



US VIRGIN ISLANDS

State & Private Forestry Fact Sheet

Investment in State's Cooperative Programs:

Programs	FY 2006 Final SPF	FY 2006 Final NFP	FY 2007 Estimate SPF	FY 2007 Estimate NFP
Coop Forest Health Management	0	0	0	0
State Fire Assistance	110,000	0	110,000	0
Volunteer Fire Assistance	43,700	0	50,000	0
Forest Stewardship Program	80,000	0	80,000	0
Stewardship Incentives	0	0	0	0
Forest Legacy Program	10,000	0	40,000	0
Urban and Community Forestry	189,625	70,000	200,000	100,000
Economic Action Programs	0	0	0	0
PNW Assistance Program	0	0	0	0
Forest Resource Information and Analysis	0	0	0	0
Forest Land Enhancement Program	10,000	0	0	0
TOTAL	443,325	70,000	480,000	100,000

FY06 includes carryover received

The goal of the cooperative programs is to maintain and improve the health of the Virgin Islands' urban and rural forests and related economies. The cooperative programs are administered and implemented through a partnership between the US Virgin Islands, the USDA Forest Service and many other private and government entities. The programs emphasize sustainability of timber and other forest products, wildlife, water resources, rural economies and conservation practices. They are cost effective as program funding is leveraged with resources provided by partners. The programs are voluntary and use non-regulatory approaches in program delivery.

KEY ISSUES:

Key issues which State and Federal programs will address together in the next few years include:

- Loss of forest cover from residential, commercial and resort development.
- Water quality problems from land development and occupancy.
- Improper maintenance of urban street trees.
- Loss of the scenic tree cover on the Queen Mary Highway in St. Croix.
- Lack of known protocols for germination and planting of native tree species.
- Shortage of easily accessible fresh water sources for fire control.

State and Private Forestry staff provided technical assistance for grant management and follow up.

Forest Facts and 2006 Accomplishments

SELECTED FACTS		FY 2006 ACCOMPLISHMENTS	
Population	112,863	Stewardship Plans Prepared (current year)	0
Acres of Forest Land	56,597.016*	Acres Under Stewardship Plans (current year)	0
Acres of NonIndustrial Private Forest Land	49,097.016*	Acres Under Stewardship Plans (all years)	1,496
Number of NIPF Landowners	1,000	Multi-resource practices implemented on NIPF - Acres	
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	7,500	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted SPF NFP	
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	49,097.016*	State Fire – Communities Assisted SPF NFP	32
Number of Rural Fire Departments	1	Coop Forest Health – Acres Protected SPF NFP	
Number of Cities and Towns Communities	32	Coop Forest Health – Acres Surveyed SPF NFP	
Forest Based Employment	125	Forest Legacy Project Acquisition - Acres	0
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	5	Urban Forestry-Participating communities	10
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	0	Urban Forestry –Volunteer Assistance Generated-Days	856
		EAP-Communitites working under broad-based local strategic plans	
		PNW-Communities working under broad-based local strategic	

* Corrected data based on Forest Inventory and Analysis Factsheet, Virgin Islands 2004, May 2006

Program Highlights:

Urban and Community Forestry:

The Urban and Community Forestry assistance program is well positioned to confer benefits to the people of the Virgin Islands. The program inspires hope in the community through the activities of grant subrecipients and motivated citizens. The traditional tendency to top trees at the approach of a hurricane is deep rooted. This program seeks to address these concerns at the local level by offering training opportunities and technical assistance in proper tree management.

In the Virgin Islands, the UCF Program had a booth with program information at the Agrifest 2006 . Over twenty thousand people attend this event.

The Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture hosted the *11th Caribbean Urban and Community Forestry Conference, Islands Forests: The Urban and Natural Interface*, held in St. Croix. The topics discussed during the conference were related to control of invasive species, emerging ecosystems, VI U&CF Program, mangrove restoration, wildland urban interface, the Forest Legacy Program as an island land conservation tool, forest inventory, and others. The conference attracted a large audience including representatives of state, federal and local agencies from Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and the United States, environmental groups and visitors from other Caribbean Islands.

Cooperative Fire Protection:

The entire territory can be classified as an urban/wild land interface. In this island environment there are very few rivers, no lakes, limited man-made ponds, and a limited number of fire hydrants. Variable trade winds, fuel buildup associated with dry tropical forests, narrow and steep roads, and difficult building entrances all combine to create a wildfire challenge.

During the year, the VI Fire Service provided Incident Command System basic, and intermediate wild land fire training for all of its employees. The emphasis on the program is to have trained fire fighters with proper safety equipment and clothing. Initial attack with aviation resources is being considered for this fire season, along with

water resources development and small engine training. National Fire Program funds are available in both State Fire Assistance and Volunteer Fire Assistance to improve firefighting capability, along with implementing stronger fire prevention. To complement this educational initiative the VI Fire Service supported and participated in a fire prevention initiative with the participation of Smokey the Bear during Fire Prevention Week. Over 3,000 children participated.

The VI Fire Service has actively used the new fire engines in areas where the fire incidence is high. The use of this equipment contributed to control wildland fires reducing environmental damages and fire hazards on private property. The Service also provided Incident Command System and wildland fire and fire engine safety trainings to the personnel working in those areas.

Landowner Assistance:

Matching natural resource professionals with farmers and other landowners is expanding the vision for forest stewardship opportunities in the territory. Recognizing the importance of protecting habitat for wildlife, soil for water quality, and aesthetics for tourism and economic development changes the way people view the opportunities and their responsibility for a healthier island. The accomplishments in the program are growing slowly as landowners begin to realize the need to actively manage their lands for the overall health of the island environment. The VI Department of Agriculture Stewardship Coordinator developed four Stewardship Plans for a 182 acres in the St. Croix area. Technical assistance was provided to private landowners that want to have more information on their property's forest resource management.

The goal of the Forest Legacy Program (FLP) is to effectively protect and conserve environmentally important forest areas that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses. This is a voluntary land conservation program between the USDA Forest Service, state or territorial governments, land trusts and private landowners. The program uses fee acquisition or conservation easements to protect lands in a conservation trust. The U.S. Virgin Islands has prepared, through The Nature Conservancy, and submitted for approval and funding an Assessment of Need (AON). This study and resulting document, evaluates the present forest resources, the values of these forests, and the threat to this resource from conversion to other land uses.

Economic Action Programs:

Economic Action Program grants are no longer available for the Virgin Islands area.

For more information contact:

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