



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet Tennessee 2025



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2024 Final
Community Forests and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$380,027
Forest Legacy	\$0
Forest Stewardship	\$197,170
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$310,000
State Fire Assistance	\$1,112,460
Urban and Community Forestry	\$485,472
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$289,146
Total	\$2,774,275

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

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture-Division of Forestry's priorities are set forth in the Department's four-year strategic plan and 2020-2030 State Forest Action Plan. The four-year strategic plan goals include

- Improve emergency preparedness and safety,
- Increase education and outreach,
- Foster comprehensive land management,
- Strengthen internal operations,
- Develop a workforce to meet the needs of the TN Department of Agriculture, and
- Develop a workforce to meet the needs of the agriculture and forestry industries.

The 2020-2030 State Forest Action Plan focuses on programmatic priorities and aligns program development and implementation on the following objectives:

- Enhancing forest health and resiliency,
- Expanding market diversification,
- Maintaining and improving connected landscapes, and
- Strengthening wildfire resilient communities.

The Division has been quite successful in pursuing the goals and objectives of these strategic planning documents. Examples include modernizing landowner assistance programs through technology, enhancing the Division's tree nursery's seedling sources and genetic diversity, and investing in workforce development initiatives. The Division will continue to apply funding to our strategic priorities, better positioning us to protect, conserve, and enhance Tennessee's forests.

Program Goals

- The overarching goal is to protect, maintain, and improve the health of urban and rural forests for Tennesseans, forest industry, and local economies. These programs maximize cost effectiveness through the use of partnerships in program delivery, increase forestland value and sustainability, and provide a voluntary, non-regulatory framework for achieving best management practices.
- The cooperative programs are administered and implemented through a partnership between the State of Tennessee, USDA Forest Service, and many other private and government entities. These programs promote the health and productivity of forestlands and rural economies. Emphasis is on timber and other forest products, wildlife, water resources, rural economies, and conservation practices.

Key Issues

- Supporting active forest management and initiatives to create and sustain diverse and competitive forest product markets
- Mitigating the increasing forest health risks from native and non-native forest pests, aging forests,

explosive population growth, and increasing urbanization

- Adapting to increasing demand for prescribed fire services to ensure management objectives are met while minimizing the potential for escaped fires
- Maintaining a motivated, well-trained, experienced workforce
- Determining appropriate services and incentives to facilitate increased forest management on private lands when the average tract size is shrinking and long-term landowners are increasingly passing management of land to inexperienced heirs
- Providing landowners guidance before timber is harvested to ensure the harvest method is meeting objectives and that a plan is in place for regeneration
- Determining appropriate services and incentives to create value-added forest industry jobs
- Taking advantage of the current and future income and marketing opportunities forest certification offers non-industrial private forest (NIPF) landowners for managing their lands
- Determining the most effective ways for the Division to use existing and emerging technology to improve forest health
- Utilizing social media to educate and engage Tennesseans and forest landowners

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2024 Accomplishments	Value
Population	6,910,840	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	88,592
Acres of Forest Land	13,846,005	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	3,772
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	9,703,581	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	2,805
Number of NIPF Landowners	197,040	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	125
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	70,000	State Fire Communities Assisted	215
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	25,668,400	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	2,000
Number of Rural Fire Departments	821	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	1,934
Cities and Towns	343	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	50
Forest Based Employment	85,500	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	2,945,177
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	3	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	14,219
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	52,298,200		

Program Highlights

Conservation Education

- Held educational outreach events across the state, reaching 101,261 adults and students.
- Launched and grew social media accounts on Facebook (2.47k new followers, 309k reach) and Instagram (27 new followers, 7k reach) in support of TN Wildland Fire campaigns, leveraging these media to promote fire prevention and mitigation messaging, educate about prescribed fire, and inform the public of major wildfire incidents.
- Grew reach of social media profiles for the Protect TN Forests conservation campaign, including Facebook (819 new followers, 193k reach) and Instagram (59 new followers, 17.1k reach) to connect with a broad audience and promote conservation education.
- Administered a contract with Tennessee Forestry Association to fund a Conservation Education Coordinator who manages the Project Learning Tree program, conducts Teacher Conservation Workshops, and trains facilitators. This effort educates teachers and students on forestry topics.
- Facilitated the 74th Tennessee Forestry Camp for 60 Future Farmers of America (FFA) high school students.
- Hosted the Commissioner of Agriculture's Forest Industry Supply Chain Tour and Jobs Camp at Natchez Trace State Forest. The Division's first Forestry Jobs Camp introduced 4H and FFA students to forestry

career opportunities in an engaging, hands-on manner.

