

ARKANSAS FORESTRY COMMISSION

Arkansas Agriculture Department



2011-2012 Annual Report

State Forester's Letter



Welcome to the Arkansas Forestry Commission's combined annual reports for 2011 and 2012. The Arkansas Forestry Commission, a division within the Arkansas Agriculture Department, has served Arkansans for more than 80 years.

It would be an understatement to say that the Commission has undergone change in the past two years. It would NOT be an overstatement to say that Commission staff performed with dedication and excellence during trying fiscal times.

2011 and 2012 were both years of drought conditions. Each year exceeded the 10-year average in number of wildfires and acres of wildfires. Your well-trained Commission personnel managed the wildfires and the wildfire seasons of '11-'12 by creating outstanding relationships with rural fire departments, federal and state agencies, and corporate landowners well in advance of 2011. If not for these relationships with our firefighting partners, the fire statistics for 2011 and 2012 would be exponentially higher. I commend Commission personnel and our partners for a job well done.

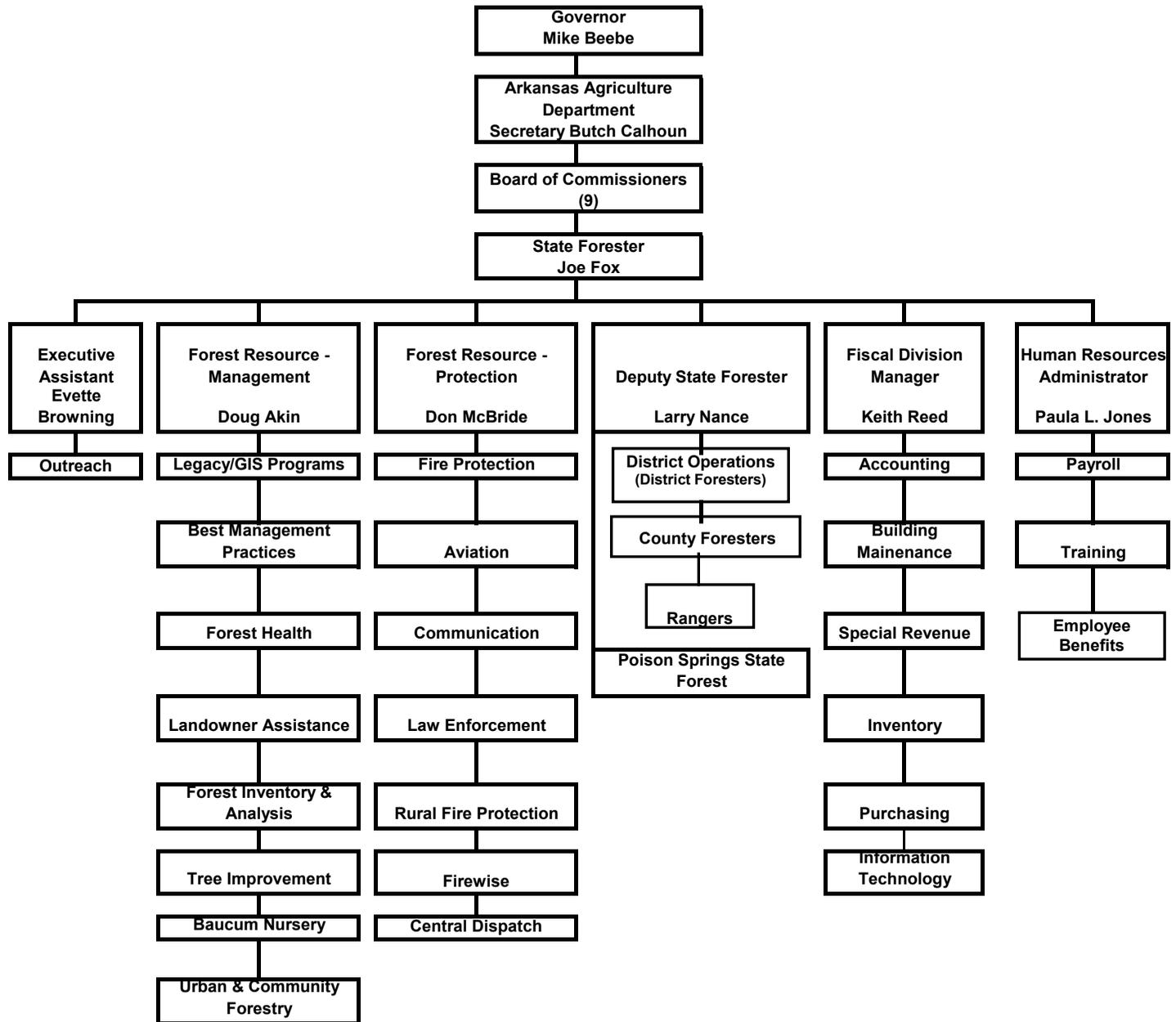
But that's not all! 2012 saw Baucum Nursery sell a record number of hardwood seedlings. In '11 and '12 agency rangers and foresters served and assisted hundreds of landowners with planning and forest practices on tens of thousands of acres. The Rural Fire Program sent 390 firefighting vehicles to VFDs all over Arkansas. Our urban foresters organized tree planting and other projects that scored more than 40,000 volunteer hours. Our mobile and handheld radio systems were completely renewed. Law enforcement recovered more than \$700,000 in timber theft restitution for landowners. The outstanding list continues in the following pages.

2012 was the fifth straight year of declining revenue for the Commission. We lost more than 60 positions and merged District 9 into Districts 6 and 8 that year. Today we are a lean, well-trained wildland firefighting and forest management agency. The 2011 and 2012 story follows. I urge you to read about our people toward the end of this report; it's an impressive story of dedication and service. Even so, we will strive to improve in the years to come.

Please enjoy our report to Gov. Mike Beebe and you, the citizens we serve.

Sincerely,
 Joe S. Fox
 State Forester

Arkansas Forestry Commission - Organizational Chart



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FORESTRY
COMMISSION
2011-2012



FOREST RESOURCE PROTECTION

The Arkansas Forestry Commission is responsible for protection of 18.8 million acres of forestland in Arkansas. The Forest Resource Protection division manages seven program service areas to provide resource protection to the forested and rural areas of the state. These are: fire protection, aviation, communications, law enforcement, rural fire protection, Firewise, and central dispatch.

Fire Protection

Foresters and rangers in the eight districts are involved daily in one or more of the four key activities of fire protection: prevention, pre-suppression, detection, and suppression.

Improvement in fire protection is often hard to measure considering the many variables that influence yearly fire occurrence and behavior. The standard measurements of fire protection are the number of fires suppressed and acres burned.

Calendar year 2012 was above average in terms of wildfires suppressed by Commission firefighters. The 2,148 fires were considerably more than the 1,554 five-year average. Total acres burned was 34,434, also well beyond the 24,178 average for the past five years. Fire size, however, was only slightly larger – an average of 16 acres as opposed to 15.56.

The 2,435 fires suppressed by Commission firefighters during calendar year 2011 were also above the preceding five-year average of 1,560 fires. The total number of acres burned was 41,783, compared to the average of 25,257 acres. The average fire size was 17.15 acres, up from the five-year average of 16.2 acres.

Wildfires from 2006-2012

Year	Number of Fires	Total Area Burned*	Average Fire Size*
2006	2,461	47,172	19.16
2007	1,222	17,123	14.01
2008	846	10,626	12.50
2009	1,047	16,159	16.84
2010	2,222	35,197	15.84
'06-'10 Avg.	1,560	25,257	16.20
2011	2,435	41,783	17.16
'07-'11 Avg	1,554	24,178	15.56
2012	2,148	34,434	16.03

* Area in acres.

** Fire Cause total may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Wildfire Causes

In 2012, the leading causes of wildfires in Arkansas were debris burning and incendiary objects. Burning debris led to 28.7% of all wildfires and 21.9% of total acres burned. Incendiary objects caused 24.6% of wildfires and 31.3% of acres burned.

Debris burning and incendiary objects were also the leading causes of Arkansas wildfires in 2011. During 2011, debris burning accounted for 33.8% of wildfires and 24.4% of total acres burned, while incendiary fires accounted for 24.7% of wildfires and 39.3% of acres burned.

2011 Fire Causes

Cause of Fire	Number of Fires	Percent of Total**	Acres Burned	Percent of Total
Incendiary	602	24.7	16,434	39.30
Debris Burning	824	33.8	10,179	24.40
Smokers	51	2.1	543	1.30
Railroad	16	0.7	304	0.07
Campfire	12	0.5	97	0.20
Equipment Use	208	8.5	2,953	7.10
Children	32	1.3	108	0.30
Lightning	331	13.6	5,196	12.40
Miscellaneous	359	14.7	5,969	14.30
Total**	2,435	99.9	41,783	100

2012 Fire Causes

Cause of Fire	Number of Fires	Percent of Total	Acres Burned	Percent of Total
Incendiary	528	24.6	10,761	31.3
Debris Burning	616	28.7	7,551	21.9
Smokers	44	2.0	401	1.20
Railroad	12	0.6	50	0.10
Campfire	14	0.7	141	0.40
Equipment Use	230	10.7	3,655	10.60
Children	28	1.3	330	1.00
Lightning	325	15.1	5,594	16.20
Miscellaneous	351	16.3	5,941	17.3
Total**	2,120	100	34,424	100

Fire lane construction is a pre-suppression service provided to landowners for a fee. Upon receiving an application from a landowner, the Commission will build or maintain fire lanes for \$85 per hour. This is the total charge for a tractor-plow, two people and transportation. During FY 2011, the Commission did 217 fire lane construction projects, constructing 252 miles of fire lane. During FY 2012, 173 fire lane projects were completed for a total of 173 miles.

The Commission has 104 firefighting units made up of a bulldozer and transport truck. These bulldozers are used to cut firebreaks to stop ongoing fires. The Commission has 69 bulldozers equipped with environmental cabs which provide added protection for the operator.

Due to budget constraints, there were no equipment purchases during FY 2011. During FY 2012, one JD550 bulldozer was purchased.

Aviation

The aviation department supports each of the eight Arkansas Forestry Commission districts through aerial fire detection, timber damage surveys, insect and disease surveys, as well as cooperating with other state and federal agencies. Aviation operates 16 aircraft statewide with four full-time pilots. Part-time pilots are used to supplement during periods of high fire danger. All Commission pilots hold at least a commercial pilot's certificate with instrument privileges obtained through the Federal Aviation Administration.

Six of the aircraft are state-owned and 10 are federally owned. Two Aero Commander twin-engine planes are utilized in an air attack role, coordinating air tanker suppression aircraft, and 14 single-engine aircraft are used for fire detection, damage surveys and other forestry related needs.

All aircraft are maintained to FAA standards and upgrades to avionics are completed as technology advances. Logbooks, maintenance records, general condition, and appearance of all aircraft are thoroughly and routinely examined to maintain a high standard of safety. During 2011, the aviation department flew 3,521 hours and in 2012 the department flew 2,078 hours while detecting wildfires, timber damage, and other forestry-related purposes.



Communications

To dispatch fire crews, the Commission operates 46 communications towers, 12 base stations at the central dispatch center in Malvern and a base station at each work center. In addition, the Commission has access to the



Arkansas Wireless Information Network (AWIN), which includes an AWIN base station located in each district office and two additional units in Central Dispatch. Dispatchers maintain communication with the Commission's field personnel, as well as the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management's communications center, each county's Office of Emergency Management, and local and volunteer fire departments. In 2011, the Commission replaced all 300 handheld radios with new units capable of meeting the future FCC mandate for narrowband digital technology. In 2012, 325 VHF mobile radios were replaced with equipment compatible with the new handheld radios. The Commission continues to move closer to achieving the ability to provide statewide dispatching on the VHF radio system from Central Dispatch. In addition, numerous tower locations have been upgraded to high performance antenna systems; the remaining locations will be upgraded into 2013.

Law Enforcement



The Commission has three forest investigators and 12 district law enforcement officers. The district law enforcement officers are rangers and

foresters that must handle law enforcement as an additional duty. Arkansas Code Annotated 20-22-301 gives the Commission the authority to enforce the state's laws pertaining to unlawful dumping, timber theft, forest fires, woods arson, logging equipment theft and vandalism, all of which have long been problems for Arkansas's forest landowners and loggers. The Commission has aggressively sought prosecution of violators to deter such crimes. Rangers with law enforcement

responsibility are required to take annual law enforcement training – 40 hours for armed district law enforcement officers and investigators, who are also required to certify with firearms, and 16 hours for unarmed officers. All officers attended firearms training; one officer completed training to become a firearms instructor.

In FY 2011, the Commission worked 70 dumping cases, 83 timber theft cases, 168 fire cases, and seven equipment vandalism cases, as well as several internal investigations and thefts of Commission property, for a total of 328 cases.

In FY 2011, law enforcement conducted arrests on felony cases and recovered more than \$250,000 in restitution to landowners. The efforts of the law enforcement personnel, through citations and suppression costs, collected \$7,588 in fines and \$12,914 in suppression costs, totaling \$20,502. Officers also patrolled state forest land during deer season. Officers assisted in several search and rescue efforts and several emergency response incidents throughout the state.

In FY 2012 the Commission worked 51 dumping cases, 138 fire cases, 81 timber theft cases, and four equipment vandalism cases, as well as one internal investigation for a total of 275 cases.

In FY 2012 law enforcement conducted arrests on felony cases and recovered more than \$449,236 in restitution to land owners. Law enforcement collected \$4,688 in fines and \$16,507 in suppression costs, a total of \$21,195. Officers also patrolled state forest land during deer season to provide contact information to remote campers in case of emergencies. Officers assisted in search and rescue and emergency response incidents throughout the state.

Fire Weather and Prescribed Burning

The Arkansas Forestry Commission fire weather supervisor keeps information on prescribed burns to meet the voluntary smoke management guidelines and forecasts fire weather to give fire suppression and prescribed burning personnel the latest weather information to assist in managing prescribed

burns and wildfires. In calendar year 2011, a total of 1,315 prescribed burns were recorded for 246,467 acres, in calendar year 2012 that number was 1,200 fires for 235,337 acres.

2011 Prescribed Burns

Landowner	No. Fires	Acres Burned
Private	229	12,515
Industrial	503	34,767
State Gov't	258	28,341
Federal Gov't	325	170,844
Total	1,315	246,467

2012 Prescribed Burns

Landowner	No. Fires	Acres Burned
Private	160	10,249
Industrial	488	40,961
State Gov't	253	21,976
Federal Gov't	299	162,151
Total	1,200	235,337

Rural Fire Protection

Rural Fire Protection serves the needs of rural Arkansas fire departments as well as the repair of Commission firefighting vehicles and tractors. Communities need prepared, well-equipped fire departments. Rural Fire Protection provides required wildland training courses for volunteer fire departments (VFDs) and administers a federal grant program to assist VFDs with the purchase of firefighting equipment. The office further assists VFDs through the provision of firefighting equipment and vehicles through federal surplus programs and interest-free loans. Federal excess vehicles destined for VFDs are evaluated and outfitted for initial service at the Commission's maintenance facility.

