



# State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet

## South Dakota 2024



### Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2023 Estimate
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$266,828
Forest Legacy	\$0
Forest Stewardship	\$112,698
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$0
State Fire Assistance	\$2,659,035
Urban and Community Forestry	\$343,345
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$533,025
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,914,931</b>

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

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry (RCF) uses State and Private Forestry funding to help South Dakotans manage and protect their forests and trees and conserve our natural resources. We work with farmers, ranchers, rural homeowners, urban dwellers, communities, conservation districts, and federal, state, and local agencies. These programs support our mission to conserve, protect, improve, and develop the natural resources of South Dakota for its citizens. These cooperative programs are key components of the State Forest Action Plan.

### Program Goals

- Lead a safe, efficient, and effective fire management program.
- Recruit, develop, and retain a diverse, highly effective, and motivated workforce.
- Reduce wildland fire threats to communities' infrastructure.
- Initiate and maintain strong partnerships with other federal, state, and private organizations.
- Coordinate with federal and local land management partners in landscape scale fuels and forest management.
- Conserve and sustainably manage forest ecosystems and landscapes.
- Protect forests from wildfire, insects, and diseases.
- Protect and enhance the economic and environmental benefits of trees and forests.
- Connect people to trees and forests.

### Key Issues

- Rapid urbanization and subdivision development.
- Age and drought have caused decline in windbreak health throughout the Great Plains.
- Insufficient funding for fire training for the hand crews, whose regular duties are to perform hazardous fuels reduction projects.
- Insufficient funding to establish a Fire Prevention Program.
- Underutilization of small diameter wood from forests and trees outside of forests.

## Forest Facts and Accomplishments

<b>Selected Facts</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>FY 2023 Accomplishments</b>	<b>Value</b>
Population	886,667	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	1,082
Acres of Forest Land	1,908,467	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	6,959
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	730,938	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	5,252
Number of NIPF Landowners	6,255	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	75
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	314,000	State Fire Communities Assisted	12
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	48,611,840	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	2,200
Number of Rural Fire Departments	365	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	0
Cities and Towns	311	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	55
Forest Based Employment	10,193	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	545,968
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	4	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	16,261
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	6,600,000		

## Program Highlights

### **Community Forestry and Open Space**

There were no active projects in 2023.

### **Conservation Education**

RCF conducted 84 presentations about Arbor Day, Tree City USA, Smokey Bear, and fire prevention, Project Learning Tree, and other community forestry subjects that were attended by schools and civic groups.

### **Cooperative Fire Protection**

South Dakota Wildland Fire (SDWF) is committed to providing direct wildland fire protection services on forested and private lands within the state and all private lands within the Black Hills Forest Fire Protection District. SDWF cooperates with local, state, and federal agencies to support wildland fire management activities statewide, regional, and national. The Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) was fully functional this past summer and fall with South Dakota using the National Call When Needed Aviation resources on fires threatening state, private, and federal lands. A total of 23 sorties were flown by airtankers staged in South Dakota, resulting in 14,351 gallons of retardant and 2,264 gallons of water being dropped across 8 incidents.

SDWF supported numerous fire training academies and training sessions statewide. Total sessions were 47 with 670 students attending.

SDWF issued 2,000 burning permits in 2023 to residents within the Black Hills Forest Fire Protection District for slash pile burning.

SDWF worked with fire departments statewide to ensure they have current Cooperative Fire Suppression Agreements for in and out-of-state mobilization purposes. SDWF also continues to support three Rocky Mountain Regional Incident Management Teams whose mission is to assist with regional and national incidents.

### **Economic Action**

RCF maintains a Log Finder website and is continuing to assist networking between people that have trees they want to sell or have removed, and people looking for trees to make value added wood products. RCF participates in the Council of Western State Foresters, Forest Products Committee. The

Forest Products Committee is looking for opportunities to promote and expand wood utilization throughout the western United States and Pacific Islands. Service foresters continue to promote utilization of all wood products with their assistance to landowners.

