

Kansas has 2.5 million acres of forestland and an additional 1.2 million acres of windbreaks, riparian woodlands, and trees. Although forestland only makes up 4.8 percent of the state's total land area, it is a vital natural resource. Healthy forests provide many benefits, including clean water, soil erosion control, critical wildlife habitat, wood products, recreational opportunities, and scenic beauty. Private individuals own 93 percent of all forestland, while only 7 percent is publicly owned.

Kansas communities support more than 1 million acres of urban forestland, a majority of which is planted. While providing a better quality of life for residents, this "planted" forest needs constant care and protection.

The Kansas Forest Service delivers the following programs designed to improve the management and protection of Kansas' forestland and related resources. More information can be found on the Kansas Forest Service website www.kansasforests.org.

Rural Forestry

Forestry assistance is provided to help private landowners improve the health and productivity of their forestlands. Long-term management plans for existing forestland are prepared and forestry practice plans, tree planting plans, and follow-up consultations are provided. Management plans address landowner's goals for timber, water quality, fish, wildlife, soil conservation, recreation, and scenic beauty. The Kansas Forest Stewardship Program and the American Tree Farm System recognize well-managed forestlands.

Loggers and sawmill operators receive training in harvesting techniques, processing logs, and the use and marketing of wood products. Lists of active timber buyers and sawmill operators are maintained and available to the public.

The Kansas Forest Service works closely with the Kansas Forestry Association to offer educational events to industry personnel, private landowners, and interested public.

The State Forest Action Plan identifies the most important forest resource areas in Kansas



by prioritizing natural resource GIS data layers that consider forests, wildlife, watersheds, soils, cropland, development, and forest health risks and opportunities. The State Forest Action Plan

helps focus efforts to protect and manage this valuable resource.

Community Forestry

Communities receive assistance in organizing public tree programs. Guidance is offered in setting work priorities and training city employees and tree boards in proper tree planting and management practices. Public tree assessments are made, inventories conducted, and long-range plans prepared with recommendations to improve the health of the public forest.

Each year a variety of training sessions cover current topics of interest. Professional arborists, municipal employees, and private citizens receive hands-on training and valuable information to improve the community forest.



The Kansas Forest Service and Arbor Day Foundation deliver the Tree City USA, Tree City USA Growth Awards, Tree Line USA, and Campus Tree programs. These programs recognize outstanding community, campuses, and public and private utility accomplishments in managing and protecting trees.

Conservation Tree Planting

Annually, more than 300,000 low-cost tree and shrub seedlings are provided to landowners for conservation planting. Seedlings are planted for farmstead, livestock, and field windbreaks; to grow timber and other forest products; along streams and rivers to improve water quality through erosion control and stream bank stabilization; to develop or enhance wildlife habitat; and for Christmas trees. Technical assistance is available in designing a conservation planting that meets landowner's objectives.

Electronic orders are taken on the Kansas Forest Service website kansasforests.org. Two planting seasons are served, fall and spring. Orders can be placed beginning in September for the fall season and in December through early May for the spring season. Seedlings are available for planting from September through October for the fall season and from March through early May for the spring season.

Weed barrier fabric squares, root protective slurry, marking flags, and rabbit protective tubes are available to improve planting success. Tree planting and weed barrier installation machines are available on loan for large plantings.



Fire Management

Rural fire departments receive assistance to protect life and property on 46.4 million acres of nonfederal rural land. Training is offered to firefighters on the most up-to-date wildland fire fighting techniques. Courses are conducted at local fire departments, including the Basic Wildland Fire (8 hr) course and National Wildland Coordinating Group Red Card training and certification.



Federal excess military equipment (usually vehicles) is loaned to rural fire departments for fire suppression. To keep the vehicles in operation, low-cost repair parts are available.

Public and private entities donate used fire equipment without the threat of liability. Kansas Forest Service acts as a clearinghouse to collect, repair, and redistribute equipment to departments in need.

Rural fire departments receive assistance in long-range planning. Recommendations focus on improving fire prevention and suppression capabilities and lowering fire insurance premiums for commercial and residential property.

The Smokey Bear program promotes fire prevention. Smokey Bear costumes and

wildland fire prevention materials are available to rural fire departments and schools. Additionally, fire prevention educational materials are available to homeowners to reduce the threat of fire in rural and high-risk areas around urban areas.

Kansas Forest Service administers federal cost-share programs and awards money to be matched by rural fire departments for the purchase of firefighting equipment. For many years, these programs have had a significant positive influence on the firefighting capabilities of rural departments.

Forest Health

Cooperating with K-State and Kansas Department of Agriculture entomologists, pathologists, and specialists, this program's foresters monitor damaging insects, diseases, and other stressors on forestland, in communities, and in conservation tree plantings.

Foresters recommend appropriate control and treatment responses to threats such as emerald ash borer, thousand cankers disease, invasive plants such as bush honeysuckle, and environmental stress such as drought. Strategies such as an emphasis on tree diversity are recommended to reduce future risks to trees.



Forest Inventory

The USDA Forest Service gathers data from forest plots to determine the condition of our forestlands. Plot data includes tree species, condition, volume of wood by species, number of trees by size classes, and understory plants. The information is a useful tool for the forest industry in knowing what forest resources are available and to state government in focusing personnel and funding to address important management issues.

A sawmill survey is conducted every 5 years. It provides long-term trends on the amount of wood, by species, being harvested from forestlands and processed by sawmills in the state. The data is useful in providing management recommendations to landowners and long-range planning for the forest industry. An urban forest inventory system is forthcoming.

To request services of a forester, contact

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Larry Biles, State Forester



K-STATE
Research and Extension

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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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