

Alabama Forestry Commission

Strategic Plan



2009 - 2011

Alabama Forestry Commission's Mission Statement

Established as a state agency in 1924, the mission of the Alabama Forestry Commission is three-fold, to:

- Protect the Forests from all harmful agents;
- Provide service and help Landowners to carry out responsible forest management on their property, using professional technical assistance so as to benefit themselves, their land and society; and
- Educate the General Public about the value of our forests in insuring both a healthy economy and environment. We do this in the most efficient and cost effective way possible.

Alabama Forestry Commission's Core Values

Teamwork

We share responsibility and ownership of our decisions and actions, and trust one another in making shared decisions as a team through honest and open communications.

Excellence

We will provide the highest standards of quality in everything we do.

Integrity

We insist on an organizational environment consistently based upon the highest ethical standards.

Respect

We will show appreciation and high regard for our associates, partners, and customers. Our core values are the principles or standards upon which we conduct business and the values upon which we base our decisions, the foundation upon which we will interact with one another, and how we will be expected to interact with customers and others.

Alabama Forestry Commission's Key Strategies

I. Enhance Personnel Training and Development to deploy trained personnel to safely and efficiently perform duties.

- A. Conduct ongoing positional gap analysis of training needs.
 - 1. Divisions, Regions and Work Units will coordinate training needs with State Training Officer.
- B. Provide up-to-date training opportunities for all employees.
- C. Ensure training meets external requirements to provide maximum effectiveness for employees and other natural resource stakeholders.
 - 1. Divisions will coordinate training opportunities with external partners and communicate to regions and State Training Officer.
 - 2. Divisions will ensure training and certification of training meets any required external requirements.

II. Foster a culture of safety

- A. Apply statewide safety program to assure a safe working environment which allows input from all Commission employees.
- B. State Safety Officer, Divisions, Regions and Work Unit safety groups operate to emphasize safety.
 - 1. Develop a statewide reporting system to effectively communicate changes, alerts, identify training needs and provide timely accident analysis to prevent future accidents.
 - 2. Revise statewide safety manual as needed.

III. Maximize efficient use of manpower and equipment.

- A. Divisions, Regions and Work Units analyze information to maximize use of manpower, equipment and facilities.
- B. Utilize annual productivity analysis to ensure maximum efficiency.

1. Ensure consistency of accomplishment reporting.
 2. Identify opportunities for operational improvement.
- C. Conduct annual assessment of need, value, replacement and/or retention of all assets.

IV. Protect against Wildfires, Insects and Diseases, and Timber Theft

- A. Deploy trained personnel to safely and efficiently detect and suppress wildfires.
1. Basic Firefighter Training
 2. Basic Firefighting Equipment Operation Training
 3. Incident Command System (ICS) Training
- B. Decrease average age of firefighting equipment to minimize downtime
1. Establish a realistic replacement schedule.
 2. Seek opportunities to secure equipment through grants and/or lease program.
 3. Utilize FEPP and ability to purchase used equipment to upgrade fleet.
- C. Reduce communication system downtime.
1. Complete consolidation of AFC Dispatch Center.
 2. Complete narrow banding project for both AFC and VFD radios.
 3. Establish a realistic replacement schedule.
 - i. Seek opportunities to secure equipment through grants.
 - ii. Secure contracts with vendors for repairs.
- D. Detect, report and assist in the suppression of infestations of harmful insects and diseases.
1. Achieve 100% notification of SPB infestations to affected landowners.

2. Provide direct landowner services in suppression efforts.
 - i. Seek opportunities to off-set suppression costs through grants and/or cost share programs.
 3. Develop partners to assist in detection.
 4. Map infestations that can be shared with all landowners.
- E. Focus Commission's law enforcement role in reducing overall number of wildfires and timber theft cases.
1. Develop close working relationships with other law enforcement agencies to reduce the number of arson, timber theft and equipment theft cases.
 2. Utilize "Blaze" bloodhound to aid in arson cases.
 3. Utilize incidental investigations of permitted and non-permitted burns to educate the public about wildfires and proper burning.
 4. Ensure professional development through training.
 - i. Seek opportunities to secure training through grants.
 5. Improve law enforcement reporting systems.
 - i. Implement Ultra System for Incident Offense reports and arrests.
 - ii. Develop web-based capability for reporting unlawful burning notices.
- F. Respond to disasters with the appropriate resources to assist with relief, recovery and rehabilitation efforts in the affected area.
1. Pre-identify and train strike teams/task forces and incident command teams for immediate response to disasters.
 - i. Capitalize on non-emergency ICS training opportunities.
 2. Increased interagency involvement with all-hazard disaster planning and preparedness.
 3. Seek opportunities to secure training for AFC personnel and VFDs through grants.

