

FORESTRY

2019 SUMMARY

State of Alaska

Department of
Natural Resources

Division of Forestry

The mission of the Division of Forestry is to proudly serve Alaskans through forest management and wildland fire protection.

FOREST RESOURCES

Budget cuts, resignations, and difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified staff have reduced the capacity to offer state timber sales statewide. However, DOF continues to complete scoping and decision documents and to offer timber sales using 29 full-time and four seasonal employees.

The Division of Forestry sold its second Good Neighbor Authority timber sale to ALCAN Timber Inc. in February. The sale combines timber from state and national forest lands on Gravina Island for a total of 16 MMBF. The sale, a combination of young growth and old growth timber, was possible because of access provided by the state financed Vallenar Bay Road.

The division completed field work for the Southeast State Forest inventory with funding provided by a USFS State & Private Forestry grant through a Challenge Cost Share Agreement. DOF and the USFS completed a multi-year project to inventory 30,000 acres in the Tongass National Forest, which supports a transition to young growth timber harvesting.



Declining activity and increased anxiety in the industry was reflected in Forest Practices notifications on public and private land as export markets weakened. For most of 2019, uncertainty related to China's tariffs depressed the market and adversely impacted the economics of hemlock and spruce. The most dramatic adjustment was in the young growth spruce market that was seeing growth prior to the end of 2018.

DOF crews completed the fourth year of the Interior Forest Inventory and Analysis Program in partnership with the USFS. Work that began in the Susitna-Copper unit in 2019 will continue through mid-2020 when crews will move to the Southwest unit.

NUMBER OF PERSONAL USE PERMITS

FY 16	911
FY 17	1070
FY 18	674
FY 19	890

TIMBER SALE REVENUE (IN THOUSAND DOLLARS)

FY 10	249.8	FY 15	1,917.0
FY 11	461.6	FY 16	212.8
FY 12	555.3	FY 17	688.5
FY 13	682.3	FY 18	477.4
FY 14	354.0	FY 19	464.3



2019 FOREST RESOURCES & PRACTICES ACT ACTIVITIES ON PRIVATE, MUNICIPAL AND TRUST LAND

NEW NOTIFICATIONS Detailed Plans of Operation

	2016	2017	2018	2019
SSE	19	19	14	24
NSE	0	1	10	13
Mat-Su/SW	0	0	1	0
Kenai-Kodiak	7	2	3	5
COASTAL	26	22	28	42
Fairbanks	2	2	1	1
Delta	0	0	0	0
Tok	0	0	0	0
Copper River	0	0	0	0
NORTHERN	2	2	1	1
TOTAL	28	24	29	43

HARVEST ACREAGE IN NEW NOTIFICATIONS

	2016	2017	2018	2019
SSE	3,341	3,758	2,479	4,376
NSE	0	0	863	961
Mat-Su/SW	0	0	1,646	0
Kenai-Kodiak	2,387	691	1,460	841
COASTAL	5,728	4,449	6,448	6,178
Fairbanks	127	79	29	29
Delta	0	0	0	0
Tok	0	0	0	0
Copper River	0	0	0	0
NORTHERN	127	79	29	29
TOTAL	5,855	4,528	6,477	6,207

TEN-YEAR RECORD OF TIMBER VOLUME SOLD (MBF) (MBF = 1,000 BOARD FEET)

	Coastal: Southeast	Coastal: Southcentral	Northern Region	State Total	# Sales Sold Statewide
FY 10	4,626	2,460	5,445	12,531	69
FY 11	12,865	3,913	7,281	24,053	71
FY 12	8,556	1,260	7,739	17,555	50
FY 13	4,976	1,918	2,662	9,556	50
FY 14	8,512	379	19,621	28,512	58
FY 15	6,171	438	14,305	20,914	39
FY 16	401	50	7,864	8,315	34
FY 17	8,196	378	2,749	11,323	38
FY 18	5,269	206	2,477	7,952	22
FY 19	13,673	152	2,165	15,990	31

WILDLAND FIRE

The Alaska Division of Forestry (DOF) provides protection from wildland fire on private, state, and municipal land (AS 41.15.010) in a safe, efficient, and cost-effective manner. The division, with a staff of 28 full-time and 190 seasonal employees, is responsible for wildland fire management on 150 million acres of land in the more densely populated areas of the state. DOF works cooperatively with local fire departments, the BLM Alaska Fire Service, U.S. Forest Service, and hundreds of seasonal workers to minimize the impacts of wildland fire on people, property, and natural resources in Alaska.