FY 2011

- Provided 248 fire fighting vehicles to VFDs for a total value of \$7,606,447.
- Assisted 241 communities with \$1,000 VFA grants for purchasing fire fighting equipment totaling \$241,000.
- Financed 28 interest-free loans to communities for fire fighting equipment totaling \$332,514.
- Conducted 90 8-hour Wildland Firefighting Suppression Training, for a total of 720 VFDs, and 2,180 students certified.



FY 2012

- Provided 142 firefighting vehicles to VFDs for a total value of \$8,665,061.
- Assisted 100 communities with \$1,000 VFA grants for purchasing firefighting equipment totaling \$100,000.
- Financed 25 interest-free loans to communities for firefighting equipment totaling \$304,460.
- Conducted 73 8-hour Wildland Firefighting Suppression Trainings for a total of 628 VFDs, and 1,723 students certified.

Firewise

The Arkansas Firewise Program leads the nation in recognized communities. Currently there are 115 recognized Firewise communities. Firewise has helped groups create 248 community wildfire preparedness plans (CWPP). These plans are used to help communities and fire departments become aware of wildfire danger and make plans for education and mitigation to reduce risk as well as prepare for wildfire in their area.

During 2012 the Firewise team worked with 70 fire departments in their Firewise education and mitigation efforts, with 23 of these departments receiving risk assessment training. The Firewise team has partnered with the Arkansas Fire Training Academy to gain accreditation for the Firewise Risk Assessment training to count towards the 16-hour requirement for structural firefighters in Arkansas. An emphasis was placed on supporting existing communities and retention of these communities in the program.

Outreach opportunities included the Arkansas Firefighters and Fire Chiefs Convention as well as the Arkansas EMT As-



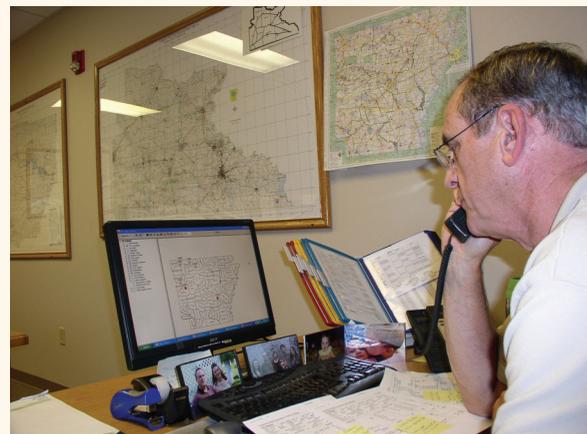
sociation Convention, and worked with the Arkansas Municipal League, the Arkansas Fire Boat School, and continued cooperative efforts with other county, state, and federal agencies.

Firewise is active in 32 of the 75 counties. The goal over the next five years is to have at least one active Firewise community in each of Arkansas's counties.

Central Dispatch

The dispatch center provides a 24/7 point of contact for the public, Commission firefighters, volunteer fire departments, and state and federal agencies.

Two statewide telephone WATS lines are in place for reporting wildfires and prescribed burns. The central dispatch center in Malvern dispatches full-time for AFC districts 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7. Districts 3 and 8 do their own dispatching during working hours. During nights, weekends, and holidays, the central dispatch dispatches all districts. The Commission uses a computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system. This system allows better coordination of firefighting efforts, resources, and faster translation of latitude and longitude into legal descriptions for dispatching purposes than the previous system.



FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Forest Resource Management Division provides technical information and assistance to the state's private forest landowners, partners, and communities to enhance economic, social, and environmental benefits.

Forest Legacy

The Forest Legacy Program helps prevent privately owned forests from conversion to non-forest uses. Forests are protected through land acquisitions or conservation easement acquisitions. The Forest Legacy Program is funded through a nationally competitive grant process overseen by the U.S. Forest Service and administered by the Commission.

During FY 2012, the 741-acre Maumelle Water Excellence project, located in West Pulaski County along the Big Maumelle River, was funded by Congress for \$4 million. Central Arkansas Water, a public utility, purchased the Maumelle Water Excellence tract from the Trust for Public Lands in July 2010 and will be reimbursed by the project grant.



Two Forest Legacy project proposals requesting funds for the purchase of 1,448 acres were submitted in FY 2011. Two new Forest Legacy project proposals requesting funds for the purchase of 4,116 acres were submitted in FY 2012.

Geographic Information System

The Arkansas Forestry Commission's GIS coordinator evaluated the forest damage caused by seven tornados during FY 2011. Aerial mapping surveys and aerial photo analysis estimated that 17,564 forested acres containing 9.73 million merchantable trees were destroyed along 161 miles of

tornado paths. To foster salvage operations, Commission personnel notified forest landowners that damage occurred on their property.

Following a severe flood in FY 2011, the Commission performed an aerial mapping survey of Arkansas levees for the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). GIS data showed 19 segments of levees totaling 2.5 miles in need of repair. During FY 2012, the Commission performed an aerial mapping survey of dams for the NRCS. GIS data depicting the condition of 96 dams was produced to determine Arkansas's earthquake preparedness.

Best Management Practices

The Arkansas Forestry Commission is the designated management agency for the silvicultural section of the Arkansas Water Quality Plan. The Commission provides Best Management Practices (BMP) and manages six areas of concern:

- BMP training and education for landowners, loggers, and foresters
- Courtesy Exams
- Biennial monitoring of BMP implementation on silvicultural sites throughout the state
- Resolution of timber harvesting/water quality complaints
- Cooperation, coordination, and participation with other state and federal agencies
- Participation in water quality grants

Highlights for FY 2011 and FY 2012 are grouped by the six areas.

BMP Training and Education

Continuing education of the forestry community is the driving force in maintaining a successful rate of BMP implementation. Statewide BMP implementation monitoring provides valuable information to direct training efforts.

Technical Training

In 2011 the Water Quality staff conducted three regional BMP technical trainings for the NRCS. More than 75 district conservationists, soil conservationists, and soil technicians attended the trainings. Also in 2011, 450 loggers and forest industry foresters were trained in 12 different sessions. In 2012, seven BMP technical training sessions trained more than 425 loggers and forest industry foresters.



In May of 2011 the Commission cooperated with the Arkansas Timber Producers Association at the In-Woods Forestry Exposition. The three-day outdoor exposition drew approximately 2,750 loggers, foresters, landowners, and their families.

The Commission trained 67 foresters in Stream Side Management harvesting techniques in FY 2012. The Commission also partnered with The Nature Conservancy to conduct a roads maintenance workshop for 50 foresters in Clinton.

In 2011 staff conducted three BMP training sessions for 112 forest landowners. In 2012 the Commission conducted two training sessions for 94 forest landowners. Staff also taught Lead Arkansas students in FY 2011 and FY 2012.

In 2012 the staff made a presentation to 156 landowners, watershed managers, associations, and agency personnel at the Arkansas Watershed Advisory Group's (AWAG) Watershed Conference at the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View.

Courtesy Exams

In 2011 the Commission held seven courtesy exams in three counties and in 2012 it held 14 exams in eight counties. Courtesy exams provide an opportunity for Water Quality staff to meet with foresters and loggers and discuss BMP implementation in the field. Manuals, brochures, and fact sheets are provided to participants to assist in instruction.

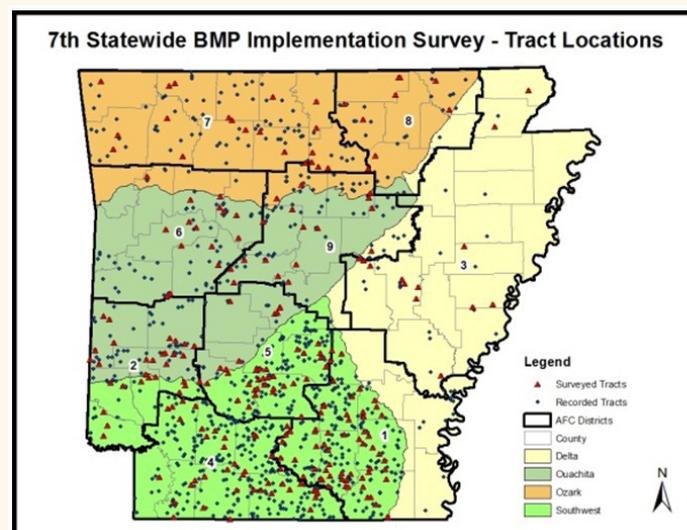
Statewide BMP Implementation Assessments

In 1996, Arkansas adopted BMP implementation survey procedures developed by the Southern Group of State Foresters titled *Silviculture Best Management Practices Implementation Monitoring, a Framework for State Forestry Agencies*. This document provides a framework for monitoring BMP imple-



mentation which is statistically sound, objective, and consistent with BMP program efforts in all 13 southern states.

In 2011, the Commission completed its 7th BMP Implementation Survey. The Commission surveyed 241 randomly selected sites totaling 23,297 acres. The BMP implementation rate on the sites monitored was 89 percent, a 3 percent increase from the 6th survey. The full implementation survey report can be found on the Commission web page.



Resolution of Logging Complaints

The Commission receives from 10 to 38 silviculture harvesting complaints annually. The Commission processes the complaints and makes a determination if a water quality impairment or potential water quality impairment exists. Then it makes BMP recommendations to correct the impairment. In 2011 there were 16 complaints. Seven were valid. All seven complaints were resolved by implementing BMPs.

In 2012 there were 11 complaints, four of which were valid. All four complaints were resolved by implementing BMPs.

Cooperation with Other Agencies and Groups

In 2011 the Commission participated in the annual Southeast Southern Group of State Foresters Water Resource Managers Conference in Auburn, Ala.

In 2012 the Commission hosted the Four State (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas) BMP Conference and also participated in all of the Arkansas Watershed Advisory Group meetings. The Commission participates and provides BMP reports to all the Arkansas Forestry Association's Forest Practices Committees, and the Ouachita Timber Producers.

BMP Grant Success

The Commission was awarded an EPA Clean Water Act Section 319(h) grant which began in October 2008 and was completed in September 2011. The use of federal funds enables the Commission to expand the scope of its program to include tasks such as conducting an aerial survey for the BMP implementation survey, funding the multi-state forestry conference, staff development, developing the BMP courtesy exam service, and printing BMP brochures and the BMP manual "Best Management Practices for Water Quality Protection."

Forest Health

The Arkansas Forestry Commission Forest Health Program provides technical assistance to Commission personnel and landowners regarding the prevention, detection, evaluation, and suppression of forest insects and diseases.

Southern Pine Beetle Prevention & Restoration

The Commission participated in the regional southern pine beetle (SPB) pheromone trap survey. Trapping results, which predicted a low or stable population, proved to be accurate. Detection flights were conducted on slightly more than 764,000 acres with no SPB spots detected in 2011. Detection flights over 3.8 million acres in eight counties in 2012 detected no SPBs. Detection flights are conducted over alternate counties each year to cover the entire SPB area with less

flight time. As long as trap catches predict low SPB numbers and initial flights don't detect any southern pine beetles, this system will continue.

In 2011 the Southern Pine Beetle Prevention and Restoration Program (SPB PRP) assisted with 53 planting projects on 2,255 acres and 131 thinning projects on 5,498 acres for a cost of \$787,500. In 2012, 99 planting projects on 4,303 acres and 90 thinning projects on 3,136 acres were funded for \$675,000.

There were 159 management plans written in 2011 by Commission foresters for 7,847 acres within SPB PRP projects. In 2012, 161 plans for 7,053 acres were written.



Gypsy Moth

The Commission supports the State Plant Board in its efforts to detect and eradicate gypsy moth infestations within the state. Thirty-five gypsy moth traps were distributed to each district and placed at various locations. Over the last six years, only one moth has been caught in any of the more than 4,500 traps set in the state.

Invasive Species

The Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission (ANHC) is a participant with the Commission in controlling invasive woody species in some of their exemplary natural areas. In 2011, the ANHC completed projects totaling 336 acres in five of these areas. In 2012 it received another grant to eradicate privet from the 210-acre Cove Creek area in Faulkner County. The eradication sites are open for demonstration and education purposes.

The emerald ash borer came to the forefront as an invasive threat in 2008 due to its rapid spread in the U.S. In 2010, the U.S. Forest Service and the Commission girdled nine trees (in three groups of three) to act as emerald ash borer trap trees. Examination in the fall revealed no emerald ash borer.



In 2011, the Commission repeated the test in Clay County. One tree in each group was cut in the fall of 2011 and examined by the U.S. Forest Service and no emerald ash borers were found. Three were examined in the fall of 2012 and no emerald ash borers were found. Three will be examined in 2013.

Forest Health Program

During FY 2011-12, 87 landowner assists on 1,313 acres were recorded; 33 field staff personnel received forest health training during the annual ranger training session; and the forest health specialist produced seven news articles.

In general, insect and disease conditions were normal. Eastern tent caterpillar numbers were abundant in the spring, and fall webworm peaked as usual. Two years of extended drought and high temperatures created ideal conditions for Ips beetles. Dead pine trees were evident in all parts of the state. Hypoxylon canker in oak trees was reported in all areas of state in 2010 and 2012. The legacy of the January 2009 ice storm across north Arkansas will impact the timber resources for years to come since damaged trees are more susceptible to insect attack, while broken tops and limbs opened trees to decay which will progressively spread, resulting in degradation of timber value and increasing potential for breakage in high winds.

Current fiscal year plans include fully utilizing the U.S. Forest Service remote sensing systems to review broad areas for changes in “greenness” to locate insect and/or diseases activity. The systems have promise to quickly and effectively enable the detection of various conditions.

The Commission will continue to provide information on most common pests during the appropriate season – for example, on the eastern tent caterpillar in the spring when the pest is active.

Landowner Assistance

The Commission works with landowners to encourage sound forest management practices in order to insure the sustainability of Arkansas forests for future generations. These practices enhance economic, recreational, wildlife, soil and water conservation, and aesthetic values. The Commission also works with forest industry, universities, private forest consultants, private non-profit agencies, and governmental natural resource agencies for forest management and sustainability of Arkansas forests.

The Commission administers the Forest Stewardship Program and is involved with several other programs that promote and provide cost-share incentives to private non-industrial forest

landowners (PNIFLOs) for tree planting and other forest management practices. It also works with industry and government landowners to promote the use of best management practices to prevent soil erosion and water degradation.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for landowners who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land. Program administration of WHIP is provided under the National Resources Conservation Service. By targeting wildlife habitat projects on all lands and aquatic areas, WHIP provides cost share assistance to conservation minded landowners who are unable to meet the specific eligibility requirements of other USDA conservation programs.

In FY 2011, the Commission provided 18 management plans on 1,354 acres to private nonindustrial forest landowners. It conducted 13 prescribed burns on 606 acres, and a total of 57 landowners were assisted on 2,797 acres.

