



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet

Georgia 2019



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2018 Final
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$553,360
Forest Legacy	\$6,000,000
Forest Stewardship	\$369,790
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$625,000
State Fire Assistance	\$1,846,609
Urban and Community Forestry	\$618,195
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$317,392
Total	\$10,330,346

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

Program Goals

- The cooperative programs are administered and implemented through a partnership among the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC), the USDA Forest Service, 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 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

- The GFC is taking an active leadership role in southeastern U.S. water resource issues including working closely with the Middle Chattahoochee Forests & Water Supply Forum Planning Team to make the connection between water resources, such as drinking water and healthy working forests. GFC's Forestry Water Quality team has been involved in working with its Continuing Logger Education partners and has created an online capability for Best Management Practices (BMP) education.
- According to the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment, Georgia has 11,768 communities at risk of wildland fire of which 5,066, or 43%, are rated at high or very high risk from wildfires. Twenty-five percent of Georgia's landscape, or 9 million acres, is categorized as Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). In FY18, there were 61 homes lost or heavily damaged by wildfire in Georgia with another 2096 saved by direct suppression actions by the GFC.
- Each year, Georgia's timberlands grow 46% more wood than is utilized. Over supply of stumpage, particularly pine saw timber, highlights the need for new markets for forest products from private lands.
- With the continuing change in demographics in the Southeast, the GFC recognizes the need for increased efforts in outreach to forest landowners and the general public. Efforts continue to increase use of social media, magazine articles and partnerships with local TV stations. Important subjects include Water Quality and Working Forests, Forest Health Issues, Urban Forestry and reforestation needs.

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2018 Accomplishments	Value
Population	9,687,653	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	77,483
Acres of Forest Land	24,634,886	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	87,285
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	18,172,000	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	41,792
Number of NIPF Landowners	524,000	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	50
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	1,400,000	State Fire Communities Assisted	235
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	27,300,000	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	7,273
Number of Rural Fire Departments	463	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	8,097
Cities and Towns	533	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	282
Forest Based Employment	53,933	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	6,701,531
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	2	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	83,577
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	73,263,807		

Program Highlights

Cooperative Fire Protection

There were 2,930 wildfires that burned over 15,385 acres of private forestland during FY18. State Fire Assistance provided for the safety of Georgia's citizens by assuring they were protected from the threat of wildfires. GFC enforcement personnel investigated 64 wildfires resulting in 24 criminal charges. The GFC serviced 5,057 requests and installed 30,071 miles of pre-suppression firebreaks during the year. There were 1,355,985 acres that received prescribed burning during the year, with the GFC providing assistance on 172,434 acres. The GFC conducted five (5) Prescribed Fire Manager Certification training sessions. We have initiated plans in 143 counties and have completed 141 CWPPs to date. There are 93 Firewise Community USA national recognitions for GA in FY18. The Federal Excess Personal Property Program assists Georgia in acquiring and placing fire equipment in rural communities throughout the state. In FY18, through the Federal DOD Firefighter Program, the GFC acquired over 72 individual pieces of equipment to support both GFC, local counties, and fire and emergency service agencies with a combined asset value of \$3.4 million. In addition, the GFC administers Volunteer Fire Assistance Program funds to support the fire prevention and protection efforts of rural community fire departments. Through coordination by the GFC's Type II Incident Management Team (IMT) and our expanded dispatch section, the GFC was able to provide National Wildland fire response by filling 188 individual personnel resource orders on 15 out of state wildfire incidents.

Economic Action

Georgia's forest industry contributed nearly \$36 billion in revenue output and over 147,000 jobs with compensation of nearly \$9 billion. Maintaining the forest industry's status as one of the top economic drivers in the state is critical, particularly for rural communities.

Georgia's forest industry would not exist without the state's highly productive and sustainable forests. The state's forests have excess utilization capacity for existing industry expansion or for new forest industries. New markets and demand for this large excess wood supply will help forest owners keep their forests as forests and keep them from converting their forests to non-forest uses.

GFC forest utilization and marketing provides forest resource analyses for existing industries seeking to expand operations, new industrial prospects, forest owners, business consultants, and state and local economic developers.

U&M personnel provided assistance to (13) prospects: (8) bioenergy and (5) traditional forest industry; analyses of timber and biomass supply was provided to (6) of these prospects.

Establishing New Forest Products and Values

GFC champions market growth of all forest industry sectors through existing and new product research, development and technology transfer that may lead to new income streams for forest owners including sequestered carbon and other ecosystem service valuations, forest planning and financial analyses.

