



Annual Report | 2019

October 1, 2018 - September 30, 2019

Protect | Manage | Educate





Kay Ivey
Governor of Alabama



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John Goff

Regional Foresters

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Northeast.....Jason Dockery
Southwest.....Benji Elmore
Southeast.....Andy Guy

The Alabama Forestry Commission is a state agency governed by a seven-member Board of Commissioners. Each commissioner, appointed by the Governor of Alabama, serves a five-year term.

Our Mission:

The Alabama Forestry Commission serves Alabama by protecting Alabama's natural resources, helping to manage for long-term sustainability of Alabama's forest resources using professionally-applied stewardship principles, and educating the public about Alabama's natural resources and the benefits they contribute to society.

The Honorable Governor Ivey:

You may notice the new format for our annual report. We've updated it, shortened it, and made it easier to review. The same great information is included, but you should find it a quicker, more concise read! I hope you enjoy learning about what the Alabama Forestry Commission did this year.

Two things come to mind this year that demonstrate the commitment of our employees to the citizens of Alabama. The first is our involvement helping the people of Lee County clean up in the aftermath of the devastating tornadoes in March of 2019. As you know, our Incident Command Team jumped into action when the EMA called us to assist. Sixteen of our people ended up spending almost two weeks at Smiths Station. We worked with Mayor Copeland to help him and the city begin the recovery process by organizing and coordinating thousands of volunteers. I am proud of the men and women who served on that team to get things done – and equally as important, the rest of our staff who picked up the slack at home while the team members were away.

On the management side of our house, I am excited to tell you we have been expanding our role in economic development for the forest products industry. We have created an online tool that is now available to economic developers and others which highlights the existing forest products industry on a county level. This database will be beneficial to industry recruiters looking to bring forest products companies to Alabama. Additionally, our Forest Inventory Analysis crews were the first in the nation to complete the 2019 forest inventory survey. This accomplishment enabled some of our people to go to Kentucky to assist with their inventory work. The State of Kentucky paid us for this service, so it helped reduce some of our overhead costs and provided additional training for our employees that participated.

As always, our thanks go to you, Governor Ivey, and members of the Alabama Legislature for your strong support. We could not do our job without your help.



*Rick Oates,
State Forester*

Sincerely,
Rick Oates,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Oates". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.



Governor Kay Ivey addressing the AFC Leadership at Cheaha State Park.



FOREST PROTECTION

Part of the mission of the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) is to guard our forests from harm. We protect the natural resources, homes, and citizens from wildfire; we coordinate the response to natural disasters and emergencies; we work to eradicate forest pests, insects, and invasive species which harm our forests. The AFC is the leader in promoting prescribed burning across the state as the best tool to protect our forests. The agency's *Protection* mission is met through the following programs:

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROGRAM

- Alabama Forestry Commission wildland firefighters suppressed 1,924 wildfires that burned 17,545 acres. The average fire size was 14 acres.
- 22 homes were destroyed or damaged by these fires, while VFD/AFC personnel saved 707 homes.
- 483 structures other than homes were destroyed or damaged, while VFD/AFC personnel saved 471 structures other than homes.
- 83 vehicles were destroyed or damaged, while VFD/AFC personnel saved 627 vehicles.
- 1,622 haybales were destroyed or damaged, while VFD/AFC personnel saved 1,260 haybales.
- As the fiscal year neared its end, an active fire season ignited in September due to a prolonged drought that began during the summer. The AFC responded to a record 471 wildfires, which burned 6,108 acres between September 1 and September 30, 2019.
- Under the Southeastern Fire Compact, the AFC sent seven wildland firefighters to Texas to assist in wildfire suppression. This mission took 1,489 AFC man hours to complete, providing our personnel with unique training and experience. The AFC received financial reimbursement for our assistance.

COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT PROGRAM

- Provided and maintained a statewide (VHF) radio communications system for AFC personnel for routine communications, fire prevention, and wildfire suppression operations. As a major part of the agency's safety structure, this includes approximately 1,000 radios – portable handheld units for each wildland firefighter and mobile units in every AFC truck, dozer, and transport.
- Additionally, provided and maintained county-wide (UHF) radio communications system for 449 VFDs in 38 of Alabama's 67 counties.
- Continues to design, support, and implement system enhancements to both VHF and UHF radio communications infrastructure, which consists of 212 repeaters (tower sites) across Alabama, more than any other state agency.
- Outfitted 14 Ford F250s with emergency lights, radios, brush guards, and pump units.
- Outfitted four dozers with radios for fire suppression.
- Completed the planning and implementation of a new Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone system at both the state office and Montgomery Dispatch Center.
- Completed the installation of the data network at North East Regional office for VoIP phones and dispatch console. This satellite dispatch center is scheduled to open in FY20.

HAZARD MITIGATION PROGRAM

- AFC personnel conducted prescribed burning on 35,059 acres within Alabama.
- The AFC issued 12,012 permits for prescribed burning on 894,890 acres across the state.
- The agency developed a new web-based Prescribed Burn Planning Tool to assist in preparing burn plans more effectively and to add additional safety/review measures to reduce mishaps.

VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

- A strong partnership between Volunteer Fire Departments (VFDs) and AFC personnel is key to our fire suppression efforts. This assistance includes pursuing funding opportunities available to VFDs, as well as providing training and equipment to these departments.
- The 13-member Rural Community Fire Protection (RCFP) Steering Committee met three times during Fiscal Year 2019. The purpose of this committee is to make recommendations to the State Forester regarding how to improve the rural community fire program and solve immediate problems including parts exchange, training, and financial assistance through federal grants.
- Transferred \$1,084,814.24 of state funds appropriated by the Alabama Legislature to VFDs. Checks were issued in July/August 2019 to 976 qualifying volunteer fire departments, in the amount of \$1,111.49 per department.
- Transferred \$92,117.74 of state funds in AFC's budget allotment for reimbursement to 26 VFDs for wildland fire suppression equipment.
- Maintained a list of volunteer fire department members who are eligible for "Firefighter" license plates for their personal vehicles and made this list available to all vehicle-licensing agencies throughout Alabama as mandated by state law.
- AFC regional and county personnel attended over 500 volunteer fire department meetings and functions across the state to strengthen relationships between the two groups and share information.
- Agency personnel continue to be closely associated with and supportive of VFDs throughout Alabama. Some examples of these relationships include AFC firefighters being active members of VFDs, as well as serving as officers in both VFDs and volunteer fire associations.

FEDERAL EXCESS PERSONAL PROPERTY PROGRAM (FEPP)

- Excess Federal Property, valued at \$170,431, was obtained through the Department of Defense (DoD) for fire suppression. Six trips were taken to military installations in order to retrieve this equipment, which was then transferred to VFD/AFC stations. Items included a tanker, brush truck, three other vehicles, and 66 other pieces of equipment, such as light towers and generators.
- Through the Alabama Department of Economic Development Agency (ADECA) auctions, 195 pieces of obsolete AFC equipment and vehicles were sold for \$486,000.
- The AFC disposed of 75 excess vehicles through the Government Services Administration (GSA), previously used by VFDs and AFC personnel across the state.



FOREST HEALTH PROGRAM

- Easiest to spot from the air, forest insect and disease outbreaks were monitored by conducting aerial surveys from June through September 2019. AFC surveys were conducted in 31 of Alabama's 67 counties, as well as all National Forest Ranger Districts under contract agreements.
- Several southern pine beetle (SPB) and pine engraver beetle spots were detected. Pines damaged by Hurricane Michael started becoming susceptible to pine engraver beetles.
- AFC measured timber losses from October's Hurricane Michael to affect 42,357 forested acres in Houston County with an estimated 1,011,819 tons of damaged timber valued at \$19,916,759.
- The Commission assessed 5,888 forested acres affected by the March tornadoes in Macon, Lee, and Barbour counties, with 149,130 tons of timber destroyed valued at \$3,369,071.
- For the second year, Alabama participated in the USDA Forest Service project of monitoring the spread of laurel wilt disease in sassafras. This invasive disease continued its natural spread into surrounding areas of confirmed counties. Laboratory results confirmed that a symptomatic sassafras in Chilton County was infected with laurel wilt disease, bringing the total to 12 confirmed counties for this disease in the state.
- The AFC, Soil & Water Conservation District, and Forest Service collaborated to initiate a coordinated cogongrass control project in Covington County. There were 25 contracts approved into the incentive program for treatment. The Alabama Forestry Commission sprayed a total of 177 spots that encompassed 26.35 acres. Plans were made for expanding this project to additional counties within the Cogongrass Partnership Boundary. A cogongrass working group was created with additional members to collaborate efforts for controlling cogongrass.



FOREST MANAGEMENT

With proper forest management, Alabama's 23 million acres of forests will continue to provide wildlife habitat, clean air and water, recreational opportunities, and aesthetic beauty now and into the future. These same forests also serve as working forests that support a robust forest industry striving to meet public demand. The forest products derived from our state's forests remain renewable as demonstrated through the ongoing cycle of harvest, product utilization, and reforestation.

The Alabama Forestry Commission assists stakeholders with managing the forests in ways that are beneficial today, tomorrow, and for years to come. The agency oversees programs to help landowners manage their forests sustainably and assists other state and federal agencies with managing their forest lands. The agency's *Management* mission is met through the following programs:

LANDOWNER ASSISTANCE AND COST-SHARE PROGRAM

- Coordinated agency efforts to serve as technical service providers for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). This program removes environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and pays landowners to plant trees that will improve environmental health and quality of that land. Alabama Forestry Commission personnel accomplished the following:
 - Prepared 219 stand management recommendations/stand management plans for a total of 8,648 acres for general continuous CRP practices.
 - Conducted 271 CRP compliance checks on a total of 9,438 acres.
- Coordinated agency efforts to serve as technical service providers for the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) administered by the FSA. This program provides funding for restoration of farmland and timberland damaged by natural disasters. AFC personnel assisted in the following areas:
 - EFRP funding was requested by FSA to assist landowners in seven counties: Houston, Macon, Henry, Blount, Butler, Choctaw, and Marengo.
 - Prepared 391 EFRP stand management recommendations for 24,272 acres. Following Hurricane Michael, 352 stand management recommendations for 21,881 acres were written in Houston County.
- Entered into a Contributory Agreement with NRCS and coordinated agency efforts to serve as technical service providers for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) administered by NRCS. This program helps agricultural producers conserve natural resources. Commission personnel assisted in the following areas:
 - Prepared 254 stand management recommendations/plans for 15,687 acres.
 - Conducted 43 compliance checks on a total of 3,573 acres.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING PROGRAM