A total of 719 wildfires burned 2,589,893 acres statewide – more than half the total acres burned nationally (4,683,606) and 2.2 million acres more than Arizona, the state with the second-most acres burned. This was the second-most destructive wildfire season on record in Alaska, with 59 primary residences and 99 other structures being destroyed, most in the late-season McKinley Fire in the Willow area. Fortunately, there were no deaths or major injuries to firefighters or the public.



WILDFIRES BY CAUSE (DATA CURRENT AS OF DECEMBER 5, 2019)

	ALL	AFS	STATE	USFS
Campfire	64	2	41	21
Children	2	-	2	-
Coal Seam	4	1	3	-
Debris Burning	64	1	55	8
Equipment	33	1	30	2
Incendiary	2	-	2	-
Investigated, but Undetermined	59	-	52	7
Lightning	368	197	170	1
Miscellaneous	113	47	61	5
Railroad	-	-	-	-
Smoking	5	-	4	1
Under Investigation	2	-	1	1
Undetermined	3	-	3	-
TOTALS	719	249	424	46

10 LARGEST FIRE SEASONS ON RECORD

Year	Fires	Acres
2004	701	6,590,140
2015	768	5,111,452
1957	391	5,049,661
1939	200	5,000,000
2005	624	4,649,597
1940	130	4,500,000
1969	685	4,231,820
1941	138	3,654,774
1990	750	3,189,079
2009	516	2,934,608

FIRE ACTIVITY BY PROTECTING AGENCY

Agency	Fires	Acres
AFS	249	1,692,755
State	424	897,124
USFS	46	14

ACRES BURNED BY LAND OWNERSHIP

Landowner	Fires	Acres
Alaska Native Claims Act Lands	92	299,625
Borough	20	3,176
Bureau of Indian Affairs	10	2,215
Bureau of Land Management	63	479,317
City	10	3
Department of Defense	46	51,332
National Park Service	24	76,872
Other Federal Lands	2	553
Private	142	2,752
State	216	879,287
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	79	783,204
U.S. Forest Service	15	11,557

* Number of fires reflects land ownership at origin. These are acre totals burned by landowner. Data compiled from submitted fire perimeters.

COMMUNITY & LANDOWNER ASSISTANCE

The Forest Stewardship, Forest Health, and Community Forestry programs provide technical and financial assistance to diverse landowners and managers through cost-effective, non-regulatory partnerships. The programs are funded 100% by grants, mainly from the U.S. Forest Service, and infuse over \$1 million in federal funds annually into the state economy. Local governments and organizations contribute matching funds. The economic impact of this assistance to Alaska Native corporations, other private forest landowners, businesses, and local governments is substantial.

Forest Stewardship Program

- Five Alaska Native corporations completed forest stewardship plans on over 216,000 acres; two received grants to begin plans on a total of 86,000 acres. Four other Native corporations are working on plans.
- 71 landowners completed forest stewardship plans on over 1,600 acres, and 110 used cost-share grants to complete wildfire fuel reduction projects. Landowner goals included wildfire defensible space, reforestation, and mitigating spruce beetle damage.
- Stewardship foresters provided Firewise and stewardship information to 200 homeowners.

Forest Health Program

- DOF and the U.S. Forest Service mapped 1.14 million acres of forest damage on the 24.42 million acres surveyed. Areas of damage were nearly equal to that observed in 2018 but on three million fewer acres surveyed.
- Observed spruce beetle activity on 139,500 acres, a decrease of 76.4% since 2018, although the outbreak in southcentral Alaska continued to expand.
- Observed an increase in damage from defoliating insects from 506,600 acres in 2018 to 839,000. Most of the damage was caused by the hemlock sawfly, birch leafminer, and aspen leafminer.
- Staff provided forest health information and/or assistance to 800 individuals, a number that continues to grow, due mainly to the spruce beetle outbreak.
- Continued two research projects looking at ways to protect trees from spruce beetles.

Community Forestry Program

- Provided technical assistance and information to local governments, businesses, agencies, and homeowners.
- Contributed to the Anchorage Climate Action Plan, adopted by the Assembly in May.
- Continued restoration of Campbell Creek in Anchorage and the Chena River Watershed in Fairbanks. The goals of the multi-year projects, funded by the USFS and other partners, include decreasing runoff and improving habitat and water quality.
- Awarded seven grants to establish community orchards.
- Received a Forest Service grant to remove invasive tree species that are impacting native habitats.