

ANNUAL
FISCAL YEAR
2024
REPORT

DIVISION OF FORESTRY



Department of
Natural Resources



FY 2024 ODNR Division of Forestry Administrative Staff

FORESTRY ADMINISTRATION

Dan Balsler – Chief
Greg Guess – Assistant Chief
David Lane – Assistant Chief
Hannah Martin – Executive Assistant
Nathan Alvarez – Business Administrator

PROGRAM MANAGERS

Stephanie Downs – Private Lands Administrator
Tom Macy – Forest Health Manager
Carrie Morrow – Urban Forestry Manager
Kelsey Bradley – Records & Grants Coordinator
Alice Glaser – Communications Manager
Heather Sheets – Project Learning Tree - Ohio Coordinator
David Parrott – Information & Education Coordinator
Aaron Kloss – Fire Prevention Manager
Jared Craig – Forest Planning Administrator

STATE FOREST DISTRICT MANAGERS

John Mueller – Northern District (Findlay)
Stephen Rist – Southeastern District (Athens)
Nate Jester – Southern District (Chillicothe)

SERVICE FORESTRY REGIONAL MANAGERS

John Kehn – Northern Region (Newbury)
Jeremy Scherf – Central Region (Cambridge)
Cameron Bushong – Southern Region (Athens)
Aaron Kash – Southwest Region (Cincinnati)

URBAN FORESTRY REGIONAL MANAGERS

Steph Miller – Western Region
Ann Bonner – Eastern Region

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Division of Forestry
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OUR MISSION:

To promote and apply management for the sustainable use and protection of Ohio's private and public forest lands.

OUR VISION:

The Ohio Division of Forestry envisions healthy, diverse forests valued for the life-sustaining benefits they provide now and forever.

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Chief's *Message*

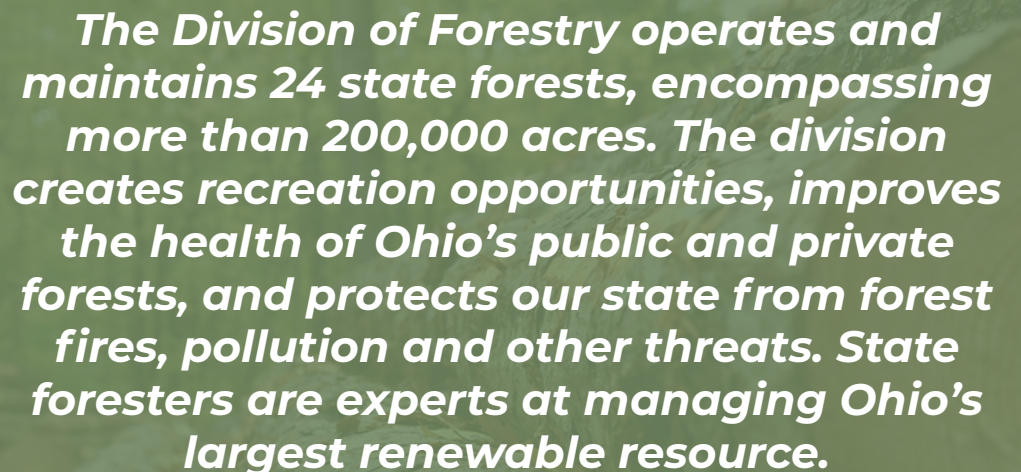
The Division of Forestry achieved significant milestones in 2024, continuing to demonstrate its commitment to sustainable forest management and community support.

This was certainly a year for celebration, and we started off with the opening of Buckeye State Tree Nursery in February 2024. We also celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources through dedicated tree plantings in all 88 of Ohio's counties. In addition, 2024 marked 80 years of fire prevention in the United States with Smokey Bear.

Aside from those highlights, the Division of Forestry had several accomplishments worth celebrating in its commitment to community support and technical assistance. Our service forestry program processed over 1,000 applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and our forest health program treated more than 4,800 trees for hemlock woolly adelgid. Our fire management program awarded more than \$549,000 in Volunteer Fire Assistance Grants, and our urban forestry program awarded more than \$5 million in grants supporting community forestry programs. All of our program areas continued to excel at supporting the Division's goal of promoting diverse forest habitats and sustainable forest products across Ohio, and I'm honored to be a part of a team that dedicates itself so fully to our mission.

