



## Benefits of Active Forest Management

### Managing the Forest: What Does it Mean?

Active forest management is a term that encompasses a wide range of actions, including vegetation control, ecosystem restoration and hazard reduction that all work in unison toward a singular goal: Maintaining forest health. Managed forests deliver critical ecosystem services such as cleaning ambient air, filtering water supplies, controlling floods and erosion, sustaining biodiversity and providing venues for recreation, education, and cultural enrichment. Healthy, productive forests are cared for and maintained in ways that reduce the risk of wildfire, insect infestation and disease while improving habitat for wider varieties of wildlife populations. And all of these objectives are met while these healthy forests are providing the fiber used in products we all rely on every day and economic support in the form of jobs and tax revenue for surrounding communities.

### Forests AND Forest Products Sequester Carbon

- Actively managed American Hardwood forests offset 12-15 percent of U.S. carbon emissions each year<sup>1</sup>. These working forests located on both public and private lands are critical to maintaining this natural carbon sink.
- American hardwood forest products made from timber harvested from public and private forestlands also contribute significantly to the reduction of atmospheric carbon. Fifty percent (50%) of a finished hardwood product is stored carbon.<sup>2</sup>

### Management Supports Forest Health and Rural Economies

- Forest Management tools to help mitigate risks of wildfire, including timber harvesting and fuel load reduction and practices to fight insect and disease must be supported. Doing so will not only improve the condition of our precious working forestlands, but the economic health of our rural communities that rely on the jobs and tax revenue from these working forests.
- Landscape scale restoration, including forest thinning and other active vegetation management techniques, create forests that allow for healthier standing trees and a fiber source that can economically support rural communities. Declining timber sales negatively impact countless wood products business all along the supply chain, local communities, and schools that rely on the jobs and tax base provided by the industry.
- Increasing management activities, including timber harvests and sales, on our National Forest system are particularly important.

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<sup>1</sup>National Alliance of Forest Owners. Forests and Climate Change for Policymakers 101.

<https://nafoalliance.org/forests-and-climate-change-for-policymakers-101/>

<sup>2</sup> WoodWorks. Carbon Footprint. <https://www.woodworks.org/why-wood/carbon-footprint>

- In 2020 over 4.9 million acres burned on federal forest lands continuing a pattern of annual devastation<sup>3</sup>. Proper management including routine forest thinning and fuels reduction is desperately needed to mitigate the threat but is hampered by insufficient funding for existing authorities and staff, as well as legal challenges from preservationist groups.

### **American Forest Acres are Increasing**

- The American forest system includes both public and private lands. More than 238 million acres of the National Forest System is managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), located within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). State, county and municipal governments own and manage an additional 83 million acres<sup>4</sup>.
- Of the 46 million acres (24%) of federal forestland designated as allowable for timber harvest, less than half of the allowable sale quantity of timber in existing forest plans is currently being harvested<sup>5</sup>.
- Another approximately 445 million acres of working forests in the U.S. are on private land, owned by individuals, families, small and large businesses, and investors<sup>6</sup>. Demand for forest products delivers a return on investment for these landowners, which allows them to keep their working forests as forests, instead of converting to other uses.
- Total volume of American hardwood forests has increased 119 percent since 1953<sup>7</sup>, despite an unprecedented housing boom in the intervening years. And that volume continues to increase. These data points speak powerfully about the role of markets in ensuring the future of our forests.

The sustainability of American hardwoods should be celebrated as part of the solution to our changing climate. American hardwood forests actively siphon carbon from the atmosphere throughout their growth cycle. This carbon is then stored throughout the life of long-lived hardwood forest products that are sought-after fixtures in homes and businesses across the U.S. and the world—not only because of their aesthetic appeal, but their superior environmental performance.

Hardwood forest products and responsible management and stewardship of our hardwood forest stands are part of the solution to reducing atmospheric carbon, not the problem.

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<sup>3</sup>U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service

<sup>4</sup>National Association of State Foresters. Forest Ownership Statistics. <https://www.stateforesters.org/timber-assurance/legalty/forest-ownership-statistics/>

<sup>5</sup>Federal Forest Resource Coalition

<sup>6</sup>National Association of State Foresters. Forest Ownership Statistics. <https://www.stateforesters.org/timber-assurance/legalty/forest-ownership-statistics/>

<sup>7</sup>American Hardwood Information Center. Fast Facts on American Hardwoods.

<https://www.hardwoodinfo.com/consumer/rediscovering-hardwoods/fast-facts-american-hardwoods/>