

A National Policy for Sustainable forests

Establishing a clear commitment
to positively influence the threats
faced by the nation's forests

Why?

The problems this policy would address are:

1. Federal, state, local and tribal government lack an effective process to coordinate policy decisions and achieve landscape scale objectives
2. Issues faced by forests due to larger scale (global, national and regional) social, economic and environmental factors.

What are the Important Factors Contributing to the Problem?

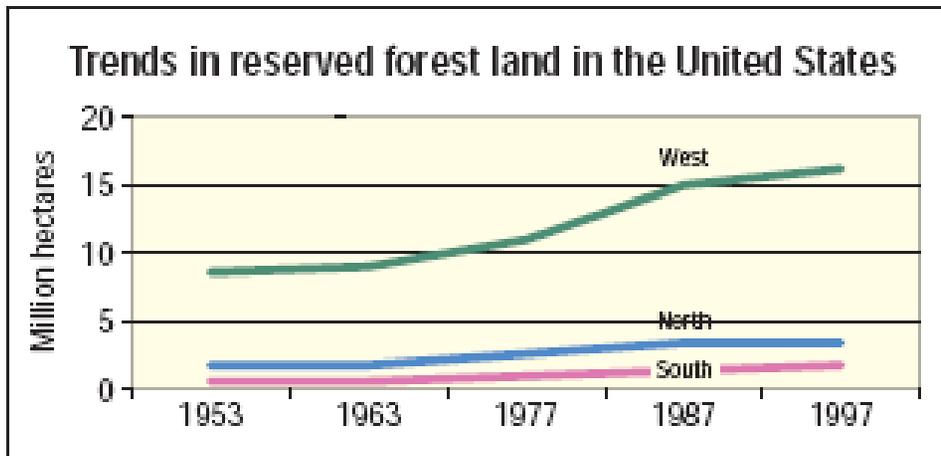


National Context

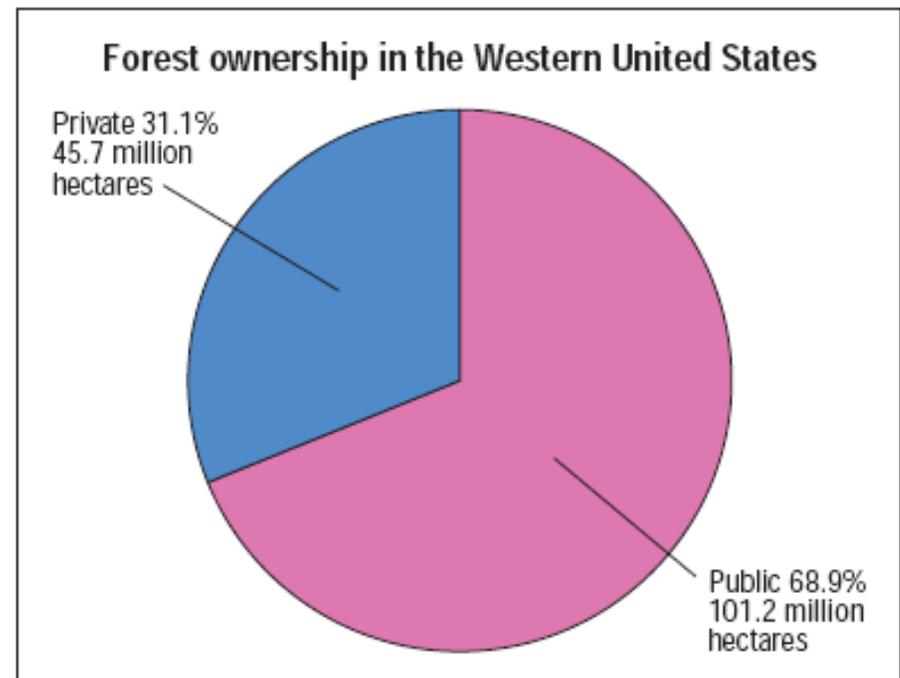
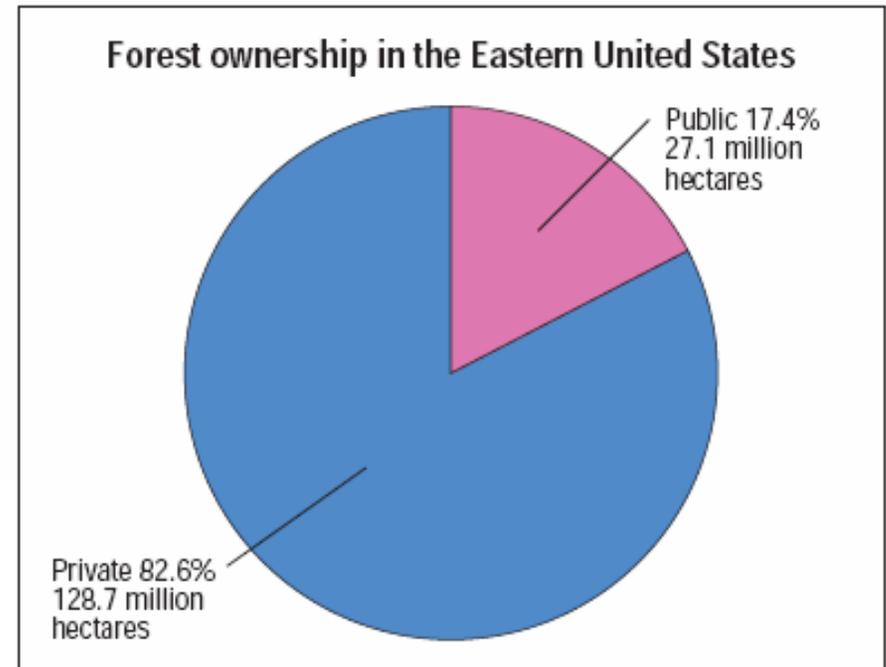
- 57% of America's forests are privately owned. These forests cover 427 million acres, which represents 19% of the total land area of the U.S.
- The largest class of forestland ownership are the “family forests”.

Data and graphics from USDA Forest Service - Forest Resources of the United States, 2002; USDA Forest Service - U.S. Forest Resource Facts and Trends 2004, or Interim update of the 2000 Renewable Resources Planning Act Assessment 2007 unless otherwise noted.

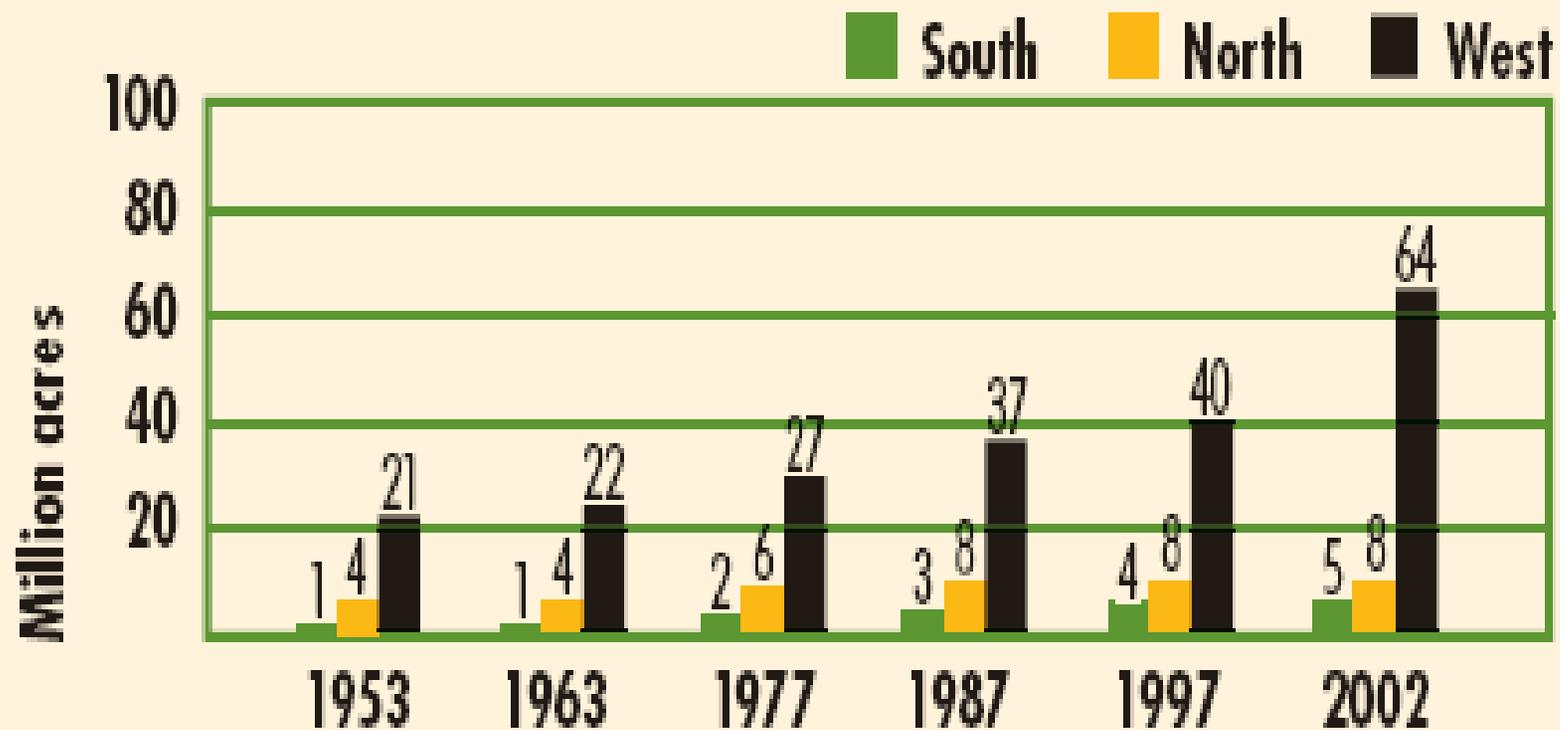
National Context: East versus West



Forest reserves comprise 11 percent of the total forest area in the West. Three percent of eastern forests are in reserves such as parks and wilderness.



