

FLORIDA FOREST SERVICE  
WACCASASSA FORESTRY CENTER  
(352) 395-4950  
(352) 395-4959 FAX



5353 N.E. 39TH AVENUE  
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA 32609

## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES COMMISSIONER NICOLE "NIKKI" FRIED

---

Local Contact:

Joseph MacKenzie, Senior Forester  
Trenton Forestry Station  
7240 S US Hwy 129  
Trenton, FL 32693  
352-463-3138

[Joseph.mackenzie@FDACS.gov](mailto:Joseph.mackenzie@FDACS.gov)

### LEVY COUNTY

### COOPERATIVE FORESTRY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CFA)

### ANNUAL REPORT

For Fiscal Year Period:  
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

TO THE

LEVY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

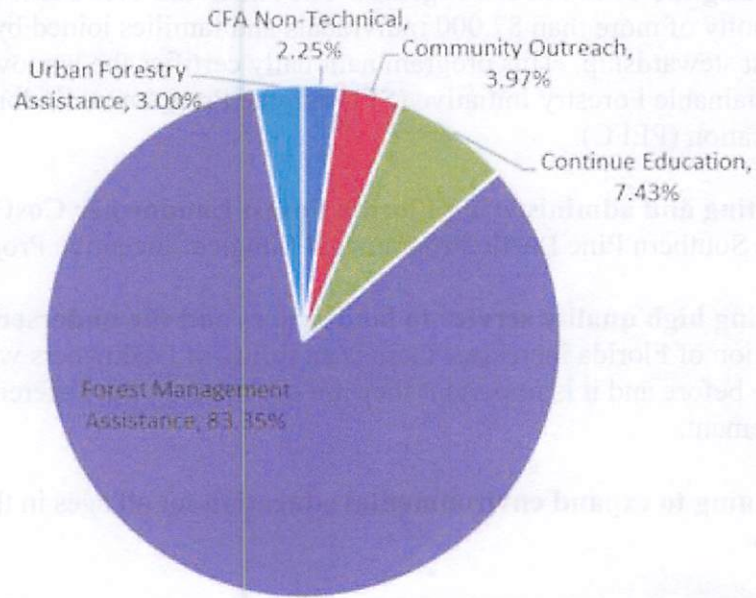
BRONSON, FLORIDA

This annual report is a summary of the activities that the County Forester has participated in on behalf of Levy County in the 2020-2021 State fiscal year. It is presented as part of the cooperative agreement between Levy County and the Florida Forest Service, a part of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Under this agreement, Levy County contracts with the Florida Forest Service for the services of a Forester to serve the needs of landowners, residents, businesses, and government agencies within the County. On a state and national level, this program is recognized as Cooperative Forestry Assistance, or CFA. Senior Forester Joe MacKenzie has served in Levy County since 2016 in this capacity.

The primary services include forest management assistance, forest health assistance, and youth outreach. Forest management assistance includes tree planting prescriptions, harvesting recommendations, fire protection practices, wildlife habitat management, and soil and water conservation. Forest health assistance includes monitoring and responding to forest insect and disease concerns. Youth outreach includes participation in special school events such as Science Day, Career Day, and Project Learning Tree workshops for teachers. The County Forester also strives to make residents aware of private vendors that provide forestry-related services including site preparation contractors, tree planting contractors, timber buyers, and private consulting foresters.

Some of these activities involve the administration of Federal Cost Share funds available to eligible landowners and government entities. Other services include support of prescribed fire and wildland fire, public information, and disaster relief efforts.

### Percent Time Allocated per CFA Activity



Levy County Cooperative Forestry Assistance Allocation 2020-2021

### Percent of Time Worked by Federal Program

Federal Programs	% of Hours
EQIP - Environmental Quality Incentive Program	8%
FHM - Forest Health Monitoring	26%
LL-OCALA Longleaf NFWF-TNC	2%
SPB - Southern Pine Beetle	7%
STEW - Forest Stewardship Program	47%
UCFG - Urban & Community Forestry Grant	9%
No Federal Program	1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

The General goals of the CFA program are to serve the communities within the districts by:

1. **Promoting the Stewardship Program:** This is a program to assist landowners who want to manage their land under the multiple use concepts. The Forest Stewardship Program is a way to give the landowner the information and direction they need and recognize all the challenging work they have invested in their property. In addition, it is the first step in becoming a certified

forest within the Tree Farm Program.

