

# The Forestry Story

2025 Annual Report



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**Cover photo:** The Wildland Fire Module boards a helicopter to clear roads in areas made inaccessible by Hurricane Helene.

# *What Is the Tennessee* **Division of Forestry?**

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF) was established in 1914 with a focus on wildfire control and reforestation. At the time, Tennessee was about 25% forested, with 7 million acres of wooded land.

Today, Tennessee's forest cover has doubled. The state now has approximately 14 million acres of forested land, covering about 52% of the state.

Over the years, TDF has adapted to address new and pressing forestry needs, forming a resilient and responsive organization.

## **How TDF Is Organized**

TDF employs approximately 400 people across the state, led by the state forester. District- and county-level operational leadership is distributed across the state.

Leadership for statewide services and programs is based in Nashville and organized into seven units overseeing wildland fire management; forest health and sustainability; state forests; forest data and analysis; communications and outreach; reforestation; and administration.

## **What TDF Does**

Day-to-day, TDF leads a wide range of programs, including:

- Forest health monitoring, management and assistance
- Wildfire suppression, mitigation and prevention
- State forest stewardship and management
- Reforestation and conservation solutions through the East Tennessee Nursery
- Urban and community forestry
- Technical and financial assistance for landowners
- Forest industry support and workforce development
- Public education and outreach
- Forest data collection, analysis and modeling

## **The Division of Forestry's Mission**

*To protect, conserve, and enhance Tennessee's forest resources by providing management options and services to citizens through leadership and education.*

# This Is Our Story

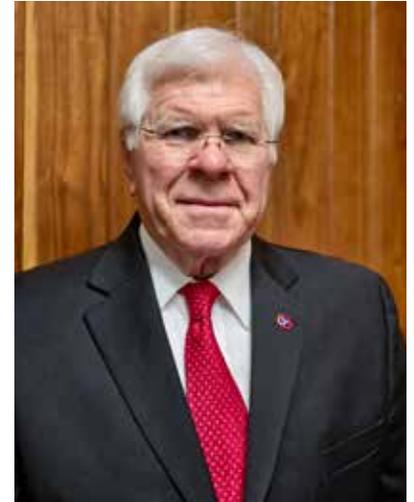
## *Introductory Messages*

### **John Charles Wilson - Chair, Tennessee Forestry Commission**

It is my privilege, on behalf of the Tennessee Forestry Commission, to present this annual report of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF). The work reflected in these pages demonstrates TDF's continued commitment to the responsible stewardship of Tennessee's forest resources, the protection of life and property, and the long-term health and sustainability of the state's forested landscapes.

This year, that commitment was demonstrated under extraordinary circumstances following Hurricane Helene. As communities across East Tennessee faced significant disruption and damage to infrastructure, homes and property, TDF mobilized personnel, equipment, and expertise in support of emergency response efforts. TDF's actions during this period underscore its unique role as both a forestry agency and one of the state's oldest emergency response organizations.

The report that follows details not only TDF's response to the storm, but also its ongoing work to steward sustainable, healthy and productive forests across public and private lands in Tennessee. The Tennessee Forestry Commission recognizes the professionalism and dedication of TDF's leadership and staff and remains committed to ensuring the continued strength and effectiveness of Tennessee's forestry programs.



### **Andy Holt - Commissioner of Agriculture, Tennessee Department of Agriculture**

Tennessee's forests are among our state's greatest natural assets, and the work of TDF helps ensure they remain a source of strength for generations to come. Over the past year, that commitment has been evident in TDF's support for communities recovering from Hurricane Helene and in the continued day-to-day stewardship carried out across the state. In the months following the storm, TDF's teams demonstrated professionalism and determination as they helped clear debris, deliver fuel, and assist partner agencies during a time of need. Their dedication reflects the very best of public service and highlights the value of strong, well-trained forestry and emergency response programs in Tennessee.

As recovery efforts have progressed, TDF foresters, data specialists and community partners have continued to put their expertise to work where



it is needed most. They are assessing long-term impacts, restoring forested and streamside areas, and planning ahead to address heightened wildfire risks created by storm-downed timber. These efforts extend far beyond Helene and support healthier forests and a more resilient Tennessee. I extend my sincere thanks to the TDF staff and leadership whose work strengthens our forest resources and the communities that depend on them, and I am also grateful for the support of the Tennessee Forestry Commission, the Tennessee Forestry Association, Governor Lee and members of the General Assembly.

Looking ahead, I am confident that our shared commitment to responsible stewardship, strong partnerships and service to our communities will continue to guide Tennessee's forestry sector.

**Heather Slayton - State Forester & Assistant Commissioner,  
Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry**

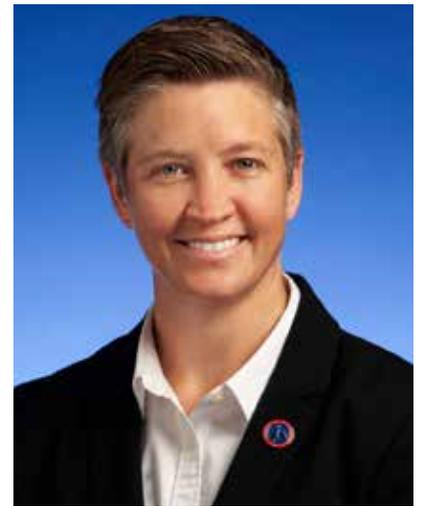
Fiscal year 2025 was a year of resilience, progress and partnership for Tennessee's forests. From emergency response to long-term stewardship, TDF rose to every challenge with professionalism and heart.

When Hurricane Helene struck, nearly one-third of TDF's workforce mobilized to clear roads, deliver supplies and restore access for communities in need. Behind the scenes, TDF teams secured resources and coordinated recovery efforts that continue to strengthen Tennessee's landscapes. These actions reflect the Volunteer State spirit at its finest.

Beyond disaster response, TDF achieved milestones that will shape forestry for generations. TDF celebrated the opening of Wolf River State Forest, adding more than 5,400 acres of ecologically and culturally significant land to Tennessee's state forest system. TDF launched innovative tools like MyTNWoods.gov and a new landowner mapping platform, modernized the seedling nursery and expanded workforce development programs. TDF's efforts in forest health, wildfire prevention and urban forestry earned national recognition and delivered tangible benefits to communities statewide.

Looking ahead, TDF's mission remains clear: to protect, conserve, and enhance Tennessee's forest resources through leadership, education and collaboration. Together—with our partners, stakeholders and citizens—we will continue to build healthy, resilient forests that sustain our economy, environment and way of life.

Thank you for your trust and support. The future of Tennessee's forests is bright, and I am honored to work alongside you to ensure it thrives.





## Fiscal Year 2025 in Review

The Tennessee Forestry Commission (TFC) convened four times during fiscal year 2025. All meetings were properly noticed and held with a quorum present. At the meetings, the commission received reports from the state forester and Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF) leadership on budget matters, staffing, program activities and operational updates. The commission reviewed and approved minutes from prior sessions.

At the August 2024 meeting, the commission discussed an active investigation into equipment damage at Franklin State Forest and voted to send a letter to the governor expressing concern over the incident. Members were updated on staffing vacancies and reviewed TDF's 2024–2025 budget, which was unanimously approved.

In January 2025, the commission met at the TN-KY Wildland Fire Academy in Bell Buckle, Tenn., where they toured the training event and met TDF field staff. During the meeting, the commission received updates on TDF's budget, vacancies and state forest operations. They also reviewed the fiscal year 2024 Tennessee Forestry Commission report.

In February 2025, the commission held a special

session to draft a letter to the state legislature regarding TDF's critical budgetary requests that had been omitted from the governor's fiscal year 2026 budget.

The commission met again in April 2025, where it approved proposed seedling price changes for 2025–2026 and production adjustments for 2026–2027 following a presentation from the Reforestation Unit. Members received updates on the memorandum of understanding between TDF and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and a presentation from the Tennessee Champion Tree team. Three TFC members were named to be on the nominating committee.

The commission held its final meeting of the fiscal year in June 2025, approving the April meeting minutes and reviewing updates on forest health, a nursery refund letter and federal and state program funding, including U.S. Forest Service timber block grants. The commission elected officers for the 2025–2026 term, appointing John Charles Wilson as chairman, Sharon Jean-Philippe as vice chairman and Bill Legg as secretary.

Members of the public are always welcome to attend TFC meetings.





Conducting a prescribed burn

## Acronyms in the Following Pages

*In Alphabetical Order*

|      |  |        |  |
|------|--|--------|--|
| BMP  | Best Management Practices                  | TCAT   | Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology                 |
| CRM  | Customer Relationship Management           | TCF    | Tennessee Conservation Fund                              |
| EMA  | Emergency Management Agency                | TDEC   | Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation     |
| FIA  | Forest Inventory and Analysis              | TDF    | Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry |
| FLP  | Forest Legacy Program                      | TDOS   | Tennessee Department of Safety                           |
| FRC  | Fire Resource Coordinator                  | TFC    | Tennessee Forestry Commission                            |
| HWA  | Hemlock Woolly Adelgid                     | TWRA   | Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency                      |
| ISA  | International Society of Arboriculture     | U&CF   | Urban and Community Forestry                             |
| LAP  | Landowner Assistance Program               | USDA   | U.S. Department of Agriculture                           |
| MOU  | Memorandum of Understanding                | UT-TIP | University of Tennessee Tree Improvement Program         |
| PIO  | Public Information Officer                 | VFD    | Volunteer Fire Department                                |
| SFI  | Sustainable Forestry Initiative            |        |  |
| SPB  | Southern Pine Beetle                       |        |  |
| TAEP | Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program |        |  |

# *Beyond the Storm:* A Year of Forestry Action After Hurricane Helene

When Hurricane Helene tore across East Tennessee from September 26–27, 2024, it left devastated lives and transformed landscapes in its wake. As government and nonprofit organizations mobilized to provide aid and assistance, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF) prepared to lend its unique skill set to relief efforts.

TDF is one of the state’s oldest emergency response agencies. While that response most frequently takes the form of wildfire suppression, the training and structures within the division—honed, practiced and proved in life-and-death situations—equip TDF staff to respond to a wide range of emergencies with great efficiency and effectiveness.

## **TDF’s Immediate Response**

TDF staff across the state were put on standby and began staging

resources before the storm even reached Tennessee.

Immediately after Helene, requests for assistance from local emergency management agencies increased, prompting the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency to coordinate resources, including those offered by TDF.

Soon, requests for assistance came in from heavily impacted counties, and TDF dispatched teams to fulfill those needs. An overwhelming number of TDF staff volunteered to join teams responding to the emergency. In total, nearly one-third of TDF staff responded, filling 86 resource requests for personnel.

In addition, TDF provided bulldozers, a skid steer, equipment transports and an off-road vehicle to support response efforts. In five counties, TDF crews responded

to a range of needs that included clearing heavy debris, opening and rebuilding roads, restoring access to communities and homes, delivering fuel and later searching for missing persons.

When TDF teams arrived on scene, county emergency management agencies (EMA) were often overwhelmed. As a result, in addition to fulfilling specific operational assignments, some TDF crews also served in an informal advisory role, supporting strategy development and decision making.

Due to TDF’s unique training and capabilities, crews were able to take on challenging assignments. For example, the Wildland Fire Module was airlifted into a remote area of Carter County that had been made inaccessible by the storm, taking on a three-day assignment to cut open access routes for stranded citizens.



