

North Carolina Has Seven Pulpmills

plus chip board plants and port facilities that ship chips overseas.

Will clear cutting and pine plantations driven by the pulp and chip using industries increase in Tennessee because North Carolina is running short of timber?

North Carolina Losing Private Forests

RALEIGH, North Carolina, March 12, 2004 (ENS) - North Carolina state officials should develop a comprehensive state forest policy to make conservation of private forest lands a top priority, according to a new report from Environmental Defense. Analysis by the conservation group finds sprawl is destroying forests at record rates and remaining forests are becoming more fragmented.

"North Carolina's private forest lands are at a crossroads," said Will McDow, forest economist with the North Carolina office of Environmental Defense. "The state lost more than one million acres of forest over the last 12 years."

For the first time, more timber is being cut than is being grown, and forest acres are expected to decline for the next 40 years, McDow maintains.

The report, based on analysis federal Forest Inventory and Analysis data, finds some 76 percent of all tree harvests were clearcuts, which can increase runoff and impair water quality.

The state has policies and programs aimed at protecting water quality and air quality, but it does not have effective policies to protect forests, according to the report.

"Almost 700,000 individuals own forestland in North Carolina and virtually every one of them manages his or her land in a vacuum," said Dan Whittle, senior attorney with the North Carolina office of Environmental Defense.

"Existing state programs and policies promote timber production and conversion to non-forest uses over forest stewardship," Whittle said. "Only by overhauling these programs can the state reverse current trends."

Environmental Defense reports that lack of planning, inadequate incentives, and poor forest management are among the root causes of the problems facing North Carolina's forest.

"The forests are more than just a stand of trees," McDow said. "Forests produce private and public benefits, including a steady supply of timber and other products, wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, clean water and healthy soil."

"If North Carolina fails to take action soon, the economic productivity and ecological health of our forests could be threatened forever," he said.

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