

FORESTRY

2022 SUMMARY

State of Alaska

Department of
Natural Resources

Division of Forestry
and Fire Protection

FOREST RESOURCES

In Southeast Alaska, harvesting continued on the 15 million board foot (MMBF) Bayview Timber Sale and on two Good Neighbor Authority sales: the 16 MMBF mixed age joint federal and state Vallenar Sale and the 29 MMBF federal Kosciusko Sale. Also in 2022, harvesting began on the 4.8 MMBF Edna Bay Parlay Timber sale. Area staff planned and designed new timber sales on Prince of Wales Island near the communities of Whale Pass, Naukati, Thorne Bay, and along El Capitan Passage. Local small mill use of Haines State Forest timber remained strong. DOF performed maintenance projects on the forest road system to provide access for commercial operators and the public.



The Northern Region supports local value-added wood processors and commercial fuelwood processors by offering timber sales in Fairbanks, Delta, Tok, and Copper River. The saw log demand remains stable while the firewood and biomass industry in Interior Alaska has increased slightly due to fluctuations in oil prices. Biomass mills in North Pole and Tok produce wood pellets and pellet logs and distribute their products statewide.

Firewood demand remains high in Southcentral Alaska, and the Mat-Su and Kenai offices maintain forest roads and cutting areas to meet the firewood needs of Alaskans.

State field crews have successfully conducted the Interior Alaska Forest Inventory and Analysis program for seven years. In 2022, the field hubs were Sleetmute and Aniak.

DIVISION OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION

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The mission of the Division of Forestry & Fire Protection is to protect the lives and property of Alaskans from wildfire and manage Alaska's forests to provide a sustainable supply of forest resources.

FIREWOOD PERMITS ISSUED & CORDS SOLD

	Permits	Cords
FY 18	740	3,093
FY 19	619	2,296
FY 20	574	2,279
FY 21	653	2,872
FY 22	564	1,951

TIMBER SALE REVENUE (IN THOUSAND DOLLARS)

FY 13	682.3
FY 14	354.0
FY 15	1,917.0
FY 16	212.8
FY 17	688.5
FY 18	477.4
FY 19	464.3
FY 20	91.7
FY 21	265.4
FY22	1,420.0

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

	Coastal Southeast	Coastal Southcentral	Northern Region	State Total	Sales Sold Statewide
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
FY 21	39,071	150	3,124	42,345	30
FY 22	4,870	0	4,728	9,599	23

2022 FOREST RESOURCES & PRACTICES ACT ACTIVITIES ON PRIVATE, MUNICIPAL, AND TRUST LAND

NEW NOTIFICATIONS Detailed Plans of Operation

	2019	2020	2021	2022
SSE	24	33	13	12
NSE	13	5	5	1
Mat-Su/SW	0	0	2	1
Kenai-Kodiak	5	3	3	5
COASTAL	42	41	23	19
Fairbanks	1	1	1	1
Delta	0	0	0	0
Tok	0	0	0	0
Copper River	0	0	0	0
NORTHERN	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	43	42	24	20

HARVEST ACREAGE IN NEW NOTIFICATIONS

	2019	2020	2021	2022
SSE	4,376	7,843	1,860	1,095
NSE	961	1,242	683	13
Mat-Su/SW	0	0	148	131
Kenai-Kodiak	841	1,085	1,479	1,214
COASTAL	6,178	10,170	4,170	2,453
Fairbanks	29	45	38	15
Delta	0	0	0	0
Tok	0	0	0	0
Copper River	0	0	0	0
NORTHERN	29	45	38	15
TOTAL	6,207	10,215	4,208	2,468

WILDLAND FIRE & HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION

In 2022, a near record snowpack in much of Alaska quickly melted and was followed by a record drought. During a two-week period, lightning storms triggered hundreds of fires statewide. Many of the fires were in southwest and western Alaska, including the Lime Complex, with 18 fires spread over 19 million acres. A total of 356 fires under state protection burned over 1.5 million acres. The statewide total of 590 fires burned 3.1 million acres, one of the highest acreages in the last 20 years. The challenge in 2022 was that most of the acreage burned in June, as early July transitioned into what became one of the wettest summers in Alaska's recorded history.

To battle the many June fires, Alaska's fire protection agencies relied on Lower 48 and Canadian assistance. Many of the fires were in remote areas and required heavy aviation support. Alaska filled over 275 fixed wing aircraft orders, dropped 277 loads of retardant from air tankers, and filled 122 helicopter orders. Alaska imported 48 hand crews from the Lower 48 and filled crew orders with Alaska-based crews on 16 incidents. By comparison, in 2004 and 2005, similar fire seasons, Alaska used local crews over 60 times. Last year the Legislature reinstated the Fire Academy to increase Alaskan crew availability to fight fires.

