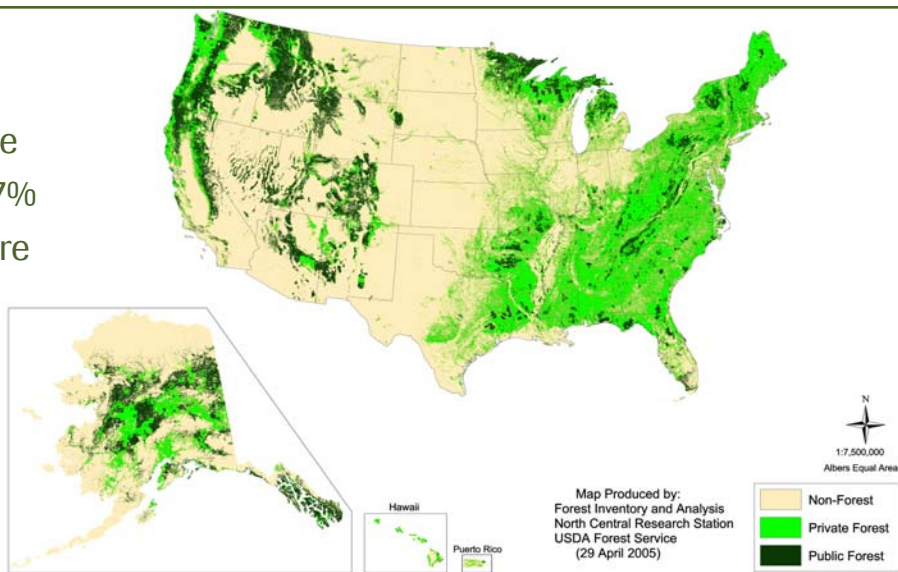


Private Forests Are at Risk: The Need for Action in the 2007 Farm Bill

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



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 75 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.
- **Endangered species habitat:** Over half of endangered species rely on private lands, including private forests, for most of their habitat.
- **Places to hunt and fish:** Annually, over 14 million people hunt and 44 million fish, including in private forests. Hunting generates 700,000 jobs and \$25 billion direct retail sales while fishing generates over 1 million jobs and \$41 billion in direct retail sales.



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Threats to Private Forests

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

- **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 an estimated 90 million acres are at risk of wildfire.
- **Minimal planning for the future:** Management planning helps families make a longterm 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.



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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, the Sustainable Forestry Outreach Initiative, and other conservation programs.
 - Creating an Emergency Forest Restoration Program for restoring private forests after disasters.
 - Modifying and increasing funding for the Healthy Forests Reserve Program.
 - Enhancing the 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 and other community focused initiatives.
- Developing opportunities for renewable energy from forests in a sustainable manner 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.



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