

# The State of South Carolina's Forests



## FOREST AREA

- South Carolina has 13.1 million acres of forestland. This is 68% of the state's total land area.
- Hardwood timber types occupy over 53% of the state's forestland. Softwoods occupy 47%.
- South Carolina's forestland acreage remains stable, averaging 12.6 million acres since 1968.
- The 2012 forest inventory found that there are 2.4 million more acres of forestland than there were in the first inventory in 1936.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Forestry is **#1** among manufacturing industries in jobs (90,624) and payroll (\$4.1 billion).
- The total economic impact of South Carolina's forest industry is around \$17 billion annually.
- South Carolina exports \$1.4 billion in forest products each year.
- Timber is the state's **#1** harvested crop at \$759 million annually.

## FOREST OWNERSHIP

- 88% of South Carolina's forests are privately owned.
- 64% of private forests are family-owned.
- The average "family forest" is 80 acres. 57% of these owners have their primary residence on the land.
- In 2012, forest industries owned 238,100 acres, down 88% since 2001 and continuing to decrease.
- Public agencies control 12% of South Carolina's forests.

## FOREST INVENTORY

- South Carolina's forests now contain 24.5 billion cubic feet of wood, more than at any time in the past century.
- The state's forests, both hardwood and softwood, are growing more wood than is being harvested.
- Net annual softwood growth is double pre-hurricane Hugo growth rates. The present annual growth of 927 million cubic feet per year is the highest ever recorded.
- Net annual hardwood growth rates have recovered since Hurricane Hugo. The present net annual growth of 362 million cubic feet per year is 39% above pre-Hugo levels.

## FOREST ECOSYSTEM HEALTH

- The state's forested watersheds fulfill a critical resource role as the primary supplier of clean public water.
- South Carolina's forested watersheds are well managed as documented by a 93.4% compliance rating with state water quality guidelines.
- The state's forests produce timber and jobs and serve as a backdrop for a desirable quality of life. In addition to beautiful landscapes, forests provide clean water and air, wildlife habitat, recreation, carbon storage, and soil protection.

*Sources: SC Forestry Commission and USDA Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA)*

*For more information about South Carolina's forest resource, contact the SC Forestry Commission at 803-896-8800 or visit [www.trees.sc.gov](http://www.trees.sc.gov).*

*The South Carolina Forestry Commission and the USDA Forest Service are equal opportunity employers and providers.*