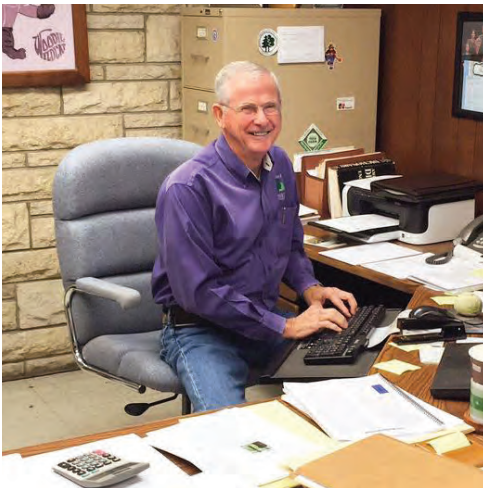




Kansas Forest Service
Serving Kansas for 130 years
December 2017



From the State Forester

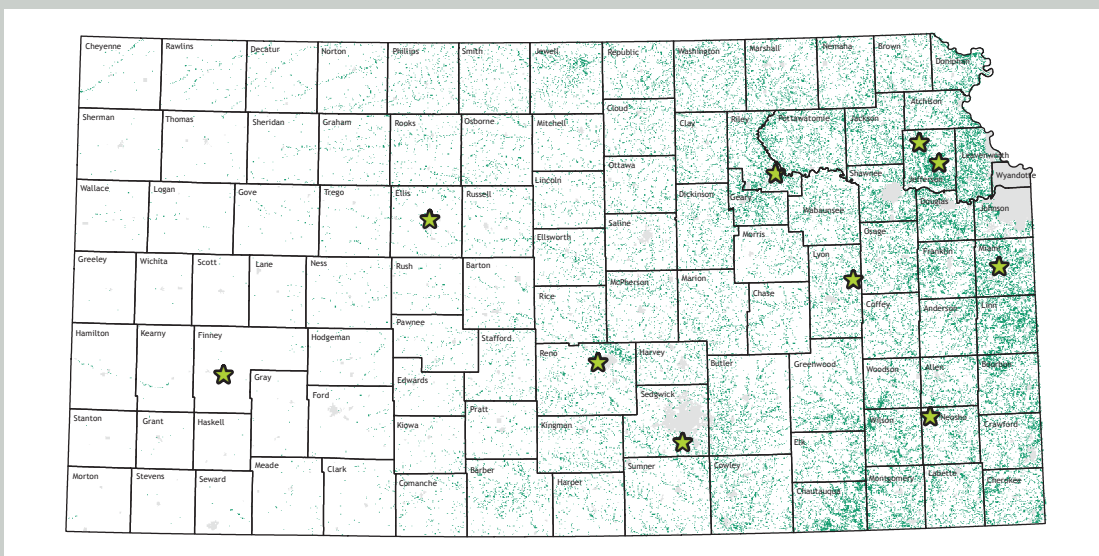
The 2017 fire season in Kansas followed a disturbing trend, as the Starbuck fire surpassed the largest fire in the state's recorded history, last year's 278,000-acre Anderson Creek fire, by more than 175,000 acres. In early March, while on full predictive alert, the Kansas Forest Service's four fire program personnel and two district foresters, transitioned from monitoring wildfire conditions to wrestling with 20 uncontrolled wildfires in a matter of hours. In a five-day period, the Kansas Forest Service fire program coordinator and fire prevention forester manned the state's emergency operations center in Topeka on 12-hour shifts; the fire training specialist provided nearly full-time duty as the operations chief on the Highland fire in Reno County; the planning and equipment coordinator, working as a staging manager, deployed 25 outstate engine and water tender crews and two single engine air tankers to the Starbuck fire in Clark County; another worked as an engine crew boss on the Highland Fire in Reno County; and another served as the single engine air tanker airport manager in Dodge City. In 2017, Kansas saw positive legislative and executive action leading to the state becoming a member of the Great Plains Fire Compact.

The Kansas Forest Service celebrated its 130th anniversary this year, a year that brought growth and success, which is evident in the various programs' activities and achievements. The Kansas Forest Service Demonstration Arboretum and Honor Grove were awarded certification from the ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program and The Morton Arboretum in the spring. Our organization hosted the Great Plains Regional Windbreak Conference, bringing together out of state partners to discuss the importance of windbreaks in the Great Plains. As state forester, I testified before the House of Representatives Water and Environment Committee on surface water programs. The conservation trees staff launched a pollinator plant marketing initiative this year to bring awareness to the importance of providing for pollinators. The GIS staff completed first-ever statewide canopy layers using available 2010 and 2015 data. Kansas Forest Service rural district foresters conducted three statewide field days, and certified 9,195 acres for forestry cost share assistance. Community forestry celebrated 41 years of Tree City USA with 92 communities, and completed tree assessments in 50 communities.