Trends in reserved forest land by region, 1953-2002



Forest Acres/U.S. Resident Actual and Projected

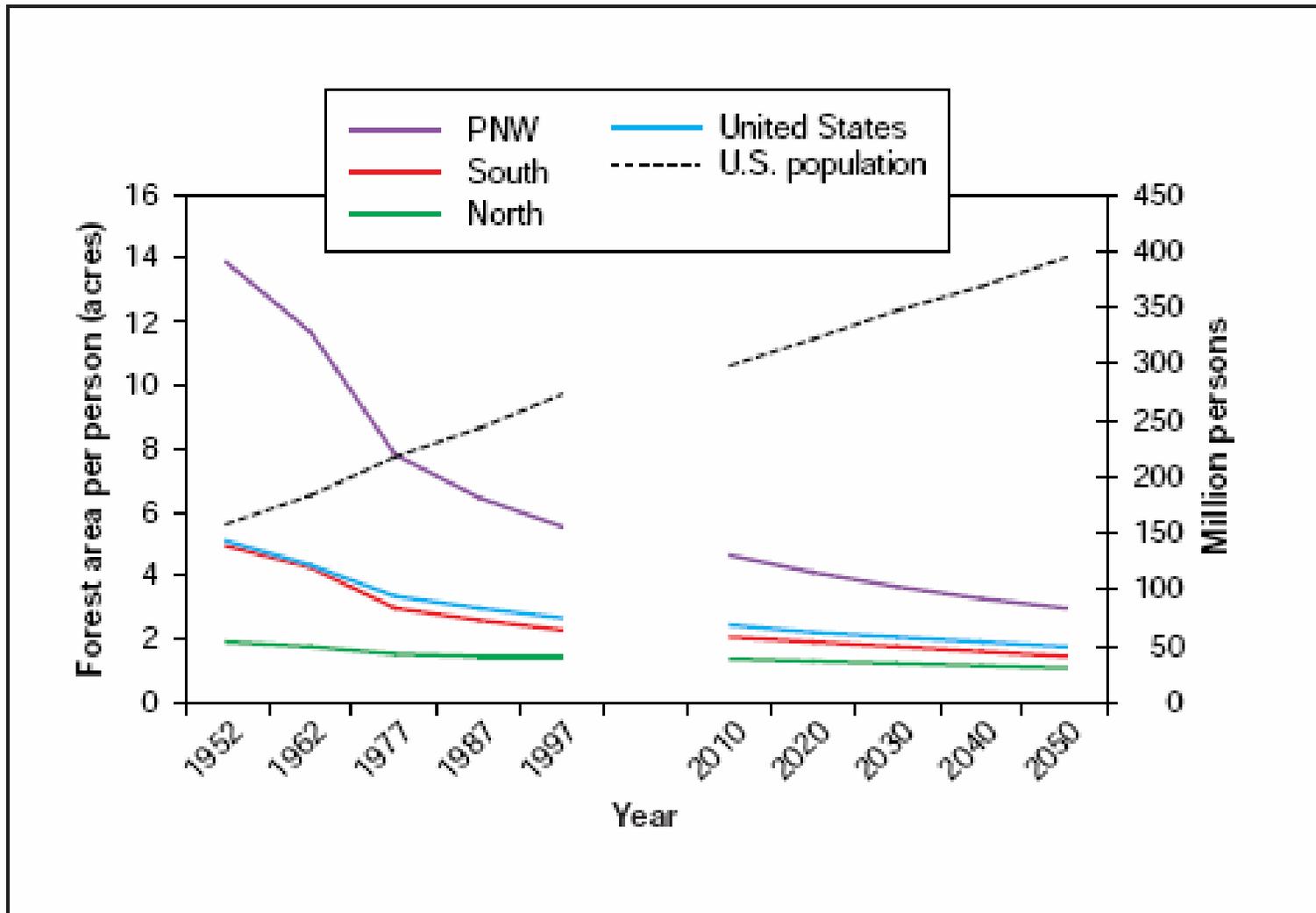
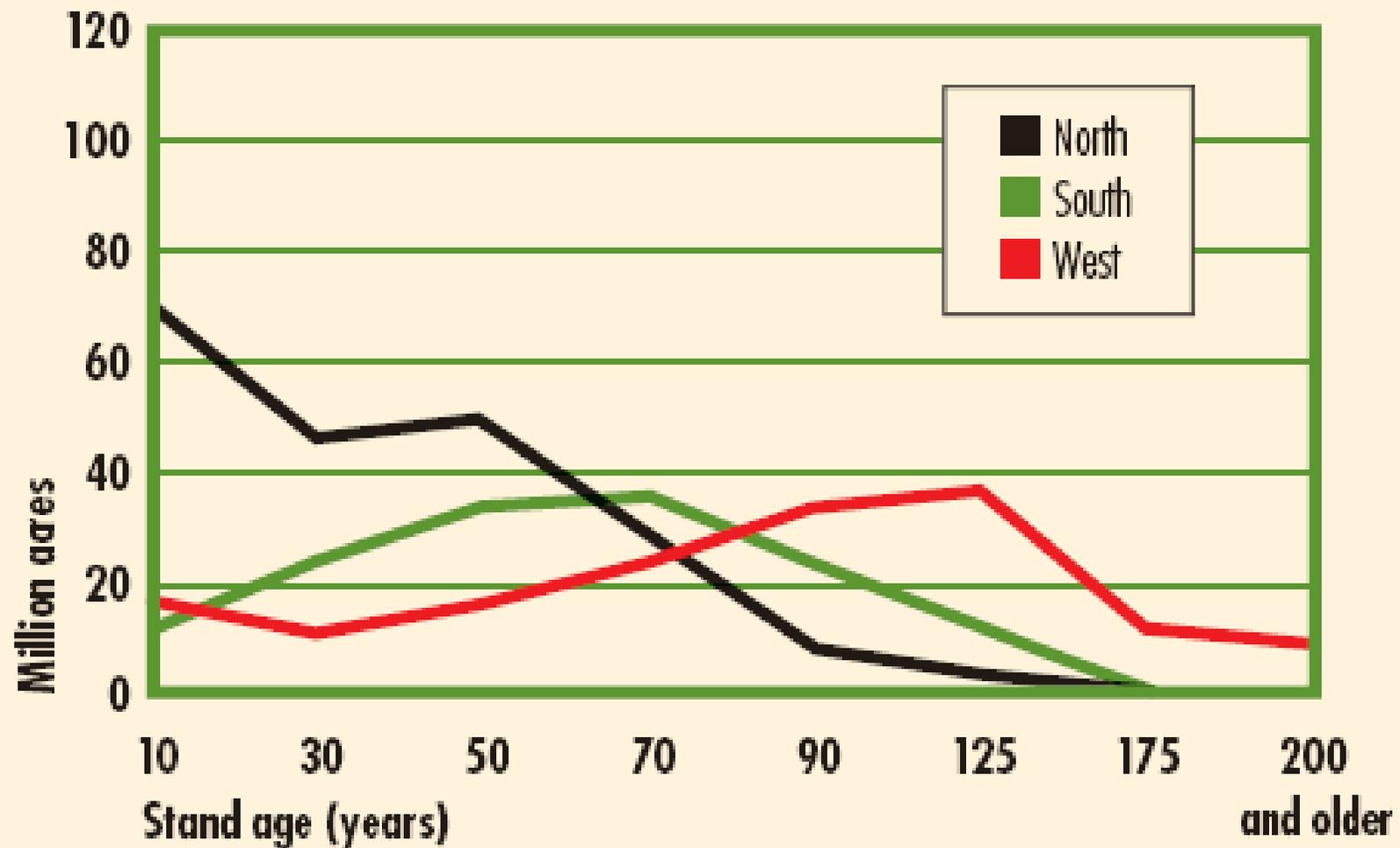
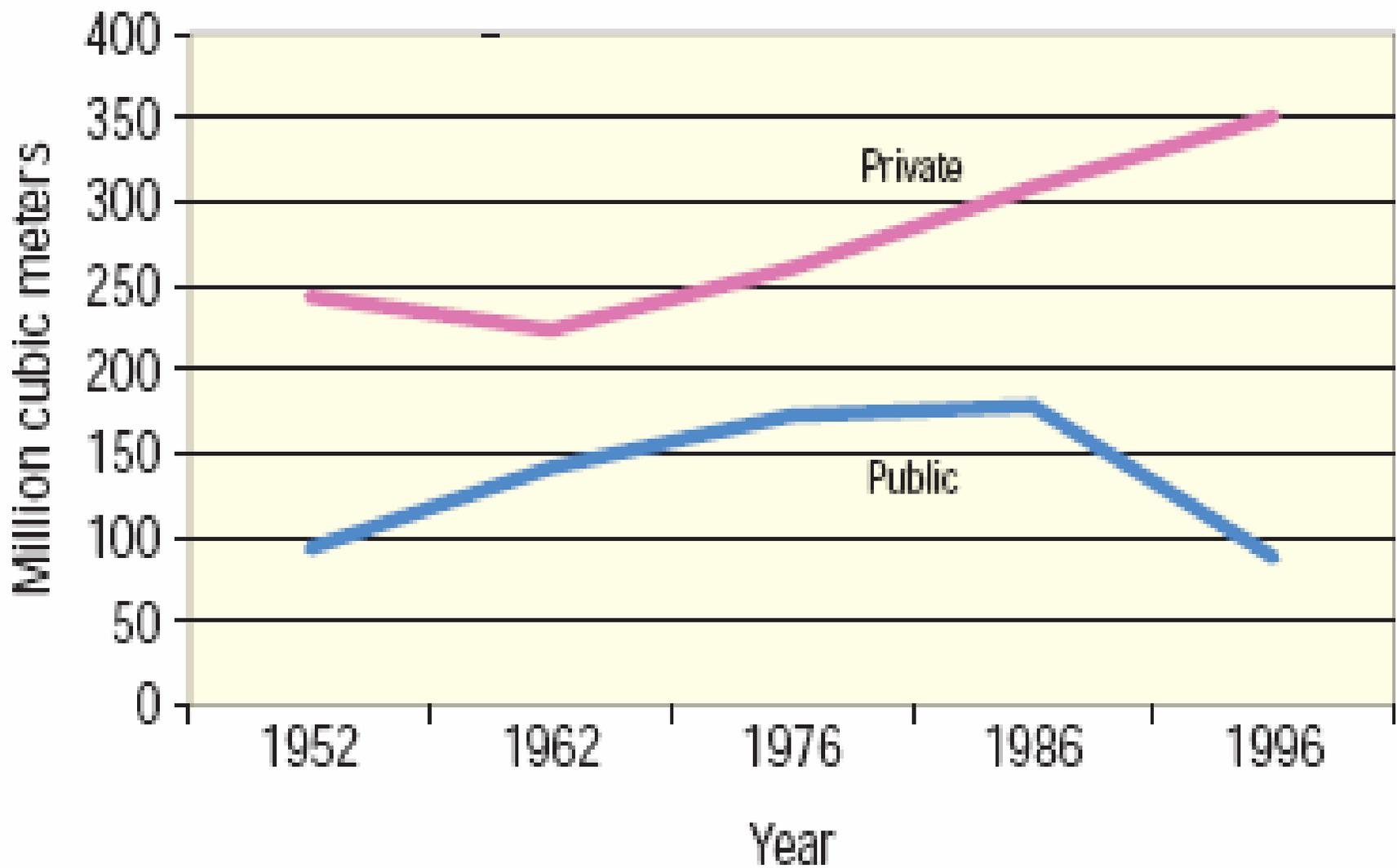