U&M staff provided (4) forest planning and financial analyses assists using Simulator for Managed Stands (SiMS) growth and yield modeling to educate forest owners on improving economic outcomes from various forest management scenarios. Staff provided (4) technical advice/reports on carbon sequestration, carbon markets, Georgia's Carbon Sequestration Registry and other ecosystem services that may lead to new values realized from forests. Staff attended (5) technical conferences on timber supply forecasting, mass timber, forest industry logistics, and financial analyses and delivered this information through outreach/education efforts to customers, company prospects, and the general public via various media. Staff collaborated with several NGO's, in addition to state, regional and national organizations to advance the development of a new forest product in Georgia, cross-laminated timber (CLT), at a seminar in Atlanta. Staff maintains, monitors and collects growth data on (2) six-year-old, biomass reforestation demonstration plots, located on the Bartram and Dixon state forests, which may result in new forest biomass silvicultural prescriptions and potentially new income streams from forest biomass. Staff began research on four multi-year and multi-state projects including construction sector wood usage, forestry sector economic impact modeling, urban forest wood utilization and projections on timber harvest and wood supplies. Staff provided pre-publication peer review for (2) technical U.S. Forest Service documents.

Forest Health Protection

The Forest Health staff provide advice to landowners and forestry professionals across Georgia.

In 2018, Georgia Forestry Commission foresters incorporated insect, disease, or invasive species advise in 465 management cases involving 17,439 acres, and 176 Stewardship and Tree Farm cases with a total impact on 60,270 acres. Statewide, forest health personnel provided training to 4,205 Georgia citizens during 73 training sessions with foresters, resource managers, loggers, nurserymen, regulatory agencies, and landowners across Georgia.

Forest Insects

Annually, prediction traps are set statewide to provide early detection of destructive forest insects, and provide information to produce an active response to the threat. Both native and nonnative insects cause damage in Georgia, and diligent efforts are made to detect the following destructive forest insects in the state: southern pine beetle, Ips engraver beetle, emerald ash borer, Asian gypsy moth, redbay ambrosia beetle, walnut twig borer, Tremex and Sirex wood borers, and any new first introduction pest that is found in the United States. In 2017, the GFC Forest Health staff expanded the regional quarantine of Emerald Ash Borer to encompass the entire state of Georgia.

Southern pine beetle has the potential to cause more forest destruction in the southeastern states than all other forest pests combined. In 2018, 76 southern pine beetle infestations were detected with a total loss of 190 acres of mature pine timber. Higher levels of Ips engraver beetles also occurred due to drought conditions. In 2018, 278 Ips infestations were reported. Aerial surveys identified Ips beetle infestations on private lands in central Georgia, with an average size of .25 acres or less. In some field inspections the suspect Ips spots contained both Ips engraver beetles and southern pine beetles.

Annual early detection/rapid response surveys are conducted to identify nonnative forest pests entering the United States through international commerce. Asian gypsy moth was identified in a trap directly outside the Port of Savannah in 2015, and annual warehouse surveys establish Early Detection Rapid Response traps and Cooperative Agriculture Pest Survey traps around warehouse sites identified as high priority due to cargo being received on wood packing material. No new Asian gypsy moths were detected during the final survey year in 2018. The Asian gypsy moth is not established in Coastal Georgia or any other location in the United States.

Forest Inventory and Analysis

During FY18, Georgia's FIA foresters collected data on a total of 1265 plots. Of these, 83 plots were National Forest plots (in the mountainous north-east region of Georgia) with downed woody debris data collection added. Downed woody debris collection is added to all plots in and surrounding National

Forests to build fuel models and also for total carbon counts (which includes dead and down vegetation). Sixty-six of the plots were P2-Plus Plots that have added crown variables to each tree, downed woody debris on each subplot, and vegetative profiles collected on each subplot. A percentage of the completed plots are checked for accuracy and the average accuracy for Georgia's FIA foresters was 95 percent for the fiscal year. GFC data collection productivity has improved drastically year over year due to full FIA funding from the USFS, which allowed us to hire a 12th FIA forester. We slightly exceeded our 5 year cycle plot goals this year and we are gaining back what was lost in the low budget years. Hopefully full funding will continue so we can continue to meet or exceed our plot goals.

Forest Legacy

Georgia has leveraged three times the non-federal cost-share funding required by the program. For FY17, Georgia secured \$6M in funding for a forest legacy tract known as the Sansavilla property.

