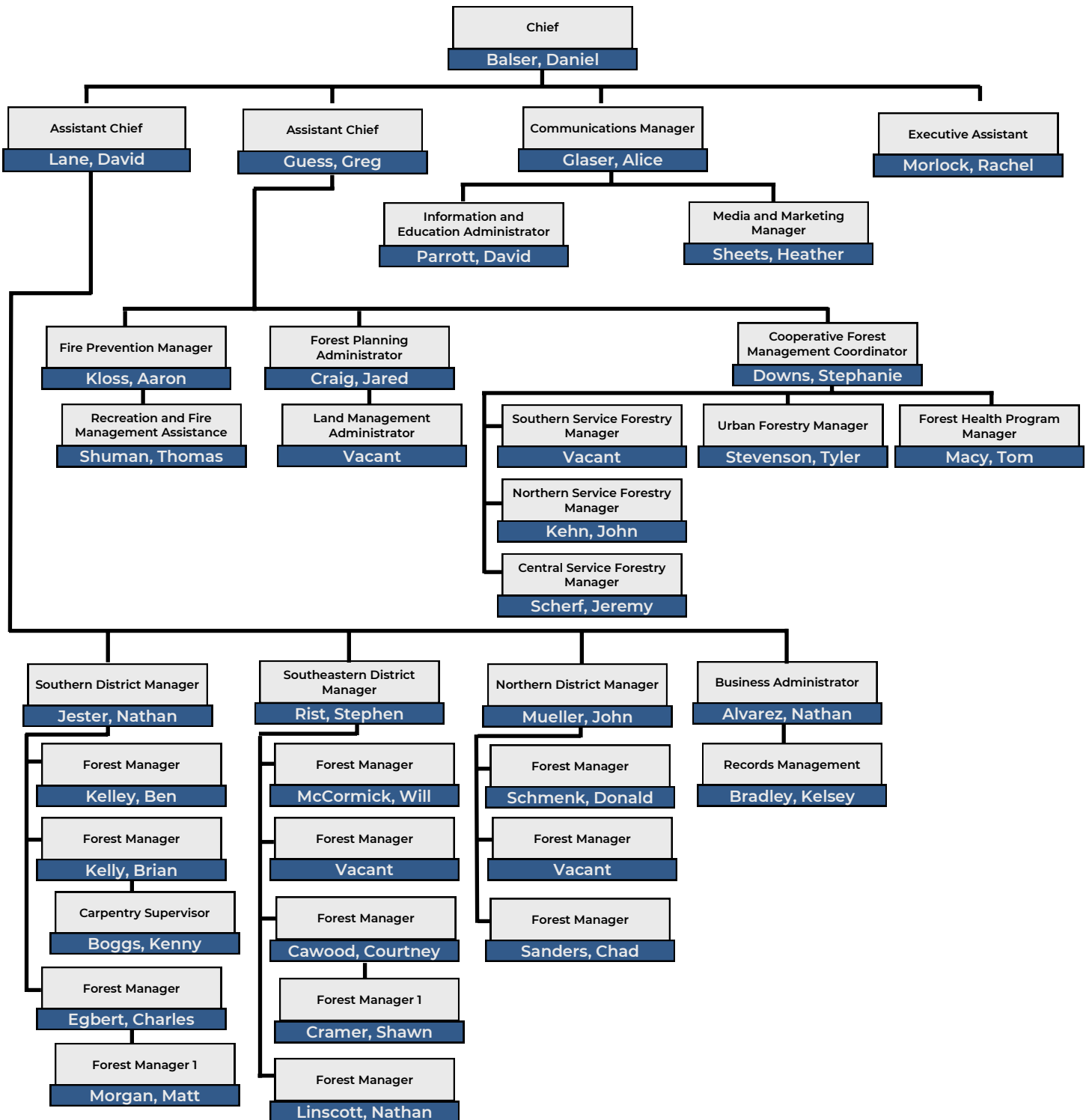


# ANNUAL REPORT

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF FORESTRY

2023  
FISCAL YEAR


# FY 2023 ODNR Division of Forestry Managerial Table of Organization



Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Forestry  
2045 Morse Road, H-1  
Columbus, Ohio 43229-6693  
forestry.ohiodnr.gov



Cover photo: Tar Hollow State Forest, by ODNR Communications Team



**OUR VISION:** The Ohio Division of Forestry envisions healthy, diverse forests valued for the life-sustaining benefits they provide to all Ohioans.

**The Division of Forestry operates and maintains 24 state forests, encompassing more than 203,000 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.**

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



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# COMMUNICATIONS



The Division of Forestry (DOF) Communications Program supports 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 DOF partnerships in promoting wise forest stewardship for healthy public and private forest ecosystems.



## COMMUNICATIONS

### 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

**257**

Participation  
Events

**16,000+**

Copies of *The Ohio  
Woodland Journal*  
issued

**264**

Social media posts

**1.3 million**

People reached  
through social  
media

**32.3k**

Public visits to  
social media  
pages

**26.6k**

Public interactions  
with social media  
content

## COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Forestry's Communications program provides the public with opportunities to learn about and experience the best that the Division and Ohio's forests have to offer.

ODNR Division of Forestry's professional foresters and communications team work together to develop and present publications, workshops, videos, Smokey Bear messaging, Project Learning Tree-Ohio activities, and educational presentations.

### THE OHIO WOODLAND JOURNAL

*The Ohio Woodland Journal* is a quarterly publication of the Ohio Tree Farm System. It is mailed at no charge to Certified Tree Farmers and at no charge for one year to all forest landowners receiving a Forest Stewardship Plan. It is also available to paying subscribers. The ODNR Division of Forestry assists with editing and article contribution for the publication.

In FY2023, four Issues of *The Ohio Woodland Journal* were published with more than 4,000 copies of each issue mailed or distributed.

### PROJECT LEARNING TREE



Project Learning Tree® (PLT) is an environmental education initiative that takes students outdoors to learn and connect with nature in urban, suburban, and rural settings. The program inspires educators and youth leaders to take action for sustainable forests and introduces young people to careers in natural resources. In Ohio, Project Learning Tree is sponsored by the Division of Forestry.

The Division's 2023 Teacher Field Days, sponsored by PLT-Ohio and ODNR Division of Forestry focused on "Stranger Things in the Woods," exploring forest ecosystems and the unique "oddities" that can be found there. The two-day program provided information on geology, insects, fungi, symbiotic relationships, and more. Teachers also learned several PLT activities that they can use in their classrooms, such as how to count the rings of tree cookies, the Web of Life, and various ways to measure and identify trees.



## COMMUNICATIONS

### EVENTS

The Ohio Division of Forestry is committed to providing forestry information and support to all Ohioans. This report highlights some of the major events, presentations, and trainings in which the Division participated in FY2023.