Clearing debris & opening roads

Wildland Fire Module boards chopper



Wildland Fire Module &amp; Tennessee National Guard flight crew



Behind the scenes, logistics, finance and administration, communications, procurement and other TDF and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture staff worked hard to ensure the availability of resources, coordinate messaging and support on-the-ground operations.

### Supporting Long-Term Recovery and Resiliency

In the months that followed the initial response, TDF continued to serve Tennesseans and support long-term recovery and resilience in impacted counties.

The Forest Data and Analysis Unit gathered, compiled and packaged data on storm damage, providing important information to local and state leaders to support data-driven recovery decisions.

The Forest Health Program conducted site visits across East Tennessee to understand new challenges forest landowners faced on their properties following the storm and to test damage assessment tools. The information gathered is guiding efforts to support forest landowners as they

restore their land. In addition, the visits served as a starting point for forest and streamside zone recovery and invasive species monitoring.

TDF's urban and community forestry personnel built new relationships with heavily impacted communities. These relationships gained momentum and led to the creation of volunteer organizations focused on restoring streamside areas and community green spaces, safe debris removal and disposal and ways to utilize downed trees.

Because trees downed by Helene increased suppression challenges in a region already prone to wildfires, the Fire Management Unit conducted pre-attack planning. By identifying and mapping key resources and existing fire breaks, assessing high-risk areas, developing tailored response strategies and coordinating with local and federal agencies, the unit is preparing to operate successfully in an environment with a dramatically increased fuel load and new barriers to normal suppression strategies.

The Reforestation Unit, running the East Tennessee Nursery, is establishing a ninebark seed orchard. This effort will support the production of a native tree species uniquely suited to streambank restoration and stabilization in regions impacted by Hurricane Helene.

Executive leadership, grants, administration and communications staff from TDF and the broader Tennessee Department of Agriculture, working with partners at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, have secured more than \$38 million in federal relief funding to offer a grant program in Tennessee to reimburse farmers and forest landowners for major losses.

Through each phase of response and recovery, TDF demonstrated the skills, dedication and volunteer spirit that Tennesseans rely on in times of crisis. Looking ahead, TDF remains committed to serving Tennessee's citizens and to restoring impacted landscapes and building healthy, sustainable and resilient forests for the future.

## Impact Stories: Fire Management Unit

# Embodying the *Volunteer Spirit*

As the lead wildfire agency in Tennessee, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF) suppressed 876 fires, covering 12,619 acres during fiscal year 2025. TDF's work protected millions of dollars in resources and property across the state and safeguarded the lives of Tennessee's citizens and communities.

The Fire Management Unit leads and directs the programs that make this possible. In addition, these men and women have shaped an organization that excels in all-hazard emergency response. That means TDF staff are highly trained and ready to respond to any emergency, anywhere in Tennessee, whenever the call comes.

When tornadoes hit Overton and Morgan counties in February 2025, 13 TDF personnel cleared roads to allow first responders to access impacted areas.

After Hurricane Helene hit in September 2024, nearly one-third of TDF's workforce mobilized to support response operations. Teams deployed safety officers, operated heavy equipment and trucks, provided chainsaw support, participated in search and rescue efforts, removed



Wildfire on Tail of the Dragon

debris from roads and delivered critical supplies including food, water and fuel to citizens in need.

During the summer, when wildland fire activity in Tennessee is low, TDF staff responded to wildfires in 12 states, supporting resource protection and life-

saving action nationwide.

Tennessee is known as the Volunteer State. TDF is proud to embody that spirit by serving Tennesseans and supporting partners across the country.

## New Equipment Protects Communities

This year, TDF's fleet gained six new, custom-built type 6 engines, designed and outfitted to meet TDF's operational needs. Built on heavy-duty four-wheel-drive trucks and equipped with 300-gallon tanks, these engines allow TDF firefighters to bring water and foam to fires that traditional fire trucks could not access.

These engines are strategically deployed at six locations across Tennessee, significantly boosting TDF's wildfire response capabilities, particularly in the wildland-urban interface where homes and communities near wildland areas are at risk.



Prescribed fire demonstration

## Investing in TDF & Partners

A trained workforce is a safe and effective workforce. During fiscal year 2025, TDF delivered high-quality training to over 1,000 individuals, including TDF staff, interagency partners, volunteer fire organizations and Tennessee residents. Training topics included:

- All-hazards response
- Command and leadership
- Safety protocols
- Tennessee Certified Prescribed Burn Manager curriculum

Investment in professional development ensures TDF is always prepared to protect life, property and natural resources across the state and beyond.

### Fiscal Year 2025



**876 Wildfires**  
suppressed across  
**12,000+ acres**

Deployed to

**12**

other states  
to support  
wildland fire



**1,389 Courses**  
on wildland fire-related  
topics completed by  
TDF staff

**\$162K**  
awarded to 22  
communities  
for wildland fire  
mitigation



**Supplied**  
**85**

Volunteer fire  
departments  
with suppression  
supplies & gear



**Taught**  
**160**  
students at  
certified prescribed  
burn manager  
courses

**Conducted**  
**133**

prescribed burns over  
**5,400 acres**

**200**  
local firefighters  
provided with wildland  
fire suppression  
training

**Reached**  
**158**

communities with  
fire prevention  
campaigns

**365 Days Serving  
Tennesseans**

## *Impact Stories:* **Forest Health & Sustainability Unit**

# TECHNOLOGY MEETS FORESTRY: *Investing in Tools to Better Serve Tennesseans*

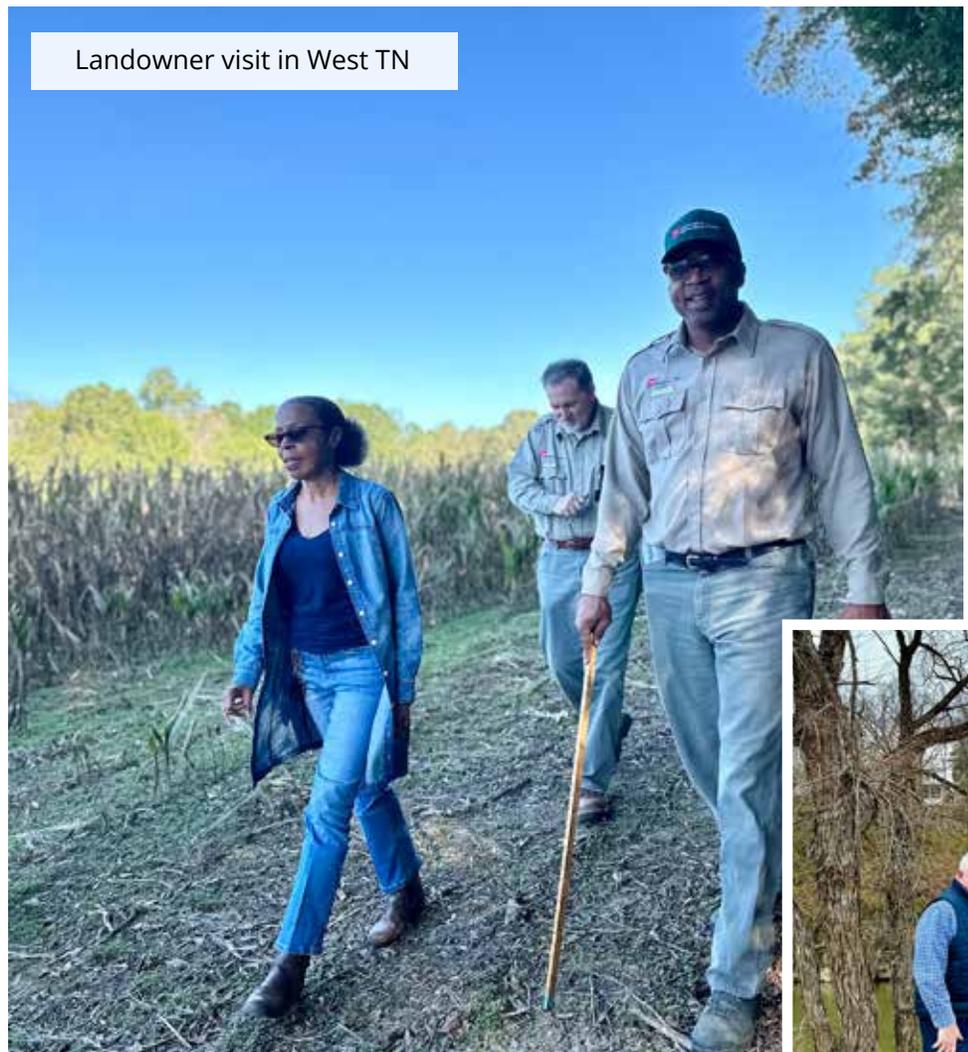
This year, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF) launched a comprehensive customer relationship management (CRM) system designed to dramatically improve how the agency tracks on-the-ground accomplishments. For a statewide program as diverse as TDF, the ability to capture consistent, real-time data is essential.

Whether TDF is speaking with landowners or with policymakers evaluating investments, it is critical that TDF can clearly demonstrate the outcomes of its work and provide accurate, timely information.

The CRM will allow TDF staff to record technical assistance, cost-share participation, forest management activities, wildfire prevention efforts and other services more efficiently and consistently.

This enhanced dataset will give TDF a much clearer picture of community needs and statewide trends, identifying where service gaps exist, where additional resources may be warranted and where landowner assistance funding can have the greatest impact.

Over time, the CRM will significantly strengthen the agency's ability to tell the story of forestry in Tennessee. Better data will allow TDF to highlight successes, justify investments and support informed decision-making at every level of government. Ultimately, this system will ensure TDF's resources are directed where they can do the most good for Tennessee's forests and the people who depend on them.



Landowner visit in West TN



## National Recognition for TDF's Forest Health Program

TDF proudly recognizes Katy Kilbourne, forest health program specialist, for being named the 2025 Forest Health Cooperator of the Year by the North American Invasive Species Management Association. This national honor highlights her outstanding leadership in monitoring forest pests, coordinating statewide survey efforts and ensuring rapid, science-based responses to emerging threats that affect Tennessee's forest resources.

Katy also provides critical training and outreach to TDF staff, landowners and partner organizations, strengthening



statewide understanding and preparedness related to forest health issues. As TDF's primary subject matter expert, she plays a pivotal role in protecting Tennessee's forests from both native and non-native invasive pests. Her recognition reflects not only her dedication and expertise but also TDF's ongoing commitment to safeguarding the ecological and economic value of the state's forests.

## Empowering Communities with Tree Canopy Data

*Providing Local Leaders with Actionable Insights to Grow Resilient Urban Forests*

The Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Program made a major investment this year by funding tree canopy assessments in 25 communities across

Tennessee. Conducting these assessments is a significant undertaking, requiring advanced mapping technology and detailed environmental analysis. The results provide communities with a clear, data-driven understanding of their current tree canopy coverage and the environmental benefits it provides.

Armed with this information, local leaders are better positioned to plan for the future. The data helps identify neighborhoods that lack tree cover, areas where green infrastructure could reduce heat or stormwater impacts and locations where new plantings would provide the greatest return on investment. For many communities, these assessments represent the first comprehensive

look at their urban forests—unlocking new opportunities for planning, grant funding and long-term resilience strategies.

This effort demonstrates TDF's commitment to supporting local governments with actionable information. As Tennessee's towns and cities grow, tree canopy assessments will help ensure that development is balanced with investments in green spaces that support public health, economic vitality and environmental sustainability.



