

Reforestation Alabama: A Vital Investment for Our Future

What difference do healthy forests make for communities in Alabama?



Alabama's forest industry contributed \$36.3 billion to the state's overall economy in 2023, up from \$28.9 billion in 2019, and directly employs more than 54,000 Alabamians across logging, trucking, mills, and allied sectors.¹



More than half of Alabama's public drinking water comes from private forests, and 60% of surface water flows through privately owned forestland before treatment. When forests are healthy, water is cleaner and cheaper to treat.⁶



Hunting, fishing, and wildlife recreation generate \$15 billion annually for Alabama's economy and support 135,000 jobs. In the Black Belt alone, hunting and fishing generates \$1.7 billion in annual economic impact, built on the forests, wetlands, and healthy waterways that define the region.^{16,17}



Riparian forest buffers planted along Crowabout Creek in northern Alabama from 2005-2009 now prevent 3,035 lbs of nitrogen, 3,537 lbs of phosphorus, and 344 tons of sediment from reaching Alabama waterways each year, confirmed when the creek was delisted in 2014.⁷

How Reforestation Can Be Supported and Expanded in Alabama



Expand pest-risk and forest health prevention programs
Alabama's 2024 pine beetle outbreak was the worst in state history: 3.1 million trees killed across 67 counties.¹ Funding thinning and stand improvement practices reduces beetle risk and protects existing forests and reforestation investments.



Expand landowner cost-share for reforestation on private and marginal agricultural land
Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) cost-share programs are a proven method for reforestation, but in 2024, less than 0.2% of Alabama's 16.5 million private forestland acres received stewardship plans.² Expanding availability and awareness would connect more landowners to existing programs.^{3,12}



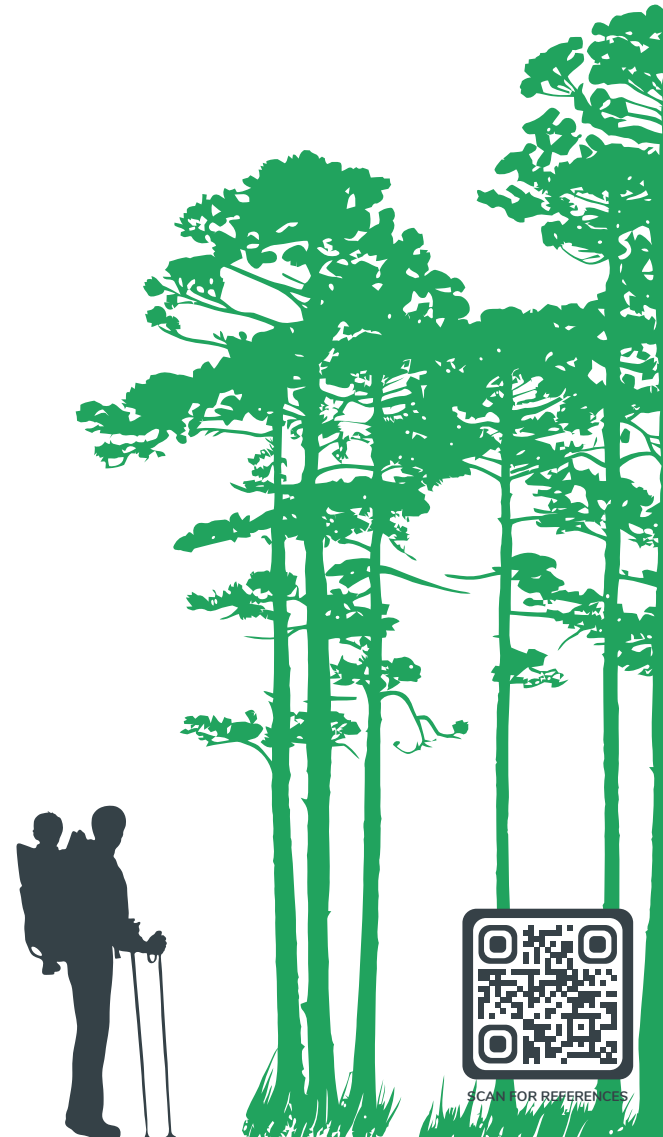
Increase technical assistance capacity
Technical assistance providers, including AFC, are the essential link between landowner interest and planted acres, developing management plans, designing planting prescriptions, and improving survival rates. Expanding this capacity is a priority in Alabama's Forest Action Plan.¹²



Fund riparian buffer planting along priority stream corridors
Riparian forest buffers protect water quality, reduce flooding, and support wildlife in a single investment. The Conservation Reserve Plan already funds this in Alabama, targeted expansion in impaired watersheds would build directly on outcomes demonstrated at Crowabout Creek.^{3,7,8}

87%

of voters nationwide (80% GOP, 88% IND, 93% DEM) support "providing financial incentives and programs for private forest and woodland landowners to sustainably manage their land to keep forests healthy and adopt practices that naturally remove carbon from the air."¹⁹



SCAN FOR REFERENCES