



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet

Utah 2025



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2024 Final
Community Forests and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$296,200
Forest Legacy	\$0
Forest Stewardship	\$164,004
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$577,361
State Fire Assistance	\$950,577
Urban and Community Forestry	\$440,827
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$353,860
Total	\$2,782,829

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

FFSL's Forestry Program is comprised of several cooperative forestry programs in partnership with the USDA Forest Service: Forest Stewardship, Forest Health, Forest Legacy, Urban & Community Forestry, Conservation Education, Landscape Scale Restoration, and Forest Landowner Assistance. For 2024, the Forestry Program also included an agreement with Federal and State Partners: a 5-Year Utah Shared Stewardship Agreement between the USDA and the State to follow six key commitments toward shared conservation priorities, strategies, investments and activities across all forest lands in Utah (May 5, 2022).

Program Goals

- The FFSL Forestry Program advances the goals of Utah's State Forest Action Plan in cooperation with multiple partners. The four goals are: Restore healthy and resilient trees and forests across Utah; Reduce wildfire risk to communities, water resources, and other natural resource values; Increase collaborative landscape-scale forest restoration activities across the State; Build capacity among partners, stakeholders and communities to engage in forest restoration activities across the State.

Key Issues

- Growing risk of catastrophic wildfire, especially in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas; Increased age and density of forests and decreased the number of forest age-classes on federal lands; Protection and rehabilitation of water quality and riparian areas; Threat of invasive, exotic species to native plants and animals; Economic and social well-being of forest dependent communities; Rapid development and demand for urban forestry support.

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2024 Accomplishments	Value
Population	3,271,616	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	986
Acres of Forest Land	18,123,661	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	7,076
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	2,583,819	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	1,460
Number of NIPF Landowners	14,194	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	42
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	0	State Fire Communities Assisted	60
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	15,593,893	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	2,414
Number of Rural Fire Departments	254	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	0
Cities and Towns	249	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	99
Forest Based Employment	175	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	2,437,061
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	2	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	17,202
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	59,085,640		

Program Highlights

Cooperative Fire Protection

FFSL received 73 Fire Department Grant requests totaling \$714,158.02 and awarded \$354,204.57 of Forest Service VFA funds and \$105,099.09 of Utah State fire cost recovery funds to 67 fire departments. Activities include training costs and purchase of personal protective equipment. FFSL also received the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funds of \$66,212.00 that supported 6 additional departments. FFSL certified approximately 4,483 Utah structural firefighters to fight wildland fire, as well as placed 2 firefighting apparatus with fire departments and 1 apparatus with the Division through FEPP.

FFSL's WUI program did not receive competitive grant funding in FY24 from the Council of Western State Forester's State Fire Assistance WUI grant. During FY24 Hazardous fuels were reduced on a combined total of 746 acres through SFA, HFR and CWDG grant funding. FFSL employees also provided education at 49 public educational events, attended 35 community meetings and hosted 115 community chipping events.

Economic Action

The Utah Forest Products & Businesses Program (FP&B) engages entrepreneurs, businesses and local communities to stimulate economic capacity and new market opportunities in coordination with Utah's Shared Stewardship initiative and the USDA Forest Service R4 Wood Innovations Program. FP&B is planning and facilitating meetings, conferences, workshops, field tours and other events to heighten public awareness, connect businesses to funding opportunities and increase workforce development and training opportunities in the forestry sector through public education and apprenticeships.

Forest Health Protection

Declining forest health in Utah can be attributed to many factors, including overgrown forests, single tree species over expansive areas and ongoing drought among other challenges. These factors lead to poor forest health making these forests more susceptible to insect and disease outbreaks.

- For 30 years, spruce beetles have infested and killed millions of Engelmann spruce.
- Douglas-fir beetle, mountain pine beetle, fir engraver and pinyon engraver beetle are currently prominent in large areas within Utah.
- Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) has not yet been detected in Utah: however, FFSL has partnered with the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food to monitor urban areas with detection traps where ash is a prominent species and EAB may be introduced.
- Balsam Woolly Adelgid (BWA), an exotic and invasive insect, has been established in the United States for over 100 years. BWA was confirmed in Utah on September 6th, 2017 and documented in Box Elder, Cache, Rich, Weber, Davis, Morgan, Salt Lake, Summit and Utah counties as of 2023.

- FFSL, USFS Forest Health Protection, USDA APHIS PPQ, Utah State University, and Utah Department of Agriculture and Food are collaborating to address the impacts of the current BWA infestation. This group is addressing concerns in regards to snowpack retention, watershed health, fuel loading, aesthetics and economic impacts.

