



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet

Kansas 2024



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2023 Estimate
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$113,000
Forest Legacy	\$50,000
Forest Stewardship	\$133,720
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$0
State Fire Assistance	\$705,690
Urban and Community Forestry	\$429,148
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$714,625
Total	\$2,146,183

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

The Kansas Forest Service through State Statute K.A.76-425, has the responsibility of overseeing the state's 2.4 million acres of forestland, 1.2 million acres of Trees Outside of Forests, and 337,239 acres of community and urban forests. The Kansas Forest Service currently employs 33 full-time employees and over 40 temporary and student employees. The Cooperative Programs are administered and implemented through a partnership between the State of Kansas, Kansas State University, the USDA Forest Service and many other private and government entities. These programs promote the health and productivity of Kansas forest lands and rural economies. Emphasis is on timber, forest products, wildlife, water resources, energy conservation, conservation practices, and wildland fire management. These programs improve cost-effectiveness by using partnerships in delivery, values through sustained productivity of forests and are voluntary, using non-regulatory approaches.

Program Goals

- Increase and sustain healthy and productive forests providing professional forestry assistance to landowners in important forest resource areas.
- Protect life and property on 46 million acres empowering fire departments to build stronger programs.
- Sustain healthy urban and community forests by building local capacity in cities and towns to care for and manage public trees.
- Strategies may be found in the Kansas Forest Action Plan, http://www.kansasforests.org/kansas_forest_services/

Key Issues

- Wildfire risk
- Forest Health Threats (EAB, TCD, Invasives)
- Loss of Forestland
- Sustaining Water Quality and Quantity
- Protecting and Restoring Forest Biodiversity and Wildlife Habitat
- Sustaining and Protecting Forest Agroforestry Ecosystems
- Maintaining and Protecting the Economic Benefits of Woodlands

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2023 Accomplishments	Value
Population	2,937,880	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	957
Acres of Forest Land	2,467,240	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	10,650
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	2,086,382	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	4,045
Number of NIPF Landowners	51,102	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	400
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	0	State Fire Communities Assisted	25
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	46,400,000	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	5
Number of Rural Fire Departments	620	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	0
Cities and Towns	625	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	38
Forest Based Employment	9,000	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	1,134,172
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	13	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	11,807
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	3,755,287		

Program Highlights

Community Forestry and Open Space

While no Community Forestry and Open Space project applications were submitted in 2023, outreach, education, and other assistance has been made available to communities with a potential interest in the program

Community Forestry Cost Share

In 2023 the Kansas Forest Service received Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding from the USDA Forest Service State, Private, and Tribal Forestry to support the many benefits provided by our Community forestry partners at the municipal and private NGO levels. Since the establishment of the KFS Community forestry program KFS staff have provided valuable support, education, and technical expertise to these partners. However, the State of Kansas has not been able to offer our Community forestry partners an opportunity for cost share for as long as current staff can remember. That changed in 2023 with two such opportunities. Using BIL funding, KFS created a cost share opportunity targeted to smaller communities with less available funding. These projects have been awarded to 4 Kansas Communities and these removal and replacement projects will be implemented in 2024. With IRA funding KFS has developed a similar opportunity targeted to Communities of all size across the state with special attention to undeserved populations. In 2023 KFS staff worked out the administrative processes for this opportunity and will award the projects in 2024.

Conservation Education

Contracted with the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education (KACEE) to provide Project Learning Tree in Kansas. These professional learning opportunities focus on preparing educators to teach about trees and forests both in schools and in out of school experiences. In 2023, KACEE delivered 13 K-12 Educator workshops and 9 Early Childhood (PreK-2) workshops for a total of 225 Kansas educators trained in implementing Project Learning Tree with students. Based on educator reporting, these 183 educators will impact 10,000+ students across the state of Kansas on an annual basis. In addition, KACEE integrated PLT into the Topeka Water Festival for over 500 Kansas kids in collaboration with key partners and issued a Green Leader eeCredential (microcredential) to 49 teachers providing critical leadership training, including PLT and PLT Green Schools. In 2023, KACEE also piloted an Environmental Justice eeCourse using PLT materials as a part of online courses offered to educators.

