

# 100 Years of the National Association of State Foresters

BY NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FORESTERS STAFF

**E**stablished in 1920, the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) is a nonprofit organization comprised of the directors of forestry agencies in the states, U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia. State foresters manage and protect state and private forests, which together encompass two-thirds of the nation's forests. Through public-private partnerships, NASF seeks to discuss, develop, sponsor, and promote programs and activities that will advance the practice of sustainable forestry, the conservation and protection of forest lands and associated resources, and the establishment and protection of forests in the urban environment. State foresters deal with the gamut of forestry-related issues, including wildfire mitigation, private landowner assistance, forest research, community forestry, and forest health.

Cooperation between state foresters predates NASF by a decade. In 1910, a devastating white pine blister rust outbreak in New York led the state foresters from New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Delaware to join with those from all of the New England states to form the Association of Eastern Foresters. The Weeks Act, passed the following year, created a framework for federal-state cooperation on fire control and other issues, but state foresters around the country did not speak with a single, unified voice on issues affecting them as a whole. In 1920, William Greeley, chief of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), realized the potential for a working relationship with state forestry agencies and requested an appropriation of \$1 million for cooperative forest fire protection and reforestation programs. This new funding made nationwide representation essential. Gifford Pinchot, founding chief of the USFS who was then chair of the Pennsylvania Forest Commission, organized the first national meeting of state foresters in December of that year, at which the Association of State Foresters was founded. In 1964, the name was changed to the National Association of State Foresters.

Since its founding a century ago, the number of issues state foresters and NASF as an organization face has grown, but the goal of healthy forests for all has not changed. Landscape-scale tree mortality from disease and pests and forest fire protection—two of the problems that led to the formation of the association—remain atop the NASF docket as foresters face new issues such as the pressures of development and forest fragmentation, threats to watershed health, and the impact of climate change on forests. They cooperate with each other and with their federal counterparts. But state foresters also work with private landowners to ensure sustainability on private land. They also invest time and money into education programs like My Tree—Our Forest campaign and the popular Smokey Bear campaign. After one hundred years on the job, NASF has accomplished much. But NASF leadership and every state forester know there is always more to be done.



## 1920

Gifford Pinchot, chair of the Pennsylvania Forest Commission, arranges a conference for 17 state foresters and representatives of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). As a result, the Association of State Foresters (ASF) is established to include all state foresters.



*The first logo  
was used until  
the 1960s.*



## 1924

The Clarke-McNary Act expands the Weeks Act of 1911 by authorizing the USFS to enter into agreements with states for the protection of state and privately owned forestland from fires, and to support seedling nursery and tree distribution efforts on private lands.





The organizing meeting of what would become the National Association of State Foresters was hosted in 1920 by Gifford Pinchot. He is fifth from the left, first row.

**1945**

ASF formally approves sponsorship of the Forestry Conservation Communications Association, which works with radio engineers and technicians managing forestry radio frequency use throughout the country.

**1942**

For the duration of World War II, ASF annual meetings are cancelled.

**1946**

ASF members resolve the long-festering dispute with the Soil Conservation Service over that agency's operation of forest tree nurseries. SCS agrees to procure tree seedling stock from those states capable of supplying its needs.

**1940**

ASF contends that federal regulation of logging on private lands, if deemed necessary, should be a state matter.

**1933**

State foresters seek assistance from the federal Civilian Conservation Corps for men to work on state lands.

**1930**

**1930**  
Annual dues are raised from \$5 to \$10.

**1935**

The Fulmer Act authorizes the federal government to purchase private lands and convert them into state forests.

**1938**

The Norris-Doxey Farm Forestry Act provides for increased technical aid to farm owners to manage their wood lands. Responsibility for oversight is given to state foresters during World War II.

**1940**



**1944**

The Smokey Bear Wildfire Prevention Campaign is launched.

**1948**

The Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Committee (USFS, ASF, and the Advertising Council) is established to manage the popular Smokey Bear campaign.

**1949**

Congress approves an interstate forest fire protection compact between five northeastern states to promote effective prevention and control of forest fires. Congress will authorize similar compacts for the Southeastern, South Central, and Middle Atlantic States over the next few years.



