>) to the target audience, as well as several online training videos for each step of the model to assist the user with the decision-making process.

The Florida Forest Service has been examining hurricane damage assessments through remote sensing technologies. For large-scale damage assessment from Hurricane Irma, Sentinel-2 satellite data at 10

meters was analyzed for vegetation change. For smaller scale areas of interest, high-resolution UAV imagery was flown in the area-of-interest by a partner agency, and a terrestrial LiDAR scanner was used to collect point cloud information underneath the forest canopy. This demonstrates how remote sensing technologies can be used for structural analysis and communication of hurricane impacts and recovery.

Landowner Assistance

A variety of incentive programs have been delivered to landowners during the past year. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) funded the FFS to help private non-industrial landowners establish or improve longleaf forestlands throughout the state. This program provided 117 applicants with \$259,496 in contract funding to treat or plant over 1,988 acres. Over 6,610 acres are being treated with funding from the Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program. One hundred thirty-one landowners were provided technical assistance on 21,531 acres enrolled in the EQIP and CRP programs of the NRCS and FSA. County foresters prepared 601 plans for private landowners covering 98,479 acres.

The Florida Forest Service has partnered with American Forest Foundation (AFF) to expand the Landscape Scale Forest Management Plan (LMP) to help private landowners in all of Florida. The expanded plan should be made available for use in early 2020 and to date 72 management plans in the panhandle have been written utilizing the LMP. Along with the expansion of the LMP, FFS has also partnered with AFF to utilize their outreach program called WoodsCamp. This outreach program uses advertisements on social media to connect unengaged landowners with the WoodsCamp website. Once on the website, a landowner will select their parcel on a map, answer a series of questions based on their interests, and receive an email with a simple description of their property. That landowner will then receive a phone call from an AFF call agent who will obtain more information from them and see if they are interested in having a visit from their County Forester. The goal is to tie both the LMP and WoodsCamp programs together to better assist County Foresters in efficiently meeting the needs of forest landowners and providing services to a broader audience in Florida.

Prescribed Burning Accomplishments on State Forests and Other Lands

During the past year, the FFS was able to treat more than 188,000 acres of Florida state forests and Babcock Ranch Preserve with prescribed fire; down from the previous year due to the response efforts associated with Hurricane Michael. During the past year, we were fortunate to experience many days with conditions favorable for prescribed fire which allowed the FFS to issue prescribed fire authorizations for nearly 2.5 million additional acres of managed lands in the state. Prescribed fire is a safe way to apply a natural process, ensure ecosystem health, and reduce wildfire risk.

Ready, Set, Go!

The Ready, Set, Go! (RSG) program aims to teach individuals who live in high risk wildfire areas – and the wildland-urban interface (WUI) – how to best prepare themselves and their properties against wildfire threats. Its tenets help residents be Ready with preparedness understanding, be Set with situational awareness when fire threatens, and to Go, acting early when a fire starts. The Florida Forest Service along with cooperating agency partners, has incorporated RSG throughout the state of Florida and continues to conduct door-to-door campaigns in communities around the state. RSG is a collaborative process that has been effective in improving coordination and communication between emergency response agencies and the community.

Urban and Community Forestry

Florida's Urban and Community Forestry Programs service non-profits, individuals and their communities providing outreach, instruction and technical assistance. Topics include planting, tree care, inventories, canopy assessments, staff improvement and developing urban forest management plans. Thirty-eight CFA foresters help citizens and municipalities across the state by encouraging stewardship, increasing storm resiliency, and promoting the value of our urban forests. A 2019 University of Florida study found that the urban forestry industry of Florida employs over 80,000 full and part-time jobs and, including multipliers, contributes \$8.40 billion to the Florida economy. One hundred seventy-five communities participated in the TREE CITY USA program through the Arbor Day Foundation. The Energy-Saving Trees program is a relatively new program provided by the FFS and Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with local organizations and utility partners. It has impacted both individuals and entire communities, and over 21,000 trees have been planted around Florida homes to date. This is a valuable program with a need for continued support. FFS funds have been used to encourage more communities and electric

utilities to participate in the Energy Saving Trees program. The FFS continued working with the Florida Urban Forestry Council and Community Greening to promote urban forestry and proper arboriculture practices around the state of Florida.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Michael, the Florida Forest Service partnered with the Arbor Day Foundation to hold seven Community Tree Recovery events during 2019. To date, these events have provided over 12,000 trees to residents and communities impacted by Hurricane Michael. Additional events are being planned for 2020.

Contact Information



Florida Forest Service

Erin Albury
State Forester
3125 Conner Blvd.
Suite
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1650
850-681-5800
Erin.Albury@fdacs.gov

US Forest Service Southern Region

Ken Arney
Deputy Regional Forester
USDA Forest Service
1720 Peachtree Street, Suite 760S
Atlanta, GA 30309
404-347-4178
ken.arney@usda.gov
