



# State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet

## Alabama 2022



### Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2021 Final
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$477,601
Forest Legacy	\$30,000
Forest Stewardship	\$190,176
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$50,000
State Fire Assistance	\$1,245,705
Urban and Community Forestry	\$283,197
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$397,287
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,673,966</b>

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

### Program Goals

- The Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) is committed to protecting and sustaining the state's forest resources using professionally applied stewardship principles and education. The AFC utilizes cooperative programs to maximize cost effectiveness through the use of partnerships in program delivery to increase forestland value and sustainability and does so in a voluntary and non-regulatory manner.
- The cooperative programs are administered and implemented through a partnership between the State of Alabama, the USDA Forest Service, Auburn University, Alabama A&M University, Tuskegee University, the Alabama Forestry Association and many other private and government entities. These programs promote the health and productivity of forestlands and rural economies. Emphasis focuses on forest sustainability and the production of commodity and amenity values and benefits.

### Key Issues

- Several years of budget reductions have reduced the AFC's wildfire response capacity to critical thresholds. At current staffing levels, each 2 person initial attack fire crew is responsible for protection on 275,000 acres. This area of responsibility is 70% greater than the next southern state in staffing and more than 100% greater than the average across the South.
- Even with a historically robust forest industry, FIA data shows the average annual rate of growth-to-removals for all species is 1.56:1 for the period 2001- 2017. An increase in markets will increase the need for more certified wood in the state. The Alabama Forestry Commission has hired an employee to focus on expanding markets for Alabama forest products.
- Fragmentation and parcelization has led to smaller tracts of forestland. Reaching more landowners with assistance specifically designed to meet their individual needs is a key to growing the number of acres under multiple benefit forest management in the state.
- Better technology has improved river and stream channel delineation, increasing the number of miles that the AFC tries to protect from 77,242 miles to 132,419 miles – almost doubling what we thought existed. Through education, site assessment, and complaint resolution, the AFC and forest industry can make a strong case that silvicultural operations with properly implemented BMPs do not degrade water quality in the state.
- It is imperative to maintain a strong forestry water quality program through the use of forestry BMPs. Through education, site assessment, and complaint resolution, the AFC and forest industry can make a strong case that silvicultural operations maintain and/or improve water quality in the state.
- Prescribed burning is important to Alabama's fire-adapted ecosystems. A total of 29,593,000 acres (91.7% of Alabama's total land area) are subject to wildfire threat.

- Invasions, including new species of non-native plants, pathogens and animals into forests continue to spread. These non-native invasive species, some of which are new to Alabama, increasingly erode forest productivity, hinder forest use and management activities, and degrade diversity and wildlife habitat.
- Under certain circumstances, forest insects and diseases have a significant impact on forest health and productivity through the effects of excessive defoliation, progressive decline, significant decay, root damage, stem dieback, species alteration, or outright mortality.
- Despite the rather mild climate, Alabama is prone to numerous adverse weather events such as hurricanes, tornadoes, ice storms, and droughts.

## Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2021 Accomplishments	Value
Population	4,779,736	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	32,490
Acres of Forest Land	23,093,931	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	33,931
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	17,765,000	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	16,584
Number of NIPF Landowners	412,000	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	975
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	687,000	State Fire Communities Assisted	101
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	27,720,994	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	1,035
Number of Rural Fire Departments	986	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	2,886
Cities and Towns	460	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	117
Forest Based Employment	40,837	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	2,169,179
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	2	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	43,855
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	21,728,209		

## Program Highlights

### Conservation Education

Due to COVID our education activities were severely curtailed.

### Cooperative Fire Protection

N/A

### Economic Action

The AFC contributes to forest products marketing and economic development in a significant number of ways. The AFC is critically involved with the USDA Forest Service's Forest Inventory & Analysis (FIA) program. FIA provides vital statistical data pertaining to Alabama's forest resources. Consultants, forest industry representative, and economic development practitioners utilize FIA data to make important decisions with regards to where to locate new wood products mills and where to make expansions to existing mills, and often they receive this data from AFC personnel. The AFC's involvement with the FIA program consists of forest resource data collection by field crews and the fulfillment of forest resource data requests by the FIA Coordinator. The year 2021 saw closer collaboration between the AFC and the Alabama Department of Commerce in terms of direct participation in creation of needed analysis work and attendance at site visits by representatives of forest industry firms looking to expand their operations or newly locate to our state.

The FIA program also conducts the Timber Products Output (TPO) studies to estimate industrial and non-industrial uses of roundwood across the United States. Primary wood-using mills are sampled, by state, to estimate roundwood usage. Historically, the TPO study was a periodic 100 percent canvass of all primary mills and has moved to an annual sample design nationwide. The AFC conducts this survey annually and

is tasked with the collection of data from 45 primary wood using mills in 2022.

