

Costs and Benefits of Sustainable Certification

Benefits:

- Improved access to markets in some areas.
- Satisfaction of improving your forest and stewardship.
- Building a potential income for future generations.

Costs:

- Sustainable forests are certified by third party organizations like the American Tree Farm System[®], the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), or the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). These groups usually charge landowners a dollar amount per acre to review management plans and occasionally audit your land to ensure that sustainable practices continue.



Wayne Merkel - DNR Forest Service

Contact a Forest Service Office

Western Region Office
3 Pershing St., Room 101
Cumberland, MD 21502
Office: (301) 777-5818
Fax: (301) 777-2197

Central Region Office
2 South Bond Street, Suite 101
Bel Air, MD 21014
Office: (410) 836-4551
Fax: (410) 836-4552

Southern Region Office
Carter Building, Box 653
Leonardtown, MD 20650
Office: (301) 880-2745
Fax: (301) 475-8527

Eastern Region Office
201 Baptist St., Suite 22
Salisbury, MD 21801
Office: (410) 713-3860
Fax: (410) 713-3869

How Can I Find Out More About Certifying My Forest As Sustainable?

- **American Tree Farm System[®]** - See the ATFS website for guidelines for certification of private properties under 10,000 acres. www.treefarmssystem.org



- **Sustainable Forestry Initiative** - Generally certifies commercial land over 10,000 acres. www.sfiprogram.org
- **The Forest Stewardship Council** or FSC certifies forests as sustainable, and provides a chain of custody (COC) for products to ensure they are sustainable. You can search the FSC site for certified forest products and get information about certification at www.fscus.org
- **Forestry For The Bay** - a voluntary membership program promoting sustainable forest management. www.forestryforthebay.org



Forest Service headquarters is located at 580 Taylor Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21401. In state, contact the Forest Service headquarters toll-free 1-877-620-8DNR, extension 8531, or call (410) 260-8531. TTY users, please call via the MD relay

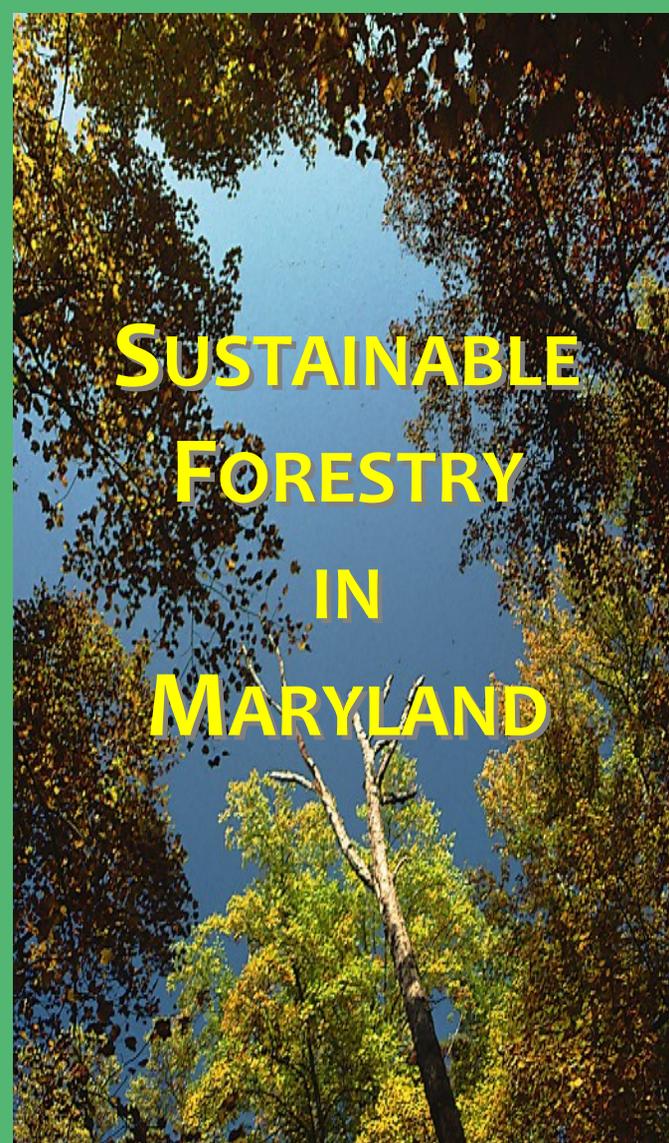
Or on the Internet at <http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/>

The facilities and services of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, or physical or mental disability. This document is available in alternative format upon request from a qualified individual with a disability.