Cooperative Fire Protection

Protection of state and private lands from wildland fire is accomplished by building strong and efficient fire

programs to protect an estimated 2,937,880 people and property valued at over \$284 billion. KFS continued to assist fire departments through the Equipment Donation Program, issuing emergency lights and sirens, radios, pagers, and personal protective equipment. Agreements are in place with 502 KS fire districts. KFS maintains an excess property inventory of over 600 pieces of equipment valued at \$43 million, and issued 8 items worth \$320,400 in 2023. This reflects a significant drop due to a widespread lack of equipment available from DOD/DLA. The Volunteer Fire Assistance grant funds were allocated to cooperating departments with an emphasis on communication, personnel safety and front monitors. For 2023, 144 fire departments in 61 counties requested a total of \$868,955 in funding. 84 applications were funded for a total of \$317,295 in awarded funding. Additionally, firefighters are becoming increasingly aware of the value of quality wildland fire suppression training. In 2023, KFS scheduled 104 classes, reaching 1,851 students with 979.5 hours of training. KFS was also able to conduct prevention messaging through Smokey Bear visits, 8 visits with 1400 attendees. KFS was able to hold our annual Spring Mitigation Project, where we host fire science college students performing fuels mitigation and prescribe fire training at Lake Scott State Park. KFS released the Kansas Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal (WRAP) to the public and public safety users including holding two events with over 100 attendees. Additionally, staff has been able to play a large role in fire weather intelligence and messaging, utilizing various forms of social media to broadcast upcoming fire weather concerns and adopting statewide the Fire Danger Rating System. Our state fire season showcased KFS's ability to make a meaningful impact of fire suppression with assistance to local FDs.

Economic Action

No action.

Forest Health Protection

EAB is currently known to exist in 13 northeast Kansas counties. In 2023 over a dozen EAB trap trees in 8 counties were peeled with one new positive find. An educational workshop was conducted in the county with a new detection in 2023. Approximately 30 people attended this workshop. With deregulation of EAB, KFS and partners-maintained outreach messaging, survey & detection, and technical support for Kansas communities going forward. These efforts will help blunt the impact of EAB, as the compensatory value of urban ash in Kansas is more than \$1.3 billion. KFS continues to assist communities with transitioning to a more diverse canopy, with less risk to future threats. As of 2023, Kansas is still free of Thousand Cankers Disease of Black Walnut (TCD). The Kansas Department of Agriculture reports that all survey and sampling returned negative results for TCD and the Walnut Twig Beetle. KFS is working on updating a Sentinel Walnuts project in western Kansas, with 227 trees located and assessed, aiding in early detection. Should TCD be introduced into Kansas there is a potential loss of \$160 million to the Kansas economy. Multiple targeted outreach efforts spread the message that wood movement increases the risk of spreading TCD and other pests and diseases. Invasive plants continue to pose a threat to Kansas landscapes, with severe infestations of bush honeysuckle, Callery pear, tamarisk, and others disrupting the functionality of a variety of ecosystems across the state. Supported by USDA competitive grant funding, KFS has partnered with local land managers to increase their effectiveness in treating invasive plants by offering remote sensing, access to specialized equipment, technical assistance and leveraged grant funding to address these threats. These efforts resulted in around 85ac treated for bush honeysuckle and Callery pear. KFS and our partners organized 2 Callery Pear buy back events. These events resulted in 200 Callery pear replaced by native species.

Forest Legacy

The Baldwin Woods Forest Legacy property continues to be utilized for scientific study and public engagement, by the Kansas Biological Survey and others. Four other public educational events were held by KU staff, with 39 adults in attendance. On April 23, 2023, approximately 50 members of the public gathered to tour the Breidenthal Biological Reserve. Attendees were divided into groups led by experts in botany, mycology, and ecology. Also in 2023, nearly 40 acres of Rice Woodland were treated with prescribed fire on November 14 by over 30 firefighters, foresters, and scientists.

Forest Stewardship

There are 3.2 million priority Forest Stewardship acres in Kansas. In 2023, KFS foresters produced 66 new Forest Stewardship Management Plans providing professional forestry recommendations on 10,650 acres. These are part of the 742 active Forest Stewardship Management plans covering 199,911 acres across Kansas, with 709 of those plans occurring within priority forest resource areas covering 57,787 acres.

KFS Tech Team

In 2023 the Kansas Forest Service received Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding from the USDA Forest Service State, Private, and Tribal Forestry to implement State Forest Action Plans. KFS staff identified on-the-ground, technical level capacity as one of the best ways we could leverage the BIL funded Forest Action Plan dollars. To achieve this goal KFS has created a new technician level position and formed these new positions into a team that is available to work statewide and across all major program areas. This Tech Team is just getting started in 2023 but has already provided assistance to our greenhouse operations, grounds maintenance, received wildland fire training to be qualified to assist with wildfire management activities, and has received training needed to begin implementation of TSI projects in 2024.