Figure 4—Forest acres per resident in selected regions, 1952–1997 (Smith et al. 2001), with projections to 2050 (Alig et al. 2003) and U.S. population.

Timber land in the United States by stand age and region, 2002



Timber removals in the United States by owner group



Federal Timber Harvest Trends

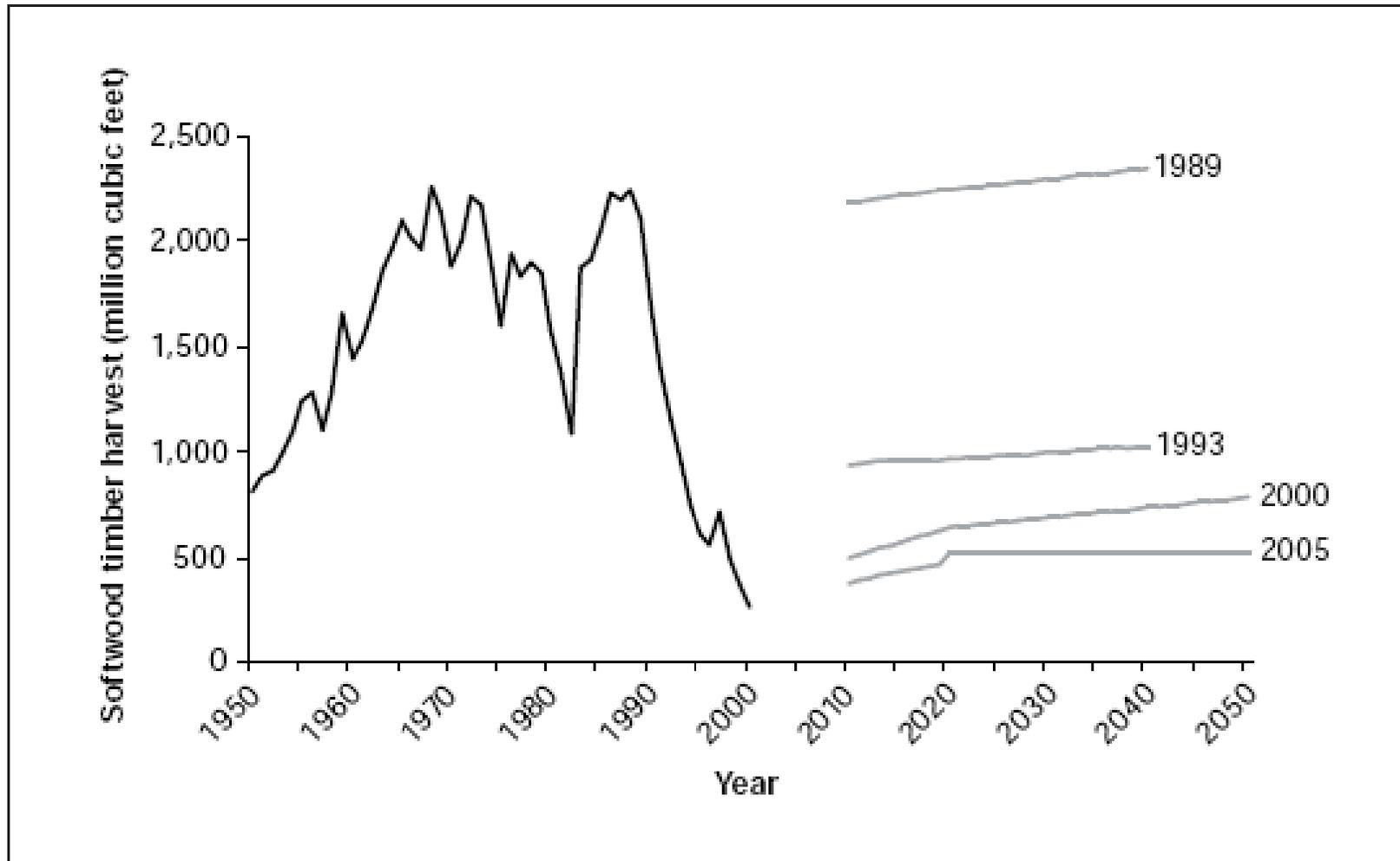


Figure 5—Actual national forest softwood timber harvest 1950–2002 with 1989, 1993, 2000, and 2005 national forest harvest assumptions.

