



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet Kansas 2025



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2024 Final
Community Forests and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$113,000
Forest Legacy	\$0
Forest Stewardship	\$139,906
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$300,000
State Fire Assistance	\$668,620
Urban and Community Forestry	\$381,851
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$507,610
Total	\$2,110,987

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

The Kansas Forest Service, through State Statute K.A.76-425, has the responsibility of overseeing the state's 2.6 million acres of forestland, 1.3 million acres of Trees Outside of Forests, and 337,239 acres of community and urban forests. The Kansas Forest Service currently employs 42 full-time employees and over 50 temporary and student employees. The Cooperative Programs are administered and implemented through a partnership between the State of Kansas, Kansas State University, the USDA Forest Service, and many other private and government entities. These programs promote the health and productivity of Kansas forest lands and rural economies. Emphasis is on timber, forest products, wildlife, water resources, energy conservation, conservation practices, and wildland fire management. These programs improve cost-effectiveness by using partnerships in delivery, values through sustained productivity of forests, and are voluntary, using non-regulatory approaches.

Program Goals

- Increase and sustain healthy and productive forests providing professional forestry assistance to landowners in important forest resource areas.
- Protect life and property on 46 million acres empowering fire departments to build stronger programs.
- Sustain healthy urban and community forests by building local capacity in cities and towns to care for and manage public trees.
- Strategies may be found in the Kansas Forest Action Plan, https://www.kansasforests.org/about/kfs_docs/KSForestActionPlan.html

Key Issues

- Wildfire risk (Longer fire seasons, more intense fires, fewer volunteer firefighters.)
- Forest Health Threats
- Loss of Forestland
- Sustaining Water Quality and Quantity
- Protecting and Restoring Forest Biodiversity and Wildlife Habitat
- Sustaining and Protecting Forest Agroforestry Ecosystems
- Maintaining and Protecting the Economic Benefits of Woodlands

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2024 Accomplishments	Value
Population	2,937,880	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	836
Acres of Forest Land	2,467,240	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	11,336
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	2,086,382	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	11,118
Number of NIPF Landowners	51,102	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	400
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	0	State Fire Communities Assisted	25
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	46,400,000	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	0
Number of Rural Fire Departments	620	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	0
Cities and Towns	625	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	50
Forest Based Employment	9,000	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	1,182,933
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	13	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	602,076
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	3,755,287		

Program Highlights

Community Forestry Cost Share

Recently, the Kansas Forest Service received Forest Action Plan funding from the USDA Forest Service State, Private, and Tribal Forestry to support the many benefits provided by our Community forestry partners. Since establishing the KFS Community forestry program, KFS staff have provided valuable support, education, and technical expertise to these partners. However, the State of Kansas has not been able to offer our Community forestry partners an opportunity for cost share for as long as current staff can remember. That changed in 2023 with two such opportunities. Using Forest Action Plan funding, KFS created a cost-share opportunity targeted to smaller communities with less available funding. These projects have been awarded to 4 Kansas Communities for removal and replacement projects. These projects were completed in 2024. Details of these projects can be read in the report at this link:

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:us:bfa703f6-e599-411b-b7df-481a87334a13>

With funding, KFS has developed a similar opportunity targeted at communities of all sizes across the state. In 2024, KFS staff worked out the administrative processes for this opportunity, sent out a call for applications, and to date have selected 11 communities we are partnering with to plan and conduct needed improvements to their community tree canopies and improve the quality of life in these communities.

Community Forests and Open Space

While no Community Forestry and Open Space project applications were submitted in 2024, outreach, education, and other assistance has been made available to communities with a potential interest in the program. A new handout was developed for use in 2025.

Conservation Education

Contracted with the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education (KACEE) to provide Project Learning Tree (PLT) in Kansas. These professional learning opportunities focus on preparing educators to teach about trees and forests both in schools and in out-of-school experiences. In 2024, KACEE delivered 19 K-12 Educator workshops and 7 Early Childhood (PreK-2) workshops, as well as 7 PLT "Mini" workshops (an introductory course) for a total of 189 Kansas educators trained in implementing Project Learning Tree with students. Based on educator reporting, these 189 educators will impact 16,000+ students across the state of Kansas on an annual basis. In addition, KACEE integrated PLT into the Topeka Water Festival for over 700 Kansas kids in collaboration with key partners and issued a Green Leader eeCredential (microcredential) to 35 teachers providing critical leadership training, including PLT and PLT Green Schools. In 2024, KACEE also piloted a Prairie Ecology eeCourse using PLT materials as a part of online courses offered to educators.

