



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet

Texas 2022



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

| Program | FY 2021 Final |
|--|--------------------|
| Community Forestry and Open Space | \$0 |
| Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management | \$1,088,786 |
| Forest Legacy | \$40,000 |
| Forest Stewardship | \$521,982 |
| Landscape Scale Restoration | \$743,295 |
| State Fire Assistance | \$2,938,216 |
| Urban and Community Forestry | \$1,249,515 |
| Volunteer Fire Assistance | \$0 |
| Total | \$6,581,794 |

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

Texas is a large state that has a diverse landscape with with a diverse set of challenges. Challenges such as forest markets, water quality and quantity, fragmentation and changing demographics have an affect on the natural resources across the state. Texas A&M Forest Service (TAMFS) provides statewide leadership in the management of Texas' vast natural resources and works to protect and restore them from natural disasters, weather extremes, wildfire and invasive pests.

Program Goals

- To maintain and improve the health of rural and urban forests and to protect the forests and citizens of Texas. These programs maximize cost effectiveness through the use of program delivery partnerships and increase forestland sustainability and value in a non-regulatory, voluntary manner.
- The cooperative programs, implemented through partnerships between Texas, USDA Forest Service, and other entities, emphasize forest sustainability and the production of amenity and commodity values.

Key Issues

- Ensuring environmental equity and accessibility to conservation assistance programs and ensuring equal access to all programs
- Enhancing awareness and application of the role that urban trees and forests play in human health through the Healthy Trees, Healthy Lives initiative
- Protecting the health and value of trees for wildlife and water where woodlands are not traditionally harvested commercially.
- Addressing landscape scale issues, including climate mitigation and developing incentive-based programs that increase water quality and forest health.
- Invasive plants, insects, diseases, and drought-related impacts are key issues within forest health.

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

| Selected Facts | Value | FY 2021 Accomplishments | Value |
|---|--------------|--|--------------|
| Population | 25,145,561 | Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance | 76,088 |
| Acres of Forest Land | 62,089,676 | Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans | 97,057 |
| Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land | 12,996,000 | Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans | 91,636 |
| Number of NIPF Landowners | 354,000 | Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted | 300 |
| Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection | 0 | State Fire Communities Assisted | 128 |
| Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection | 157,658,560 | Coop Forest Health Acres Protected | 3,615 |
| Number of Rural Fire Departments | 1,663 | Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions | 2,387 |
| Cities and Towns | 1,214 | Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance | 138 |
| Forest Based Employment | 67,000 | Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance | 13,433,837 |
| Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank) | 6 | Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance | 4,106 |
| State Forestry Budget (All Sources) | 67,101,544 | | |

Program Highlights

Conservation Education

During FY 2021, TAMFS created the first interdepartmental, interdisciplinary TCI planning committee for Austin's Urban Connections this summer, pulling in 5 new partners including Austin ISD, Ecorise, St. Edwards University, Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve, TPWD Junior Ranger Program. In addition to traditional forestry and urban forestry education, this year's program will emphasize the importance of including local partners and highlighting equity and inclusion in the urban forest, supplying attendees with more resources and access to supplemental curriculum than ever before.. TAMFS Coned Coordinator worked with interregional USFS staff in the north east region as well as NY DEC to aggregate Healthy Trees, Healthy Lives success stories, scientific literature, and news that went on to inform the resources available on the new Healthy Trees, Healthy Lives website. •Texas is the lead state for grant projects aiding the innovation and expansion of conservation education programs across the south. The projects will allow Texas to expand the successes of our education program and create more distance learning tools and education infrastructure, with Spanish language and accessibility modifications for visually and hearing impaired individuals. Lastly, TAMFS partnered with Texas Children in Nature Network, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and Texas by Nature to begin developing a new website and engagement platform called Nature Challenge that connects the public to on-the-ground outdoor education resources and tracks the extensive network of environmental education program providers nationally as the same time. The beta version of the website launched Spring 2021 with the full website launching Summer 2022.

Cooperative Fire Protection

Texas A&M Forest Service (TAMFS) continued to work with counties, communities, and homeowners to mitigate wildfire risk using the Ready Set Go program. During FY 21 TAMFS provided 505 community protection programs (RSG, Firewise and fire prevention workshops/presentations) educating 173,820 Texans on mitigating wildfire risk. VFA funds were allocated to award training tuition grants for 359 firefighters and personal protection equipment grants to 141 communities. State and local firefighters responded to 5,300 wildfires burning 88,321 acres in FY 21. State Fire Assistance provided funding to support fire protection and training activities across Texas. The federal excess property programs (FEPP and FFP) provided 66 assists in and placing fire equipment in rural communities throughout the state. In addition, TAMFS administered Volunteer Fire Assistance Program funds to support firefighter safety and the training efforts of rural community fire departments.