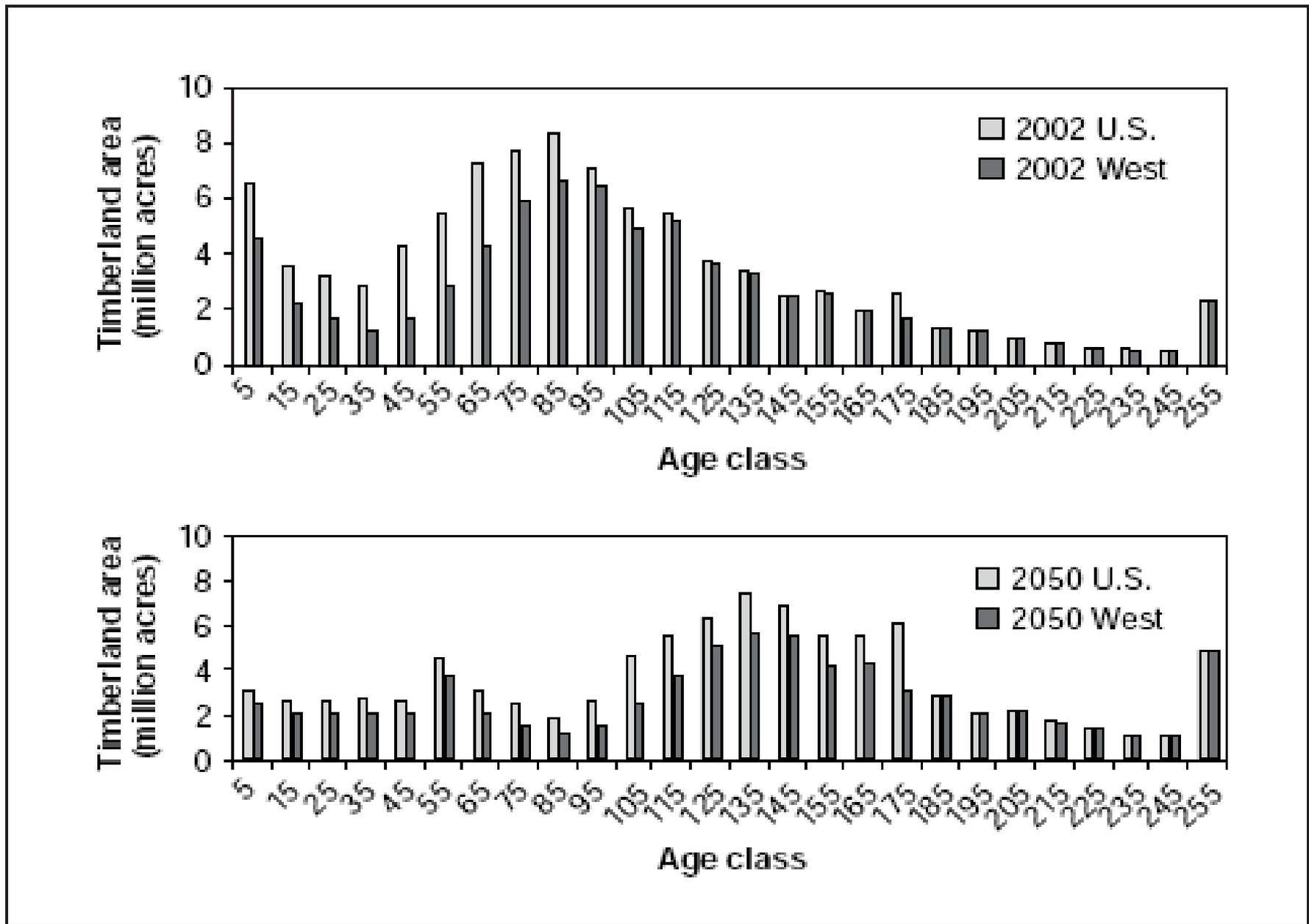


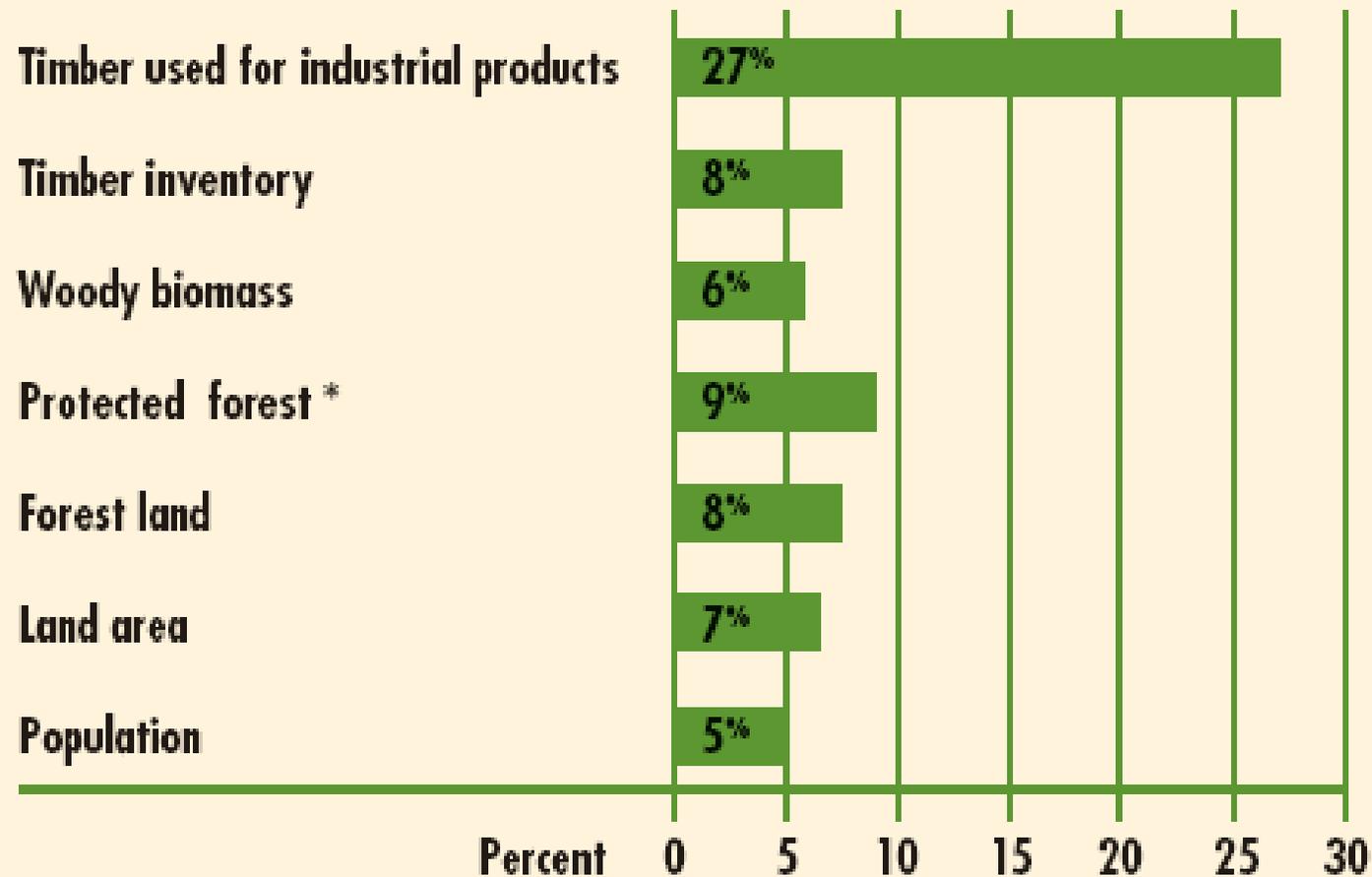
Figure 6—National forest timberland area by age showing the initial (2002) and the projection (2050) distributions.

Consumption behaviors not sustainable

- US imports 42% of sawn wood products consumed
- US uses 27% of world's industrial wood; largest per capita

UN FAO 2003: 2000 data

United States as a percent of world totals for selected measures



* Based on data from the Conservation Biology Institute.