2. **Promoting the Tree Farm Program:** The American Tree Farm System is a nationwide community of more than 87,000 individuals and families joined by their desire for excellence in forest stewardship. This program nationally certifies the landowner's property endorsed by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the Programme Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).
3. **Promoting and administering Florida Forest Landowner Cost Share Assistance programs** such as Southern Pine Beetle Program and Longleaf Incentive Program.
4. **Providing high quality service to landowners and the underserved landowners.** As the population of Florida increases, there is an influx of landowners who may have never owned acreage before and it is important they are educated on the different options in forest management.
5. **Continuing to expand environmental education** for all ages in the counties and throughout the state.
6. **Promoting urban forestry programs** such as Tree City USA, Champion Tree Program, and Arbor Day. This will include assisting the Urban Forestry Coordinator where needed.
7. **Working Relationships:** Working closely with other agencies such as the Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission (FWC), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farms Service Agency (FSA) on federal assistance programs.
8. **Wildland Firefighting & Emergency Management:** Providing fire support and assist with fire prevention when needed. Foresters are encouraged to get involve with the incident management teams (IMT).

## FORESTRY PROGRAMS

Rural forestry programs were offered to landowners throughout the County. The County Forester worked with local agencies and FFS administrators in the administration of these state & federal cost-share programs.

### *Forest Stewardship Program*

The Florida Forest Service administers this program. It offers landowners a management plan and networking & educational opportunities.

Table 1. Forest Stewardship Program

County	FSP Plans	
	Completed	Certifications
Levy	11	2

## ***American Tree Farm Program***

The Florida Forest Service (FFS) has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with the Florida Tree Farm Program. The American Tree Farm System is a program under the [American Forest Foundation](#) which is a non-profit organization that advocates on behalf of forest landowners. If a landowner is in the Tree Farm System, their forest will be considered a sustainable **certified** forest. The wood from these forests are accepted and recognized by SFI and PEFC chain of custody. These forests are inspected every 5 years to ensure they are following the guidelines. If the Tree Farm does not meet the standards of certification they will be decertified. The foresters must be trained every 5 years as inspectors to conduct inspections.

Table 2. American Tree Farm Program

County	Inspections
Levy	15

## ***Florida Forest Service Financial Assistance Programs***

These programs financial assist landowners in the management of their forest land or assist in establishing forest land.

### ***Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program, (SPB)***

The goal of this program is to minimize southern pine beetle damage in Florida by helping forest landowners reduce the susceptibility of their pine stands or future pine stands to this destructive insect. The program offers up to cost share reimbursement for pre-commercial thinning, 1<sup>st</sup> pulpwood thinning, longleaf or slash pine planting, mechanical underbrush control and prescribed burning. Table 3 provides a summary of activity.

Table 3. Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program

County	Acres Reqst	Pymt Reqst	Acres Complt	Final Pymnt	# Applications
Levy	812	\$39,558	204	\$20,467	6

## ***Federal Assistance Programs***

### **USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)**

#### ***Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)***

This program has a general forestry and longleaf initiative categories. These programs offer landowners assistance in planting, site preparation, understory control, prescribed burning and other management. The foresters assist the District Conservationist in technical advice and prepares a forestry plan for the practice. More information on this program can be found at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/>.

#### ***Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)***

This program offers an opportunity for forestland managers to enhance their agricultural operations while adopting conservation activities that can improve crop quality, improve soil health, and improve water quality. CSP can help you plan and implement conservation practices and enhancements that address natural resource concerns on your operation. There is financial assistance that is offer to the landowners for 5-year terms. More information on the

program can be found at

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/csp/> .

### ***Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)***

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. Under the Agricultural Land Easements component, NRCS helps American Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land. Under the Wetlands Reserve Easements component, NRCS helps to restore, protect and enhance enrolled wetlands. More information on the program can be found at

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/easements/acep/>.

