



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet Kentucky 2021



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2020 Final
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$211,154
Forest Legacy	\$0
Forest Stewardship	\$248,793
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$642,784
State Fire Assistance	\$1,161,819
Urban and Community Forestry	\$295,008
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$310,180
Total	\$2,869,738

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

The mission of the Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) is "to protect, conserve and enhance the forest resources of the Commonwealth through a public informed of the environmental, social and economic importance of these resources." As a means of meeting this mission, the division offers a variety of programs and services ranging from landowner assistance and master logger training to forest health protection and wildland fire management. The division is also involved in the operation of tree seedling nurseries, urban and community forestry assistance, forest resource utilization and forestry education.

Program Goals

- The cooperative programs are administered and implemented through a partnership between the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the USDA Forest Service and many other private and government entities. These programs promote the health and productivity of forestlands and rural economies. The overarching goal is to maintain and improve the health of urban and rural forests and related economies as well as to protect the forests and citizens of the Commonwealth.

Key Issues

- Forests are being fragmented and landowner objectives are changing. There are 473,000 non-industrial private forest landowners in Kentucky. There are 467,000 families, individuals, trusts, estates, family partnerships, and other unincorporated groups of individuals that own forestland. Eighty-eight percent of the forestland in Kentucky is privately owned which makes it a challenge getting technical assistance done on-the-ground.
- Eighty-three percent of wildland fires in Kentucky are caused by humans. Arson accounts for 50% of the wildland fire causes.
- Urban development and other land use changes are affecting Kentucky's natural resource sustainability. Economic growth, population demographics, and infrastructure expansion in rural and urban areas drive these issues. The development of self-sustaining community forestry programs that include advocacy groups, public education components, urban forestry staff, and properly maintained urban trees and forests remain an issue in Kentucky.
- The emerald ash borer has now been found in 96 counties and will eventually impact ash resources across the entire state. The emerald ash borer will continue to have an extensive impact in urban communities and has already had a significant impact on Kentucky's forest industry. It is estimated that the ash disaster will cost Kentucky landowners and forest industries nearly \$100 million annually. In addition, a new invasive disease, Laurel Wilt Disease, was found in Kentucky in 2019.
- White oak is important both economically and for the long term sustainability of its ecosystem. Currently, the demand on white oak resources is in-check with the growing stock inventories; however, forest data shows a significant reduction in smaller-sized oak that indicates a shortage of

large, high quality white oak in the future. The white oak initiative was developed by partners comprised of industry, agency, university and non-profits to facilitate dealing with this issue across 17 states.

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2020 Accomplishments	Value
Population	4,339,367	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	5,055
Acres of Forest Land	12,375,943	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	63,012
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	10,398,000	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	51,390
Number of NIPF Landowners	473,000	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	17,100,000	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	0
Number of Rural Fire Departments	775	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	0
Cities and Towns	421	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	94
Forest Based Employment	53,000	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	1,804,105
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	3	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	3,775
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	16,900,000		

Program Highlights

Cooperative Fire Protection

State Fire Assistance provides funding to support firefighting resources throughout Kentucky. In fiscal year 2020, the Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) suppressed 501 fires that burned 7,957 acres. The Federal Excess Personal Property Program and the Federal Firefighter Program assist in acquiring and placing fire equipment in rural communities throughout the state. The KDF administers the Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grant program to support the fire prevention and protection efforts of rural community fire departments. The division provided VFA grant funding of \$353,926 to 98 fire departments and also awarded \$75,000 in Firewise cost-share grants to eight communities. Kentucky communities have completed 70 Community Wildfire Protection Plans, with five more in progress. Of those communities, twelve hold recognition as a Firewise USA Community. Currently, two more communities are working on their certification for recognition. Mitigation funds have been used to pay for law enforcement assistance from the Kentucky Department for Fish and Wildlife Resources. A 24 hour notification process is required for prescribed burn practitioners in Kentucky to perform prescribed burning. The opportunities for reducing hazardous fuels within Kentucky have never been higher. The KDF is utilizing Community Fire Protection funding to complete hazard fuel reductions around communities that are adjacent to US Forest Service property. KDF has also partnered with US Fish and Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy to utilize their funding to further ecosystem management on properties they oversee through prescribe fire implementation.

Forest Health Protection

EAB infestations have been confirmed in 96 counties in Kentucky. In April of 2014, the state regulated county quarantine system was rescinded and the entire state was added to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) list of regulated areas. This federal order directly affects the wood and nursery industries because it regulates the interstate movement of ash nursery stock, green lumber, waste, compost, and chips of ash species to areas outside the federal quarantine. EAB continues to move throughout Kentucky and infestations in neighboring states of Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and Tennessee suggest that the pest will be confirmed in the remaining Kentucky counties in the coming years. It is estimated that the ash disaster will cost Kentucky landowners and forest industries nearly \$100 million annually.

The hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) is another exotic pest that is impacting Kentucky's forests. HWA infestations occur broadly across 31 counties in eastern Kentucky. The Division has a dedicated field crew tasked with chemically treating hemlock trees on public lands in order to prevent the total loss of hemlocks from our forests. The Hemlock Treatment Program began in 2011 and treatments have occurred every year since that time. The Division treated 12,163 hemlock trees in 2020. In addition, a new invasive disease, Laurel Wilt Disease, was found in Kentucky in 2019. It has since spread to five counties and threatens sassafras and spicebush across the state.

The Division also monitors for potential pests/diseases that could impact our forests in the future, such as thousand cankers disease. Eight counties were surveyed for declining walnut trees in 2020 and eight traps were placed at public sites to monitor for the insect vector carrying the disease. Broader surveys of Kentucky's forests also occur and in 2020, 2,488,527 acres were aerially surveyed and an additional 25,004 acres were ground surveyed for potential forest health threats.

Forest Legacy

Administrative funds were used to monitor existing Legacy projects. There are 10,220 acres protected to date through 9 acquisitions.

Forest Stewardship

KDF foresters developed 769 forest stewardship/forest management plans covering 63,012 acres. The division completed forest improvement plans covering 44,659 acres of activities including tree planting, timber stand improvement, and many other forest enhancement practices through USDA Farm Bill programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Good Neighbor Agreement

The Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) and the US Forest Service (USFS), Daniel Boone National Forest, have made and entered into a Master Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA) executed and effective as of June 14, 2018, and expiring May 1, 2028. The expressed purpose of this GNA is to provide the framework, and to document the cooperative effort for these parties regarding authorized forest, rangeland, and watershed restoration services on National Forest System (NFS) lands under specified provisions. Allowable restoration services will use the Supplemental Project Agreement (SPA) instrument and will include, but are not limited to, activities to treat insect and disease-infected trees; activities to reduce hazardous fuels; silvicultural prescription activities; vegetation management activities; and any other activities to restore or improve forest, rangeland, and watershed health, including fish, and wildlife habitat. The USFS will retain National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) responsibilities on NFS lands.

Landowner Assistance

The KDF continues to expand its efforts to involve woodland owners in sound management practices. The division, in cooperation with UK Extension, hosted over 10 forestry virtual woodland owner short courses and forestry webinars, and other landowner and school children training opportunities across the state. This effort involved partnering with our sister agencies (i.e. fish and wildlife, nature preserves, conservation organizations, NRCS, USFS, etc.), and several forestry-related organizations, such as the Kentucky Woodland Owners Association, the Kentucky Arborists Association, the Kentucky Forest Industries Association, and the Kentucky Association of Consulting Foresters. The division continues to co-sponsor the annual small, limited resource, minority landowner conference with Kentucky State University.

Urban and Community Forestry

In 2020, Kentucky celebrated its 124th Arbor Day. Kentucky Division of Forestry participated in a total of 25 Arbor Day events that included tree plantings and giveaways of 56,320 trees. A total of forty-one communities were designated as a Tree City USA community, including six communities that also received a Growth Award for significantly expanding their urban forestry program. Over 36% of Kentuckians live in a Tree City USA community, and these communities spent over \$7.5 million dollars on urban forestry management. Thirteen universities and colleges received designations of Tree Campus USA and two medical facilities received designations of Tree Campus Healthcare USA. Additionally, three utility companies were designated as Tree Line USA. Two annual urban reforestation events were

reinvented in the spring in partnership with KDF due to COVID-19, which resulted in the distribution and planting of over 5,400 tree seedlings. FY18 Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) grant project, "Energy Saving Trees/Community Canopy Program", was carried out in the City of Louisville. FY20 LSR projects include University of Kentucky's "Conservation, protection, and enhancement of forest canopies in rural communities and small municipalities", and Northern Kentucky Urban and Community Forestry Council's "Assessment of volunteer-driven reforestation efforts in Northern Kentucky". FY18 pass-through funds are being used to carry out urban and community forestry work in Central Kentucky through the University of Kentucky's Urban Forest Initiative and through the Green Heart Louisville project.

White Oak Initiative

The white oak initiative project encompasses both USFS Regions (8 & 9) and 17 partnering states designed for easy engagement of partners that have significant and critical upland oak resources. Regional activities include the assessment of oak resources and identification of management barriers that will be used to develop a Conservation and Sustainability Plan for upland oak forests with an emphasis on white oak as a keystone species. State level activities will include demonstration areas, development of landowner cooperatives, state landowner management materials, social media and sociological based tools to facilitate landowner outreach and engagement.

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