

OVERVIEW

Students read tables and figures to determine ownership of forestland in Pennsylvania and where most is located.

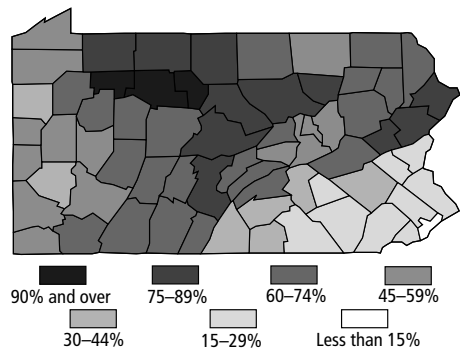


BACKGROUND

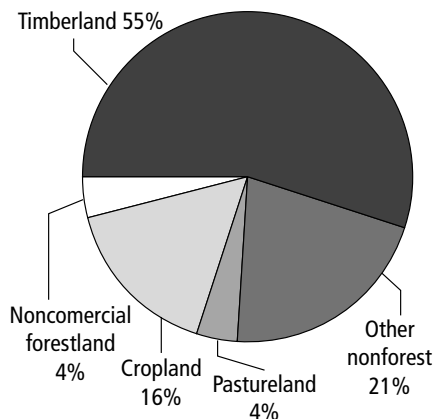
Who Owns Pennsylvania Forestland?

Today, six out of every ten acres in Pennsylvania are forested. Fifty-nine percent of the state is in forest, totaling nearly 17 million acres. Other primary land uses in Pennsylvania include cropland at 16 percent and pastureland at 4 percent. The remaining 21 percent are under a variety of other non-forest uses, including urban and other developed areas.

There is a high percentage of forestland in most counties in Pennsylvania. The highest percentage is found in the north-central counties, the lowest percentage in the southeastern counties.



Penn's Woods—Change and Challenge, Finley and Jones, 1993, p.4.



When looking at forestland ownership in Pennsylvania, it is helpful to understand the difference between commercial forestland (or timberland) and non-commercial forestland. Depending on the source, the acreage or percentages given may include all forestland, or it may only include commercial forestland, and therefore will vary slightly.

At the same time timberland acreage has not changed significantly during these same 30 years. Although there were losses of commercial timberland by reclassification to non-commercial forestland and by the loss of timberland to non-forest uses (such as housing developments), additions from abandoned farmland have nearly offset those losses.

Ownership patterns of Pennsylvania's forests reflect a wide diversity of owner types, who own forestland for a variety of reasons. The largest share of forestland, about 74 percent, is in the hands of private owners. With this ownership comes individual and property rights. As long as the owners are following the laws and regulations, they can and do make the decisions on how to use their land. These decisions might not always be the most popular with environmental concerns.

Sometimes through negotiations and compromise both sides can obtain their individual goals for the land.

Of these private owners, non-industrial private owners own 69 percent of Pennsylvania's forestland. These private owners include approximately 512,000 farmers, individuals, corporations outside of the forest industry and other miscellaneous groups, such as hunting clubs. The holding size for these non-industrial private owners averages 23 acres. With such a wide variety of forests and owners, it's not surprising that there are a wide variety of ownership objectives.

The other five percent of that 74 percent of forest land is in private ownership, belonging to forest industries. Forest industries include companies or

GRADE LEVELS:

Grades 5-10

OBJECTIVES: Students will (1) be introduced to some definitions regarding forestland and timberland, (2) take a short quiz about Forestland in Pennsylvania, and (3) read tables and figures to determine ownership of Forestland in Pennsylvania and where most of the Forestland is located.

PENNSYLVANIA PROPOSED ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

4.8.7

B. Explain how people use natural resources.

4.9.7

A. Explain the role of environmental laws and regulations.

4.8.10

B. Analyze the relationship between the use of natural resources and sustaining our society.

4.9.10

A. Explain why environmental laws and regulations are developed and enacted.

ESTIMATED DURATION: One to two 50-minute class periods.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Copies of the Student Page "Sizing up Pennsylvania's Forests 'Pre-Quiz';" copies of the Student Page "Forestland in Pennsylvania."

individuals that operate either primary or secondary forest product plants.