## *Impact Stories:* **Reforestation Unit**

# The Wild Seed Network

*A Statewide Partnership for Reforestation Excellence*



Left: "Mother Oak" at East TN Nursery  
Right: Donated white oak acorns



The Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF) partnered with American Forests and the University of Tennessee Tree Improvement Program (UT-TIP) to form the Wild Seed Network, which identifies wild seed sources, outside of commercial seed vendors, for reforestation and tree improvement programs.

Wild seed offers several distinct benefits. The regionally adapted tree genetics found in wild seed improve survival rates, create resilience and support stronger long-term growth for the seedlings that result. In addition, many state nurseries, including Tennessee's, have found that vendor seed supplies can frequently be insufficient, so supplementing with wild seed stabilizes the supply chain.

### **Becoming A Model For Other States**

The Wild Seed Network has been such a success that it has attracted national attention. TDF's partner, American Forests, has been approached by surrounding states interested in duplicating Tennessee's Wild Seed Network to improve their own seedling outcomes and seed supply.



### **A Win For Streamside Restoration**

The Wild Seed Network focused its efforts on four important species: white oak, hickories, wild crabapple and ninebark during fiscal year 2025.

Ninebark is a native shrub that is often found growing naturally in streamside (riparian) areas. It is an excellent choice for restoring streambank areas, thriving in moist ground and stabilizing the soil. It also provides food for pollinators and shelter for small wildlife and birds, enhancing biodiversity along waterways.

In the wake of Hurricane Helene, new emphasis has been placed on cultivating plants like ninebark that can help restore riparian areas impacted by flooding.

Notably, ninebark cuttings collected in fiscal year 2025 have been successfully grafted and will be ready to plant a new two-acre seed orchard this fall at the East Tennessee Nursery.

### **Outpouring Of Public Support**

White oak is a species vital to Tennessee's ecosystems and prized by the forest industry. Unfortunately, in recent years, successful regeneration has

lagged, causing the median age of white oaks to rise. This means that there are not enough young white oaks regrowing to replace the existing aging population that is rapidly reaching maturity or overmaturity (the trees are "elderly" and declining in vigor).

The East Tennessee Nursery is growing white oak seedlings to help give nature a leg up in regeneration and ensure future generations can enjoy this magnificent species.

Vendors are often unable to supply the nursery with enough white oak seed, so TDF and its partners appealed to the public to help collect acorns to grow future forests.

The public and media immediately showed immense support. In fiscal year 2025, the nursery received over 2,500 pounds of white oak acorns, donated by Tennesseans and the UT-TIP.

## **Investing *in the Future***

During fiscal year 2025, the East Tennessee Nursery, in its 36th year of operations, underwent important modernization efforts to protect seed and seedling production. A new generator was installed to ensure the cooler system remains operational during power outages, reducing the risk of losing critical seed stock. Outdated seedling bag strappers were replaced with safer, more efficient models.

Several long-overdue infrastructure needs were also addressed. Hydrology and drainage improvements now protect seedling beds from potential flooding and soil loss, reducing the risk of crop damage. These investments strengthen the nursery's ability to supply high-quality seedlings to support Tennessee's reforestation priorities.

### ***Renewing Key Partnerships***

During fiscal year 2025, TDF renewed longstanding partnerships with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and UT-TIP, signing a memorandum of understanding focused on jointly meeting seed, research and reforestation needs.

## Impact Stories: State Forest Management Unit

# WOLF RIVER STATE FOREST

## 5,488 Acres Conserved for Future Generations



Gov. Bill Lee, State Forester Heather Slayton and former Commissioner of Agriculture Dr. Charlie Hatcher celebrate the grand opening of Wolf River State Forest



Touring the new state forest

In March 2025, partners from across the state gathered in a small hall in southwest Tennessee to celebrate the grand opening of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry's (TDF's) 16th state forest: Wolf River State Forest (WRSF).

The 5,488-acre property holds great historical, cultural and archaeological significance and is home to long-term forest research plots and exceptional hardwood forestland.

The land, located along the North Fork of the Wolf River, is a portion of the historic Ames Plantation, a property located about 60 miles east of Memphis that has been used by the University of Tennessee's scientific research programs for decades.

The portion of the Ames Plantation that became WRSF includes one of the finest examples of bottomland hardwood forests in the state, including white oak stands that provide significant aid to white

oak restoration and sustainability efforts. The new state forest conserves more than 30 miles of streams and streamside habitat and 1,560 acres of wetlands, helping ensure water quality for Memphis drinking water, fisheries and others downstream.

In addition to the natural resources on the forest, the tract contains 45 state-registered historical sites, including numerous homesites and burial grounds, as well as a ghost

town that was once the former county seat. Rhodes College and the Hobart Ames Foundation have invested in expanding historical knowledge of slavery at Ames, identifying more than 800 enslaved people who lived and worked on the property and documenting their cemeteries and remnants of dwellings. Rhodes College, the University of Tennessee and the Hobart Ames Foundation will continue to collaborate with descendants to identify enslaved ancestors.

The new state forest also provides public access for passive outdoor recreation activities, including hunting, wildlife viewing, hiking and fishing.

TDF advanced this project with The Conservation Fund (TCF), a nonprofit organization that works to protect natural land, cultural sites, recreation areas and working forests and farms across the United States. TCF has partnered with TDF and other state agencies over the years to protect more than 300,000 acres of Tennessee's land and water.

Funding for the purchase was made possible with grant funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program (FLP), supported by Tennessee's federal congressional delegation. Matching funds were provided from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency's

Wetlands Fund, the Tennessee Heritage Conservation Trust, the Conservation Fund and the seller. FLP is a working forest conservation program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service in partnership with TDF. The program protects privately owned forestland from conversion to nonforest uses through conservation easements and land purchases. With the acquisition of WRSF, the area conserved under the Tennessee FLP is nearly 60,000 acres.

TDF is grateful to the many individuals and groups that worked together to make this effort possible.

***We will keep Wolf River State Forest as a forest, conserve and steward its extensive natural and cultural resources, facilitate the ongoing research and conservation education at the site and support the local wood products industry.***

-State Forester Heather Slayton

## Strategic Acquisitions Statewide

During fiscal year 2025, TDF acquired several strategic tracts in addition to WRSF that advance the state forest vision of working forests that model sustainable management; support renewable forest products; conserve wildlife and cultural resources; and expand recreation and education opportunities.



In addition to WRSF, tracts were acquired at Stewart State Forest, Pickett State Forest and Cedars of Lebanon State Forest, strengthening long-term stewardship and public access across the system.

## Active Management Supports Forest Industry

Active forest management continues across the state's now 16 state forests. During fiscal year 2025, forestry staff maintained up-to-date forest management plans that include long-term resource analysis; regular forest inventory; and growth and yield modeling.

TDF manages the state forest system in alignment with the internationally recognized

Sustainable Forestry Initiative® standards, ensuring future generations have the same access to forests and wood products that Tennesseans do today.

As working forests, state forests support Tennessee's forest industry. Harvesting occurs at sustainable levels that balance timber production with conservation values.

State forest timber sales contributed 10 million board feet of wood to Tennessee's \$4 billion forest product economy during fiscal year 2025.

The forest industry comprises 3.2% of Tennessee's economy, supporting more than 94,000 jobs and generating \$29.8 billion in economic output.

## Impact Stories: Forest Data & Analysis Unit



# MAPPING THE IMPACT of Hurricane Helene

After Hurricane Helene swept across East Tennessee in September 2024, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry's (TDF) Forest Data and Analysis Unit led efforts to quantify the storm's impacts on the state's forest resources.

Using a combination of satellite imagery, weather forecast models and statewide forest inventory data, as well as in-person flights over affected areas, the unit produced comprehensive damage assessments and maps within a matter of weeks. These maps provided clear visualizations of

where the storm caused light, moderate, severe or catastrophic timber damage, helping local, state, federal and private partners understand the scale and distribution of the event.

The results were significant. More than 280,000 acres of forestland were affected, with timber losses estimated at close to \$60 million, including \$41 million on private lands.

These findings now guide recovery priorities in areas that include:

- **Hazard mitigation:** Strategic

planning to address a massively increased fuel load that impacts wildfire behavior, as well as dense areas of downed trees that impede firefighting operations.

- **Salvage opportunities:** Identifying areas where wood can be salvaged before it begins to rot on the ground.
- **Federal assistance:** Working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to facilitate availability of block grant funds to impacted Tennesseans.

# Empowering Landowners with a New Forest Information Tool



During fiscal year 2025, the Forest Data and Analysis Unit, in partnership with the Forest Health and Sustainability Unit, launched an innovative, publicly accessible mapping tool that equips landowners with clear and

actionable information about their properties. It complements land

management plans prepared by TDF area foresters for landowners.

Tennessee landowners can generate a customized report, complete with high-quality maps, in just a few minutes. The tool compiles information from dozens of data layers, offering insights on ecoregions, forest types, soils, hydrology, rare species and past forest management.

By making complex geospatial data easy to access and understand, the tool lowers barriers for Tennesseans

interested in better managing their forested land.

Users can quickly become familiar with their land's characteristics, which often leads to more informed conversations with foresters and encourages long-term planning for objectives such as wildlife habitat, recreation, timber, aesthetics or conservation.

Early feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, underscoring the tool's value as a resource for forest stewardship statewide.

# Building a Smarter, More Responsive Landowner Assistance Program

The introduction of a new customer relationship management (CRM) system during fiscal year 2025 significantly improved the efficiency and quality of TDF's Landowner Assistance Program (LAP).

The CRM captures, consolidates and centralizes essential information about TDF's work with landowners into a single accessible database, including demographics, management objectives, forest health recommendations, completed management practices and management plans, with a profile for each landowner. This streamlined system represents a major modernization of how TDF

engages with and tracks support for Tennesseans who use TDF's services.

Throughout the year, the Forest Data and Analysis Unit played a vital role in rolling out this tool to staff statewide. Behind the scenes, the unit led a quality assurance process to ensure that data entered into the CRM is consistent, accurate and actionable. Staff also developed detailed operational protocols and delivered training to support seamless implementation.

These efforts are already improving service delivery and communication within the LAP.



Looking ahead, the unit will produce a statewide landowner profile report during fiscal year 2026, synthesizing CRM data to identify trends, service gaps and opportunities to better serve forest landowners. This will ultimately strengthen TDF's ability to promote healthy, resilient forests across the state.

## Impact Stories: Communications & Outreach Unit



# TDF Takes Center Stage in National Fire Prevention Campaign

In July 2024, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF) joined The Weather Channel and the Ad Council to collaborate on a national fire prevention campaign centered around Smokey Bear's 80th birthday celebration.

TDF's Communications and Outreach Unit took a lead role in coordinating locations, on-camera representatives and partnerships for the project.

Area Forester and Public Information Officer (PIO) Brook Smith and Forestry Technician PJ Webb, as well as U.S. Forest Service PIO James Heaton, were brought into the project by TDF and served as the face of forestry to the nation.

Since many partners have a vested interest in wildfire prevention and work together to protect Tennesseans from wildfires, the unit also engaged city, county, federal and nonprofit partners to participate in the project and speak with one voice on this critical topic.

The resulting fire prevention campaign ran nationwide in August 2024 on The Weather Channel's media platforms, reaching over 300,000 viewers.

