



TENNESSEE FORESTRY COMMISSION

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Communications & Outreach



Reforestation



State Forest Management



Forest Data & Analysis



Forest Health & Sustainability



Wildland Fire Protection





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MEMBERS

Chair Johnny Heard | Collinwood, TN | Represents hardwood manufacturers

Vice-Chair Tom Midyett | Knoxville, TN | Represents pulp and paper manufacturers

Secretary John Charles Wilson | Memphis, TN | Represents conservation organizations

Bob Qualman | Brentwood, TN | Represents forest landowners of less than 500 acres

Alex Richman | Lynchburg, TN | Represents owners of greater than 500 acres

Mike Witt | Cookeville, TN | Represents owners of less than 500 acres

Dr. Sharon Jean-Philippe | Represents public at large

Ex-Officio Charlie Hatcher, D.V.M. | Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture

Ex-Officio Bobby Wilson | Director of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

Ex-Officio David Salyers | Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation



JOHNNY HEARD
CHAIR OF FORESTRY COMMISSION

The magnificent forests of Tennessee provide our state natural beauty, industrial products, clean water, recreational opportunities, and numerous other benefits. The Tennessee Forestry Commission works to establish policies that protect, conserve, and develop this imperative natural resource. The commission helps ensure the Division of Forestry has the needed resources to manage our State Forests, control wildfires, monitor for diseases and pests, and perform other duties. The commission appreciates the support and cooperation we receive from the Department of Agriculture and our elected officials.

CHARLIE HATCHER, D.V.M.
COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE

The COVID-19 pandemic brought changes to our lives that we never could have expected. For many, Tennessee's beautiful and abundant forests provided a welcome refuge. The Tennessee Department of Agriculture is a proud steward of those forestlands.

The forest industry is vital to our rural areas and will be critical to economic recovery as we move forward. As always, my sincere gratitude goes to the dedicated Division of Forestry employees who are committed to improving the forests we enjoy. I appreciate them, and you, for your support of the Tennessee Forestry Commission.



DAVID ARNOLD
STATE FORESTER

The Division's focus on increasing capacity during the last fiscal year was a tremendous success. We gained new and strengthened existing partnerships, leveraging personnel and financial resources to reach our goals. We increased training of our personnel to enhance their skills and abilities to perform their jobs. We aggressively adopted new technologies allowing efficiencies in managing data and information, resulting in more robust decisions and engaging outreach. Our efforts find us better positioned to accomplish our mission – to protect, conserve, and enhance Tennessee's forest resources.







ACTIONS & ACTIVITIES FOR FY 2020 AT A GLANCE

The Tennessee Forestry Commission met four times during the 2020 fiscal year (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020). The Commission's meetings were both in-person and virtual, pursuant to Governor Bill Lee's Executive Orders related to slowing the spread of COVID-19.

Throughout the year the Commission received reports from citizens, staff, and other experts on various forestry topics and issues affecting forest landowners and the State of Tennessee. The Commission also discussed and took action on several significant matters.

The Commission continued its evaluation of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry's wildfire response and the adequacy of the Division's equipment and response personnel. The Commission expressed its concern about the retention and recruitment of qualified fire suppression and professional forestry personnel. To this end, the Commission asked the State Forester to provide headcount and retention statistics at each Commission meeting. New fire suppression investments included dozers and transports, helicopter dump buckets, new technology (fiResponse wildfire & resource management software, communications equipment), personnel training, and community hazard mitigation projects. As in previous years, the Commission endorsed the Firewise USA program to lessen the likelihood and severity of wildfires, and encouraged the Division to continue promoting this program throughout the State.

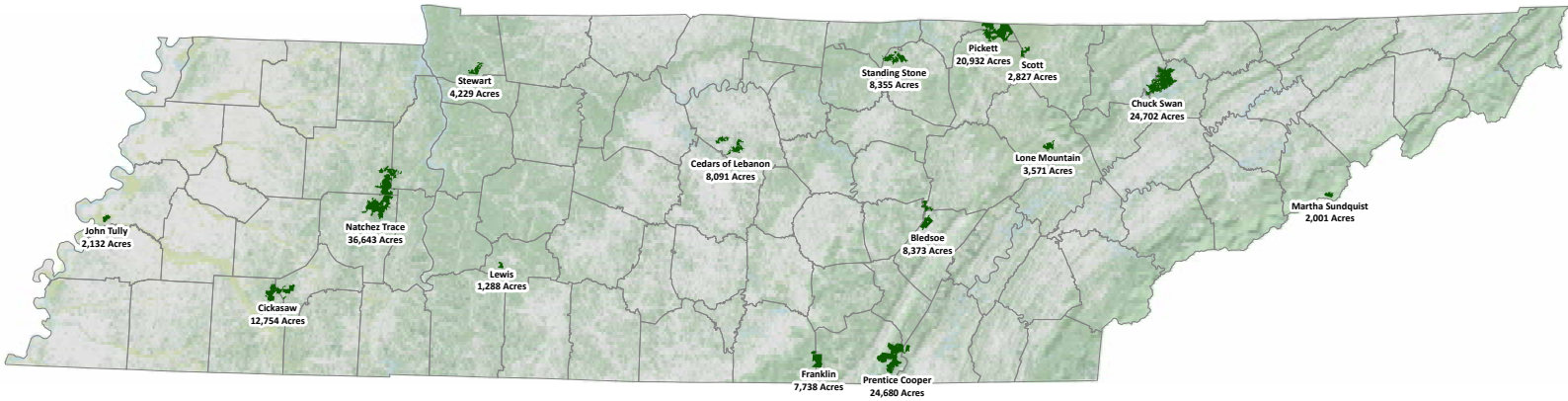
The Commission continued its intense monitoring of the operations of the East Tennessee Nursery in order to ensure that this very important source of high-quality seedlings for Tennessee landowners is operated as efficiently and economically as possible without sacrificing the seedling quantity and quality. The Commission reemphasized that the Nursery increase its marketing efforts.

The Commission heard of redoubled efforts to increase conservation awareness in the forestry industry. The Commission reviewed an early draft of the Division's 2020 Forest Action plan, which assesses threats facing Tennessee's forests and provides strategies and actions to deal with those threats over the next 10 years. The Commission also heard of the Division's development of a partnership with TDEC State Parks and Natural Areas to utilize the respective agencies' skills, knowledge, and abilities to help with common and agency specific issues.

In FY 2020, the Division's fifteen state forests achieved Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) certification. This is an important step in maintaining public trust in how we manage our forests. Being SFI certified assures the public that we meet a high standard, and we can get meaningful input and move forward with our goals and objectives for state forests.

The Commission continued its monitoring of timber sales from state forests, and continued to encourage the Division to increase sales where feasible to both improve the health and quality of the forests while generating expected revenue for the State.

Like every other State Board or Commission, the Tennessee Forestry Commission faced strong headwinds in the latter half of FY 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the leadership of Department of Agriculture Commissioner, the Commission was kept abreast of the adverse impacts of the pandemic on the Tennessee agriculture and forestry economy, and on the State of Tennessee budget, both for the 2020 and the 2021 fiscal years. While the Department of Agriculture and the Division of Forestry experienced a hiring freeze and had substantial budget reductions due to a forecasted reduction in state revenues, under the leadership of Commissioner Hatcher and State Forester David Arnold, the Division was able to achieve the necessary reductions without substantial adverse impacts on its mission.