In FY 2012, 20 management plans for 1,128 acres were provided to landowners. There were 20 prescribed burns, and 35 landowners were assisted on 2,047 acres.

Wetlands Reserve Program

The Wetlands Reserve Program provides landowners cost-share funds and/or land payments to restore wetlands. Wetlands converted to cropland prior to Dec. 23, 1985, are eligible for the program, which is administered by the NRCS.

In FY 2011, 13 landowners planted 1,756 acres of hardwood seedlings. Planting inspections were accomplished on seven landowner properties comprising 821 acres. The Commission assisted NRCS in checking 36 tracts for seedling survival on some 4,638 acres, and provided 12 landowner assists on 3,064 acres.

In FY 2012, 14 landowners planted 1,751 acres of hardwood seedlings, and planting inspections were conducted for 10 tracts comprising 7,578 acres. The Commission assisted NRCS in checking 15 tracts for seedling survival rates, totaling 2,405 acres, and 70 landowner assists were performed on 28,755 acres. The Commission also monitored 44 WRP easements for compliance.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers which promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants with installation or implementation of structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

A portion of the state-allocated EQIP funds was dedicated to forestry practices. EQIP addresses forest protection, forest health, and forest water quality. Forest practices include firebreaks, prescribed burning, fencing, forest stand improvement, invasive species control, tree planting, water bars, stream crossing structures, culverts, seeding and stream bank stabilization.

EQIP offers contracts to provide incentive payments and cost-shares to implement conservation practices. EQIP activities are carried out according to a plan that identifies the appropriate conservation practice or practices to address the resource concerns. The practices are subject to Natural Resources Conservation Service technical standards adapted for local conditions.

In FY 2011, 213 EQIP landowner assists were given on 13,286 acres, and two EQIP landowners with 56 acres were referred to forest consultants and other resource professionals. The Commission prepared or revised 125 management plans on 8,190 acres for landowners to implement EQIP eligible practices. Planting inspections were done on 101 landowner properties comprising 3,641 acres. Survival checks were conducted on 93 landowner properties comprising 2,756 acres. Prescribed burns were performed on 40 tracts that totaled 2,024 acres, and 26 fire breaks totaling 32 miles were installed or maintained for landowners.

In FY 2012, 197 EQIP landowner assists were made on 10,848 acres, and four landowners with 314 acres were referred to consultants. The Commission prepared or revised 108 management plans for 6,093 acres to implement EQIP eligible practices. Planting inspections were conducted for 123 landowner properties covering 5,443 acres, and survival checks were done for 116 landowner properties comprising 4,985 acres. Prescribed burns were performed on 24 tracts totaling 1,087 acres, and 32 firebreaks totaling 35 miles were installed or maintained. Forest stand improvement was also performed on two tracts totaling 64 acres.

Other Landowner Assistance

In addition to federal programs, accomplishments during 2011 and 2012 include the following.

- Provided 2,062 landowner assists on 85,206 acres.
- Prepared or revised 307 forest management plans covering 24,424 acres.
- Selectively marked for harvesting 55 acres of timberland for three landowners.
- Prescribed burned 17,307 acres for site preparation, fuel hazard reduction, or wildlife habitat enhancement purposes for 243 landowners.
- Conducted 33 forestry field demonstrations for landowners.
- Inspected or re-inspected 151 landowner properties covering 26,458 acres that are enrolled in the Tree Farm System or Forest Stewardship Program.
- Provided planting inspections for 18 landowners who planted pine and hardwood seedlings on 1,242 acres.

Conservation Reserve Program

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) began in March 1986 and was designed to retire erodible cropland from agricultural production and to conserve soil. Landowners can make applications for eligible crop- or pastureland at any time of the year. Programs include vegetative cover for established trees, riparian buffers, wetland restoration, and bottomland timber establishment on wetlands. The Commission wrote management plans for 474 landowners which resulted in forest management recommendations for continuous sign-up CRP on 29,990 acres. Three hundred sixty eight landowners planted 1,180 acres of pine seedlings and 19,313 acres of hardwood seedlings in continuous sign-up practices. The 43rd general CRP sign-up included 107 plans.

Forest Stewardship Program

The Commission works with a diverse group of partners and professionals to conserve, protect, and enhance Arkansas's forests through the Forest Stewardship Program. The program is an opportunity for private non-industrial forest landowners interested in managing their property for wildlife, recreation, soil and water conservation, agro-forestry, or for timber purposes.

This is conducted through the development and implementation of comprehensive forest stewardship management plans by Commission foresters, private consulting foresters, private wildlife biologists, and soil and water professionals for landowners. This comprehensive plan provides technical assistance and site specific recommendations to provide guidance to the landowner to utilize federal funds through the

many state and federal cost-share assistance programs in management of their forest lands. These recommendations will not only enhance multiple resources on their property during their lifetime but help benefit future generations.

Arkansas has 4,484 landowners under the Forest Stewardship Program owning 823,587 acres, and 1,267 certified landowners with 277,219 acres being maintained under the Forest Stewardship Program guidelines. In FY 2011 and 2012, a total of 663 plans were written or revised, encompassing 91,475 acres; two Commission personnel and nine consulting foresters received training on the stewardship program. Other accomplishments during FY 2011 and 2012 include the following.



- A total of 308 landowners with a total of 61,942 acres were certified or recertified as forest stewards.
- Made referrals to forest consultants for 119 landowners with 18,581 acres.
- Performed 600 landowner assists covering 95,422 acres.
- Conducted prescribed burns on 1,440 acres for 15 landowners.

Forest Stewardship Certification

The Forest Steward or Stewardship Forest designation is an award honoring landowners for implementing their Forest Stewardship Management Program in the true spirit of stewardship. The nominating forester or resource professional can schedule an appropriate recognition event, agreeable with the landowner, for presentation of a certificate signed by the state forester and a Forest Stewardship sign.

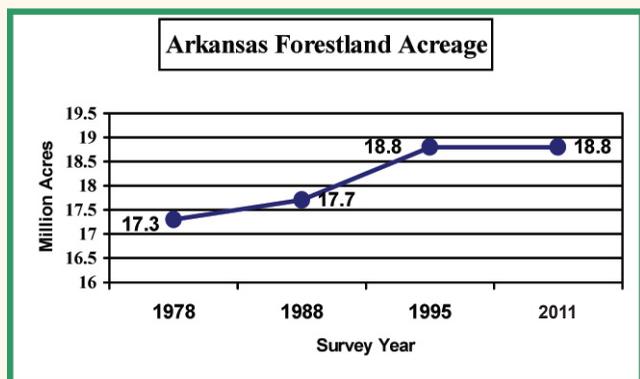
Property can be nominated for certification as a Stewardship Forest at any time. A subcommittee of the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee or the state coordinator makes final determination based on management objectives and their achievement.

This certification program is ongoing and the property is inspected every five years. Those who fail to maintain the Stewardship Forest criteria at any time will be given one year to correct management deficiencies or lose their certification.



Forest Inventory and Analysis

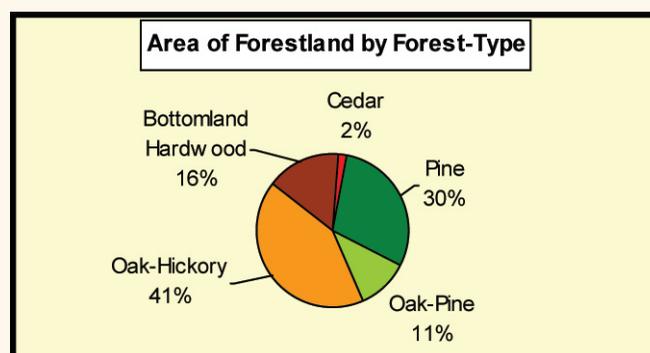
The Forest Inventory and Analysis program has been collecting forest resource data in Arkansas since the 1930s. Forest data is obtained from permanent inventory survey plots located primarily on a 3-mile by 3-mile grid across the state. There are a total of 5,734 survey plots in Arkansas. Commission foresters collect measurements on 20 percent of the plots each year, which provides annual updates about forest growth, damage, mortality, health, biomass, ownership trends, timber availability, and land use trends.



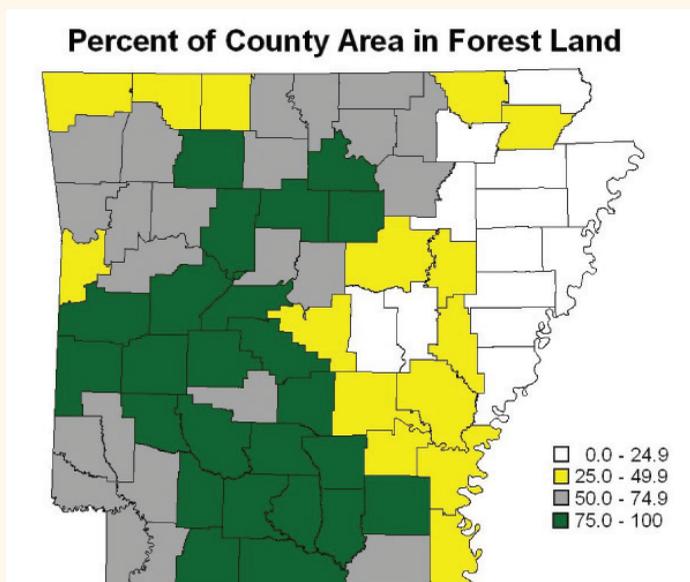
Prior to 1999, the U.S. Forest Service conducted all the forest inventory surveys in the state. Beginning in 1999, the Arkansas Forestry Commission entered into a cooperative agreement with the Forest Service in which the Commission would conduct the field measurements and the Forest Service would continue producing statistical reports from the data. The latest inventory data can be found at the National Forest Inventory Program Data and Tools website (<http://www.fia.fs.fed.us/tools-data/>).

The Commission's Forest Inventory and Analysis program consists of one forest inventory coordinator and six forest inventory specialists. These foresters work full time collecting

research data and must maintain a minimum quality control/quality assurance grading average of 87 percent.



The Commission's forest inventory program collected data from 756 plots in FY 2011 and 884 plots in FY 2012. The quality control/quality assurance grading average for the two FYs was 97 percent. During those FYs, the 2010 and 2011 annual surveys were also completed and the data was posted on the National Forest Inventory Program Data and Tools website. The 2010 and 2011 factsheets are available on the Southern Research Station website (<http://srsfia2.fs.fed.us/states/arkansas.shtml>).



Tree Improvement

The Arkansas Forestry Commission's Tree Improvement program provides landowners with the highest possible genetic gain pine and hardwood seed, which results in seedlings with the greatest chance of survival and the best growth potential.

The Commission works aggressively and innovatively to meet the reforestation needs of Arkansas's private non-industrial forest landowners through its breeding and testing program and orchard management practices.

All production orchards are managed for maximum seed production at a reasonable cost. All cultural practices are applied according to specifications provided by the Western Gulf Forest Tree Improvement Program (WGFTIP). Maintenance and measurements are conducted on all the pine and hardwood progeny tests. Only the best clones in the Commission's loblolly and shortleaf pine seed orchards are harvested. The Commission sells the balance of cones and seed. In FY 2011 the program sold 162 bushels of loblolly pine cones, and in FY 2012 the program sold 159 bushels.

Seed Sales

	FY '11	FY '12
Species	pounds sold	pounds sold
Loblolly 25-30% gain	336.18	38.82
Loblolly 30-35% gain	0	26.14
Loblolly 35-40% gain	0	71.24
Improved shortleaf	33	0
Advanced generation shortleaf	0	24.42
Regular shortleaf	95.5	0
Total	464.68	160.62

Cone and Seed Collection

The Commission harvested 536.25 bushels of cones in FY 2011 for a yield of 905 pounds of improved loblolly pine seed, which is a rate of 1.69 pounds of seed per bushel. In FY 2012, 329 bushels of cones, yielding 400 pounds of seed, were harvested for a rate of 1.22 pounds per bushel.

The fifth and sixth harvest of the advanced generation genetically improved shortleaf orchard yielded 43.5 bushels of cones in FY 2011, which produced 27 pounds of improved (advanced generation) shortleaf pine seed. In FY 2012, 37 bushels were harvested, producing nine pounds of seed.

The Commission collected 2,000 pounds of sawtooth oak seed in both FY 2011 and 2012. The first and second harvest of improved cherrybark oak produced 2,700 pounds of seed in FY 2011 and 416 pounds in FY 2012. In FY 2013, the Commission plans to harvest its first crop of improved Nuttall oak seed.



Baucum Nursery

Baucum Nursery produces, stores, and distributes pine and hardwood seedlings of the highest quality, with the genetic background to provide the greatest chance of survival and the highest possible growth potential. These seedlings are sold primarily to private non-industrial landowners for afforestation and reforestation purposes.

In FY 2011, the nursery produced 5.75 million hardwood seedlings and 2.75 million pine seedlings. The nursery sold 5.45 million hardwood and 2.66 million pine seedlings to landowners. In FY 2012, the number of hardwood seedlings produced was 8.06 million and the number of pine seedlings was 5.14 million, with sales of 5.68 million hardwood and 3.72 million pine seedlings.

During the production of the seedlings, nursery employees applied fertilizer per soil test results, fumigated soil, and applied pesticides and herbicides to control weeds, diseases, and insects. Approximately one hundred tons of soil amendments, plus cover crops on layout fields, were used to maintain soil productivity each year.

In FYs 2010 and 2011, two new products were introduced for the Commission's changing customer base. Individual seedling species are now available in bundles of 25 and wild-life and beautification bundles of 10 seedlings are available (two each of five species). In FY 2012 three more products were added: improved cherrybark oak seedlings; containerized improved shortleaf pine, and family blocks of loblolly pine.

Loblolly pine was available in grades of one star (25-32 percent genetic gain), two star (33-40 percent), and three star (41-51 percent). In addition, landowners are now able to purchase a single family within each of the star-graded options which will provide a more consistent seedling crop as well as a more uniform crop throughout the harvest years.



Urban and Community Forestry

The Urban and Community Forestry Program is designed to assist communities, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions with the necessary tools, information and technology to promote forest stewardship in their communities. Engaging these groups helps build capacity in the program and encourages urban forestry at the local level. To meet the growing demand for technical assistance, the Arkansas Forestry Commission provides assistance through district arborists and urban forestry representatives in its eight districts. These individuals work closely with Commission urban foresters and their districts, communities, schools, non-profits, and other organizations to increase public awareness of the value of community trees. Technical and educational services help improve standards for urban forestry management. They include tree protection for water quality and wildlife habitat, land use planning for greener neighborhoods, and proper planting and care by municipal employees, contractors and volunteers.

