**State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet**
**Nebraska 2023**

**Investment in State's Cooperative Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>FY 2022 Final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Forestry and Open Space</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management</td>
<td>$121,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Legacy</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forest Stewardship</td>
<td>$174,451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Scale Restoration</td>
<td>$700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Fire Assistance</td>
<td>$1,479,688</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban and Community Forestry</td>
<td>$1,474,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Fire Assistance</td>
<td>$453,266</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,427,412</strong></td>
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NOTE: This funding is for all entities within the state, not just the State Forester’s office.

Nebraska's forest resources provide important environmental and economic benefits, such as soil & water conservation, wildlife habitat, wood & specialty forest products, wind protection, and overall aesthetics in the state. Unfortunately, many of the rural woodlands are unmanaged and our community forests are in decline. In Nebraska, there are 1.5 million acres of forest with approximately 489,000 acres of community forest that improve air and water quality, benefit overall storm water management, save energy, and contribute to the "Good Life" in our towns and communities that all Nebraskans enjoy. Stewardship and growth of community forest in Nebraska is key, considering about 2/3 of all Nebraskans live and work inside the boundaries of a community forest. In addition, Nebraska's rural forests include our native forest areas, and conservation plantings such as windbreaks, shelterbelts, and riparian buffers. These rural forests contribute by filtering harmful chemicals & improving water quality, reducing the wind to help keep soils in place while protecting rural homes, farms, ranches, and livestock. At the Nebraska Forest Service (NFS), we continue to generate substantial impacts by implementing, improving and expanding programmatic, technical and financial assistance. In 2022, NFS staff worked with tens of thousands of people and hundreds of communities across the state to address our mission: of enriching lives of all Nebraskans by protecting, enhancing and utilizing Nebraska's tree and forest resources.

**Program Goals**

- Ensure that our mission remains relevant to the current and emerging needs of our clients and the people of Nebraska, and clearly articulate our vision and role in meeting those needs.
- Ensure the effective management and stewardship of the NFS, our people, programs, and resources.
- Promote species diversity in both rural and community forests.
- Cultivate partnerships - supporting and enhancing existing partnerships as well as developing new relationships with non-traditional partners. Provide benefits to Nebraskans and the forest of Nebraska by leveraging relationships to effectively and efficiently serve the people of Nebraska.
- Foster an entrepreneurial organization to create an innovative and creative staff that supports program design and implementation.
- Continue to develop Wildland-Urban fuels reduction programs to thin acres around communities and infrastructure, thin to protect lives and thin to reduce costs associated with catastrophic wildfires.
- Provide direct, on-the-ground, technical assistance to woodland owners, agricultural producers, land stewards, critical habitat and high priority landscapes to maximize the overall benefit for the resource and for all Nebraskans.
- Improve the overall health of Nebraska's trees and forests in both urban and rural environments by engaging landowners statewide on the benefits of trees and current issues related to forest health, invasive insects and proper forest management activities.
- Address the critical issues, including forest health threats, timber management and wildfire.
• Utilize biomass, CLT technology, mass timber, biochar, and other technology to maximize utilization and help offset the cost of management for landowners and communities.
• Restore forest areas affected by natural disasters and wildfires.

Key Issues
• High fuel load in unmanaged forest areas. These areas are at risk to catastrophic wildfires.
• The encroachment of eastern red cedar into hardwood and coniferous forests. The uncontrolled spread of eastern red cedar into native grasslands.
• Emerald ash borer and other invasive insects.
• The declining health of community forests due to age and other factors.
• Community forests canopy cover is on the decline.
• Fuels within the WUI and the expanding acres and homes in the wildland urban interface.
• Herbicide drift and the affect on both community and rural forests.
• Removal of conservation forests including riparian forest and windbreaks.
• Lack of economically viable markets for forest products which leads to a decline in management.
• Hazardous tree removal on public and private lands in communities.