Landowner Assistance

In 2023, KFS foresters provided technical assistance to 411 landowners. KFS also produced 134 practice plans that led to the implementation of tree planting, windbreak establishment and renovation and forest stand improvement on 7,270 acres. KFS work contributed to 44,092 tons (3,150 dump truck loads) of sediment and contaminants annually kept from entering Tuttle Creek reservoir by 8 streambank stabilization projects. Through a direct-seeding program, more than 362,000 native tree seeds were planted in riparian forest areas. Through a Contribution Agreement with NRCS, KFS designed 303 forestry conservation practice plans covering 2,744 acres. These include plans for windbreak establishment and renovation (94), forest stand improvement (111), riparian forest buffers (53), and tree and shrub establishment (45). KFS also provided 64 inventory/evaluation site visits and 112 implementation visits for landowners to assist with compliance to NRCS standards and specifications for applications and plans. KFS also provided forestry education to 546 adults and 1672 youth at 31 workshop or field day events throughout 2023.

Landscape Scale Restoration

In 2023, Kansas Forest Service had five active LSR funded projects in various stages of implementation. These projects aligned with, and were informed by the issues and risks identified in the Kansas Forest Action Plan. Projects included efforts focused on restoring Arkansas River water quality and quantity through invasive plant mitigation and riparian forest restoration; increasing cross-boundary landscape forest stewardship in high priority areas in eastern, central, and western Kansas associated with private lands adjacent to state-managed wildlife areas and other public lands; and improving water quality and quantity through riparian forest planning and management assistance across boundaries, including on tribal and private forestlands in the Delaware River watershed and other priority watersheds in eastern Kansas.

Seedling and Direct Seeding Capacity Improvements at KFS.

The Kansas Forest Service received Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding from the USDA Forest Service State, Private, and Tribal Forestry to enhance state and tribal nurseries and seed orchards. The funding was directed to two major projects: the improvement of the conservation seedling nursery shadehouse structure and efficiency and capacity improvements for collecting, processing, and storing bulk tree seed for direct seeding reforestation and afforestation projects. The KFS Conservation Trees Program produces containerized conservation-grade tree and shrub seedlings, distributes bare-root conservation-grade tree and shrub seedlings produced by partner nurseries, and produces, collects, and processes tree and shrub seed for seedling production and bulk seed supply for direct seeding of trees in reforestation/afforestation projects. It has been in its operating location since the mid-1950s and expanded in the 1960s, where its focus was on coniferous species for windbreaks. Over the years, most of the demand and consequent production has shifted to primarily hardwood species and, as a result, the KFS seed and seedling production facilities have a reduced potential to meet existing demand. The renovation of the shadehouse facility began in December of 2022, with an anticipated completion in May 2024. The BIL funds will be used to purchase a clearspan shadehouse along with an irrigation system, rack lifters, and other equipment and supplies used for containerized seedling production at KFS. The outcome of this project will be increased seedling production capacity, efficiency, and improved seedling quality.

The improvements to the tools, supplies, and equipment used in seed collection and processing began in July 2023 and will conclude in July 2024. The outcome of this project will be increased volume and quality of seed available for reforestation and afforestation projects via direct seeding in Kansas. (Click here for full story: <https://bit.ly/3SgEEzJ>)

Urban and Community Forestry

The Kansas Forest Service aided communities in developing sustained local efforts to manage public trees, with an emphasis on capacity building by providing program organization, tree inventories, canopy studies, management plans, tree planting plans and training for local tree advocates such as tree boards, residents, municipal employees, and arborists. The Kansas Forest Service built sustainable and climate adapted community canopies with additional species diversity and enhanced tree equity in cities. 88 communities certified as Tree City USA's, 10 Tree Campus', spent over \$19.7 million and 11,807 volunteer hours in helping improve and protect the local community forest resource. The Kansas Forest Service completed 25 tree management plans and community canopy surveys, 14 outreach and training sessions for 411 participants. Community Foresters provided 78 technical assists. Over 6,473 community trees were planted statewide. To promote sustainable community forestry programs and build capacity we have partnered with the Kansas Arborist Association for 48 years hosting the Arborist Training Course. This is a weeklong course and is the first step in becoming a Kansas Certified Arborist. We certified 38 new Kansas Certified Arborists in 2023. There are 230 total KAA Certified Arborists.

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