

Forestry Incentives Program



photo: NRCS Oklahoma

Forestry Incentives Program (FIP)

Oklahoma has approximately 2.6 million acres of timberland that is less than 60 percent stocked with desirable trees for meeting the timber production needs of our growing nation. In addition, another 500,000 acres of cleared land that is marginal in agriculture production would be better suited for trees. Oklahoma landowners' interest in Forestry Incentives Program for 2000 significantly exceeded our allocation. Nearly 70 landowners applied for funding, which totaled over \$273,000. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assisted landowners to develop 40 contracts, which obligated nearly \$141,000 of federal cost-share assistance. Several of these contracts resulted from emergency FIP funds allocated because of damages sustained by natural disasters.

Accomplishments

Calendar year 2000 was an active year for FIP in Oklahoma. Approximately 100 landowners participated in the program, providing tree planting in addition to enhancing existing and future forestland on just over 2,350 acres. As a result, nearly one million trees were planted.

Outlook

Reforestation is a critical need in the twelve southeastern counties of Oklahoma. These counties are economically depressed and land holdings are relatively small. Approximately three million acres can be established to viable stands of timber producing species. Additional funding would ensure continued timber production, ease the overall demand on private landowners and provide needed financial incentives.

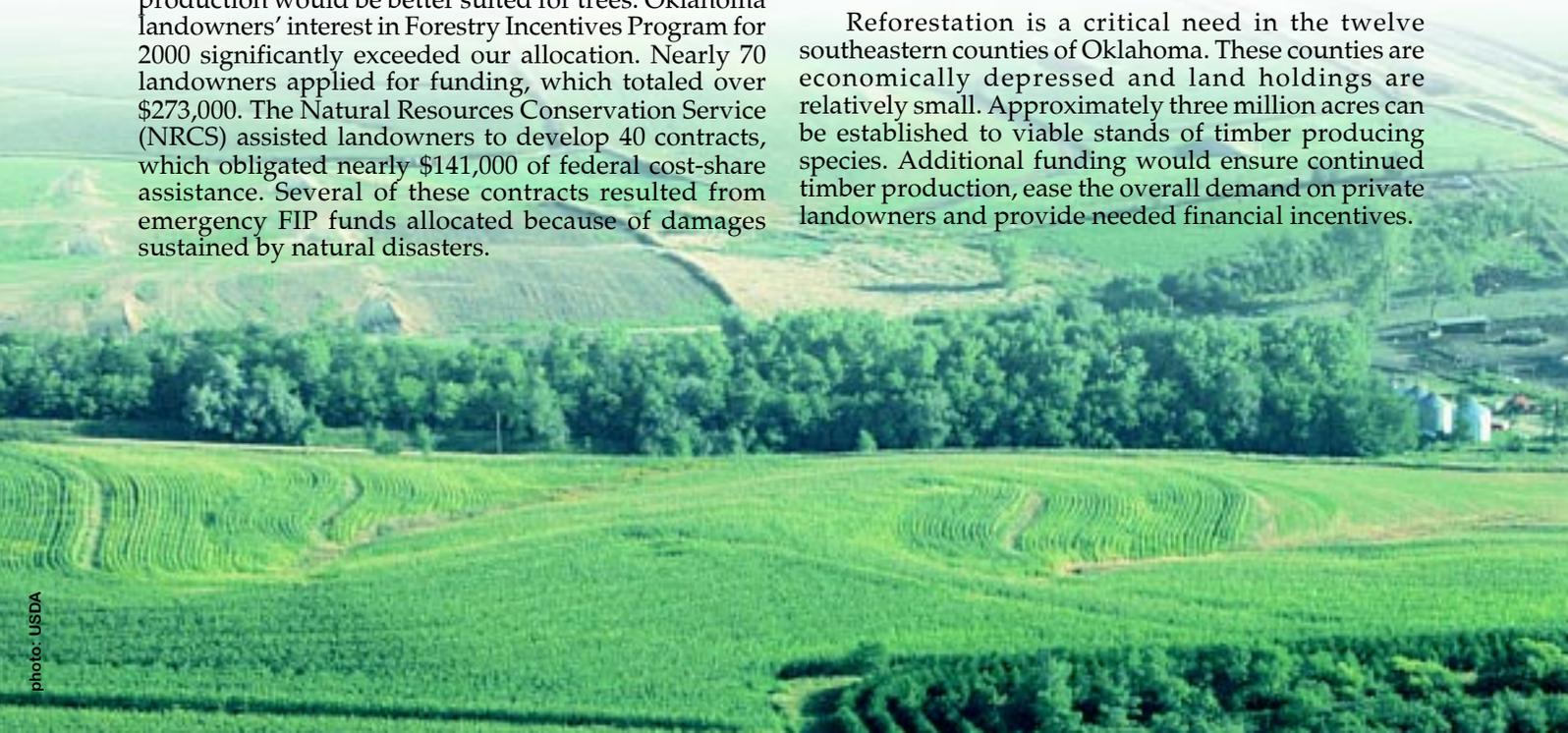


photo: USDA

FIP Success Story



photo: NRCS Oklahoma

Dorothy Westmoreland grew up on this 115-acre farm just north of Antlers, Oklahoma. She was able to purchase it as her own about 15 years ago. Dorothy

requested assistance from the local Natural Resources Conservation Service office in 1993, to construct two farm ponds for livestock water. As a result of this request, she became a cooperator with the Pushmataha Conservation District and a conservation plan was developed for the entire farm. Dorothy continued to lease her fields as pasture until 1995. She has always liked trees and because of her strong stewardship for the land, wanted to establish the farm to pine seedlings as an investment in her grandchildren's future.

The Westmoreland tree planting began in 1995, with a total of 55 acres planted to pines. Another 35 acres were planted in 1997. Technical assistance for the actual site preparation, tree planting and fireguards was provided by the Oklahoma Division of Forestry. The drought of 1998 was severe across southeastern Oklahoma resulting in thousands of acres of trees dying due to wildfires and lack of water. Dorothy's planting did not escape the effects of the drought. Most of her seedlings died from the drought in 1998 and 1999. She applied for the emergency Forestry Incentive Program funds provided through Natural Resources Conservation Service, which resulted in the replanting of approximately 55 acres in 2000.

Forestry Incentives Program Number of Participants and Cost-share Allocation Fiscal Year 2000

