



***Key Findings from the
National Report on
Sustainable Forests—2010***

Rich Guldin

**Research & Development
US Forest Service
Washington Office**

The National Report

- 🌿 Provides a comprehensive picture of current conditions and recent trends in U.S. forests and the forest sector
- 🌿 Supports dialog on sustainability based on the firm foundation of good information
- 🌿 Serves as a reference for analysts, land managers, and policy-makers
- 🌿 Meets our country's commitments to the Montréal Process Working Group

The Key Question: Are U.S. forests sustainable?

- 🌿 A complex question; no simple yes-or-no answers
- 🌿 What's the evidence in favor of Yes?
 - Forest area is stable and wood volumes are increasing
 - Growing capacity and willingness to manage forests sustainably; especially through public-private collaboration on projects devoted to landscape-scale conservation
- 🌿 But some recent trends raise concerns:
 - Forest disturbances are increasing; especially a threefold increase in insect-induced tree mortality relative to 2003 report
 - Fragmentation and loss of working forests to development affect ecosystem services
 - Climate changes increase uncertainty

Additional Findings

- 🌿 The number and complexity of values and demands society places on forests are increasing
 - The value of ecosystem services that forests provide is recognized
- 🌿 Wood products production is declining relative to growing consumption, with increasing imports filling the gap
- 🌿 Forest management activity is declining in many areas, as forest products firms divest themselves of timber lands



Three Overarching Issues

1. The loss of forest lands and working forests
2. Forests, climate change, and bio-energy
3. Forest health and disturbance patterns

The Path Forward

- 🌿 Flexible, adaptive management techniques that work with natural processes are needed to meet challenges of climate change and forest disturbances
- 🌿 Innovative market mechanisms that generate revenues from ecosystem services are needed
- 🌿 Carbon sequestration and wood-based bio-energy should be vigorously pursued, but not at the cost of other aspects of sustainability
- 🌿 Ongoing broad-scale monitoring at national, regional, and local scales is essential to inform these steps

The Path Forward

Better Data → Better Dialog → Better Decisions

- 🌿 The report provides better data and aims to spark dialog about forest sustainability.
- 🌿 Decisions and actions should follow robust and inclusive dialogue at all levels of society. Decision-makers should adapt decisions in response to changing ecological, economic, and social conditions.
- 🌿 Solutions are best accomplished at the landscape scale; embodying an all-lands approach to forest conservation and restoration



...Thank you for caring about our forests

... Questions?

The 2010 Report: Table of Contents

Part 1: Background, discussion and policy implications (50 pages)

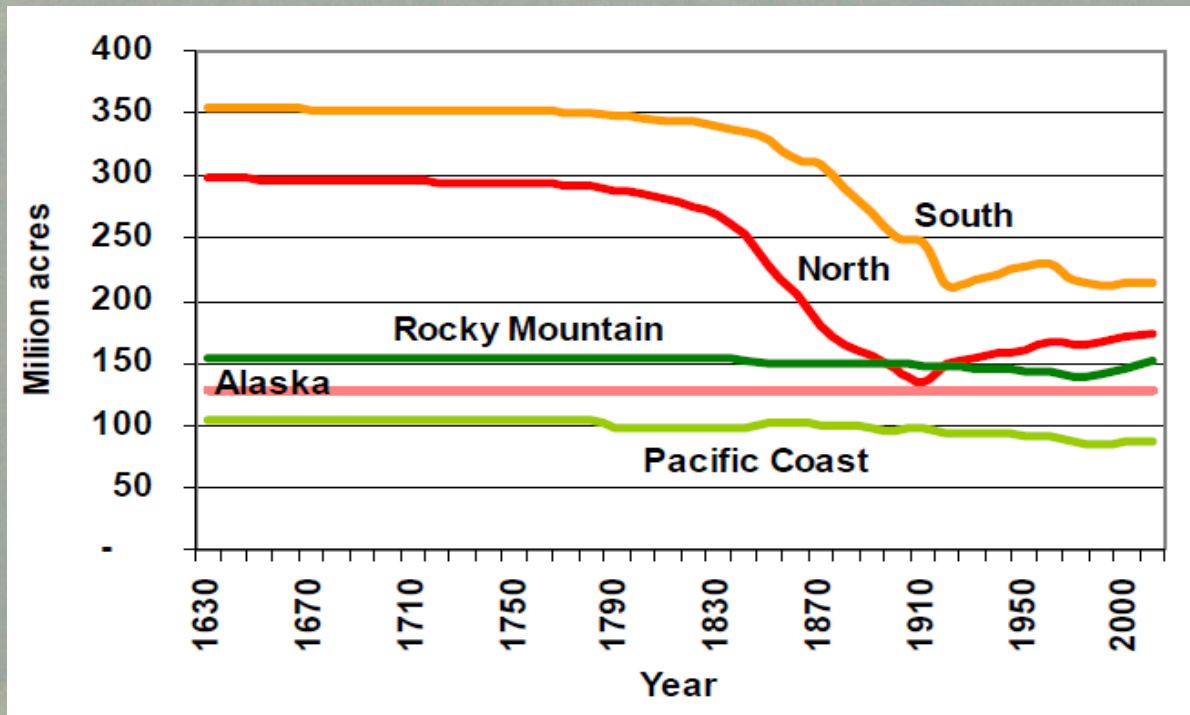
- Introduction
- Summary of key findings
- Sustainability C&I efforts at sub-national scale
- Policy implications

Part 2: Presentation of the data (150 pages)

- MPC&I framework
- Summary of findings by criteria
- Indicator briefs
- References, glossary, etc.