Cooperative Fire Protection

State and private lands are protected from wildland fire by building strong and efficient fire programs to protect an estimated 2,937,880 people and property valued at over \$284 billion. KFS continued to assist fire departments through the Equipment Donation Program, issuing emergency lights and sirens, radios, pagers, and personal protective equipment. Agreements are in place with 502 KS fire districts. KFS maintains an excess property inventory of over 600 pieces of equipment valued at \$43 million and issued 15 items worth \$515,460 in 2024. This is less than in the past due to a widespread lack of equipment available from DOD/DLA. KFS assisted 3 counties in beginning contracted CWPPs through CWDG funds. The Volunteer Fire Assistance grant funds were allocated to cooperating departments emphasizing communication, personnel safety, and wildland fire hand tools. For 2024, 92 fire departments in 56 counties requested \$605,159 in funding. KFS funded 90 applications for a total of \$343,076 in awarded funding. Additionally, firefighters are becoming increasingly aware of the value of quality wildland fire suppression training. In 2024, KFS held 55 wildland fire classes, reaching 1,459 firefighters, for 6,592 contact hours. KFS also conducted prevention messaging through Smokey Bear visits celebrating Smokey Bear's 80th birthday. KFS facilitated 30 Smokey Bear visits to 2,939 attendees. KFS assisted with the startup of two new Prescribed Fire Burn associations. KFS is assisting with updating the Kansas Smoke Implementation Plan, which is intended to be completed in May 2025. Additionally, staff has played a large role in fire weather intelligence and messaging, utilizing various forms of social media to broadcast upcoming fire weather concerns and adopting the Fire Danger Rating System statewide. Our state fire season showcased KFS's ability to make a meaningful impact on fire suppression, providing assistance to local FDs.

Economic Action

No action.

Forest Health Protection

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is currently known to exist in 15 northeast Kansas counties. In 2024, industry and agency partners alerted KFS to potential new detections of EAB, with two counties (Lyon & Nemaha) being added as having positive finds. With the deregulation of EAB, KFS, and partners maintained outreach messaging, survey & detection, and technical support for Kansas communities as we advance. These efforts will help blunt the impact of EAB, as the compensatory value of urban ash in Kansas is more than \$1.3 billion. KFS continues to assist communities with transitioning to a more varied canopy with less risk of future threats. As of 2024, Kansas is still free of Thousand Cankers Disease of Black Walnut (TCD). The Kansas Department of Agriculture reports that all surveys and sampling returned negative results for TCD and the Walnut Twig Beetle. KFS is working on updating a Sentinel Walnuts project in western Kansas, with 227 trees located and assessed, aiding in early detection. Should TCD be introduced into Kansas, there would be a potential loss of \$160 million to the Kansas economy. Multiple targeted outreach efforts spread the message that wood movement increases the risk of spreading TCD and other pests and diseases. Invasive plants continue to threaten Kansas landscapes, with severe infestations of bush honeysuckle, Callery pear, tamarisk, and others disrupting the functionality of various ecosystems across the state. Supported by USDA competitive grant funding, KFS has partnered with local land managers to increase their effectiveness in treating invasive plants by offering. KFS and our partners organized 2 Callery Pear buy-back events. These events resulted in 200 Callery pear trees being replaced by native species.

Forest Legacy

The Baldwin Woods Forest Legacy property continues to be utilized for scientific study and public engagement, by the Kansas Biological Survey and others. Four public educational events were held by KU staff. In addition, a regional forest legacy meeting and tour was held in October. The Fall Baldwin Woods Walk took place on 10/27/24 at the Forest Legacy Tract. Tours were led by experts in botany, mycology, forestry, forest health, and ecology. Through all five events, 178 people attended.

Forest Stewardship

There are 3.2 million priority Forest Stewardship acres in Kansas. In 2024, KFS foresters produced 63 new Forest Stewardship Management Plans providing professional forestry recommendations on 11,336 acres. These are part of the 805 active Forest Stewardship Management plans covering 211,247 acres across Kansas, with 771 of those plans occurring within priority forest resource areas covering 68,905 acres.

