

SYSTEM DIMENSIONS	CHEMICAL AND PHYSICAL	BIOLOGICAL COMPONENTS	HUMAN USES
Extent	Nutrients, Carbon, Oxygen	Plants and Animals	Food, Fiber, and Water
Pattern	Contaminants	Communities	Recreation and Other Services
	Physical	Ecological Productivity	

● Forest Management Categories

What Is This Indicator, and Why Is It Important?

This indicator reports the percentage of forest area in several different management categories. These range from “reserved lands” (forests in national parks, wilderness areas, and other similar areas) to forests under intensive management involving replanting after harvest. Other forest lands are subject to a wide variety of both management practices and restrictions on use.

How a forest is managed influences the goods and services that it provides. Heavily managed areas produce fiber and other wood products, while the value of reserved areas may lie in the solitude they offer, the rare plants and animals they shelter, or the watersheds they protect.

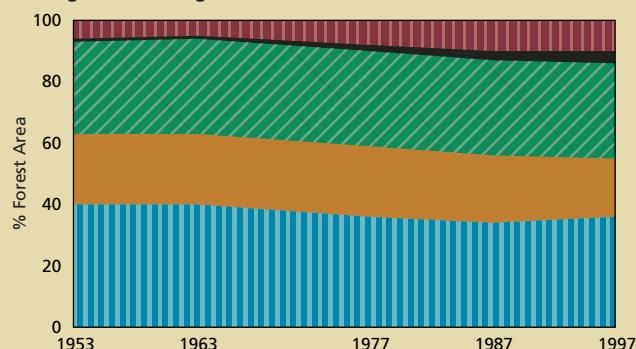
What Do the Data Show? In 1997, 10% of eastern forests and 4% of western forests were in intensively managed plantations (planted timberlands). Eleven percent of western forests and 3% of eastern forests were in reserved forest lands (federally designated wilderness areas or national parks). (Data are not currently available to support national reporting on reserved lands in private or other public ownership.) Nationwide (East plus West), reserved forest land doubled between 1953 and 1997, while planted timberland increased tenfold.

Other forest lands receive less-intensive management activity, which may include periodic timber harvest. Nineteen percent of forests in the West grow too slowly to support timber harvest under current economic conditions; these forests are identified as “other natural or semi-natural forest lands” in the graph above.

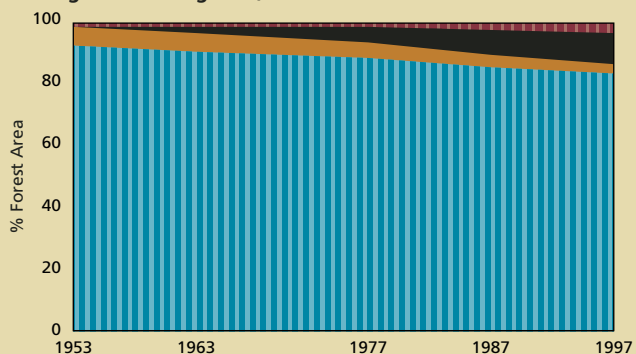
The technical note for this indicator is on page 240.

Management Categories

Management Categories, West



Management Categories, East



- **Reserved forest land:** land where timber harvesting is prohibited by statute. Data shown for this category currently include only national parks and federally designated wilderness areas. Future reports will track reserved forests in private and other public ownership.
- **Planted timberland:** planted with nursery seedlings and intended for repeated harvest.
- ▨ **Interior Alaska:** distinguished here because—regardless of its legal or management status, it is practically “off-limits” at this time because of its remoteness; so is similar to “reserved forest land”.
- **Other natural/semi-natural forest land:** forest that grows too slowly or too sparsely to support timber harvest under current economic conditions and is neither in national parks or wilderness areas, nor managed by planting seedlings from a nursery.
- ▨ **Natural/semi-natural timberland:** “timberland” is any forest land that grows fast enough to support harvesting and that is not in an area, such as a national park or wilderness area, where harvesting is prohibited by statute. This term does *not* imply that harvesting is being, will be, or should be carried out. On “natural and semi-natural” lands, new trees grow from seeds from nearby trees, not from planted seedlings.

Data Source: USDA Forest Service. Coverage: all 50 states.