I look forward to seeing what we will accomplish in 2025!

Dan Balser
Chief, ODNR Division of Forestry



The Division of Forestry operates and maintains 24 state forests, encompassing more than 200,000 acres. The division creates recreation opportunities, improves the health of Ohio's public and private forests, and protects our state from forest fires, pollution and other threats. State foresters are experts at managing Ohio's largest renewable resource.

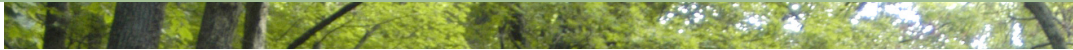


Communications

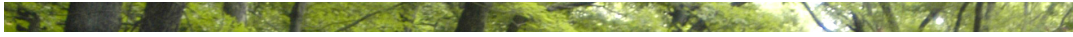
The mission for the Division Forestry's Communications program is to support all Division of Forestry programs by raising awareness of the importance of trees and forests, providing forest education tools for all age levels, publicizing Division accomplishments, and encouraging vibrant partnerships in promoting wise forest stewardship for healthy public and private forest ecosystems.

In 2024, the Communications program participated in over 400 events ranging from tree plantings to workshops for woodland owners all across the state. In addition, the Division continued to support publication of *The Ohio Woodland Journal*, and provided educators with the tools and training to bring forestry education to the classroom through Project Learning Tree - Ohio.

Celebrating 2024



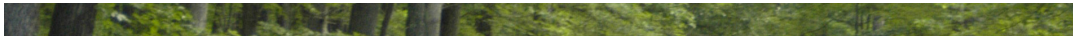
In conjunction with national efforts, the Division of Forestry celebrated Smokey Bear's 80th birthday throughout the year, including support for the 2024 Smokey Bear Reading Challenge.



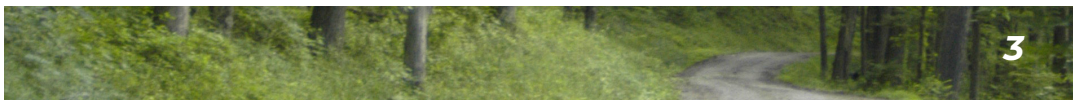
In honor of the Ohio Department of Natural Resource's 75th Anniversary, the Division of Forestry facilitated commemorative tree plantings in each of Ohio's 88 counties in 2024.

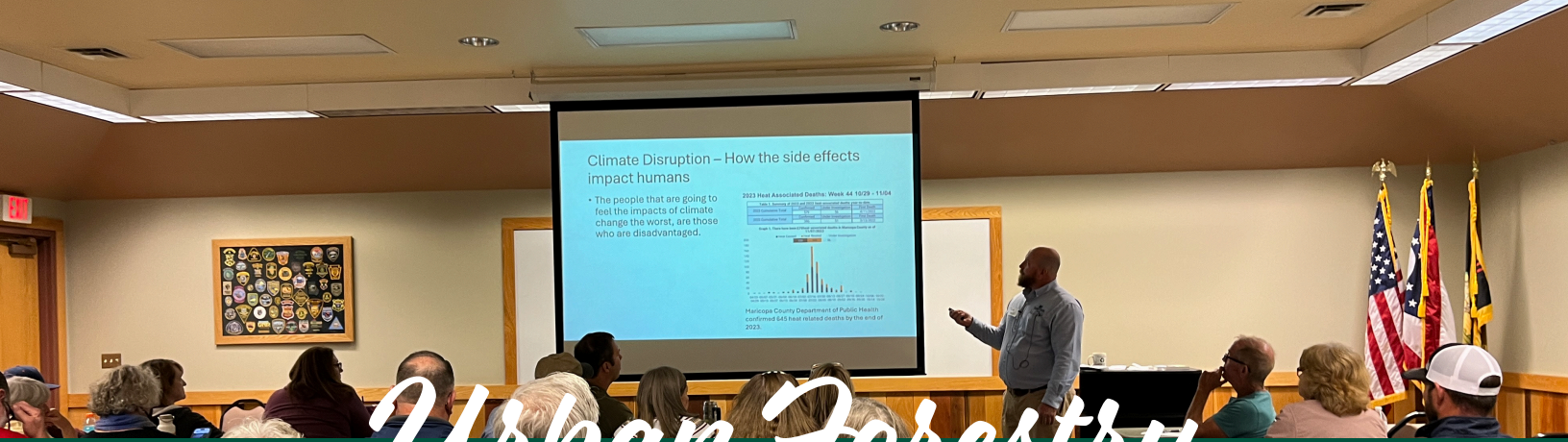


As an investment in the future of Ohio's forests, in 2024 the Division of Forestry began growing trees at Ohio's newly established Buckeye State Tree Nursery.