In order to organize and deliver many of its educational programs the Commission partners with the Arkansas Urban Forestry Council, a non-profit with members across the state. The Commission also partnered with the Northwest Arkansas



Regional Storm Water Education Program and the Illinois River Watershed. The groups held two conferences. A Green Infrastructure Conference educated a broad mix of professionals as

an introduction to storm water management, green infrastructure techniques and nutrient management, and laid the groundwork for additional training opportunities. A one-day Green Development Workshop educated individuals who work with land use changes and water quality. The 53 registrants included professional developers, engineers, architects, landscape architects, contractors, city planners, and representatives from watershed groups and government agencies. This workshop detailed how to be proactive in the planning and development arena with conservation techniques. The workshop was specific to development and the prevention of non-point source pollution and how to use the existing landscape during the projects entirety to address this issue.

Forty-six municipalities recertified as a Tree City USA and three college campuses achieved the Tree Campus USA sta-



tus: The University of Arkansas at Fort Smith, University of Arkansas at Monticello, and Ouachita Baptist University. Trees can significantly reduce the amount of energy a campus or community needs to generate for cooling. Planting and maintaining trees on campus and in the community reduces carbon dioxide in the atmo-

sphere, which is one of the important roles that trees play. On campus, green spaces give students and faculty a setting where they can relax. By meeting the annual standards and being recognized as a Tree Campus USA, an atmosphere is created which not only benefits the environment but also instills pride in the students, faculty, and community.

FY 2011 & FY 2012 Highlights

- Total number of residents in communities that were provided educational, technical or financial assistance for projects such as developing green infrastructure plans, planting and pruning projects, reforestation after natural disasters, organizing tree or beautification committees, discussing tree management in parks and streets, tree inventories, workshops and organizing Arbor Day ceremonies:

2011	2012
1,486,451	1,497,199

- Percent of the population living in communities that are involved in urban forestry programs to protect and maintain their forests:

2011	2012
37%	37%

- Volunteer hours served participating in tree planting projects, serving on tree boards, organizing workshops and taking part in training programs:

2011	2012
19,858 hours	20,475 hours

POISON SPRINGS STATE FOREST

Poison Springs State Forest is a demonstration forest located in western Ouachita and eastern Nevada counties. The state forest provides the Commission with yearly revenue while demonstrating various forest management techniques to private non-industrial landowners.

When the Arkansas Forestry Commission purchased the Poison Springs State Forest from the U.S. Forest Service in 1957, the 19,942-acre forest had 20.24 million board feet of pine and 10.3 million board feet of hardwood. The Commission has cut timber every year since 1957 except for 2009, when sawtimber sales were skipped due to low prices. Today Poison Springs State Forest is 22,152 acres and has over 120 million board feet of pine and over 15 million board feet of hardwood. The Commission has added land to Poison Springs each year for the past several years.

The Commission used timber sale proceeds to make annual payments to the U.S. Forest Service until the original land purchase was complete. Recent land purchases were paid for primarily through grants from the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council. Timber sale proceeds provide the Commission revenue for general operations and capital equipment purchases.

Income generated from formal timber sales during FY 2011 was \$1,703,104. Income generated from formal timber sales during FY 2012 was \$929,424.

Public Use

Arkansans use Poison Springs State Forest for camping, hunting, hiking, horseback riding, and sightseeing. The Commission requires a permit for camping. Most permits are issued for the October and November deer seasons. More than 350 campsite reservations were made each year in 2011 and 2012 for the state forest's primitive campsites. There is also a public shooting range.



FY2011 Timber Income

Product	Volume*	Value
Pine Sawtimber	7,328	\$1,592,783
Hardwood Sawtimber	304	\$60,800
Misc. and Salvage		\$49,521
Non-timber income		\$655
Total		\$1,703,759

FY2012 Timber Income

Product	Volume*	Value
Pine Sawtimber	3,880	\$891,768
Hardwood Sawtimber	155	\$31,000
Misc. and Salvage		\$6,656
Non-timber income		\$769
Total		\$930,192

*Volume in thousand board feet (MBF).

Outreach

The Arkansas Forestry Commission uses different forms of outreach to reach and assist minorities and/or limited-resource customers, with goals of increasing the Commission's involvement with these landowners and their participation in programs and services.

The Commission is reaching out to all segments of society, particularly underserved populations and communities. During 2010 and 2011, 400 minority landowners (African American, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian American) were served.

The Commission's Rural Fire Protection program worked with minority volunteer fire departments across the state in 2011 and 2012.



Rural Fire Protection participated in a discussion panel on strengthening rural fire departments at the Rural Life Conference, where past Rural Fire Protection administrator

Bob Summerville was presented with the Rural Advocate of the Year award.

Other Rural Fire Protection work included acquiring a fire truck at no cost for the community of Haynes (Lee County) through the U.S. Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program.

Arkansas's Firewise program includes four minority communities.

The Commission made one minority hire from FY 2011 to FY 2012, an African American man.

Among other accomplishments in 2011 and 2012:

- Awarded interest-free loans of up to \$15,000 for equipment purchase to minority volunteer fire departments in Crawfordville (which purchased a 1989 Mack MC688 top-mount pumper), Arkansas City (a 5,000-gallon tanker truck), and



Wrightsville (a Department of Defense 1468 Freightliner turn-key tanker truck).



- Law enforcement assisted 134 minority landowners, representing a total of 4,803 acres of land, who reported timber theft, illegal dumping, or equipment vandalism.
- A Dallas County Strike Force Natural Resources Conservation Service meeting in Sparkman was attended by 33 people.
- 2011 Southwest Arkansas Small Farm Conference in Hope was attended by 260 landowners.
- Forest health specialist Jim Northum wrote an article on forest invasive species for *Minority Landowner Magazine*. The article was published as the cover story, a first for the Commission.
- The Commission's staffed educational booths at the 2011 and 2012 Rural Life Conference.
- The Commission participated in several school programs and fairs, including a children's safety fair in Batesville and Smokey Bear programs in Batesville and Fordyce.
- Urban forestry outreach included the Shade Trees On Playgrounds (STOP) program, which held a tree-planting ceremony in Newark, donated a tree for the Arbor Day event at Rose City Middle School in North Little Rock, and held a tree planting in Dumas in conjunction with Modern Woodmen of America.



Outreach Activities by District

In February 2011, Outreach Coordinator Evette Browning attended *Minority Landowner Magazine's* fifth annual conference in Raleigh, N.C., with 300 farmers and forest landowners from across the country. Through breakout sessions and interactive discussions, farmers, ranchers and forest landowners designed an intervention program to help save family farms. Farmers and forest landowners understand where the problems are and can be instrumental in fixing them. Their ideas and experiences provided the foundation for creating and building the Farm Turnaround Team.

In April 2011, Browning worked with James Stephenson and the Arkansas Land & Farm Development Corporation (ALFDC) to conduct an outreach workshop in Dermott. Doug Akin, assistant state forester for forest management, presented information on Commission services. There were 59 people in attendance.

Other accomplishments of the outreach coordinator during 2011 and 2012 include:

- Arranging two meetings with absentee landowners and Commission staff, including a site visit in Cleveland County and a business meeting at Commission headquarters, from which a summary of action items needed by the landowners was produced.
- Partnering with the ALFDC to conduct an outreach workshop in Marianna. There were 50 people in attendance.
- Completing a new U.S. Forest Service civil rights compliance review.
- In September 2011, Browning and Outreach Technician Bruce McCrackin worked with the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and the Silas H. Hunt Community Development Corporation (CDC) Small Farm Conference to make a site visit with a minority landowner in Foreman (Little River County) who was interested in learning about Commission services and planting seedlings. District Forester Mike Whelan and County Forester Charles Oholendt participated in the site visit.
- Partnering in a small-farm program with the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and Silas H. Hunt CDC. The program was held at two sites in Hempstead County and Lafayette County. The Commission provided an overview of programs and services for landowners interested in harvesting timber due to drought conditions, and information on timber management and replanting practices.

- District 1: Participated in outreach meeting in Dermott and a two day visit with absentee landlords.
- District 2: Attended an outreach meeting in New Boston, Texas, that targeted Arkansas and Texas landowners. Also participated in a site visit for a minority landowner interested in Commission programs and services.
- District 3: Assisted 19 minority landowners with forest management plans, survival checks, planting inspections, or pine thinnings. Assisted a minority landowner with a forest stewardship plan. Worked with ALFDC to develop a nature trail on its campus in Fargo (Monroe County).
- District 4: Participated in site visits for minority landowners interested in timber harvesting, management plans, and drought assistance.
- District 5: Submitted articles on Clara Craig of Sparkman (Dallas County) and Judge Larry Jr. of near Doddridge (Miller County) to *Minority Landowner Magazine* that were published in its special Farmer of the Year edition. Worked with a landowner on funding for a site preparation project to reforest 21 acres that were clear-cut. Firebreaks were completed around tract for a prescribed burn in preparation for planting loblolly pine and hardwood in the 2012 planting season.
- District 7: Hosted a Wildfire Safety Workshop in conjunction with Pine Village Fire Department in Conway. The focus of the workshop was how to create defensible space around homes. There were 25 in attendance.
- District 8: Conducted programs at grade schools, career days, and fairs and a children's safety fair in Batesville.



HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources (HR) Department is responsible for employment procedures, recruitment, employee benefits, time data entry, payroll processing, workers compensation claims, training, and safety. The HR staff works with employees on a myriad of day-to-day assists to facilitate a productive work environment.

The Arkansas General Assembly authorized 329 regular positions for FY 2011 and FY 2012; due to a reduction in force in January 2012, the authorized number of positions for FY 2012 was reduced to 284.

Safety is a topic on every staff meeting agenda in addition to routine tailgate sessions and local Commission unit safety meetings. Inspection of PPE (personal protective equipment) worn by Commission firefighters is performed in conjunction with the Fire Protection Department equipment inspections. Commission firefighters must meet annual physical fitness standards. The Commission works with the Arkansas Department of Labor to assure that all buildings and contents meet building and shop safety requirements and employees are certified in CPR and First Aid.

Employee Development

HR handles training requests and is responsible for maintaining copies of individual training records. Other departments also provide and report training that occurs within the respective department. Training in FY 2011 and FY 2012 was accomplished by several different methods ranging from the traditional classroom method, field demonstrations, hands on or practical, and distance/on-line self study training.

All Commission employees, both new and experienced continued to remain in compliance with training directives of the Department of Homeland Security, which apply to employees with emergency response responsibilities.

All of this training is available by distance learning from the FEMA Emergency Management Institute. More than 90 Commission employees completed this training during FY 2011 and FY 2012.

Employees are required to take specific training provided by DFA Inter-Agency Training Program (IATP). In FY 2011 29 employees participated in six different IATP courses. In FY 2012, 25 employees participated in four different IATP courses:

The courses were:

- Administering Discipline

- Interpersonal Communications
- Grievance Prevention and Handling
- T.H.E. Course (The Human Element)
- Supervisory Management Institute
- Train the Trainer

Sixty-five employees were certified in CPR/First Aid training to maintain their biannual certification requirements in FY 2011, 48 in FY 2012.

In FY 2011, four Commission employees and 30 cooperators from other agencies attended the Prescribed Fire Course held annually at Camp Robinson. In FY 2012, seven employees and 32 cooperators from other agencies attended the course. Commission personnel help organize and instruct the annual Prescribed Fire Course. Agencies require their personnel to pass this course before they can manage a prescribed burn. The Commission normally nominates nine employees to attend the course; however budget restraints decreased that number in FY 2011 and FY 2012.

The Annual River Valley Fire Academy was held on the campus of Arkansas Tech University in May 2011 and 2012. During this academy 291 individuals registered each year and most attended one or more courses which were offered during the two week period. The fire academy is the main training method for Commission employees as well as cooperators to get required wildland fire training. It meets both agency standards as well as the standards of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) and continues to be a cost effective means for agencies to provide training for their employees.

A total of 19 agencies and organizations were represented at the academy, with participants from 10 states. Twenty-eight Commission employees either participated as students or instructors for classes.

AD Training – U.S. Forest Service

Commission employees and other cooperators receive specialized training for emergency response positions within the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and other federal agencies. They attend training as Administratively Determined (AD) employees of the federal government. The federal government pays for travel and training expenses. After training, employees are then selected by the USFS or other federal agencies to fill emergency response positions (many being overhead jobs) for wildfire or other disaster related details.

National Interagency Fire and Disaster Responses

In FY 2011 and FY 2012, the Commission issued Fire Qualification Cards to 52 Commission employees, four retired Commission employees, 15 individuals from paid or volunteer fire departments, and 12 individuals from Arkansas State Parks. All of these individuals met the training and physical fitness requirements as well as experience for national certification for many different emergency response positions.

Many Commission employees and cooperators maintain job performance qualifications which allow them to be utilized as resources for national emergencies anywhere in the nation. In FY 2011 the Commission deployed 14 Commission and six other individuals to Georgia, Texas, Arizona and North Carolina. In FY 2012, six Commission and 11 other individuals were deployed to Texas, Arkansas, Virginia, Colorado, Oklahoma and Florida.

These individuals worked as:

- Medical Unit Leader
- Task Force Leader
- Public Information Officer Type 1 & 2
- Facilities Unit Leader
- Air Tanker Base Manager
- Emergency Medical Technician (Basic & Paramedic)
- Dozer Boss
- Dozer Operator
- Helibase Manager
- Air Support Group Supervisor
- Demobilization Unit Leader
- Resource Unit Leader
- RAMP Manager
- Ground Support Unit Leader
- Training Specialist
- Safety Officer
- Crew Boss
- Human Resource Specialist
- Initial Attack Dispatcher
- Staging Area Manager

FY 2011-2012 Training Summary

In FY 2011, a total of 27 training courses were provided representing 3,556 total employee hours taken by Commission employees and cooperators. In FY 2012, 13 training courses were provided representing 3,440 total employee hours. Total employee hours for the two years was 6,996.