This opportunity not only contributed to fire prevention across Tennessee and the nation, but also helped position TDF as a nationally recognized expert on wildland fire topics and issues.



**Watch TDF  
speak to the  
nation:**

# MyTNWoods.gov Goes Live,

## Providing a One-Stop Shop for Forest Landowner Resources



Online forest landowner resources took a major step forward during fiscal year 2025, thanks to the work of the Communications and

Outreach Unit in launching a new website.

The new website is a one-stop shop for landowners looking for information about fostering healthy, sustainable forests by conserving, stewarding and managing their forested land.

Organized by management goals, the site is designed with a focus

on easy navigation and centralized resources. It gives landowners access to an array of professional tools and information to guide decisions about their land, as well as details about where to find technical and financial assistance and how to contact a TDF area forester or a consulting forester.

**Check it out:**  
[www.MyTNWoods.gov](http://www.MyTNWoods.gov)

## Two New Forestry Camps Launched

Middle school students in Memphis and Nashville attended two new forestry camps created by the Communications and Outreach Unit to better educate younger urban and suburban students about forestry and boost interest in forestry careers.

Working with internal and external partners, TDF used hands-on learning to introduce students to the cycle of forestry, forest management, forest products and industry, forest health, water quality, urban forestry, prescribed fire and wildfire suppression.

Notable highlights included a carefully planned live prescribed

fire demonstration at Cedars of Lebanon State Forest, planting trees, visiting local forest industry businesses, seeing an operating sawmill and getting in a stream to learn about water quality.

The communications team brought together staff from across the state to provide unique insights into forestry.

Student and parent feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Students left camp with a new appreciation for forests, a stronger grasp of what forestry is and does and a new perspective on possible careers within the forest industry.



Safe Burn Piles



Campfire Safety



Wildfire Starts



Smokey's Birthday

## *Impact Stories:* **Administrative Services Unit**

# **BEHIND THE SCENES:** *Coordinating a Major State Acquisition*

Behind the more familiar faces at the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF) is the Administrative Services Unit. This team works tirelessly to manage the common—and uncommon—administrative needs of the organization and provide the support structure that makes everything else TDF does possible.

During fiscal year 2025, one of the most complex administrative achievements was the purchase of the property that became Wolf River State Forest and conserved more than 5,400 acres of bottomland hardwood forest, made possible through coordinated efforts by the Administrative Services Unit.

From grant management to federal-state coordination, documentation and property acquisition, administrative staff ensured the transaction moved efficiently through each phase. The purchase was completed on an accelerated timeline, a rarity for transactions of this complexity.



Scene at Wolf River State Forest

## Enhancing State Forest Facilities & Infrastructure

This year, the Administrative Services Unit made significant progress in TDF's real property and infrastructure portfolio, beginning with the construction of a brand-new work center at Standing Stone State Forest. This facility expands operational capabilities and directly supports greater efficiency in forest management activities. The facility includes office space; a large meeting space for education, outreach and training; bays for maintaining critical state forest and wildfire equipment; and secure space to store TDF resources. In addition, the work center will serve as a command center for wildland fire management in the area.

The unit also facilitated major capital repairs and renovations at the Altamont, Selmer and Hohenwald work centers, improving health, safety and working conditions for staff.

Finally, three new bridges were installed at Martha Sundquist State Forest, replacing aging wooden structures. These new bridges improve forest management access, enhance visitor safety and reduce maintenance costs.



**Top:** Groundbreaking ceremony at Standing Stone State Forest | **Bottom:** Artist's rendering of the new work center



Collectively, these infrastructure investments modernize essential facilities, strengthen forest management capacity and

reinforce TDF's commitment to maintaining safe and functional environments for staff and visitors across the state.

### ***Supporting Employee Growth***

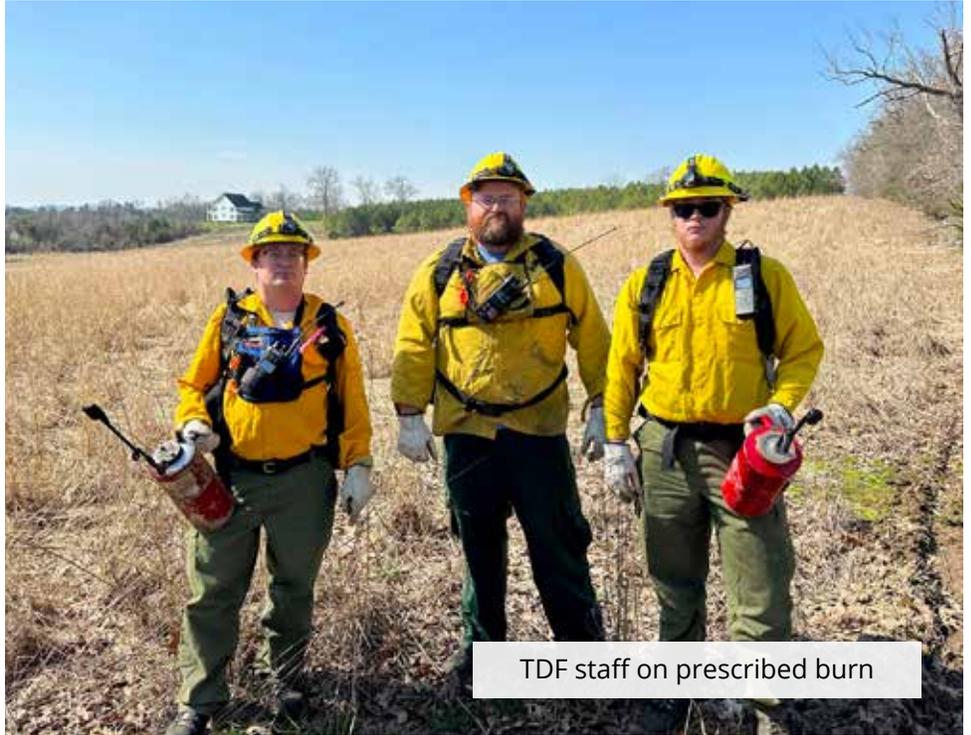
To better meet TDF's workforce needs, the Division contracted a Training Coordinator to expand and modernize internal workforce development efforts and improve organizational performance.

### ***Advancing the Forestry Workforce***

Support for the ForestryWorks workforce development program continued this year, playing a critical role in preparing and connecting workers to careers in the forestry sector.



Collecting seed for the nursery



TDF staff on prescribed burn



Log truck at a state forest



2025 Tennessee Forestry Camp



White oak seed orchard



TDF Foresters Academy training

## *Unit & Impact Details:* **Fire Management Unit**

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF) is legally tasked with protecting Tennessee's forest resources (T.C.A. 11-4-405). Wildland fire prevention and suppression are the primary responsibilities of TDF (T.C.A. 11-4-406), for which the agency is uniquely equipped and qualified. Fire occurrence and acres burned in Tennessee have gradually decreased during the past 50 years.

As the forest landscape experiences an influx of homes in the wildland-urban interface, TDF's fire role has remained consistent. What has changed is suppression equipment, communication methods, training and a greater emphasis on safety, prevention and education.

### **Unit Mission**

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

## **Operations & Training Program**

### ***OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR***

- Continue to provide professional and developmental training to TDF personnel and partner agencies.
- Strengthen interagency partnerships through open dialogue, training and support.
- Build proficiency and develop TDF's fire management organization by supporting out-of-state deployments, incident management team participation and national training opportunities.

### ***ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR***

- Deployed approximately 80 TDF employees to support Hurricane Helene disaster operations, with some individuals deploying multiple times. Personnel participated in search and

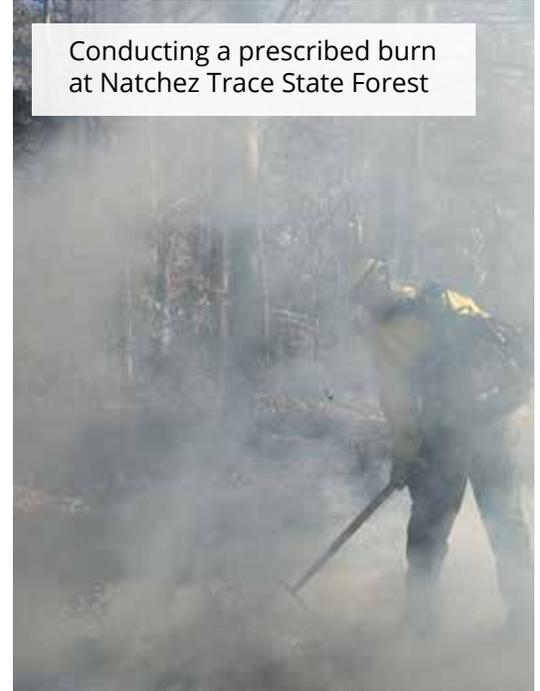


TDF staff clearing debris after Hurricane Helene

rescue; debris removal; and food, water and fuel delivery. TDF staff worked as safety officers, truck and equipment operators and airborne and land-based saw teams to provide relief to Tennessee residents affected by the disaster.

- Suppressed 876 wildfires across 12,619.15 acres in Tennessee.
- Mobilized resources to 12 states to aid with disasters, filling 128 personnel resource orders and 17 equipment resource orders. Deployed staff served in incident command and general staff positions, operations, planning, logistics, finance and dispatch.
- Sponsored the 22nd Tennessee-Kentucky Wildland Fire Academy, providing 34 courses and hosting 591 attendees, including 487 students from Tennessee, other states and federal agencies.
- Provided an intermediate dozer operator academy for 29 students, primarily from TDF, with three state agencies represented.
- Certified 59 full-time employees in specialized wildland fire roles, including Firefighter Type 1, Incident Commander Type 3 and Division Supervisor.
- Provided training to 370 TDF personnel total, including 1,389 wildland fire-focused courses.
- Continued ongoing fire mitigation project on Oak Ridge Reservation in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy, conducting prescribed burns, installing firebreaks and implementing other fuel reduction strategies to reduce wildfire risk to the surrounding community and Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Conducting a prescribed burn at Natchez Trace State Forest



## Volunteer Fire Assistance Program

### OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR

- Assist local volunteer fire departments (VFDs) serving populations of fewer than 10,000 residents to obtain wildland fire equipment, personal protective equipment, tools, communication supplies and technical assistance.
- Provide wildland fire training to VFDs across Tennessee, covering topics including incident command systems, tactics, leadership, mutual aid and wildland-urban interface education.
- Prioritize and support economically distressed counties and VFDs within those areas.

Distributing wildland fire tools, gear, and supplies to VFDs



## Volunteer Fire Assistance Program, Cont.

### *ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR*

- Maintained 400 agreements with volunteer fire departments for cooperative wildfire protection.
  - Delivered free wildland fire training to 200 firefighters, representing 10 fire departments across Tennessee.
  - Provided \$167,389 in wildfire suppression supplies and personal protective equipment to 85 volunteer fire departments in Tennessee.
- 

## Safety & Risk Management Program

### *OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR*

- Create a desirable safety culture within TDF where every employee accepts responsibility for their own safety and the safety of those with whom they work.
- Provide appropriate training, equipment and personal protective equipment to perform assigned jobs safely.
- Meet all provisions of applicable federal, state, and local laws for persons engaged in potentially hazardous job responsibilities or tasks.
- Maintain equipment in a safe and operable condition.
- Ensure that all employees, regardless of position, are comfortable in raising safety issues with their supervisor in a respectful interaction.