Trend in Trade Balance

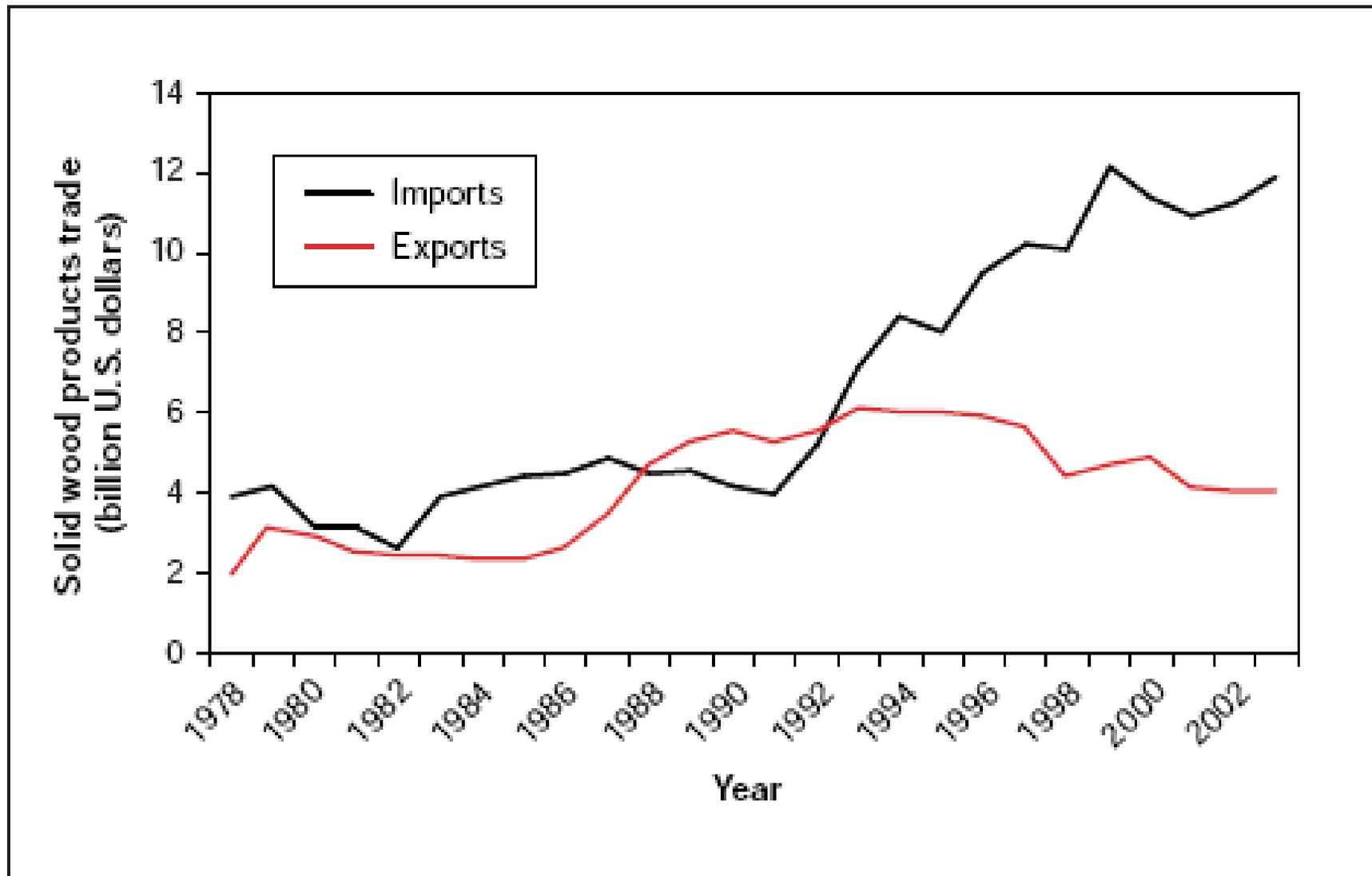
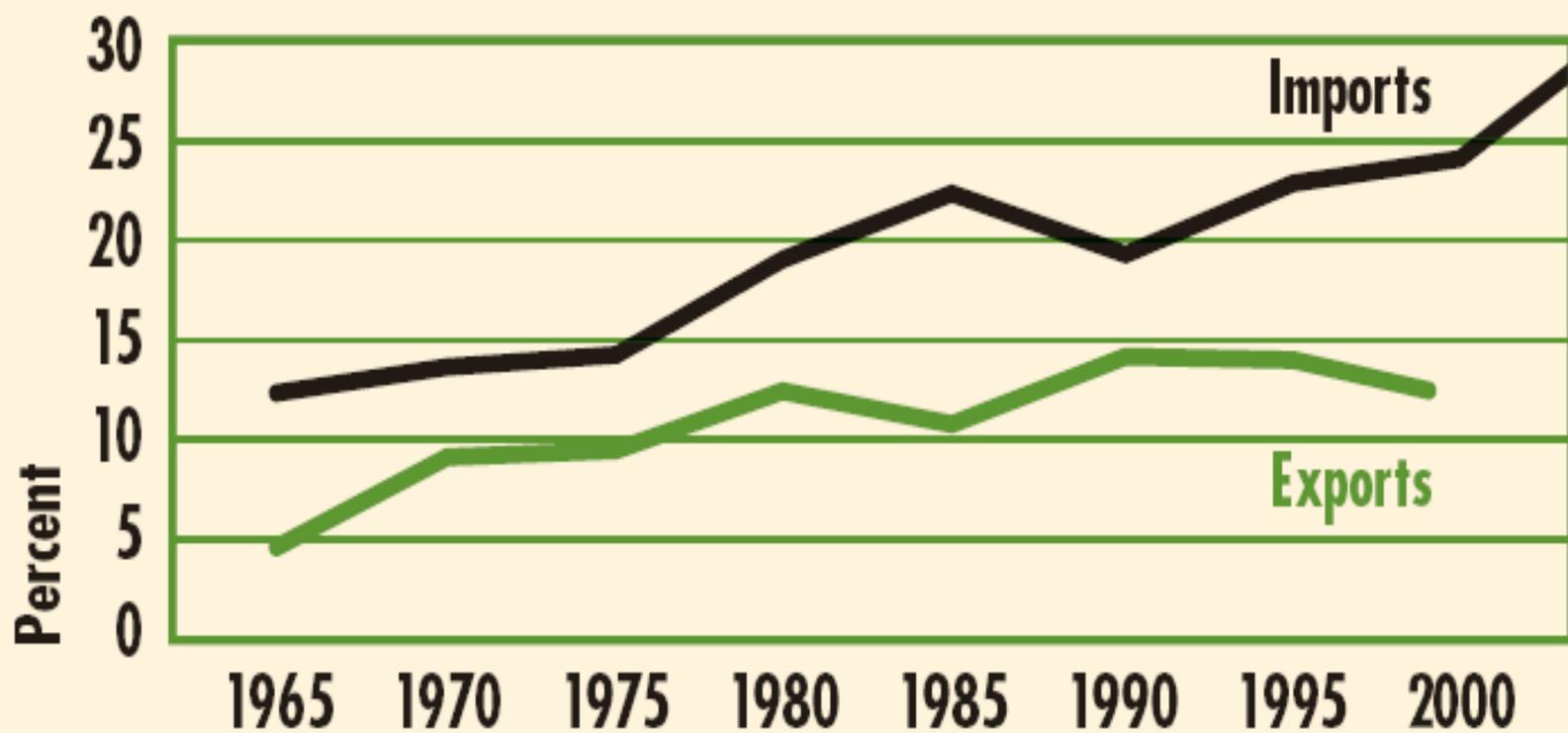


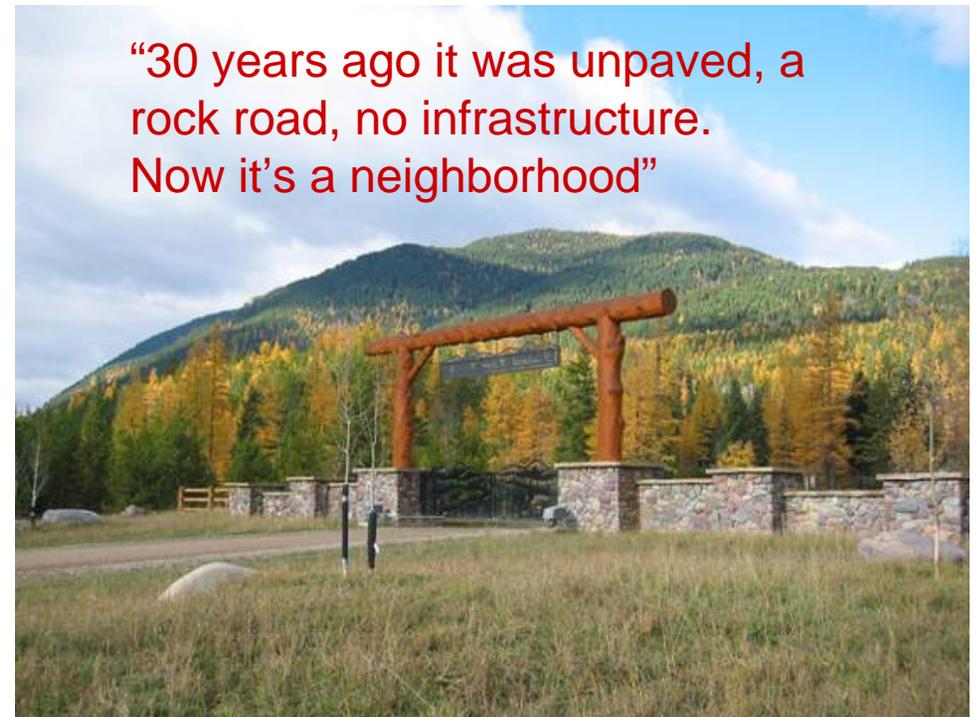
Figure 2c—United States solid wood products trade balance, 1978–2003.

