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Contact: Elishia Ballentine (334) 315-8019
elishia.ballentine@forestry.alabama.gov

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Alabama Forest Inventory Leads the Way

New data is now available in the form of one-page 'Fact Sheets' that give a quick snapshot of each of the 50 states' forest resources, based on the most recent available Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA) data. Not only does the Alabama sheet share a large amount of information in a small amount of space, but because all states were published together, you can quickly compare Alabama to our neighbors.

This report reinforces most of the same facts that you have been hearing for many years. Alabama has approximately 23 million acres of forest, which is about 69 percent of the state's area, and more than 93 percent is privately owned. Our state is growing 2.581 billion cubic feet of wood annually and harvesting 1.224 billion cubic feet. While there are areas of the state that experience forest loss due to conversion to other uses, over the past five years we have averaged over 80,000 acres each year reverting into forest, an amount slightly greater than the forest acreage being lost.

Although we might be accustomed to these numbers, they stand out when compared to other states, even our nearest neighbors. For example, Tennessee is only 52 percent forested, and Alabama grows 2.5 times as much wood as they do. Also, their ratio of tree mortality to harvest is nearly equal in volume, whereas we harvest and process three times the volume of wood that we lose to all causes of tree death. Mississippi grows almost as much wood as Alabama but sees a lot less of it processed by industry. For that reason, they are gaining forest volume at a faster rate than we are.

Georgia is noticing areas of rapid change. Looking at the past five years, they are losing forest cover at a rate of about 50,000 acres per year. Alabama forest growth has now surpassed that of Georgia, despite Georgia still containing about 1.5 million more acres of forest than Alabama. On average, an Alabama acre is about 10 percent more productive at growing tree volume than a Georgia acre.

To view the national map and access the various state fact sheets, visit: <https://tabsoft.co/2N9MLdC>

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The mission of the Alabama Forestry Commission is to protect and sustain Alabama's forest resources using professionally applied stewardship principles and education, ensuring that the state's forests contribute to abundant timber and wildlife, clean air and water, and a healthy economy. For more information about the fire situation in your area or any other forestry related issues, contact your local Alabama Forestry Commission office or visit the AFC website at www.forestry.alabama.gov

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