



NEWS RELEASE

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Projecting the future of our forests

Madison, Wis.— Consumption of forest products will continue to increase at a faster rate than our population, imports will satisfy more of our wood demand, paper products and composite wood products will gain in share of our consumption, and forests will continue to change in composition according to a recently released USDA Forest Service report.

“This report really points out the changing context of forestry in the United States,” says Ken Skog, lead economist for the USDA Forest Products Laboratory (FPL) in Madison, Wisconsin. “We took a detailed look to determine what market factors will shape our landscape for the next generations.”

The Resource Planning and Assessment (RPA) report is required by law every 10 years, with interim updates every five. This version actually looks at 50 years of historical data and uses it to project 50 years into the future.

Highlights of the report include

- Consumption of forest products in the United States will increase over the next 50 years, but at a slower rate.
- Prices for most classes of forest products will follow recent trends.
- Most of the increase in the Nation’s timber harvest will occur in the East and on private lands in the South, with an increasing reliance on softwood plantations.
- Canada will continue to be our leading importer. However, Canada’s share of import volume will decline while non-Canadian sources will show a sharp increase.

“This report will help foresters develop strategies that improve forest health while providing the goods and services that American’s expect and need from our forests,” adds Skog.

A team of Forest Service researchers produced the report. It will be highlighted in six articles in the March issue of "The Journal of Forestry." Complete copies of the report can be obtained off the web at www.fs.fed.us/pnw/sev/rpa

The USDA Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory was established in 1910 in Madison, Wis., with the mission to conserve and extend the country's wood resources. Today, FPL's research scientists work with academic and industrial researchers and other government agencies in exploring ways to promote healthy forests and clean water, and improve papermaking and recycling processes. Information is available at FPL's Web site: www.fpl.fs.fed.us. Through FPL's Advanced Housing Research Center, (www.fpl.fs.fed.us/ahrc/), researchers also work to improve homebuilding technologies and materials.

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