DOF supported Lower 48 states as well, sending 350 firefighting personnel and air attack fixed wing aircraft to 15 states. The Alaska Incident Management Team was deployed to Oregon to manage the Cedar Creek incident, one of the largest fires in the U.S. this summer. In addition, two engine strike teams were sent to Washington and Oregon for over two months. Mutual agreements allow states and the federal government to request and share firefighting resources.

Reducing fuels and creating fire breaks have proven successful in protecting communities and resources. In 2022, DOF added two Regional Fuels Specialists and purchased four industrial chippers. The passage of House Bill 209, which allows the use of emergency firefighters outside of emergencies, helped staff hazardous fuels crews and put Alaskans to work.

DOF supported 22 fuels reduction projects and completed seven in 2022. Work included fuel breaks, burning debris, Firewise assessments, and fuel disposal sites in the Mat-Su and Denali boroughs, Kenai, Tok, and Delta, which reduces the chance of escaped debris burns. The highly effective Old Murphy Dome and Chena River Recreation Site fuel breaks were re-treated. These projects provide jobs for DOF's seasonal workers and private sector contractors. Nine new projects are planned for Fairbanks, Tok, Delta, Glennallen, Soldotna, and Anchorage in 2023.



WILDFIRES BY CAUSE		
CAUSE	FIRES	ACRES
Campfire	29	272.6
Debris Burning	99	169.9
Equipment	27	10,313.6
Firearms/Blasting	6	926.0
Fireworks	2	0.2
Incendiary/Arson	5	0.9
Natural: Lightning/Coal	280	3,101,422.8
Miscellaneous	60	97.0
Powerline	30	5.2
Smoking	5	0.6
Undetermined*	28	33.2

*Investigated but cause undetermined

FIRE ACTIVITY BY PROTECTING AGENCY		
AGENCY	FIRES	ACRES
AFS	222	1,537,952.4
State	414	1,575,418.9
USFS	31	11.2
TOTAL	667	3,114,049.5

RECORD HIGH FIRE SEASONS		
1950-2022		
YEAR	FIRES	ACRES
2004	701	6,590,140
2015	768	5,111,452
1957	391	5,049,66
2005	624	4,649,597
1969	685	4,231,820
1990	750	3,189,079
2022	562	3,107,470
2009	516	2,934,608
2019	719	2,589,893

COMMUNITY & LANDOWNER ASSISTANCE

The Forest Stewardship, Forest Health, and Community Forestry programs provide technical and financial assistance to diverse landowners and managers. The USDA Forest Service funds these programs, contributing over \$1 million annually to the state economy. They assist Alaska Native corporations, other private landowners, businesses, and local governments, which contribute matching funds.

Forest Stewardship Program

- One Alaska Native corporation completed a Stewardship Plan for 352,900 acres. Two others are working on plans for over 51,000 acres.
- Stewardship Foresters prepared plans for 24 landowners covering over 700 acres.
- 22 homeowners used federal cost-share funds to complete wildfire fuel reduction projects that included reforestation, spruce beetle mitigation, and wildfire defensible space.
- Project Learning Tree, a national program to train K-12 educators in an outdoor education and forestry curriculum, trained 130 educators, provided university credits for 45 teachers, and offered online fire education for teachers across the state.

Forest Health Program

- DOF and the USDA Forest Service mapped 900,000 acres of forest damage on the 16.3 million acres surveyed. The top three damage agents were western blackheaded budworm, hemlock mortality caused by sawfly and budworm, and spruce beetle.
- Spruce beetle activity was observed on 48,800 acres, a 75% decrease from 2021. It appears the outbreak peaked in 2018.
- DOF is partnering with universities and other agencies on research to evaluate and monitor various pests and improve practices to protect Alaska's forests.
- Provided forest health information and/or assistance to 566 individuals, a 40% increase over 2021.

Community Forestry Program

- Assisted the Anchorage Heritage Land Bank to apply for USDA Forest Service funds to create the Potter Marsh Watershed Community Forest using data from the CF Program's 2010 Anchorage Forestlands Assessment.
- Helped Anchorage Parks, BLM, the Forest Service, and Hilltop Ski Area salvage seedlings from a fire break in the Campbell Tract and replant elsewhere.
- Participated in Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation presentations to Anchorage civic groups on Complete/Green Streets and street tree opportunities.
- The Arbor Day Foundation, a corporate donor, and the Municipality of Anchorage secured funds to give away trees at the Alaska Run for Women at UAA.
- Three grantees completed projects to control invasive chokecherry trees and four new control grants were issued.