Imports as a percent of consumption and exports as a percent of industrial wood production



Forestland base not sustained – Loss of productivity, conversion and fragmentation

- Ownership change
- Parcelization
- Conversion

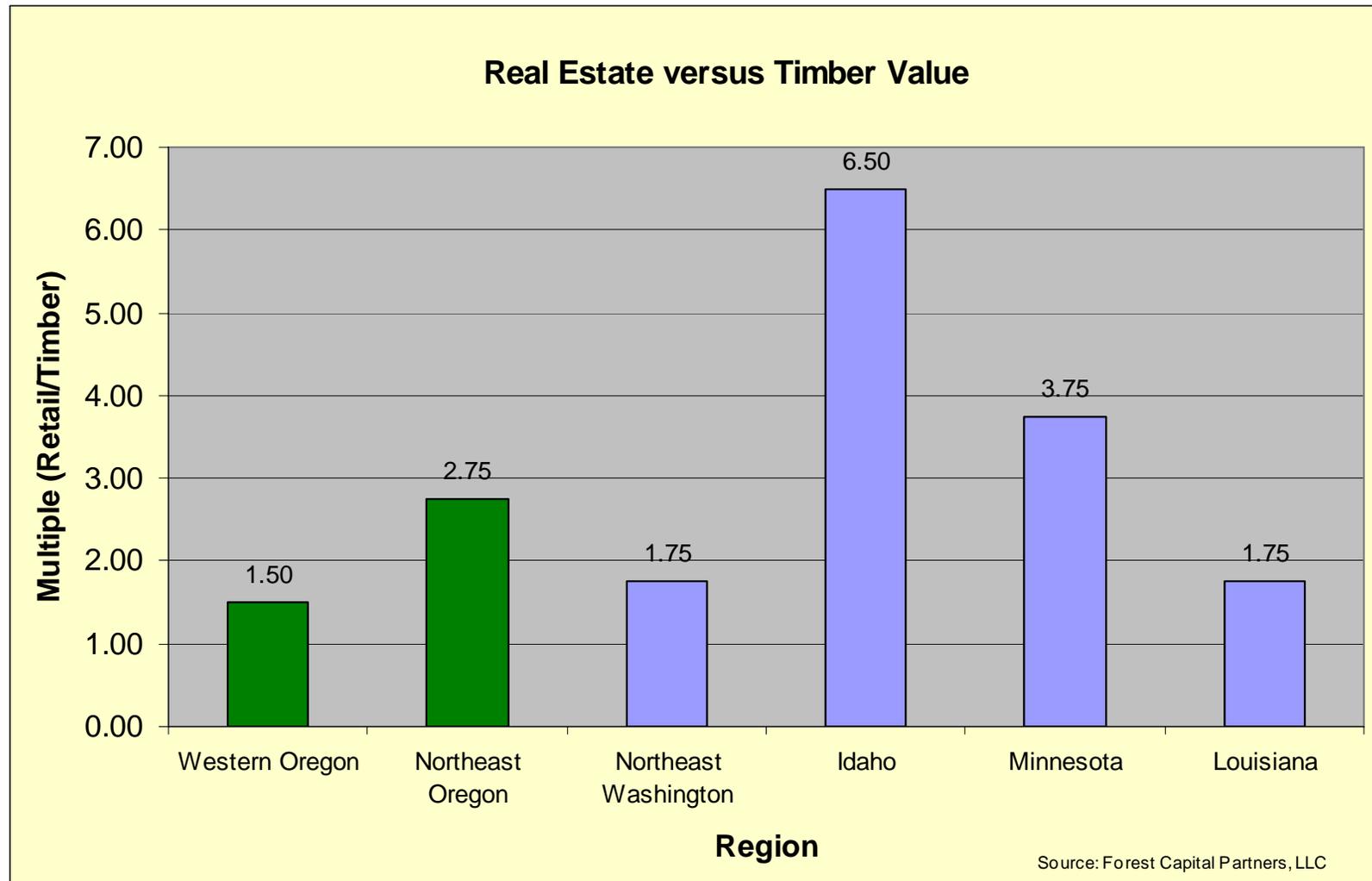




“The value of the trees they can take off the land is negligible compared to the raw real estate value.”

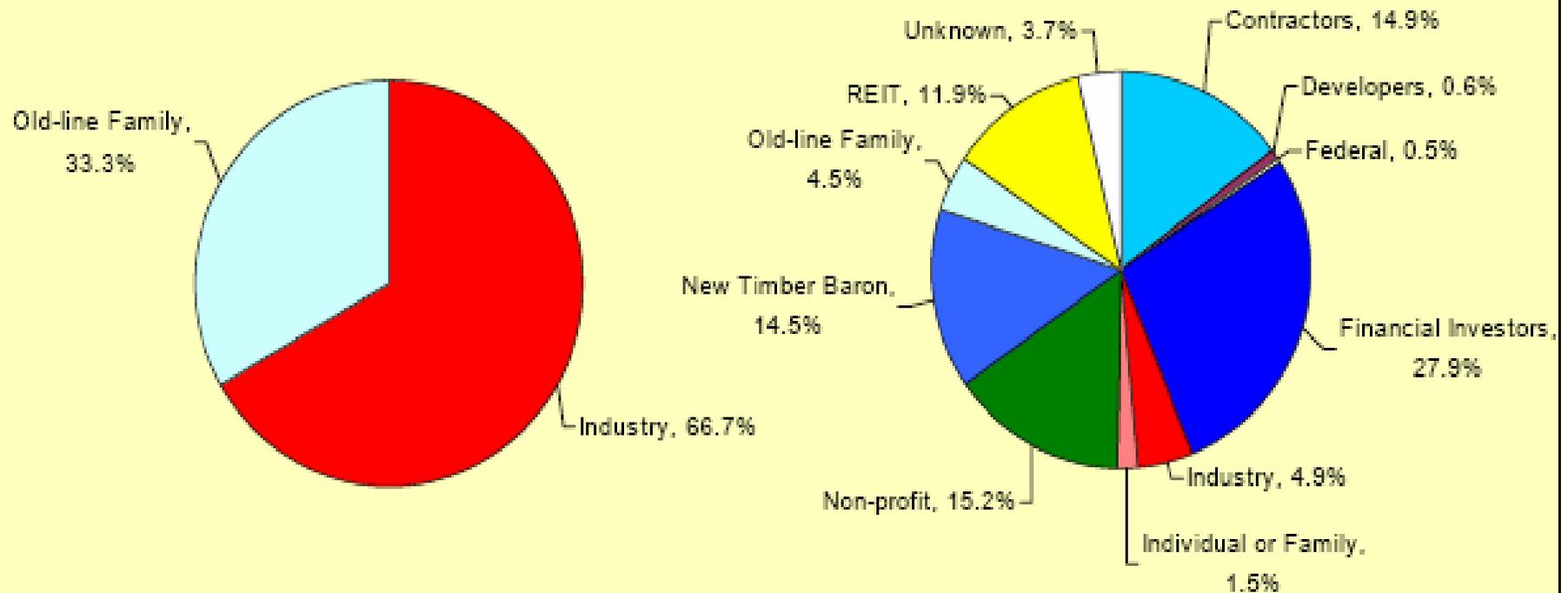


Non-Forest Profitability is Attractive



Shift From Industrial Ownership to a Diversity of New Owner Types

Figure 4. Hancock Timber Resources Group (John Hancock Insurance Co.) timberland purchases and sales in the Northern Forest region. Hancock purchased timberland from two landowner types beginning in 1993 and sold the same land to 11 landowner types beginning in 1995.



National Trends

- From a peak of 762 million acres in 1963, total US forest land decreased by 13 million acres by 2002. While the area of forest land in most states remained stable during that period, or in some cases increased, several of the Southern states, as well as the Pacific coast states, experienced a substantial reduction in forest land area (Smith et al. 2004).

National Trends

- Between 1982 and 1997, the amount of land deforested was equal in size to all the forests in the state of Washington.
- More than 50 million acres of forestland are projected to be converted to developed uses over the next 50 years.

National Trends

- In the last 15 years, the shift from Industrial ownership to a diversity of new owner types has been rapid.
- Reserved forestland has doubled since 1953 and now stands at 7-10 percent of all forestland in the United States.

Consequences of Ownership Change

- The rapid growth of conservation easement deals in the last 8 years is linked, to some degree, to the change in ownership.
- The development pressure, especially in shore land areas (lakes, rivers, and ponds) has grown dramatically, and appears to be facilitated by landowner type change.
- The trend toward increased monetization of land values ("highest and best use") originated before financial investors became important landowners.

The number of family forests is increasing, while the owners' holding sizes are shrinking.