TENNESSEE'S STATE FORESTS EARN SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE CERTIFICATION

All of Tennessee's 15 state forests are now certified to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Forest Management Standard. The Tennessee Department of Agriculture's Division of Forestry announced in June 2020 that all state forests—covering 168,359 acres—passed the third-party audit for forestry management practices. This independent certification assures that forests are managed sustainably, which is essential for clean water, wildlife habitat, and market access.

"We are proud of our state forest management team's efforts to achieve certification with SFI," Agriculture Commissioner Charlie Hatcher, D.V.M. said. "It means we are following a strict set of requirements and rules that ensure our land and resources are managed responsibly and sustainably. Certification is a key tool in helping our forests remain healthy and productive for generations to come."

SFI's mission is to advance sustainability through forest-focused collaborations. They are an independent, non-profit organization that demonstrates their commitment to forests through their work in standards, conservation, education, and community. SFI works with the forest sector, conservation groups, academics, researchers, brand owners, resource professionals, landowners, educators, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and governments to achieve a vision of a world that values and benefits from sustainably-managed forests.

SCS Global Services conducted the audit required for certification. The company specializes in third-party environmental and sustainability certification with 30 years of experience in forest management assessment.

"Based on a rigorous evaluation of forest management practices, which included site inspections, extensive documentation review, and stakeholder consultation, we are pleased to confirm that the Tennessee Department of Agriculture's state forest lands qualified for SFI certification," SCS Global Services' Director of Forest Management Brendan Grady said. "This leadership at the state level sets an example for public and private forest management and serves as a vital link in the chain of bringing sustainably-produced forest products to market."

Certification under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative helps the Division of Forestry maximize the positive impacts of managed forests and meet high standards to address social, economic, and environmental impacts.

"The Division of Forestry has a long history of improving degraded lands and making them healthy and productive forests," State Forest Unit Leader Philip Morrissey said. "SFI Certification is an independent verification that we manage all resources on state forest lands so that those resources are continually evaluated, protected, and utilized to best meet the long-term needs of Tennesseans."

One key measure contributing to certification was the Division's conformity to a forest management planning standard that ensures forest management plans include long-term sustainable harvest levels and measures to avoid forest conversion. The audit determined that the long-term resource analysis guides forest management planning at a level appropriate to the objectives, size, and scale of its land management operations. Furthermore, state forest plans seek to contribute to the conservation of biological diversity of the forest and the landscape in which it resides; maintain or improve the productive capacity of the forest; maintain the health and vigor of the forest and its landscape/watershed and protect soil productivity and water quality. Lastly, harvest levels are guided primarily by the forests' sustainable productive capacity and forest management research along with consideration for special sites and recreation.

This certification covers all Division-managed state forests, which span all of the state's physiographic provinces, from mountain coves to bottomlands along the Mississippi River. Central hardwood, pine, pine-hardwood and bottomland hardwood forest types are common. These public lands are managed for a mix of natural resources including game and non-game wildlife, and large, high quality timber. They lack improvements such as inns, golf courses, and restrooms but offer hunting, hiking, bird watching, and tranquility. Many state forest lands were in poor condition when acquired, either eroded or heavily timbered. Some were planted with trees to control erosion; others regenerated naturally into hardwood forest. Since then, they have been carefully protected and managed. SFI certification validates this and provides assurance to the public that the Division will continue to sustainably manage the state forests moving forward.

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WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

The Division of Forestry is legally tasked to protect Tennessee's forest resources (TCA 11-4-405). Wildland fire prevention and suppression are the primary responsibilities of the Division (TCA 11-4-406), which is uniquely equipped and qualified for this role. Fire occurrence and acres burned in Tennessee have gradually decreased during the past 50 years. Forest resources have benefited, particularly with improved hardwood timber quality. As the forest landscape constantly changes with influx of homes in the Wildland Urban Interface, the Division's fire role has remained consistent. What has changed is suppression equipment, communication, training, and emphasis on safety, prevention and education.

UNIT MISSION

The mission of the Fire Management Unit is to minimize damage caused by wildland fire to forest resources and personal property while giving priority to firefighter and public safety through cost-effective and creative programs and collaboration, as well as safe and effective fire and fuels management operations.

OPERATIONS AND TRAINING

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR

- Strengthen agency performance related to incident business process and acumen during emergency response situations.
- Coordinate and execute high-level, nationally certified training for wildland fire, all hazard incident management, leadership, and the Incident Command System.
- Further develop the Grand Divisions Type 3 Incident Management Team through repeated drills, exercises, and out-of-state specialized training deployments.
- Implement fiResponse computer-aided dispatch program to compile and communicate all information related to the full life cycle of an incident.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

- Deployed 66 highly trained personnel to support wildfire and all hazard emergencies across the nation resulting in transferrable skills to be utilized in Tennessee as well as generating over \$900,000 in revenue.
- Secured \$764,310 in grant funding to support state fire assistance surrounding remote automated weather stations, training, supplies, and personal protective equipment.

- Restructured internal business processes to better support personnel during emergency response. Changes included fiscal, travel, accounting, and documentation improvements and standards.
- Held two full-scale Type 3 Incident Management Team mobilization exercises in East and Middle Tennessee over 5 and 14 day periods respectively.
- Held three Tennessee Certified Prescribed Burn Manager Workshops for over 100 students. This brings the number of Certified Burn Managers to just under 500.
- Facilitated internal Forestry Technician Academy for 76 personnel and 6 additional National Wildfire Coordinating Group Courses for 200 personnel targeting personnel development, safety leadership, firing operations, chainsaw operations, senior firefighter, incident commander, and air operations.
- Suppressed 443 fires for 3,668 acres. The division recorded 251 saved private and commercial structures at an estimated value of \$124,675,950.
- Coordinated with Department of Military on finalizing the purchase and transfer of two air support water drop buckets from Forestry to Military.
- Facilitated the 17th annual Wildland Fire Training Academy. The academy provided 789 students from 30 states access to 41 high quality fire and leadership courses taught by 116 professionals over the two-week period.
- Developed the agency's first Fire Operations Handbook encompassing robust procedures and guidelines for emergency response inside and outside the state of Tennessee.
- Implemented fiResponse training platform to include web, desktop, and mobile application versions.

VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE (VFA)

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR

- Assist local fire departments serving populations less than 10,000 in obtaining wildland fire equipment, personal protective equipment, tools and communication supplies, and technical assistance.
- Provide wildland fire training to volunteer fire departments across Tennessee, including incident command system, tactics, leadership, mutual aid, and wildland urban interface.
- Restructure grant program to better address economically distressed counties and departments within those areas.
- Promote greater fire department participation in Tennessee's annual Wildland Fire Training Academy.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

- Awarded \$186,467 to 105 volunteer fire departments.
- Provided free wildland fire training to 250 students from 30 fire departments.