Forest Legacy

In 2024, Utah's Forest Legacy Program (FLP) was awarded funding for the Wasatch Back Forest Conservation Project. This \$55M project offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for fee acquisition of 8,588 acres of incredible forestland in Summit County. Located just minutes from the world-renowned, 4-season resort town of Park City and only 25 miles from Salt Lake City, the project links a corridor of 52,000 acres of protected land consisting of FLP projects, state parks and National Forest. With explosive regional growth, proximity to an international airport, an abundance of outdoor recreation, and the upcoming 2034 winter Olympic Games, the project will provide free, year-round public recreation access, including 35 miles of new trails. Once completed, this project will increase the amount of protected land through the FLP in the state, contributing to a total of 110,795 acres of private forest land that is protected throughout Utah with FLP conservation easements.

Three new projects were submitted for funding consideration in September: The Nine Mile Canyon project (1,344 ac) is located in the archeologically-rich Book Cliffs region. The adjacent Cave Canyon (177 ac) and Clear Creek Canyon (202 ac) projects contain documented habitat for the federally endangered California condor and provide public trail access into neighboring Zion National Park.

The Division continues to ensure the long-term sustainability and integrity of its FLP easements by thorough annual monitoring procedures and close review of proposed activity requests to ensure compliance with the FLP, and provides education to new landowners of existing FLP properties. Utah participates in a Forest Service pilot program to conduct annual monitoring of FLP projects using LENS remote sensing, and is part of the new Landscape Land Conservation data management and monitoring pilot program. The FLP Manager attended, and presented at, the National Forest Legacy Program Summit in Montana.

Forest Stewardship

The Utah Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) enables private forest landowners to better manage their lands to provide valuable public, economic, and environmental benefits. Across Utah's landscape, approximately 3 million acres (16%) of Utah's forests are held in private ownership. In 2024, FFSL completed 3 Forest Stewardship Management plans covering 7,076 acres. These plans enable landowners to manage their forest resources to meet their objectives and to improve landscape-scale benefits. Utah currently has 98 active plans covering 268,446 acres. The Division has renewed FFSL's efforts to promote forestry program accomplishments and tell our story via social media. Working with FFSL's PIO, FFSL have reached a wider audience and promoted education and involvement. FFSL's foresters secured funding through NRCS' Environmental Quality Improvement Program and Utah's Watershed Restoration Initiative to assist landowners with implementation of recommended forest practices outlined in these plans. The Division continues to update procedures in line with the changes due to the modernization of the FSP.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act - Community Wildfire Defense Grant

In addition to the \$5,086,617 of Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding through two Community Wildfire Defense Grants (CWDG) received last year, FFSL received three additional CWDG Awards. Rim to Rim Restoration/Moab Valley Fire District was sub awarded one grant for \$5,216,234 to conduct hazardous fuels reduction treatments and conduct public education. Funds will be used for training, supplies, and equipment for fuels reduction and public education. Salt Lake City Fire Department was sub awarded \$242,138 and the Shivwits Band of the Paiute Indians was awarded and is reporting directly to the US Forest Service on \$73,172 to write a new Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). FFSL also received an additional \$400,000 to continue administration of the program throughout the state. This brings the total amount received to \$11,018,161.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act - Forest Action Plan

Awarded \$608,000 in 2024 from the USDA Forest Service through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to strengthen FFSL Forestry Program capacity to implement Utah SFAP priorities.

Strengthened Forestry staff capacity to plan and implement programs and projects:

A. Hired a Forestry/Fire Grants Coordinator to develop policies, procedures and tools for improved and consistent program/project planning and grant administration across FFSL Forestry and Fuels programs.

B. Clarified leadership roles of the Forest Stewardship Program Manager to:

- Reinvigorate partnerships through the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee (FSCC);

- Coordinate/integrate private landowner assistance activities with the NRCS-FFSL shared Forestry positions;

- Lead/coordinate FFSL activities to plan and implement a team-based forest landowner assistance initiative for lower income forest landowners.

- Strengthen guidance and training for FFSL's Area Foresters toward proactive program/project planning, implementation and reporting.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act - State Fire Assistance

In 2024 FFSL received critical funding through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) SFA Program to address the growing challenges of wildfires and to enhance capacity to meet these challenges effectively. FFSL was awarded \$381,000 for FY 2024, which was utilized to strengthen staffing by supporting the salaries of: A Deputy State Fire Management Officer dedicated to hazardous fuels reduction, Six Fire Management Officers, Two Prevention Technicians, and Six Area Administrative Assistants.

The added capacity allowed the state to achieve significant milestones, including the establishment of an Interagency Fuels and Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Committee. This committee facilitates Utah's implementation of the National Cohesive Strategy (NCS) by promoting integrated and collaborative efforts among local, state, federal, and tribal entities. The capacity has also enabled Utah to make considerable progress in advancing prescribed fire initiatives. With active participation in Utah's Prescribed Fire Council, FFSL has contributed to educating and training stakeholders, supporting resource development, and shaping policy and procedures at the state level for prescribed fire management.