### *ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR*

- Completed 10 work safety audits.
- Developed and implemented the use of a new Survey123 safety inspection form.
- Investigated, reviewed and reported all job-related injuries, accidents and illnesses.
- Facilitated various safety-focused training sessions, including first aid/CPR, defensive driving and hazard communication for TDF personnel.

# Hazard Mitigation & Prevention Program

## OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR

- Develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans, expand Tennessee's Fire Adapted Communities network and increase certified Firewise USA Communities®.
- Provide the public with safety information, including updates on current hazard situations and mitigation steps to prevent devastating wildland fire impacts.
- Manage TDF's safe debris burn permit program to limit the risk of a planned fire growing into a wildland fire.
- Pursue new and diverse revenue opportunities and effectively manage growing wildland fire mitigation needs in Tennessee.
- Serve as Tennessee's sponsor for the National Fire Protection Agency's Firewise USA Communities® Program and the Smokey Bear Wildfire Prevention Campaign.



Tennessee Army National Guard drops water on a wildfire in coordination with TDF

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

- Secured \$285,642 in federal grant funding to implement wildland fire mitigation activities.
- Awarded \$162,247 in hazard mitigation grants to 22 communities for Community Wildfire Protection Plan development, outreach, education and community mitigation action items.
- Utilized federal funding to contract with multiple hazard mitigation specialists and the Appalachian Resource and Conservation District to expand capacity for hazard mitigation assessments and improvements.
- Facilitated Tennessee's annual Fire Adapted Communities Workshop in Sevier County with representatives from numerous local communities, fire departments and interested stakeholders such as National Fire Protection Association.
- Successfully reached 158 communities with fire prevention campaigns.
- Achieved 3.9 million impressions on paid fire prevention and mitigation social media campaigns.

## Fleet Management Program

### OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR

- Coordinate with the Division of Vehicle and Asset Management for the necessary procurement of essential fleet assets required by TDF to protect, conserve and enhance Tennessee's forests.
- Manage federal excess property distribution to Tennessee fire departments, supporting local wildfire suppression efforts.



### ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

- Coordinated with local fire departments on inventory and alterations to the federal excess property program and established new agreements to bring the federal firefighter property program to Tennessee.
  - Coordinated with Department of General Services and John Deere to integrate vehicle and equipment tracking services into TDF's computer automated dispatch system.
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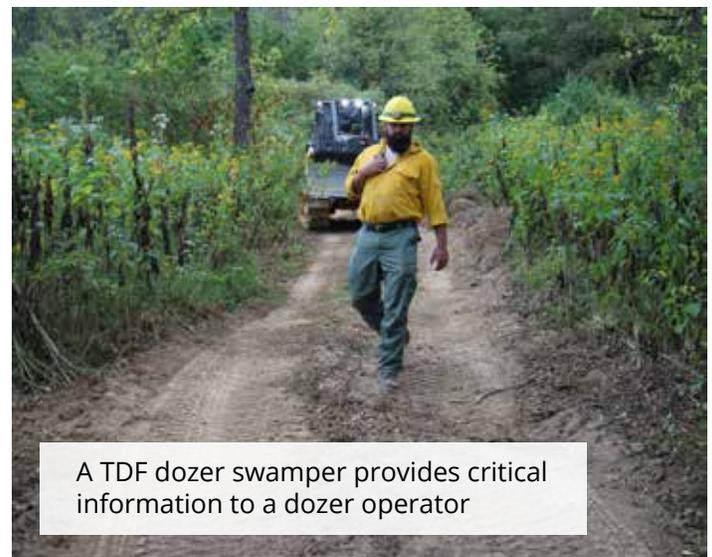
## Radio Communications Program

### OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR

- Maintain the highest level of integrity for TDF's statewide radio communications network.
- Establish interoperability solutions with emergency response partners at all levels of government.
- Support the continued advancement of knowledge, skills and abilities of staff.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

- Established a radio-over-internet-protocol solution, enabling leadership to monitor forestry communication transmissions from any computer or mobile device.
- Coordinated with the Tennessee Department of Safety (TDOS) to identify forestry radio tower locations suitable for continued TDOS build out of the Tennessee Advanced Communication Network.



# Prescribed Fire Program

## OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR

- Continue refining and expanding the Tennessee Certified Burn Manager Program curriculum to align with state regulations and evolving needs.
- Update the Tennessee Certified Burn Manager program by adding a website and updating methods of tracking certification, recertification and certification expiration.
- Deliver high-quality Tennessee Certified Burn Manager courses statewide.
- Strengthen the Type 2 Initial Attack Crew through robust annual training and structured leadership development opportunities.



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

- Refined and enhanced Tennessee Certified Burn Manager program curriculum in alignment with the Tennessee Prescribed Burning Act.
- Co-led planning and delivery of the annual three-day Type 2 Initial Attack Crew training event at the Tennessee Fire and Codes Academy in May. Training included tactical drills, leadership development and technical exercises. Crew boss trainees gained real-world leadership experience under TDF supervision.
- Integrated participant feedback into Tennessee Certified Burn Manager program, adding a third day of teaching, featuring expert-led modules on smoke management, endangered flora and invasive species control.

## Prescribed Fire Program, Cont.

### *ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR*

- Delivered 4 Tennessee Certified Burn Manager courses to approximately 160 students, including a Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA)-specific session. Courses included both classroom learning and hands-on field exercises, strengthening burn planning and implementation skills across the state.
  - Partnered with TWRA to revise their burn plan template to mirror TDF standards, enhancing consistency, safety and effectiveness of prescribed fire practices statewide.
  - Led a technical workshop for TWRA staff to review and refine burn plans, address operational questions and share best practices, boosting TWRA's internal capacity for implementing prescribed fire.
  - Provided structured mentorship to Crew Boss Trainees during training, reinforcing leadership capacity and succession planning within the Type 2 Initial Attack Crew structure.
  - Contributed to statewide training and education events, including recruit instruction at the Tennessee Fire and Codes Academy (October and May), the TN/KY Wildland Fire Academy and Nashville Forestry Camp.
  - Launched "Training Mondays," a recurring internal professional development initiative covering time management, sand table exercises, radio use, acreage estimation and mobile apps. These sessions have enhanced team cohesion, improved operational readiness and encouraged continuous learning.
- 

## Fire Logistics Program

### *OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR*

- Ensure logistics functions operate seamlessly for in-state fire operations and out-of-state deployments.
- Improve fire dispatch processes to strengthen in-state fire operations.

### *ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR*

- Produced and provided learning videos for personnel going out on deployments, helping staff understand various processes to make deployments easier.
- Incorporated additional TDF staff into the process of deploying resources out-of-state and utilizing the Interagency Resource Ordering Capability system, providing opportunities to gain knowledge and qualify for overtime.
- Brought TDF's Fire Resource Coordinators (FRCs) together virtually from across the state using a FRC Squad Microsoft Teams chat, facilitating communication and collaboration to solve shared issues and develop a Dispatcher's Handbook.



TDF wildland firefighter on a fire in Sequatchie County

## *Unit & Impact Details:*

# Forest Health & Sustainability Unit

The health of a forest directly influences all aspects of forestry and is a part of every unit within the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF). Not limited to insects and diseases, forest health is also influenced by abiotic events, invasive plants, improper silvicultural prescriptions, harvesting damage to the residual stand, air and water quality, soil compaction, wildland fire and much more.

Forest health is considered in all settings, whether the forest exists within an urban environment, a riparian strip between two agricultural fields or a rural forest.

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 and Sustainability Unit is to protect and enhance the health and productivity of Tennessee's forests.

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## **Forest Health Program**

Forest health programs involve detecting, monitoring, managing and suppressing native, non-native and abiotic damaging forest health issues. The major forest health issues managed within this unit are spongy moth, hemlock woolly adelgid, laurel wilt disease, southern pine beetle and other pine bark beetles and invasive plants.

Other threats to Tennessee's forests are addressed through consistent off-plot monitoring by aerial detection, ground detection and technology, including satellite imagery. This program also engages in substantial education and outreach to share information about current and imminent threats and how to address them.

### ***PROGRAM 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.

### ***OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR***

- Promote forest health through monitoring and management activities, staff trainings, technical assistance,

outreach and social media.

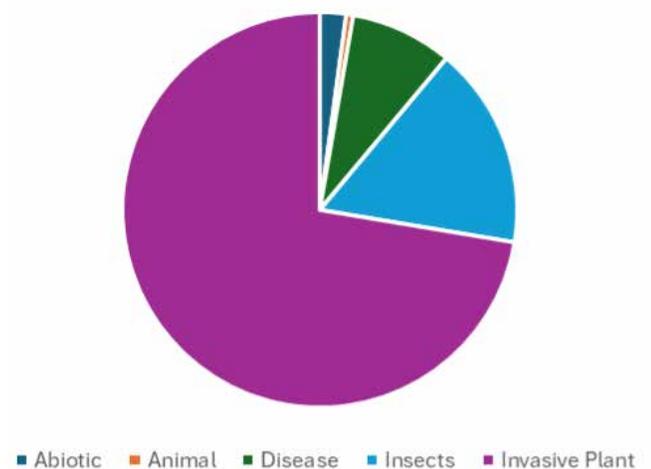
- Improve the collection, analysis and sharing of data internally and externally to enhance customer relationships.
- Partner with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal Plant Health Inspection Service and Slow the Spread Foundation to conduct annual survey of spongy moth by placing and monitoring traps across all 95 counties in Tennessee.
- Monitor for southern pine beetle and other pine bark beetles to evaluate areas at a higher risk and mitigate outbreaks.
- Support research, collect data and conduct outreach for emerald ash borer, laurel wilt disease and other invasive forest health threats.
- Promote management of invasive plants through outreach and by providing funding to local government and nonprofit organizations for implementation of invasive plant management projects across the state.
- Provide leadership to the Tennessee Hemlock Conservation Partnership by facilitating meetings, cooperative field days and outreach.
- Protect significant hemlock forests from extinction through continued operation of the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) Strike Team.
- Work towards establishing a biocontrol insectary for HWA within Tennessee.



### ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

- Recorded 778 forest health observations submitted statewide by TDF personnel using the Environmental Systems Research Institute’s Survey123 platform. Observations included widespread abiotic injury, particularly freeze damage and tornado damage, oak decline (various causal agents), invasive plants and a variety of native and non-native pests.
- Collected more than 500 citizen science pest reports across the state, capturing a variety of invasive and native pests. Spotted lanternfly was the most reported pest.
- Elm zigzag sawfly was confirmed in Washington County, infecting roughly 100 acres. This was the first confirmed detection in Tennessee.

**Types of Pests Reported**



## Forest Health Program, Cont.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

- Monitored for several forest health insect pests including spongy moth (with more than 4,000 traps), emerald ash borer and exotic bark beetles as part of early detection and rapid response trapping.
- Deployed southern pine beetle (SPB) traps to assess the number of SPB and clerid beetles present. Tennessee is trending towards an uptick in southern pine beetles in comparison to clerid predatory beetles, suggesting an elevated risk for potential SPB activity.
- Completed road and ground surveys for laurel wilt disease, detecting the disease in eight additional counties. This disease has spread to 34 counties in Tennessee since its first detection in 2019.
- Conducted several forest health training and outreach events for stakeholders and the public. In addition, TDF partnered with Clemson University to host forest health training for forestry staff.
- Treated over 13,000 eastern hemlocks on almost 1,200 acres across 19 Hemlock Conservation Areas. A release of a predatory beetle species that targets HWA occurred at one site as a biocontrol measure on public lands.
- The Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Strike Team received an award for nominating the state champion eastern hemlock tree found in Fiery Gizzard portion of the South Cumberland State Park.
- Facilitated landowner HWA workshops, as well as the Tennessee Hemlock Conservation Partnership winter meeting.
- Worked toward establishing a biological control insectary to facilitate the ability to release HWA predatory beetles on the Cumberland Plateau. Carolina hemlocks and eastern hemlocks were planted at the Westel field office and HWA was introduced. Three species of predatory beetles will be introduced once HWA populations grow.
- Worked with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency to perform cogongrass treatments, with treatment sites totaling about one acre.
- Collected cogongrass samples to support U.S. Forest Service research projects, including a genetics study and species distribution models.