### **USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA)**

### ***Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)***

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a land conservation program. In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10-15 years in length. The long-term goal of the program is to re-establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. More information can be found at

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/conservation-reserve-program/>.

### ***Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP)***

The Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) helps the owners of non-industrial private forests restore forest health damaged by natural disasters. The EFRP does this by authorizing payments to owners of private forests to restore disaster damaged forests. The local FSA County Committee implements EFRP for all disasters with the exceptions of drought and insect infestations. In the case of drought or an insect infestation, the national FSA office authorizes EFRP implementation. More information can be found at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/emergency-forest-restoration/index>.

Table 4. Applications of Foresters Assisted NRCS

County	Forester	Total		
		EQIP	CRP	ACEP
Levy	MacKenzie	12	0	0

## **FOREST HEALTH**

Routine aerial flight surveys were conducted in the district and traps were installed to monitor potential insects and disease. The [SPB Forecast Information](#) link will provide more detailed information on the data. Pine sawflies were active the past Fiscal Year within the district. The pine sawfly defoliated numerous longleaf stands. The probability of trees dying from this insect is low but it results in numerous phone calls to the county foresters.

## URBAN FORESTRY AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY ACTIVITIES

Urban Forestry is a large component of the district. The foresters conduct urban shade tree inspections for the counties, cities, and the residents of the area. They also assist in the Tree City USA program and Arbor Day events. No Tree City designations exist currently in Levy County.

Table 5. Urban Forestry

County	Forester	# of Events
Levy	MacKenzie	9

To qualify for Tree City USA, a town or city must meet four standards established by The Arbor Day Foundation and the National Association of State Foresters. These standards were established to ensure that every qualifying community would have a viable tree management plan and program. It is important to note that they were also designed so that no community would be excluded because of size.

1. A Tree Board or Department (can be volunteers)
2. A Tree Care Ordinance
3. A Community Forestry Program with an Annual Budget of at Least \$2 Per Capita
4. An Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation

## OUTREACH

The CFA outreach program reaches out to forest landowners, adult groups such a Master Gardener club, and schools. The foresters work in partnership with organization or other agencies. This includes forest landowner workshops on forest management, invasive species, prescribed fire and Project Learning Tree activities.

Table 6. Outreach

County	Forester	# of Events
Levy	MacKenzie	5

Covid did have an impact on outreach opportunities. For example, the district Fire Festival, which is a large event conducted at Austin Cary Forest, was cancelled. However, targeted prescribe burning was conducted by the Florida Forest Service along with information on prescribed burning and forest management.

Youth programs included FFA Land Judging Contest and small-group career presentations conducted outside. Also, a Project Learning Tree virtual workshop was conducted for teachers.

The media is another means of outreach and foresters submitted articles to local newspapers, including the Chiefland Citizen. Social media was used with the help of the Mitigation specialist.

## MANAGEMENT PLANS

In addition to Stewardship plans there are request for general management plans, practice plans and greenbelt plans. This is a good opportunity to educate the landowners on the benefits of the Stewardship and Tree Farm Programs. Many of these landowners are new forest landowners and it is important to discuss the programs with the landowner. Also, the NRCS may request the foresters to write the forest management portion for a practice area in the EQIP program. All these plans must be mapped in the Stewardship geo-database and the time allocated under the federal program of Stewardship.

Table 7. Management Plans

County	Forester	Mgmt Plans
Levy	MacKenzie	16



FLORIDA FOREST SERVICE  
WACCASASSA FORESTRY CENTER  
(352) 395-4950  
(352) 395-4959 FAX



5353 N.E. 39TH AVENUE  
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA 32609

## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES COMMISSIONER NICOLE "NIKKI" FRIED

---

David Carter  
Florida Forest Service  
5450 unit 1 NW Hwy 19  
Chiefland, Fl. 32626

October 1, 2021

### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Levy County Commissioners  
P. O. Box 310  
Bronson, Fl. 32621

### HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS:

The Florida Forest Service is once again pleased to present the Annual Report. The following information is being provided for your office as the annual report to Levy County Commissioners, as provided for, under the Cooperative Fire Control Agreement between Levy County and The Florida Forest Service.