#### GIRL SCOUTS OF AMERICA

In 2023, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Division of Forestry partnered with the Girl Scouts of America to fulfill their Girl Scout Tree Promise. Launched in 2021, the Girl Scout Tree Promise is a national protection initiative to plant 5 million trees across the country over five years, and to protect and honor new and existing trees. ODNR has committed to providing resources for Girl Scouts to plant 250,000 trees in Ohio by 2026.

In addition to six planting events held in 2023, the Division also hosted three Forester for a Day events, where Girl Scouts are able to connect with Ohio forests, as well as learn essential forestry skills and about green

#### RECOGNITIONS

- Tree City USA Awards Programs: Regions 1-6
- Forest of Honor
- Ohio Tree Farm of the Year Tour

#### STATE FOREST EVENTS

- Hocking State Forest Fall Color Tour
- Division of Forestry Open Houses
- Pike Forestry Field Days
- Fernwood Forestry Field Days

#### STATEWIDE EVENTS

- Ohio State Fair
- Farm Science Review
- Paul Bunyan Show
- Open Season Sportsman's Expo
- Ohio Forest Health Meeting
- Ohio Wildlife Management Conference
- Ag-Pro Expo
- State Fire Marshal Fire Expo & Muster





## COMMUNICATIONS



### PARTNER PROGRAMS


- Ohio Tree Farm Committee Quarterly Meetings
- Woodland Wednesdays
- Ohio Forestry Association Annual Meeting
- A Day in the Woods
- Ohio Society of American Foresters (OSAF) Winter and Summer Meetings
- Ohio Statehouse Holiday Festival and Tree Lighting
- Buckeye Hero Hunt
- Wheelin' Sportsmen Turkey Hunt
- Thunder in the Hills Hunt
- SFI/PLT Annual Conference
- NE Ohio Urban and Community Forestry



### PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS

- Women Owning Woodlands
- Tree Commission Academy
- Managing Oaks for Wildlife
- Young Tree Training
- Maple Management
- Place-Based Woodland Owner Outreach
- Woodland Legacy Workshop
- Tree Risk Assessment Qualification
- Best Management Practices and Chainsaw Safety
- Forestry and Wildlife Workshop
- "To Chop or Not to Chop" Workshop
- Tree ID Class
- HWA Treatment Workshop
- Project Wet, Wild, and Learning Tree Webinar
- Forestry Walk at Penitentiary Glen
- Tools and Techniques of Forest Stand Improvement
- Working Woods Field Day
- Guided Hike—Meigs County

# URBAN FORESTRY



The Ohio Division of Forestry 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.



## URBAN FORESTRY

### 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

**38%**

Percent of Ohio's population living in communities with urban forestry management plans

**37%**

Percent of Ohio's population living in communities that are developing urban forestry management plans

**161**

Ohio communities with active tree management plans developed with professional assistance

**47,654**

Urban forestry volunteer hours recorded across Ohio

### URBAN FORESTRY REPORT

Ohio's Urban Forestry Assistance Program provides community officials and allied agencies with the organizational and technical assistance to effectively manage the trees and urban forest resources. Ohio's statewide network of regional urban foresters help develop and support sustainable urban forest management programs and empower communities to manage their urban forest resources to meet their local needs. The program also administers the Tree City USA Program in Ohio for the Arbor Day Foundation.



### Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Urban Forestry Grant Program

The Division of Forestry awarded nearly \$5.5 million in grants for 36 urban forestry projects across Ohio through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Urban Forestry Grant Program.

Two grant programs were made available to nonprofit organizations in Ohio. Eligible projects were focused on developing emerging and established urban forestry programs, with an emphasis on expanding tree canopy in underserved communities.

Urban forestry programs utilized grant funds to invest in program development such as staffing, urban forestry planning, training programs, risk mitigation, and tree planting and establishment. Grants up to \$50,000 were available for emerging urban forestry programs, while grants up to \$1 million were available for established programs.

These IRA grant funds were provided to ODNR Forestry by the USDA Forest Service. The funding from this cycle of IRA grants is a portion of \$9 million from the IRA that had been allocated to Ohio for forestry. This was the single largest pass-through grant ever administered by the Division of Forestry.



## URBAN FORESTRY

### Program Workshops and Trainings

Ohio's Urban Forestry Assistance Program continued working with diverse partners in FY23 to provide classroom and field-based education and training to communities and allied agencies.

Notable events included:

- Ohio Chapter ISA Strategic Planning Retreat
- Tree Risk Assessment Qualification
- Tree Commission Academy
  - Three Sophomore courses
  - Two Freshman courses
  - One Senior course
- Pruning Class
- Tree City USA Ceremonies
- Garden Club of America Columbus Tour

#### North Coast Urban Forestry Regional Conference

DOF staff presented at the North Coast Urban Forestry regional conference at Lakeland Community College. The keynote presentation was given by Mark Bays from Oklahoma Forestry Services. Division of Forestry Urban Forester Steph Miller opened the conference with *Urban Forestry's Historical and Future Roles in Community Health and Equity*, followed by DOF Urban Forestry Manager Tyler Stevenson presenting on *Federal Urban Forestry Funding Discussion and Q & A*.

#### Ohio Tree Care Conference

This year's Tree Care Conference took place in Newark, OH, where more than 500 tree care professionals attended and took part in educational sessions and a trade show. Division of Forestry urban foresters Ann Bonner and Steph Miller presented at the event, and recently retired DOF Urban Forester Lola Lewis received an honorary life membership in recognition of her exceptional support and years of devoted service to the organization. In addition, DOF urban foresters Colleen Berg and Alistair Reynolds staffed a table at the conference, sharing the Division's Urban Forestry message with many customers and partners.





## URBAN FORESTRY

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### SW Ohio Summer Conclave

In SW Ohio, a field day specially designed for Tree Commission Academy (TCA) graduates covered how to create your own community arboretum. Ohio's TCA Conclaves are intended to facilitate networking between communities to share ideas, successes, and failures, introduce non-TCA members to the benefits of TCA, and spend time exploring subjects covered in TCA. This year's conclave was held at Anderson Township's new Heritage Center Arboretum in August. The program began with small group tours of the Arboretum and then centered on a panel of arboretum experts from Cox Arboretum, Forest Hill Cemetery & Arboretum, and Spring Grove Cemetery & Arboretum that discussed how to develop and operate arboretums and what it means to be accredited. The afternoon was spent learning from the Tree Commissioners who organized the township's new arboretum and then working in small groups to develop arboretum plans with the experts.



### Ohio Virtual Pruning Training & Hands-On Workshop

Several of the program's regional Young Tree Training Workshops took on a hybrid approach at the beginning of the fiscal year to reach more students across the state and beyond, ultimately gathering over 1,000 in attendance. With special guest presenter Dr. Bill Fountain from the University of Kentucky, virtual attendees learned the basics of tree biology for structural pruning. All those who attended the virtual portion were then invited to attend a hands-on training at one of eight locations throughout the state.