1950

1950

The Cooperative Forest Management Act (CFM) allows federal funding passed through the USFS to state foresters to provide professional and technical assistance to private forestland owners. This supersedes the Norris-Doxey Act of 1937.

1958

Congress revises the law governing the disposal of federal excess property to give those state foresters in fire control activities the same priority to obtain such equipment as other federal agencies.

1960

1969

NASF membership approves a Uniform Fire Reporting System for use nationwide. This improves and standardizes reporting on the causes and occurrences of forest fires.

1968

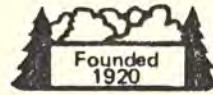
Congress authorizes the Urban and Community Forestry Program for funding under the CFM. It permits federal cost-sharing for urban forestry projects underway in many states.

1972

Kenneth Pomeroy, NASF's first Washington Representative, begins representing the association in DC on a part-time basis (1972–1975).

1975

Boyd Rasmussen is hired as Washington Representative (1975–1982).



NASF's second logo



NASF's third logo

1954

Under the Watershed Protection and Flood Protection Act, a program further expands forest management services to private owners by involving a state forester and their staff in those watershed projects established under the law in their state.

1964

The organization's name is changed from the Association of State Foresters to the National Association of State Foresters (NASF).

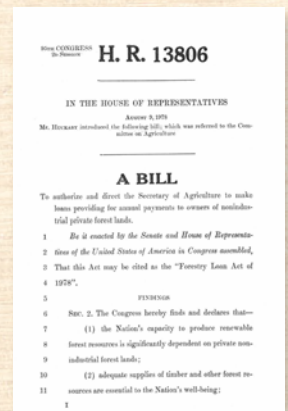
1966

The first Cooperative Forestry Memorandum between the USFS, Soil Conservation Service, and Federal Extension Service provides for interagency coordination in furthering forestry objectives of the Department of Agriculture and the respective state agencies.

1978

The Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act consolidates into one law all of the federal-state cooperative forestry programs for better stewardship of non-federal lands.

*NASF often contributes language and ideas to federal forestry legislation.*

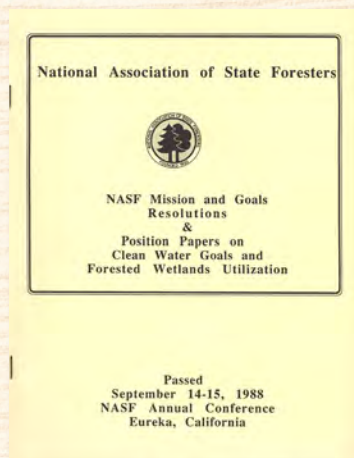






**1980**

NASF endorses, and Congress passes, the Forest Investment Tax Credit to encourage private landowners to regenerate forestlands.



*Annual meetings give members a chance to discuss issues and speak with one voice on them.*



**1999**

A college internship program, funded by NASF, giving upper classmen exposure to the forest policy and the political process in DC, initiated.



**1990**

The first Forestry Title of the Farm Bill authorizes Forest Stewardship, Urban and Community Forestry, and Forest Legacy programs. Colorado provides the first tree planted in the National Grove of State Trees at the National Arboretum.

**1986**

The National Association of State Foresters Foundation (NASFF) is formally established to promote and advance state and private forestry through educational initiatives. Annual dues increase from \$1,500 to \$2,000.



**1980**

**1990**



**1982**

Hank DeBrun is hired as Washington Representative (1982–1984). NASF opens its first office in Washington, DC.



**1984**

Melinda Cohen hired as the first full-time Washington Representative (1984–1989).



**1985**

The Federal Farm Bill contains a Conservation Reserve provision, which boosts tree planting, especially in the South. To be closer to Capitol Hill, the NASF office moves from the American Forestry Association Building to the Hall of States Building.



**1989**

Terri Bates is hired as NASF's Washington Representative (1989–1996); staff grows to two part-time and two full-time employees. NASFF endowment fund exceeds \$100,000 and is generating enough income to allow support of forestry projects.