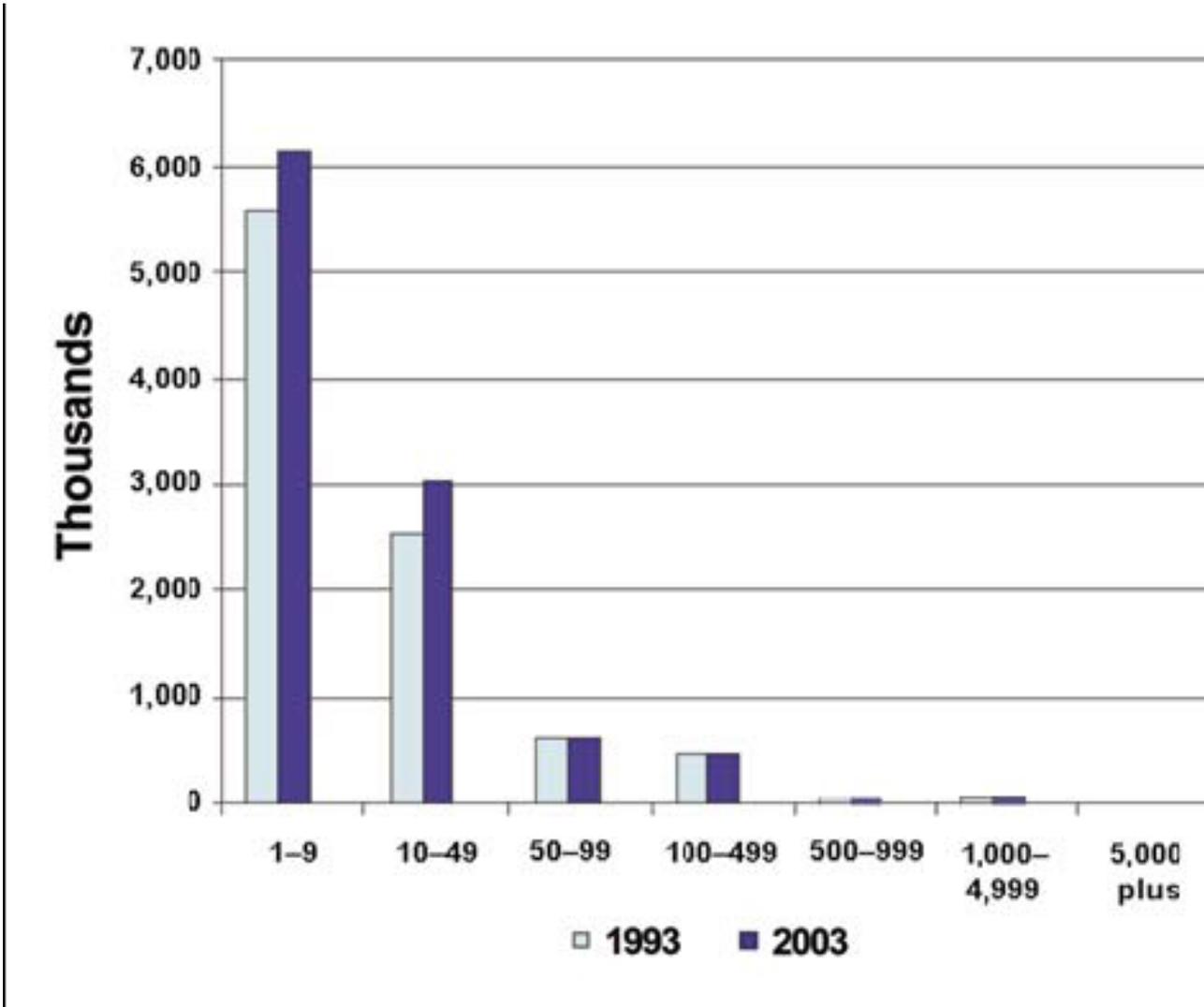
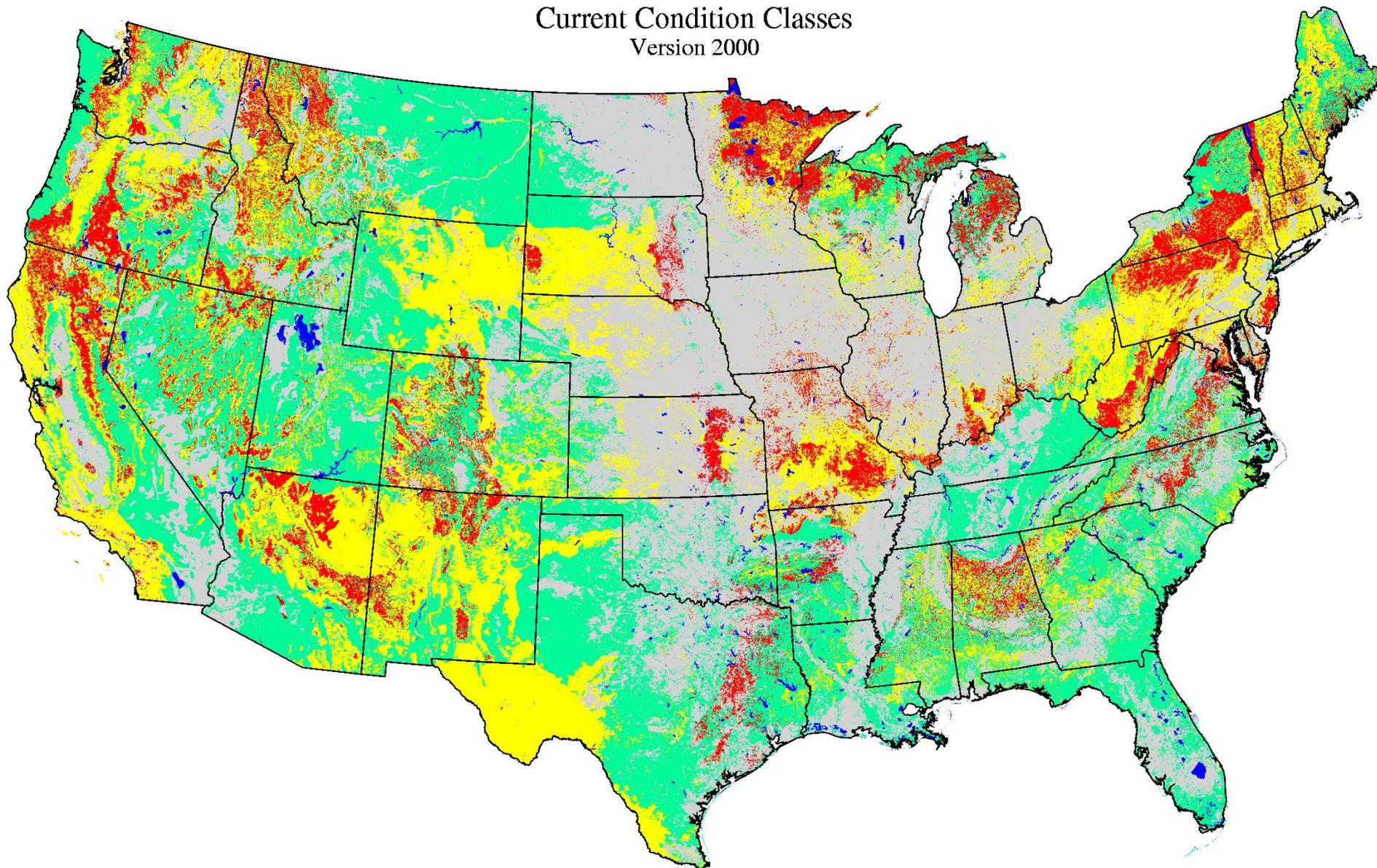


Figure 18.—Number of owners by size of holdings (acres).

Forest health conditions declining – loss and costs related to fire and I&D increasing

- Average growing stock volume per hectare on timber land continues to rise across the United States. The rate of increase has leveled off, partially due to recent increases in mortality (fire and insects).