- AFC's Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA) program was the first in the nation to complete the 2019 Survey and have online data available to users, providing critical timber standing inventory information to industry planners, academia, and policy makers.
- An online directory of both Primary and Secondary forest product companies was produced and provided in map and listing formats to the public. The hundreds of secondary mill contacts had not been updated by the AFC since 2009.
- The Commission formed a partnership with Kentucky to assist that state with catching up on their FIA plot inventory program. Our foresters gained job enrichment from the opportunity and have subsequently been invited to assist on a Hurricane Michael inventory remeasurement project to be completed in 2020. AFC was reimbursed for this assistance.
- AFC partnered with the Economic Development Association of Alabama's Rural Development Committee, which is working on a pilot program to better serve groupings of rural counties that may lack in-house resources. Our work allows for potential forest product projects to remain a focus of the group.



STATE LANDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

- Conducted two timber sales at Geneva State Forest and three timber sales at Choccolocco State Forest generating \$569,371 in income for the agency.
- Administered a select cut timber sale for the Alabama Department of Mental Health (DMH) that brought in a commission of \$7,567. AFC manages 4,155 acres of DMH forestland under a Memorandum of Agreement.
- Reforestation activities conducted include planting of pine seedlings on six cutover AFC fire tower sites totaling 83 acres, planting and release spraying of 39 acres of cutover at the old Thorsby Seed Orchard, planting 86 acres of cutover in Tuscaloosa County on Mental Health land, and site prep spraying of 105 acres of cutover at Choccolocco State Forest.
- The Commission entered into a Good Neighbor Authority agreement with the USDA Forest Service (USFS) in which AFC provides timber sale assistance on selected USFS lands. The first of these sales was prepared in FY19 with the timber to be sold in November 2019.
- Entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) to provide direct landowner services on lands controlled by the ADCNR. The Commission assisted with direct landowner services at the following ADCNR locations: Gulf State Park in Baldwin County, Lakepoint State Park in Barbour County, and Uchee Creek Special Opportunity Hunting Area in Russell County. These activities generated \$27,069 in additional revenue for the AFC.

FORESTRY BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMP) PROGRAM

- The Commission continued to investigate and mitigate BMP water quality complaints through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Through these agreements, the AFC provides technical assistance for potential water quality violation complaints resulting from silvicultural activities.
- The agency investigated 41 complaints alleged to be a result of silvicultural activity. These complaints were resolved through education and remedial efforts and/or referred to other entities as appropriate for handling.
- The AFC also works with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative's (SFI) State Implementation Committee (SIC) comprised of forest industry representatives who also assist in resolving BMP complaints.
- The Commission continued to track agency internal BMP compliance efforts by monitoring the work completed on 75 fire lanes installed by AFC personnel on private lands. These internal fire lane audits are undertaken to ensure that AFC personnel implement BMPs to prevent water quality problems.
- The agency also monitored an additional 15 harvest sites on private lands at the request of the landowners to ensure compliance.
- Following a framework developed cooperatively among the 13 southeastern states, the AFC monitored 256 randomly selected sites on closed-out logging jobs to determine the extent of forestry BMP implementation, with the following observed BMP implementation rates:

Best Management Practice Category	Sites	Implementation Rate
Streamside Management Zones	197	98.3%
Stream Crossings	83	97.6%
Forest Roads	248	97.5%
Harvesting	197	98.7%
Mechanical Site Preparations	44	100%
Fire Lane Stabilizations	81	98.7%
Forest Chemical Applications	107	100%
Overall BMP Implementation:		98.2%



STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

- Prepared Stewardship Management Plans, Stand Management Recommendations (SMRs), and stand management plans to provide professional assistance to landowners across the state.
- Recognized forest landowners for their accomplishments in managing their property for multiple-uses and long-term sustainability by certifying them under three statewide certification programs.
- Implemented a TREASURE database update of landowner certifications in order to streamline the process and maintain accurate reporting for the future.
- Created a new nomination form with the TREASURE Forest Committee to encourage greater participation in the nomination process.
- Implemented a streamlined method of mapping stewardship management plans to report to the Forest Service.
- Referred landowners to forestry consultants for further assistance.
- Number of landowners assisted, and impact is shown in the table below.



Program	Landowners Assisted	Impact
Stewardship Management Plans	223	27,237 acres
Stand Management Plans	75	3,375 acres
Stand Management Recommendations (SMRs)	2,033	220,360 acres
Stewardship Certifications	79	15,943 acres
Tree Farm Certifications	74	24,482 acres
TREASURE Forest Certifications	18	5,429 acres
Forestry Consultant Referrals	172	N/A

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM

- Continued to manage all state forests and make recommendations for forest landowners to manage their property to benefit Threatened and Endangered Species habitats.
- Met with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel and other conservation agencies/organizations to gather Strategic Habitat Unit (SHU) information. The data gathered was used to create/update guidelines for incorporating SHU information into stand management recommendations for landowners.
- Inventoried gopher tortoise burrows at Geneva State Forest (GSF) and Little River State Forest. Coordinated an understory chemical herbicide application at GSF on approximately 635 acres with funding from DCNR to improve habitat for the tortoise.
- Reviewed documents, including the federal register, and participated in meetings, workshops, seminars, and other functions to ensure forestry perspectives are included in processes related to providing protection to species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
- Participated with the Southeastern Environmental Resource Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS) Steering Committee. This group is comprised of natural resources state agency personnel from across the Southeast, as well as members of the various military branches. SERPPAS functions to develop partnerships to benefit natural resources while maintaining military readiness.



URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM

- Completed a USDA Forest Service grant entitled "Protecting and Restoring Urban Tree Canopy for Stormwater Management," part of a six-state cooperative study which yielded quantitative measures of the ecological services provided by trees in various study locations. The City of Auburn was the study location in Alabama. This study provided tree location GIS layers, potential areas to plant new trees, tree protection ordinance suggestions, and a stormwater calculator. This information should be useful for encouraging further use of natural tree cover in urban communities.
- Finished flights and analysis associated with a Forest Service grant entitled "Hyperspectral Imagery for Urban Forestry Applications and Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness and Response Planning Scenarios in North Mississippi and North Alabama Urban & Community Forests." This grant will allow urban forest managers to detect, plan for, and respond to non-native invasive species concerns, particularly potential emerald ash borer invasions, in the states of Alabama and Mississippi.
- Continued to assist with Arbor Day Foundation programs by processing and awarding recognition packages to 79 Tree City USA applicants, 12 Tree Campus USA applicants, and two Tree Line USA applicants. These programs are designed to recognize cities that encourage further use of natural tree cover in urban communities.
- Served on the "Re-Tree Jacksonville" Committee and helped distribute 2,500 trees and shrubs to 723 residents of Jacksonville, Alabama, who were impacted by the March 19, 2018, tornado.
- Assessed urban forest damage from Hurricane Michael and submitted urban forest recovery estimates for hurricane supplemental funding expected to be received in FY20. Also monitored tornado damages in Wetumpka, Tuskegee, and Lee County.
- Purchased and distributed 31,600 seedlings of eight species to the public at 40 Arbor Week Events across the state.
- Assisted 200 Alabama residents with tree planting information, disease identification, and general tree questions.



EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Because education is such an important part of our mandate, almost every activity the Alabama Forestry Commission undertakes has an educational component. Therefore, a great deal of agency time is devoted to educating school children, volunteer firefighters, landowners, and industry professionals about the importance of forestry to the state. Educating landowners and the public about how to better manage natural resources helps ensure the sustainability of 23 million acres of forests in Alabama, so that this vast resource continues to provide clean water, wildlife habitat, and timber to help grow the state's economy. It also includes teaching K-12 students and scouting groups about the importance of Alabama's forests. The AFC adapts and grows its education/outreach objectives in the following ways:

YOUTH EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAM

- Across the board, AFC associates reached approximately 57,640 students as they conducted 1,237 school programs across the state.
- **Fire Prevention** - In Alabama, the AFC takes the lead in a highly recognized national wildfire prevention program, Smokey Bear. Through this program, the agency educates K-12 students about being careful with fire. North to south and all in between, AFC personnel in practically every county across the state conducted wildfire prevention programs in 2019: For example, Smokey Bear visited with approximately 800 students during one program in Tallapoosa County, approximately 250 third graders in Cherokee County, 300 kids at one school in Baldwin County, elementary students in Choctaw, Conecuh, and Montgomery counties during Fire Prevention Week, even a daycare center in Cleburne County. In Houston County, Smokey visited four schools in one day to share his message with more than 300 second graders, and a Smokey Bear poster contest was held at schools in Bullock County.
 - Also in 2019, AFC firefighters from Autauga, Calhoun, Tallapoosa, and many other counties participated in local 'National Night Out' events where people of all ages interacted with public safety and first responder personnel.
- **Forest Management** - 'Classroom in the Forest' and 'Forestry Awareness Week Now' (FAWN) are two programs AFC employees conduct which introduce students in grades 4-5 to forest management by taking them into the woods and teaching them about water quality, wildlife habitat management, invasive species, and many other topics.
 - More than 200 5th graders in Choctaw County learned from 'Classroom in the Forest,' as well as students from Cleburne and Tallapoosa counties, and many other counties across the state.
 - Just to name a few of the children benefiting from the FAWN program: Eight groups of sixth graders from three schools in Lamar County, about 400 kids from all six of Marion County 6th grade classes, and a total of 358 students from Clarke County schools.
 - In Houston County, more than 500 4th graders attended the Groundwater Festival. At the annual Water Festival in Chilton County, about 600 4th graders were educated about the water cycle and the negative impacts of pollution on water quality.
 - In Butler County, this year was the 24th Youth Camp at Mussel Creek Lodge for local rising 6th grade students to learn about their state's natural resources.
 - During Farm City Week, the Autauga Forestry & Wildlife Stewardship Council gave a presentation on the importance of our natural resources to approximately 800 Autauga County sixth graders. In Cleburne County, another 230 4th graders participated in Farm Day.
 - In Geneva County, approximately 180 students were reached during a celebration of Dirt Day, where they were given a deep understanding of soil and its importance.
 - In Jefferson County, more than 200 5th grade students representing three schools attended the Urban Forestry & Conservation Fair in Birmingham. The AFC also participated in children's activities during WeatherFest at the McWane Center.
 - Arbor Week programs were also conducted by AFC personnel at schools in Lamar and other counties.
- **Career Development** - It takes a lot of people working together to ensure Alabama's natural resources are maintained, both for the environment as well as a source of raw materials for wood-using facilities. The AFC and other agencies reach out to kids to spark their interest in forestry-related careers.
 - Examples include attending career fairs and events such as the Career Expo in Baldwin County that reached approximately 950 8th grade students representing four schools, a Career Day in Monroe County where AFC employees presented to high school students, the CATalyst program in Autauga County for junior high students, and the Annual World of Works in Tuscaloosa County where more than 6,000 8th graders from nine surrounding counties participated.