Following annual precedent, the Kansas Forest Service earned high marks and was awarded funding for three grants, totaling \$785,000. Activities for these grants include a statewide windbreak assessment project, tamarisk management along the headwaters of the Quivira Wildlife Refuge, and a statewide peer-to-peer network promoting streambank stabilization. The final efforts for fiscal year 2017 found us preparing grant proposals for 2018. We look forward to the next year, continuing this pattern of success, and fulfilling our mission of "Care of Natural Resources and Service to People through Forestry." For more information on Kansas Forest Service programs, people, and events, please visit Kansasforests.org.

Larry Biles, Kansas State Forester

Kansas Forest Service Districts Offices



The Kansas Forest Service consists of a state office and several district offices. The state office, located in Manhattan, houses the state forester, program coordinators, statewide specialists, and support staff. The rural fire shop and conservation trees greenhouse are also located at the state office. Displayed on the state map is the Kansas tree canopy based on 2015 imagery.



What are our legislated duties?

We serve rural fire districts, forest and arboriculture industries, and citizens of the state through our

- conservation tree and shrub planting,
- fire management,
- community forestry,
- rural forestry,
- marketing and utilization, and
- forest health programs.



Water

Did you know ... healthy forests lead to healthy streams? The Kansas Forest Service continues its work this year restoring the state's streamside forests. Where streamside forests have been degraded, streams have suffered, but where streamside forests are healthy, streams have less pollutants, tamer currents, and improved water quality. Just like city water lines need periodic maintenance, "green" infrastructure of creeks and rivers have to be cared for as well. Public education and landowner assistance work is funded because of the environmental and financial benefits that streamside forests provide to the public.

What We're Doing

- Educating the public about the role of forests, their current condition, and the need to manage them better.
- Assisted landowners with 155 acres of riparian forest buffer plantings on 138 sites in 2017, along with 6,693 acres of tree stand improvement in high-priority areas such as Cottonwood, Tuttle Creek, and Delaware watersheds.
- Providing specialty equipment at no cost for landowners to conduct their own riparian area forestry management activities.
- Supporting landowners wishing to enroll streamside areas into conservation programs.

Results

- Provided forestry education to more than 8,500 Kansans at more than 100 statewide events.
- Guided the protection of 102,300 linear feet of streams with new tree planting projects.
- Riparian buffer plantings help prevent sediment, phosphorus and nitrogen from entering federal reservoirs, saving hundreds of thousands of dollars in future dredging costs and reducing harmful algae blooms.
- Reducing sediment and nutrient inputs to streams and reservoirs where two-thirds of Kansas water supplies are sourced.

Results Are in the Numbers



102,300 linear feet

Protection of streambanks by tree plantings.



66 feet

Average width of riparian forest buffers we design.



Quality of Life

Did you know ... studies show forested areas improve quality of life? The positive effect gardens, parks, and other green spaces have on Kansas communities is immeasurable. Trees clean the air and improve health, windbreaks and shelterbelts increase crop yields and lower energy bills, and riparian plantings slow erosion and reservoir sedimentation. Trees are important to the well-being of Kansans, a message the Kansas Forest Service is eager to spread.

What We're Doing

- Providing forestry assistance and trainings in communities to ensure best management practices on current issues in order to build healthy and sustainable community canopies.
- Working with communities across the state to implement more effective control of invasive plants, such as bush honeysuckle, that degrade community forests and parks.
- Ensuring communities enjoy the benefits of a healthy tree canopy by working with them to reduce future risk of damaging insects and diseases.
- The Kansas Forest Service achieved arboretum accreditation from the ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program and The Morton Arboretum for achieving standards of professional practices deemed important for arboreta and botanic gardens.

Results

- Community foresters performed 190 technical assists to Kansas communities and provided 62 workshops with 3,995 attendees.
- Enhanced the ability of local decision makers in Lawrence, Topeka, Manhattan, Hutchinson, and Wichita to strategically deploy limited resources to control invasive plants, by pioneering a new method of detecting these plants through remote sensing.
- Assisted communities by promoting and demonstrating tree diversity and assisting them with insect and disease preparedness and response plans, to enhance their community forest resource.
- Providing a space for people to learn more about the trees and shrubs suitable for planting in Kansas and the Great Plains.

