## **Texas A&M Forest Service**

## **Strategic Plan**

## **Fiscal Years 2023 - 2027**

## **Mission**

Texas A&M Forest Service provides statewide leadership and technical assistance to ensure trees, forests and related natural resources are sustained for the benefit of all. The agency supports the state's incident response capability, protecting against wildfire and responding to a range of all-hazard incidents.

## **Vision**

The future to which Texas A&M Forest Service aspires:  
Abundant, healthy and sustainable landscapes across Texas that provide environmental, economic, social, and health benefits to all, free of catastrophic wildfire, and full of people knowledgeable on how to steward the land, prevent and prepare for wildfire, and actively do so.

## **Core Values**

Texas A&M Forest Service has:

* **A Call to Serve:** Providing technical assistance, program delivery and readily-available, easily-accessible, science-based information
* **A Duty to Protect:** Providing protection against wildland fires and other all-hazard emergencies
* **The Commitment to Support:** Promoting statewide forestry-based economic development, the environment and the well-being of the state
* **A Belief in the Power of Partnership:** Building partnerships and coalitions with other organizations because we know we are stronger together

## **About Texas A&M Forest Service**

Each state in the United States has a forestry agency, but Texas was the first in the nation to establish its state forestry agency as part of a land-grant college. Four other states have since done the same: Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska and North Dakota. Texas A&M Forest Service is one of eight Texas state agencies not headquartered in Austin—but rather in College Station, Texas.

Signed into law in 1862, the Morrill Act fostered the land-grant mission, and has provided a broad segment of the population with a practical education that has direct relevance to their daily lives through research, teaching, extension and service. Texas A&M Forest Service embodies the service component of the Texas A&M University System and of Texas A&M AgriLife.

## **Purpose of the strategic plan**

The purpose of this strategic plan is to establish and communicate the direction of the state forestry agency and create a foundational strategy that balances long-term objectives, operational priorities and financial discipline. The five-year strategic plan outlines the agency’s mission, vision, values, strategic destination, and links to the Texas Forest Action Plan and Texas Wildfire Protection Plan. This strategic plan is intended to build upon the agency’s strong foundation in order to prepare for future needs, challenges and opportunities.

## **Goal 1: Conserve**

Conserving Texas’ trees and forests, Texas A&M Forest Service helps property owners maintain land and natural resources to ensure forestlands remain productive and healthy for the environment, and for generations of Texans to come.

**Objectives:**

* Monitor forests to improve health and productivity
* Identify landscapes experiencing significant change and conserve threatened natural resources due to that change
* Use technology to predict the impacts of climate, land-use change, and other threats on forests and woodlands
* Prioritize and deliver forest and woodland landowner assistance programs throughout the state
* Determine impacts of wood utilization on forests and woodland resources and the economy of the state
* Maintain and enhance watersheds as a source of clean drinking water with land management and targeted conservation
* Help restore impacted forests and communities
* Train, educate and build the capacity of landowners to make sound land management decisions
* Integrate technology into conservation education programs, content and delivery to reach a wider range of learners than ever before

## **Goal 2: Protect**

Texas A&M Forest Service is one of the lead agencies for incident management in the state. From the initial response to ongoing recovery, the agency strives to protect Texas from wildfire and other types of disasters. Texas A&M Forest Service does this by not only fighting wildfire and responding to incidents, but also by building capacity and increasing public awareness about community protection, wildfire prevention, and proactive resource management. The state agency protects trees, forests, water and other natural resources by mitigating threats, practicing and teaching sustainable and resilient land management practices.

**Objectives:**

* Ensure rapid and effective response as the lead state agency for wildfire suppression
* Lead incident management teams during all-hazard incidents
* Support a state fire mutual aid system
* Maintain mitigation programs that help plan for wildfires and other disasters prior to a threat, reduce occurrence, hazardous conditions, and risk of loss from wildfires and other natural and human-induced pressures
* Maintain a continual assessment of wildfire risk by analyzing current and predicted weather conditions, wildfire occurrence, and vegetative fuels
* Enforce laws pertaining to wildfires and timber theft and pursue the prosecution of violators
* Provide timely, comprehensive information on wildfire and incident response
* Build resilient landscapes and communities to moderate impacts of catastrophic events
* Identify and mitigate threats to trees, forests, and woodlands resources of the state
* Protect and improve air and water quality using trees, forests, and woodlands incidents
* Protect soil and water quality through promotion of Forestry Best Management Practices

## **Goal 3: Lead**

Through service and in partnership with other agencies, local governments and fire departments, Texas A&M Forest Service provides programs and resources to build the capacity of others.

**Objectives:**

* Ensure the relevancy of resource assistance programs and services by understanding landowner goals and challenges
* Integrate climate, weather, and wildland fuel conditions into products that will enhance the ability of managers to make sound decisions
* Support the forest industry and its positive impact on the state’s economy
* Determine the potential of emerging markets to benefit forest landowners and the state
* Provide information resources, technology, and geospatial analyses to help guide decisions on wildfire risk and forest resources
* Provide leadership and training to build local urban and community program capacity
* Provide leadership, training, and equipment to strengthen emergency response capabilities of fire departments
* Educate, involve, and engage all stakeholders and audiences through conservation education outreach
* Offer training and professional development opportunities to members of organizations that support our mission, building capacity and cohesion within working alliances with other agencies and groups who serve the same customers
* Strengthen agency planning and coordinated program delivery
* Maintain an effective level of infrastructure that utilizes current, and plans for future, technology
* Continually improve the agency work environment to adapt to and optimize change in a competitive recruiting climate and in workplace expectations.
* Work collaboratively across departments and agencies in planning, developing, implementing, supporting, and evaluating agency response capabilities and needs

**Implementation:**

Elements of implementation of the agency’s strategic plan include: planning the work, planning the tasks and subtasks, planning the time, and planning the people and resources. The strategic plan objectives are carried out in two major action plans:

* **Texas Forest Action Plan** <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/uploadedFiles/TFSMain/Wildfires_and_Disasters(4)/TexasForestActionPlan.pdf>
* **Texas Wildfire Protection Plan** <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/uploadedFiles/TFSMain/Wildfires_and_Disasters/Contact_Us(3)/TWPP%202020.pdf>

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