This publication was made possible by funding from the USFS, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry. Award No. 05-DG-11244225-100
February, 2008
DNR Pub. No. 02-2202008-276

Printed on Recycled Paper

Cover Photo by R. Harrison Wiegand - Maryland DNR



A Resource Guide for Landowners

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Forest Service



RECENT years have seen an increase in the demand for sustainable forestry and forest products. Many people think a “sustainable” wood product has to come from a rainforest or a different part of the world, or be made of woods like Bamboo or Mahogany. But many of our own local forests are also certified as sustainable, and any type of wood can be a sustainable forest product.

What is a Sustainable Forest?

Sustainable forestry is a broad term for management techniques that respect the full range of environmental, social, and economic values of the forest, and seek to meet today’s needs without losing any of those values. Sustainable forests maintain all components (trees, shrubs, flowers, birds, fish, wildlife, etc.) as well as ecological processes (nutrient recycling, water and air purification, ground water recharge, etc.) so they can remain healthy and vibrant into the future.

A basic part of sustainable forestry is adaptive management, which means that forest managers watch and monitor the forest carefully. If future conditions change and the forest shows signs of stress or decline, new management actions can help restore sustainable conditions.

There are several organizations with standards for forest certification to measure responsible forest management. The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) are commonly used. On-the-ground audits by independent consultants verify that standards are met. Products from certified forests can be labeled as certified wood products if they follow chain-of-custody procedures at participating mills.

What Factors Are Considered?

- **Conservation of Biological Diversity.**
- **Productive Capacity of Forest Ecosystems.**
- **Forest Ecosystem Health and Vitality.**
- **Soil and Water Capacity.**
- **Forest Contribution to Global Carbon Cycles.**
- **Maintenance of Socioeconomic Benefits.**
- **Legal, Institutional, and Economic Framework; Measure and Monitor Changes and Conduct and Apply Research to Forest Conservation.**

Source: USDA National Report on Sustainable Forests - 2003; Sustainable Forest Indicators.

Why Manage Forests?

Though many would like to think nature can simply take care of itself, at this point in history it is clear that outcome oriented management is critical for the future of our forests.



Loss of Wildfire: Nature’s way of regenerating forests is with natural disasters like fire, wind, or insects. Wildfire isn’t a part of the settled landscape now, and without active management to encourage regeneration of the native oaks and hickories, many forests throughout the Eastern United States are seeing a shift from fire tolerant oaks to fire sensitive and shade tolerant species like red maple and beech.

Past Harvesting Practices: Repeated high grading (taking the best trees and leaving genetically inferior trees "to grow") and land development have robbed today's forests of genetic integrity. This will increase susceptibility to disease and insects, unless countered by timber stand improvement practices.

Animals: Deer are a part of the native forest, but the explosive rise in the white-tailed deer population is fundamentally changing the health and composition of our forests. With high deer densities, native tree seedlings are too heavily browsed to assure the future forest.

Invasive Species: Invasive pests like Emerald Ash Borer and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid threaten survival of native trees. Invasive weeds can interfere with normal forest regeneration, reducing the number of viable seedlings for tomorrow’s forests.

A forest management plan will lay out actions needed to address these environmental issues and the landowner’s objectives to improve the forest resource over time.



Tom Daviden - Maryland DNR

Where Are Certified Sustainable Forests in Maryland?

The State Forests of Maryland are currently managed using sustainable methods, though not all acres are yet officially certified. Maryland’s private forest landowners are also seeking certification through the American Tree Farm System®, a program of the American Forest Foundation. Over 147,000 acres have been enrolled.

Acquired in 1999, the 60,518 acres of the Chesapeake Forest Lands is one of the first forest ownerships in Maryland certified as Sustainable Forest. Managed by the Maryland Forest Service, it serves as a national model of a public/private partnership for sustainable forestry and ecosystem management on public lands. This forest is “dual certified” under both the FSC and SFI protocols.

You can view the Sustainable Forest Management Plan for the Chesapeake Forest at the Forest Service’s website at: <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/chesapeakeforestlands.asp>.

A second certified property in Maryland, over 22,000 acres, is owned by a private forest management group and is under a Conservation Easement. The management goal for this forest is “to perpetuate a sustainable working forest...encourage the long-term professional management of those forest resources... facilitate the biologically and economically sustainable production of the forest resources... and conserve and preserve the significant conservation values of the property”. Both properties are former forest industry lands located across the six lower Eastern Shore counties and in Charles County, in southern Maryland.

What Can A Forest Landowner Do?

- **Keep land in forest - Consider using a conservation easement.**
- **Follow a Forest Management Plan, and involve family members in long-range planning decisions.**
- **Harvest for health, using good silviculture to encourage growth and reproduction of the best trees.**
- **Keep some fallen logs or limbs for wildlife.**
- **Follow harvesting Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect soil and streams from erosion and sedimentation.**