MITIGATING WILDFIRE

The Grand Divisions Incident Management Team cooperated with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency to execute a 5-day mobilization to North Cumberland Wildlife Management Area. Mirroring a real incident, team members were ordered and convened to the Incident Command Post in Caryville without prior notice. High level collaboration between both agencies identified the project assignment which was provided to the team upon their arrival. As a result, hundreds of acres were prepped for beneficial prescribed fire and burned for habitat management. The team obtained needed training to support our culture of preparedness.

- Coordinated with the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance and various media outlets promoting services and opportunities provided through the VFA program.
- Reviewed and updated Memorandums of Understanding for 105 volunteer fire departments.
- Updated grant program metrics to elevate distressed county values within the application process.
- Secured \$264,368 in federal grants to support providing financial and technical assistance and training to fire departments.

CERTIFIED TRAINING

Tennessee Division of Forestry serves as the state's certified training organization for National Wildfire Coordinating Group wildland fire courses. Through a national initiative to increase capacity to support wildfire response, the division regularly provides no cost training to our fire department partners explaining the science, strategy, tactics, and demands of wildfire operations. Fire departments are then better prepared to support local wildland urban interface scenarios such as the Laurel Lick Fire which ignited in Sevier County in October 2019. The division integrated crews from local departments into the steep mountainous terrain and were able to contain the fire at six acres and protect multiple surrounding communities.



HAZARD MITIGATION AND PREVENTION

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR

- Develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP), expand Tennessee's Fire Adapted Communities network, and increase certified Firewise USA Communities.
- Provide the public with safety information including updates on current situations, as well as public service announcements on mitigation steps to prevent devastating wildland fire impacts.
- Manage Burnsafetn.org and the division's safe debris burn permit program to effectively limit the likelihood for a planned fire to become a wildfire. Since inception, the safe debris burning program has paralleled a significant decrease in wildfires year over year.
- Pursue new and diverse revenue opportunities and effectively manage \$527,000+ in recurring mitigation grant funding.
- Serve as Tennessee's sponsor for the Smokey Bear wildfire prevention and awareness campaign through attending education and outreach events such as fairs, festivals, sporting events, and educational institutions.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

- Secured \$142,613 in new Community Fire Protection grant funding for 250,000-acre project area for wildfire hazard mitigation work in Cocke County.
- Awarded \$110,000 in hazard mitigation grants to 17 communities for Community Wildfire Protection Plan development, outreach, education and community mitigation action items.

- Contracted with multiple Hazard Mitigation Specialists and Appalachian Rural Conservation District to expand capacity for hazard mitigation assessments and improvements.
- Certified three new Firewise USA communities and carried four new communities into FY 2020.
- Contacted approximately 14,000 citizens promoting Smokey Bear and fire prevention.
- Issued 448,223 safe debris burn permits to residents and agencies totaling 32,546 acres.
- Updated and published Tennessee's Fire Adapted Communities Desk Reference promoting awareness, strategies, and tactics for keeping communities safe.
- Executed elevated multi-media advertisement campaign, in print, web, and radio, promoting safe debris burning, fire danger, and suspected arson reporting.
- Collaborated with the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency for additional hazard mitigation grant opportunities to support wildfire hazard mitigation and community resiliency.
- Executed multiple county burn bans during elevated fire danger during late summer of 2019.

FLEET MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR

- Manage administration, replacement cycles, and maintenance of 742 pieces of equipment and rolling stock owned and operated by the Division.
- Provide sound leadership, technical expertise, and fiscal accountability in fleet management decisions.
- Increase wildland firefighting capacity and capability through implementation of the Federal Excess Property Program and the Firefighter Property Program sponsored through the US Forest Service and Department of Defense respectively.
- Develop or update agency-wide equipment policies supporting increased safety and decreased deferred maintenance costs.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

- Initiated replacement of 112 firefighting bulldozers and 112 heavy equipment transports through coordination with Vehicle Asset Management and third-party vendors.
- Coordinated with Vehicle Asset Management the replacement of approximately 75 pieces of equipment and rolling stock not associated with bulldozer replacement.
- Completed statewide inventory and photo catalogue of 105 pieces of Federal Excess Property sponsored by US Forest Service and executed by the Division. Property is acquired by the division and loaned to fire departments in need at no cost.



LEVERAGING RESOURCES

The Division leverages resources to conduct community fire protection through wildfire mitigation projects. An example of this includes fuel reduction, fire break installation, and ingress and egress elements designed to protect critical communication sites on English Mountain and in the City of Newport through new Community Wildfire Protection funding. These vulnerable locations contain three separate tower sites serving as two-way radio and cellular communication hubs for local emergency response agencies and emergency alert systems. As a result of interagency planning and investment, this project highlights successful federal, state, and local collaboration solving real world problems before becoming real world emergencies.



- Contracted with an equipment specialist to assist in management, screening, and securing federal property for distribution. Two Type 6 fire engines were received out of Florida along with multiple 300-gallon slip-on units. These new fire apparatuses are deployed in high-risk, high-utilization areas of the state.
- Completed needs analysis and replacement outline for 128 tactical firefighting engines.

SAFETY

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR

- Provide a structured approach to control safety risks in operations as well as promote a culture of open dialogue and reporting of accidents and near misses.
- Provide high level of guidance and mitigation strategies commensurate with the tasks and risks associated with all disciplines within the agency.
- Adhere to OSHA accident or injury reporting requirements and timelines.
- Participate and support Tennessee Fallen Firefighters Memorial needs and requests related to committees, initiatives, and Line of Duty Deaths.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

- Updated Health and Safety Manual and established new processes and criteria for Critical Incident reporting as well as Lessons Learned documentation to support accident awareness and prevention.
- Coordinated internal and interagency COVID-19 PPE management and distribution to support both internal and partner needs.



- Developed internal COVID-19 and infectious disease guidance documentation and best practice measures allowing continued support of critical mission functions.
- Collaborated with wildland fire management partners to develop national standards for wildland fire response for both sending and receiving agencies.
- Reported to OSHA 3 minor injuries resulting in no days away from work or job restrictions.
- Supported TN Fallen Firefighters Memorial service with committee planning and execution of Tennessee’s annual firefighter memorial service representing both structural and Division of Forestry Line of Duty Deaths.



COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE BURN BAN

Hot, dry conditions prior to the state’s typical fall fire season led to early issuance of debris burning permits and burn bans were enacted in several counties in the fall of 2019. Under state law, the commissioner of agriculture, in consultation with the state forester, has the authority to issue burn bans at the request of county mayors under certain conditions including weather, climate, fire danger and occurrence, and resource availability.

Bans were requested for Marion, Sequatchie, Smith, and Van Buren counties and applied to all open-air burning including leaf and woody debris and construction burning, campfires and other fire activity outside of municipalities where local ordinances apply.

