

Forest Ownership

Of the 17 million acres of forestland in Pennsylvania about three-fourths are owned privately and one-fourth is publicly owned.

- ✧ An estimated 512,000 private owners own an average of 23 acres each – or 11.5 million acres.
- ✧ State forests, game lands and other state, county and municipal forestlands equal nearly 3 million acres.
- ✧ Forest industry ownership is less than 1 million acres.
- ✧ Federal ownership is more than one-half (.5) million acres.

Forests for Everyone

The forests of Pennsylvania are home to some 3,500 species of plants and animals. They contain 90 tree species and two-thirds of the state's native plants. They provide habitat for some 120 species of birds and 50 species of mammal.

Different species require different forest habitats – from young trees to old growth – and a variety of conditions – from wetlands to open areas to the presence of underbrush.

Inherent forest benefits:

- ✓ Water quality protection: Forest soil absorbs runoff, filters water, and traps and transforms contaminants.
- ✓ Wildlife habitat: Forests provide a diversity of habitats over space and time.
- ✓ Soil conservation: Trees and other plants reduce the impact of rain while root systems hold the soil in place.
- ✓ Climate regulation: Trees are important gas exchangers. They convert carbon dioxide and water into carbohydrates and oxygen. For each ton of growing wood, an estimated 1.47 tons of carbon dioxide are removed from the air and 1.07 tons of oxygen are produced. Growing forests are considered an important sink for greenhouse gases.
- ✓ Filtration of pollution and dust in the air.
- ✓ Natural barriers to wind, snow, rain and solar radiation.

Derived forest benefits:

- ✓ Recreation
- ✓ Hunting and fishing
- ✓ Landowner income
- ✓ Spiritual and psychological renewal
- ✓ Timber production
- ✓ Noise reduction
- ✓ Wild crops, such as nuts and berries, for culinary, pharmaceutical and other uses
- ✓ Specialty crops, including Christmas trees, ginseng and maple syrup
- ✓ Outdoor classrooms