

Georgia Forestry Commission

Harris County



Annual Report

2018 - 2019

Value of Forestry to Harris County



Logging operation

Georgia's abundant forests, both industry and privately owned, provide the resources that are directly responsible for generating more than 12.7 billion dollars annually through the state's market places and a total of 20.2 billion dollars both directly and indirectly. No other single industry affects the lives of more Georgians than forestry and the by-products generated by the industry.

Harris County has 253,300 acres in forestland.

Forestland supplies the raw materials for several major industries in Harris County. There are a total of 13 industries in the county that are engaged in the processing or manufacturing of forest products that include producing pulpwood for paper companies, lumber for residential construction, and the manufacturing of pallets, cabinets and furniture just to name a few. Pine, oak, yellow poplar and various other hardwood species are used in the manufacturing of these products.

Accomplishments of the Harris Forestry Unit

Forest Protection



Truck/Tractor suppression unit

During fiscal year 2018– 2019, the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC), in Harris County, encountered an above average fire season due to extensive drought conditions.

There were 5 wildfires in the Harris county area during the year on forest land under the protection of the Georgia Forestry Commission. Total land burned was 9.55 acres of forest and open land. The average wildfire in Harris County was held to 1.91 acres per fire. This can be attributed to well trained personnel who operate equipment that is maintained in a high state of readiness. Additionally, we have had much cooperation from the public in proper fire usage, limited burning, and in many cases, not burning at all when the fire danger was too high.

Unit personnel used 4 truck/tractor fire suppression units as well as two type 7 wildland fire engines, and two UTV's to suppress fires throughout the three county coverage areas.



Burning Logging Debris



House Lost Due to Wildfire

There were several different types of fire use that caused the wildfires in the county. Debris Burning accounted for 3 fires and 8.72 acres. Debris Burning includes lot clearing, logging operations, escaped prescribed burning, and household garbage among other types of debris. One fire can be attributed to a down power lines, burning .53 acres. One other fire was caused from a structure fire that spread into the woods burning .30 acres.

One aircraft is assigned for air patrol in Harris County. It is used in the detection and suppression of wildfires and to monitor pine bark beetle activity. Its use is primarily dependent upon weather and fire danger conditions. The Commission also has a helicopter to assist in the suppression of large wildfires which is stationed at the Macon airport.



GFC Aircraft



GFC Helicopter

During this fiscal year, 20 landowners requested firebreaks be installed on their property. Unit personnel responded by plowing 128 miles of firebreaks, using best management practices to ensure water quality and the prevention of soil erosion.



Plowing Fire Break on Control Burn



Tractor Harrowing a Food Plot

Personnel also assisted 9 landowners with 678 acres of assistance for controlled burning operations. Prescribed burn plans, agreements, and mapping were utilized to better assist the landowners in safe burning practices. We again received numerous requests for wildlife food plot assistance. A large percentage of our plowing miles are accumulated through these requests. Also Randall Creek Farms subdivision maintained their status of the first Fire Wise community in Georgia with the assistance from the Harris/Muscogee/Talbot unit.

Unit Personnel Training

In a continuing effort to retain the excellent record in safe and efficient operation now held by the Commission, the employees of the Harris Forestry Unit received many hours of instruction and training in fire related subjects during the past year. This training included, but was not limited to, safety and first aid, equipment operation and maintenance, fire weather and fire danger, fire suppression (including detection, measurement and investigating), prevention of wildfires, rural fire defense, incident command system, reports and communications.



Rural Fire Departments



Truck Outfitted by the RFD shop

During the year, the Commission was cooperating with 10 rural fire departments in Harris County with 1 piece of equipment on loan from the Commission or Federal surplus.

These 10 departments worked jointly with the Commission to keep a low average wildfire size. The Fire Departments worked with the Forestry Unit on 4 fires that burned a total of 2.48 acres, with a .62 acre average per fire. This was a decrease from the previous fiscal year average. The fire activity was held to a manageable rate by prompt responses from the Forestry Unit, Fire Departments and the 911 system dispatchers. Due to the increasing numbers of cell phone users, the public's reports of fires were another factor in the timely responses.

The Forestry Commission also assisted the Fire Departments by offering several grants for equipment, which was matched by funds from the federal government. The Forestry Unit personnel also worked hand-in-hand with the Fire Departments in presenting both adult and school age fire prevention programs throughout Harris County.

Robert Brogdon is our local screener for the Federal Firefighter Excess Program. Throughout the year he screens surplus items from military bases that aid in the suppression of fire and response to natural disaster and emergencies. This equipment is being utilized by local fire departments, county government and state agencies. Throughout this Fiscal year he screened over Five Hundred Thousand dollars in equipment.



