

FOREST

2020 SUMMARY

State of Alaska

Department of
Natural Resources

Division of Forestry

FOREST RESOURCES

Difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified staff has reduced the capacity to offer state timber sales in SE Alaska. Most timber harvest activity on state land in the southern SE was on small sales. There were no operations on the Vallenar Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) timber sale on Gravina Island. 10,000 MBF were harvested on the Kosciuszko GNA Timber Sale on USFS lands and a Best Interest Finding and Forest Land Use Plan were completed on the 4,500 MBF Parlay Timber Sale. Proposals were solicited for the 15,000 MBF Bay View sale in Thorne Bay on State Forest and Settlement Classified land. Timber harvest remained active in the Interior. Aurora Energy Solutions, LLC started a kiln-dried firewood operation in Fairbanks.

The DOF completed field work for the Southeast State Forest inventory with funding from a USFS grant through a Challenge Cost Share Agreement. This inventory data and imagery were used to establish the annual allowable harvest at 9,147 MBF. The DOF and USFS completed an inventory of 30,000 acres in the Tongass National Forest, which will be used in a plan to transition to young growth timber harvesting.

Forest Practices notifications declined in the first half of the fiscal year but rose in the second half. Uncertainty related to tariffs by China and the market response depressed the market, but agreements to restrain tariffs and shifting supply chains brought some relief late in the year. White wood slowly recovered to allow purchasers to operate in old and young growth timber. Sales with red cedar remain in relatively high demand.

DOF staff completed the fifth year of the Interior Forest Inventory and Analysis Program in partnership with the USFS. The Susitna-Copper unit was completed, and work began in the Southwest unit.

The DOF entered a Sikes Act agreement with the US Army Corps of Engineers on Fort Wainwright. The agreement allows the DOF to help conserve and rehabilitate natural resources on military bases. The DOF began a forest inventory on the base in 2020.

The DOF entered two GNA agreements with the Bureau of Land Management, one to help develop a fuel break near Delta Junction, and one to develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans in the Copper River Valley.

FIREWOOD PERMITS ISSUED & CORDS SOLD

	Permits	Cords
FY 16	904	3938
FY 17	780	3336
FY 18	740	3093
FY 19	619	2296
FY 20	574	2279

TIMBER SALE REVENUE (IN THOUSAND DOLLARS)

FY11	461.6
FY12	555.3
FY13	682.3
FY14	354.0
FY15	1,917.0
FY 16	212.8
FY 17	688.5
FY 18	477.4
FY 19	464.3
FY 20	91.7

TIMBER VOLUME SOLD – MBF (MBF = 1,000 BOARD FEET)

	Coastal Southeast	Coastal Southcentral	Northern Region	State Total	Sales Sold Statewide
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
FY 20	262	250	1,809	2,321	31

2020 FOREST RESOURCES & PRACTICES ACT ACTIVITIES ON PRIVATE, MUNICIPAL AND TRUST LAND

NEW NOTIFICATIONS Detailed Plans of Operation

	2017	2018	2019	2020
SSE	19	14	24	33
NSE	1	10	13	5
Mat-Su/SW	0	1	0	0
Kenai-Kodiak	2	3	5	3
COASTAL	22	28	42	41
Fairbanks	2	1	1	1
Delta	0	0	0	0
Tok	0	0	0	0
Copper River	0	0	0	0
NORTHERN	2	1	1	1
TOTAL	24	29	43	42

HARVEST ACREAGE IN NEW NOTIFICATIONS

	2017	2018	2019	2020
SSE	3,758	2,479	4,376	7,843
NSE	0	863	961	1,242
Mat-Su/SW	0	1,646	0	0
Kenai-Kodiak	691	1,460	841	1,085
COASTAL	4,449	6,448	6,178	10,170
Fairbanks	79	29	29	45
Delta	0	0	0	0
Tok	0	0	0	0
Copper River	0	0	0	0
NORTHERN	79	29	29	45
TOTAL	4,528	6,477	6,207	10,215

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

WILDLAND FIRE

Following one of its busiest and most-destructive fire seasons in 2019, the Division of Forestry experienced a much tamer fire season in 2020. A total of 347 fires burned an estimated 181,253 acres statewide, the lowest number of acres burned in a season since 2008. The slow season was due largely to heavy spring snow and cool temperatures in the Interior that delayed the start of the season, and heavy rain from mid-June through August that kept ignitions and spread low.

