



WOODLAND AND FOREST LAND

The forest area of continental United States currently totals 648 million acres according to the preliminary reports of the Timber Resource Review completed by the United States Forest Service in 1955. In arriving at this total forest land area the Forest Service used the following definition of forest land:

Forest land area includes (a) lands which are at least 10 percent stocked by trees of any size and capable of producing timber or other wood products, or of exerting an influence on the climate or the water regime; (b) land from which the trees described in (a) have been removed to less than 10 percent stocking and which have not been developed for other use; (c) afforested areas; and (d) chaparral areas. Does not include orchard land. The minimum area that qualifies as forest land is one acre in the East and 10 acres in the West. Roadside, streamside, and shelterbelt strips of timber, in addition to meeting above requirements, must be at least 120 feet wide to qualify as forest land.

It is important to note that chaparral areas are included under this definition. The chaparral land area is defined by the Forest Service as including "lands supporting heavily branched dwarf trees or shrubs, usually evergreen, the crown canopy of which covers more than 50 percent of the ground and whose primary value is watershed protection."

Included in the total forest land area of 648 million acres are 484 million acres of commercial forest land and 164 million acres of noncommercial woodland and forest land. The noncommercial area is made up of 138 million acres of unproductive and unreserved woodland and forest land and 26 million acres (including 11 million unproductive acres) reserved for special purposes such as parks and wildlife refuges.

Commercial forest land is made up of all forest land which (1) "is producing, or physically capable of producing, usable crops

of wood (usually sawtimber), (2) economically available now or prospectively, and (3) not withdrawn from timber utilization." When the present commercial forest area of 484 million acres is broken down into stand-size classes, there are 178 million acres of sawtimber stands, 169 million acres of pole timber stands, 95 million acres of seedling and sapling stands, and 42 million acres of nonstocked and other forest areas. Some of this 42 million acres of nonstocked forest land is probably reported under other uses of land in farms by the Census of Agriculture.

FOREST LAND AREA IN CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES, BY REGIONS, 1953¹

Region	Forest land		
	Commercial ²	Noncommercial ³	Total
	<i>1,000 acres</i>	<i>1,000 acres</i>	<i>1,000 acres</i>
Northeast.....	63,023	3,342	66,365
Corn Belt.....	30,948	281	31,229
Lake States.....	53,272	1,929	55,201
Northern Plains.....	5,508	244	5,752
Appalachian.....	67,868	1,439	69,307
Southeast.....	78,135	1,683	79,818
Delta States.....	51,631	178	51,809
Southern Plains.....	18,210	29,827	48,037
Mountain.....	53,063	90,435	143,498
Pacific.....	62,682	33,988	96,670
Total.....	484,340	163,346	647,686

¹ As reported by the U. S. Forest Service, 1955.

² Forest land which (a) is producing, or physically capable of producing, usable crops of wood (usually sawtimber), (b) economically available now or prospectively, and (c) not withdrawn from timber utilization.

³ Forest land (a) withdrawn from timber utilization through statute, ordinance, or administrative order but which otherwise qualifies as commercial forest land, or (b) incapable of yielding usable wood products (usually sawtimber) because of adverse site conditions, or so physically inaccessible as to be unavailable economically in the foreseeable future.