The Division of Forestry continued their partnership with the Girl Scouts of America, with 12 tree plantings and four Forester for a Day events completed in 2024.





Urban Forestry

The Ohio Division of Forestry's Urban Forestry program provides community officials and allied agencies with the organizational and technical assistance to effectively manage the trees and land within their communities and enhance the quality of life for all Ohioans.

2024 marked a historic year for the Urban Forestry program as it awarded nearly \$5.5 million in grants for 36 urban forestry projects across Ohio through the Inflation Reduction Act Urban Forestry Grant Program, the single largest pass-through grant administered by the Division to date. In addition, the program made significant updates to the Tree Commission Academy, and continued to provide workshops and regional conferences throughout the year.

2024 Ohio Urban Forestry Grants Inflation Reduction Act Grant

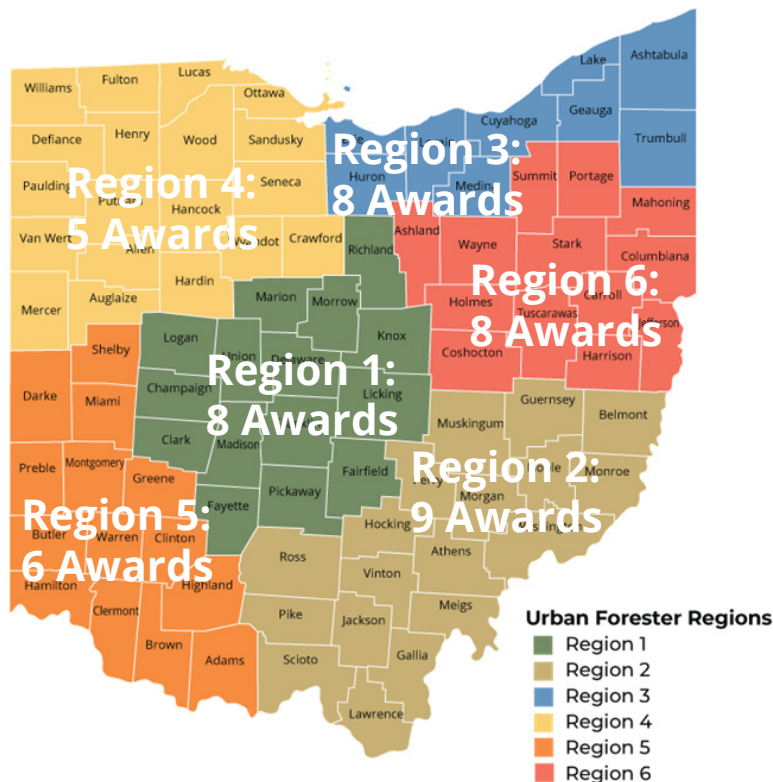
36 of 67
applicants awarded

5 non-profits
awarded

36 grants awarded
ranging from
\$18,000 to \$500,000

Awards total =
\$5,499,581

Geographic Distribution:



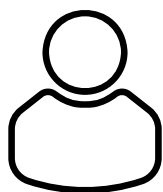


Service Forestry

Ohio's forests are predominantly privately owned, and they provide life-sustaining benefits to all citizens. The Division of Forestry's Service Forestry program empowers those connected to Ohio's private woodlands by providing information and technical assistance to support sustainable management.

This year, the Service Forestry program made significant accomplishments. In addition to the numerous workshops and events service foresters facilitated, the Service Forestry program also processed nearly 1,000 applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). In addition, 52 landowners were assisted through the Call Before You Cut program.