FISCAL DIVISION

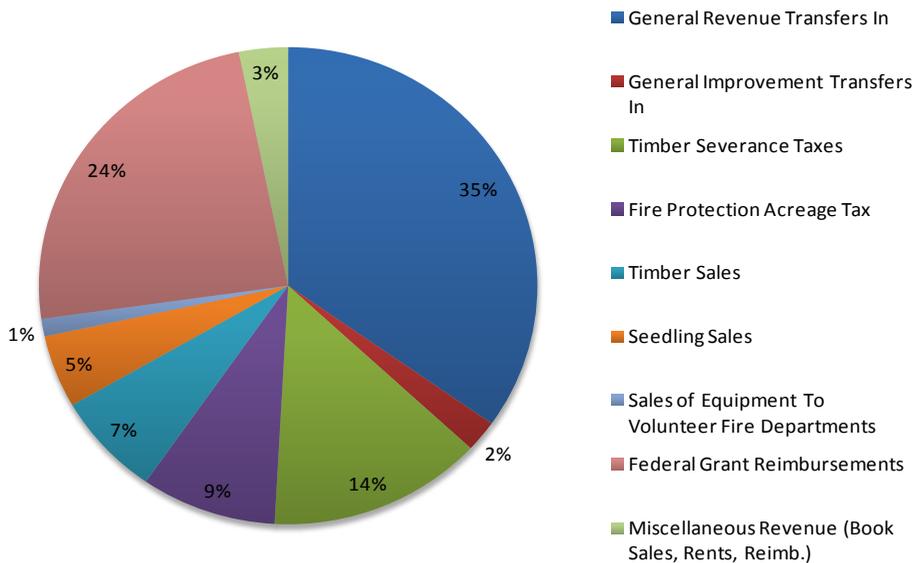
ARKANSAS FORESTRY COMMISSION
FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR THE PERIOD ENDING JUNE 30, 2012 AND JUNE 30, 2011

GAAP Resources Provided	FY 2012	FY 2011
Cash Balance July 1	2,255,677.25	1,531,356.12
General Revenue Transfers In	9,271,999.68	8,194,790.63
General Improvement Transfers In	2,916,324.00	500,000.00
Timber Severance Taxes	3,317,162.44	3,292,915.34
Fire Protection Acreage Tax	2,078,490.14	2,080,166.16
Timber Sales	986,282.98	1,647,002.24
Seedling Sales	1,343,787.50	1,157,518.23
Sales of Equipment To Volunteer Fire Departments	402,319.28	278,646.36
Federal Grant Reimbursements	3,279,571.06	5,661,814.26
Miscellaneous Revenue (Book Sales, Rents, Reimb.)	<u>564,337.07</u>	<u>751,874.33</u>
Total Receipts	<u>24,160,274.15</u>	<u>23,564,727.55</u>
GAAP Expenditures		
Salary Expense	14,495,176.58	14,973,929.04
Communication & Transportation of Commodities	288,100.11	297,776.85
Printing & Advertising	23,014.98	32,459.21
Repairing & Servicing	715,816.17	713,991.20
Utilities & Rent	377,690.42	398,687.68
Travel and Subsistence	86,507.20	96,061.49
Professional Services & Fees	615,689.39	1,223,175.96
Insurance and Bonds	176,849.90	169,915.00
Other Expenses & Services	880,796.58	823,673.35
Commodities, Materials & Supplies	2,735,989.12	1,670,749.48
Assistance, Grants & Aid	920,404.00	1,064,232.89
Refunds, Taxes & Claims	52,395.27	9,299.41
Treasurer of State Service Charges	182,262.47	172,506.93
Capital Outlay	217,711.20	2,436,604.12
Depreciation/Amortization	1,756,970.12	1,738,075.37
Gain/Loss on Fixed Assets	6,387.11	226.43
Interagency Transfers for Claims & Other Expenses	<u>(100,418.13)</u>	<u>(1,481,013.11)</u>
Total Expenditures	23,431,342.49	24,340,351.30
Non-cash Items Affecting Cashflow (Accruals, Depreciation, etc.)	2,352,744.76	1,499,944.88
Cash Balance June 30*	<u><u>5,337,353.67</u></u>	<u><u>2,255,677.25</u></u>

*2011 Cash balance was made up of \$847,946 restricted for Federal Grant programs, \$364,236 restricted for the Rural Fire Revolving Loan program, and \$500,000 restricted for Single Engine Air Tankers leaving only \$543,495 unrestricted General and Special Revenue for use in operations. The Trust Fund had a zero balance at the end of 2011.

*2012 Cash balance was made up of \$586,600 restricted for Federal Grant programs, \$352,304 restricted for the Rural Fire Revolving Loan program, \$1,180,100 restricted for repayment of potential Federal liabilities, \$514,480 restricted reserve in the Trust Fund, and \$380,221 restricted for Single Engine Air Tankers leaving \$2,323,649 unrestricted Special Revenue for use in operations.

FY2011 AFC GAAP Resources Provided (Receipts)



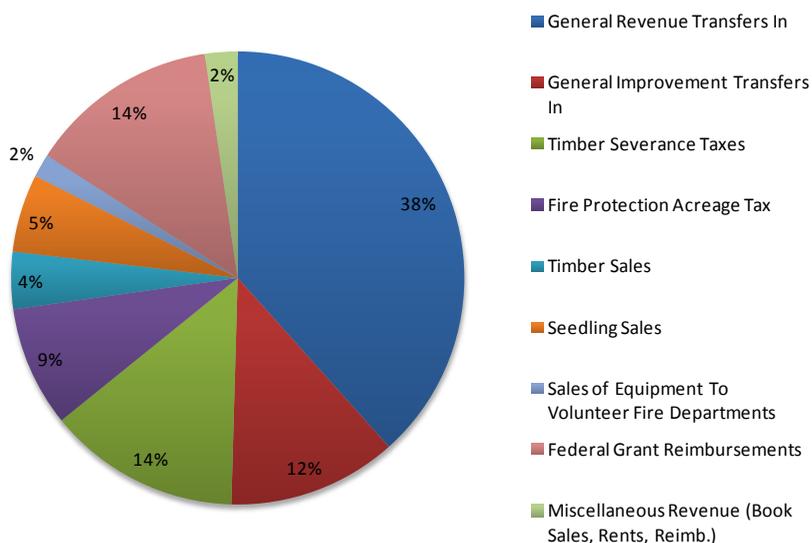
2011/2012 AFC Financial Overview

In 2011, GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles) receipts totaled \$23.6 million and GAAP expenditures totaled \$24.3 million.

In 2012, GAAP receipts totaled \$24.2 million and GAAP expenditures totaled \$23.4 million.

After GAAP accruals and non-cash activities were taken in to consideration, total cash reserves increased by \$700,000 in 2011 and increased \$3.1 million in 2012. During this same period, the Trust Fund ended 2011 with no cash balance and 2012 with a balance of \$514,480.

FY2012 AFC GAAP Resources Provided (Receipts)

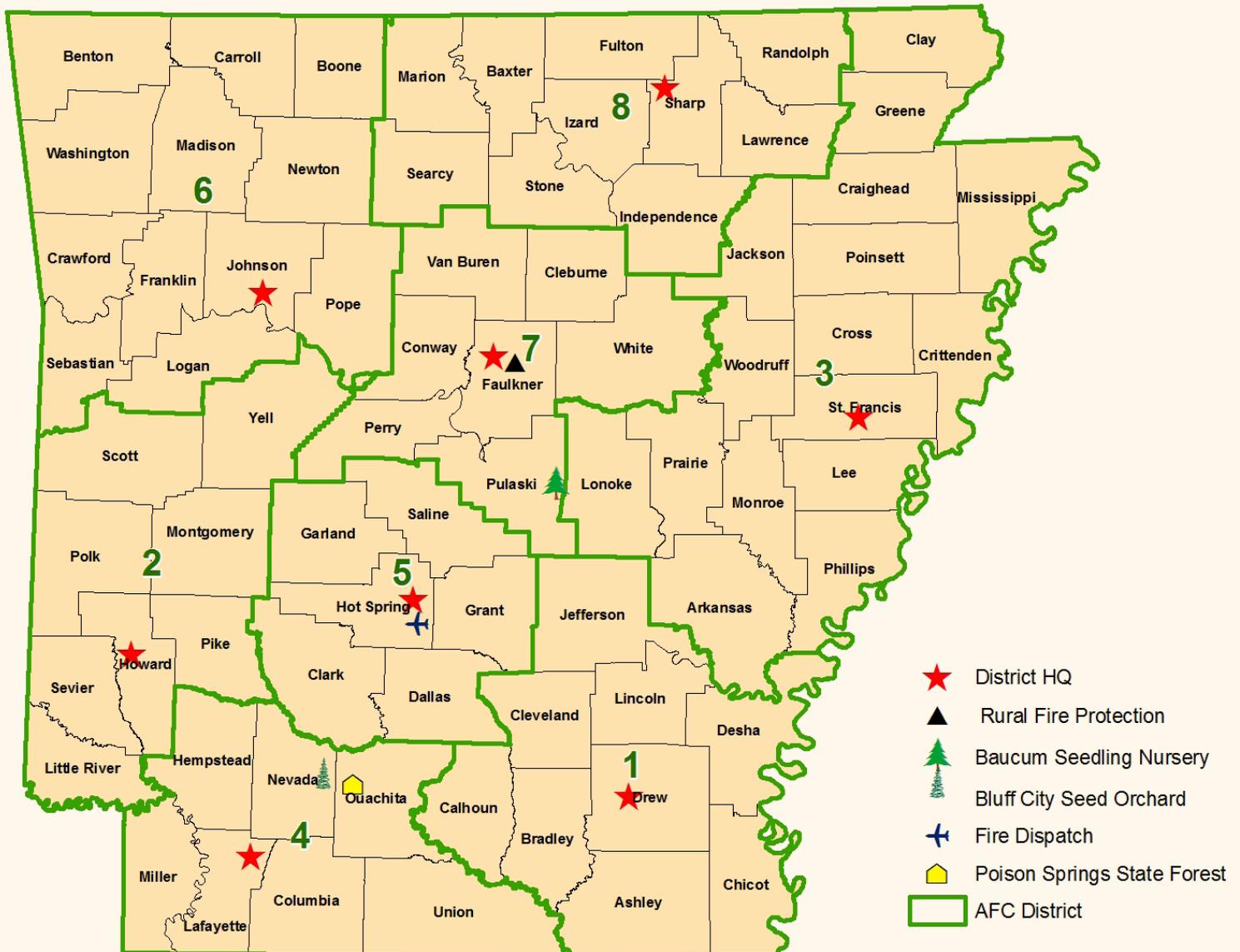




DISTRICTS AND PROGRAMS

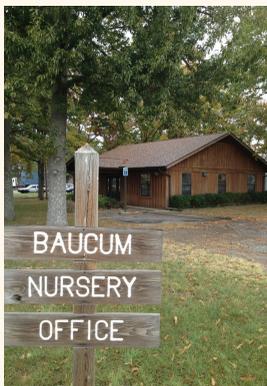


Forestry Districts and Facilities



The Arkansas Forestry Commission's headquarters is in Little Rock and it has a presence throughout the Natural State. In addition to its eight district offices, the Commission also has several facilities where the Commission works to improve tree stock and advance forestry for the benefit of the people of Arkansas.

Each of these districts and facilities is staffed with specialists who perform the core work of the Commission: Producing improved seed, growing pine and hardwood seedlings, fighting fires, combating insect infestation, and interacting with the public on a daily basis. The people who perform these duties are dedicated, knowledgeable, and passionate about Arkansas's forests.



Baucum Nursery

North Little Rock
Allan Murray,
Nursery Supervisor

Nestled amid the oxbow lakes in eastern Pulaski County, not far from the Arkansas River, is the Commission's 220-acre Baucum Nursery. With 100 acres under irrigation in 2012 it was on track to produce

about 5 million pine seedlings and more than 6 million hardwood seedlings which are sold to private, industrial, and government landowners throughout the state. In addition, its hardwood seed orchards are used to produce improved oak trees.

Almost all the year-old pine seedlings find their way to tree farms, unsurprisingly.

"We have one of the largest inventories probably in the country, as far as the number of hardwoods being grown," said Allan Murray, nursery supervisor.



He believes the nursery is the only one in the country producing improved cherrybark oak seedlings – which exhibit increased growth, ideal shape, and other qualities in the mature tree – and he hopes to have improved nuttall oak seedlings available in the next year or two, with willow oak and water oak likely future candidates.

"Tree improvement work in hardwood is in its infancy, like pine was 30 years ago," Murray said. "We're probably stepping out further ahead than most other state forestry commissions and services in the country."

The nursery's pre-ordering system helps assure that customers - primarily industrial and private landowners - in the state have the flexibility to get the seedlings they need, when they need them.

While the cherrybark and nuttall oaks are in high demand as timber trees, Murray said cypress is another high-demand product because of its fast growth. Willow and water oaks are popular, as well.

The nursery has seven full-time employees and can use from 20 to 25 contract laborers as seasonal work demands, especially during harvest time from December to March. A less-visible function of the nursery, Murray said, is education.

"We educate a lot of people on the physiological and morphological parts of trees," he said. "They'll call us in July wanting to buy some trees, and we have to explain you can't transplant in the summer or they'll die. You have to transplant in winter."

While in the past the nursery sold seedlings in minimum lots of 100 hardwoods or 500 pines, now they'll sell as few as 10 trees in a wildlife or beautification bundle of mixed species, or individual species in bundles as small as 25 hardwoods or 50 pines.

"We have a lot of families that are breaking up their land, maybe five or six kids all inheriting part of a tract, and some will want to do different things," said Murray. "For a lot of those people, to come in and buy even 100 of a species of hardwood was too many. I think we're the masters of small orders – we definitely have hundreds of orders that are 25 of this or 25 of that."



Tree Improvement

Bluff City
Randy O'Neal,
Reforestation Foreman

Tucked away in Nevada County, not far from Poison Springs State Forest, the Bluff City Tree Improvement facility is where the Commission develops its three-star pine seeds for sale to forest land owners and for the production of seedlings at Baucum Nursery. The facility dates back to the 1960s, and Randy O'Neal, reforestation foreman, has worked there for the last 35 years.

With 48 acres in production and another 15 soon to be added, the orchard can produce several thousand bushels of pine cones, although given how dry it's been this year, O'Neal thought 1,000 was more likely from the latest harvest.

