

Indiana Forests Play a Vital Role in Providing Goods and Services

The Challenge

Forests play a key role in Indiana's economy by providing direct and measurable benefits. Indiana's forests not only provide employment, but support a diverse forest products industry. The forest-based manufacturing sector employs more than 54,000 people with an annual payroll of approximately \$1.4 billion. Forest-related recreation and tourism opportunities also abound within the State, contributing approximately \$1 billion annually to the economy.

Indiana has more than 4.5 million acres of forest land, and 96 percent of this timberland is capable of growing more than 20 cubic feet per acre of industrial wood each year. Indiana's forests grow more than twice the amount of wood that is harvested and lost to natural causes annually. Yet, few people understand the scope, productivity, and economic impact of the State's forest land. If this vital resource is to be sustained on a long-term basis, it is essential to increase public awareness of the overall economic importance of Indiana's forests.

The Solution

The Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry Economic Action Program provided funding to the Indiana Division of Forestry to develop an informational booklet about the vitality and importance of the State's forests. The publication contains the most current Forest Inventory and Analysis data as well as economic data about Indiana's forest resource and industry. It presents a comprehensive overview of the State's most valuable resource and how it contributes to the growth of the economy. The Indiana forest industry community and a number of forestry professionals also joined the effort to increase awareness of the importance of the forest products industry to the State's economy.

Eighty-five percent of Indiana's timberland is owned by private landowners. More than three-quarters of timberland owners are individuals or "family forest owners" with an average forest tract of less than 25 acres.



Indiana has 4.3 million acres of land that are categorized as timberland. Each 1,000 acres of timberland in Indiana directly supports 12 forest-based manufacturing jobs. Hardwoods make up 96 percent of the 85 different tree species that grow naturally in Indiana's forests.

Resulting Benefits

- Heightened awareness and appreciation of the contributions and importance of forests to the State's economy
- Encouraged sustainability through improved management practices
- Supported the expansion of forest-based industries, which also increased employment
- Provided additional economic and health benefits of clean air and water

Sharing Success

- Approximately 11,000 copies of *Forests of Indiana: Their Economic Importance* have been distributed. This publication is available at http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/forestprod/indiana_forest04/forests_of_IN04.htm.
- One sawmill uses the publication in landowner packets that are distributed to prospective landowners who may be interested in managing their forest land.
- A log scanning project was recently initiated as a result of this initiative.



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