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Facts</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>FY 2022 Accomplishments</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>1,961,504</td>
<td>Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance</td>
<td>1,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres of Forest Land</td>
<td>1,433,522</td>
<td>Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans</td>
<td>40,824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land</td>
<td>1,227,194</td>
<td>Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans</td>
<td>33,294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of NIPF Landowners</td>
<td>21,091</td>
<td>Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted</td>
<td>474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection</td>
<td>741,247</td>
<td>State Fire Communities Assisted</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection</td>
<td>48,342,273</td>
<td>Coop Forest Health Acres Protected</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Rural Fire Departments</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities and Towns</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Based Employment</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance</td>
<td>1,313,235</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)</td>
<td>34,000,000</td>
<td>Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance</td>
<td>13,289</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Forestry Budget (All Sources)</td>
<td>5,306,217</td>
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Program Highlights

Conservation Education
Conservation Education (CE) programming directly reached over 9,574 Nebraskans across the State, and staff worked in dozens of communities. An SFI Education Grant was awarded to assist NFS with expanding its Project Learning Tree program, particularly funding the initiation of the Affiliate Education Centers program. Nebraska PLT has continued steady growth since 2016. CE staff provided 158 presentations, hosted 56 events, and contributed to seven news articles and stories. Through 64 workshops NFS hosted 1,345 educators and facilitated environmental education curriculum, potentially reaching thousands of Nebraska’s youth. Students are trained in three NFS-sponsored curricula (Project Learning Tree K-8, Project WET K-12, Project WET Climate, Water and Resilience). Our Affiliate Education Centers (AEC) program that was created in 2021, with centers located in Omaha, Lincoln, Gering, Ponca, Trenton, Columbus, and Hastings each facilitated one in-person workshop.

Cooperative Fire Protection
In 2022, the Complex Incident Management Team (CIMT)- Type I responded to two fires (the 702 and Bovee) in Western Nebraska. Once in 2022, the Nebraska Type 3 Team deployed (Road 739 fire). NFS staff worked on 54 fires in an overhead capacity as part of Type 3, CIMT, or Wildland Incident Response and Assistance (WIRAT) teams.

Additionally, NFS fire staff conducted 31 training events reaching over 650 trainees from dozens of volunteer fire departments (VFDs). NFS also supported VFDs via the Volunteer Fire Assistance program, which provided $503,000 in financial assistance to 96 VFDs for equipment, training, and prevention supplies. By providing training and financial assistance to the VFDs, we are building fire suppression capacity within the state and providing means for these departments to increase their knowledge and abilities. This increased capacity has allowed NFS to sponsor VFDs to serve as Nebraska state fire response resources and assist with national wildfire response, supporting our regional partners and providing a source of income for the departments. The coordination between cooperating agencies, VFDs, and community stakeholders assists in keeping fires small and helps mitigate catastrophic wildfire and large-scale incidents.

**Economic Action**

In 2022 through our partnership:

- Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) staff successfully assisted the City of Lincoln, Nebraska with developing a proposal to Bloomberg Philanthropies to create a City-led biochar development program. This program turns urban wood waste into biochar to address area environmental needs while helping Lincoln achieve its goal in its Climate Action Plan.

- The Urban Wood Network brings cohesion to the branding and messaging of urban wood activities throughout the State of Nebraska. Partners work to create markets connecting end users to producers.

- In a partnership with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), biochar producers, and concrete producers, a research team is completing a comprehensive study to develop industry-ready, high-performance, and environmentally-friendly biochar concrete that can effectively sequester CO2.

**Forest Health Protection**

The Forest Health Program continues to be impactful across Nebraska. Forest Health workshops and presentations helped educate over 750 people on tree pest detection, diagnosis, insects, diseases, windbreak issues, herbicides, freeze damage, chlorosis, exotic pests, tree physiology and anatomy, soils, watering, and nutrition/fertilization. In addition, NFS staff:

- Created seven videos on various tree pests and problems.
- Evaluated over 350+ tree problems, including EAB, Cercospora needle blight, Oak galls, and thousand canker disease in the State.
- Trained professional tree care specialists on upcoming invasive species, including the spotted lantern fly.