There were 179 human-caused fires and 168 lightning-caused fires. Lightning-caused fires burned 180,945 acres. Only 308 acres were burned by human-caused fires. No homes were destroyed and there were no serious injuries suffered by firefighters or the public in 2020.

In DOF protection areas 191 fires burned 135,926 acres. Most of the acreage (99%) was in the Southwest (McGrath) Area, with 29 fires burning about 135,589 acres. Most of those fires were in remote areas and were not suppressed as they did not pose a threat. The largest fire was a lightning-caused 54,099-acre fire in the SW Area, which accounted for more than one-quarter of the total acreage burned statewide.



ACRES BURNED BY LAND OWNERSHIP		
Landowner	Fires	Acres
Alaska Native Claims Act Lands	36	6,741
Borough	6	0.6
Bureau of Indian Affairs	4	116.6
Bureau of Land Management	32	4,871.3
City	6	13.6
Department of Defense	6	1,288.5
National Park Service	11	5,587.5
Other Federal Lands	0	0
Private	98	128.8
State	80	32,211.1
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	63	130,279.3
U.S. Forest Service	5	15

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

FIRE ACTIVITY BY PROTECTING AGENCY		
Agency	Fires	Acres
AFS	140	45,299.9
State	191	135,926.6
USFS	16	26.8
TOTAL	347	181,253.3

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



CAUSE	ALL		STATE		AFS		USFS	
	FIRES	ACRES	FIRES	ACRES	FIRES	ACRES	FIRES	ACRES
Campfire	24	7.2	20	3.6	3	3.5	1	0.1
Children	1	0.5	1	0.5	--	--	--	--
Debris Burning	45	87.3	43	86.9	1	0.3	1	0.1
Equipment	25	44	25	4.4	--	--	--	--
Incendiary	2	0.2	2	0.2	--	--	--	--
Lightning	168	180,945.4	37	135,658.4	131	45,287.0	--	--
Miscellaneous	44	162.4	37	153.0	5	9.1	2	0.3
Smoking	7	0.8	7	0.8	--	--	--	--
Undetermined	31	44.8	19	18.5	--	--	12	26.3

DIVISION OF FORESTRY State Forester John "Chris" Maisch (907) 451-2666
 Deputy Director Tim Dabney (907) 269-8476 | 550 W. Seventh Avenue, Suite 1450
 Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3566 | (907) 269-8463 | www.forestry.alaska.gov

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. These programs infuse over \$1 million in federal funds annually into the state economy. Local governments and organizations contribute matching funds. The economic impact of the assistance to Alaska Native corporations, other private forest landowners, businesses, and local governments is substantial. COVID-19 impacted the level of assistance staff could provide this year.

Forest Stewardship Program

- Three Alaska Native Corporations completed Forest Stewardship Plans covering over 108,000 acres. One Native corporation received a grant for a plan on 23,000 acres, and one was approved for funding for 299,000 acres in 2021.
- 29 landowners completed plans on 2,014 acres, and 112 used cost-share grants to complete wildfire fuel reduction projects. Landowner goals included wildfire defensible space, reforestation, and mitigating spruce beetle damage.
- Received a USFS grant to fund a Project Learning Tree coordinator for two years. PLT is a national program to train K-12 educators in a forestry and outdoor education curriculum.
- Provided information to 100 homeowners and held virtual presentations for Haines and Skagway.

Forest Health Program

- Aerial forest health surveys were canceled, largely due to COVID-19. Using an alternative survey strategy, DOF and the USFS mapped about 380,000 acres of damage on six million acres surveyed.
- While subsiding in some areas, the spruce beetle outbreak in SC Alaska continued to expand and investigations into ways to protect trees from spruce beetles continues.
- Assessed 27 properties, totaling about 1,100 acres, in support of the new DOF Western Bark Beetle Initiative cost-share program.
- Provided forest health information and/or assistance to over 700 individuals.

Community Forestry Program

- Hosted a Community Tree Forum in Anchorage in March, attended by 80, to discuss invasive species and the large numbers of trees killed by spruce beetles. Interest is being directed toward creating a tree board to promote preservation, care, and planting of trees.
- Using USFS funds, the CFP awarded its first three grants to remove invasive tree species impacting native habitats to the Homer Soil & Water Conservation District, Talkeetna Community Council, and SE Alaska Watershed Coalition.
- Secured funding from International Paper to donate 100 trees to participants in the virtual Alaska Run for Women.
- Volunteers donated 855 hours to community forestry projects.