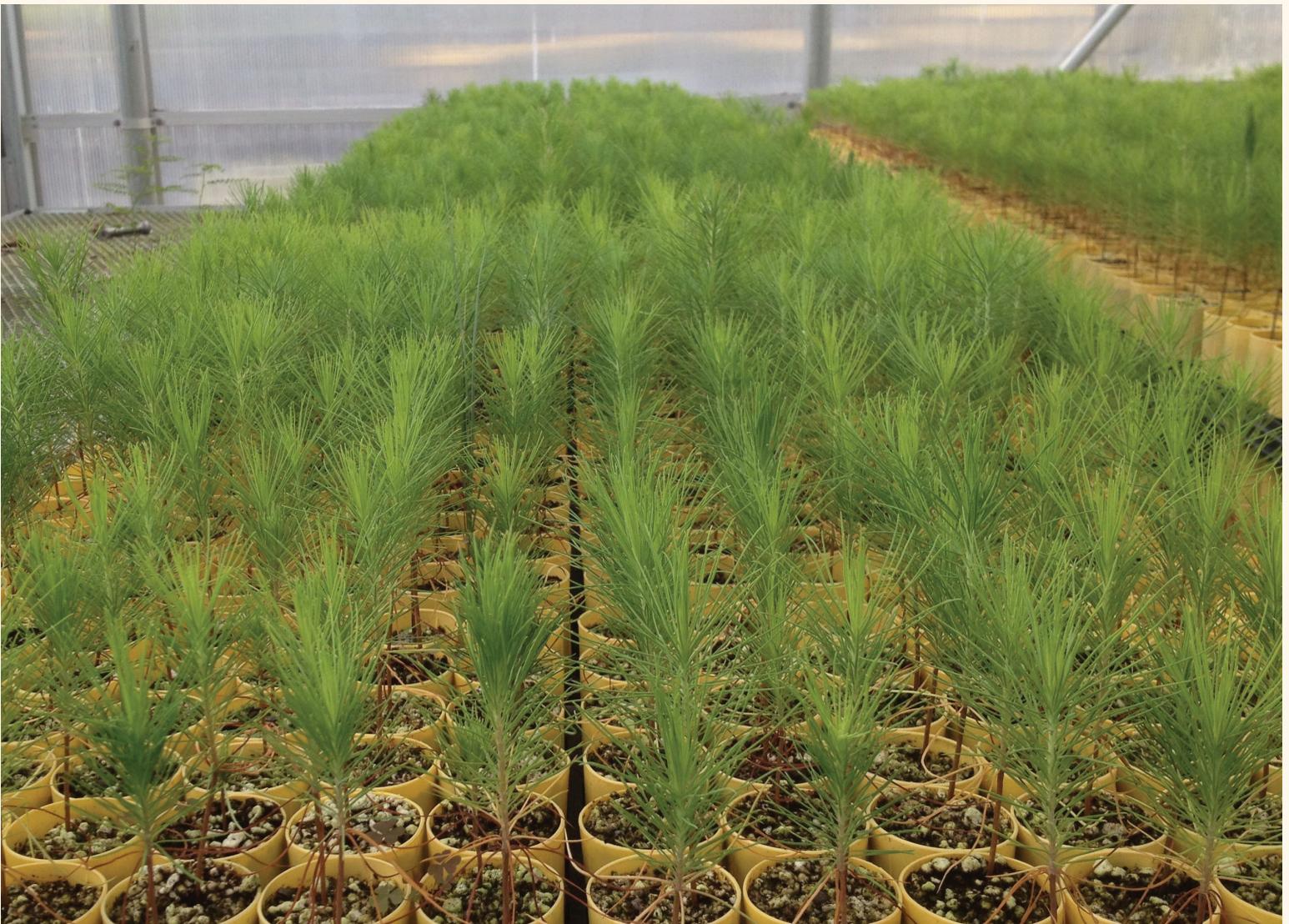
"Back in the '80s, we picked over 5,000 bushels of cones in a good year," said O'Neal. "Next year, if something doesn't happen this winter, we should have a good crop. The last two springs have been kind of tough."

Standing in boom lifts, contract laborers pick the cones from the trees. Those cones are packed into half-bushel bags, and the bags into 20-bushel crates. Then they're sent to the processing plant, where they're heated in a kiln until they open, then the wings are knocked off the seeds and hollow seeds are disposed of. The seed is dried so it can be stored in freezers without killing the embryo, then they are shipped back to the Commission.

The oldest loblolly pine orchard was planted in 1983, and is thinned of trees that don't meet the current minimum genetic gain requirements. The fall 2012 harvest included "some of the good stuff," said O'Neal – trees with 41 percent gain in timber volume over what you'd get from unimproved trees.

The dry weather has meant increased vigilance at the seed orchard. For instance, O'Neal had to spray for insects five times during 2012, instead of the usual four. O'Neal is still bullish on his crop, though, because he knows exactly what kind of genetic material he's working with.

"All of these trees out here are grafted," he said. "We know the mammas and the daddies of all of them."





Poison Springs State Forest

Camden, Ouachita County
Ed Montgomery,
State Forest Manager

Named for a spring that's not really poisonous, but which was the site of a Civil War engagement, Poison Springs State Forest covers more than 22,000 acres and abuts White Oak Lake. With 36 miles of graded roads and about 100 primitive campsites, it serves as a recreational area (especially during hunting season) as well as a working forest that produces about 3.3 million board feet of timber every year.

Ed Montgomery, an 11-year Commission employee, has managed the forest since 2004. He said that, like the rest of the industry in Arkansas, revenue from such timber sales is entirely dependent on the marketplace.

"Right now it's down and we may sell the yearly harvest of 3.3 million board feet for \$660,000," Montgomery said. "In 2005 the same amount of timber would have sold for twice as much. But it's dropped so much, and that's driven mainly by the housing market."

The state forest is divided into five compartments for timber harvesting, with one being worked each year. A compartment is cruised in the winter, and marking of the trees starts the following September, Montgomery said. Around January 1 each year, announcements for timber sales for that compartment began; most of the trees are selectively cut, but there is part of the forest that is a timber plantation and it is clear cut and replanted at harvesting.

The forest is managed by a full-time crew of six: Montgomery, a foreman, three technicians, and an administrative specialist. That's the same number as when he started, even though 5,000 acres have been added since then, which can be a challenge given how labor-intensive most of the work is.

Poison Springs naturally faces the same bug and disease problems as other timber owners, but the past few years haven't seen big problems.

"You're always watching for the southern pine beetle but we haven't had a bad year in a long time," said Montgomery. "The black turpentine beetle gets individual pines and small clumps of pines, so we'll have a small logger come in and do a salvage sale. Wildfire is something else you have to watch for – we may have to go in and salvage that if it gets too hot."

The state forest had a fairly light wildfire season in 2012, with Montgomery estimating that about 60 acres was burned.

In addition to attracting hunters, Poison Springs also sees recreational use for camping, fishing, and some hiking. There's a nine-mile horseback riding trail, and the woods roads are popular for ATV use. One of the less well-known amenities is a shooting range, said Montgomery.

"I know we get a lot of use on it," he said, "but a public firing range is kind of rare in this area. Some people don't realize you can shoot here for free."

Another noteworthy feature is that there are a few old cemeteries in the state forest. Montgomery says he makes sure they're marked off when the trees near them are being harvested so there's no accidental damage to the gravesites. One has headstones dating back to the 1860s; another has just two people buried in it, and the story is that they were part of a group following an old wagon trail who died along the way and were buried right there.

Not all of the cemeteries are abandoned, though.

"Someone paid people to come out and clean one of them up in the last year," said Montgomery.





Central Dispatch
 198 Airport Road
 Malvern
 David Wiley,
 Administrative Office
 Supervisor

Located at the Malvern Municipal Airport, the Commission's Dispatch Center is the hub through which communications

for most of the districts flow. Operating 24 hours a day, it handles daytime dispatching for all districts except 3 and 8, and picks up those districts on nights and weekends.

Needless to say, this place can get pretty intense during fire season.

"What's it like?" said David Wiley, the administrative office supervisor. "All I can do is invite you down here. You see our consoles – imagine in every district they've got fires going, and not just in one county, in a lot of counties. All of those folks are calling on the radios. Each dispatcher is trying to handle two districts, two planes, the phones are ringing, you've got guys calling in and asking for resources, news people calling.... We just have a lot of things going on."

It's the dispatcher's job to coordinate Commission personnel on the ground and those in the air — the spotter planes and SEATs (Single Engine Air Tankers) — during a wildfire; they also work with fire weather officer Scott Reed, who is in the same building as the dispatch center, to keep tabs on how the elements might impact a blaze. If other agencies are involved, such as the U.S. Forest Service, local fire departments, or industry fire crews, the incident commander on the ground handles coordination of their efforts.

Dispatchers use an ArcView software system to help track fires and guide Commission personnel to the sites.

"We can see where things are at, we can click on a fire and get longitude and latitude, the legal description, the county, roads, sections, all that stuff," said Wiley, who has been with the Commission almost seven years, all of them at dispatch. "It has satellite photos and topographic maps."

The technology is a big advantage over how it was done before it became available, said Dispatch Supervisor Sherry Russell, who's been working there since the Commission opened the centralized dispatch center 14 years ago; prior to that, each district office did its own dispatching.

"It was a headache," she said of manually plotting locations. "We used a T-square and a [district] map."

If the fire had been called in by a member of the public, Russell said, that could make it easier because they would often mention a road it was near. But if it came from one of the Commission's spotter planes, they could usually only give coordinates, which dispatchers would use for cross-referencing on the map. Sometimes the best location they could come up with that way, she said, was "a guesstimate," and the computerized system was "a big leap forward."

Russell recalls August of 2000 as the worst she had experienced as a dispatcher.

"I would literally come in at 7:30 a.m. and it would be popping, and I might get to go home at 7:30 or 8 at night, if I was lucky," she said. "That was just constant. We tried to have two people here all the time during that time. Even at midnight, we were getting as many calls as we did during the day."

When there's one really big fire that requires a lot of attention, Russell said, they try to pull one dispatcher to work it and nothing else, or sometimes if it's a busy fire day Russell or Wiley will take it. There are five dispatchers who work shifts at the center, and the Malvern Airport is also home to the Commission's fleet of airplanes; the District 5 office is right across the street from dispatch, as well.

Wiley said that in addition to wildfires, dispatch takes calls about prescribed burns so they can inform not only the spotter pilots but local officials where and when to expect smoke.

"We take all the information: Name, phone number, county, section, township, range, address, what time, what they'll be burning," he said. "Whether it's site prep, backfire, a ring fire, and what kind of fuel – pine straw, leaf litter, fields, slash. We have to check the weather, to get the category day and the transport winds; we have to do a little figuring, like how far it is to a road or how far away from a town or highway, for smoke management."

That info also helps keep the public at ease, he said, because a lot of people will call the dispatch office when they see smoke, "especially when it's close to somebody's house," said Wiley.



Rural Fire Protection
 10 Industrial Blvd.
 Greenbrier
 John Blackburn
 Rural Fire Administrator

When rural fire departments around the state are in need of a piece of vital equipment – a tanker truck, perhaps, or a couple of pick-ups – one of the places they can turn is the Rural Fire Protection office in Green-

brier. The Commission draws on the resources of the federal government’s surplus vehicle programs to help fire departments find what they need.

The office has been in place since the early 1980s and Rural Fire Protection Administrator John Blackburn is quick to credit his predecessors with “a lot of hard work through the years” to get it established.

“When we started in Arkansas, we probably had less than 300 fire departments,” said Blackburn. “Now there’s over 1,000.”

There are two main sources for surplus federal trucks, many of which were formerly used by the military and thus arrive with forest or desert camouflage paint jobs. First is the loaner program, where the vehicles are used by the fire departments for a set number of years, then returned to Rural Fire Protection where they are held until the federal government auctions them off. And since 2006, there is also the firefighter program, where the vehicles become the property of the departments.

Either way, he said, vehicles come to Rural Fire Protection, where they are evaluated by Commission mechanics to make sure they are road-worthy. The fire departments then have two options: They can take the vehicle as-is, if they have the resources to make necessary modifications like painting or adding a tank to hold water; or they can pay to have it sent to the Tucker Unit of the Arkansas Department of Correction, where inmates man a shop to paint trucks and install tanks.

With the tight budgets most rural fire departments operate on, the surplus vehicles help stretch their funds.

Other services Rural Fire offers includes an interest-free loan program that volunteer fire departments can use to equip and convert the former military vehicles for fire fighting use or to purchase other types of fire fighting equipment. And the shop at the Greenbrier complex – which Rural Fire shares with the District 7 office, the Faulkner County crew, and Forest In-

ventory Analysis – also does maintenance and repair work on Commission vehicles, from trucks to bulldozers.

“We’re set up for basic service work and repair, though there’s some specialized repairs that would have to be done off-site,” Blackburn said. “It’s an important part we play in terms of trying to keep them in fire fighting condition.”

Another key service Rural Fire offers to fire departments is wildland fire training.

“We teach an eight-hour course to volunteer fire departments. It’s a requirement for their 833 funding,” said Blackburn, referencing the state fire department grant program. “The fire departments are already trained on structural and vehicle fires, but need training for the wildland and woods fires. The course shares experience [Commission firefighters] have gained over the years with the volunteer fire departments to hopefully make it more efficient and also safer for them. Fire fighting techniques, tools, terrains, organizational skills, communication – things that are very important for wildland fire fighting.”

The training is offered every week that is not a holiday week, and Rural Fire Protection takes the courses to the firefighters in every county. The classes – held either nightly during the week or as a eight-hour Saturday class – are advertised 30 days in advance so as many volunteer firefighters as possible can attend. The schedule is on the Commission’s website and classes are already set up into August 2013.

“We try to do as much as we can to make it easier for the firefighters,” said Blackburn. “We know their time is important and they’re taking time out of their lives to attend these courses.”

Blackburn said it would be hard to exaggerate the importance of rural fire departments in the Commission’s efforts to fight wildfires around Arkansas.

“They’re able to take a lot of the load off of us, they’re critically important to our network,” he said. “They answer local calls and they do triage – if it gets to the stage they need dozers or additional equipment, they call us in.”

“We’re dedicated to serving and supporting the volunteer fire departments and the Forestry Commission through our maintenance program, but it’s broader than just this outfit,” he said. “We rely on support from the districts and county personnel. They help us inventory federal excess equipment, and that helps the work we do. And they’re also working on relationships with those same fire departments.”



DISTRICT 1

Joe Friend, District Forester

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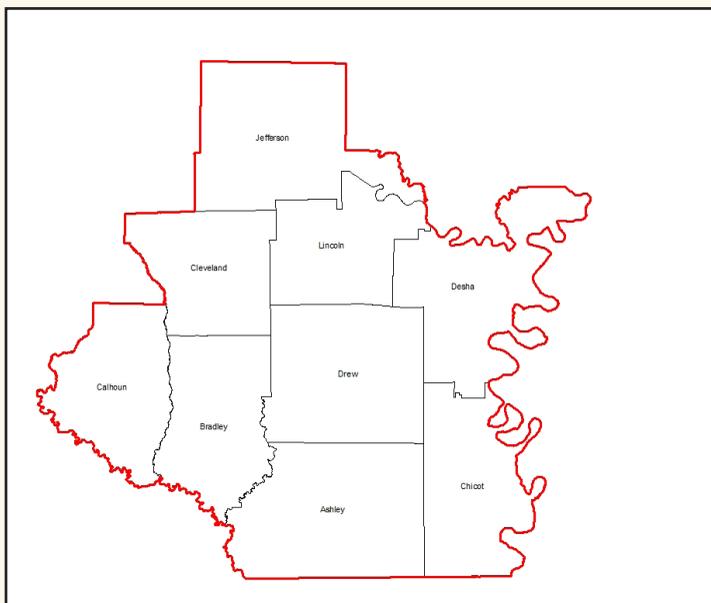
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Ashley, Bradley, Calhoun, Chicot,
Cleveland, Desha, Drew, Jefferson,
and Lincoln Counties



their own bulldozers, he said. The Commission keeps two in each county except for Chicot and Desha, where there is a significant amount of farm land. The Commission performs as much of the maintenance work on the equipment as possible can at their own shop.

“They’re pretty good dozers, just old,” he said.

The district also had a busy year as far as management work. Made up of about half industry and half private landowners, there’s not a lot of public land in the district, though the U.S. Forest Service has a 1,600-acre experimental forest south of Crossett.

“The majority of what we have in our district is Conservation Reserve Program,” said Friend. “To give you an example, in the last quarterly accomplishment report... we did 40-something management plans in a three-month period.”

The district’s foresters work with private landowners to facilitate planting every year, making sure the planting meets minimum program standards, and then checking back a year later to ensure there has been adequate seedling survival. The district also does monitoring for the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, conducts survival checks, and does prescribed burning for the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission on Warren Prairie Natural Area – which does have timber on it, Friend noted.

