Iowa Forest Resource Fact Sheet 2024

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Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2023 Estimate
Cooperative Fire Protection	$715,427
Cooperative Forestry	$1,028,728
Forest Health Management	$108,745
Forest Legacy and Community Forestry	$60,000
Total	**$1,912,900**

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

Key Issues

- Maximize forest health and productivity.
- Strategically grow Iowa's forests.
- Promote the benefits of Iowa's forest resources.

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value
Population	3,190,369
Acres of Forest Land	2,851,077
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	2,124,686
Number of NIPF Landowners	43,184
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	0
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	7,612,000
Number of Rural Fire Departments	871
Cities and Towns	942
Forest Based Employment	22,454
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	3
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	3,018,917

FY 2023 Accomplishments	Value
Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	8,071
Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	16,359
Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	13,811
Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	145
State Fire Communities Assisted	130
Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	0
Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	1,028
Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	262
Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	1,898,333
Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	22,209

Program Highlights

Community Forestry and Open Space

In Plymouth County, The Nature Conservancy acquired a former Girl Scout Camp property to create the first community forest funded by the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program in the State. The 200-acre Joy Hollow Community Forest is part of a larger landscape of conserved lands adjacent to the Five Ridge Prairie State Preserve. This area is open to the public for passive recreational activities such as photography, hiking, and bird watching. The Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program granted $417,000 to The Nature Conservancy for the acquisition.

Cooperative Fire Protection

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources delivered wildland fire courses to 300 students, treated 5,000 acres of hazardous fuels, and supported Federal wildland fire suppression efforts through the mobilization of firefighters and equipment. Additionally, the State implemented 30 hazardous fuels reduction projects and 50 wildfire prevention education programs. Through State Fire Assistance and Volunteer Fire Assistance, 110 fire departments were supported with grant funding. Iowa acquired $67,210 in property from the Federal Excess Personal Property program for emergency response. The property goes to State and volunteer fire departments' wildland fire programs.

Forest Health Protection

Emerald ash borer has been confirmed in 97 out of 99 counties and is causing significant ash mortality in portions of the State. Iowa forests continue to be affected by weather/climate events, including statewide drought in 2023. Over 10,000 acres were impacted by white oak mortality in 2023. Threats to oak health continue to be oak decline, oak wilt, and bur oak blight. So far, the Slow the Spread Program for spongy moth has prevented oak defoliation by this pest.

Forest Legacy

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources continued to protect important forests in northeastern Iowa with the purchase of two conservation easements that are part of the Heritage Valley Forest Legacy Program (FLP) project. Using $1,902,946 of FLP funds, the two purchases collectively protect 1,028 acres of newly conserved forestland, including 3 miles of forestland along the Upper Iowa River. The State continues to make progress on the remaining five Heritage Valley FLP project tracts.

Forest Stewardship

Iowa's 2023 Tree Farmer of the Year field day event was hosted by Craig and Cheryl Parker of rural Jesup on October 2. With over 120 people in attendance, the Parkers showcased their reforestation, timber harvest, and improvement projects implemented on the family farm over the past 20 years. Iowa's Forest Stewardship Program was instrumental to helping the Parkers understand their forest resource and gain the confidence needed to embark on a lifelong mission of stewardship, addressing critical State issues including soil and watershed protection, declining songbirds and pollinators, oak decline, and rural economic diversification through the $5 billion forest products industry.

Landscape Scale Restoration

Grantee: Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Federal investment: $98,428
Project: Women's Woodland Stewardship Network--Growing Engagement to Enhance Midwest Forest Management
Summary: This project will provide targeted outreach, hands-on training, and networking for female forest landowners and decision makers, led by female foresters and educators using a variety of resources and partners. Women make up a growing majority of forest landowners but are still underrepresented as primary decision makers. Engagement in targeted programming can overcome these barriers, resulting in increased forest management and participation in conservation programs to best include this underserved landowner group.

Urban and Community Forestry

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources assisted 1,898,333 Iowans in 2023. The department has focused on helping communities prepare for and recover from emerald ash borer and other pests with community tree inventories, canopy cover assessments, tree planting grants, tree distributions, and urban forest management plans. In addition to delivering urban forestry technical assistance and programs, Iowa continues recovery efforts from the 2020 derecho, the most costly thunderstorm disaster in U.S. history.

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