COUNTIES WITH STATE-ISSUED BURN BAN





FOREST HEALTH & SUSTAINABILITY

The health of a forest directly influences all aspects of forestry and is a part of every Unit within the Division. Not limited to insects and diseases, forest health is also influenced by abiotic events, invasive plants, improper silvicultural prescriptions, harvesting damage to residual stand, air and water quality, soil compaction, wildfire, and much more. Forest health is considered in all settings whether the forest exists within an urban environment or a riparian strip between two agricultural fields. This focus on forest health provides the Unit with a holistic and sustainable approach to all forest management. It demonstrates the connectivity among forest health, the human interface, and the ecosystem services all forests provide.

UNIT MISSION

The mission of the Forest Health & Sustainability Unit is to protect and enhance the health and productivity of Tennessee's forests.

FOREST HEALTH

Forest health programs involve monitoring, detecting, and managing and suppressing native and non-native damaging forest health issues. The major forest health issues managed within this Unit are: gypsy moth, hemlock woolly adelgid, laurel wilt disease, southern pine and other bark beetles, and invasive plants. Other threats to Tennessee's forests are addressed through consistent off-plot monitoring by aerial detection, ground detection, and current technology including satellite imagery. A significant component of this unit is education and outreach that emphasizes current and imminent threats and their transportation vectors (i.e. firewood).

MISSION

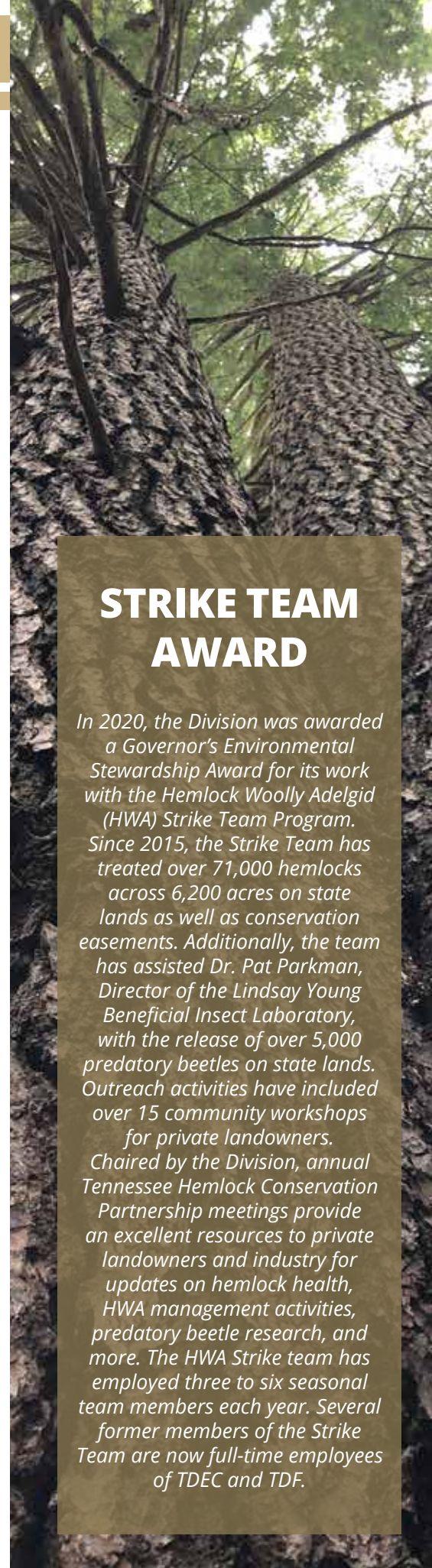
Enhance the health of Tennessee's forests and minimize forest resource losses caused by forest pests through effective prevention, detection, evaluation, suppression, and technical assistance measures.

- Promote forest health through monitoring and management activities, staff trainings, technical assistance, and outreach.
- Improve the collection, analysis, and sharing of data internally and externally in order to enhance customer relationships.
- Partner with the Slow the Spread Foundation to conduct gypsy moth mating disruption treatments in northeast Tennessee.

- Support research, collect data, and conduct outreach for laurel wilt disease, a recently introduced disease to Tennessee.
- Provide leadership to the Tennessee Hemlock Conservation Partnership (THCP) through meeting facilitation, cooperative field days, and general outreach.
- Protect significant hemlock forests from extinction through continued operation of the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) strike team.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

- Recorded 1,015 forest health observations submitted statewide by Division personnel by a new mobile platform, ESRI's Survey123.
- Protected 17,639 hemlock trees across 1,751 acres in 18 conservation areas.
- Released 53 *Laricobius nigrinus* and 363 *L. osakensis* beetles on Pickett State Forest in cooperation with the Lindsay Young Beneficial Insect Laboratory to help control the spread of hemlock woolly adelgid.
- Monitored state-wide gypsy moth activity via placement of 5,536 traps, capturing 61 male gypsy moths in 8 counties, which is a significant decrease from 171 moths trapped during the same period in 2019.
- Conducted gypsy moth mating disruption treatments on 8,567 acres in Johnson County.
- Completed road surveys across 17 counties for the presence of laurel wilt disease of which ten counties had symptomatic sassafras trees.
- Confirmed emerald ash borer in all previously quarantined counties in addition to two counties not previously within the quarantined area.
- Held several forest health training events for Division personnel, partner agencies, and private landowners.
- Staffed a Prescribed Fire Strike Team including four crew members and one crew leader. The strike team coordinator oversees this team as well as the HWA Strike Team.
- Conducted prescribed burns on 987 acres of public land and 994 acres of private land.
- Assisted in a prescribed burn on an additional 380 acres of public land owned by TDEC.



STRIKE TEAM AWARD

In 2020, the Division was awarded a Governor's Environmental Stewardship Award for its work with the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) Strike Team Program. Since 2015, the Strike Team has treated over 71,000 hemlocks across 6,200 acres on state lands as well as conservation easements. Additionally, the team has assisted Dr. Pat Parkman, Director of the Lindsay Young Beneficial Insect Laboratory, with the release of over 5,000 predatory beetles on state lands. Outreach activities have included over 15 community workshops for private landowners. Chaired by the Division, annual Tennessee Hemlock Conservation Partnership meetings provide an excellent resources to private landowners and industry for updates on hemlock health, HWA management activities, predatory beetle research, and more. The HWA Strike team has employed three to six seasonal team members each year. Several former members of the Strike Team are now full-time employees of TDEC and TDF.

RURAL FOREST MANAGEMENT

Family forest owners are the key to keeping Tennessee's forests productive and healthy. They play an important role in providing all Tennessee citizens with forest products, clean water, wildlife habitat and natural beauty. Many of these landowners are unaware of the role forest management plays in maintaining sustainable and resilient forests. This lack of awareness has quite often resulted in activities that leave forests less productive or at risk to insect, disease, and water quality problems.

The Division of Forestry provides forest management planning and financial assistance to encourage landowners to manage their forest resources in a manner that increases productivity, maintains forest health, and protects water quality. Forest management planning assistance is provided as individualized management plans, published materials, and group presentations. Financial assistance is offered through various federal and state funded cost-share programs.

MISSION

Encourage and assist landowners to implement forest management practices that yield healthy, productive forests.

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR

- Provide professional development and continuing education opportunities for Division Foresters.
- Develop landscape management plan for Tennessee.
- Fully implement the ArcGIS Pro landowner assistance mapping, geospatial database, and performance tracking suite of tools.
- Update Forest Stewardship Priority Areas.
- Provide excellent customer service to Tennessee's forest Landowners.