Forest Stewardship

Consultant plan contracting has been reduced significantly to respond to a shrinking budget. In order to maintain an acceptable level of production, an incentive program has been developed to create a mechanism to get GFC employees to produce additional management plans at a reduced cost over conventional contracting. Currently, the cumulative enrollment is 2,382 landowners covering 785,837 acres in Georgia. In 2018, 284 plans for 82,916 acres were written. This was a record number for GFC foresters. The Georgia program has continued to develop partnerships with conservation organizations, like the National Tree Farm System and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, to broaden outreach efforts. New partnerships to reach under-served groups like heirs property owners are being developed with groups like the McIntosh Seed partnership. This effort delivers focused technical information delivery to landowners who have been challenged with clear title issues. GFC conducted 19 site visits and completed 11 stewardship plans. Other under-served landowner outreach programs include "Ladies for their Lands". GFC has begun a series of workshops that continue into FY19. Another outreach effort called the ALL Lands program seeks to coordinate with landowners around the Oconee NF to address common forest management issues at a landscape level. A landscape management plan was developed along with a Landowner Co-Op. Those efforts continue. Through its Certified Steward designation, the FSP continues to recognize landowners who demonstrate commitment to the stewardship of their land. Six new stewards were nominated in 2018. New partnerships are being developed in an effort to broaden outreach by hosting several landowner seminars. These partnerships include SE Georgia Altamaha Partnership, the Feral Swine Initiative, and the West Central GA Landowner initiative.

Invasive Plants

Many invasive plants cause problems in Georgia and our efforts focus on cogongrass and Chinese privet. In 2018, the GFC continued the Invasive Plant Control Cost Share Program assisting landowners with control of targeted invasive species. Landowners were awarded contracts to focus on Chinese privet, Japanese climbing fern, Chinese tallowtree, chinaberry, and non-native rose on private lands across Georgia. All contracts have been completed and a total of 331 Georgia landowners with 10,941 acres of nonnative invasives were served under this program. This program will hold another signup period in 2019 with an emphasis placed on funding landowners fighting the targeted species listed above, with the addition of callery pear (Bradford Pear). This will be a statewide program with emphasis placed on landowners with callery pear.

Eighty-seven new cogongrass infestation sites were reported and treated by the Georgia Forestry Commission during 2018, which is consistent with the average reports of new infestations over the past three years. Sixty-one Georgia counties have now identified cogongrass infestations involving 1,252 sites across 320 acres. Dooly County was the only new county where cogongrass was detected. Most infestations in Georgia are approximately a quarter acre in size and all known sites have been treated at least once. Approximately 85% of all known sites are being reported as negative for cogongrass and 814 sites have been declared eradicated. Only 189 infestations of cogongrass remain active in Georgia and all of those active spots have been treated with at least one herbicide treatment.

Landowner Assistance

In FY18, the GFC provided general forest management assistance through 1,701 landowner site visits covering 168,498 acres. Verbal advice was given during each visit and all were followed up with a written plan to the landowner and other documentation such as maps, pamphlets, directories, etc. In addition to this work, GFC foresters provided technical assistance with planning and certifying practices within the

EFRP, CRP, SPB, EQIP, WHIP, Partners for F&W, IPSC and CSP incentive programs. Within these programs, GFC provided technical assistance in developing 1,804 plans covering 101,560 acres. GFC foresters certified the completion of 2,551 cost-share practices/plans covering 130,629 acres.

Marketing and Technical Assistance

U&M staff markets and promotes the state's forest resources through print and online media and public speaking venues, forest industry surveys and economic impact reports, and by cultivating new customers at domestic and international trade shows.

Staff initiated the 2017 Timber Product Output Survey in cooperation with the project lead, U.S. Forest Service Southern Research Station, completing about 77 of 167 total surveys of primary wood-using industries. Technical advice and marketing services totaled (648) including disseminating domestic and international trade leads to potential buyers and exporters, cultivated via memberships with the Southern Forest Products Association, American Hardwood Export Council and the Hardwood States Export Group. Formal presentations were provided to (5) groups with a total audience of (150) participants. Staff distributed (2,534) pieces of marketing materials. Staff displayed a GFC exhibit at (3) domestic trade shows: Wood Bioenergy Conference & Expo and Panel & Engineered Lumber International Conference, Southeast Wood Solutions Fair, all in Atlanta; and (1) American Hardwood Export Council exhibit at IndiaWood, Bangalore, India; and attended (2) others: Atlanta Build Expo and the National Hardwood Lumber Association annual conference. Also, staff provided insight during Georgia Congressional staff tour of wood-using industries in southeast Georgia