Cooperative Fire Protection

- Secured over \$195,000 in grant funding to supply 65 volunteer fire departments with wildfire suppression kits. These kits included personal protective equipment, hand tools, and backpack blowers.
- Deployed 132 personnel and 64 pieces of equipment to national wildfire and all-hazard emergencies across 13 states.
- Suppressed 1,001 fires, which burned 21,344 acres, protecting 734 residences and 373 additional structures. Residential home values protected are estimated at \$238,000,000 based on mean Tennessee home values.
- Implemented 150 prescribed fire treating 6,244 acres with ecologically beneficial fire.
- Hosted two Certified Prescribed Burn Manager courses and certified 80 new burn managers.
- Facilitated the 21st annual Tennessee-Kentucky Wildland Fire Academy, presenting 49 courses to 521 students.
- Supported regional and national training opportunities by sending personnel to the Southern Area Heavy Equipment Operator Academy, National Medical Unit Leader training, Southern Area Engine Academy, and the Women-in-Fire Prescribed Fire Training Exchange.
- Provided free wildland fire training to 300 firefighters representing 15 fire departments across Tennessee through the Volunteer Fire Assistance program.
- Awarded \$136,000 in hazard mitigation grants to 19 communities for Community Wildfire Protect Plan development, outreach, education, and community mitigation action items.

Economic Action

- Harvested \$3.4 million in planned timber sales and concluded a 1,400-acre salvage operation from tornado damage at Natchez Trace State Forest.
- Administered the Timber Products Output survey with a response rate of 75%.

Forest Health Protection

- Established an online "Report a Pest" tool for the public which proved to be a valuable resource for detecting spotted lanternfly in three counties.
- Monitored spongy moth activity via placement of 5,000 traps, capturing 60 male moths in 10 counties. Most moths were found within the Slow the Spread Action Area in northeastern Tennessee, which is closest to the current range of the invasive spongy moth.
- Deployed southern pine beetle (SPB) traps to assess the number of SPB and clerid beetles present in four counties. Catch numbers for both SPB and clerid predatory beetles at three sites were higher than previous year.
- Completed road and ground surveys for laurel wilt disease, detecting the disease in three additional counties. This disease has spread to 25 counties in Tennessee since its first detection in 2019.
- Funded five invasive plant control projects to support invasive plant removal and native seedling replanting on 32 acres of forest and 1.2 miles of riparian habitat.
- Treated 18,000+ eastern hemlocks on over 1,800 acres across 17 Hemlock Conservation Areas.

Forest Legacy

- Formalized the Forest Legacy Program conservation easement on Myers Cove, protecting 1,933 acres for continued forest and agriculture products, water quality, wildlife habitat and biodiversity, natural ecosystem functions, forest sustainability, and the cultural and economic vitality of rural communities. Myers Cove is a working forest and farm dominated by forestland interspersed with agricultural fields.

Forest Stewardship

- Wrote 22 Forest Stewardship plans addressing 3,301 acres.

Landowner Assistance

- Assisted 17,739 forest landowners and educated 101,261 Tennesseans through direct outreach programs.
- Wrote 182 forest management plans addressing 26,065 acres.
- Wrote 477 prescription plans improving 39,049 acres.
- Published the Landscape Management Plan (LMP) which will reduce the burden of individual management plan development, allow foresters to spend more time with landowners on the ground, and

contribute to landscape-level goals.

- Continued to improve the implementation of ArcGIS Pro for landowner assistance mapping, data management, and performance tracking.
- Began development of a customer relation management (CRM) program to increase efficiencies and measure impact of technical assistance.
- Provides 115 management services to private landowners and another 13 to public landowners through the Vendor Services program. This includes services for prescribed burns on 3,613 acres of private land and 828 acres of public land as well as standby, firebreak construction, tree planting, and timber marking.
- Funded 33 cost-share applications totaling \$250,833 to complete forest management practices. The total project spend with cost-share applications and match was \$407,401.

Landscape Scale Restoration

- Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Suppression TN/KY (reported in Forest Health Protection section)
- Landscape Management Plan (reported in Landowner Assistance Section)
- Forestry Workforce Promotion and Training Program
 - oIncreased the number of conservation education and outreach events and workshops aimed at promoting green jobs from 30 to 50.
 - oCollaborated with 23 Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs) and high schools to develop forest industry curriculum that can be tailored to meet local market needs.

Urban and Community Forestry

- Developed and launched the Tennessee U&CF grant program that offers \$3.3 million in financial assistance to qualified proposals. Funded 12 proposals and awarded \$1,940,527 to communities across the state.
- Created three ArcGIS StoryMaps to feature Arbor Day Foundation Programming, the TAEP Community Tree Planting Grant, and Urban and Community Wood Utilization efforts.
- Co-hosted the Memphis Urban Wood Academy in collaboration with USDA Forest Service and Urban Wood Economy.
- Awarded \$130,015 in state Community Tree Planting funds to 18 projects. A total of 1,238 trees were planted.
- Celebrated the 149th Tennessee Arbor Day and recognized 45 Tree City communities, 16 Tree Line utility companies, 9 Tree Campus higher education institutions, and 2 Tree Campus K-12 schools.
- Collaborated with the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council to host the two-day Urban and Community Forestry Conference, welcoming 84 attendees.
- Provided 14 educational presentations on urban and community forestry, the benefits of trees, and what U&CF programs offer to community groups, local government entities, and other partners.
- Hosted a week-long Level 1 Arborist training.

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