Current Condition Classes
Version 2000



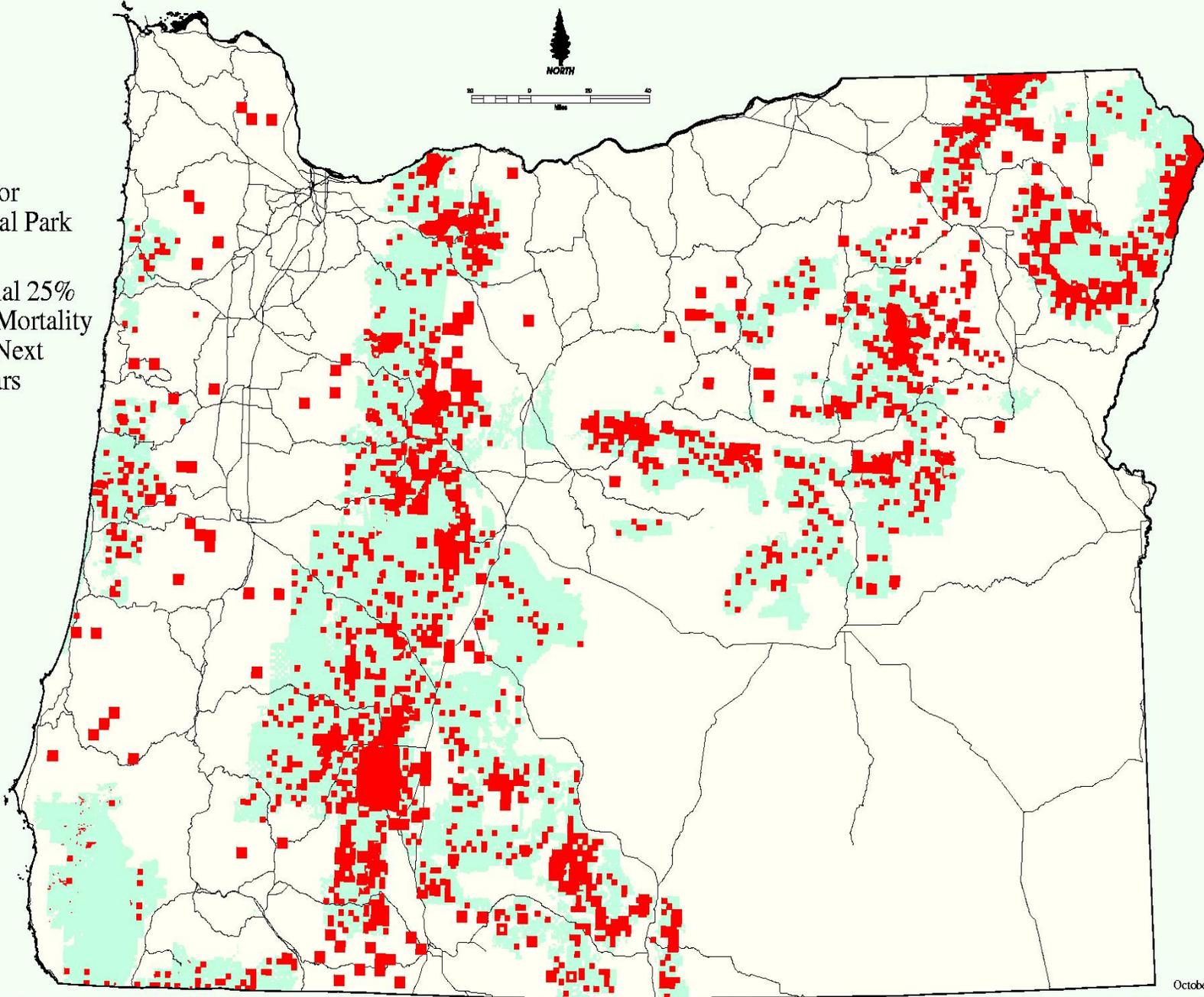
LEGEND

- Condition Class 1
- Condition Class 2
- Condition Class 3
- Water
- Agriculture & Non-Vegetated Areas

Oregon FIA – Areas at Risk from Insects on Federal Lands



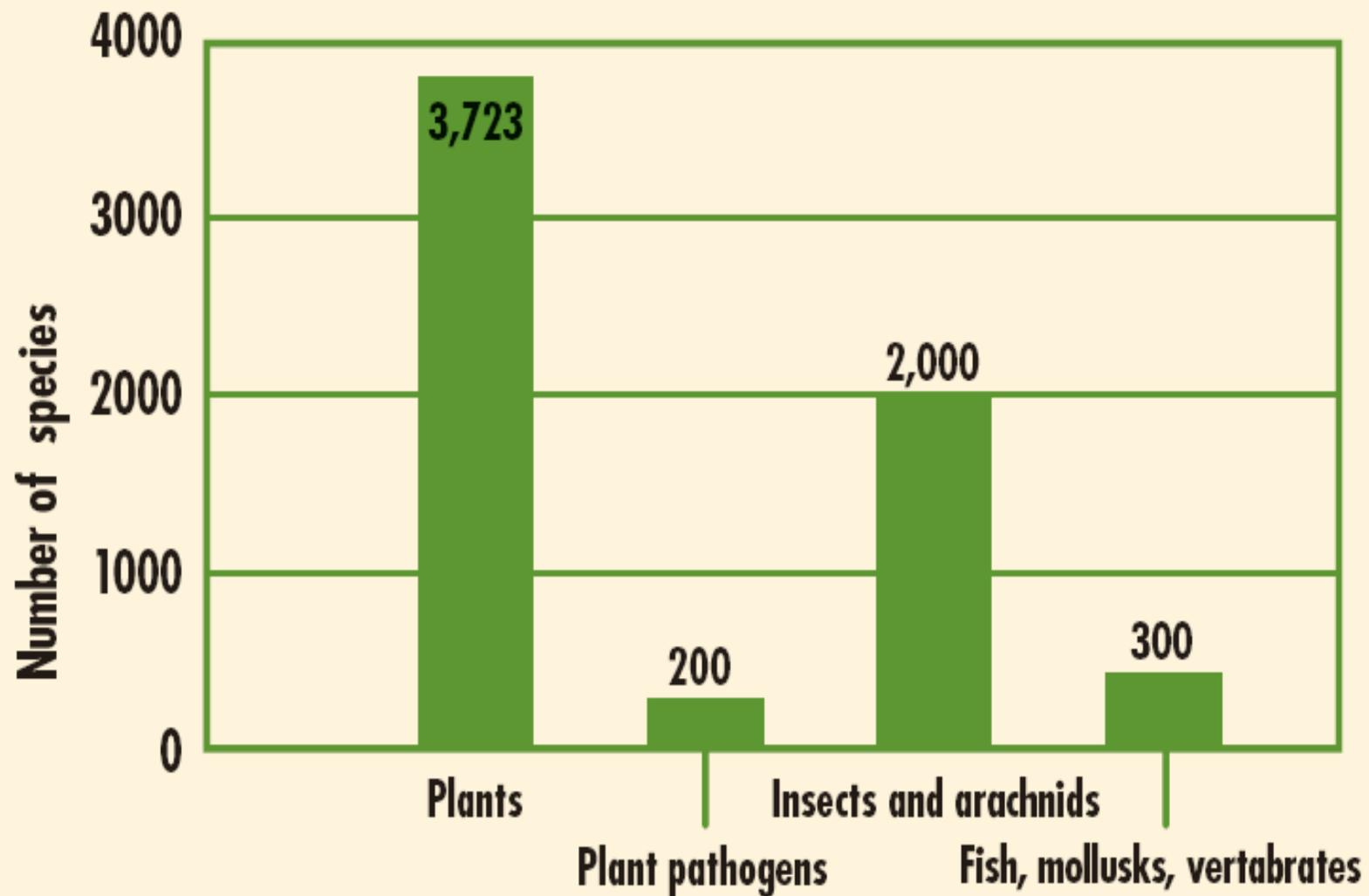
-  USFS or National Park Lands
-  Potential 25% Stand Mortality in the Next 15 Years



Invasive Species are impacting biodiversity, productive capacity and costs

- More than 4,500 exotic free-living species are in the United States—some 2 to 8 percent of plants, insects, and pathogens are introduced.
- Approximately 19 of the 70 major insect pests found in the United States are exotic.
- Of the FIA plots in Oregon, 70% have invasive plants present.
- One 1994–95 study showed that a significant part of the total flora is composed of invasive plant species. The number of invasive plant species was highest (greater than 10 percent of the total flora) in areas of the North, and in areas of the Pacific Coast region. Invasive plant species accounted for 25 percent of the California cover (Stapanian et al. 1998).

Invasive species in the United States



Loss of Forest Sector Capacity

- Investment in forest research (in both silviculture and biodiversity) has been declining.
- More than 330 paper and wood mills have closed since 1997.
- More than 158,000 wood manufacturing jobs lost.
- Some states have lost most infrastructure to do forest health treatments (NM, AZ).

What are possible solutions?

- A national policy and Act on par with the Farm Bill that would say:
 - Conservation and management of forest resources be based upon the use of forest by the present generation not compromising the ability of future generation to meet their needs.
 - Economic, social and environmental values are mutually supportable.
 - Review and improve federal authorities, policies and programs to ensure they support sustainable forests.
 - Integrated policies and programs that reflect the contemporary issues and needs.

Consequences

- Investments in forests reflecting their strategic importance.
- Reduction of the unintended consequences of existing policies and programs
- Improved community livability and global competitiveness
- Investments in opportunities to improve forest health while reducing CO2 emissions and promoting energy independence

What are the Barriers?

- The traditional Farm Bill focus and lobby.
- Nebulosity of “sustainability.”
- Some forest landowners feel threatened by the concept.
- Lack of viable ecosystem service markets
- Economic conditions at state and federal levels.