Furthermore, these roles have been instrumental in overseeing the Division's wildfire management and suppression efforts. As a result, Utah has continued to experience a notable decline in human-caused wildfires, which have decreased from 70% in 2020 to 57% in 2024. Additionally, the state's ability to contain wildfires before they escalate has seen continued success, with only 89 out of 1,244 fires exceeding 10 acres during the 2024 fire season.

Landowner Assistance

FFSL's foresters provide expertise and guidance to improve forest health conditions and encourage active forest management. FFSL's forestry staff provided 66 technical assists to 427 private forest landowners and land managers. The Division's project to better capture private forest landowner assistance using Survey123 has been largely successful. This involved the forestry program coordinators and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff designing a Routine Technical Assist form which has streamlined the annual federal reporting requirements. Grant funding awarded from various federal and state programs allowed forestry staff to assist private landowners with implementing recommended forest practices. This included a variety of on-the-ground projects, such as post-wildfire tree planting, aspen regeneration projects and invasive weed treatments.

Landowner Support Program

The Forest Landowner Support Program provides resources to help FFSL further strengthen Forestry program capacity to engage and support forest landowners. Our team-based, capacity-building approach for this funding aligns with one of the four major goals of the Utah SFAP: Goal 4. Build capacity among partners, stakeholders and communities to engage in forest restoration activities across the State. This non-competitive, voluntary funding provides an opportunity for FFSL Forestry programs to collaborate with the Forest Service, Western states and other partners to learn together how to engage and provide technical assistance to forest landowners in Utah. Our strategies with this funding will focus on engaging and learning with partners at multiple scales, but particularly with communities and landowners with the highest need for forest restoration in Utah. Priorities include building a team-based, learning approach that will strengthen our Forestry programs' understanding of changing forestry techniques and practices, as well as emerging markets, to share within FFSL and with its various partners.

Landscape Scale Restoration

In 2024, FFSL received funding for two grants applications; one of the applications was fully funded and one was partially funded because Utah reached the funding cap for 2024 allocation.

1. Electric Lake: (Received partial funding) Project goals are to collect Engelmann spruce cones for the seeds to grow seedlings for planting in spruce stands that were destroyed by bark beetles and control noxious/invasive weeds.

2. Springdale, Virgin River Watershed Restoration: (Received full funding) - Restore riparian habitat on private lands city owned lands along the Virgin River in and near the town of Springdale through the treatment of woody invasive species and restoring native trees

Active 2024 Projects Summary:

1. Wasatch Plateau Restoration: Approximately 77 acres of invasive weeds were treated and 1,500 Engelmann spruce seedlings were grown to be planted in the spring of 2025.

2. Grassy Trails Watershed Fuel Break: This grant will create shaded fuel breaks and utilize prescribed fire for forest stands improvement and an Area Forester was hired to implement this grant.

3. Escalante River: Approximately 76 acres of hazardous woody invasive species was treated along the Escalante River.

4. Aspen Resilience in Priority Watersheds of Southeastern Utah: Approximately 171 acres aspen regeneration project was completed.

5. Mill and Pack Creeks Watershed Restoration: Reduced 40 acres of Russian olive and other invasive trees to reduce hazardous fuel and riparian restoration.

6. Little Bear Forest Resilience Project: A 220-acre aspen restoration contract was awarded.

Completed 2024 Project Summary:

1. Virgin River: Restore riparian forests/habitats in the priority landscapes with partners. 115 people were engaged, reduced 113 acres of hazardous fuels (Russian olive and tamarisk), 150 acres invasive weed were treated, 42 miles of riparian forest treated to enhance water quality, 164 acres and 4.37 miles of riparian forest were treated to enhance wildlife habitat.

Urban and Community Forestry

Urban forests provide essential benefits to Utah's quality of life and economy such as reductions in energy use, storm water runoff, and reduction of air pollutants. FFSL promotes healthy urban forests by encouraging communities to participate in Tree City USA with 70 communities having achieved this designation. Additionally, 6 universities were designated with TreeCampus Higher Education credentials. FFSL also promotes volunteer support for urban forestry efforts with volunteers working 17,202 hours to keep their cities green and vibrant in 2024. FFSL provided technical or financial support to 111 communities, which are actively developing or managing their urban forests and maximizing community value in 2024. FFSL coordinated 11 sub-award grants to communities in 2024, utilizing both state and federal funding sources. Urban and Community Forestry continued to work with 6 communities funding projects in specifically, lower income communities. In addition, FFSL completed a project supporting the installation of an urban forest trail in South Jordan City. Urban and Community Forestry continued to coordinate with Forest Health Protection and Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) to strategically place more EAB traps. The purpose of additional traps is to increase the probability of early detection of EAB. To date, no EAB has been detected.

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