



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet West Virginia 2024



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2023 Estimate
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$846,975
Forest Legacy	\$94,058
Forest Stewardship	\$286,361
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$0
State Fire Assistance	\$631,466
Urban and Community Forestry	\$658,102
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$433,955
Total	\$2,950,917

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

- Competing land uses.
- Communications and education.
- Sustainability of forest resources in West Virginia.
- Water quality.
- Wildfire.
- Sustainability of urban forests.
- Forest health.
- Utilization, marketing, and economic development.

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2023 Accomplishments	Value
Population	1,793,716	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	3,678
Acres of Forest Land	12,013,467	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	20,211
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	7,878,875	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	14,161
Number of NIPF Landowners	96,965	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	125
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	0	State Fire Communities Assisted	169
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	12,000,000	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	3,281
Number of Rural Fire Departments	432	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	0
Cities and Towns	232	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	26
Forest Based Employment	10,198	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	271,497
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	1	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	5,991
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	8,007,548		

Program Highlights

Chesapeake Bay Watershed

The Chesapeake Shared Stewardship Agreement is being implemented and will help West Virginia meet its mandated water quality improvement goals for the Chesapeake Bay through watershed forestry. The Division of Forestry participated in the restoration of 13 acres of riparian forest buffers and led the implementation of 13,238 acres of forest harvest best management practices. Other significant watershed forestry activities in 2023 included working with partners at the Cacapon Institute to implement tree planting efforts through Project CommuniTree grants, participating in the Forestry Workgroup, and implementing West Virginia's new Riparian Forest Buffer Action Strategy.

Community Forestry and Open Space

The West Virginia Land Trust acquired three tracts of forests to create the 298-acre Bluestone Community Forest in Summers County. Two of the tracts, 198 acres in total, were acquired with a \$192,000 grant from the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program. This is the first USDA Forest Service-funded community forest in the State and is adjacent to the New River Gorge National Park's Bluestone National Scenic River unit. The creation of the community forest protects river frontage along the Little Bluestone River and offers recreational opportunities for hiking, fishing, and hunting.

Cooperative Fire Protection

Volunteer Fire Assistance funds were used to support 125 rural fire departments. Cooperative Fire program funds supported the training of 470 firefighters and treatment of 200 acres of hazardous fuels. Fire prevention efforts reached 160 communities through 250 events or programs.

Forest Health Protection

West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) found the following new detections of invasive pests through forest health surveys, including elongate hemlock scale in Monroe and Wood Counties, spotted lanternfly in Hardy, Grant, Brooke, Hancock, and Tyler Counties, and beech leaf disease in Ohio County in the northern panhandle. WVDA continued using Forewarn to identify, survey, collect, and report large forest disturbances across the State, which continues to provide a more comprehensive method for reporting statewide disturbances and data all season long.

Landscape Scale Restoration

Grantee: National Association of Conservation Districts

Federal investment: \$600,000 (13-State project)

Project: Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Partnership for Forests and Water

Benefiting States: CT, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, VT, WV

Summary: This interagency, multi-partner collaboration advances science-based restoration of priority forest landscapes and protects water in 13 States across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. The project is also supported by the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and includes focus on protecting water supplies for underserved communities and a climate markets work group. Regional collaboration will drive alignment between the forest and water sectors and facilitate greater information sharing. Projects will result in measurable on-the-ground outcomes.

Urban and Community Forestry

In 2023, West Virginia's Urban Forestry program provided assistance to 33 communities and positively impacted 301,999 West Virginians. The grant program funded nine local projects resulting in a total of \$198,172 in urban forestry investments, including four inventories and management plans, tree planting and maintenance for four Tree City USA communities, and West Virginia University's (WVU) development of a neighborhood mapping tool to provide insight as we began offering Inflation Reduction Act grants. A total of 16 communities received Tree City USA certification. Additionally, WVU, West Virginia State University, and Shepherd University achieved Tree Campus USA status and were recognized for these accomplishments. Both Potomac Edison and Mon Power, under the First Energy umbrella, were recognized as a Tree Line USA this year.

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