### **Forest Health Protection**

Forest Health management encompasses a wide array of growing conditions, management practices, and host species. Strategies used to address identified threats include educational materials and presentations, pest surveys and trapping, and preventative pest management. The results of diagnoses on current pest problems were communicated to a national audience associated with federal, state, and local governments, and the general public through the weekly Pest Update located on the division's website and the division's emerald ash borer (EAB) website. The forest health team hosted monthly virtual workshops for a second year, covering timely topics related to trees and tree pests in South Dakota. The eight Forest Health Workshop meetings and nine EAB presentations were attended by a total of 1,465 people. The recorded Forest Health Workshops have been posted to the DANR YouTube channel and the DANR website. More than 1,500 posters informing the public about the potential threat of insects from firewood transported into the state were prepared and distributed. Efforts to mitigate mountain pine beetle and pine engraver beetle activity in the Black Hills included the use of an anti-aggregation pheromone to protect the relic stand of limber pine and suppression trapping at two sawmills, Custer State Park, and one private properties in the Black Hills. Between the Annual Forest Health Invasive Plant Program and the BIL-Invasive Plant program to treat 2,450 acres of potentially damaging weeds on land adjacent to national grasslands or national forest lands. BIL-Invasive Plant funds were used to defray the costs of printing over 6,500 copies of educational brochures and newsletters and distributing them to more than 1,700 landowners in Custer and Fall River counties. The division completed 2,289 technical assists regarding insect and disease diagnoses on trees and woody plants. 72 EAB traps were placed in communities with infested ash trees to monitor EAB populations.

### **Forest Legacy**

Foresters working with SD Game, Fish and Parks on the tree planting plan for the original tract purchased through the Forest Legacy program in Good Earth State Park . One Forest Legacy proposal was resubmitted for consideration. The projects is on the northern boundary of Newton Hills State Park in southeast South Dakota.

### **Forest Stewardship**

The Forest Stewardship Program provides landowners with technical assistance with the development and implementation of comprehensive resource management plans. RCF prepared and approved 30 new or updated forest stewardship plans covering 6,595 acres that were located in the high-priority area also identified as the federal investment area. During 2023, RCF conducted 12 virtual or in-person forest stewardship workshops which had attendance from private landowners, professionals, and the general public totaling 600 individuals. Prescriptions for non-commercial timber stand improvement projects totaled 27 resulting in an additional 404 acres improved.

### **Hazardous Fuels - Competitive Projects**

Fuels reduction treatments on private lands in the Black Hills to reduce hazardous fuel loading and to create or enhance defensible space have resulted in 468.43 acres being thinned and 670 acres of hand piles being burned. These projects are funded through the Community Assistance Funds Adjacent to the National Forests and Grasslands Program and the Western State Fire Manager Wildland Urban Interface Grants. These projects reduce fuel loading, reduce ladder fuels, and create a resilient landscape to minimize the negative impacts of wildfire on homes and critical infrastructure. Through this program, four community workshops were hosted to educate landowners about living in a wildfire environment and how to increase the survivability of their homes through fuel management and home hardening techniques.

### **Landowner Assistance**

RCF provided 2,289 forest health, 76 forest management, and 231 prairie forestry technical assists to private landowners, conservation districts, state parks, and cooperative extension personnel. These technical assists are targeted at threats identified in the South Dakota Forest Action Plan.

### **Landscape Scale Restoration**

No Landscape Scale Restoration funding for 2023.

**Urban and Community Forestry**

The division provided 158 technical assists to community governments, volunteer/service groups and organizations, and private citizens in 68 communities. Communities and non-profit organizations were awarded grant funds totaling \$581,183.40.

**Volunteer Fire Assistance**

In 2023, \$761,403.81 in VFA grants were awarded to 111 Fire departments for a total project cost of \$1,784,563.88. Through these grants, departments were able to increase their capabilities and interoperability.

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