

This Chapter Has Been Updated. Updates Are Available At: [www.heinzctr.org/ecosystems](http://www.heinzctr.org/ecosystems)

# Forests



**What Indicators are used to describe Forests?**
**Can we report trends? Are there other useful reference points?**
**SYSTEM DIMENSIONS**

●	Forest Area and Ownership	How much forest land is there in the United States? How much is privately owned, and how much is publicly owned?	Trends, regional comparison
●	Forest Types	How is the area occupied by major forest types changing?	Trends, regional comparison
●	Forest Management Categories	How intensively managed are U.S. forest lands?	Trends, regional comparison
○	Forest Pattern and Fragmentation	How fragmented are U.S. forests?	Regional comparison

**CHEMICAL AND PHYSICAL CONDITIONS**

●	Nitrate in Forest Streams	How much nitrate is there in forest streams?	Current data only, federal standard, cross-ecosystem comparison
○	Carbon Storage	How much carbon is stored in U.S forests?	Trends, regional comparison

**BIOLOGICAL COMPONENTS**

○	At-Risk Native Species	What are the percentages of forest-dwelling species that are at different levels of risk of extinction?	Current data only, regional comparison
⊖	Area Covered by Non-native Plants	What percentage of the plant cover in forests is not native to the region?	No data reported
○	Forest Age	How much of the nation's forests is young, middle-aged, or old?	Regional comparison
●	Forest Disturbance: Fire, Insects, and Disease	How many acres are affected each year by fires, insects, disease, windstorms, and ice?	Trends
⊖	Fire Frequency	Are forest fires burning much more or less frequently than in presettlement times?	No data reported
⊖	Forest Community Types with Significantly Reduced Area	How much area is occupied by forest types that have significantly declined in area since presettlement times? Are these forest types increasing or decreasing in area at present?	No data reported

**HUMAN USES**

●	Timber Harvest	How much timber is harvested each year, and what is it used for?	Trends, regional comparison
●	Timber Growth and Harvest	How much timber grows each year, compared to the amount that is cut?	Trends, regional comparison
⊖	Recreation in Forests	How much recreational activity takes place in the nation's forests?	No data reported

● All Necessary Data Available
○ Partial Data Available
⊖ Data Not Adequate for National Reporting
? Indicator Development Needed