Lastly, the Forest Health team coordinates the Nebraska Invasive Plant Management Grant, funding treatments of invasive plants on non-federal state, local or private lands in Sioux and Dawes counties. Partners inventoried 5,500 acres and treated 350 acres of invasive plants.

**Forest Legacy**

NFS continues to promote and work on the development of potential Forest Legacy projects in the State. We are continuing to work with the R2 coordinator to determine which projects are worth pursuing due to the unique nature of Forest Legacy Program. NFS has also updated our Forest Action Plan and the priority forest landscapes which now align more with the Forest Legacy Areas in the state.

**Forest Stewardship**

Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) staff provided crucial forest management planning and implementation to both private and public landowners. Community Assistance Funds Adjacent to National Forest, staff worked on 13 projects treating over 301 acres adjacent to or near the Nebraska National Forest to reduce cross-boundary wildland fire threats. Forestry staff met with 1,202 new forest landowners to assist with forest management recommendations or practice implementation, resulting in establishing windbreaks
and forest stand improvement projects.

**Landowner Assistance**

Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) forestry assistance staff provided crucial forest management planning and implementation to both private and public landowners. Along with more than 1,202 project visits conducted by staff, 157 management plans (54 were Forest Stewardship Management Plans) were developed to facilitate the management of 63,406.5 acres of Nebraska forests (40,824 acres under Forest Stewardship Management Plans). These management plans led to 2,879.63 acres managed through $1,754,219 in financial assistance provided to public and private landowners. Foresters also coordinated the reforestation of 440 acres of pine forest in the Pine Ridge and Niobrara Valley. Along with direct, technical assistance, Foresters organized 20 education programs (reaching 1,238 people), developed, delivered 77 presentations (reaching 3,346 people), and participated in 185 media pieces.

**Landscape Scale Restoration**

Great Plains community forests consist of trees growing in 1,340 towns. These trees grow in tough environments fraught with invasive pests and disease, drought, floods, intense storms, and wildly fluctuating temperatures. As the climate changes and our over-mature canopy declines, these stressors and their effects will intensify. The Community Threat Assessment Protocol (CTAP 2) LSR grant engages Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska in a collaborative effort to identify and respond to threats facing rural community forests to improve long-term resiliency. Rural communities face limited budgets and capacity, aging forests, environmental challenges including drought and severe storms, and a lack of information with which to manage their tree resources. CTAP 2 will build upon the success of CTAP 1 and other inventory/assessment projects to help 100 communities across 3 states to successfully integrate new inventory and assessment data into proven management strategies.

Nebraska rural communities are the hub of activity for over 50% of the state's population, yet rural community forests are suffering from long-term accelerating decline due to a long list of challenges. The Rural Community Forest Advocates LSR project is a grassroots effort to increase local capacity and action to restore Nebraska's community forests and their associated benefits. NFS Staff activities in 2022 included:

- Identified priority needs and provided Tree Care and Pruning workshops
- Created an emerald ash borer management template for communities
- Trained and provided scholarships for 20 individuals to obtain Nebraska Arborists Association (NAA) and International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) certification

**Urban and Community Forestry**

Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) Community Forestry staff in collaboration with the Nebraska State Arboretum, Inc. focused on the sustainable community forest, from landscape to trees, providing Nebraskan's the education and knowledge needed to make sound resource decisions and grow the next group of land stewards. Through our Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) programming, we helped Nebraska communities increase their capacity to implement community forestry programs and help improve community forest outcomes. Staff worked in 134 communities conducting inventories, tree planting, and EAB preparedness activities. UCF programs, including the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, secured grant dollars over the years. Allowing the program to impact hundreds of communities across the State. Activities in 2022 included:

- 134 community assists, 27 tree inventories, 91 Tree City USA, plus 16 growth awards (4 new), 5 Tree Campus, 4 Tree Line
- Over 13,000 hours of volunteer community service projects related to urban and community forests.
- Sixty-four community projects resulted in $109,000 in reimbursements. We planted 654 trees and thousands of companion plants (shrubs/perennials/grasses, many native/pollinator friendly) on these sites.
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