



## State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet American Samoa 2025



### Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2024 Final
Community Forests and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$90,000
Forest Legacy	\$0
Forest Stewardship	\$90,000
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$0
State Fire Assistance	\$100,000
Urban and Community Forestry	\$200,000
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$480,000</b>

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 (*Wasmania auropunctata*), Fua 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, interns, and apparatus; 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 2024 Accomplishments	Value
Population	49,710	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	140
Acres of Forest Land	39,156	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	4
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	27,312	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	3
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	1
Forest Based Employment	0	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	0
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	0	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	41
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	230,000		

## Program Highlights

### Forest Health Protection

The Forest Health Program has implemented numerous invasive specie control, maintenance, and monitoring across the territory. The program controlled 655 seedlings, 299 saplings, and 305 trees of invasive plant species across 8 different project sites. Invasive plant species includes *Falcatoria moluccana* (Albizia), *Spathodea campanulata* (African tulip tree), *Castilla elastica* (Mexican rubber tree), and more. With the assistance from the program interns and agency partners, the program continues to conduct weekly control and monitoring activities across all project sites. In addition, because the island(s) are extremely vulnerable to climate change and invasive species, the program continues to connect and meet with other Pacific Island Invasive Specie groups such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Region Environmental Program to combat tropical invasive species through quarantine, pest management, and other various efforts. The little fire ant (*Wasmannia auropunctata*) is still a primary pest concern for American Samoa. The Entomology team surveyed and treated more than 50 acres of little fire ant infested sites across the island. Extreme rainfall and the transportation of materials (i.e. plants and soil) are some of the main causes for the increase of infested sites. However, the Entomology team and Forestry Program continues to work closely with the communities in combating these pests through awareness, outreach, and collaborations.

### Forest Legacy

American Samoa reached a significant milestone in forest conservation in 2024. After years of preparation by the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, the territory's Forest Legacy Assessment of Need was accepted in May 2024, paving the way for participation in the program. Following this achievement, American Samoa swiftly submitted its first Forest Legacy proposal, also in May 2024. This proposal focuses on preserving the invaluable Naumati Lowland Rainforest, the last remaining tava lowland rainforest in the territory. This initiative marks a crucial step in protecting American Samoa's unique biodiversity and natural heritage.

### Forest Stewardship

The Forest Stewardship Program staff members and interns have accomplished numerous forest stewardship activities across the territory. The program, together with the landowners, were able to conduct site assessments and forest management activities that focuses on soil stabilization, agroforestry, coastal stabilization, tree pruning, and more. For example, the program worked closely with one of the programs clients in planting 5 *Calophyllum inophyllum* and 5 *Terminalia catappa* for medicinal purposes. All program data and accomplishments have been recorded into the SMART reporting system. The Forestry Nursery has collected 4,017 seeds, propagated 5,876, and transplanted 3,467

native seedlings and saplings. A total of 1,712 trees were distributed to the nursery clients and visitors. These native and coastal tree species include *Theobroma cacao*, *Instia bijuga*, and more. Trees were distributed through nursery visitations and island-wide events such as the American Samoa Farm Fair, Career Fair, and more. The program assisted 12 landowners, served 171 nursery clients, and conducted an outreach to 656 nursery visitors. The program continues to provide forestry/agroforestry educational and technical assistance to all current and potential landowners and clients.

### **IIJA**

The Forestry Program would like to recognize the significant impact that the IIJA has on the territory. The Forest Stewardship Program IIJA project successfully established two new Extension Nurseries, with one on the far east and one on the far west, on the island. These nurseries accommodate landowners and clients who are unable to visit main nursery due to the long distance and transportation issues. These nurseries have distributed more than 80 native trees to visitors, who are encouraged to contact and connect with the Forestry Program for any questions or potential forest management projects. The Forest Health Program IIJA focuses on controlling the invasive vine, *Merremia peltata*, which is a growing forestry concern in the island. The program controlled more than 40 acres of this vine across 6 different project sites. The Forestry Program continues to work closely with its interns, who have been extremely helpful, in implementing these projects.

### **Urban and Community Forestry**

The Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program accomplished numerous activities and goals throughout the year. The island's 29th Annual Arbor week celebration was coordinated to involve the community and schools to promote and create a better life by following the 2024 theme "Enjoy, Learn and Love Trees". A total of 5 schools (202 students and 12 teachers) were selected and conducted Arbor week educational outreach and tree planting at their school grounds. The celebration started with an "Arbor Week Wave" in the morning at the central district of American Samoa. The program also awarded a sub-grant UCF opportunity to two schools, South Pacific Academy and Leone High School, to implement their UCF projects and goals on their school campuses and project sites. This sub-grant opportunity is extremely valuable because it gives other groups and communities the opportunity to initiate and lead their own forestry related projects across the territory. This also encourages students and other participants to learn more about the U.S Forest Service, the Forestry Program, and to partake in UCF activities. Another highlight for the program was the Grand Opening of the first ever "Forestry Murals" displayed at the ASCC-ACNR Compound. The Forestry Program worked with 6 local artists to produce murals that are displayed at the ACNR entrance gate. The opening ceremony for the murals marked the closing of year 2024 Arbor Week celebration as well. The murals, the sub-grant opportunities, the outreach presentations, tree planting efforts, and all other UCF related activities have really enhanced the program's services and garnished numerous support and partnerships for potential UCF projects and events.

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### **Contact Information**



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