

Forests in Farm Bill Coalition

American Forests

American Forest & Paper Association

American Forest Foundation

American Forest Resource Council

American Tree Farm System

Association of Consulting Foresters

Eastern Forest Partnership

Environmental Defense

Environment and Energy Study Institute

Hardwood Federation

National Association of State Foresters

National Association of University Forest Resource Programs

National Woodland Owners Association

Northern Forest Alliance

Northwest Woodland Owners Council

Pacific Forest Trust

Pinchot Institute for Conservation

Society of American Foresters

Southern Environmental Law Center

The Nature Conservancy

The Wilderness Society

Trust for Public Land

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Wildlife Mississippi

Private Forests are at Risk: The Need for Action in the 2007 Farm Bill

One-third of the nation's landscape is forested and 57% of these forests are privately-owned.

Data sources

Forests: University of Maryland, MODIS Vegetation Continuous Fields

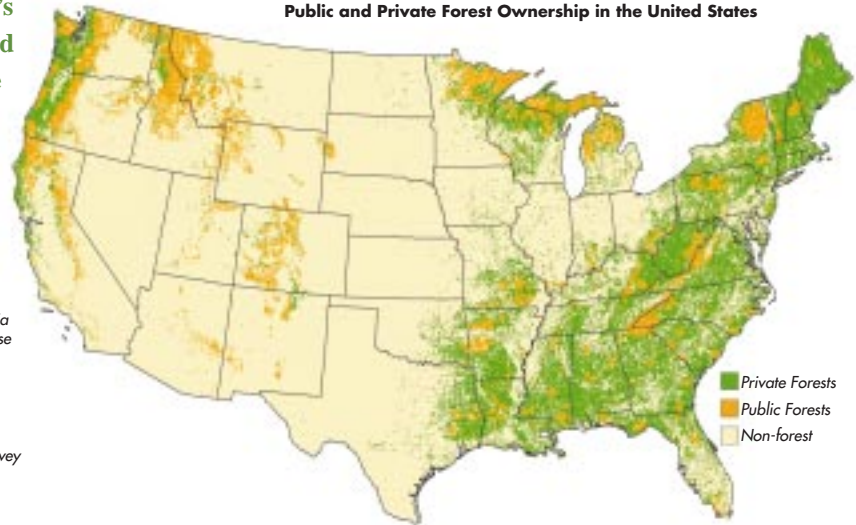
Public ownership: University of California Santa Barbara, Managed Area Database

States: ESRI Data and Maps



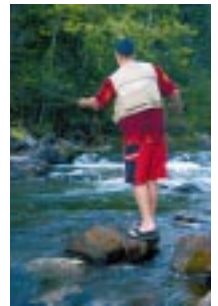
USDA Forest Service
Forest Inventory and Analysis
National Woodland Owner Survey

Public and Private Forest Ownership in the United States



Private Forests: Essential to the American Way of Life

- **Family-owned treasures:** 262 million forested acres are in the hands of families and individuals, a source of pride and value to everyday Americans.
- **Clean water:** 2/3s of the nation's drinking water comes from forests.
- **Clean air and stable climate:** A single tree can absorb more than 10 pounds of carbon dioxide per year. It takes approximately 1,000 trees to absorb the average annual carbon emissions from one car.
- **Jobs and thriving rural economies:** U.S. paper and wood manufacturing generates 1.2 million jobs and \$230 billion dollars in annual sales.
- **Wood for houses, furniture, and paper:** 92% of trees harvested in the U.S. come from private forests.
- **Part of farm life:** More than 100 million acres of forests in the U.S. are part of a farm.
- **Places to enjoy wildlife:** 66 million people enjoy watching wildlife across the country, including on private forests. Wildlife watching generates over 1 billion jobs, and \$38.4 billion direct retail spending on trips, equipment, etc.
- **Endangered species habitat:** 90% of endangered or threatened species rely on private land, including private forests, for habitat.
- **Places to hunt and fish:** Annually, over 14 million people hunt and 28 million fish, including in private forests. Hunting generates 700,000 jobs and \$25 billion direct retail sales while fishing generates 684,000 jobs, \$26.5 billion in direct retail sales.



Mark Godfrey © The Nature Conservancy

Threats to Private Forests

Private forest owners often lack financial and technical resources to hold on to and manage their forest.

- **Development pressures:** An average of 1 million acres of private forests is converted every year to development.
- **Forest health problems:** 27 million acres of non federal forests are at risk of insect and disease damage, including invasive pests, and millions of acres are at risk of severe wildfire.
- **Minimal planning for the future:** Management planning helps families make a long-term commitment to the land. Yet estimates suggest that only 3% of family forest owners have a written management plan.
- **Minimal professional advice:** Professional advice helps landowners avoid unintended, poor management, yet only 22% of family forest owners have received professional advice prior to harvesting timber.
- **Loss of markets for forest products:** More than 330 paper and wood mills have closed since 1997 and more than 158,000 industry jobs have been lost. Lack of incentives for private forest management combined with global competition have decreased economic opportunities for U.S. forest products.

Policy Opportunities for the 2007 Farm Bill

The 2007 Farm Bill must recognize private forests as part of the rural landscape, improve the effectiveness of programs for private forest conservation and management, and increase resources for these programs.

Policy opportunities in no order of priority include:

- Establishing **national emphasis** on sustainable private forest conservation and management, and **state-wide forest planning** to guide federal and state efforts.
- **Expanding federal investments in private forest conservation by:**
 - Expanding cost-share opportunities for forestland owners in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.
 - Supporting robust technical, educational, and outreach assistance for forestland owners through existing programs such as the Forest Stewardship Program, other conservation programs, and new programs such as the Sustainable Forestry Outreach Initiative.
 - Creating an Emergency Forest Restoration Program for restoring private forests after disasters.
 - Modifying and increasing funding for the Healthy Forests Reserve Program.
 - Enhancing Conservation Security Program to include forest landscapes and forest owners.
 - Enhancing the Conservation Reserve Program to restore important forest ecosystems.
 - Supporting community-led conservation through a new Community Forest and Open Space Program, reiterating value of the Community and Private Land Fire Assistance Program, and other community focused initiatives.



Dave Powell, USDA Forest Service, www.forestryimages.org

- **Developing opportunities for renewable energy in a sustainable manner from forests by:**
 - Better incorporating forest material into new renewable energy opportunities.
 - Expanding research and pilot projects to test technology and equipment, and determine social and biological impacts of development and growth in renewable energy from forests.
- Developing **voluntary compensation opportunities** for forest owners for ecosystem services and amenities their forests provide society such as clean water, clean air, carbon sinks, biodiversity, soil conservation, and wildlife habitat.
- Creating **economic opportunities for forest landowners through a competitive grants program** for traditional and nontraditional forest products markets.
- Expanding existing **rural development opportunities** to better address issues in forested communities, tied to national emphasis issues and state plans and priorities.
- Reauthorizing the **Renewable Resources Extension Act**, reaffirming the importance of the **Cooperative Forestry Research Program**, and supporting efforts for better transfer of research findings to forest practitioners and private landowners.
- Expanding **market development and access programs** to protect and expand markets for U.S. forest products at home and abroad.

For more information contact _____