A forest health training for TDF staff



Planting hemlocks at the Westel field office

- Developed a cogongrass ArcGIS Experience to educate about the plant and TDF's efforts to eradicate the species in Tennessee.
- Emerald ash borer has been confirmed in a total of 66 counties in Tennessee, with no new counties being confirmed during fiscal year 2025.
- A total of 69 spongy moths were caught in six counties across Tennessee, with the highest number occurring in eastern Tennessee.

## Rural Forest Management Program

Family forest owners are the key to keeping Tennessee's forests productive and healthy. They play an important role in providing all Tennesseans 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 often results in activities that leave forests less productive or at risk of insect, disease and water quality problems.

The TDF 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 cost-share programs.

### ***PROGRAM MISSION***

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

### ***OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR***

- Provide professional development and continuing education opportunities for TDF foresters.
- Implement customer relationship management system (CRM) to assist and integrate with the ArcGIS Pro landowner assistance mapping, geospatial database and performance tracking suite of tools.
- Provide excellent customer service to Tennessee's forest landowners.



A yellow poplar leaf

## Rural Forest Management Program, Cont.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

- Continued to improve the implementation of ArcGIS Pro landowner assistance mapping, geospatial database, and performance tracking suite of tools, specifically designed to support landowner assistance.
- Implemented a CRM to support landowner assistance programming. Hosted two internal training sessions for staff.
- Assisted 15,709 forest landowners and educated 87,034 Tennesseans through direct outreach programs.
- Wrote 24 Forest Stewardship plans addressing 5,488 acres, 216 other forest management plans addressing 31,220 acres, and 171 prescription plans improving 7,282 acres.
- Provided services 10 times for public entities and 87 times for private landowners through the vendor service program, impacting 3,864 acres. This included services for standby, firebreak construction, tree planting, and timber marking, as well as prescribed burns on 693 acres of public land and 3,171 acres of private land.
- Funded 32 cost share applications, totaling \$169,673, applied to complete forest management practices. The total project cost generated with cost-share applications and match was \$358,786.

## Forest Legacy Program

This U.S. Forest Service program, authorized by the Farm Bill and facilitated by TDF, works to identify, permanently protect and maintain well-managed, working forests on the landscape.

### PROGRAM MISSION

To protect environmentally important, private forestlands threatened with conversion to nonforest uses.

### OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR

- Acquire 5,488 acres in Fayette County for the creation of Wolf River State Forest.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

- Purchased 5,488 acres of bottomland hardwoods and



TDF area forester recognizes landowner's stewardship efforts

upland forests in Fayette County, leveraging \$15.95 million in federal Forest Legacy Program funds, as well as funding from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, the State Lands Acquisition Fund and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. This tract was formerly part of Ames Plantation and has served as a tremendous resource for forestry research and education. Wolf River State Forest boasts a second-generation white oak orchard, a cutting-edge research project where hardwood seed orchards are developed to improve oak seedling quality.

## Water Quality Program

Water is a valuable product of the forest. The benefits of water are difficult to measure, but changes in quality and quantity are easily observed. Forests act as buffers and filters to reduce damage to waterways caused by practices from other land uses, such as urban runoff, and protect streambanks from erosion caused by flooding. Since the mid-1980s, TDF has provided leadership to safeguard Tennessee's streams and rivers.

### **PROGRAM MISSION**

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

### **OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR**

- Provide continuing education and assistance to loggers, landowners, foresters and the general public to safeguard Tennessee's forest resources, including water, through increased implementation of water quality best management practices (BMPs).



### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR**

- Assisted with 13 Master Logger Program classes across the state, resulting in 138 new Master Logger graduates and 302 individuals obtaining continuing educational credits.
- Provided 646 field visits to forestry operations across the state on more than 56,000 acres.
- Surveyed an overall BMP Compliance rate of 98%.

## Urban & Community Forestry Program

The Urban and Community Forestry Program's (U&CF) purpose is to ensure all Tennesseans experience the numerous benefits of urban and community forests. The program works to catalyze and support the full-circle management of healthy urban and community forests through community outreach, education, public engagement, technical support, workforce development and financial assistance.

### **PROGRAM MISSION**

To grow, manage and sustain healthy urban and community forests throughout Tennessee.

### **OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR**

- Enhance data collection and utilization within the program.
- Foster greater awareness of the U&CF and why community forestry matters.
- Promote and support the implementation of full-circle management practices in community forestry.
- Strengthen and diversify Tennessee's community forestry partnerships and networks.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR**

- Awarded and managed \$1,940,527 in federal Inflation Reduction Act grant funding to 12 subawardees for projects across the state.
- Provided 17 Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program (TAEP) Community Tree Planting Grants to communities statewide, with total TAEP investment of \$86,752.73, and total project costs of \$156,321.56, resulting in 1,479 trees planted.
- Hired three contracted team members to assist with program delivery throughout the state.
- Partnered with the University of Tennessee Chattanooga's Center for Applied Geospatial Data Science on a robust tree canopy assessment project that collected data in 25 Tennessee communities. This data will provide local leaders with actionable information to plan for the future.
- Created a periodic programmatic digital newsletter, *The Poplar Post*, and issued two editions.



TDF U&CF staff presenting to community representatives

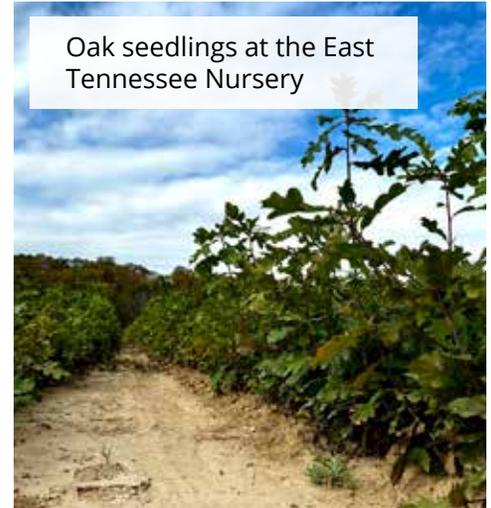
- Administered Arbor Day Foundation recognition program in Tennessee, hosting the Tennessee State Arbor Day in Newport, TN, on March 7, 2025, and recognizing a variety of entities that participate in the Tree City USA, Tree Line USA, Tree Campus K-12, Tree Campus Higher Education, Tree Campus Healthcare and Growth Awards programs.
- Delivered presentations and educational outreach at conferences and meetings, including the Texas International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Tree Conference, Keep Tennessee Beautiful Conference, Tennessee Public Works Conference, Southern Group of State Foresters Winter Meeting, Tennessee Urban Forestry Conference and Tennessee Fire Adaptive Communities Conference.
- Planned and hosted the Southern Group of State Foresters Urban & Community Forestry Winter Meeting in Knoxville.
- Developed an internal activity tracking tool using Survey123.
- Hosted an ACRT Basic Arborist class and the ISA Southern Tree Climbing Competition and pre-climb workshops at Ellington Agricultural Center.
- Partnered with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture's Wood Products Business Consultant to plan and implement Community Wood Utilization community events throughout the state.
- Assisted with launching the Southern Community Wood Utilization Group in the southeastern U.S. region.
- Applied for disaster supplemental funding to support streambank stabilization and vegetative restoration in communities impacted by Hurricane Helene.
- Convened a diverse group of partners in Cocke County to work together to address challenges created by Hurricane Helene.
- Supported the creation of the Southeast Tree Coalition and the monthly hosting of stakeholder meetings to provide updates and strengthen collaboration.
- Developed a tree inventory tracker template for communities to use.
- Created the Roots to Shoots tree care workshop and hosted it in Monteagle, Tenn.
- Completed a tree canopy assessment internally for the City of Jonesborough and oversaw a tree inventory in Clinton, Tenn.



## *Unit & Impact Details:* **Reforestation Unit**

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry's (TDF) seedling nursery in Delano produces approximately three to four million tree seedlings annually 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. The remaining seedbed area is planted in cover crops to ensure the long-term productivity of the soil.



### **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 THE YEAR***

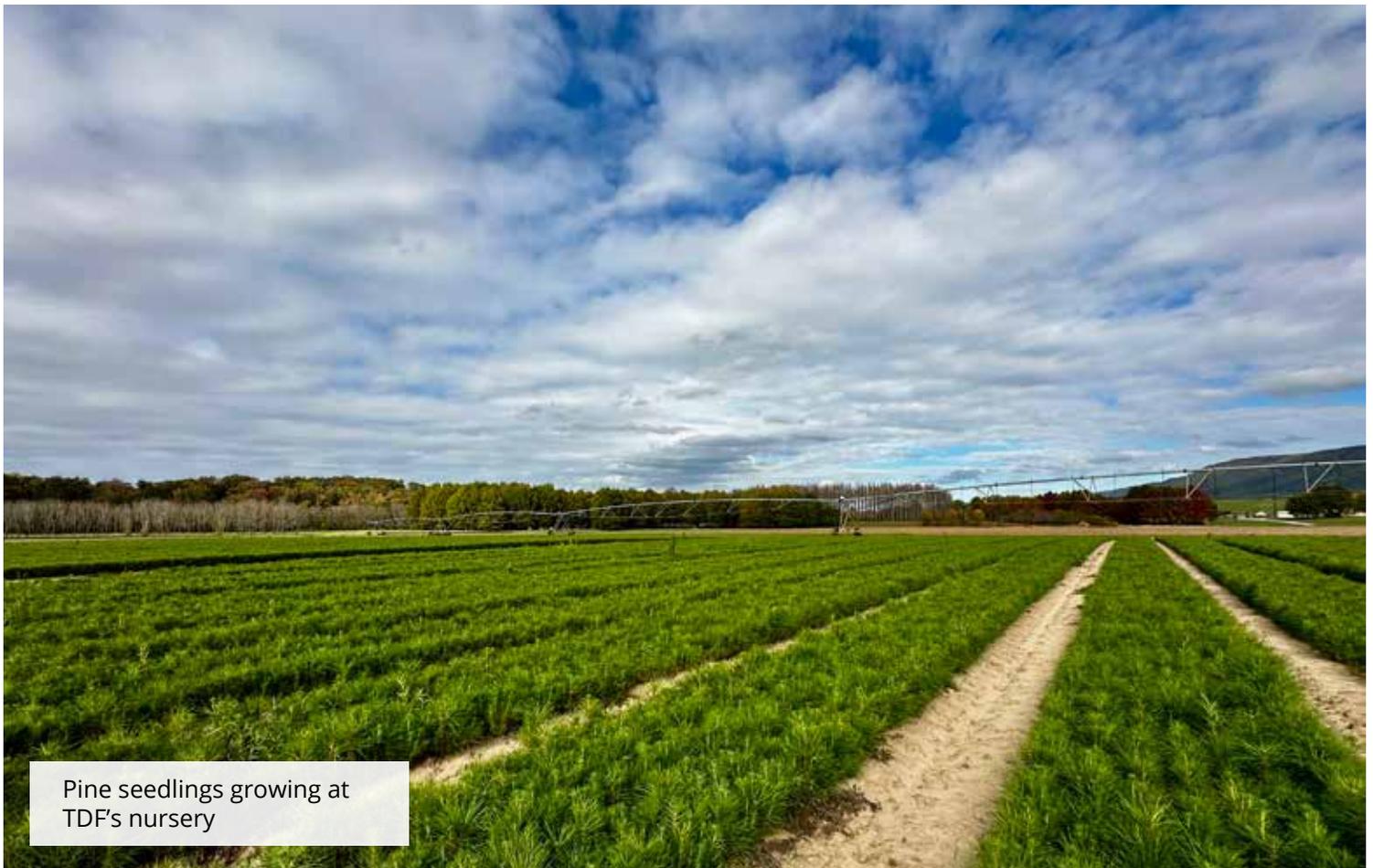
- Continue adjusting seedling species and volumes to account for the changing demands of timber and land management in Tennessee. The demand for midstory and understory species of trees and shrubs has outgrown the demand for pine species. Natural disasters, changing timber markets and an increased interest in wildlife and riparian zone management have altered the direction of management at the East Tennessee Nursery.