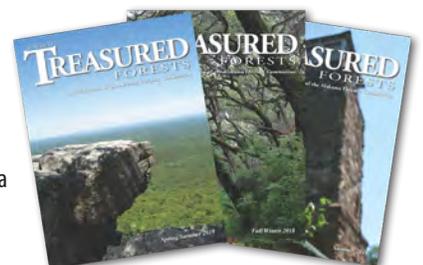
ADULT EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAM

- Through the Certified Prescribed Burn Manager (CPBM) program, the AFC certified 104 new CPBMs and recertified 102 existing CPBMs.
- Educational efforts provided to volunteer fire departments (VFDs) throughout Alabama included conducting ten 40-hour Wildland Firefighter Certification training sessions for 157 volunteer firefighters and one Chainsaw Safety class for 10 volunteer firefighters.
- Assisted Conecuh County Fire Association with hosting the Alabama Association of Volunteer Fire Departments (AAVFD) conference in Evergreen July 19-20.
- Continued participation in outreach and education efforts with forest resource and economic development talks delivered to such diverse audiences as the Alabama Landowners Conference, ALFA Commodities Conference, state leadership from the USDA Forest Service, Fayette County FAWN program for 6th grade students, and many others.
- Hosted two landowner workshops that discussed Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) financial assistance programs.
- Continued to educate forestry stakeholders about Alabama's Best Management Practices for Forestry (BMPs). In fiscal year 2019, the AFC provided BMP education at 27 events reaching 1,179 stakeholders including loggers, foresters, environmental professionals, lawmakers, politicians, students, and the public.
- Helped landowners be better stewards by hosting workshops on many topics related to managing their property.
- Worked with other agencies to conduct landowner tours across the state to demonstrate good forest management and provide ways for landowners to learn from fellow landowners.
- Presented information regarding the Endangered Species Act at several workshops and Professional Logging Manager (PLM) courses for various members of the public including timber company employees, loggers, and landowners.
- Coordinated Alabama Natural Resources Council (ANRC) Forestry Field Days (landowner tours) on Robert Loper's property in Greene County and Roy Jordan's property in Marengo County, both recent recipients of the Helene Mosley Memorial TREASURE Forest Award.
- Worked with the ANRC to organize its annual landowner conference, which was held in Prattville on October 14-16. Topics included: Threatened & Endangered Species, Forest Economic Development, Estate Planning, Deer Management, SmartMap Technology, and Usage of Prescribed Fire in Longleaf Pine.
- The table that follows shows many of the educational programs presented during the year with an estimated number of attendees reached.

Key Educational Accomplishments	Number of Events	Attendees
Fire Prevention Presentations	703	187,265
Forest Health Presentations	250	52,173
Forest Management Presentations	653	27,401
Landowner Workshops	39	1,820
Landowner Tours	37	1,781
County Forestry/Natural Resources Activities	383	3,469

MEDIA/PUBLICATIONS PROGRAM

- The Alabama Forestry Commission's public awareness campaign continues to evolve in promoting the state's forests and their benefits to forest landowners, legislators, and the general public.
- In addition to attaining positive media coverage through the traditional avenues of news releases and media advisories, the Media/Publications Team reached larger audiences through the agency's social media networks, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The fiscal year began with several news releases relating to timber damage as a result of Hurricane Michael in October, followed immediately by Lee County tornados in March. The Media Team ended the year responding to a flurry of inquiries and interview requests by television, radio, and newspaper outlets while agency firefighters battled wildfires across the state during a severe drought. The situation ultimately provided an opportunity to strengthen the AFC's media relationships and develop new ones.
- The AFC's Facebook page audience continues to steadily increase with 11,570 followers and 11,503 likes at the end of the fiscal year. Post Reach, or the number of people who saw any of our posts at least once, is estimated at 74,046, with an all-time high of 287,221 views when a Fire Alert was issued in September.
- One of the highlights of the year included the Media Team's creation of the AFC's Smokey Bear 75th Birthday Challenge video which received rave reviews on social media. In observance of Smokey's birthday in August, staff also promoted and participated in two other events at the State Archives & History and Montgomery Biscuits Baseball stadium.
- Other Media Team projects completed during the fiscal year included:
 - Design and publication of *Alabama's TREASURED Forests* for the 37th consecutive year. Published since 1982, the magazine continues to provide landowners with forest stewardship principles and management techniques/advice. Current circulation remains at approximately 13,500.
 - Production of *TREETopics*, the monthly newsletter for AFC employees which highlights activities across the state.
 - Production of two video presentations highlighting landowner achievements for the Helene Mosley Memorial TREASURE Forest Awards for the 28th consecutive year, which were unveiled during the annual awards banquet of the Alabama Natural Resources Council.
 - Modified tailgate wraps for the Commission's 14 new Ford F250 trucks depicting the AFC's missions of forest protection, forest management, and water quality.
 - Design and production of AFC's 2018 Annual Report, AFC Landowner Assistance & Services PowerPoint, Geneva State Forest SERPPAS meeting flyer, 2018 Forest Resource Report, annual Butler County Natural Resources Youth Camp brochure, several regional and county landowner tour flyers, and various other publications as needed in support of agency staff.



REGIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

AFC field offices are organized into four regions. Some of the highlights for each region are noted here:

NORTHWEST REGION

- Franklin County landowner Johnny Mack Morrow was named one of the recipients of the 2019 Helene Mosley Memorial TREASURE Forest Award.
- Winston County Forest Management Specialist Chris Wright was awarded the 2019 Tree Farm Inspector of the Year.
- Certified landowners in Stewardship, Tree Farm, and TREASURE Forest programs.
- Completed Stewardship Plans for landowners.
- Completed Forest Management stand management recommendations (SMRs) for landowners.
- Completed Forest Health SMRs for landowners.
- Continued expanding on a new service offered to landowners to disk their existing fire lanes.
- Received a new dozer for Greene County.



NORTHEAST REGION

- Flagg Mountain/Weogufka State Forest restoration and improvements are underway. Water and septic are now available. An architect is working on plans for renovations of the lookout tower and a new bath house while funding is being acquired.
- The office in Brownsboro, Madison County, was sold in preparation for a new office currently being designed for Marshall County.
- The Shelby County office was reopened and staffed.
- TREASURE Forest, Stewardship Forest, and Tree Farm landowners Stan and Suzanne Wood from Cullman County were recognized as Southeast Regional Tree Farm of the Year by the American Forest Foundation.
- Cleburne County landowner Jerry Paul Owen was named one of the recipients of the 2019 Helene Mosley Memorial TREASURE Forest Award.
- Northeast Region firefighters responded to a proportionately large number of wildfires during the drought. In September alone, there were 190 fires for 2,803 acres in the region.
- In addition to maintaining a 26-mile perimeter fuel break and maintaining the road system, the AFC installed more than 25 miles of firebreaks and executed nearly 7,000 acres of prescribed burning at Pelham Range under contract.
- Received a new dozer for Tallapoosa County.



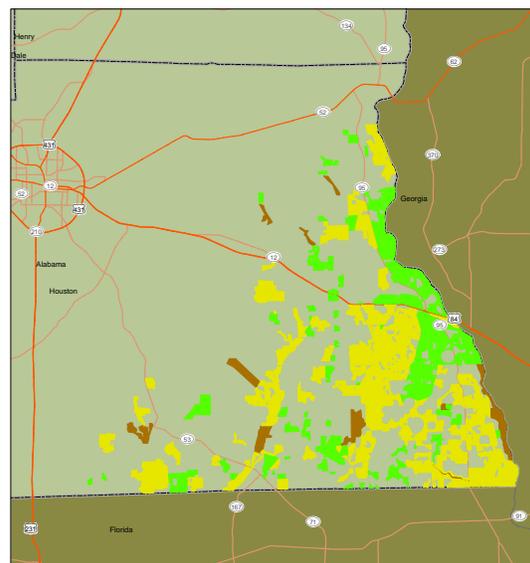
SOUTHWEST REGION

- Conducted a high-risk Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) prescribed burn at Gulf State Park in partnership with Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (ADCNR). Utilized an Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) helicopter with a water bucket to protect structures and boardwalks.
- Suppressed a 1,100-acre fire in north Baldwin County over July 4th holidays, the largest wildfire in Alabama during FY19.
- Hosted a tour for the University of Alabama Blackburn Institute leadership class at PRT nursery highlighting partnership of AFC and private industry.
- Conducted additional high-risk WUI burns at Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary and Graham Creek Nature Preserve (Foley) in March and April.
- Partnered with the Management Division to host a Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA)/Restore tour in Baldwin County to highlight areas where the AFC can work with landowners in Baldwin and Mobile counties to help improve water quality in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Assisted the Conecuh County Fire Association in July with hosting the annual AAVFD conference in Evergreen.



SOUTHEAST REGION

- Hurricane Michael made landfall on October 10, 2018 with significant timber damage in Houston County. AFC personnel conducted 368 field visits covering 23,506 acres of land to prepare stand management recommendations. They also made 85 field visits to evaluate damage to existing Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts.
- On March 3, 2019, two tornadoes devastated the southern part of Lee County. AFC Incident Command teams mobilized and were instrumental in helping with the recovery efforts. A command center was established in Smiths Station to help organize volunteer efforts for residents affected by the tornadoes. In the following months, 32 field visits were conducted for reforestation technical assistance.
- In June, AFC personnel helped set up a tour of Geneva State Forest that highlighted how we work to protect the gopher tortoise, and how we work closely with the military at Fort Rucker to support their helicopter pilot training.
- Conducted 18 prescribed burns on 2,000 acres of gopher tortoise habitat under a grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), generating \$100,000 for the AFC.
- The Pike County office was reopened in July.
- The Southeast Region AFC firefighters responded to 189 wildfires that burned over 2,500 acres of land during the drought, the largest of which was the Johnson Quarter Fire at 589 acres in Covington County.