Tennessee Division of Forestry foresters attended the 2nd annual TDF Forestry Academy in August 2019. The purpose of the academy was to ensure each area understands the vision of the Tennessee Division of Forestry and to further our commitment to ongoing professional development. Area foresters, state forest foresters, and forest inventory and analysis foresters, program specialists, and unit leaders attended sessions to review programs including urban forestry, water quality, silviculture, surveying, and more. Foresters also heard updates from various leaders and educators about subjects such as prescribed fire, markets, herbicide application, communications, and forest inventory.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

- Held 2nd annual TDF Forestry Academy to ensure each area understands the vision of the Division and to further a commitment to ongoing professional development.
- Began development of a landscape level forest management plan for Tennessee. This project will reduce the burden of individual management plan development, allow foresters to spend more time with landowners on the ground, and contribute to accomplishing landscape level goals.
- Fully implemented the ArcGIS Pro landowner assistance mapping, geospatial database, and performance tracking suite of tools specifically designed for landowner assistance.
- Completed spatial analysis and programmatic policy updates which were used as the basis for the updated Forest Stewardship Program and associated Forest Stewardship Priority Areas.
- Provided assistance to 2,406 forest landowners who own 172,355 acres of forestland. This type of boots on the ground assistance is up 137% from the previous year.
- Wrote 78 Forest Stewardship plans addressing 9,123 acres.
- Wrote 497 other forest management plans addressing 62,273 acres.
- Wrote 653 prescription plans improving 25,473 acres.
- Assisted 209 landowners in the implementation of forest management activities on 4,364 acres that included hardwood and softwood tree planting, site preparation and release activities, prescribed burning, wildlife habitat improvement, stream crossings, and erosion control.
- Completed 4,201 acres of prescribed burning via vendor services.
- Provided services for standby, firebreak construction, tree planting, and timber marking.
- Funded 62 cost-share applications for completing forest management practices totaling \$270,000.

TENNESSEE'S LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Nationally, fewer than 8% of forest landowners have a management plan and less than 10% have met with a natural resource professional. Given that there are more than 9.4 million acres of forest owned by non-industrial (family) forest landowners in Tennessee and more than 145,000 individual owners of more than 10 acres of forest land, it is not practical for every landowner to be provided comprehensive forest management planning assistance. Working collaboratively with other resource agencies, forest industry professionals, non-governmental organizations, and landowners at the landscape scale is a more effective way of influencing forest stewardship. This approach should result in increased efficiency in assistance delivery; wider recognition of the value of forests and forest sustainability; and ultimately an increase in the productivity, health, diversity, and resiliency of private forests. Landscape level management planning can address issues and opportunities within priority areas identified in Tennessee's Forest Action Plan and similar action plans developed by our conservation partners. This is accomplished by encouraging collaboration among all stakeholders within a priority area, including private forest landowners and industry professionals, to achieve their objectives within the context of these landscape level plans, leading to a greater public benefit.

The creation and implementation of a state-wide Landscape Management Plan (LMP) will allow natural resource professionals to deliver consistent and comprehensive information to better inform landowners of forest management practices at the landscape level and to make specific recommendations on practices that will lead to accomplishing landscape-level goals. The development of this LMP will support the engagement of family forest owners and aid the identification and accomplishment of their management objectives. This project will also significantly reduce the burden of individual management plan development, remove the barriers to forest certification and participation in the Forest Stewardship Program, and provide additional access to certified materials for forest industry partners.

URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY

Urban and Community Forestry programs provide technical and financial forest and tree management assistance to communities and municipalities statewide. Technical assistance can be offered at the tree board or city planning level, through rapid on-site forest or tree assessments, or communication through outreach events or individual inquiries. Financial assistance is offered to cities, municipalities, and non-profit groups through a competitive proposal process. These proposals range from ball-and-burlap plantings to urban riparian restoration projects. The urban forestry programs also include nationally recognized programs that allow cities, utilities, and centers for higher learning to promote their urban forest status and bring awareness to the importance of urban trees.

MISSION

Assist and encourage municipalities and private urban landowners to establish, improve, and maintain healthy urban forest resources.

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR

- Provide grant opportunities to municipalities to increase canopy cover.
- Provide assistance and support for Arbor Day Foundation Program participants.
- Begin contract negotiations with Tennessee Urban Forestry Council (TUFC) for administrative support.
- Provide urban forest information and training to Division foresters.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

- Administered Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program tree planting grants for 11 municipalities that planted 1,612 trees for a total investment of \$210,062.
- Assisted City of Clarksville with site and tree selection for riparian buffer enhancement project on the north bank of the Red River at Billy Dunlop Park.
- Provided technical assistance to 46 Tree Cities, 19 Tree Lines, and 10 Tree Campus Higher Learning USA members.
- Trained multiple organizations on urban and community forestry principles and activities totaling 148 hours.
- Revised Champion Tree Program contract with University of Tennessee – Knoxville.
- Participated in or supported Arbor Day Celebrations statewide.
- Assisted Germantown in becoming the first Tree City of the World recognized in Tennessee.
- Produced a Green Industry Technical Assistance Report.
- Continued to contract with the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council.
- Supported a staff member to graduate from the Municipal Forestry Institute in February 2020.



Cookeville was one of the 46 cities recognized as Tree City USA.

FOREST LEGACY

The Forest Legacy Program identifies and protects environmentally important private forestlands that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses. Program emphasis is to maintain well-managed, working forests on the landscape.

MISSION

Protect environmentally important, private forestlands threatened with conversion to non-forest uses.

