



United States
Department of
Agriculture



Forest Service

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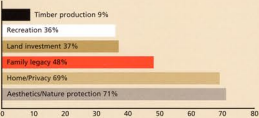
WHO OWNS FOREST LANDS?



Nationwide, about 33 percent, or 246 million acres, of our forest land is federally owned; the remaining 67 percent is owned by other public agencies (10 percent), industry (9 percent), and private landowners (48 percent). Nearly 10 million individuals now own approximately 363 million acres of the Nation's forest. These valuable private forest lands are becoming increasingly vulnerable to urban development, fragmentation, forest health problems, and harvesting pressures.

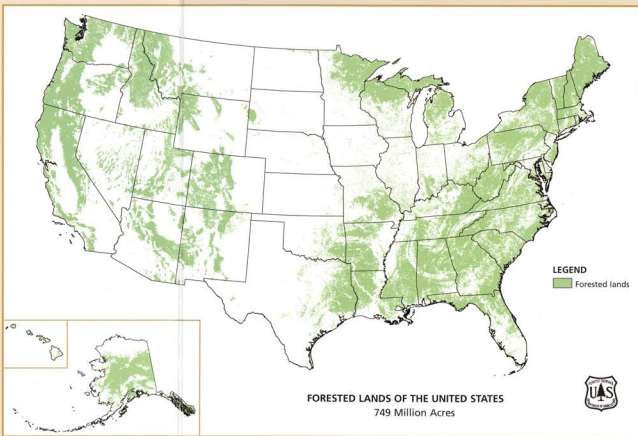
Visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/cooperativeforestry>.

WHY DO PEOPLE OWN FOREST LAND?



* Most people own forest land for multiple reasons.

Visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/woodlandowners>.



LEGEND

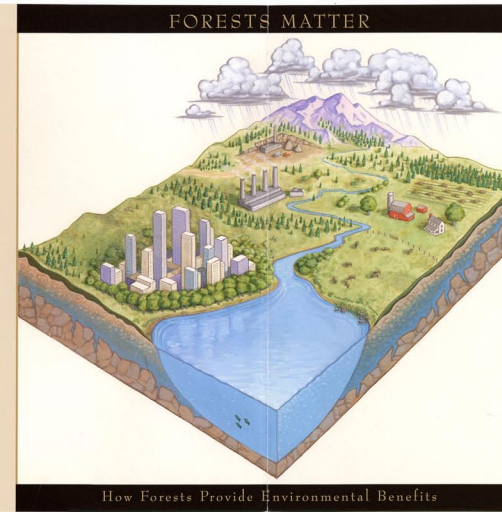
Forested lands



AIR QUALITY: By using up carbon dioxide in the photosynthesis process and storing carbon in its leaves and woody matter, trees remove large amounts of one of the major "greenhouse gases." The evaporation process and the shading effect of trees also lower daytime temperatures during the warmer parts of the year.



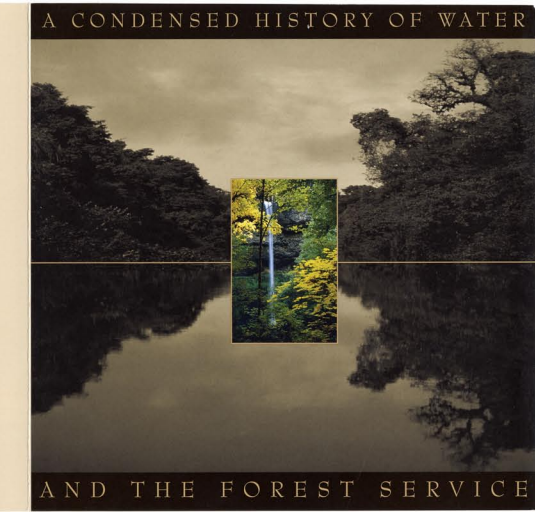
REPLENISH GROUNDWATER SUPPLIES: Forests act as sponges, absorbing rainfall and snowmelt and allowing precipitation to seep into groundwater and recharge aquifers.



WILDLIFE HABITAT: Streamside forests are a source of food and shelter for aquatic and other wildlife. Branches falling into a stream provide an important fish and crab habitat. Insects falling from trees and plant leaves provide food. In the summer, shade from the forest canopy helps maintain the cooler stream temperature that trout and other aquatic organisms require.



FILTER POLLUTANTS: A forest buffer strip planted along streams and lakes can help filter out pollutants, like sediments and nutrients, before they enter our waterways. In a streamside forest, tree roots bind the soil in streambanks and can help to stabilize the stream channel structure.



SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS ERA

1781-1872

Through purchase, treaty, and cession, the United States acquires 1.8 billion acres of public domain lands. To promote settlement of these lands and to raise revenues to pay national debts, Congress passes numerous homesteading and development acts.

1785

The Land Ordinance directs exploration, survey, and sale of public domain lands.