### ***ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR***

- Identified strategies to address some industry-related challenges related to market changes and access to quality seed by attending the Arkansas Southern and Northern Nursery Conference.
- Saw completion of major hydrology capital improvement project, which should alleviate heavy flood conditions from heavy rainfall within 48 hours, leading to a higher success rate in developing quality seedlings.
- Received more than 2,500 pounds of white oak acorns, donated by Tennesseans and the University of Tennessee Tree Improvement Program (UT-TIP) to the East Tennessee Nursery as part of the Wild Seed Network's initiatives.
- Signed a memorandum of understanding among the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA), UT-

TIP and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture for the objective of meeting the seed, research and reforestation needs of Tennessee.

- As part of the Wild Seed Network, with the support of American Forests, UT-TIP and TDF identified wild seed sources that are not acquired by vendors on contract. The four species focused on during the year were white oak, hickories, wild crabapple and ninebark.
- The American Forests, UT-TIP and TDF partnership grafted ninebark scions over the past year and will be ready to plant a new two-acre seed orchard for the species at the East Tennessee Nursery in the fall. This species is important to streambank restoration and stabilization, a pressing need in areas affected by Hurricane Helene.
- Due to the success of the Wild Seed Network, American Forests has been approached by surrounding states to copy the programs since seed acquisition is an issue at all state nurseries, and the acquisition of regionally adapted tree genetics is of critical concern for the future of reforestation planning.
- Replaced aging 36+ year-old equipment and systems, including a generator for the coolers at the nursery to prevent loss of seed and seedlings during power outages and a bag strapper machine that improves workplace safety and reduces supply costs.
- The updated online seedling store ([PlantTNTrees.org](http://PlantTNTrees.org)), in its second year of operation, continues to better meet the needs of customers and staff and to improve efficiency and effectiveness.



Pine seedlings growing at  
TDF's nursery

## *Unit & Impact Details:*

# State Forest Management Unit

Tennessee's 16 state forests total 173,269 acres and range from mountain coves in East Tennessee to bottomlands along the Mississippi River. They are managed primarily for natural resources, including high-quality, sustainable timber, game and non-game wildlife and biodiversity.

Recreation is a secondary offering by state forests. State forests do not feature inns, golf courses or restrooms, but instead welcome the public for passive recreation opportunities such as hunting and hiking.

Tennessee's state forest system is certified by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), one of the forest industry's leading authorities on sustainable forestry. The Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF) maintains compliance with SFI's rigorous management standards and submits to periodic audits to ensure continued compliance in all aspects of forest management.

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. After decades of restoration, conservation and careful management, the state forest system now contains a vast 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 also provide opportunities to demonstrate the application of sustainable forestry practices that maintain and enhance multiple use values. Demonstration sites show 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**

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 residents of Tennessee.

### ***OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR***

- TDF remains committed to managing Tennessee's state forest system as a model of sustainable, multiple-use forestry, balancing timber production, conservation, recreation, education and cultural stewardship to benefit the people and natural resources of Tennessee for generations to come.
- Support forest industry and local economies through active forest management.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

- Engaged contractors to complete a thorough inventory across all 16 Tennessee state forests. This current data now informs precise growth and yield projections, enabling better-calibrated timber harvest plans that maintain forest health and age-class diversity. It also reinforces TDF's adherence to SFI certification standards.
- Established the 5,488-acre Wolf River State Forest, Tennessee's 16th state forest, in Fayette County. The tract includes exceptional bottomland hardwood ecosystems, 1,560 acres of wetlands, 30+ miles of streams and 45 historically significant sites. This highlights TDF's commitment to conservation, cultural stewardship, ecological resilience and recreational opportunity.
- Signed an official memorandum of understanding (MOU) between TDF and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), which manages Tennessee State Parks. This MOU formalizes a partnership to enhance enforcement of state forest protection rules. Due to this agreement, TDEC law enforcement officers now assist with patrols on five state forests: Cedars of Lebanon, Chickasaw, Natchez Trace, Standing Stone and Pickett. This collaboration strengthens TDF's broader stewardship mission by ensuring that public use remains safe and sustainable, natural resources are safeguarded and Tennessee's forests remain healthy and resilient.
- Hosted forestry-focused educational field days, including programs on invasive species management, wildlife conservation and White Oak/Shortleaf Pine workshops. In addition, state forests welcomed numerous college and high school classes, offering hands-on learning in a wide range of natural resource topics such as prescribed burning, timber measurement techniques and forest health management.
- Partnered with TDEC and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency to form the Natchez Trace Recreation Area in a collaborative conservation and recreation initiative that unites state parks, state forests and wildlife management areas. These public lands are now promoted as a unified outdoor recreation destination, creating a cohesive visitor experience.
- Approved 18 compartment plans for 20,000+ acres, establishing management plans for the next 10 years.
- Generated \$3.4 million in timber sale revenue from 1,500 acres, totaling 10 million board feet; conducted sales throughout nine months of the year. TDF harvests less than 1% of the state forest system annually.
- Conservatively estimate the total standing timber inventory on the state forest system to be valued at \$350 to \$375 million.



Franklin State Forest's main road

## *Unit & Impact Details:*

# Forest Data & Analysis Unit

The Forest Data and Analysis Unit manages Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF) data resources, provides visualization and analytical services, interprets data and communicates findings to internal and external audiences. Core focus areas include statewide forest inventory, integrated database management, analytics, mapping and remote sensing technology.

The unit tracks availability and sustainability of Tennessee's 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 technologies for efficient data collection and management, mapping and distribution to field staff.

This unit develops and manages data systems and governance and administers the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA), Geographic Information Systems, and Unmanned Aircraft Systems programs.

## Unit Mission

Empower TDF and TDF's partners with data-driven insights to enhance operations and business intelligence through data collection, management, visualization, analysis and communication.

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## Data Management & Technology Program

### *OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR*

- Conduct a TDF-wide needs assessment for data management and technology.
- Configure a publicly available, map-based reporting tool for landowners using landscape management plans.
- Implement improvements in data workflows to increase efficiency and program responsiveness to customer needs.
- Support the Landowner Assistance Program's goal for implementing a new customer relationship manager (CRM) software.
- Support research, collect data and conduct outreach for emerald ash borer, laurel wilt disease and other invasive forest health threats.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

- Analyzed satellite imagery, data models and forest inventory data to map damaged timber from Hurricane Helene in Eastern Tennessee.
- Conducted a TDF-wide needs assessment and began development of a three-year Unit Plan to guide continued data modernization, technology adoption and internal training.
- Configured a Landscape Management Plan report for landowners, including a map of the landowner's property and information from dozens of data layers (ecoregion, soils, hydrology, rare species, etc.).
- Developed a new data collection system for the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Strike Team.
- Improved state forests' road and trail data using new GPS points and designating each road and trail segment by allowed uses (e.g., hiking, horseback riding, biking and motorized vehicles).
- Supported implementation of Landowner Assistance CRM software and will generate a landowner profile report during fiscal year 2026.

## Forest Inventory & Analysis Program

FIA is a continuous census of forest resource extent, condition, 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 seven-year cycle.

The FIA Program also conducts felled tree studies and timber product output surveys, gathering information from loggers and facilities in the state that utilize wood produced by forests. The FIA Program provides information on forest age dynamics, health, ownership patterns, socioeconomic benefits of forests and emerging market opportunities.

The multi-resource information gathered by FIA informs policy, economic development and forest program development, and provides a scientific basis for forest ecosystem monitoring.

### PROGRAM MISSION

Collect and process data on the condition, productivity and sustainability of Tennessee's forest resources to support economic, policy and program development.



## Forest Inventory & Analysis Program, Cont.

### *OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR*

- Complete measurements for Inventory Year 2022.
- Begin measuring Inventory Year 2023.
- Use supplemental federal funding to increase staffing.
- Complete a timber products output survey of Tennessee's primary mills.

### *ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR*

- Completed measurements for Inventory Year 2022, achieving a productivity rate 140% of the national standard.
- Utilized supplemental federal funding to support two additional staff based in Knoxville.
- Completed a timber products output survey with a sample of 79 primary mills in Tennessee.

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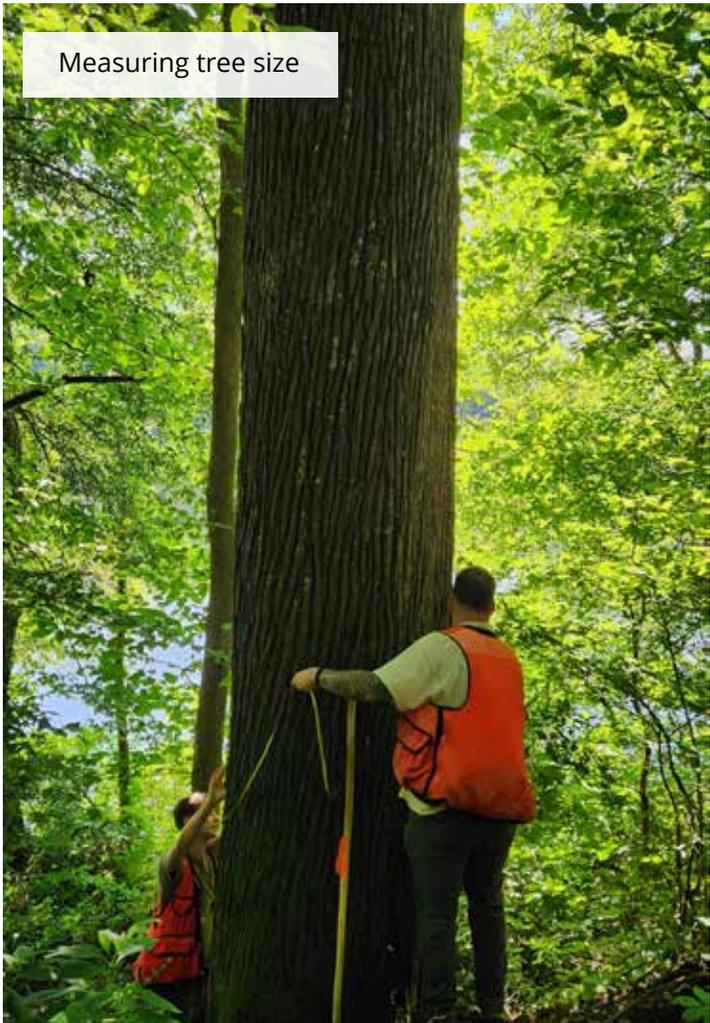
**How inventory years work:** Field crews collect data for a given inventory year over an extended period of multiple years because many forest plots can only be accessed during specific seasons due to weather conditions, snow cover and terrain limitations. The inventory year designation refers to when measurements begin for that set of plots, rather than when fieldwork must or should be completed.