Many valued partners made all of these programs possible including Advanced Tree Health, Bur Oak Consulting, Cleveland Metroparks, Kent State University, Ohio Department of Agriculture, Ohio Chapter ISA, Ohio Independent Arborist Association, OSU Extension, Metroparks Toledo, University of Kentucky, Wright Patterson AFB, Youngstown State University, multiple Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and Ohio's communities. The program also organized, presented, and assisted with several of our partner's arboriculture and urban forestry programs and events throughout Ohio including, the Mahoning Valley Tree Symposium, Holden Arboretum's Tree Corps CREW program, the Ohio Tree Care Conference, and multiple tree planting events with Governor DeWine and Director Mertz. In addition to assisting with partnering educational programs, Ohio also provided two \$2,400 scholarships for the Society of Municipal Arborist's Municipal Forestry Institute in Bowling Green.

A person wearing a green hoodie and blue jeans is kneeling in a field, working on a red metal structure. The structure appears to be a windbreak or a similar agricultural device. The background shows a line of bare trees under a clear sky, suggesting a late autumn or winter setting. The ground is covered with dry leaves and grass.

# NORTHWEST OHIO FIELD WINDBREAK PROGRAM

The Northwest Ohio Field Windbreak Program plants field windbreaks that provide protection against wind erosion and wind damage to crops. The windbreaks may also provide food and cover for wildlife.



# NORTHWEST OHIO FIELD WINDBREAK PROGRAM

## 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

**12**  
Counties  
benefited from  
the program

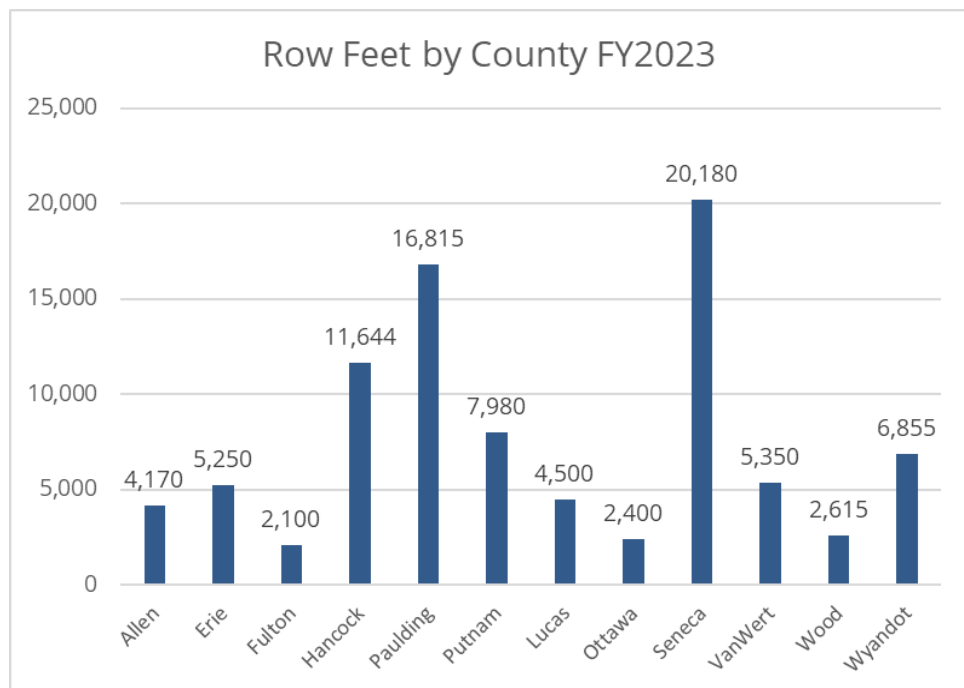
**18,586**  
Total trees planted

**17**  
Miles planted

**20**  
Windbreak  
projects  
completed

## NORTHWEST OHIO FIELD WINDBREAK PROGRAM REPORT

The Northwest Ohio Field Windbreak Program, an interagency effort, began in 1977 to encourage planting of field windbreaks in northwestern Ohio to reduce soil erosion, protect crops from wind damage, and enhance wildlife habitat.