A key way in which the AFC contributes to the marketing of Alabama's forest resources is by the annual development of their "Forest Resource Report." This report contains valuable economic status indicators of the forest industry and forest resources in Alabama for the previous year. The "Forest Resource Report 2020" was completed in June 2021 and is available on the AFC website, with the next edition coming in mid-year 2022.

### **Forest Health Protection**

During the aerial surveys only 203 spots were detected with a total 7,650 trees being infected. In addition, the commission also detected 88 spots for a total of 2,530 trees being infected via ground detection. Overall, the southern pine beetle infestations in Alabama remained low with most of the recorded infestations being in the southern half of the state.

Besides the southern pine beetle, other pests attracted the attention of the Commission. The non-native hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) was confirmed for the first time in the state back in June of 2020 in Dekalb County. In 2021 HWA is still only be reported in Dekalb County which shows that containment strategies have been effective in preventing spread to neighboring counties.

Cogon grass was another invasive species of concern. In partnership with other agencies and organizations, the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) treated 13 cogongrass spots by herbicide application that controlled 0.76 acres. In 2021 the AFC launched its cogon grass program to combat the spread of this invasive plant throughout the state. The program will begin spraying in the spring of 2022 once it has acquired the necessary equipment, sprays, and personnel. Other technical assistance and responsibility accomplishments that AFC completed in 2021 were 548 forest health stand management recommendations encompassing 33,435.18 acres and 39 public education activities with 1,712 attendees.

Disturbances such as hurricanes, tornadoes, inundation, hailstorm, frost damage, excessive rain, and high temperatures not only influenced the health of the state's forests but also affect landowners' conservation and management decisions. The only hurricane to make landfall was Hurricane Zeta but the damaged acres did not meet the criteria for a formal survey to be conducted. During the month of March, the state did experience two damaging tornadoes. These tornadoes combined damaged approximately 14,000 acres.

### **Forest Legacy**

N/A

### **Forest Stewardship**

Landowners in Alabama were recognized for their accomplishments in managing their property for multiple-use and long-term sustainability by certifying them under three programs: Tree Farm, Stewardship Forest, and TREASURE Forest. There were 97 new landowners added to the three recognized programs: 37 Tree Farm landowners, 43 Stewardship Forest landowners, and 17 TREASURE Forest landowners.

The Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) provided professional assistance in stewardship to landowners across the state by providing management plans and stand management recommendations. Agency employees completed 2,281 stand management recommendations for landowners in 2021. There were also 10 stand management plans and 167 Stewardship management plans completed this year. Other accomplishments were related to education and outreach activities. In collaboration with other agencies, the AFC hosted 11 landowner tours across the state to provide information on proper management and good stewardship of the land.

In 2021, AFC introduced the landscape management plan by the USFS. The landscape Management Plan, or LMP provides landowners with information concerning sustainable forestry practices for water quality, protection of special sites, protection of threatened and endangered species, as well as recognition and control of invasive species, ecosystems, silviculture practices, and forest certification standards. LMPs will help landowners overcome one of the biggest barriers to participating in our forest programs by eliminating the need for every landowner to develop and maintain an extensive individual management plan.

### **Landowner Assistance**

Distributed approximately \$10,000,000 in Hurricane Michael Block Grant money and \$3,000,0000 in CARES money to forest landowners in Alabama.

**Landscape Scale Restoration**

N/A

**Urban and Community Forestry**

Alabama U&CF Program provides technical and financial assistance to local governments and other organizations within Alabama who are planning, developing, and managing urban forestry. In 2020 the number of Tree City USA communities rose to 91, the highest number since 2000. There are also a dozen Tree Campus USA Higher Education institutions in the state, the first Tree Campus USA Healthcare recipient, and two utilities in the Tree Line USA program.

In 2021, more than 40,000 seedlings of ten species were distributed to the public and more than 44 cities in 33 counties were assisted with Arbor Week events. AFC employees logged 164 urban forestry technical assists throughout the state during the period. The U&CF Partnership Coordinator not only graduated from the Forestry Academy, but also graduated from the week-long Municipal Forestry Institute in Bowling Green, Ohio. Darci DeBruner was one of the first AFC employees outside of the U&CF to become a Certified Arborist and Tree Risk Assessment Qualified (TRAQ).

The largest project for FY 2021 was planning and coordinating a deployment of specialists from six states and one city for the Urban Forest Strike Team to Baldwin and Mobile counties following hurricane Sally. After the weeklong deployment, 1,529 trees with significant storm damage were identified and recorded by GPS location, FEMA damage type, and species.

The program administered 4 Urban & Community Forestry grants totaling \$930,017 and partnered on 4 multi-state grants worth \$571,000. LSR Grant activities continued during FY 21. A webinar series delivered information from the "Trees and the Law" grant to more than 400 participants and an in-person workshop was held as well. Also, a Hurricane Michael supplemental grant nears completion with 119 trees planted and more than 20,000 trees in Dothan inventoried as part of the storm recovery and to improve readiness for subsequent events.

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