2024 by the Numbers



2.1k Landowners impacted



3.7k Landowner activities assisted



134 Forest management plans reviewed



85k Acres impacted



Fire Management

The Ohio Division of Forestry's Fire Management Program provides statewide leadership in wildfire management through fire department support programs, wildfire prevention efforts, and promotes prescribed fire as a resource management tool.

In 2024, the Division of Forestry awarded 85 Volunteer Fire Assistance Grants for \$549,372 and an additional 18 awards for \$52,187 through the Prescribed Fire Supplies, Tools, Education & Personal Protective Equipment (STEP) Grant. The Fire Management Program also successfully completed seven prescribed fires on state forest land, treating a total of 1,059 acres.

Inspiring Wildfire Prevention Through Art



Western Local Elementary School

Two new Smokey Bear murals were installed by artist Pam Kellough at Western Local Elementary School in Pike County and Northwest Middle School in Scioto County. The mural installations are intended to promote wildfire prevention and illustrate the beauty and resources that Ohio's state forests offer. Grant funding for the murals was provided through the USDA Forest Service.



Northwest Middle School



Forest Health

The Division of Forestry's Forest Health Program works cooperatively with partner agencies, organizations, and all Ohioans to protect Ohio's forests and the benefits they provide through early detection and effective management of threats to forest ecosystems.

In 2024, the Forest Health Program increased efforts to identify healthy ash trees that might have natural tolerance or resistance to the invasive insect, emerald ash borer. These trees are referred to as "lingering ash." Lingering ash were discovered in several areas of the state, and will be studied and potentially included in a breeding program to restore ash to Ohio's forests. A new potential forest pest, the elm zigzag sawfly, was discovered in Ohio in 2024. Other forest health work continued throughout the year, including survey for beech leaf disease, treatments conducted on state lands for oak wilt and hemlock woolly adelgid, as well as treatment and removal of invasive plants.



Discovery of Elm Zigzag Sawfly

In 2024, a researcher discovered a population of the invasive elm zigzag sawfly infesting elm trees at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service Northern Research Station lab in Delaware, Ohio and in northern Franklin County. Subsequent surveys through the Forest Service and the Division of Forestry reported that the species was also located on nearby properties.

Elm zigzag sawfly is an invasive insect native to Asia that was first found in Canada in 2020 and in multiple eastern U.S. states in 2021 and 2022. Its discovery this year was the first detection of the species in Ohio.

While capable of significant defoliation of elm trees, the overall impact of the species to forests and urban landscapes is not fully known and is an area of active research. Management options for the species are still being studied. The ODNR Division of Forestry will continue to survey for the elm zigzag sawfly across the state moving forward.



Land Management

The Division of Forestry's Land Management program manages state forests to maintain forest health, a sustained yield of forest products, and to promote diverse forest habitats across the landscape, while considering a multiple-use mandate. The Division strives for state forests to be the best example of the benefits resulting from long-term forest management.

STATE FOREST LAND INVENTORY

TOTAL ACREAGE: 203,250 Acres

1. **Beaver Creek:** 1,122 acres, Columbiana County
2. **Blue Rock:** 4,578 acres, Muskingum County
3. **Brush Creek:** 13,424 acres, Scioto/Adams/Pike counties
4. **Chapin:** 371 acres
5. **Dean:** 2,759 acres, Lawrence County
6. **Fernwood:** 3,023 acres, Jefferson County
7. **Gifford:** 320 acres, Athens County
8. **Harrison:** 1,345 acres, Harrison County
9. **Hocking:** 9,815 acres, Hocking County
10. **Maumee:** 3,395 acres, Fulton/Henry/Lucas counties
11. **Mohican-Memorial:** 4,541 acres, Ashland County
12. **Perry:** 4,706 acres, Perry County
13. **Pike:** 13,919 acres, Pike/Highland counties
14. **Richland Furnace:** 2,530 acres, Jackson/Vinton counties
15. **Scioto Trail:** 9,600 acres, Ross/Pike counties
16. **Shade River:** 2,859 acres, Meigs County
17. **Shawnee:** 65,987 acres, Scioto/Adams counties
18. **Sunfish Creek:** 637 acres, Monroe County
19. **Tar Hollow:** 16,446 acres, Ross/Vinton/Hocking counties
20. **Vinton Furnace:** 12,086 acres, Vinton County
21. **West Blue Rock:** 675 acres, Muskingum County
22. **Willow Grove:** 350 acres, Belmont County
23. **Yellow Creek:** 756 acres, Columbiana County
24. **Zaleski** (Waterloo @ 447acres): 27,375 acres, Vinton/Athens counties

