

# 2013 Tennessee Forest Facts

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- Forests in Tennessee cover 14 million acres, encompassing 52 percent of the State's land area. [USFS FIA 2012](#)
- Private non-industrial landowners control 81 percent (11.4 million acres) of the forest land in Tennessee, while wood-using industry own 3 percent (374,000 acres) and 16 percent (2.3 million acres) is publicly owned by federal, state, and other public agencies. [USFS FIA 2012](#)
- The total number of private woodland owners in Tennessee exceeds 530,000. [National Woodland Owners Survey 2008](#)
  - Approximately 344,000 (65 percent) forest owners control less than 1 million acres of forest in tracts of less than 10 acres or about 7 percent of the total acreage of private forest land in Tennessee
  - Conversely, 24,000 (5 percent) forest owners control 4.4 million acres in tracts larger than 100 acres or about 39 percent of the total acreage of private forest land in Tennessee.
  - An estimated 162,000 (30 percent) forest owners control 6 million acres in tracts between 10 and 100 acres or about 30 percent of the total acreage of private forest land in Tennessee.
- Approximately 89 percent of the trees in Tennessee's forests are hardwoods. More than 120 tree species occur in Tennessee. [USFS FIA 2012](#)
- Oak-Hickory forest types account for an estimated 73 percent or 9.9 million acres of the forest land in Tennessee. [USFS FIA 2012](#)
- Tennessee's forests are aging. A greater percentage of acres have trees in the mature or overmature age classes, than in the immature age classes. [USFS FIA 2012](#)
- The standing wood volume or inventory continues to increase statewide at a rate of 2 percent per year. In 2008, approximately 1,100 million cubic feet of wood was grown, 314 million cubic feet died due to natural mortality (old age, insects, disease), and 407 million cubic feet was removed during harvests. The growth-to-removal ratio is 1.5 to 2.0 indicating that for every cubic foot of wood volume that is removed from Tennessee's forest, 1.5 to 2.0 cubic feet are grown. Even at the present rate of growth, Tennessee's forest land is producing wood volume at less than half of its potential capacity. [USFS FIA 2011](#)
- Forest harvest and wood manufacturing uses about ½ to ⅓ of the wood grown in Tennessee each year. The remainder of the growth continues to accumulate on trees or is lost through natural mortality. An estimated 230,000 acres of forests are cut each year with partial harvests occurring for 65 percent of the total annual area cut, final harvests accounting for 28 percent and other harvests (7 percent) for timber stand improvement activities. [USFS FIA 2012](#)

- The proportion of hardwood sawtimber volume in the better tree grades has declined. Grade 1 trees compose 7 percent of the volume, grade 2 compose 18 percent, grade 3 compose 45 percent and below grade trees compose 30 percent. Three out of every ten hardwood trees in Tennessee is considered a cull. The volume of wood in the forest is increasing, but the quality is decreasing. The decline in tree grade is most likely tied to past cutting practices and reflects the need for implementation of hardwood forest management practices. [USFS FIA 2012](#)
- Sawlog and veneer logs compose 49 percent of the volume cut each year, pulpwood is 38 percent, other industrial products, primarily poles and posts are 3 percent and residential fuelwood is 9 percent. [USFS FIA 2012](#)
- Forestry in Tennessee includes the management and logging of trees; sawmills (primary forest products), including pulp and paper mills, and forest products manufacturing (secondary forest products). The forest industries and businesses in 2008 (without indirect effects) contributed \$12.8 billion directly to the state's economy, 42,000 jobs and \$2.5 billion in wages and salaries. When spent throughout the economy, forestry accounted for 4.3 percent of the state's economy, employed over 101,700 Tennesseans and generated \$21.0 billion in total industrial output. [UT AIM-AG 2011](#)
- Tennessee generated \$288 million in timber sales on private lands in 2011. [TN Dept. of Agriculture 2012](#)
- Tennessee's forests provide clean water and abundant wildlife habitat which support the \$2.5 billion annual hunting and fishing industry. [TN Wildlife Federation 2011](#)
- Scenic beauty and opportunities for outdoor forest recreation contribute to the \$15 billion per year tourist industry in Tennessee and the high quality of life enjoyed by Tennesseans. [TN Dept. of Tourism 2012](#)
- Tennessee is among the top three hardwood lumber producing states every year. [TN Dept. of Agriculture 2012](#)