Hurricane Michael Impact Area

Total - Approximately: 42,357.54

Date: 10/22/2018



Legend

GroundCover in Acre

- Green: Pine: 13,396.10
- Brown: Hardwood: 2,879.30
- Yellow: Mix: 26,082.14

EXECUTIVE DIVISION

Though not directly related to one of the agency's three missions, the Executive Division keeps busy implementing efficiencies in the overall agency, hiring and training new personnel, managing agency facilities and equipment, and managing the agency budget and expenses. Some of the activities of the Executive Division are presented here.

FACILITY AND EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT

- The agency, with the assistance of Department of Corrections inmates, made significant improvements to agency facilities, and either acquired for little to no cost several items of significant value, saving the state considerable money.
- Made the following improvements to the state office building complex saving approximately \$38,750: brick pressure washed and sealed, carpenter shop sealed and painted, annex sealed and painted, concrete walkways sealed and painted, re-glazed and repainted annex windows, and cleaned HVAC system duct work.
- Rebuilt bay door wall and added work shelving at Communications Center saving \$4,000.
- Retrofitted county office lighting to LED systems at 24 offices and installed HVAC systems at four county offices for a savings of \$55,000.
- Acquired the following items from other agencies at no cost with a total value of \$290,000: executive conference table and chairs, small conference table, auditorium chairs, 20 used vehicles, and 68 used computers.
- Purchased the following excess federal property at roughly 10 percent of its original value, saving approximately \$424,000: LED lighting tubes – 5 pallets; LED globe lights – 3 pallets; new air conditioning systems – 17 units; toilet paper – 5 pallets; liquid tight conduit – 3 pallets; 48 chain saws; generator; sidewall air conditioners, variable speed - 10 units; and an extend bucket lift.
- Sold property, including old trucks, transports, dozers, computers, and other items that were no longer working or needed, bringing in an additional \$219,665 in revenue.
- Purchased two Caterpillar D4 dozers used for suppressing wildfires. Also purchased 14 F250 trucks used for fire response and everyday operations working with forest landowners. Finally, a used airplane was purchased from DCNR. This plane is used for wildfire, insect, and disease detection.

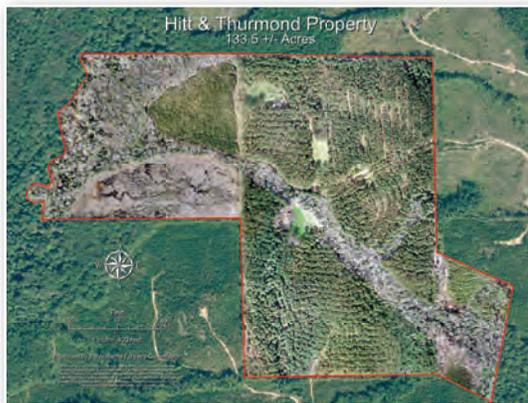


INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY/GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

- The Information Technology (IT) Section incorporated the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' (DCNR) Game and Fish Division into the AFC's dispatching CAD system allowing multi-agency radio communications from one dispatch center.
- To increase communication efficiency and reduce costs by roughly \$100,000, the IT Section and Communications Section transitioned the Dispatch Center and the state headquarters' phone systems over to a Voice Over IP (VOIP) system. The IT Section also disconnected county office phone and fax numbers, deleted county email addresses, moved most county office phones to cell phones for each employee, and converted from DSL to faster and cheaper MiFi wireless internet service.
- Thanks to an increase in budget, the IT Section was able to purchase new computers for field personnel for the first time in four years and is now on an annual computer replacement plan.
- The IT Section is developing a system that incorporates historical data with live state-wide weather station information and weather forecasts to determine the probability and estimated severity of fires in each area of the state. The IT Section also converted the prescribed burn plan creation to a web-based system.
- The GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Section continues to roll out the ArcGIS Enterprise mapping online platform. AFC pilots and spotters use the system to record forest pest-damaged spots, such as southern pine beetle infestations. This locational information is then used by field personnel to notify the landowners of outbreaks on their property. This system was also used to map the damage caused by Hurricane Michael and the Beaugard/Smiths Station tornadoes.
- In conjunction with forest economic development, the GIS Section created several maps providing an updated visual representation of primary and secondary wood-using facilities, and historical documentation of new and expanding investments in the forest industry sector.
- For years, the AFC field offices have used desktop GIS software to create stewardship plans to help landowners manage their forestland. The Commission is currently transitioning to the new online mapping system.



AERIAL IMAGING & MAPPING



- Based on the successful launch of the AFC's new service offering a full line of aerial forest imaging and mapping services to forest landowners, a new full-time position of drone coordinator was created.
- 'Taking Off' in Fiscal Year 2019, the program conducted mapping services for 20 landowners encompassing a total of 4,885 acres.
- AFC drone personnel conducted two wildfire reconnaissance flights and one pilot training.
- Also participated in a total of 17 landowner tours and/or school programs across the state to demonstrate the benefits of the new technology and how the agency is using this tool to assist county personnel and landowners.