KFS Tech Team

In 2024 the Kansas Forest Service continued to leverage flexible funding from the USDA Forest Service State, Private, and Tribal Forestry to implement State Forest Action Plans. KFS staff identified on-the-ground, technical level capacity as one of the best ways we could leverage the Forest Action Plan dollars. To achieve this goal KFS has created a new technician level position and formed these new positions into a team that is available to work statewide and across all major program areas. A few example accomplishments of the KFS Tech Team in 2024 include:

8 Community Tree Inventories
678,000 Seeds collected for KFS Greenhouse production
423ac of TSI marked
20 Smokey Bear events

Landowner Assistance

In 2024, KFS foresters provided technical assistance to 836 landowners. KFS also produced 287 practice plans that led to the implementation of tree planting, windbreak establishment and renovation and forest stand improvement across Kansas. Through a Contribution Agreement with NRCS, KFS designed 303 forestry conservation practice plans covering 2,744 acres. These include plans for windbreak establishment and renovation (92), forest stand improvement (138), riparian forest buffers (22), and tree and shrub establishment (35). KFS also provided 230 inventory/evaluation or implementation site visits for landowners to assist with compliance to NRCS standards and specifications for applications and plans. Through this partnership with NRCS, KFS foresters assisted Kansas landowners secure more than \$440,000 in EQIP funding alone. KFS also provided forestry education to 125 adults and 1961 youth at 20 workshop or field day events throughout 2024.

Landscape Scale Restoration

In 2024, Kansas Forest Service had five active LSR funded projects in various stages of implementation. These projects aligned with, and were informed by the issues and risks identified in the Kansas Forest Action Plan. Projects included efforts focused on invasive plant mitigation and riparian forest restoration; increasing cross-boundary landscape forest stewardship in high priority areas in eastern, central, and western Kansas associated with private lands adjacent to state-managed wildlife areas and other public lands; and improving water quality and quantity through riparian forest planning and management assistance across boundaries, including on tribal and private forestlands in the Delaware River watershed and other priority watersheds in eastern Kansas. One new project was successfully started, focused on "Enhancing Streambank Practice Success at Multiple Scales in Priority Watersheds" in eastern Kansas.

Seedling and Direct Seeding Capacity Improvements at KFS.

The KFS Conservation Trees Program produces containerized conservation-grade tree and shrub seedlings, distributes bare-root conservation-grade tree and shrub seedlings produced by partner nurseries, and produces, collects, and processes tree and shrub seed for seedling production and bulk seed supply for direct seeding of trees in reforestation/afforestation projects. It has been in its operating location since the mid-1950s and expanded in the 1960s, where its focus was on coniferous species for windbreaks. Over the years, most of the demand and consequent production has shifted to primarily hardwood species, and, as a result, the KFS seed and seedling production facilities have a reduced potential to meet existing demand. The renovation of the shadehouse facility began in December of 2022 and was completed in the summer of 2024. The outcome of this project will be increased seedling production capacity, efficiency, and improved seedling quality. The improvements to the tools, supplies, and equipment used in seed collection and processing began in July 2023 and concluded in July 2024. The outcome of this project will be increased volume and quality of seed available for reforestation and afforestation projects via direct seeding in Kansas. In addition to these projects, KFS has begun the design phase of the construction of a new headhouse and updates to the greenhouse utilizing disaster funding.

Urban and Community Forestry

The Kansas Forest Service aided communities in developing sustained local efforts to manage public trees, emphasizing capacity building by providing program organization, tree inventories, management plans, tree planting plans, and training for local tree advocates such as tree boards, residents, municipal employees, and arborists. The Kansas Forest Service built sustainable and adaptable community canopies with additional species and enhanced quality of life in communities. 88 communities certified as

Tree City USA's, and 7 Tree Campus', spent over \$23.3 million, and volunteers served 7,427 hours in helping improve and protect the local community forest resource. The Kansas Forest Service completed 11 tree inventories for communities across the state. Chapman, Blue Rapids, and Burlingame utilized \$25,000 in Forest Action Plan funding to remove hazardous trees and replant with appropriate species. 9,358 community trees were planted statewide. We have partnered with the Kansas Arborist Association to promote sustainable community forestry programs and build capacity by hosting the Kansas Arborist Training Course. This week-long course is the first step in becoming a Kansas Certified Arborist. There are 230 total KAA Certified Arborists

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