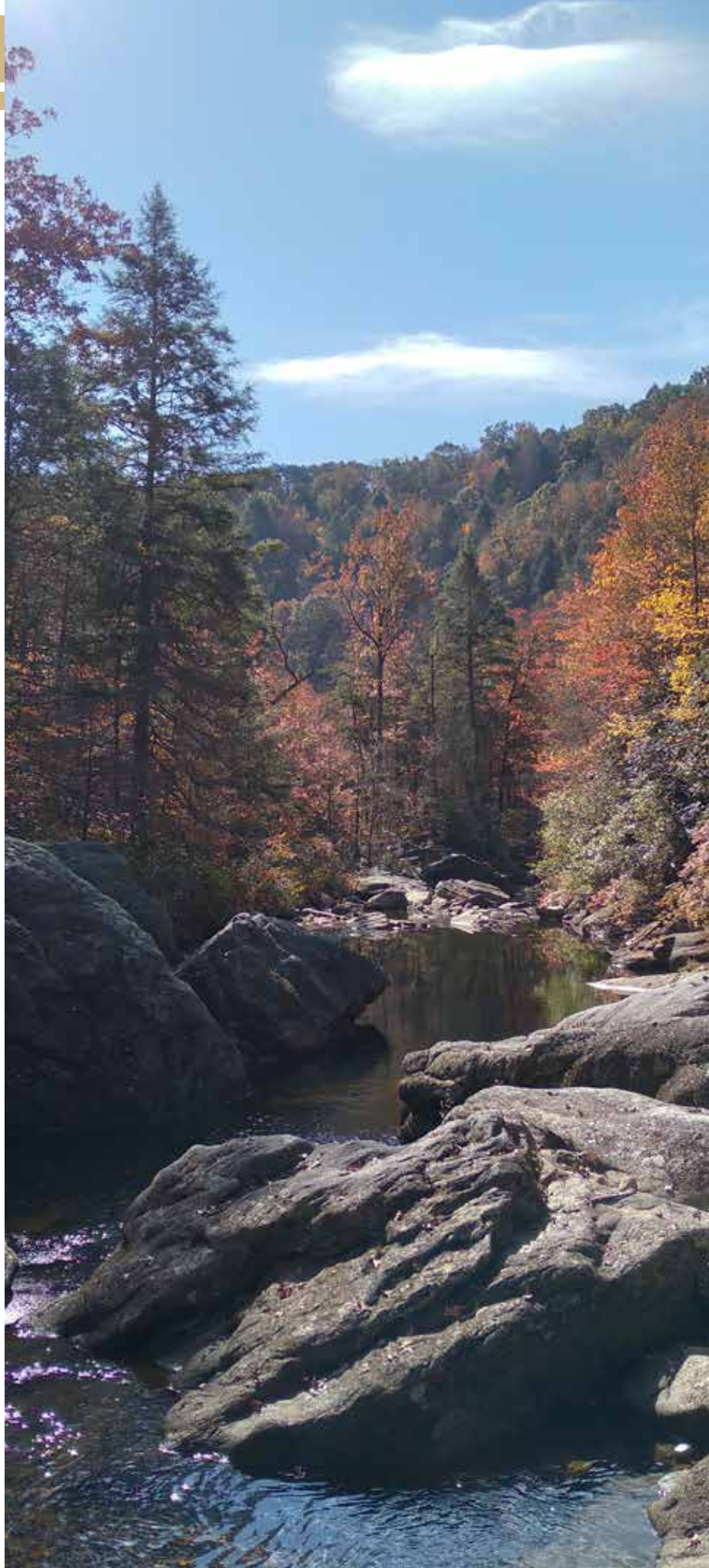
OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR

- Rank and submit Myers Cove project proposal for Forest Legacy Funding.
- Conduct monitoring of all Forest Legacy conservation easement tracts.
- Update Forest Legacy Assessment of Need and Forest Legacy Priority Areas.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

- Submitted the Myers Cove project proposal for Forest Legacy funding. The proposal was ranked 8th nationally. If funded, this 2,100 acre working forest in Warren County will be protected through a conservation easement. The project will cost \$2.4 million with Forest Legacy providing \$1.8 million.
- Completed all annual compliance monitoring visits for Forest Legacy conservation easement tracts.
- Completed spatial analysis and programmatic policy updates which were used as the basis for the updated Forest Legacy Assessment of Need and Forest Legacy Priority Areas.

A stunning view of fall colors along Cain Creek located within the Cartter Patten Forest Legacy Conservation Easement. This donated Forest Legacy conservation easement consists of 1,139 acres managed as a portion of North Chickamauga Creek Gorge State Natural Area.





WATER QUALITY

Water is a valuable product of the forest. Benefits of this product are difficult to measure, but changes in quality and quantity are easily observed. Forests act as buffers and filters that can reduce the damage caused by practices from other land uses such as urban runoff and protect stream banks from erosion caused by flooding. Since the mid-1980s, the Division has provided leadership to ensure timber harvesting operations do not pollute our streams and rivers. Encouraging implementation of Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) is the foundation of the Division's water quality program. We assist the forestry community with BMP implementation through three major program areas: technical assistance, water quality complaint investigations, and BMP implementation monitoring.

Best management practices (BMPs) are integral to keeping Tennessee's forests healthy and preserving our water quality. Division professionals provide technical assistance to loggers and landowners by visiting logging operations to ensure BMPs are used and by conducting training events for the forest industry.

MISSION

Improve the quality of surface and sub-surface water using forest cover as a filter and buffer for agricultural point and non-point pollution sources.

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR


- Monitor and provide support to forestry industry in Tennessee to maintain or improve water quality through BMPs
- Ensure cross-agency collaboration to protect and improve water quality in forested watersheds.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

- Provided training and technical assistance to more than 3,000 foresters, loggers, and landowners since the start of the program in partnership with the Tennessee Forestry Association.
- Conducted 1,046 harvest operation site visits statewide and responded to 45 reported water quality complaints.
- Determined yearly logger BMP implementation rate of 98% based on harvest sites inspected for compliance.
- Determined 19 of the 45 sites that were visited due to reported water quality complaints had issues affecting water quality and had to be brought back into compliance with Tennessee's Water Quality Control Act (TCA 69-3-101) with Division technical expertise provided.

BMP Courtesy v2.1

Location



Lat: Lon:

Date of Visit*

Inspector (1)*
List up to 5 inspectors

A mobile data collection (Esri Survey123) was implemented to collect BMP courtesy check and complaint information in the field. This allows live access to data and streamlined reporting, assistance, documentation, and implementation of BMPs.





REFORESTATION

The Division of Forestry's seedling nursery in Delano produces forest seedlings that are available for sale to landowners in Tennessee. These seedlings are adapted to growing conditions found in the state and are used primarily for reforestation and forest conservation projects. Approximately one-half of the 80 acres available for seedling production at the nursery are used for this purpose each year.

UNIT MISSION

The mission of the Reforestation Unit is to provide high quality, affordable seedlings to Tennessee landowners and to optimize genetic improvements to increase the productivity of the state's forests.

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR

- Explore new ways to increase seedling productivity and quality.
- Expand outreach in urban areas to bring awareness to the importance of having diverse, high quality seedlings.
- Seek new Green Partnerships to expand availability and reduce costs for seedlings available to landowners.
- Find use for unusable seed.
- Sell over \$400,000+ of high quality bareroot seedlings.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

- Acquired a seed sorter to help increase the quality of seedlings produced.
- Completed a hydrologic and seedling planting compartment restoration plan in a 3 phase engineering report to increase productivity and seedling quality.
- Expanded seedling planting and awareness in urban locations.
- Donated seedlings to the Nashville Urban Tree Board who will replant in neighborhoods damaged by the March 2020 tornado.
- Expanded Huber Seedling Green Partnership from \$15,000 to \$30,000 for free pine seedlings to landowners in the Cumberland and Eastern Districts.
- Continued offering \$30,000 for free hardwood seedlings to landowners statewide through the D'Addario Seedling Green Partnership.

- Expanded One Tree Planted Green Partnership contribution of \$1,500 to \$5,000 for free hardwood seedlings to landowners statewide.
- Developed Duck and Elk River Watershed Forest Initiative (DEWI) Green Partnership that will give seedlings to landowners in the regions for nut and riparian type seedlings to increase habitat and reduce erosion.
- Donated excess sawtooth acorns to the Appalachian Bear Rescue as food for bears being rehabilitated.
- Sold 2,389,928 seedlings (1,451,575 pine and 938,353 hardwood) with a revenue of \$444,656.



