

Forests Are Our Most Important Renewable Resource

A healthy forest products industry goes hand-in-hand with healthy forests. Why? Without a market for sustainably grown wood, many landowners would convert their land to development for use as parking lots, subdivisions or agriculture. Demand for forest products means continued demand for and replanting of trees.

American Forests Are Strong

Here are the facts. According to the U.S. Forest Service, more than 1 billion trees are planted in the U.S. each year. There are 20 percent more trees in the United States than there were 50 years ago--totaling 766 million acres. And the forest products industry replants and grows twice as many trees as are harvested. Strong markets for paper and wood products gives private forest owners confidence to continue replanting trees. And demand for these products increases the incentive to replant trees, decreasing the likelihood of conversion to other uses.

According to the American Forest Foundation almost half of U.S. wood fiber comes from family forests. By requiring our wood fiber is sustainably sourced, our members are investing in the future of forests and ensuring the private forest owners are motivated to the same commitment to sustainability.

Still, our forests are increasingly at risk – vulnerable to drought, insect infestation and disease, and to extreme weather events like hurricanes and floods. In the west, forests face risk of catastrophic wildfire. Sustainable forest management on both private and federal forest land is critical for the future of our nation's forests.

Responsible Stewardship of Our Forests

U.S. forest products manufacturers take unprecedented steps to promote and implement sustainable forest management practices - it is even a condition of AF&PA membership. In 2018, AF&PA members procured 99 percent of the total wood fiber used for products through a Certified Fiber Sourcing Program. Our members adhere to principles that assure wood is received from suppliers committed to sustainable management and harvesting practices.

Well-managed forests provide a multitude of environmental, social and economic benefits to thousands of American communities. Forests also sequester carbon, provide clean water and promote biodiversity. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency found that each year, forests and forest products store enough carbon to offset approximately 16 percent of the nation's fossil fuel emissions. And, according to the Urban Forestry Network, a single tree can absorb more than 10 pounds of carbon dioxide (CO₂) each year.

We believe trees are one of our best renewable resources, and by producing reusable, recyclable and biodegradable products we can continue keeping forests as forests. We must embrace active and sustainable forest management on private and federal forest land to bolster the health and resilience of our forests.