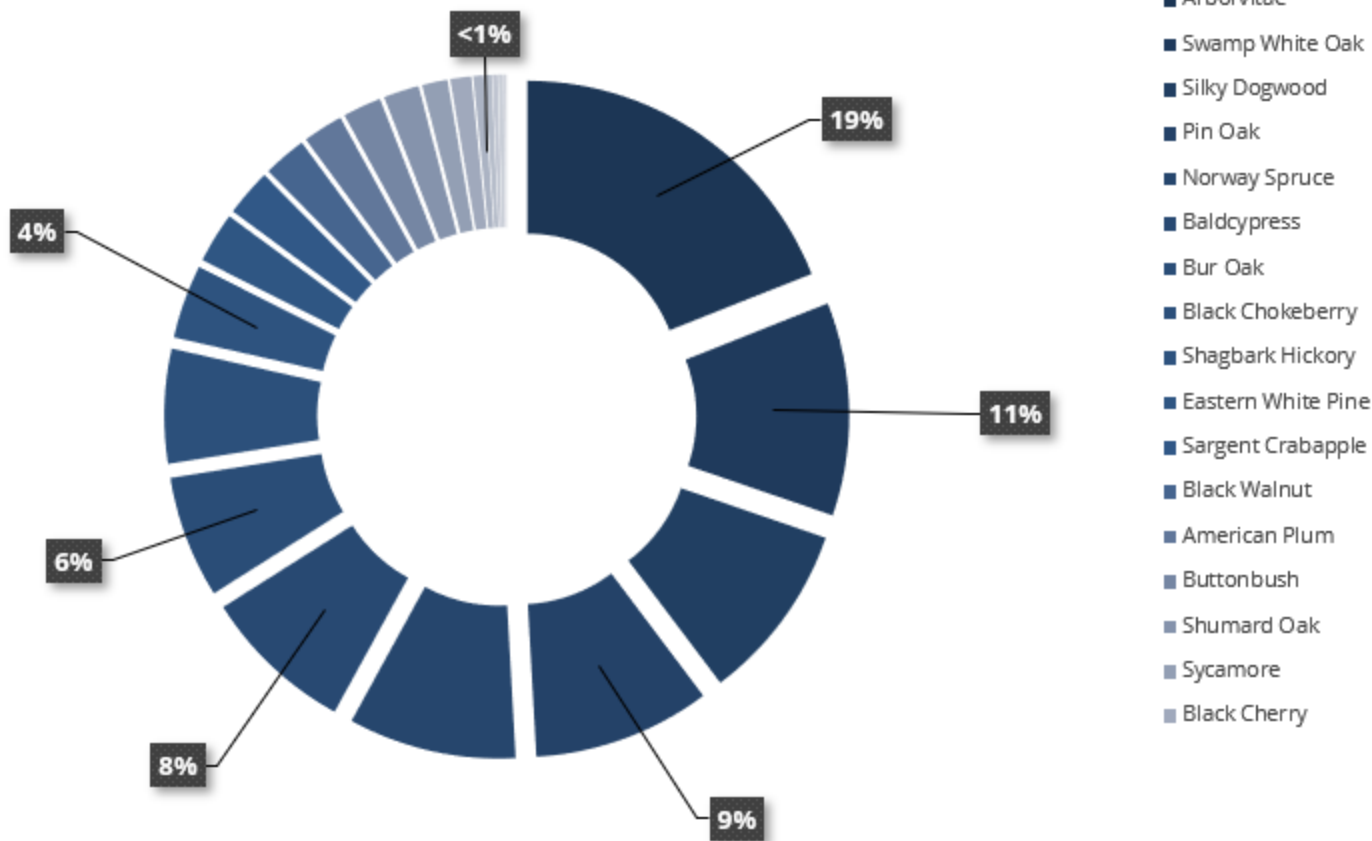


TOTAL: 89,859 feet



# NORTHWEST OHIO FIELD WINDBREAK PROGRAM

## FY2023 Distribution By Species



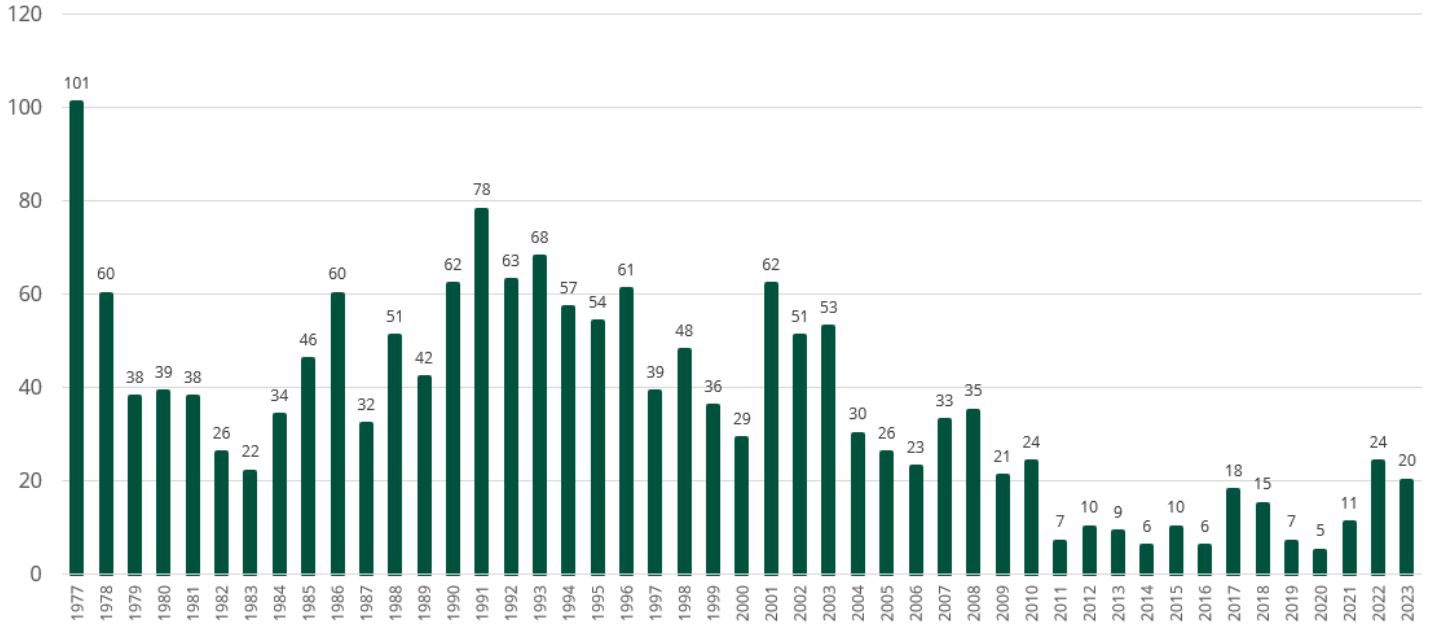
SPECIES	NUMBER	SPECIES	NUMBER
Arborvitae	3,530	Black Walnut	426
Swamp White Oak	2,095	American Plum	395
Silky Dogwood	1,759	Buttonbush	378
Pin Oak	1,744	Shumard Oak	350
Norway Spruce	1,649	Sycamore	250
Baldcypress	1,494	Black Cherry	206
Bur Oak	1,201	Sugar Maple	100
Black Chokeberry	1,123	Blue Spruce	70
Shagbark Hickory	725	Red Oak	50
Eastern White Pine	499	Tuliptree	50
Sargent Crabapple	466	White Oak	26

TOTAL: 18,586



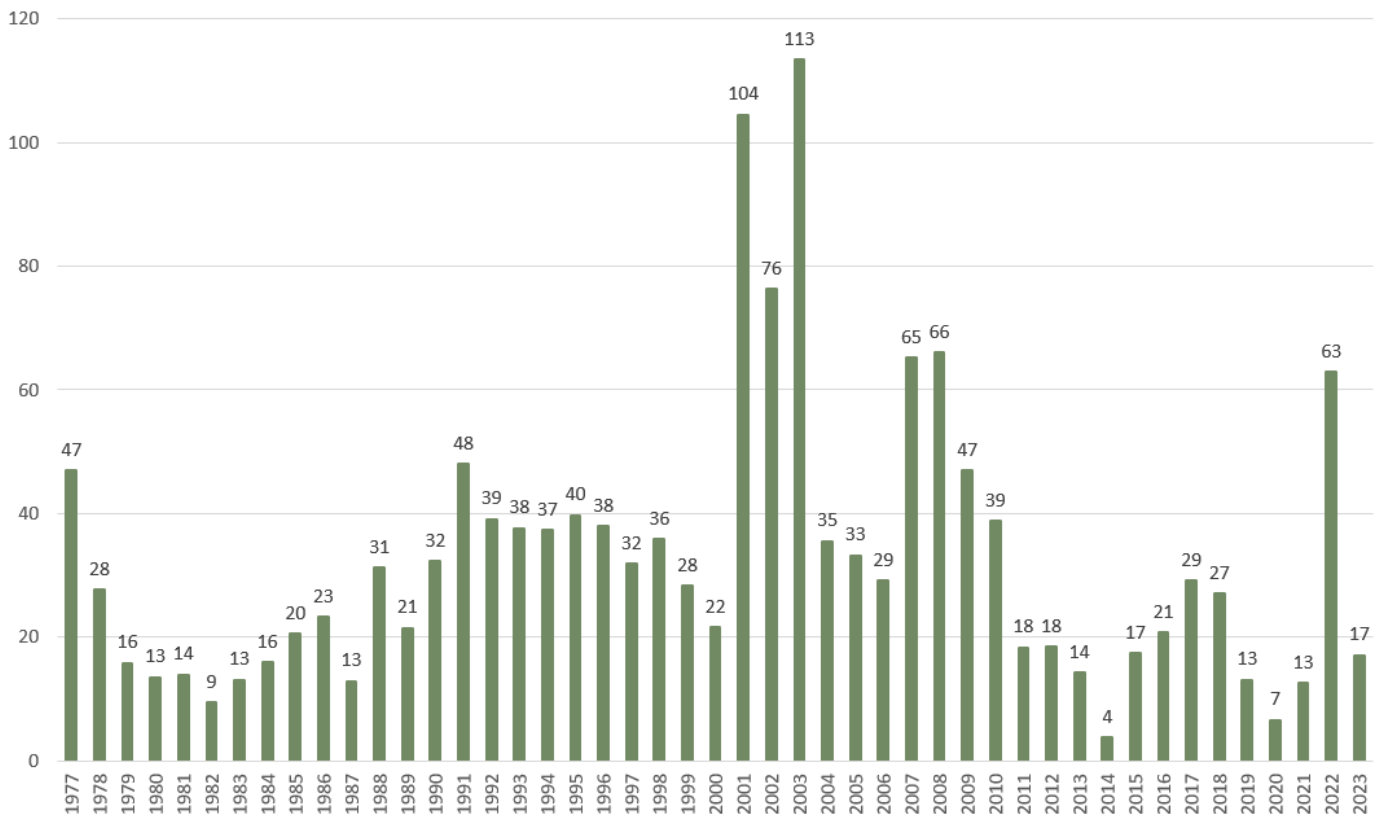
# NORTHWEST OHIO FIELD WINDBREAK PROGRAM