SORTING SEEDS

The East Tennessee Nursery acquired a seed sorter in April to separate oak acorns and other large seeded species into four size categories. Depending on the species, the smallest size is set aside and not utilized for nursery production. This seed was donated to the Appalachian Bear Rescue in Townsend for bear food. The remaining larger sized seed have a greater chance of producing higher quality seedlings.



STATE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Tennessee's 15 State Forests, totaling 166,459 acres, range from mountain coves in the east to bottomlands along the Mississippi River. State Forests are managed for a mix of natural resources including game and non-game wildlife, and high-quality timber. State Forests do not feature inns, golf courses, or restrooms. However, they offer hunting, hiking, bird watching, and tranquility.

Many State Forest lands were in poor condition when acquired, either eroded or unsustainably harvested. Some were planted with trees to control erosion; others regenerated naturally into hardwood forest. Since then they have been carefully protected and managed.

Following decades of restoration, conservation, and careful management, Tennessee's State Forest system now contains an abundant supply of high-quality timber and other forest products. Timber harvested from some of these forests helps support local forest products industries. Money spent by consumers in the pursuit of recreational opportunities on the forests supports local merchants. State Forests are sites for field sessions demonstrating application of sustainable forestry practices that maintain and enhance multiple use values. Sites have been established to demonstrate how forestry best management practices maintain, protect, and enhance water quality. State Forests also provide data to characterize the resources and values provided to local communities and local economies.

UNIT MISSION

The mission of the State Forest Management Unit is to provide for the multiple-use management of all resources on State Forest lands so that those resources are protected and utilized to best meet the long-term needs of the citizens of Tennessee.

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR

- Complete 15 compartment plans and approve all plan prescriptions before field implementation.
- Host two demonstrations, tours, or field days on state forests.
- Harvest and regenerate 1,166 acres of timber.
- Complete Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) 3rd party annual audit.
- Manage \$3.2 million in expected revenue collections to maintain health and sustainability objectives across the state forest system.
- Complete GIS update from ArcMap to ArcPro and utilize ArcOnline data housing.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

- Completed Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) 3rd party accreditation for the entire forest system to cover the next 5 years.
- Completed and approved six compartment plans.
- Completed 25 scheduled timber sales totaling 1,131 stand acres and yielding 9.08MM board feet.
- Generated \$2,487,771.82 in scheduled timber sale revenue toward FY 2020 budget.
- Scheduled two Tennessee Healthy Hardwoods field days at Stewart and Franklin State Forests. However, they were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

TENNESSEE'S STATE FORESTS EARN SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE CERTIFICATION



All of Tennessee's 15 State Forests were certified to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Forest Management Standard. The Tennessee Department of Agriculture's Division of Forestry announced that all state forests—covering 168,359 acres—passed the third-party audit for forestry management practices. This independent certification assures that forests are managed sustainably, which is essential for clean water, wildlife habitat, and market access.

Pictured is Natchez Trace State Forest. A historical image features the denuded and heavily eroded landscape of the forest at the time of acquisition in the 1930s. A recent timber harvest 80 years later demonstrates how productive the forest has become under active forest management.



FOREST DATA AND ANALYSIS

The Forest Data and Analysis Unit manages Division of Forestry data resources, provides visualization and analytical services, interprets data, and communicates findings to internal and external audiences. Critical work areas include statewide forest inventory, integrated database management, analytics and mapping, and remote-sensing technology. The Unit tracks availability and sustainability of forest resources and provides this information to landowners, forest industry, other state agencies, external partners, and the public. The Unit facilitates the evaluation and implementation of pertinent technologies for efficient data collection and management, mapping, and distribution to Division of Forestry field staff. Adopting appropriate technology will lead to better assessment of forest health and productivity, enhanced communications, increased efficiency, and strengthened credibility.

UNIT MISSION

The mission of the Forest Data and Analysis Unit is to collect, manage, visualize, analyze, and communicate data to address forest resource availability and sustainability, support Division of Forestry operations, and enhance business intelligence. The Unit facilitates the development and utilization of technology and supports other Units and the Division of Business Development.

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR

- Implement a technology system for tracking and managing wildfires.
- Develop an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Program.
- Develop a primary lumber mill survey to support the Unit and Division of Business Development.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

- Implemented fiResponse, an enterprise decision support system that provides capabilities for monitoring wildland fire incidents and all associated operational activities related to incident response, dispatch, and resource tracking.
- Developed training materials and documentation for fiResponse implementation with the Wildland Fire Protection Unit. The Unit developed a series of short instructional videos designed for field personnel. Personnel received training in-person and remotely. A core group of early adopters were identified and targeted for further training, enabling them to be experts within their respective districts.

- Launched the UAS Program by developing a Standard Operating Procedures manual for staff pilots with guidance from the Department's legal counsel. The initial fleet of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) was purchased with a \$21,000 Landscape Scale Restoration grant.

- Facilitated the development of a primary lumber mill survey of 100 mills in Tennessee through forest industry contract.

- Configured Geographic Information System (GIS) field apps to streamline workflows for field staff. The GIS field app Survey123 was developed for the Forest Health and Sustainability Unit's Vendor Services program and the Wildland Fire Protection Unit's vehicle inspections.

FOREST INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS PROGRAM

The Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Program is a continuous census of forest resource condition and health, productivity, and sustainability that dates back to the late 1940s. Tennessee's FIA foresters complete detailed forest inventory measurements on more than 4,200 permanent plots on public and private lands on a 5- to 7-year cycle. The FIA Program also conducts felled tree studies, gathering information from loggers and manufacturing facilities in the State that utilize wood produced by forests. The FIA Program provides information on forest age dynamics, forest health, ownership patterns, socioeconomic benefits, and emerging market opportunities such as forest biomass and carbon. The multi-resource information gathered by the FIA Program is used to formulate sound forest policies, provide information for economic development, develop forest programs, and provide a scientific basis to monitor forest ecosystems.

UNIT MISSION

Monitor the condition, productivity, and sustainability of Tennessee's forest resource.

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR

- Complete FIA plot measurements on 527 plots (7-year sampling cycle).
- Complete 24 National Forest intensification plots.
- Review the next publication in the USDA Forest Service FIA series for Tennessee.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

- Completed measurements on 469 FIA plots.
- Completed 24 National Forest intensification plots.
- Reviewed *Tennessee's Forests, 2014* (with updates for 2016), produced by USDA Forest Service FIA Program. This publication summarizes forest resources data and trends from the ninth complete inventory of Tennessee's 13.9 million acres of forest.

MONITORING WILDLAND FIRES

Following the devastation of the 2016 Gatlinburg Fires, Tennessee Division of Forestry acquired fiResponse, an enterprise-wide decision support system for monitoring wildland fire incidents and operational activities. FiResponse supports incident management, comprehensive resource management, real-time resource tracking for firefighter safety, and situational awareness for emergency responders and the public.

The Forest Data and Analysis and Wildland Fire Protection Units implemented fiResponse technology and trained every agency emergency responder in Spring and Summer of 2020. The Data Systems Forester developed a series of training videos that covered each function of fiResponse software. These training videos were viewed by more than 150 Division personnel.