With 33 years at the commission and nine as a district forester, Joe Friend still says the last two years were standouts in how tough they were on his district and his people.

“It’s been, as far as fires and stuff, a pretty tough year. Heat’s taken its toll on people,” said Friend. “Last year in District 1 was plenty tough enough. The thing was, last year it was earlier in the year – May, June, July. This year it was June, July, August, and we had the heat longer this year.”

The biggest wildfire they fought in 2012 was near Lacey in Drew County, at 1,422 acres. And while it was dwarfed by a 3,300-acre blaze in 2009, Friend said it was a particularly hard one to get a handle on.

“Lacey was a multiple-day fire,” he said. “We actually got it contained about 2 or 3 o’clock in the morning, but then we worked on it until dark the next evening, maintaining the lines.”

That fire was on land owned by The Campbell Group, which provided a couple of contract bulldozers to help fight it, said Friend. Only two industry landowners in the district have



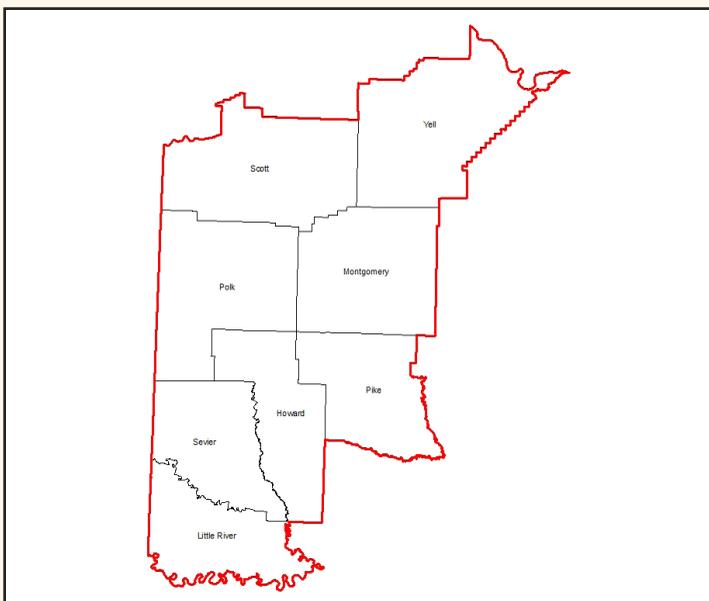
“We stay busy,” he said. “It was kind of amazing, with the fire season we had – when we did our quarterly accomplishments, I sat down with our foresters to go over everything we’ve done and the list was extensive. You think, ‘Wow, we did all that and still fought fires around the clock.’”

The District 1 office is on the campus of the University of Arkansas at Monticello in a log building completed in 1986 by district employees, including Friend, who is the last of the builders still with the Commission. It’s the only district office with a log building and, he added, the only one with a fireplace.



DISTRICT 2

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 Howard, Little River, Montgomery,
 Pike, Polk, Scott, Sevier, and Yell
 Counties.



“And the Firewise houses,” added ranger Ken Strasner.

“And air support,” said Whelan.

District 2 has a lot of industry land – Weyerhaeuser is the major landowner – as well as some 800 acres of state conservation area and private landowners toward the south end of the district.

Besides fire, drought has been the biggest hazard for forest landowners in the district, especially among red oak trees where two consecutive dry summers allowed hypoxylon canker fungus to gain a foothold. Commission employees have also been checking a lot of dead trees in people’s yards, but again drought seems to be the main culprit. Insects, on the other hand, haven’t particularly been a problem.

Seedling orders have been way down, as well, said Whelan. They’re not seeing the large orders they had in the past. The low price of timber is likely one factor, reducing the incentive to do much logging and, in turn, replant.

A new bulldozer is on Whelan’s wish list, but he knows money is tight. District employees try to handle all their day-to-day maintenance, but during fire season even that can be a challenge.

Take the air filters on the enclosed-cab environmental dozers, said Strasner. “The price of air filters is staggering,” he said. “We can blow them out twice, but if you have three or four fires a week, that’s once a week” they have to be replaced.

He said a new air filter for a bulldozer with an environmental cab can cost \$60 or more but, while an environmental



dozer is expensive, the protection it provides the driver during fire-fighting is “super.”

Heading into his 23rd year with the Commission, District Forester Mike Whelan wasn’t here for the landmark fire season of 1980, still considered one of the worst ever in the state. However, 2011 and 2012 were still plenty tough and certainly the worst since 2000.

“We had back-to-back rowdy summers,” said Whelan. “As dry as I’ve ever seen. We’ve been extremely lucky, I tell you.”

Fires in Sevier County and near Ola in Yell County stood out this year. Justin Mallett, county forester for Howard, Polk, and Sevier, started with the Commission in June and was amazed by what he saw in the Sevier fire.

“It scared me,” Mallett said frankly. “I was watching the field and making sure it didn’t take off once it hit the field. Then there was a wall of flame walking across the road. It’s a miracle it didn’t burn down the houses.”

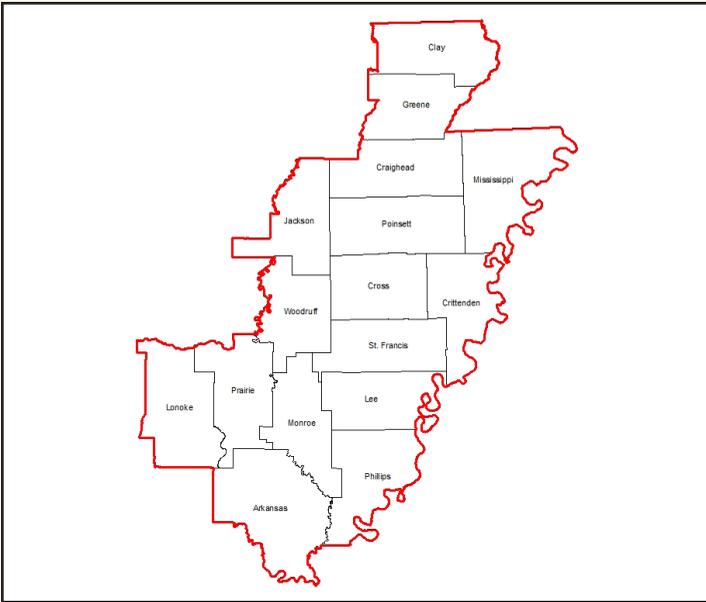
“The fire departments,” Whelan said, “we can’t thank the fire departments enough.”



DISTRICT 3

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Arkansas, Clay, Craighead, Crittenden, Cross, Greene, Jackson, Lee, Lonoke, Mississippi, Monroe, Phillips, Poinsett, Prairie, St. Francis, and Woodruff Counties



Stretched along the Mississippi River Delta in east Arkansas, District 3 is lightly forested compared to other parts of the state. But that's changing.

"Forest land is growing by leaps and bounds," said District Forester Mark Cutrer.

County Ranger Jeremy Jones estimated some 5,000 acres were being reforested yearly by the state Game and Fish Commission, the U.S. Forest Service through cropland and wetland reforestation programs.

"It's gotten into more hardwood planting than pine in the last 10 years, though we're still doing pine," said County Ranger Tom Lindsey.

The fire season in District 3 also runs differently than in other parts of the state, said Lindsey.

"It's been tough. We get a lot of fires outside our normal fire

season – it usually starts in mid-February on into the first of April," he said. "We have two, maybe three months, that's our season. October has never been a fire season for us, but we had a lot of fires in a short period of October because of drought. And we had a lot more fires this summer."

As spread-out as the district is, one of the challenges is getting from offices to fire sites. It can take up to four-and-a-half hours to get from one end of the district to the other, longer for a truck hauling a bulldozer. That also makes providing back-up difficult, which makes cooperation with local fire departments all the more important.

"They took a lot of our workload off for our firefighting," said Lindsey, "but they still require our assistance."

The extensive drought over the past two years has created some problems for trees in the district, Lindsey said.

"Drought makes the trees weak, and here comes insects and disease," he said. "We had a lot of trees go into dormancy early. Insects are still there and when they go dormant early, you see a lot of trees lost."

They've had some issues with the twig girdler beetle going back to last year, he said, and the incidence of hypoxylon canker fungus has been significant.

The district's headquarters in Forrest City has a large cooler for storing seedlings. With many small landowners, seedling orders can be comparatively small, say 2,000 or 3,000 trees. That can be handled by a pickup with siderails on it, said Cutrer. But outside of planting season, the cooler is used to store something else in the heat of summer: The crew's four-wheelers.

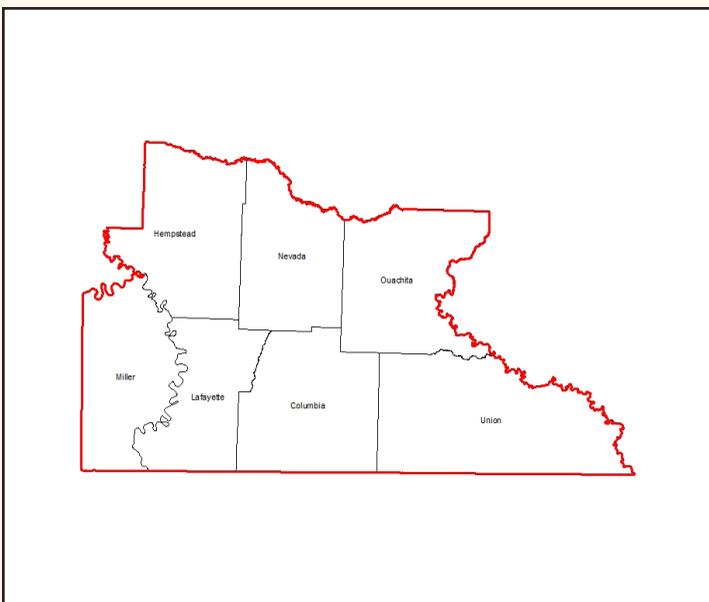
"We take four-wheelers everywhere we go," said Cutrer.





DISTRICT 4

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 Columbia, Hempstead, Lafayette,
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 Union Counties



District Forester Bill Sprinkle said the 2012 fire season wasn't as bad in southwest Arkansas as in 2011.

"It was extremely dry and windy [in 2011]," Sprinkle said. "Not this year – we got a few rains here, where north of here was extremely dry. We've had some fires, but not nearly like last year. And the weather has been conducive so that we've been able to do our controlled burning this year."

Forest ownership is shifting from industrial to non-industrial in District 4.

"Industry is downsizing and phasing out," he said. "International Paper is no longer here, they sold off their holdings to different companies and a lot of IP's land sold to private individuals."

That impacts firefighting since there is less help from large timber industries that traditionally kept equipment or fire crews on hand.

"We don't have access to that anymore," said Sprinkle. "We do the best we can with what we've got and keep on going."

Fortunately, he said, their bulldozers and other equipment are in good shape but putting on some age, which increases maintenance costs. But he thinks the district is in better shape, equipment-wise, than it has been in the last 30 years; Sprinkle is in his 34th year with the Commission.

Besides the heat, weather produced more problems in the form of several small tornados in the spring and some flooding in Columbia County. But the total damage wasn't great, Sprinkle said, and officials didn't even need to take him up on his offer to help clear roads or do other work afterward.

District 4 does some cross-border assistance with wildfires in Louisiana, generally about once a year, said Sprinkle, and they also have helped with some fires in Texas.

"Last year we had a big fire that started in Arkansas on Labor Day weekend, and a strong north wind pushed it into Louisiana," he recalled. "They'll call us up and say they've got something going, and we'll get together with them."

That coordination can be tricky since the communications systems used in the two states are not compatible, but they get around that by having one person from each agency stationed together and relaying information back and forth, which Sprinkle says is "a good safety practice."

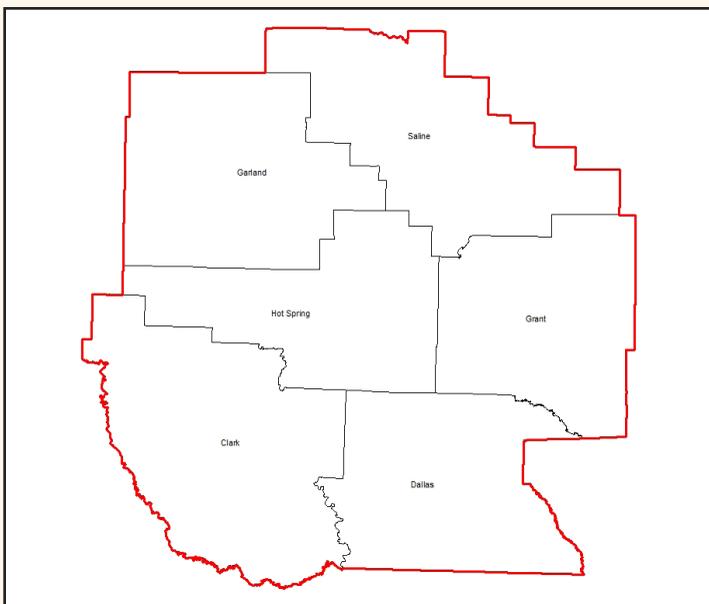
The district has very good cooperation with its 100 or so volunteer fire departments, he said, and Union County's Firewise participation is strong. The rest of the counties in the district have been given Firewise training but, Sprinkle said, there hasn't been much participation.





DISTRICT 5

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Clark, Dallas, Garland, Grant, Hot
Spring, and Saline Counties



Given what 2012 was like everywhere else, it's little surprise that the foresters and rangers in District 5 in south-central Arkansas are still talking about the fire season.

"The fire season controlled our year," said District Forester John Cook. "About June, I knew it was going to be non-stop for three months."

It included blazes in Clark County that consumed 600 acres near Amity and 900 acres near Gurdon.

"We hadn't had a fire season like this in awhile," he said. "The numbers won't reflect it but the acreage will."

Cook credited not only his own personnel but help from industry, local fire departments, and the U.S. Forest Service for making it possible to keep on top of things.

With the end of fire season and their attention turning toward the usual end-of-year duties – seedling survival checks, and prescribed burns – Cook is also concerned about some programs that have received outside funding that's drying up. With the federal farm bill held up, some grant funds that are

used to subsidize replanting work are in limbo. And the poor market for timber doesn't help, either.

"The timber industry is so down lately, a lot of landowners are holding off – they're not wanting to cut or thin," said Cook. "It's hard to see timber prices go from record highs to record lows in just a year. But we're seeing some landowners starting to accept it."