Key Findings (cont.)

At 751 million acres, forest area in the United States remains stable since the 1950s.



Forest area in the United States

Key Findings (cont.)

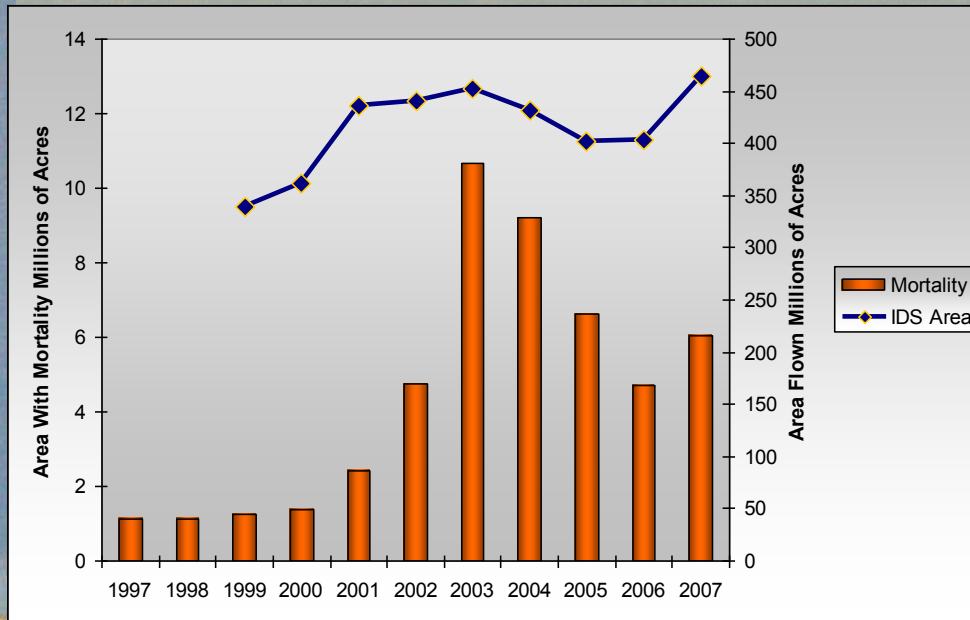
Forest land fragmentation and loss owing mostly to human development.

- Fragmentation presents analysis and display challenges
- Development on the edge of urban areas and in recreational and amenities places
- Important regional issue, not apparent in national statistics

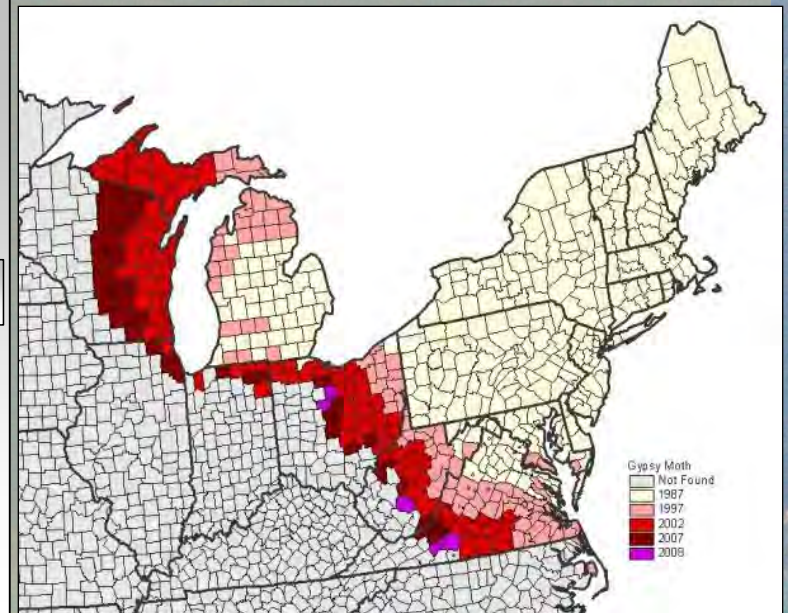


Key Findings (cont.)