The Forest Data and Analysis Unit has enhanced communication within fire operations through the development of dashboards. Dashboards provide clear, visually-accessible situational awareness for Incident Commanders, Public Information Officers, the Fire Chief, and State Forester. The Recent Trends dashboard summarizes number, size, and status of fires by month and administrative district. This information, along with fire weather reports, is vital to understanding statewide and district-wide trends in fire activity and assessing resource allocation and fatigue.

The Fire Incidents dashboard summarizes activities that Public Information Officers assigned to an incident may need to report to news outlets for public safety. Daily fire reports are generated to provide consistent, clear messaging about fire activity within the Division of Forestry and for our partners, including other wildland fire suppression agencies and the Ag Crime Unit.



COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

The Forestry Communications and Outreach Unit strives to inform and educate audiences by providing a better understanding of forestry as a discipline and the role that the Division plays in maintaining a healthy and productive forest resource. A successful effort leads to an enhanced appreciation for the state's forests, which, in turn, leads to an informed citizenry who recognize the benefits of conserving, protecting, and enhancing the resource. As a result, our society receives essential ecological benefits. The Unit also helps foster communication within the Division, a critical function of a healthy organization.

UNIT MISSION

The mission of the Forestry Communications and Outreach Unit is to communicate clearly and accurately to Tennessee's citizens information necessary to accomplish the Division's mission and to optimize in-house communications.

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR

- Raise awareness about important and timely forest resources issues.
- Educate our youth on the importance of trees and forests in our rural lands and within our communities.
- Maintain social media profile for Protect TN Forests conservation education campaign.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

- Held 1,576 educational outreach activities reaching 30,580 children and adults statewide.
- Administered a contract with the Tennessee Forestry Association to fund a Conservation Education Coordinator who managed the Project Learning Tree Program, conducted Teacher Conservation Workshops, and trained facilitators.
- Cancelled the 71st annual Forestry Camp due to global COVID-19 pandemic, ending a 70-year consecutive run.
- Produced 22 news releases pertaining to relevant topics including forest pests, wildland fire danger, burn permit requirements, capital improvements, tree planting, urban forestry, cost share opportunities, state forest closures, and state forest certification.
- Gave multiple radio and television interviews addressing Division programs and topical issues.

- Promoted Division services and outreach campaigns across multiple media outlets. This included advertising campaigns for wildland fire prevention, forest health, the Tennessee Wood Products campaign, and East Tennessee Nursery tree seedlings.

- Grew reach of social media profiles for Protect TN Forests conservation campaign including Facebook (added 266 Likes and a reach of 80,755 people with 114,829 impressions), Twitter (added 46 new followers and 37,700 impressions), and Instagram (analytics unavailable) to reach a broad audience and promote conservation education and Division activity in forest management.

TFA CON ED COORDINATOR PARTNERSHIP

The Division partnered with the Tennessee Forestry Association (TFA) to build capacity in statewide implementation of conservation education. The partnership organizes and promotes conservation education to Tennesseans.. focusing on coordinating Project Learning Tree facilitating Teacher Conservation Workshops, and partnering with various organizations and agencies to provide conservation training opportunities to Tennesseans of any age.

Pictured: Teachers from west Tennessee public schools participating in the 2019 Teacher Conservation Workshop at Pickwick Landing State Park.





ADMINISTRATION

Spread across the state and administered from 4 district offices and 1 reforestation office, the 475 employees (330 full time, 152 seasonal) of the Department of Agriculture's Division of Forestry have responsibilities in 9 separate programs. Effective planning, priority setting, and communication within the Division are crucial to organizational effectiveness. Assistant State Foresters work with staff to refine systems that improve customer services and operational efficiencies.

UNIT MISSION

The mission of the Administration Unit is to assist the State Forester in increasing the effectiveness of management, the quality of customer services, the efficiency of operations, and the cost effectiveness of Division programs.

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR

- Manage personnel, facilities, vehicles, and equipment.
- Provide administrative support to Division-wide projects.
- Manage two budgets-- Operations and Facilities Maintenance.
- Procure and manage federal grants.
- Implement Department and Division strategic plans.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

- Completed statewide assessment on nearly 400 facilities owned and operated by the Division.
- Hired 76 new employees including a Forest Data & Analysis Unit Leader, a Forest Health Specialist, a newly created Fire Management Program Specialist, one Administrative Assistant, two Area Foresters, 45 Forestry Aide 1s, and 20 Forestry Aide 2s.
- Created and staffed Prescribed Burning Strike Team.
- Adjusted Division budget by implementing a slow-down in expenses due to global pandemic.
- Signed and executed Good Neighbor Authority with the Cherokee National Forest.
- Assisted Department of Environment and Conservation in selling timber on a natural area to help them meet their management objectives.

- Partnered with Tennessee College of Applied Technology to pilot a Division-specific welding certificate program and graduated one Division employee.
- Held groundbreaking for new work center at Natchez Trace State Forest.

RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR

- Maintain and develop effective radio communications network.
- Develop a plan to purchase radio comparator.
- Install and implement radio over internet protocol (RoIP) in the Highland Rim and West Tennessee Districts.
- Develop a plan to purchase portable radios.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

- Installed radios in 39 new forestry vehicles.
- Identified radio interference to the Highland Rim District radio network.
- Installed 13 radios and Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) devices into new forestry vehicles.
- Installed radios and AVL's into new transports and dozers and staged training to field staff for future installations.
- Updated firmware in 68 microwave transceivers for improved performance and reliability.
- Developed plans for replacement of 605 portable radios.
- Developed a plan for radio technician training.
- Created a statewide radio codeplug for anticipated radio purchase.
- Installed Radio over Internet Protocol (RoIP) in the Highland Rim and West Tennessee Districts.
- Completed radio installations and training for the Prescribed Fire Strike Team.



FIRST GRADUATE OF TCAT PROGRAM

The Division of Forestry partnered with the Board of Regents and the Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) to develop a special welding program that is specific to the Division's needs. TDF subject matter experts Floyd Demps and Anthony Elrod met with TCAT instructors to develop a welding curriculum that would teach skills for maintaining and improving the Division's equipment in both emergency and non-emergency situations.

Jesse Ferrell (Forestry Aide 2) was TDF's first graduate of the welding program that provided Jesse with over 160 hours of training on a variety of welding processes. TDF is planning to replicate the class with other TCAT facilities across the state.





Forestry Commission Duties and Functions

The Tennessee Forestry Commission was established by the legislature under T.C.A. 11-4-201 to:

1. Nominate candidates for State Forester.
2. Review, approve, and submit the annual budget of the Forestry Division to the Commissioner of Agriculture.
3. Make an annual report to the Governor; Department of Agriculture Commissioner; the Tennessee Senate Energy, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee; and the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.
4. Recommend to the General Assembly legislation to protect, conserve and develop the forest resources of the state.
5. Approve the Division's comprehensive long-range plan for the state's forest resources.
6. Establish state forestry policies that will enable the Division to manage its programs.
7. Include in budget recommendations those goals and objectives necessary to implement state forestry policies.

The State of Tennessee policy of non-discrimination

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