STATE FOREST TIMBER SALE REVENUE & HARVESTING

	SALES FY2024	
	Fund R043	Fund 5090
Board Feet	7,688,488	1,309,135
Tons	32,409	0
Revenue	\$3,636,975	\$1,819,999
Acres	1,465 acres combined	

R043 sales are normal stumpage sales. Revenues from these sales are shared with local governments through the "Trees to Textbooks" program. 5090 sales account for all forest product sales. The bulk of these sales are accomplished through the log sales where the Division utilizes contract logging crews as well as its own staff to accomplish the sales. Logs are then sold via sealed bids.

SILVICULTURE ACCOMPLISHED FY2024	
Thinning	511 acres
Clearcuts (under 10 acres)	163 acres
Clearcuts (more than 10 acres)	95 acres
Deferment Harvests	266 acres
Shelterwood Harvests	304 acres
Uneven-Aged	116 acres
Group Openings	10 acres

The Division follows scientific silvicultural management standards. The goals are based on the Division's 5-year management plan. Overarching silvicultural goals include oak forest regeneration, increasing early successional habitats, and rare habitat management.



Fiscal

The Division of Forestry's Administration and Fiscal group supports all field staff and program managers, providing them with the tools needed to accomplish their work.

Trees to Textbooks

This year, the Division distributed more than \$2.1 million in Trees to Textbooks funds to 16 rural school districts and their local governments. Funding for the program comes from sustainable timber harvests on Ohio's state forests.

Since the Trees to Textbooks program started in 1999, more than \$39 million has been shared with Ohio school districts and local governments.

Summary of Timber Distribution for Revenue Received in FY 2024

Local Government Distribution		
ADAMS		
COUNTY	\$	129,400.78
FRANKLIN TWP	\$	24,715.25
GREEN TWP	\$	42,880.24
JEFFERSON TWP	\$	61,805.29
OHIO VALLEY LSD	\$	173,041.09
MANCHESTER LSD	\$	85,760.47
TOTAL PAYMENT	\$	517,603.12
ASHLAND		
COUNTY	\$	32,479.39
HANOVER TWP	\$	32,479.39
LOUDON-PERRYS CSD	\$	64,958.79
TOTAL PAYMENT	\$	129,917.57
HOCKING		
COUNTY	\$	37,755.54
SALT CREEK TWP	\$	37,755.54
LOGAN ELM LSD	\$	75,511.08
TOTAL PAYMENT	\$	151,022.16
JACKSON		
COUNTY	\$	18,562.86
WASHINGTON TWP	\$	18,562.86
WELLSTON CSD	\$	37,125.72
TOTAL PAYMENT	\$	74,251.44
PIKE		
COUNTY	\$	21,038.30
BENTON TWP	\$	1,618.78
MIFFLIN TWP	\$	19,419.52
WESTERN LSD	\$	42,076.61
TOTAL PAYMENT	\$	84,153.21
ROSS		
COUNTY	\$	46,094.85
COLERAIN TWP	\$	916.69
FRANKLIN TWP	\$	683.79
HARRISON TWP	\$	44,494.37
SOUTHEASTERN LSD	\$	90,356.30
ZANE TRACE LSD	\$	1,833.39
TOTAL PAYMENT	\$	184,379.38
SCIOTO		
COUNTY	\$	68,945.94
BRUSH CREEK TWP	\$	2,775.26
NILE TWP	\$	28,510.56
RARDEN TWP	\$	34,777.42
UNION TWP	\$	2,882.70
NORTHWEST LSD	\$	80,870.76
WASHINGTON-NILE LSD	\$	57,021.12
TOTAL PAYMENT	\$	275,783.77
VINTON		
COUNTY	\$	143,104.94
BROWN TWP	\$	42,483.62
EAGLE TWP	\$	35,295.01
ELK TWP	\$	683.79
KNOX TWP	\$	13,956.81
MADISON TWP	\$	46,922.97
VINTON TWP	\$	3,762.75
VINTON LSD	\$	286,209.88
TOTAL PAYMENT	\$	572,419.76