Fire

Did you know ... once again, the Kansas Forest Service helped fight the largest wildfire in Kansas' recorded history this year? The past two years have made it obvious that the wildfire situation in Kansas is escalating, and the Kansas Forest Service fire program is helping rural and volunteer fire departments keep their communities safe by providing equipment and trucks, free of charge, to combat loss due to fire. The Kansas Forest Service fire program provides training, excess property distribution, prevention materials, and grant funding to Kansas fire departments to help keep their communities safe.

What We're Doing

- Provided leadership to the Kansas Legislature, subsequently allowing Kansas to join the Great Plains Interstate Fire Compact.
- Assisted in managing national-level wildfires in 15 states, providing valuable training experience that Kansas Forest Service personnel bring back to Kansas.
- Donating fire equipment to fire departments through federal excess property programs.
- Administering Volunteer Fire Assistance cost-share program to rural fire departments.

Results

- Kansas is better able to receive out-of-state resources to assist in emergency wildfire situations.
- From March 3 to October 1, Kansas Forest Service fire personnel were continuously deployed in support of national-level wildland fire emergencies.
- Provided 36 trucks or other major equipment items to Kansas fire departments worth an original acquisition value of more than \$3.7 million.
- Distributed \$423,000 to Kansas fire departments through Volunteer Fire Assistance grants.



385,000

Acres of remote sensing imagery captured, processed, and classified to detect invasive bush honeysuckle.



139

Number of tree and shrub species in the Demonstration Arboretum available for the public to observe and enjoy.



213

Consecutive days KFS fire personnel assisted on national-level incidents in 15 different states.



\$423,000

Savings to Kansas rural fire departments through the Volunteer Fire Assistance cost share program.



Sustainability

Did you know ... the Kansas Forest Service helps to sustain healthy prairie and woodland ecosystems? Prescribed burning and forest management aid in the prevention of the spread of invasive vegetation, while improving wildlife habitat, water quality, and recreation. Restoring the state's ecosystem is important to the Kansas economy, as well as wildlife and native trees and grasses. Forest and prairie management remove undesirable vegetation that in turn, creates potential for valuable wood products and new energy source opportunities, such as biochar.

What We're Doing

- Uniting Kansans to utilize the state's forest resources to its fullest potential, strengthening forest product markets.
- Exploring opportunities associated with biochar to provide environmental benefits as well as ways to utilize wood waste and underutilized woody species.
- Providing a wide selection of tree seedling species used in wildlife food and habitat, as well as other conservation purposes through the Conservation Tree Planting program.
- Partnering with land managers, owners, and conservation groups to demonstrate the benefits of prescribed fire.

Results

- Connected with the 46 timber buyers and 47 Kansas sawmills to enhance opportunities for cooperation and networking between those within the industry as well as private landowners.
- Secured funding through the U.S. Forest Service Wood Education and Resource Center to establish the Great Plains Biochar Initiative, providing financial, educational, and technical assistance to individuals interested in exploring opportunities with biochar.
- Increased and improved wildlife habitat through the distribution of 277,350 seedlings through the Conservation Tree Planting Program.
- Kansas Forest Service fire personnel coordinated 13 prescribed burn cooperatives.

Developing Stewards

Did you know ... the Kansas Forest Service is in the business of educating Kansans on the importance of stewardship to provide for the future health of our state? In a state where nearly all lands are privately owned, stewardship is crucial. The Kansas Forest Service achieves this objective through various activities, from elementary education with the annual Arbor Day Poster Contest, to offering valuable training and instruction for tree-care professionals throughout the state.

What We're Doing

- Engaging landowners in the active management of their woodlands through the Forest Stewardship Program.
- Celebrating 44 years partnering with the Kansas Arborist Association on the Arborist Training Course.
- Developing lesson plans to support forestry education through the Arbor Day Poster Contest in Kansas elementary schools.
- Providing Kansans who care for their municipal trees a way that improves their communities through the Tree City USA program.

Results

- Foresters have provided long-term, comprehensive planning and professional forestry recommendations for Kansas woodlands on more than 110,000 acres in the form of Forest Stewardship management plans.
- More than 1,900 individuals have been trained through the Arborist Training Course, with 258 of those currently Kansas Certified Arborists.
- Educated 1,088 5th graders through lesson plans, activities, and information regarding the importance of Kansas' tree resources.
- 2,194 Kansans spent a total of 31,925 volunteer hours in 92 Tree City USA communities learning and practicing tree care and management.



277,350

Seedlings distributed in 2017 for conservation plantings.



47

Number of active sawmills in Kansas.



31,925

Number of volunteer hours Kansans invested in caring for community trees.



110,000

Total number of actively managed acres of private lands.