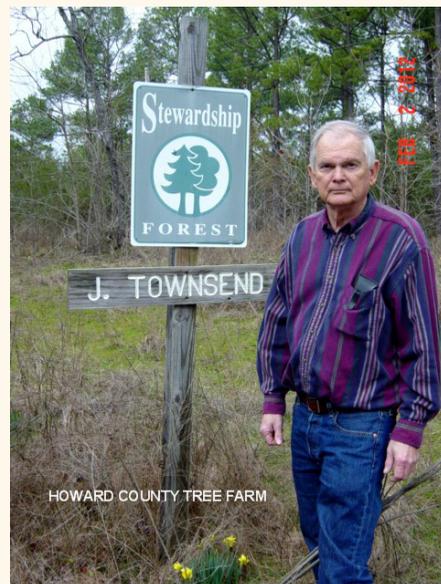
One of the things Cook would like to see in his district is a bigger seedling cooler, something with double or even triple the current capacity of 100,000 plants. With between 50 and 60 percent of the district's timberland in the hands of industrial owners, big orders for seedlings are not unheard of. Another asset would be a diesel tank trailer that could be taken out to fire sites and used to refuel bulldozers on-site.

"We've been fortunate to get diesel from landowners and fire departments," he said.

In addition to his duties as the new Clark County forester, district employee Matt Voskamp has been working on a book about Arkansas's champion trees, which will be featured in a special on AETN in the spring of 2013.

Also this year, District 5 lost one of its most familiar faces: Jupe Townsend, who retired at the end of June as district forester after 45 years with the Commission, died in August. The son of a ranger, he'd been around the Commission since he was about 6 years old, and eventually earned a reputation for his extensive knowledge of the forests, as well as his knack for spotting fires on days you'd think nothing was likely to burn.

Angie Coman, the administrative specialist at the district office, worked with Townsend for 18 years and said he was a supportive presence for her and her daughter after Coman's husband died 10 years ago.



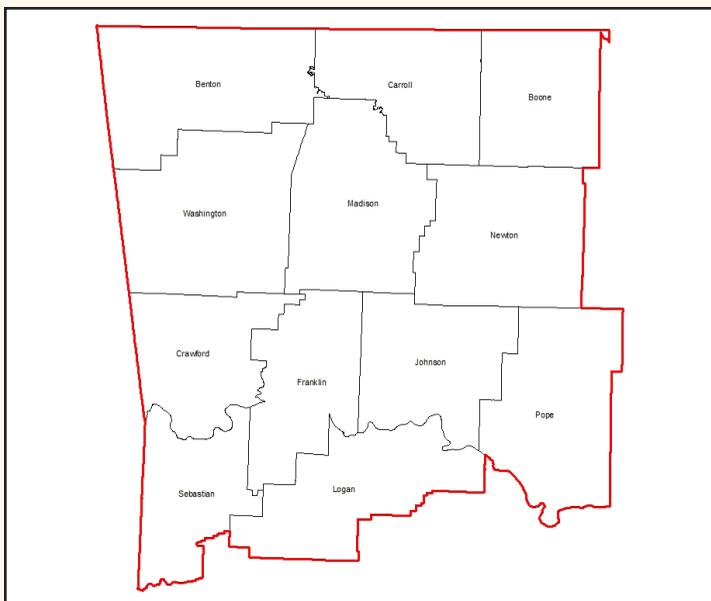
"He was the best man I've ever known," Coman said of Townsend. "I'm not exaggerating. He was my mentor."



DISTRICT 6

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Benton, Boone, Carroll, Crawford,
Franklin, Johnson, Logan, Madison,
Newton, Pope, Sebastian, and Wash-
ington Counties



District 6 Forester Ray Wakefield, who's been with the Commission for 39 years, said 2012 was "a bad summer" for wild-fires in his district, which covers the northwestern part of the state.

"In 2011 it was on the west side of the district, and this year it moved east," said Wakefield. "And I don't know if they were slightly wetter [to the west] than we were. I really think what happened is after 2011, [on the east side] they went through and were far more cautious than they were."

The toughest fires of 2012 were one north of Atkins and the Hog Thief Valley fire in southern Logan County, he said. The primary difficulty was the terrain crews had to deal with.

"The earth was upheaved at one time, and the rock now stands up. It's a little hard to travel over," said Wakefield. "That was a booger, a lot of hand work."

Connecting bulldozed lines with hand work is pretty much mandatory in terrain that can turn a bulldozer over, some-

thing Wakefield has seen happen. Not to mention getting them stuck on rock projections, or in silted-up gullies that looked solid enough from a distance.

The district also saw three fires set either accidentally or purposefully in one afternoon in Franklin County, burning four, 70, and more than 100 acres, respectively, though containment efforts "came out really well," he said.

"What saved us was the volunteer fire departments. They are like the backbone, keeping us on our feet," said Wakefield.

Another bonus was the U.S. Forest Service allowing its crews to assist on fires. When a professional wildland firefighting crew tells you a firebreak in the woods is going to hold, Wakefield said, you can bank on it. Volunteer fire departments – there are some 140 in the district – are more experienced with house and grass fires, which are different things altogether.

The district has U.S. Forest Service land in the north, Mount Magazine State Park in Logan County, and part of the Ouachita National Forest in Sebastian and Logan counties. Elsewhere private ownership is the norm, with some industry – Deltic Timber Corp. and Green Bay Packaging – primarily concentrated in Pope County.

As the case is elsewhere in the state, extended drought conditions are causing insect problems in distressed trees – red oak, white oak, pine, and hickory have all shown signs of stress and infestation. Wakefield said part of the problem is that it's hottest and driest during what should be the growth season for the trees.

"Average rainfall means very, very little," he said. "You can end the year above normal rainfall, but if you get none in July, August, and September, you're hurting."

One unique aspect of District 6 is that it's home to the state's only nuclear power plant, which used to be a source of some frustration, Wakefield said, until the volunteer fire departments realized what was happening. That's because someone would see the steam from its cooling towers rising over a ridge and call in to report smoke from a fire.

"On a low, cloudy night it does look just like a fire burning back there," said Wakefield. "The amber lights reflecting off the low clouds – if you can't see the top of the cooling tower, you'll say there's a fire there."



DISTRICT 7

Mike Cagle, District Forester

Mailing-P.O. Box 10

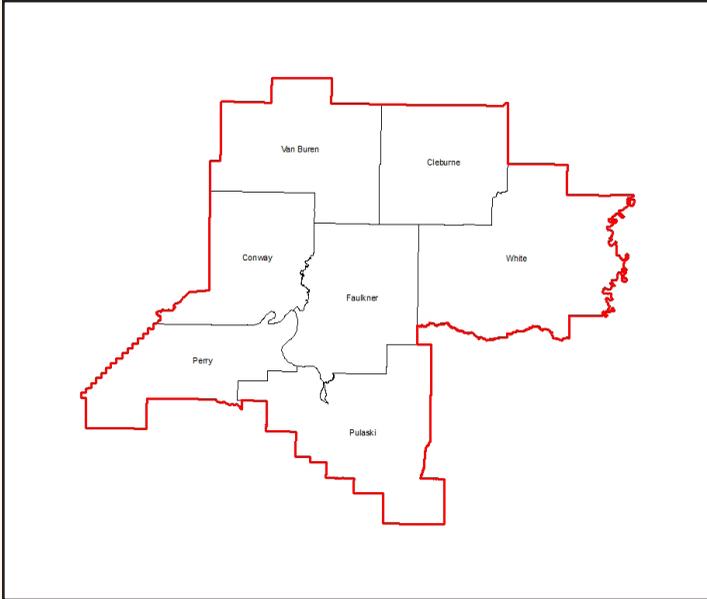
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Cleburne, Conway, Faulkner, Perry, Pulaski, Van Buren, and White Counties



District Forester Mike Cagle has a pretty straightforward standard for measuring a fire season: If nobody got hurt, that's a good season.

"[By early October] we had approximately 100 fires over what we had all last year," said Cagle. "One of the main things that I'm probably gladdest about is no major injuries – nothing with a dozer turning over, or somebody injuring themselves where they're incapacitated or dying. We've had some of them get overheated this year, but nothing that was life-threatening."

It is part of a constant emphasis on safety, he said, that includes things like making sure first aid kits are stocked and keeping firefighting crews well-hydrated. And maintaining good relations with industry and volunteer fire departments, who can help turn the corner on a blaze.

The district's biggest fire was near Casa in Perry County, scorching 825 acres. There were also several fires of between

150 and 300 acres. Cagle said he worried about his personnel, saying past reductions in force have left the district shorter-staffed than he'd like.

"I have a lot more respect for all the guys because they may fight fires all day and all night, and the next morning go back and check that fire, then get called out to another fire," he said. "You just have to tell them to go home and rest. They're just devoted to their duty and their jobs."

One thing that helped this year's firefighting efforts was the presence of shale gas wells in the district, said Cagle. If there's a fire in the area of one, he said, Southwestern Energy will not only shut down the well for safety, they send in fire trucks to provide support. And the U.S. Forest Service has also sent out hand crews to fight fires in counties with national forest land.

"It saves us from tying up our guys and getting them tired out on hand-raked job overnight," said Cagle. "We don't have a lot of personnel for hand labor."

Despite a busy fire season, the district was able to keep up with its management and landowner assistance duties, Cagle said, along with cutting fire breaks and overseeing prescribed burns.

"The guys have filled in and it's amazing to me how many [prescribed burns] were done this year," he said. "This district is a little different, probably more urban requests than some of the other districts because we have Little Rock. There are lots of requests for Smokey programs, school programs, shade tree assistance for planting, pruning, bugs, disease."

A lot of calls the district fielded in the summer to check on dying trees turned out to be trees going into early dormancy due to drought conditions.

"A lot of trees we have that are completely browned out, that look dead, those trees will probably not bounce back," said Youngblood. "With stressed out trees, next year we're really going to start seeing how much insect damage we're getting from the drought."

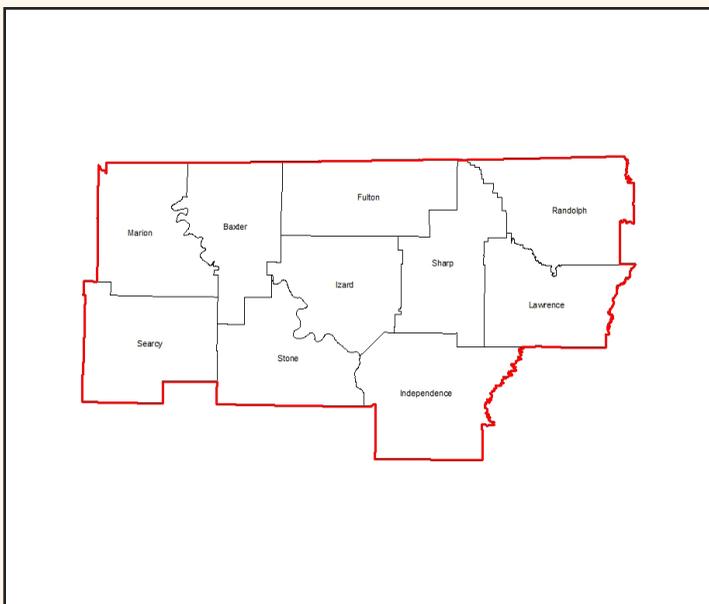
Indeed, the resilience of trees is celebrated by a plaque on the desk of County Ranger David Smith in the Greenbrier district office.

"If you would know strength and patience," it says, "welcome the company of trees."



DISTRICT 8

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 Baxter, Fulton, Independence, Izard, Lawrence, Marion, Randolph, Searcy, Sharp, and Stone Counties



With District 8 having grown from six to 10 counties in the redistricting, District Forester Marc Phillips said his personnel are still adjusting to dealing with more territory, more equipment, and more paperwork.

“With more equipment, there are more chances you’ve got stuff breaking down,” said Phillips. “The more fires you go, the better the chance [of a breakdown] – those are not highway miles these dozers get.”

The northern district’s rocky terrain is both beautiful and difficult to get around on in a dozer, said Phillips. And 2012 was an unusual year on the firefighting front; spring is usually when they see most of their blazes, but this year a very dry summer contributed to more than 320 fires by November.

“We had pretty good rainfall the first three or four months of the year, then it turned off dry,” he said. “We typically don’t have much of a summer fire season.”

Most of the district’s area is in the hands of private, non-industrial forest landowners. There is some U.S. Forest Service land in Independence and Stone counties, and about 13,000

acres of state land. Phillips said they got support from the U.S. Forest Service this year, as well as from Arkansas National Guard Blackhawk helicopters for a fire near Sylamore in Izard County.

There are around 120 volunteer fire departments in the district that also provided support – in some cases putting out fires before there was even a need to call the district in, Phillips said.

“If we had to suppress every fire the fire departments went to, and the ones we were called to, I just don’t think we have enough manpower or equipment,” he said. “We wouldn’t have been able to cover them all.”

A Sharp County fire that reached 230 acres was probably the biggest this year, Phillips said, but that’s not the best measure for difficulty in his neck of the woods.

“Everybody talks about the size, you hear about the thousand-acre fires and stuff,” he said. “A 50-acre fire can be just as challenging if you have 30 to 40 percent slopes and bluff areas. You can’t just drive the dozer off the end of the bluff; you have to figure out a way to get it down to the bottom.”

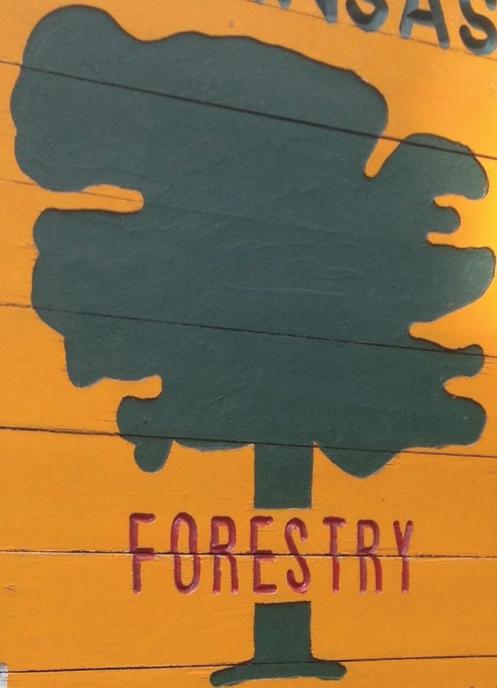
Keeping tabs on crews can be a challenge in that terrain, too. He said Commission Communications Manager Steve Brown has done a great job getting repeaters installed throughout the district, but there are inevitably some spots where radios won’t reach.

“If you can’t get in touch, you don’t know if they’re okay, if something’s happened,” Phillips said.

Outside of fire season, he said they promote Firewise and have had some success in getting communities to adopt it. There’s also Forest Stewardship plans and, around hunting season, a lot of interest from landowners about planting food plots to promote deer and turkey populations. They also had two outbreaks of army worms in 2012. His personnel also assisted in a search for a missing boy in Stone County and one in Fulton County. The phrase “other duties as assigned” comes to mind, listening to Phillips run down the list.

“If there’s a problem that arises, these guys are going to put their heads together and figure out a solution,” he said. “If you throw a track [from a bulldozer], you’re going to have to figure out how to get it back on. Everybody thinks if it’s not fire-related, we don’t have anything else to do, but there’s a lot of maintenance and upkeep on this stuff throughout the year.”

ARKANSAS



FORESTRY

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