PERSONNEL

- The Alabama Forestry Commission started Fiscal Year 2019 with 227 employees. During the year, 27 employees were hired (including nine interns and two retired state employees). The agency lost 30 employees due to resignations and retirements, ending the year with 224 employees.
- The Personnel office expanded recruiting efforts not only to college career fairs, but also to forestry clubs located at two-year and four-year colleges in Alabama and Mississippi. During the forestry club meetings, Commission employees were able to present information to students pursuing a degree in forestry about the mission of the AFC, as well as employment opportunities available within the agency. The presentations also included information about the hiring process and the benefits offered by the State of Alabama.
- Proper training is imperative for employees to effectively accomplish the goals of the agency as well as to help ensure the safety of AFC employees and the citizens of Alabama. During the fiscal year, 14,107 hours were spent on employee training to support this effort. Training varied from new employee orientation, supervisory courses, as well as the continued participation in the State Operations Staging Area (SOSA) exercise at Maxwell Air Force Base which ensures the readiness of AFC employees assisting in the event of a natural disaster. Other training topics included: Urban and Community Forestry, BMPs, FIA, prescribed burning certification, and emergency response courses.

FISCAL YEAR 2019 INCOME/EXPENSE STATEMENT

- The agency started out with a cash balance of \$3,080,328. This amount increased by \$1,285,071 from the beginning of the year to \$4,365,399 mostly as a result of receiving \$1.5 million from the Office of the Governor for the GOMESA Project to conduct environmental programs in the Delta Region around Mobile.
- Most of the expense increase was a result of initiating an annual equipment replacement plan for transports, dozers, trucks, and computers.
- The table on the following page shows all revenue and expenses by category.

Fiscal Year 2019 Income/Expense Statement

Alabama Forestry Commission
 FY 2019 Income Statement - ALL FUNDS
 ALL FUNDS

For the period ending 09/30/19, FY 2019

Revenue Source	Description	Budget	Actual	Balance
0101	Severance Tax	5,800,000.00	5,412,308.79	387,691.21
0300	Forest Products	38,000.00	32,498.12	5,501.88
0398	Fishing Permits	4,000.00	3,554.51	445.49
0532	Legal Fees		16.25	(16.25)
0538	Contract Fees-Land		4,155.00	(4,155.00)
0595	Fire Suppression	5,000.00	800.54	4,199.46
0602	Other Fines and Forfeits Not Otherwise	-	30.00	(30.00)
0645	Easements and Other Non Mineral Land	12,000.00	-	12,000.00
0648	Oil and Gas Rights Lease	1,000.00	753.42	246.58
0657	Tower Rents	34,000.00	26,150.00	7,850.00
0680	Insurance Recoveries	20,000.00	33,377.63	(13,377.63)
0683	Reimbursements Not Otherwise Classified	200,000.00	146,653.41	53,346.59
0684	Prior Year Refunds - Co-Op Capital Credits	20,000.00	6,101.81	13,898.19
0691	Contract Services	950,000.00	987,630.45	(37,630.45)
0697	Real Property	-	277,500.00	(277,500.00)
0699	Salvage Equipment/Property	430,000.00	219,665.12	210,334.88
0701	Timber Sales	275,000.00	576,938.68	(301,938.68)
0702	Park Sales, Rentals & Fees	2,500.00	-	2,500.00
0704	Nursery lease Income	80,000.00	90,155.86	(10,155.86)
0724	Non Governmental Contribution	40,000.00	58,441.77	(18,441.77)
0768	Building Rents	20,000.00	7,700.00	12,300.00
0800	General Fund Transfers In	8,037,520.00	7,995,520.00	42,000.00
0810	Interfund State Programs	-	1,501,339.83	(1,501,339.83)
0825	Interfund Federal Programs	65,000.00	101,405.85	(36,405.85)
0839	Federal Operating Grants	5,303,964.00	3,581,139.11	1,722,824.89
0859	Federal Operating Reimbursement	-	27,433.15	(27,433.15)
0869	Local Government Operating Grants	13,000.00	-	13,000.00
0870	Local Government Grants, Multipurpose	-	20,404.00	(20,404.00)
0933	County Forestry Collections (Assessments)	1,800,000.00	1,800,497.22	(497.22)
TOTAL REVENUES		23,150,984.00	22,912,170.52	238,813.48

Expenditure Object	Description	Budget	Actual	Balance
0100	Personnel Costs	11,720,926.00	10,716,098.16	1,004,827.84
0200	Employee Benefits	4,865,870.00	4,609,314.65	256,555.35
0300	In-State Travel	156,125.00	153,589.53	2,535.47
0400	Out-of-State Travel	83,764.00	50,272.61	33,491.39
0500	Repairs and Maintenance	139,569.00	139,392.79	176.21
0600	Rentals and Leases	47,820.00	36,533.53	11,286.47
0700	Utilities and Communication	637,900.00	625,342.75	12,557.25
0800	Professional Services	953,921.00	889,631.65	64,289.35
0900	Operating Supplies and Materials	805,980.00	760,109.84	45,870.16
1000	Transportation Equipment Operations	1,273,874.00	1,226,563.80	47,310.20
1100	Grants and Benefits	1,340,978.00	1,313,830.61	27,147.39
1200	Capital Outlay	-	-	-
1300	Transportation Equipment	956,789.00	948,273.73	8,515.27
1400	Other Equipment	167,468.00	158,146.29	9,321.71
1700	Depreciation Expense	-	-	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		23,150,984.00	21,627,099.94	1,523,884.06

TOTAL REVENUES - TOTAL EXPENDITURES	-	1,285,070.58	(1,285,070.58)
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CARRYFORWARD -BEGINNING CASH		3,080,328.28	
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ESTIMATED ENDING CASH (includes \$1.5 million GOMESA carry forward balance)		4,365,398.86	
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