

**Forest Resource Strategies/Actions**

***Save and Expand Oak-Hickory Forests***

***Create More Forested Areas of 500 Acres or More***

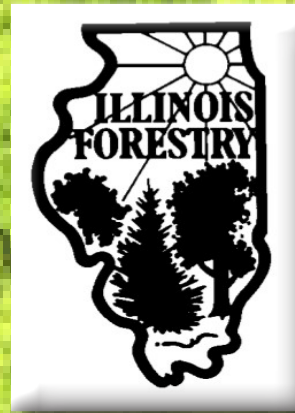
***Mitigate Forest Health Threats***

***Hire More Forestry Professionals***

***Expand on Illinois Forestry Industry***

***Expand Urban and Community Forests***

***Identify Permanent Funding for the State Forestry Division***



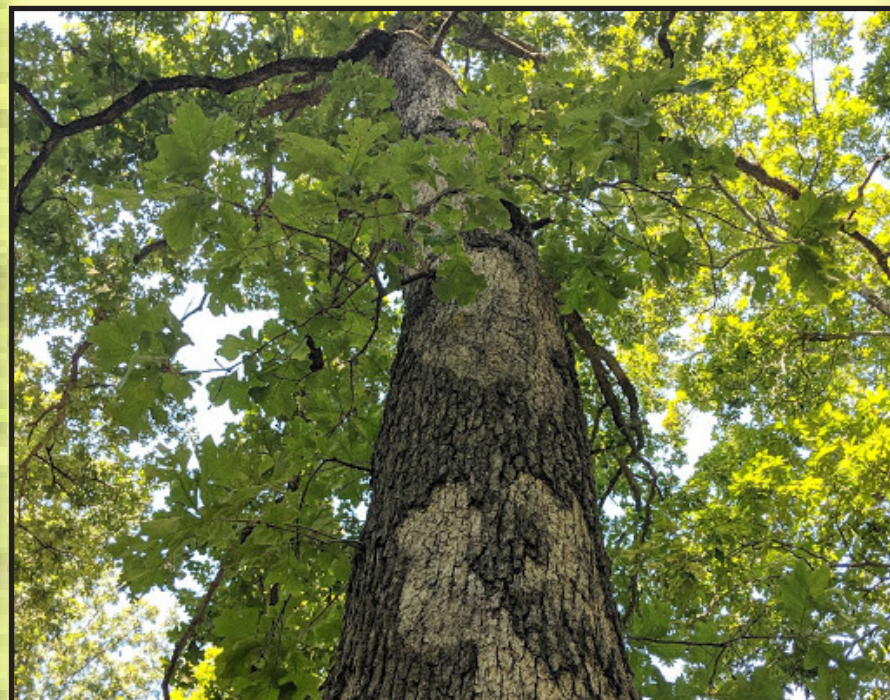
***Have questions? Want to learn more about the Illinois Forestry Development Council? Get in touch with us:***

***Illinois Forestry Development Council  
c/o Department of Forestry  
Southern Illinois University  
1205 Lincoln Drive, Mail Code 4411  
Carbondale, IL 62901***

***The Illinois Forestry  
Development Council  
and Illinois Forests***

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The Illinois Forestry Development Council was created back in 1983 upon passage of the Illinois Forestry Development Act (525 ILCS 15). The 29 members of the Council represent the following interests or groups: woodland owners, farmers, forest/ wood products industry, urban forestry, environmental concerns, state and federal agencies, the General Assembly, and the Governor's office.



The Council's purpose is to identify and evaluate the social, economic, scientific, and educational value of Illinois's forest lands and forest products industries.

The Council determines:

- 1.) Magnitude, nature, extent, and ownership of Illinois' forest resources
- 2.) Uses, benefits, and ecosystem services our forest resources provide
- 3.) Economic development, increasing employment, and management opportunities relating to the forest/ wood products industry
- 4.) Staffing and funding needs for state-wide forestry programs and support
- 5.) Forestry education and outreach programs
- 6.) Soil, water, and wildlife habitat benefits of forestry practices

## Threats to Forest Lands and Resources

**1.) Oak-Hickory Forests:** Oaks in our forests are affected by both ongoing biological processes or inhibited functions and by human or livestock practices initiated by landowners, resource managers, and government decisions.



Decreases in the frequency of beneficial disturbances, including timber management and prescribed fire, have contributed to suppression of oak seedlings that need ample amounts of sunlight and canopy space to establish. The density of shade-loving non oak seedlings and saplings is expanding, outcompeting oaks.

**2.) Fragmentation of Large Forest Blocks:** Some of the harmful consequences of fragmentation are a loss of biodiversity, increased populations of non-native species, and changes in living organisms as well as environmental conditions. The process of fragmentation is accelerated when more and more people seek to purchase tracts of forested land.



— Illinois' forestland is predominantly held by private landowners. An estimated 206,000 families and individuals own a total of 3.5 million acres, or 77% of forestland.

**3.) Forest Health Threats are Increasing:** Multiple factors affect forest health, particularly exotic invasive plants, insects and pathogens. Damage from floods, ice storms, wind, or livestock grazing without remediation are also examples of forest health issues in Illinois.



**4.) Forestry Professionals are too Few:** Early retirement and subsequent budget cuts to IDNR have reduced Forestry Division professional, technical, and clerical staff by as much as 86%. Strategic planning dating back to the 1990's, prior to staff loss, defined the need for additional districts and urban and traditional forestry field staff.

**5.) Forest Industries and Mills are Shrinking:** The number of sawmills within Illinois has decreased by 72% since 1961. This loss is partly attributed to higher workers compensation rates, utility rates, and business taxes compared to neighboring states.

**6.) Urban and Community Forests Face Extreme Pressures and Challenges:** Since 1990, there has been approximately a 7% increase in municipal lands state-wide. Increased urbanization is outpacing reforestation efforts and the ability of most communities to manage urban forests.

**7.) Forestry Funding and Significant Other Threats:** Illinois has failed to generate or legislate permanent funding for forest and natural resources conservation and remains in great need of doing so.