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.