Projects Completed (1977-2023)



Total Projects Completed: 1,690

Miles Planted (1977-2023)



# SERVICE FORESTRY



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



## SERVICE FORESTRY

### 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

**2,015**

Landowners  
received technical  
assistance

**2,784**

Landowners  
participated in  
educational  
programs

**11,058**

Acres covered by  
new or revised  
Forest Stewardship  
Management Plans

**309**

New or revised  
Forest Stewardship  
Management Plans

**206,246**

Acres covered by  
current Forest  
Stewardship  
Management Plans

## SERVICE FORESTRY REPORT

The Division of Forestry's Service Forestry program is the primary source of forestry assistance for private woodland owners in the State of Ohio. State service foresters provide one-on-one assistance and group education to landowners, helping them evaluate their woods and plan for proper management, create or enhance wildlife habitat, plant trees for future forests, and maximize the benefits from their woods.

State service foresters also administer Ohio's property tax reduction program for woodlands, called Ohio Forest Tax Law, and provide technical assistance to landowners participating in the USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and other federal incentive programs. The Division of Forestry works with many partners, including the Ohio Tree Farm program, U.S. Department of Agriculture, local Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Ohio State University Extension, and other state and local partners.

PRIVATE LANDOWNER ASSISTANCE FY2023	
Total Forest Stand Improvement	7,085 acres
Marketing assistance to landowners for potential timber harvests	1,664 acres
Referrals to Consultants	70

## CALL BEFORE YOU CUT

Call Before You Cut is a program designed to provide landowners with information to make educated management decisions about their woodlands at the time of a harvest. Through the program, landowners can also connect with professional resources, including ODNR Division of Forestry service foresters or private consulting foresters, to assist them. The Ohio Call Before You Cut program is a partner program coordinated by the ODNR Division of Forestry and Ohio State University Extension. Other partners of the program include the Ohio Chapter of the Society of American Foresters, the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Division of Soil & Water Conservation, the Ohio Federation of Soil & Water Conservation Districts, The Nature Conservancy, and the Ohio Tree Farm Committee.





## SERVICE FORESTRY

### FORESTRY POLLUTION ABATEMENT PROGRAM

The ODNR Division of Forestry's (DOF) Forestry Pollution Abatement Program (FPAP) has the responsibility to enforce and promote Ohio's Forestry Pollution Abatement Rules and Standards, in partnership with Ohio's 88 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs). In 2023, the Division of Forestry continued to investigate logging complaints to ensure that Best Management Practices (BMPs) were being used and that water quality was protected. Staff also provided BMP and complaint-response training to SWCD staff and supervisors. DOF staff assisted with statewide BMP training programs for logging companies during the year, in cooperation with the Ohio Forestry Association. BMP training was also provided to logging companies for individualized training. Several public education programs were also conducted to educate landowners about the benefits of filing Timber Harvest Plans, prior to harvest, and utilizing BMPs throughout the logging process. These sessions were taught at numerous timber marketing events throughout the state, including events hosted by SWCDs, OSU Extension, and other partners.





## SERVICE FORESTRY

### NRCS PROGRAMS

The Ohio Division of Forestry and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) work together to provide financial incentive opportunities for landowners to complete management activities in their woodlands. Activities such as invasive plant control, crop tree release, tree planting, wildlife habitat development and many more can be completed with both technical and financial assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Both of these programs are run through NRCS with technical assistance from state service foresters.

#### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP is an incentive program that provides technical and financial assistance for completing woodland management activities to improve the health and sustainability of Ohio's woodlands. Common activities include woody invasive plant removal, grapevine control, forest stand improvement work, tree planting, herbaceous weed control, erosion control, wildlife habitat development and more.

EQIP COST SHARE ASSISTANCE FY2023	
Number of new and/or revised Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Management Plans	132 plans
Number of acres of new and/or revised EQIP Management Plans	4,405 acres

#### Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

CSP is an incentive program that is designed to build upon management work already being completed by a landowner. This program offers assistance for continued management on woodlands that are actively managed and where landowners would like to achieve enhanced woodland health and sustainability. Most CSP practices build upon work done in EQIP to achieve specific landowner-driven results in regards to woodland and wildlife habitat quantity and quality.



### OHIO FOREST TAX LAW

The Ohio Forest Tax Law program provides a 50% reduction of property taxes on qualifying forested acreage. In exchange for the tax reduction, landowners agree to manage their forest land for the commercial production of timber and other forest products and to abide by pertinent rules and regulations.

ODNR Division of Forestry service foresters approve management plans and inspect participating properties to ensure those management plans are being followed.

# FIRE PROGRAM

A photograph of two firefighters in full yellow protective gear, including helmets and goggles, working in a wooded area. One firefighter is in the foreground, looking down, while another is in the background, holding a tool. The scene is outdoors with trees and brush.

The Ohio Division of Forestry 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.



## FIRE PROGRAM

### 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

**3,448**

Total acres burned  
in wildfires

**1,049**

Wildfires  
reported in Ohio

**217**

Reported  
prescribed burns

**572**

Wildfires caused  
by debris burning

**76**

Wildland fire  
protection  
projects funded

**489k**

Total grant funds  
awarded

**10**

States assisted  
by the Ohio  
Interagency Fire  
Crew

## OHIO FIRE REPORT

The Division of Forestry provides leadership in wildfire prevention, training, suppression, and prescribed fire management. The Division participates in cooperative agreements with local fire departments, as well as in training, equipping, and coordinating the Ohio Interagency Fire Crew and specialized individual resource personnel for wildfires and disasters in and out of state. The Division also administers federal grants and federal excess property to rural fire departments.

