



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet

Illinois 2024



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2023 Estimate
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$268,169
Forest Legacy	\$0
Forest Stewardship	\$169,549
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$299,934
State Fire Assistance	\$308,751
Urban and Community Forestry	\$1,447,664
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$518,269
Total	\$3,012,336

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

State, private, and other non-Federal forests make up 92 percent of the 176 million acres of forests across the 20 states of the Northeast and Midwest. The U.S. Forest Service and state forestry agencies collaborate with other partners on shared stewardship goals, which also support each State Forest Action Plan. The State, Private, and Tribal Forestry programs promote the health, resilience, and productivity of trees and forests across all ownerships for the benefit of people and wildlife; establish and manage urban and community forests; empower private landowners with information and technical assistance to sustainably manage their forests; and protect critically important rural forests and watersheds.

Program Goals

- Conserve and manage working forest landscapes for multiple values and uses.
- Protect forests from threats.
- Enhance public benefits from trees and forests.

Key Issues

- Oak-hickory forests are threatened.
- Large forest blocks are disappearing.
- Forest health threats are increasing.
- Forestry professionals are too few.
- Forest industries and mills are shrinking.
- Urban and community forests face extreme pressures and challenges.
- Forest funding and other significant threats exist.

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2023 Accomplishments	Value
Population	12,812,508	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	10,259
Acres of Forest Land	4,873,487	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	48,786
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	3,838,009	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	33,174
Number of NIPF Landowners	81,946	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	40
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	0	State Fire Communities Assisted	4
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	10,670,000	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	24,774
Number of Rural Fire Departments	1,280	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	0
Cities and Towns	1,298	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	478
Forest Based Employment	44,145	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	10,291,357
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	8	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	32,923
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	6,100,000		

Program Highlights

Cooperative Fire Protection

Illinois benefited from \$287,877 in continued funding for two Cross-Boundary hazardous fuels reduction projects. A Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant was awarded for \$87,500 to expand prescribed fire use. The Volunteer Fire Assistance program funded 40 grants to volunteer fire departments for wildland fire suppression training and equipment. State Fire Assistance funds trained 308 firefighters and paid for 11,725 acres of hazardous fuels treatment.

Forest Health Protection

Large areas of Illinois were subjected to a very dry and early summer. Drought-like conditions prevailed until mid-July when moderate precipitation returned. Leaf scorch and early fall color were evident on a variety of tree species, particularly oaks and maples. The incidence of foliar fungal diseases was at low levels due to the drier spring and early summer. Ongoing forest health issues included herbicide drift injury to woody plants, especially oaks, and the rapid decline of oaks and conifers. Beginning in summer 2023, a statewide survey was initiated to determine possible factors involved in rapid decline and death of oaks. To date, 16 sites were surveyed for the presence of oomycetes associated with oak tree roots. Preliminary results indicate that over 80 percent of the root samples have evidence of *Phytophthora* fungi. Further results are still pending. Forest health monitoring surveys were conducted in 2023 for thousand cankers disease and the walnut twig beetle, sassafras wilt, and sudden oak death. There were no positive detections. However, in mid-September 2023, the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA) confirmed the first detection of spotted lanternfly in Illinois in southern Cook County. State, Federal, and local officials coordinated a site visit near the area of the report and identified a moderately populated area of spotted lanternfly. The IDA is currently working with Federal and local partners to determine the full extent of the infestation.

Forest Stewardship

Thanks in part to Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding, Illinois initiated a series of projects intended to better assist landowners by creating landowner resource materials, equipping foresters to improve service delivery, and helping increase State nursery production. Diverse partnerships continue to be a cornerstone of private forest landowner assistance. By collaborating with University of Illinois Extension, Shawnee Resource, Conservation & Development, River-to-River Cooperative Weed Management Area, Shawnee National Forest, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and many others, staff foresters help to deliver high-quality technical assistance to the private forest landowners of Illinois to produce the full suite of ecosystem service benefits that resilient, well-managed forests provide.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

In 2023, six projects from local nongovernmental organizations in Illinois received over \$1 million in Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding through the USDA Forest Service's competitive grant programs. Projects addressed canopy loss due to invasive insects such as emerald ash borer; planted trees in urban communities to combat stormwater runoff that causes flooding and erosion and impacts water quality; and restored coastal and riparian habitat. In total, the projects propose to plant 650 trees and shrubs, and treat or restore over 100 acres. Added community benefits include job and skills training through programs such as the Conservation Corps, Greencorps, Openlands Arborist Apprentice program, Student Conservation Association, Eco Ambassadors Youth Program, and Imani Green Health Advocates. Projects are largely focused in underserved areas and at least three are planning to take climate change into account when choosing which species to plant.

Landscape Scale Restoration

Grantee: Shawnee Resource Conservation & Development Area

Federal investment: \$299,934

Project: Large-Scale Oak-Hickory Ecosystem Restoration in Southern Illinois

Summary: This project capitalizes on the Let the Sun Shine In partnership, established in southern Illinois through previous Landscape Scale Restoration grants. Stewardship priority areas were established to focus implementation efforts and include disadvantaged communities identified by the Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool. These focus areas and success of past work mean that efforts can expand to the surrounding forest and other priority areas. Partnerships and funding for implementation are the key to large-scale oak-hickory ecosystem restoration in southern Illinois.

Urban and Community Forestry

Illinois Department of Natural Resources Urban and Community Forestry program partners have increased the State's Tree City USA communities to 200 with 5 new members, a 100 percent recertification of last year's participants, and a recapturing of 4 members from previous years. Also in 2023, Illinois completed and field tested a Forest Strike Team Emerald Ash Borer Protocol as a component of a larger Eastern/Midwestern/Southern project, and grew the Illinois Urban Forest Strike Team to 63 volunteers.

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