The remaining 26 percent of forestland are publicly owned; 3 percent is national, 21 percent is state, and counties and municipalities own another 2 percent. These public forests are a major source of forest-related recreation as well as a source of timber for Pennsylvania's timber products industry.

Table 1 shows the ownership of commercial timberland in acres and percentages of each in Pennsylvania. Note that when talking specifically about commercial timberland, these percentages change slightly from those previously discussed. Either way, what is clear is that while Pennsylvania does have a fair amount of public forestland for all to enjoy and benefit from, the vast majority of the forests in Pennsylvania are privately owned — owned perhaps by people like you and your students and their families.

PROCEDURES

1. Review with your students the following definitions of forestland and timberland, adapted from the glossary in *Forest Statistics for Pennsylvania — 1978 and 1989* and from *Project Learning Tree Focus on Forests Secondary Module*.

Forestland — land that is at least one acre in size, and is at least 10 percent stocked with trees of any size, or that formerly had such tree cover and is not currently developed for a non-forest use; the components that make up forestland are timberland (also sometimes referred to as commercial forestland) and all non-commercial forestland.

Timberland (also sometimes referred to as **Commercial Forestland**) — forestland producing or capable of producing crops of industrial wood (more than 20 cubic feet per acre per year; 1.4 cubic meters per acre per year) and not withdrawn from timber production.

Non-commercial Forestland — reserved timberland and other forestland, christmas tree plantations, and other forestland not capable of producing 20 cubic feet per acre per year.

Reserved Timberland — forestland sufficiently productive to qualify as timberland but withdrawn from tim-

Forestland in Pennsylvania		
Timberland	Acres	Percent of Total Timberlands
Federal		
Allegheny National Forest	463,593	3
Other Federal	38,000	<1
State		
State Forest	1,447,865	9
State Game Lands	1,178,772	7
Other State	15,299	<1
County & Municipal		
Private		
Individual	6,230,000	40
Forest Industry	826,000	5
Corporate	1,344,000	9
Farmer	2,660,000	15
Other Private	1,448,000	10
Total Timberland:	15,894,129	100 percent
Total Non-commercial Forestland in Pennsylvania	1,108,671	
Total Pennsylvania Forestland	16,992,800	(59 percent of Pennsylvania's land area)

ber use through statute or administrative designation; land exclusively used for Christmas tree production.

2. Have students take the "Sizing up Pennsylvania's Forestland 'Pre-Quiz'" to identify some of their preconceptions. Record students' responses, but wait to give them the correct answers. Explain that they'll analyze information given to them to find the answers to the questions.
3. Pass out copies of the Student Page "Forestland in Pennsylvania." Ask students to use this information to see if they answered the pre-quiz questions correctly.
4. Once they have determined the answers to the questions, ask students if any of the answers surprised them. Ask students what was easier for them to interpret — the information presented in the tables or in the figures? Also, you might wish to have students convert some of the information presented in the tables into figures and vice versa.
5. Point out that tables and figures are often used in newspapers and other publications to quickly summarize a lot of information. You might want to collect some other examples from

newspapers and magazines to share with students or ask them to bring examples in from home.

EXTENSION

- Have students write a brief report or essay about how forest ownership affects their own personal lives. For example: access to forest areas, availability of wood products, forest-related jobs, activities that can or cannot be conducted on different forestland depending on ownership, etc.
- In small groups or individually, have students research the importance of private lands in producing timber in Pennsylvania.

ASSESSMENT

Have students bring copies of the “pre-quiz” home and administer it to 2–3 members of their family. Have them discuss the correct answers with their family members, then write a brief report summarizing the results.

Adapted from Project Learning Tree Focus on Forests Secondary Module, American Forest Foundation “Who Owns America’s Forests?”

Answers to the “Sizing Up Pennsylvania’s Forests Pre-Quiz”

1. (c) 59 percent; more than half!
2. (d) primarily the north-central counties
3. (a-d) answers will vary depending on location of school
4. (c) 55 percent timberland; 4 percent non-commercial forestland
5. (b) private individuals
6. (d) 79 percent; more than three-quarters!
7. (c) 51 percent; more than half!
8. (b) Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Forestry