## WILDFIRE STATISTICS

The leading cause of wildfires in Ohio in FY2023 was debris burning. The remaining causes were distributed among other common causes:

CAUSE	NUMBER OF FIRES	TOTAL ACRES
Campfire	24	57.04
Children	3	0.95
Debris Burning	572	1370.18
Equipment	47	128.69
Incendiary	53	1096.43
Lightning	4	1.4
Miscellaneous	181	547.57
Powerline	94	132.95
Railroad	4	24
Smoking	28	35.88
Structure	27	51.63
Fireworks	3	1.27
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1049</b>	<b>3447.99</b>

### Wildfires and Acres Burned by Causes

*Between 07/01/22 and 06/30/23*

SIZE CLASS	NUMBER OF FIRES	TOTAL ACRES
Class A - .25 Acres or less	389	55.61
Class B - .26 to 9.9 Acres	591	1103.88
Class C - 10 to 99.9 Acres	66	1429.5
Class D - 100 to 299.9 Acres	2	409
Class E - 300 to 999.9 Acres	1	450
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1049</b>	<b>3447.99</b>

### Wildfires and Acres Burned by Size Class

*Between  
07/01/22 and 06/30/23*



## FIRE PROGRAM

### PRESCRIBED FIRE

The Division continued to provide leadership in prescribed fire management in FY2023. Waivers of ORC 1503.18 were issued by the Division of Forestry to federal, state, and local government partners, as well as to private companies, NGOs, and citizens to facilitate prescribed fires across Ohio.

PRESCRIBED FIRES	ACRES
Division granted 152 Waivers (can cover multiple units)	31,431 acres
Received 217 reports of burn units	5,038 acres

### RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENT SUPPORT

The Division achieves its goal of reducing the threat of wildfires through partnerships with rural fire departments, which includes providing training and administering grants and excess property to rural fire departments.

The Prescribed Fire Supplies, Tools, Education, and Personal Equipment (STEP) grant helps partner agencies build and expand their prescribed fire programs. This cost-share reimbursement grant opportunity is open to local and state land management agencies and supports prescribed fire management projects in Ohio with 50/50 matching grants.

Eligible applicants include local government agencies, state government agencies, metro park agencies, county park agencies, park districts, and non-profit land management entities.

FIRE DEPARTMENT GRANTS	STEP: 3 projects for \$6,350
	Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA): 76 projects for \$489,456
	Ohio Fire Academy: 1 grant for \$20,000





# FIRE PROGRAM

## INTERAGENCY WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION SUPPORT

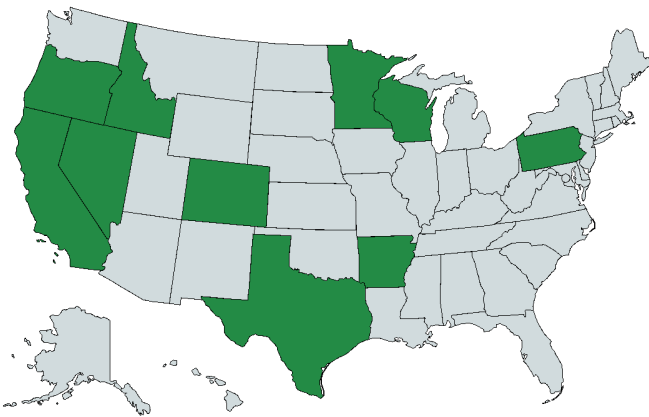
The Ohio Division of Forestry trains federal, state, and local agencies for wildland fire detail and providing assistance to other states as part of a national effort.

Ohio crews and individual management personnel have assisted with hurricanes, floods, and wildfire incidents since 1986.

The Division of Forestry's Interagency Fire Crew provided engines and 66 resources in FY2023 to assist suppression efforts throughout the United States.



### STATES ASSISTED FY2023:



- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Idaho
- Minnesota
- Nevada
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Texas
- Wisconsin

## SMOKEY SCOUTS

In FY2023, the Mid-Atlantic Compact Prevention Committee (ODNR Division of Forestry is a member agency), in coordination with the USDA Forest Service, sponsored and worked with students from the Columbus College of Art and Design to develop the mobile game Smokey Scouts. Now available on the App Store and Google Play, this interactive matching game introduces the principles of wildfire prevention.



A photograph of a person wearing a green long-sleeved shirt, a grey cap, and orange gloves, using a white spray bottle to apply a substance to the trunk of a tree in a forest. The person is seen from the side, facing right. The forest floor is covered in brown leaves and fallen branches. The background shows many thin tree trunks.

# COOPERATIVE FOREST HEALTH PROGRAM

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.



## COOPERATIVE FOREST HEALTH PROGRAM

### 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

**6**

Positions created by the Division of Forestry to manage non-native invasives

**9**

New counties with confirmed beech leaf disease

**2,000**

Acres surveyed on ODNR land for hemlock woolly adelgid

### OHIO FOREST HEALTH REPORT

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Forestry's Forest Health Program works cooperatively with partnering agencies and organizations within Ohio and neighboring states. Since insects and pathogens do not recognize political boundaries, it is important for states and jurisdictions to work together to mitigate potential threats to their forest resources. This is achieved through rigorous field work and various investigative techniques. Additionally, state land managers, service foresters, and urban foresters are periodically asked for assistance and provide input related to forest health issues throughout the year.

Landowners and the general public are encouraged to call the Ohio Division of Forestry, toll free at 1-877-247-8733, and report any suspected forest health concerns or issues.

### Aerial Forest Health Survey



Discoloration of eastern white pines in southeastern Ohio caused by white pine needle damage (Credit: Ohio Division of Forestry)

Each year, the Ohio Division of Forestry, with the assistance of the Ohio Division of Wildlife, conducts an aerial survey over the majority of the forested areas of Ohio to identify forest damage. This year's survey began on June 5 and concluded on June 15. The observers identified 329 different sites from the air with discoloration, defoliation, or mortality, totaling 8,496 acres. The majority of these sites were inspected on the ground by Ohio Division of Forestry staff. The top five damage-causing agents (DCA) and associated acreage are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Aerial survey results

Damage causing agent	Acres
Eastern white pine needle damage	3,739
Sycamore anthracnose	1,728
Unknown conifer discoloration	657
Flooding	602
Yellow-poplar weevil	361



## COOPERATIVE FOREST HEALTH PROGRAM



Forest understory heavily impacted by beech leaf disease (Credit: Ohio Division of Forestry)

### Pest and Disease Update

#### Beech Leaf Disease

A decline of American beech (and potentially several other non-native beech species) has been documented in northern Ohio since 2012. This decline is being referred to as beech leaf disease (BLD) and was first noted in Lake County and is now known to be present in parts of northern Ohio, the Canadian province of Ontario, and several Northeastern states. In 2023, beech leaf disease was detected in nine new counties in Ohio. Symptoms are first noticeable as dark interveinal striping on leaves, and progress over a period of one or more years to stunted and distorted leaves, reduction in leaf and bud production, and branch dieback. Mortality of understory trees and saplings has been documented. The causal agent of beech leaf disease is believed to be a species of foliar nematode (*Litylenchus crenatae* ssp. *mccannii*). Since 2021, the Ohio Division of Forestry in partnership with Holden Forests & Gardens, has sampled American beech (as well as maple and oak species) buds from 24 counties across the state. Analysis identified nematode DNA at roughly half the sites, fairly evenly distributed across the state, including areas far from where beech leaf disease symptoms are known to occur. Nematode DNA was also detected from some oak and maple buds. Those sites that were positive for nematode DNA were re-visited in order to be examined for beech leaf disease symptoms as well as leaf sample collection for the identification of live nematodes. Long-term monitoring plots have been established in the area of the known extent of beech leaf disease in Ohio to better track tree damage progression over time and document impacts and changes to forest ecosystems.