Smokey Bear at a School Program

Forest Management

During the year the Forestry Commission personnel assisted landowners with a total of 51 forestry management requests. These cases were completed by Forester Keith Sanders and Forest Tech Chris Dunn. These requests include General Advice Cases, BMP Assurance and Inspections, Cost Share Programs, Stewardship Plans, and the detection and eradication of Cogongrass.



Forester Assisting Landowner



Forester Marking Trees for Harvest

The Georgia Forestry Commission aerial survey for pine beetle activity in detected no beetle spots within the county. Annually the Forestry Commission flies the state in search for locations that are possibly affected by beetle activity. When activity is found the spots are marked and landowners are contacted.

Reforestation

The reforestation campaign in Harris County resulted in 9,700 seedlings being shipped from our GFC nursery and planted in these counties. Planting advice, seedling survival, hardwood control, site preparation, chemical demonstration spots, general reforestation information and Best Management Practice information was given to landowners.



Flint River Nursery Sign



Pine Seedlings at Nursery

Forestry Unit personnel were asked to collect Persimmon, Red Cedar, Yellow Poplar, Swamp Chestnut Oak, Southern Red Oak, Northern Red Oak, Water Oak, Red Maple, Crabapple, Wild Plum and White Oak acorns as well as Wax Myrtle for planting at GFC's Flint River Nursery. They responded by exceeding in collecting their requested quota of all species.

Personnel assisted landowners in seedling care, tree planter rentals, proper planting procedures and seedling survival. Landowners were given literature on proper thinning procedures, insect control, planting instructions, species selection and spacing.

Administration

Harris county was assessed at ten cents per acre for forest fire protection services. There are 292,850 forest acres in both counties that accounts for 29,285 dollars paid for protection services.

Personnel in the unit consist of the Chief Ranger Mike Dean and Rangers George Barbee, Mike Bryan, Ben Brogdon, and Orion Gibson.

The forestry unit building is located at 608 Georgia Highway 36, just outside of Waverly Hall.

The Harris office is manned by Senior Forester, Keith Sanders. Chris Dunn also serves as a Forest Technician out of the Marion Office. The Foresters and Forest Technicians are available to assist landowners in all areas of forest management, reforestation, insect and disease inspections and cost share programs.

Forest Education

Unit personnel continued to inform the people of Harris County of the tremendous value of forestry to the economy in our area. During the year there were 89 programs conducted in Harris County. In these programs there were 575 audience members. These programs were conducted by 6 Forestry Commission employees with 134 total hours invested in the delivery of the programs. Our programs covered fire prevention, Smokey Bear, general education, general forest management, reforestation, and forest health.

Acreage

COUNTY	TOTAL ACRES	FOREST ACRES	PERCENT FOREST
Harris	300,700	235,300	78%

Wood Using Industries

COUNTY	INDUSTRIES	EMPLOYEES	TOTAL
Harris	13	22	53

Administration

COUNTY	FOREST ACRES	ASSESSED @ \$.10 per ACRE
Harris	235,300	23,530

Wildfires

COUNTY	NUMBER OF FIRES	ACRES BURNED
Harris	5	9.55



Dozier On a Wildfire

Reforestation

COUNTY	NUMBER OF SEEDLINGS SOLD
Harris	9,700



Light Duty Tree Planter



Bare Root Seedling

Major Fire Causes And Acres Burned

CAUSE	<i>HARRIS</i>	
	Fires	Acres
Debris	3	8.72
Incendiary	0	0
Machine use	0	0
Campfire	0	0
Miscellaneous	2	.83
Lighting	0	0
Undetermined	0	0
TOTALS	5	9.55

Fire & Plowing Business Summary

HARRIS COUNTY

1. Controlled Fire Use

Controlled Burns Reported By Public and Aircraft	8,734
Estimated Acres	9,469

2. Burning Assistance

Requests Received	9
Acres Assisted	678

3. Harrowing

Number Assists	5
Miles Plowed	18.5

4. Pre-Suppression Plowing

Number Assists	15
Miles Plowed	109.5

GEORGIA FORESTRY
COMMISSION



Rural Fire Defense Assists

Total Number Assists with GFC	4
Approximate Acres Burned	2.48
Number Of Departments	10
Pieces Of Equipment	1
Number Of Other Departments Cooperating With GFC	0
Total Countywide Rural Volunteer Fire Departments	10
Master Fire Plans Implemented	1



RFD Trucks Built in GFC Shop in Macon

Forest Management

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	NUMBER OF CASES	AMOUNT
General Advice Cases	17	1235 Acres
Cost Share Cases	25	2046 Acres
Cogongrass	1	1 Site Treated
BMP Firebreak Inspection	5	4.68 Miles
Stewardship Plan	3	451 Acres

Forest Education

Programs Conducted	89
Audience Size	575
Hours Invested	134



Literature and Children at a Forestry School Program