

Society of American Foresters Web Site -- Forest Facts

<http://www.safnet.org/for/forfacts.html>



The science of forestry was established in the United States at the turn of the century, at a time when vast areas of forests had been cut down with little thought of the future. Foresters have done a magnificent job in restoring America's forests. Our forests now grow nearly four times more wood each year than in 1920.

There are 737 million acres of forestland in the United States, about 67% as much as there was in 1600, which is about 1/3 the area of the country.

America's forests are owned by private individuals (59%), public agencies (27%), and private industries (14%).

Each year about 1.4 billion tree seedlings are planted—roughly four million a day—more than making up for those that are harvested. If you include naturally regenerated trees the net growth exceeds the harvesting by 33% due to good forest management.

The average American uses about 749 pounds of paper every year and 95% of the houses built are done so using wood. That means that the average person uses the equivalent of a 100 foot high, 16 inches in diameter tree each year for their wood and paper needs.

Parks, wildlife refuges, and other preserves span 166 million acres of the nation's total land mass; and the National Wilderness Preservation System covers an additional 104 million acres—a total of 270 million acres set aside for parks, refuges, or wilderness areas. The first set aside wilderness area was the Gila in New Mexico, with Aldo Leopold, a forester, as its primary advocate.

The forest industry ranks among the top 10 employers in 40 of the 50 states.

About 45 percent of the paper consumed in the United States is recovered for recycling. Recycled paper, however, is not "pure" so it must contain some new wood fiber for strength.

Three well-placed mature trees around a house can cut air-conditioning costs by 10-50 percent, while trees and other landscaping can increase property value by 5-10 percent.

One mature tree absorbs approximately 13 pounds of carbon dioxide a year. For every ton of wood a forest grows, it removes 1.47 tons of carbon dioxide and replaces it with 1.07 tons of oxygen.

Today, the United States has about 3 percent more forest (737 million acres) than there was in 1920 despite the 143 percent increase in population.