#### Oak Wilt

The fungal pathogen *Bretziella fagacearum*, which causes the disease oak wilt, has been known to occur in Ohio since at least 1950, but there has been a concerning increase in oak wilt infected areas since 2019, with some new infected areas reported in 2023. New and existing infections were identified in all regions of the state. This disease is deadly to oaks and the fungal spores can spread between trees aboveground via sap-feeding beetles and belowground through root systems of neighboring trees that have grown together, or “grafted.” Ohio Division of Forestry is working with landowners to help manage oak wilt infections on private land as well as on Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR)-owned properties. The ODNR Division of Forestry convened an Ohio Oak Wilt Working Group in 2022 for the purpose of bringing together agencies, organizations, and professionals that may work on some aspect of oak wilt, to increase education and outreach about oak wilt and management options and improve the mapping of oak wilt across the state.



## COOPERATIVE FOREST HEALTH PROGRAM



Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (Credit: Ohio Division of Forestry)

### Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) is known to be present in 21 counties (one new county identified to date in 2023; Ross). In 2023, the Ohio Division of Forestry treated several thousand eastern hemlock trees across 550 acres with the insecticide imidacloprid to protect them from HWA. Hemlock pest detection surveys were carried out on 2,000 acres of ODNR land. The ODNR Hemlock Conservation Plan was completed in 2017, with the Ohio Division of Forestry as the lead agency. The plan is guiding the management of HWA and other hemlock pests in Ohio and includes a prioritization of Ohio's hemlock stands. All counties with confirmed HWA infestations are quarantined by the Ohio Department of Agriculture to prevent the movement of potentially infested hemlock materials out of the infested areas.

### Emerald Ash Borer

Emerald ash borer (EAB) has been the most devastating forest pest in Ohio in recent years. As of 2016, all 88 of Ohio's counties have confirmed infestations. Significant mortality of ash has occurred and is ongoing throughout Ohio. In 2023, The Ohio Division of Forestry, in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service Northern Research Station and the Great Lakes Basin Forest Health Collaborative, conducted survey and site visits for surviving mature ash trees (termed "lingering ash"). Healthy lingering ash were identified in several counties and are planned to be sampled for testing against emerald ash borer and possible future propagation in a breeding program for emerald ash borer tolerance. The Ohio Division of Forestry continues to help woodland owners manage their forests and utilize their ash resources, assist communities that are dealing with EAB issues, and promote the identification and reporting of lingering ash.



Adult emerald ash borer (Credit: Ohio Division of Forestry)

### Non-native Invasive Plants

Non-native invasive plants are a threat to the biodiversity of forests throughout Ohio. Some forests contain dense infestations of invasive plants such as *Ailanthus*, Asian bush honeysuckles, autumn-olive, multiflora rose, and Japanese stiltgrass, while other areas remain largely uninvaded. In 2022, new infestations of Japanese angelica tree (*Aralia elata*) and a hybrid crabapple (*Malus spp.*) were identified and reported in parts of eastern and central Ohio, respectively. Efforts are underway to document the extent of these species and explore treatments to reduce their populations. In 2018, over 30 species of invasive plants were banned from sale and propagation in Ohio. Callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*; including the popular 'Bradford' variety), which had a 5-year phase out period, was banned from sale starting in January 2023. In early 2023, the Ohio Division of Forestry hired two new 3-person crews focused largely on invasive plant control, based at Shawnee and Zaleski state forests. They have completed several hundred acres of invasive plant control work. The Ohio Division of Forestry promotes invasive plant control by working with Ohio's Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs), Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs), Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISMs), and on private land through its Service Forestry Program and through other outreach events.



# STATE FOREST MANAGEMENT

The Division of Forestry's Land Management program manages state forests to maintain forest health, a sustained yield of forest products, and 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 MANAGEMENT

## 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

**5,594**

Backpackers

**745**

Horse campers

**1,055**

Family campers

**328**

Hunter Campers

**3,260**

APV Riders

**902**

Hunters and anglers

**2,938**

Gun range users

**530**

Mountain bikers

**545**

Foragers

**475**

Miscellaneous day users

## Recreation and Facilities Report

### STATE FOREST LAND INVENTORY

**TOTAL ACREAGE: 203,398 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 RECREATION

State forests offer visitors numerous outdoor recreation opportunities that are compatible with sustainable forest management. More than 300 miles of backcountry bridle trails, 80 miles of hiking and backpacking trails, and 50 miles of mountain bike trails are found on Ohio's state forests. Each year the state forest staff maintains the trails through vegetation management, trail blazing, monitoring, and implementing soil and erosion control practices.



## STATE FOREST MANAGEMENT

### OHIO'S STATE FOREST FACILITIES

Throughout Ohio's state forest districts there are eleven staffed state forest locations. Each of these facilities is maintained by Division staff. Managers and staff complete much of the maintenance and upkeep in order to save costs and fully utilize the expertise of staff. Routine maintenance includes cleaning, painting, vegetation management, and minor repairs. In-house staff also conduct many of the larger renovation and repair projects such as remodeling, roofing, demolition, and minor plumbing and electrical work.

### ROADWAY MAINTENANCE

Roads with a "state forest road" designation are maintained by the forest crews. Funding and technical expertise may be provided by ODOT on larger projects. These projects include, but are not limited to: road and parking lot paving, large quantities of aggregate or culvert placement, bridge repairs or replacement, and large road slip repairs.

Within the state forest road system there are more than 200 miles of road, more than 65 bridges, and several thousand culverts and headwall systems. There are numerous parking areas, pull-offs, scenic vistas, and service roads. All routine maintenance is conducted by district employees.

The camps are also maintained with practices such as mowing, hazard tree removal, kiosk and sign management, manure and trash removal, as well as latrine cleaning and maintenance.