1862

The Homestead Act is the first of a series of settlement and development laws providing free land to settlers. Throughout the 1800s, the competition for land and water intensifies as farm and ranch settlements grow.



1864

George Perkins Marsh, considered America's first environmentalist, writes "Man and Nature," describing the extent and destructiveness of the human impact on the environment.



1872

The General Mining Act opens public lands for development of mineral deposits. To encourage industrial growth and provide revenues, citizens can purchase mining claims. Early mining practices leave lasting marks on the environment.

1891

Public concern about adequate supplies of clean water and timber leads to the establishment of forest reserves, later called the national forests.



1897

The Organic Act provides for the care and management of the forests to secure "favorable conditions of water flow." The act clarifies that the resources on national forests can be used and developed—timber harvested, livestock grazed, and minerals mined. Many people object to these uses, believing the national forests should be preserved in their pristine state. This debate continues today.



1904

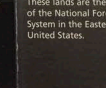
Congress passes an act to protect the Bull Run Forest Reserve for the Portland, OR, water supply. Recognizing the close link between healthy forests and clean water, a series of acts to protect individual municipal water supplies follow.

1905

Management of the national forests moves from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture Forest Service. The first Forest Service Chief, Gifford Pinchot, promotes wise use and scientific management of forests and water resources to provide for current needs while sustaining resources for future generations.

1909

At Wagon Wheel Gap, CO, the first controlled Forest Service experiment on the relationship between stream-flow and forests begins. These experiments demonstrate how water moves through forest soils to sustain stream-flow during dry weather.



MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP ERA

1910-1949

Restoration of the Prairie States after the Dust Bowl days and increased demand for recreation lead to more intensive forest management. A land conservation ethic recognizing the importance of natural resource stewardship emerges.

1911



The Weeks Act allows the Forest Service to purchase private land at the headwaters of streams. Much of the purchased land has been overcut, over-farmed, or burned out. These lands are the start of the National Forest System in the Eastern United States.

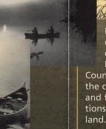
1924

The Forest Service establishes a new tradition by setting aside the Nation's first wilderness area in the headwaters of the Gila River on the Gila National Forest in New Mexico.



1928

The Forest Service publishes the first of a series of pamphlets promoting vacationing on the national forests. Water sports, fishing, and boating are among the activities touted, leading to over 6 million visitors. This number increases 30-fold by 2003.



1930

The Congress directs the Forest Service to manage the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in Minnesota for its scenic beauty and recreation and to maintain natural water levels. This is the first congressional action to protect land and water as a wilderness area.

1949



Former Forest Service employee and eminent environmentalist Aldo Leopold publishes "A Sand County Almanac," promoting the care of natural resources and fostering an ethical relationship between people and land.

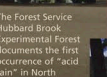
MULTIPLE-USE FOREST ERA

1950-1989

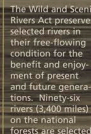
A massive building boom after World War II drives a tremendous demand for timber. As a result of growing concerns over voluminous Forest Service timber harvests, Congress passes a series of environmental protection laws.

1960

The Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act directs management of the national forests for multiple uses and gives each natural resource—outdoor recreation, range, timber, water, and wildlife and fish—equal consideration.



1963



The Forest Service Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest documents the first occurrence of "acid rain" in North America and uncovers the link between air pollution, acidic rainfall, and impacts on stream quality.

1968

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act preserves selected rivers in their free-flowing condition for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. Ninety-six rivers (3,400 miles) on the national forests are selected for their outstanding values.

1973



The Endangered Species Act authorizes a program of conserving, protecting, restoring, and propagating selected species of native fish and wildlife. The clear, cool waters of the national forests provide habitat for over 140 threatened and endangered aquatic and amphibian species.

1974

The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act establishes the national forest planning process and requires, among other things, that the forests be managed for soil and water conservation and to maintain species diversity.

1980

A Presidential Executive Order allows the Forest Service to clean up abandoned mines and other hazardous waste sites by securing funds from responsible parties or taking the clean-up action itself. By 2003, 83 abandoned mines are cleaned up and \$230 million contributed by responsible parties.

1992

The USDA National Agroforestry Center is established to conduct research and technology transfer on the use of trees to reduce water pollution. Findings indicate that trees planted along streambanks can filter out contaminants before they enter the waterways.



1998

Tennessee's Cherokee National Forest hosts the whitewater events of the summer Olympics. A unique partnership, formed to restore flows to the Ocoee River, provides long-term benefits to the community and results in a world-class whitewater river.

2000



Large-scale, community-based watershed partnership projects are initiated to demonstrate watershed restoration techniques across landownership boundaries.

2003

The Forest Service determines that the value of water from the national forests is at least \$3.7 billion annually. The national forests are providing the source of drinking water for over 3,400 communities.

2005

The Forest Service celebrates its 100th anniversary.



WATERSHED MANAGEMENT ERA

1990-2005

Watersheds are recognized as the basic building blocks of sound resource stewardship. Collaboration with partners is recognized as essential to successful watershed protection and restoration.