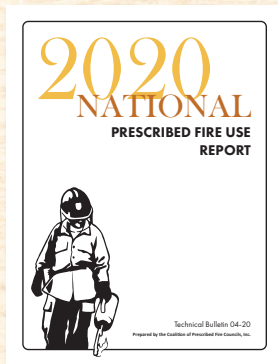
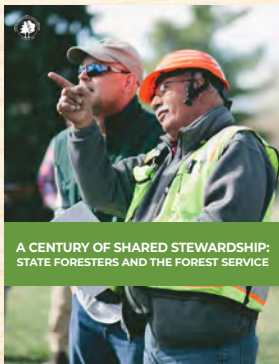


**1996**

Bill Imbergamo is named NASF Executive Director (1996–2001). NASF's newsletter, "The Washington Update," is made available to the general public through the Internet.

*As part of its communications effort, NASF issues press releases.*





Booklets like these are designed for different audiences and are made available through the NASF website.

**2001**  
Anne Heissenbuttel is appointed NASF Executive Director (2001–2006).

**2002**  
NASF supports a new Forestry Title in the 2002 Farm Bill, creating the Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) and repealing the Stewardship Incentives Program and Forestry Incentives Program. The Community and Private Lands Fire Assistance Program is included to enhance community fire protection.

**2007**  
C. T. “Kip” Howlett is appointed NASF Executive Director, quickly succeeded by Jay Farrell (2007–current). NASF, USFS, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the National Association of Conservation Districts establish the Joint Forestry Team to enhance interagency support for delivery of forestry assistance to private landowners. NASF joins 30 leading forestry and conservation groups to establish the Forest Climate Working Group coalition.

**2003**  
NASF supports enactment of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 to address the risk of wildland fire to communities and watersheds and to support adoption of a Watershed Forestry Assistance Program. Language about the program was authored by NASF.

**2005**  
NASF hosts three regional meetings to discuss the environmental and economic contributions of non-federal, privately owned forestlands to the American people. The meetings are held in cooperation with the USFS.

**2008**  
NASF publishes “State and Private Forestry: Redesign Report Card,” with the USFS, to outline strategies for enhancing public benefits from private lands. The 2008 Farm Bill includes significant recommendations from the Forests in the Farm Bill Coalition, co-led by NASF. Under the Farm Bill, for the first time, national priorities for private forests were established and state forestry agencies were charged with assessing forest resources and developing strategies to address the national priorities.

**2009**  
Congress passes the Federal Land Assistance, Management, and Enhancement Act of 2009 (FLAME). NASF is coleader of a coalition of 114 environmental, industry, outdoor recreation, and forestry organizations, which argues that the establishment of a FLAME fund would help provide a sustainable suppression funding mechanism to deal with the escalating costs of fighting wildfires.



## 2010

The Statewide Forest Resources Assessments and Strategies (rebranded as Forest Action Plans by NASF) is completed, which collectively serves as a strategic plan for America's forests. Congress passes an appropriations bill that includes direction to establish a Cohesive Wildfire Management Strategy, which NASF is a part of.

NASF's  
2019 meeting



## 2012

NASF adds staff, achieving professional support for all committees for the first time.

## 2014

The Farm Bill institutes the Good Neighbor Authority, which allows the USFS to enter into agreements with state forestry agencies to keep forests healthy and productive.

## 2018

After a multi-year advocacy effort by NASF and partners, Congress passes an appropriations bill that includes a wildfire funding fix to halt borrowing from non-fire program budgets to cover wildfire suppression costs.

## 2020

NASF holds its first-ever virtual annual meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic; postpones its centennial celebration to 2021.



NASF's current logo

## 2011

In partnership with the USFS, NASF convenes partners and establishes a communications campaign for the official U.S. celebration of the International Year of Forests. NASF establishes its first e-commerce store.

## 2013

Six states pass legislation or executive orders consistent with NASF's green building and forest certification positions.

## 2015

NASF publishes "Protecting Water Quality through State Forestry Best Management Practices" and creates a web-based interactive map linked to state BMP programs.

## 2016

Through research commissioned by NASF, Virginia Tech scientists publish a compendium of studies documenting the effectiveness of state BMP programs in "Forest Ecology and Management." The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency cites NASF's 2015 report in ruling additional regulation of forest roads is not needed.

## 2019

NASF launches its Centennial Challenge campaign; publishes "A Century of Shared Stewardship: State Foresters and the Forest Service." The Smokey Bear campaign marks its 75th anniversary.



The NASF website hosts the Forest Action Plan published by each state and territory.