Urban and Community Forestry

In FY18, Georgia had 155 Tree City USA communities, 19 Tree Campus USA schools and 1 Tree Line USA utility. Funds from the Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Assistance program were used to contract with the Georgia Urban Forest Council to utilize circuit-rider arborists to make personal visits and assist communities in developing community forestry programs. Services provided included revising tree ordinances, working on tree management plans, conducting hazardous tree assessments, training municipal tree care workers, and assisting with Tree City USA certifications. In FY18, 15 new Tree City USA's and 1 new Tree Campus USA were certified. Approximately 408 educational programs, meetings or trainings were conducted by U&CF staff and circuit rider arborists. In addition, circuit riders & U&CF staff conducted three Certified Arborist Review classes. These classes were held over 2 days and trained 60 tree care workers and potential arborists in arboriculture and prepared them to take the ISA Certified Arborist Exam. Approximately, 20 people from the classes took and passed the exam to become Certified Arborists.

U&CF funding was also used to assist Trees Atlanta in hosting a Mayor's Symposium to celebrate Arbor Day in addition to holding stakeholder forums to create a long-term vision for the City of Atlanta's tree canopy. Funding was also used to provide 10,000 seedlings to 36 Keep Georgia Beautiful affiliates to distribute at their "Bring One for the Chipper" events. Two Making the Shade grant projects planted 80 large trees around the playground equipment at two elementary schools. In addition, U&CF funding was used to support the Georgia Urban Forest Council which conducted three quarterly programs on various topics, an iTree workshop, a ramble to Mill Creek Nature Center, a College Canopy Conference and the Annual Awards Luncheon and Conference. U&CF funding was also used to support the Georgia Arborist Association and the its new chapter organization.

Urban and Community Forestry Outreach, Education, and Special Projects

The Sustainable Community Forestry Program (SCFP) Coordinator was invited to participate in a committee to develop an Urban and Community Forestry emphasis at the University of Georgia's Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources. The new curriculum will be offered starting in Fall 2019 and will provide classes in municipal, commercial and utility arboriculture. With this new emphasis, SCFP started providing opportunities for students to gain experience in community forestry by hiring interns. In addition to participating in tree board and city council meetings, the interns provided assistance with database management, conducted tree inventories for 11 small communities and completed 53 iTree Canopy analyses for communities across Georgia, particularly in the fast-growing northern part of the state.

As special projects, the U&CF program used LSR funding to work with the Green Infrastructure Center out of Virginia to develop case studies from the cities of Alpharetta and Norcross to determine how trees

can be utilized to meet storm water goals. Also, SCFP worked with GFC's Utilization department to conduct an urban forestry economic impact report in conjunction with the annual forestry economic impact report. The report determined that U&CF created and supported 45,096 jobs in 2016 and generated \$4 billion of economic activity in the state of Georgia

Water Quality

For Federal Fiscal Year 2018, GFC completed the items that follow related to water quality. Funded largely through the EPA Section 319 grant program, the GFC Water Quality program was staffed with one state coordinator (staff forester), four full-time Water Quality Specialist Forester positions, and eight CDI Water Quality Foresters that focus on water quality in a part-time fashion along with regular field forester duties. Regular GFC Field Foresters also contribute to some water quality related work. During FY18, GFC Foresters provided 121 BMP talks to 8473 people. In addition, GFC foresters put on 26 BMP field demonstrations with 523 in attendance. GFC foresters investigated 45 complaints requiring 98 site visits to mediate. GFC completed a total of 157 BMP Assurance Exams on harvests and other management activities. Water quality/BMP advice was given during the course of a combination of 495 general advice site visits and management plans for landowners on a total of 109,544 acres. GFC Water Quality Foresters completed 274 state level firebreak BMP inspections on GFC firebreaks, and 327 local level forester inspections were completed. During FY18, GFC Water Quality Foresters finished fieldwork for the 11th Statewide Silvicultural BMP Survey, completing the last 103 site inspections of 232 total randomly selected sites. A detailed report on the survey findings was completed December 2017. The GFC continues to be involved in the Governors Comprehensive Water Plan Study Committee. As required by state law, the Regional Councils have continued to meet periodically with GFC Foresters attending as needed. During the period, GFC attended 14 water planning meetings with 310 people attending. Additionally, GFC foresters attended/participated in 176 other meetings concerning water quality for various groups, such as federal/state/local government, NGOs, landowners, forest industry, loggers, foresters, etc... with 4493 people attending.

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