Economic Action

TAMFS continues to monitor economically-viable sources of biomass and promote traditional forest products, biomass energy, as well as emerging markets including mass timber, and forest carbon.

TAMFS continues to expand the capabilities of www.texasforestinfo.com, a web-based portal that provides all Texans and others information on Texas' forest resources. The "Timber Supply Analysis" web application allows current and potential wood using industries in Texas and across the south quantify the wood resource available in a given area. This aids in the development of new wood using markets and the expansion of traditional markets. TAMFS continues to support the development of "ecosystem value" markets and routinely updates estimated values contained within the "Forest Ecosystem Values" application on www.texasforestinfo.com. During FY 2021 TAMFS began working to develop a comprehensive report demonstrating the value of "Urban Ecosystem Values" through which the value urban forests and trees provide to human health, flood mitigation, and quality of life. TAMFS Water Resources Coordinator continues to partner with USFS, SGSF and water utility districts to promote and incentivize sustainable forest management techniques within Texas watersheds. This effort is part of the regional Forest and Drinking Water Campaign funded project from USFS in which Texas along with other southern states are working to develop incentives supported by water utility districts to assist landowners in maintaining and managing forest watersheds.

Forest Health Protection

TAMFS continues to coordinate public outreach and technical assistance to Texans regarding a variety of forest and tree pests. Forest Health staff provide oversight and comment to policy regarding pest regulation to ensure those policies are pragmatic and have achievable outcome-based results. During FY 2021 TAMFS continued to monitor for new and existing pests such as emerald ash borer, redbay ambrosia beetle, gypsy moth, spotted lanternfly, Asian longhorned beetle and a variety of native bark beetles, all of which are impacting or have the potential to impact Texas trees and forests. TAMFS continues providing financial assistance to landowners to assist in minimizing the threat of southern pine beetle establishment in East Texas and slowing the spread of oak wilt in Central and North Texas. To date, in cooperation with USFS-FHP, TAMFS has provided over \$6.7 million to more than 1,900 landowners in East Texas to thin more than 126,000 acres of overly dense pine stands improving stand health and vigor while minimizing the threat of SPB attacks. Also, to slow the spread of oak wilt in Central and North Texas, TAMFS to date has provided over \$2.8 million in funding to assist landowners install more than 673 miles of trenching. TAMFS staff spent more than 175 hours diagnosing pest issues, hosted 120 workshops with over 2,000 landowners attending and provided forest health/pest technical expertise to more than 3,700 Texans. During FY 2021 TAMFS continued to promote and update the mobile and web application TreeMD to assist homeowners, landowners and land managers diagnose a variety of common native and invasive pests affecting trees across the state. TreeMD averages 435 sessions monthly and as the application grows so will its use. Lastly, TAMFS continues to expand its relationship with USDA-APHIS, US Customs and Border Control, Texas Department of Agriculture and USFS-FHP in an effort to better coordinate efforts for identifying and mitigating forest health issues.

Forest Legacy

The agency continues to promote the Forest Legacy program and currently has a total of 7 funded projects protecting more than 30,000 acres of forestland within high priority areas. The State Stewardship Coordinating Committee Forest Legacy Program Subcommittee continues to develop new partners. With support from the Houston Endowment and other conservation partners, a new project on the coastal bend edge of the Forest Legacy Priority Area has been submitted for FY23 funding. This unique property will protect 7,500 acres of rapidly disappearing bottomland hardwood forest within a complex ecosystem comprising three major Texas rivers that flow into the Gulf of Mexico.

Forest Stewardship

Through the Forest Stewardship Program, TAMFS emphasizes the management and sustainability of resource priority areas throughout the state as identified by the Texas Forest Action Plan. Using this plan as a guide, TAMFS directs educational and technical resources to these identified priority areas. Program delivery is tailored to address the known resource concerns and threats as well as assist Texans in maintaining healthy forests, trees and woodlands. A variety of tools are used to help educate Texans on stewardship and how they can become better stewards of their forests and trees. These tools include quarterly newsletters, social media posts, mobile and web applications and most importantly one on one assistance from TAMFS staff. During FY 2021 TAMFS staff aided almost more than 57,000 landowners, educated almost 20,000 landowners and developed 734 Forest Stewardship Plans on over 97,000 acres of which 95% were located within identified priority areas. The TAMFS Tree Improvement Program and Idalou Nursery, a component of the FSP in Texas, produced over 24,000 pounds of improved seed and over 68,000 seedlings respectively. Working in cooperation with Prairie View A&M University, Texas

A&M University and US Endowment for Forestry, TAMFS is helping to deliver the Sustainable Forestry & African American Land Retention Program. Through this effort TAMFS and partners will provide forestry assistance, education and resources to African American landowners in East Texas. Lastly, The Texas A&M Forest Service Leadership Institute graduated 24 participants in its first cohort and the second cohort began in fall of 2021 including 27 members. The institute will rally existing and emerging leaders within the fields of natural resources and increase their capacity and ability to enact meaningful change throughout the state of Texas.