This report covers the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021.

During this time of the Covid 19 pandemic, we are very appreciative of the cooperation of all the essential workers and citizens in Levy County. We also have not been able to do as many projects this year due to social distancing and social events being cancelled. This has been a very difficult time for all our County and Country.

The Spring and Summer of 2020/2021 was very hot but not quite as bad as 2019 Summer. However, in Levy County the 2020/2021 fire season was a success. We in Levy County were very fortunate to not have had as many wildfires as in the past. The amount of rainfall that we received was a tremendous help. Again, we would like to thank the citizens of Levy County for their participation and cooperation in battling the wildfires that we did have.

During fiscal year 2020/2021 receipts and expenditures (Salary, Expense, OPS, on-Call and OCO) in Levy County totaled \$1,178,663.38 for the Fire Control Program. Levy County's contribution of \$36,207.50 results from our Cooperative Fire Control Agreement providing fire protection of 517,250 acres of forest

and wildlands in the county, with remaining sum coming from State and Federal funding. Currently our Cooperative Fire Agreement is \$.07 per acre. The Florida Forest Service maintained twenty (20) full time fire control, six (6) CARL and seven (7) inmate supervisory positions in Levy County.

Statistics for the 2020/2021 year are as follows

Number of fires	71
Fires caused by Debris Burning	32
Fires caused by Lightening	10
Fires caused by Equipment	8
Fires caused by Incendiary	8
Fires by Power Lines	5
Fires caused by Structure	0
Fires caused by Unknown	3
Campfire	3
Children	1
Miscellaneous -Other	1
Acres Burned	299.7
Pile Burn Authorizations	4,612
Acreage Burn Authorizations	2,547
Acre's Burned	22,200

The E. T. Usher Forestry Station (Usher Fire Tower) south of Chiefland continues as the Florida Forest Service's Levy County Fire Control Headquarters. The work center serves as a fully functional dispatch/operational fire control center as a part of the five (5) county District that also includes Alachua, Putnam, Marion, and Gilchrist Counties. The District Headquarters, located in Gainesville, under the direction of Forestry Center Manager, Rick Dolan.

The Florida Forest service continues to maintain four (4) primary fire towers in Levy County (Cedar Key, Lebanon Station, Wekiva and Usher Work Center). In addition, adjoining towers complete the grid for wildfire detection.

The "Red Flag Alert" that was implemented with local fire department and law enforcement agencies continues to be a success. It has helped to keep all Emergency and Law Enforcement Agencies in close contact with each other to be able to work together when needed.

In fiscal year 2020/2021 we had sixteen (16) fire line plowing jobs of pre-suppression fire line plowing, and ten (10) contract burns, and six (6) burn assist for county landowners. The Florida Forest Service

continues to lease the tree planter and scalper to private landowners. The Florida Forest Service conducted various community contracts including public workshops and civic media contacts related to weather and informational requests.

The Florida Forest Service continues in its efforts of supplying leased firefighting equipment and support to the various county departments with a total of three (3) trucks and one (1) skid currently.

The Forestry Inmate Program continued, up until the Pandemic, to provide inmates as a labor source for maintenance and upkeep in various state sites, forest (county and district) and the seedling operations at Andrews nursery.

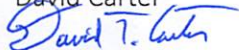
We continue to hold educational fire prevention programs, what we call Smokey Programs, in the local schools, businesses and other public events. We are also actively involved in mitigation programs that reduce the fuel/fire hazard in the communities upon request. In the year 2020/2021 we participated in eighteen (18) mitigation projects in Levy County. With the total of man hours being two hundred and sixty and 1 half (260.5), Acres, one thousand three hundred eighty-nine (1,389) and treatment cost being twenty-six thousand two hundred sixty-two dollars and eighty cents (\$26,262.80).

We sincerely appreciate and continue to enjoy the excellent working relationship with the citizens, county administrators, law enforcement establishment and other governmental agency cooperators of Levy County. And as always, we welcome any comments or suggestions that you might have to improve our service.

Sincerely,

Nicole Fried  
Commissioner of Agriculture

David Carter



Cc: Rick Dolan