

[Request for Forestry Assistance Form](#)

Background: The forests of Illinois contribute greatly to our economy and provide the ecological systems and visual landscapes essential to our quality of life. Historically, demands for raw materials (i.e., wood, land for development, etc.) have competed with the need to protect and conserve natural resources. Meeting these diverse needs on a sustained basis without sacrificing the integrity and the productive capacity of our forests is the challenge facing the owners and managers of Illinois' forests.

Over the next 25 years wood demand is forecasted to rise about 25 percent. This problem of increasing demand is being compounded by the reduction of harvest from federal forest lands. This is causing the demand for wood products to shift to non-industrial private forest (NIPF) lands. Over 90 percent of the 4.26 million acres of Illinois forest land is owned by private landowners. Of these landowners, over 80 percent have never received professional forestry management assistance.

Illinois, in spite of the field forestry staff available through programs of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the record number of private consultant foresters, is faced with a dilemma in attempting to provide forest management assistance to the over 169,000 forest landowners. Various programs have been developed at the state and federal level that are designed to provide management assistance to forest landowners, industry and fire departments.

Another important and often overlooked forest resource in Illinois is the State's urban and community forests. These are the trees and related natural resources found in the State's 2,000 plus communities. These forests provide important benefits to the communities where over 80 percent of our population lives, works, and plays.

Forest Product Industries are an important part of the State's economy. These privately owned primary and secondary operations employ over 65,000 people, have an annual payroll of approximately \$1.9 million, and contribute over \$4.5 billion annually to the State's economy through value added by manufacturing.

Goals: The goals of forestry programs in Illinois are to maintain and improve the State's rural and urban forests, and enable forests to remain as an important component in the ecological processes that sustain the State's valuable natural resources and economy. These goals and private landowner objectives will be accomplished by using non-regulatory approaches and voluntary participation.

Rural Forest Landowner Assistance: Provides technical assistance to NIPF landowners to manage their forests for multiple resources. In addition, cost-share assistance is available for landowners to implement forest stewardship practices.

This program has been developed to assist and encourage landowners to become good land stewards, achieve land management objectives, and maintain ecological processes.

The program produces:

1. clean air and water
2. sustainable rural forests
3. sustainable economic development
4. improved forest health
5. restored ecological processes
6. enhanced wildlife habitat and populations.

Urban and Community Forestry: Provides technical and financial assistance to the State's 2,000 cities and towns. This program builds a local community's capacity to manage their natural resources. Program goals are accomplished by engaging local citizens in tree planting, care and protection activities, and the development of comprehensive natural resource management plans. The Urban and Community Forestry Program helps achieve community sustainability and enhances the quality of life by improving and maintaining the health of trees and other related natural resources.

The Urban and Community Forestry Program:

1. increases awareness of natural resources
2. improves environmental quality
3. creates partnerships to manage community natural resources
4. implements long-term natural resource management in the State's cities and towns.

Nursery Operations: The production and availability of high quality, native plant material is essential for reforestation and habitat restoration efforts. This program provides landowners suitable plant materials, often at no-cost, to meet their land management objectives. Available plant materials range from tree and shrub species to prairie grasses and forb species.

Forest Protection and Health Management: Provides technical and financial assistance to rural fire departments to protect natural resources from wildfires. Assistance is provide through direct technical support; grants for organization, training, and equipment; and placement of fire equipment obtained through the Federal Excess Property Program. The program utilizes the Smokey Bear Fire Program to promote forest fire prevention.

In addition, the program provides technical and financial assistance to protect forests against the introduction of exotic insects and diseases, and cooperates with state and federal organizations on long-term monitoring of forest health conditions.

Forest Products Industry Assistance: Provides assistance to forest industries by providing:

Forestry Development Act (FDA): Provides the funding source for a forest landowner cost-share program. This program is funded through the collection of a four (4) percent harvest fee on all timber sales. These funds are only available for the cost-share program and the operations of the Illinois Legislature's Council on forestry Development.

*The Council gathers and disseminates information on the State's forest resources and industries, and makes recommendations on appropriate forest management practices.

1. timber, lumber and forest-based herbal product marketing information,
2. forest resource information for potential new forest industries, and
3. recommendations regarding improved operating techniques.