Landowner Assistance

TAMFS assists landowners across the state through a number of activities through support of USFS State and Private Forestry programs. Through these programs TAMFS staff are able to provide Texans assistance regarding a wide range of natural resource issues. In addition to Forest Stewardship activities, landowners receive help with land, timber and tree management issues and needs. Landowners and homeowners receive expert advice on things such as reforestation, tax valuation, ecosystem restoration as well as forest and tree health threats. TAMFS strives to meet the needs of all Texans throughout the diverse state. This includes windbreak needs in the High Plains, insect and disease issues for rural and urban trees, brush control issues in Central and West Texas, water related issues across the state, forestland habitat fragmentation, and protection and sustainability of the commercial forests of East Texas. TAMFS annually provides more than 100,000 assists across the state through both on-site and off-site assistance. During FY 21 TAMFS staff made over 3,000 on the ground assists to landowners on more than 250,000 acres of privately owned forests and woodlands. TAMFS, even with COVID reducing outreach events, provided more than 280 education and training events with over 16,000 Texans receiving formal education on natural resource related topics. TAMFS staff developed more than 1,600 forest management plans on almost 170,000 acres.

Landscape Scale Restoration

TAMFS continues to collaborate with federal, state, and NGO partners to identify and develop landscape initiatives to address forest and woodland health, improve water quality, and identify barriers to landowners in managing forests and woodlands across the state. Agency staff serve integral roles on various restoration teams including the Texas Longleaf Implementation Team, Northeast Texas Conservation Delivery Network, and the State Technical Advisory Committee hosted by NRCS. TAMFS continues to support the restoration of longleaf pine, shortleaf pine, ponderosa pine and native grass restoration as part of restoring historical ecosystem types in Texas. During FY 2021 TAMFS continued efforts to restore ponderosa pine in the Davis Mountain region, identify deteriorated windbreaks in the High Plains for restoration purposes, and continue grow native grass for restoration projects. Also, TAMFS continued to grow the Texas Forests and Drinking Water campaign which works to develop a connection between water utilities and forest landowners in hopes of providing monetary support for managing priority watersheds. Through the Good Neighbor Authority TAMFS is assisting Texas National Forests in addressing forest health issues and mitigating hazards to both the local ecosystem and general public. Lastly, during FY 2021 TAMFS expanded its role with National Forest System in Texas through the Good Neighbor Authority. TFS took the lead on the management of timber sales (mostly thinning operations to improve forest health conditions) on the Sabine, Sam Houston and Davey Crockett National Forests.

Urban and Community Forestry

The Urban and Community Forestry Program continues to provide educational and technical assistance to communities and residents across the state, focusing on arboriculture principles and practices, ordinances, inventories, urban planning, and strategic management plans for greenspaces and trees. Staff work with six regional urban forestry councils and numerous NGOs to educate citizens about the benefit and value of trees in the landscape, developing a variety of formats to meet the needs of the diverse Texas population, including traditional, virtual live and self-directed, and Spanish language. Over 10,000 seat hours of formal education and training were delivered to Texans. Additionally, program staff promote the Healthy Trees, Healthy Lives initiative, facilitating on-the-ground place-making to increase environmental equity and accessibility; expand selection and reach of climate ready, urban hardy trees from the Urban Tree Improvement Program; coordinate the Texas Tree Conference, providing scholarships to over 50 municipal employees; and develop innovative applications to aid communities in the management of their trees, including My Tree ID, Trees Count inventory app, and the Tree Risk mobile app.

Water Resources

The TAMFS Water Resources program continues to focus on innovative technology and strategic partnerships to enhance water resources throughout the state. Texas Forestry BMPs, a native smartphone application for the Texas Forestry Best Management Practices handbook, has been downloaded by more than 2,500 users. The web-based Plan My Land Operation application averages 300 sessions per month, providing users with site specific BMP recommendations to support operation planning and layout. Computer models (iTree Hydro) are also being used to quantify and build support for utilizing urban forests in storm water management programs and watershed protection plans. The Texas Forests and Drinking Water Partnership continues to grow and connecting forest managers, owners and water utility districts to advance source water protection initiatives. Priority watersheds have been identified, conservation funding has been directed to these areas, and efforts are underway to develop a forest-water demonstration project. TAMFS is also delivering land stewardship training to farm and ranch contractors in Central and West Texas, building on the extremely successful logger training model in East Texas.

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