FIA foresters hiking to hard-to-access plots



Measuring tree size



An FIA crew

## *Unit & Impact Details:* **Communications & Outreach Unit**

The Communications and Outreach Unit strives to inform and educate audiences by providing a better understanding of forestry as a discipline, the role that the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF) plays in maintaining a healthy and productive forest resource and services and resources available to forest landowners in Tennessee. It also educates the public on wildfire prevention and mitigation and provides time-sensitive information during serious wildfire incidents.

A successful effort enhances the appreciation for the state's forests and teaches residents the benefits of conserving, protecting and enhancing the resource. As a result, Tennessee's society receives essential ecological benefits.

The Unit also helps foster healthy communication within TDF itself.

### **Unit Mission**

Communicate clearly and accurately to Tennessee's residents the information necessary to accomplish TDF's mission and to optimize internal communications.

#### ***OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR***

- Grow the public's awareness of TDF's services and resources and educate the public on foundational forestry and forest management concepts.
- Create and expand online resources for wildfire prevention, mitigation and suppression; forest health; and forest management.
- Establish a new landowner assistance website to centralize resources that equip landowners to steward their forest sustainably and achieve their management goals.
- Expand forestry camp offerings across the state to extend opportunities to a wider range of students.

#### ***ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR***

- Modernized the annual fire prevention campaign, transitioning away from channels with difficult-to-track results to channels with quantifiable outcomes. Achieved 3.9 million online impressions and high levels of engagement and interaction across the campaign.
- Orchestrated the grand opening event for the newly acquired Wolf River State Forest, attended by more than 150 individuals, including Gov. Bill Lee, and involving representatives from a range of organizations.

- Launched the Nashville Forestry Camp and the Memphis Forestry Camp, offering opportunities for forestry learning to middle school students from any educational background. Earned exceptional feedback from both students and parents.
- Hosted 67 Future Farmers of America students from across the state at the 74th annual Tennessee Forestry Camp.
- Administered a contract with the Tennessee Forestry Association to fund a conservation education coordinator who manages the Project Learning Tree program, conducts teacher conservation workshops and trains facilitators, helping to educate on forestry topics.
- Debuted MyTNWoods.gov, a landowner assistance website that offers an easy-to-navigate comprehensive source of learning, guidance and information for forest landowners.
- Coordinated an expanded TDF presence at the state fair, using the event as an opportunity to engage and educate the public.
- Collaborated with The Weather Channel and the Ad Council to create a Smokey Bear-themed fire prevention campaign that featured TDF forestry personnel as its face.
- Hosted a Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively workshop in May 2025, contracting a training facilitator to deliver specialized training to TDF field staff to enhance their ability to communicate effectively with forest landowners.
- Partnered with field staff and district leadership in East Tennessee to host the Commissioner of Agriculture's Forest Industry Supply Chain Tour, working with the University of Tennessee Arboretum and Oak Ridge Reservation to host and execute the event. This included engagement and tours for legislators and other VIP guests.
- Provided multiple radio and television interviews addressing TDF programs and topical issues.
- Promoted TDF services and outreach campaigns across multiple media outlets and on social media. This included advertising campaigns for wildland fire prevention, safe debris burning, prescribed fire, landowner assistance, forest health, Tennessee Wood Products and East Tennessee Nursery seedlings.
- Deepened partnership with the Tennessee Forestry Association's communications manager, leading to opportunities to amplify reach.
- Crafted strategic messaging to address controversial or sensitive issues around forest management and wildfire topics.



Campers at the Nashville Day Camp learn about wildfire suppression equipment

## *Unit & Impact Details:* **Administrative Services Unit**

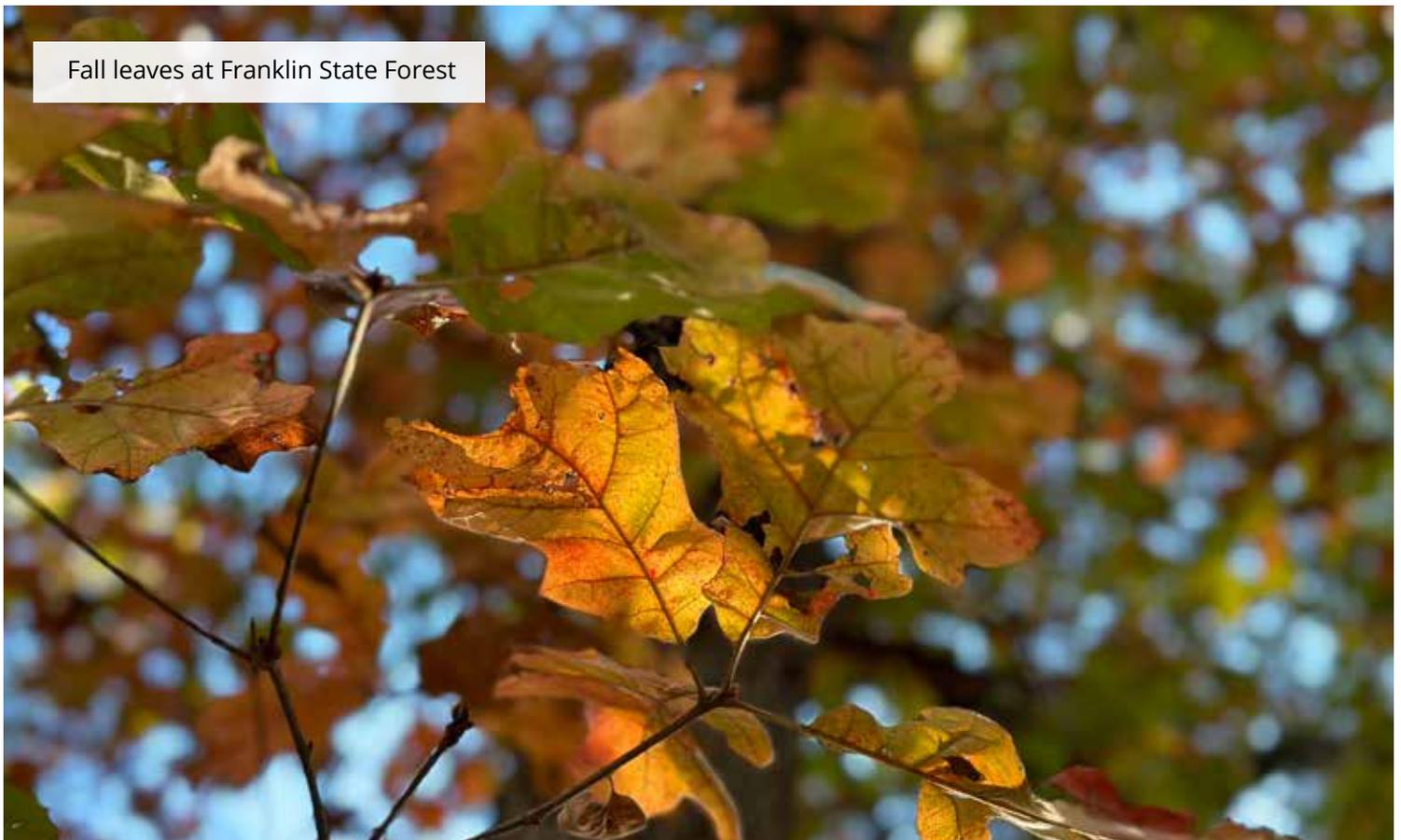
The Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry (TDF) employs a workforce of 394 individuals (330 full time and 64 seasonal employees). TDF is administered from headquarters in Nashville, four district offices and one reforestation office.

The business of TDF is led by the director of forest protection (wildland fire, communications and outreach, fleet, real property and fiscal administration) and director of forest management (state forests, data and analysis, forest health and sustainability, and reforestation).

Effective planning, priority setting and communication within TDF are crucial to organizational effectiveness. The directors work with staff to refine systems that improve customer service and operational efficiencies.

### **Unit Mission**

Increase the effectiveness of management, the quality of customer services, the efficiency of operations and the cost-effectiveness of TDF programs.



## OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR

- Establish Wolf River State Forest in Fayette County.
- Expand the ForestryWorks workforce development program to additional Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs), community colleges and high schools.
- Strengthen and centralize training efforts across TDF.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR

- Purchased 5,488 acres of formerly Ames Plantation property to create Wolf River State Forest in Fayette County. Leveraged U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Legacy Program grant of \$15.95 million, with additional funding from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, the State Lands Acquisition Fund, the Tennessee Heritage Conservation Fund, and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.
- Added forestry curriculum to Walters State Community College in Morristown and TCAT-Athens.
- Certified 959 students and 13 teachers in ForestryWorks.
- Contracted with a training coordinator to begin development of the next biennial Technician Academy and Forester Academy.
- Facilitated three major capital repair and renovation projects at Altamont, Selmer and Hohenwald to improve the health and safety of the staff's working conditions.
- Built three new bridges at Martha Sundquist State Forest, improving safety and access for TDF staff and forest visitors.
- Lowered month-over-month vacancy rates to less than 5%.
- Hosted groundbreaking ceremony at Chickasaw State Forest for new work center.





## 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. Provide an annual report to the Governor; Commissioner of Agriculture; the 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 strategic 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.

In addition, the Tennessee Forestry Commission provides guidance and oversight for various TDF operations and management decisions, including seedling pricing and production at the East Tennessee Nursery and landowner assistance activities.

## The State of Tennessee Policy of Non-Discrimination

Pursuant to the State of Tennessee's policy of non-discrimination, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability or military service in its policies or in the admission or access to treatment or employment in its programs, services, or activities.

# Tennessee Forestry Commission Members

**Chair John Charles Wilson** | Memphis | Represents conservation organizations  
**Vice-Chair Sharon Jean-Philippe** | Knoxville | Represents the public at large  
**Secretary Bill Legg** | Westpoint | Represents forest landowners of less than 500 acres  
**Mark Rogers** | Caryville | Represents forest landowners of greater than 500 acres  
**Jacob Franklin Almond** | Kingston | Represents forest landowners of less than 500 acres  
**Tom Midyett** | Knoxville | Represents pulp and paper manufacturers  
**Drew Getty** | Winchester | Represents the hardwood industry  
**Ex-Officio Andy Holt** | Commissioner - Tennessee Department of Agriculture  
**Ex-Officio Jason Maxedon** | Director - Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency  
**Ex-Officio David Salyers** | Director of Conservation - Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation

TFC Members, left to right: Jacob Almond, Bill Legg, John Charles Wilson, Tom Midyett, Mark Rogers, Drew Getty and Sharon Jean-Philippe



Bonfire at the Tennessee Forestry Camp



Department of  
**Agriculture**

Forestry



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