

# Forestry and Wildfire

## National Association of Conservation Districts



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Conservation Districts

The effective management and conservation of public and private forestland is essential to the health and sustainability of ecosystems across our country.

The U.S. contains hundreds of millions of acres of public forests, but more than half of forestland in our country is privately owned and managed. It is critical that private land managers are provided with the resources and tools needed to effectively manage forests under their care. Conservation districts play a key role in managing forestland across the country and NACD is actively engaged with Congress, federal agencies, and other partners to empower land managers to improve forest health.

- NACD publishes **Forestry Notes**, a monthly newsletter that highlights district-led forestry projects and partnerships to address modern forestry challenges.
- As a member of the Joint Forestry Team, NACD works closely with the U.S. Forest Service, National Association of State Foresters, and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service to strengthen delivery of forestry and conservation assistance on working forests, farms, and ranches. These partnerships support the shared stewardship approach to forest management, bringing together federal, state, and local partners to improve forest health and accelerate restoration across jurisdictional boundaries.
- Good Neighbor Authority agreements can help increase the pace and scale of forest management while supporting locally driven conservation priorities. More information about these and other resources can be found on NACD's website.

### Forestry Management Priorities

Maintaining healthy forests serves several important functions, including mitigating wildfires, preventing pest and disease outbreaks, improving water quality, preventing soil erosion, increasing carbon sequestration, and protecting wildlife habitats. To maintain and enhance our forest resources, it is critical for Congress to support:

- **Site appropriate silvicultural techniques** and advanced, science-based forest management practices to promote the growth and maintenance of healthy, diverse forests.
- **Good Neighbor Authority & Stewardship Agreements** allows the U.S. Forest Service to work with nonfederal partners to administer critical management practices that keep forests healthy and productive within and around National Forests and other federal lands.
- **State, Private, and Tribal Forestry Programs** provide technical and financial assistance to resource managers to sustain our nation's forests, protect communities from wildfires, and restore fire-adapted ecosystems.



### Contact Us

509 Capitol Court, NE  
Washington, DC 20002

NACD GA Director Libby Wawro

libby-wawro@nacdnet.org  
202-595-9156

info@nacdnet.org  
nacdnet.org



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### Urban Forestry Priorities

Urban forestry is an important component of our nation's forest management framework, providing a wide range of benefits for communities across the country. Trees, vegetation, and green spaces in towns and cities support water quality, economic activity, community resilience, and cleaner air and soil while helping reduce energy costs, strengthen infrastructure, and improve quality of life.

Urban forests represent an important form of natural infrastructure that can help communities manage stormwater, reduce extreme heat, and protect public investments in built infrastructure. Through partnerships with municipalities, state forestry agencies, and community organizations, conservation districts help connect federal programs with local communities and support the active management of community forests.

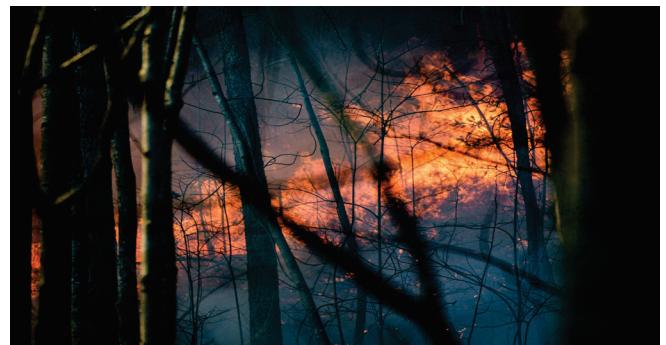
Urban forestry efforts can complement broader shared stewardship approaches to forest management by strengthening coordination between federal, state, and local partners and encouraging community participation in forest stewardship. Programs, such as the USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program, help leverage federal resources with state, local, and private investment to support healthy and resilient community forests. To support sustainable urban forestry, NACD encourages Congress to:

- Recognize urban trees as essential community infrastructure and support efforts to expand and maintain urban tree canopy.
- Invest in staffing, workforce development, and technical capacity within the U.S. Forest Service and partner organizations to plant, manage, and maintain community forests.
- Support locally led urban forestry projects through the USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program and partnerships with conservation districts, municipalities, and state forestry agencies.

### Wildfire Management Priorities

The frequency and intensity of wildfires have increased significantly across the United States. Recent fires have destroyed land and infrastructure, depleted soil, increased flood risks, and decimated wildlife habitats. NACD and districts across the country are working closely with federal agencies and other partners to administer programs, helping communities prepare for and mitigate wildfires. To help mitigate and respond to wildfires, NACD encourages Congress to:

- Support **wildfire mitigation and management** activities on public forests and rangelands.
- Reauthorize and strengthen U.S. Forest Service programs and **bolster workforce capacity at the federal and local levels**.
- Improve Post-Disaster Landowner Assistance through the Emergency Forest Restoration Program.
- Support the use of appropriate prescribed burning and silvicultural treatments.
- Increase pre- and post-fire grazing on at-risk public lands.



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