## STATE FOREST MANAGEMENT

### DAMS

Maintenance of lakes, dams and spillways continues to be a priority for Division of Forestry staff. There are several small unclassified ponds that require minimal maintenance, but the Division also manages nine classified dams. These lakes and associated infrastructure are frequently inspected and the dam's Emergency Action Plan or Emergency Preparedness Plan is followed if concerning issues are developing. The Division of Forestry utilizes the Division of Engineering for technical expertise and the Division of Water Resources regulates these classified structures. Maintenance items on these dams include mowing the earthen levees, minor repair to spillway and associated structures, vegetation clearing, spillway clearing, ice mitigation, and exercising the drain valves if present. Lake maintenance may include seasonal water level lowering, inlet maintenance, snag removal, perimeter vegetation clearing, and mowing.

### SPECIAL USE

State forests may be utilized in various ways by the public, stakeholders, other government agencies, companies, etc. There are laws, rules, and policies that dictate how the Division evaluates and grants permission for these land-use requests.

One of the most common venues for allowing a special use is the issuance of a "special use permit." When relevant, an interested party would complete a special use permit application. It would then be evaluated by Division staff, and if approved, a permit for that use would be issued. These are commonly issued for short-term events in which one or more of the "forest rules" would need to be waived in order for the event to take place. In some cases, the Division may require an application fee, proof of insurance, and a surety bond. These events include, but are not limited to:

- Competitive trail races
- Large groups utilizing recreation trails
- Short term access across state forest property to private land or utility lines
- Research
- Events such as weddings, group tours, group camp use
- Filming
- Geocaches
- Concessions taking place on state forests





## STATE FOREST MANAGEMENT

### 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

**\$3+ million**

Revenue received from stumpage sales

**\$2+ million**

Revenue distributed to local governments and 12 rural school districts

**7+ million**

Board feet harvested

**1,917**

Acres harvested

## Land Management Report

### FSC AND SFI CERTIFICATION OF STATE FORESTS

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry has continued to maintain certification of state forests under the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®). Ohio's state forests are the only dual-certified forests in Ohio and have been recognized by independent third party auditors as being "well-managed." NSF-ISR, an accredited SFI certification body, and Scientific Certification Systems, an accredited FSC certification body, continue to provide auditing services under the standards. Reports of the audit findings are available on the Division's website.

### STATE FOREST TIMBER SALES

Each year, the Division of Forestry evaluates a portion of the forest to assess inventory and determine potential harvesting opportunities. Harvesting can improve the overall health and condition of the forest by removing trees of poor health and vigor that are prone to attack from insects and disease. It also can reduce the stand's susceptibility to natural disturbances such as wildfire and ice storms. Timber harvests are one way that the Division meets the requirement in the Ohio Revised Code to "bring about a profitable growth of timber."

Most state forest timber sales are advertised and sold through a competitive sealed bid process. The purchasers of our timber sales are part of Ohio's \$28.8 billion forest industry that employs more than 124,000 people. The successful purchaser is required to use an Ohio Forestry Association Certified Master Logging Company. These companies have completed training on environmentally sensitive harvesting. Division foresters supervise this process carefully by marking trees to be harvested and administering the operations as they proceed. Ohio's state forests are working forests that provide forest products and a diversity of wildlife habitats that are enjoyed by all.

### FOREST PRODUCT SALE REVENUE AND LOG PRODUCT SALES

The sale of forest products provides revenue for the Division. These sales are differentiated from standing timber sales. These products are mostly sold as cut and sorted logs rather than as standing trees. The largest contributor to this program is the log merchandising program. Merchandising sales are generated from service contractors who harvest timber and deliver the logs to a central location for Division staff to sort the logs into separate lots for sale. The Division also harvests some timber utilizing in-house staff. The Division also sells other products throughout the year. These include sawdust, lumber, and logs salvaged by state forest crews from storms or right-of-way construction.



## STATE FOREST MANAGEMENT

### STATE FOREST TIMBER SALE REVENUE & HARVESTING ACTIVITY— STUMPAGE

In FY2023, revenue received from State Forest stumpage timber sales totaled \$3,852,393.57. Revenue lags sale advertisement because purchasers pay for sales as they are harvested via cutting section control or weekly payments in pay-as-cut sales.

A portion of the revenue from state forest stumpage sales is distributed to local governments that are located where the harvest took place. The Division of Forestry is allowed to recover the costs associated with timber management. The net revenue is then divided as follows according to Ohio Revised Code Section 1503.05: 35% to the Division of Forestry and 65% to the local county. The county treasurers are instructed to distribute 50% of that amount to the local school district, 25% to the township, with the county government keeping the remaining 25% pursuant to ORC. The Division of Forestry uses its share of stumpage revenue to fund the Division's operations as well as transferring funds to the wildfire protection assistance account to fund fire departments in support of wildland fire suppression.

SALES FY2023		
	Fund R043	Fund 5090
Board Feet	8533571.05	1,846,255.08
Tons	31,443.02	12
Revenue	\$3,852,393.57	\$2,191,355.72
Acres	2,094 acres combined	
<p>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.</p>		

Silviculture Accomplished FY2023	
Thinning	736 acres
Clearcuts (under 10 acres)	95 acres
Clearcuts (more than 10 acres)	204 acres
Deferment harvests	315 acres
Shelterwood harvests	514 acres
Group Openings & Uneven-aged	230 acres
<p>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.</p>	



# 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.



## FISCAL

## FISCAL REPORT

## REVENUE BY FUND

FUND	FUND DESCRIPTION	FY 2023
5090	State Forest	10,517,022.24
5100	Property Management	19,890.53
5210	State Recreational Vehicle	622,213.97
R017	Bond Refunds	167,800.00
R043	Timber Sales Redistribution	2,386,828.74
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$13,713,755.48</b>

\*GRF funds received are not calculated as revenue

## EXPENSES

FY23 EXPENSES	FUND						
	GRF	5090	5100	5210	R017	R043	Total
<b>Payroll</b>	5,876,546.00	4,792,717.73	-	245,751.77	-	-	<b>\$10,915,015.50</b>
<b>Purchased Personal</b>	14,000	325,505.24	-	-	-	-	<b>\$339,505.24</b>
<b>Supplies &amp; Maintenance</b>	1,304,667.74	2,913,183.53	2,209.24	26,806.23	-	-	<b>\$4,246,866.74</b>
<b>Equipment</b>	20,973.90	964,049.55	-	224,967.13	-	-	<b>\$1,209,990.58</b>
<b>Subsidies &amp; Shared</b>	-	947,489.93	-	-	-	1,578,538.40	<b>\$2,526,028.33</b>
<b>Capital Items</b>	-	702,000.00	-	8,873.50	-	-	<b>\$710,873.50</b>
<b>Refunds</b>	-	5,000	-	-	172,903.00	-	<b>\$177,903.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,216,187.64</b>	<b>\$10,649,945.98</b>	<b>\$2,209.24</b>	<b>\$506,398.63</b>	<b>\$172,903.00</b>	<b>\$1,578,538.40</b>	<b>\$20,126,182.89</b>

\*Expenses for Subsidies & Shared Revenue include expenses encumbered by PO for grants expected to receive reimbursement upon completion of projects.