

# Virginia Forest Facts

*"Our Common Wealth"*

## Forest Resources

The Sixth Virginia Forest Survey revealed that the forestlands of Virginia had experienced many changes during the six-year period between 1986 and 1992. The survey provided a comprehensive assessment of land-use changes, timber volumes, rates of growth and removal, and insect and disease mortality. Below are some highlights:

- Of Virginia's 25.4 million acres, 15.4 million (61%) are commercially productive woodland. This is down from 63% in 1976.
- Virginia's forests are composed of 66% hardwood, 22% pine and 12% oak-pine mixed.
- 77% of productive forestland (11.9 million acres) is owned by private non-industrial landowners. Forest industry owns 10% (1.5 million acres); government owns 13% (2 million acres).
- Forest growth exceeds harvest by 42%.
- Insect and disease mortality claim 17% of the growth within the growing stock of all species.
- Forestland in Virginia is disappearing at an alarming rate. Recent surveys have shown that more than 20,000 acres of forest land are lost each year. *This is not from the cutting of trees for forest products such as lumber, paper, or firewood - but rather the conversion of forestland to house sites, shopping centers, roads and other development purposes.*

- Approximately 186,000 acres are harvested each year, with 95,000 acres *replanted to pine*. The remaining acreage reseeds naturally to hardwoods or mixed pine and hardwood species.

## Economic Value

An update of the 1985 Economic Study showed that forest industry is a major contributor to Virginia's economy:

- In 1993, forest industry was the number one manufacturing industry in Virginia, worth \$5.8 billion per year to the state's economy.
- One of every seven manufacturing workers, 130,000 wage earners, are employed in a forest-related industry.
- Forest-related industries are located in every county in Virginia, including 285 sawmills, 178 furniture plants, 7 pulp mills, 7 veneer plants and 1,100 harvesting contractors.
- Forest resources contribute \$7.4 billion annually to Virginia's economy.
- The forests are also important for hunting, fishing, recreation, providing clean water, purifying the air, and a place to "get away from it all." A monetary value cannot be placed on some of the virtues of the forest. However, it is estimated that some of these attributes are worth another \$1.6 billion to the people of Virginia and its economy.