V. Sustain Healthy and Productive Forests

A. Increase forested acres sustainably managed on public and private lands.

1. Implement GIS/ARC View Information System to establish baseline forest resource data and to monitor progress.
 - i. Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment
 - ii. Southern Forestland Assessment
 - iii. Stewardship Management Plans
 - iv. Stand Management Recommendations
 - v. Insect and disease monitoring
 - vi. Invasive Species monitoring
 - vii. Landowner certification programs
 - viii. Urban forestry management program

B. Provide landowners with professional forestry advice specific to their geographic watershed.

1. Continue partnerships with ADEM and Clean Water Partnerships to implement watershed plans.
2. Respond to and investigate 100% of BMP complaints
3. Implement comprehensive ground monitoring of logging operations.
 - i. Provide pre-harvest recommendations to minimize potential problems.
4. Identify and assist underserved landowners.
 - i. Identify and work with partners to leverage success of meeting limited resource and minority landowner needs.
5. Assist landowners in the suppression of harmful agents.
 - i. Utilize statewide assessment and regular monitoring of invasive species locations.

- ii. Identify, assess and monitor native forest pests.
- C. Provide landowners with technical and financial assistance related to federal and state cost share programs.
 - 1. Assist local and federal entities to provide cost share assistance.
 - i. Implement MOU between Alabama Forestry Commission, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Soil & Water Conservation Districts and the Alabama Association of Conservation Districts.
 - ii. Implement MOU between Alabama Forestry Commission and Alabama Association of Regional Councils.
 - 2. Provide stand management recommendations that help landowners qualify for cost share assistance.
- D. Complete Statewide Assessment and Response.
 - 1. Analyze public input identifying conditions, trends, and threats to Alabama's natural resources. Develop agency wide natural resource strategies addressing identified conditions, trends and threats.
 - i. Provide a rough draft document for review by stakeholders.
 - ii. Provide a second draft after obtaining input from stakeholders for further review and/or comment.
 - 2. Submit final Statewide Assessment and Response Plan to the Secretary of Agriculture.
- E. Increase landowner participation in programs that certify managed forest properties.
 - 1. Streamline agency personnel's participation in certification process.
 - 2. Certify all eligible Forestry Commission personnel as Tree Farm Inspectors.
 - 3. Ensure all personnel are up-to-date on Tree Farm, Stewardship, and Treasure Forest programs rules and procedures.
- F. Maximize forest management and productivity of all state lands.

VI. Educate Landowners and Public about Proper Forest Management and Protection

- A. Provide educational programs and publications about fire prevention and environmental stewardship.
 - 1. Promote sustainable forestry in urban and Wildland Urban Interface areas.
 - i. Work with partners in their educational efforts with Firewise Prevention and Green Infrastructure Planning Programs.
 - ii. Continue identifying and developing working relationships and other opportunities with community and city planners to promote Green Infrastructure.
 - 2. Train and equip our personnel to take leadership role in making the public aware of the threat of non-native invasive plants.
- B. Work with all landowner groups, organizations and educational institutions in their natural resource educational efforts.
 - 1. Work with groups/agencies to reach a larger audience.
 - i. Work with other resource groups and agencies to assist landowners interested in certification and conservation easements.
 - 2. Work with groups, agencies and universities to develop demonstration areas highlighting value added opportunities.
 - 3. Continue providing leadership to the Outreach Council.
- C. Continue improving the Forestry Commission's web page to provide timely and useable information.
 - 1. Ensure links to other groups and agencies are beneficial to landowners.
- D. Continue training personnel in providing professional presentations.
 - 1. Continue statewide forest management training.
 - i. Introduction to Forest Management.
 - ii. Basic to advanced forest management.
- E. Utilize statewide database of landowners and Statewide Assessment Response Plan to refine/improve service provided to landowners.

1. Better identifying landowner needs and geographic areas to focus landowner assistance.
- F. Implement a statewide landowner survey to determine landowner needs.
1. Identify value added opportunities for landowners and economic development for Alabama.
 - i. Develop closer working relationship with agencies and groups to identify and develop emerging markets to provide small landowners with value added opportunities.
 - a. Carbon sequestration
 - b. Woody biomass fuels
 - c. Ecosystem Services
 - d. Green Infrastructure
 - ii. Work with groups, agencies and universities to reach a larger audience to develop demonstration areas highlighting value added opportunities with emerging markets.
- G. Forest resource information provided to potential companies seeking to relocate or establish business in Alabama.
1. Collect timber and other forest resource information by conducting the FIA survey.
 2. Collect timber product output information from primary forest industries.
 3. Provide timely analysis and reports to all stakeholders.
- H. Continue Leadership role in making the public aware of the threat of non-native invasive plants.
1. Stay actively involved in public awareness campaigns.
 2. Develop closer working relationship with agencies and groups to identify threats and develop proactive approaches to control/eradicate.

Critical Issues

- 1) Adequately trained personnel
- 2) Age of firefighting equipment
- 3) Forest fragmentation and changing demographics
- 4) Funding for programs
- 5) Urban growth and land development
- 6) Uncertainty of economic downturn on State General Funds
- 7) Ecosystem Services
- 8) Emerging Markets