Levels of forest disturbance are rising, including a three-fold increase in insect-induced mortality relative to the previous report



Insect mortality and area sampled



Sample epidemic—Gypsy Moth

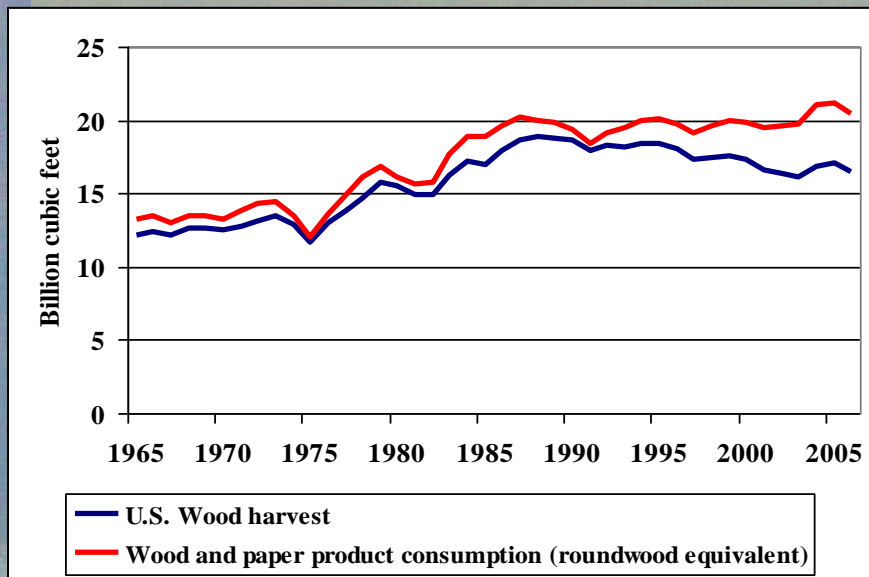
Key Findings (cont.)

The number and complexity of values and demands society places on forests are increasing.

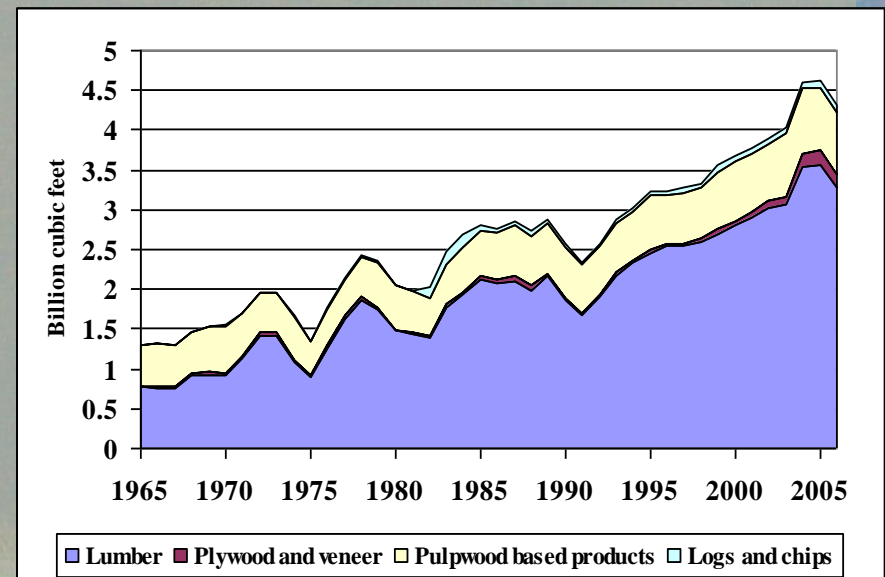
- Diverse set of ecosystem services increasingly recognized and incorporated into decision making
- Increasing demand for various recreational activities
- Growing concern for conservation and amenity values
- Wood products consumption continues to grow (with bio-energy as potential new market with additional demands on the forest)

Key Findings (cont.)

Wood products production is declining relative to growing consumption, with increasing imports filling the gap.



Harvest (blue)
Consumption (red)



US Imports in roundwood equivalents

Key Findings (cont.)

Forest management activity is declining in many areas as forest products firms divest themselves of timberlands.

- Broadscale shift in forest ownership from timber management companies to Timber Investment Management Organizations (TIMOs) and Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs).
- Economic and forest management behavior of these entities is uncertain
- Large reductions in timber harvests from US Forest Service and other federal lands in the West

Key Findings (cont.)

Capacity and willingness to manage forests sustainably are evidenced by a growing number of public-private collaborations on projects devoted to landscape-scale conservation.

- Some urban areas are leading the way in recognizing the value of urban forests and trees and incorporating them into their planning activities
- Landscape-scale forest management partnerships are emerging that bring together different groups and jurisdictions

Criteria and Indicators (C&I) are a common tool used in these efforts

Plans for the Future:

- 🌿 Continue to refine and expand reporting capacity in preparation for 2015 reporting cycle
- 🌿 Institutionalize standardized reporting routines for individual indicators where possible
- 🌿 Deliver data for selected indicators on an annual basis through the web.

Concluding Remarks:

Better Data → Better Dialog → Better Decisions

- Decision process often distant from the analysis and reporting process and outside of the control of the “experts”
- For this to work we need broad capacity in institutions and society at large (fortunately something we have)

Well functioning democracies demand good information