

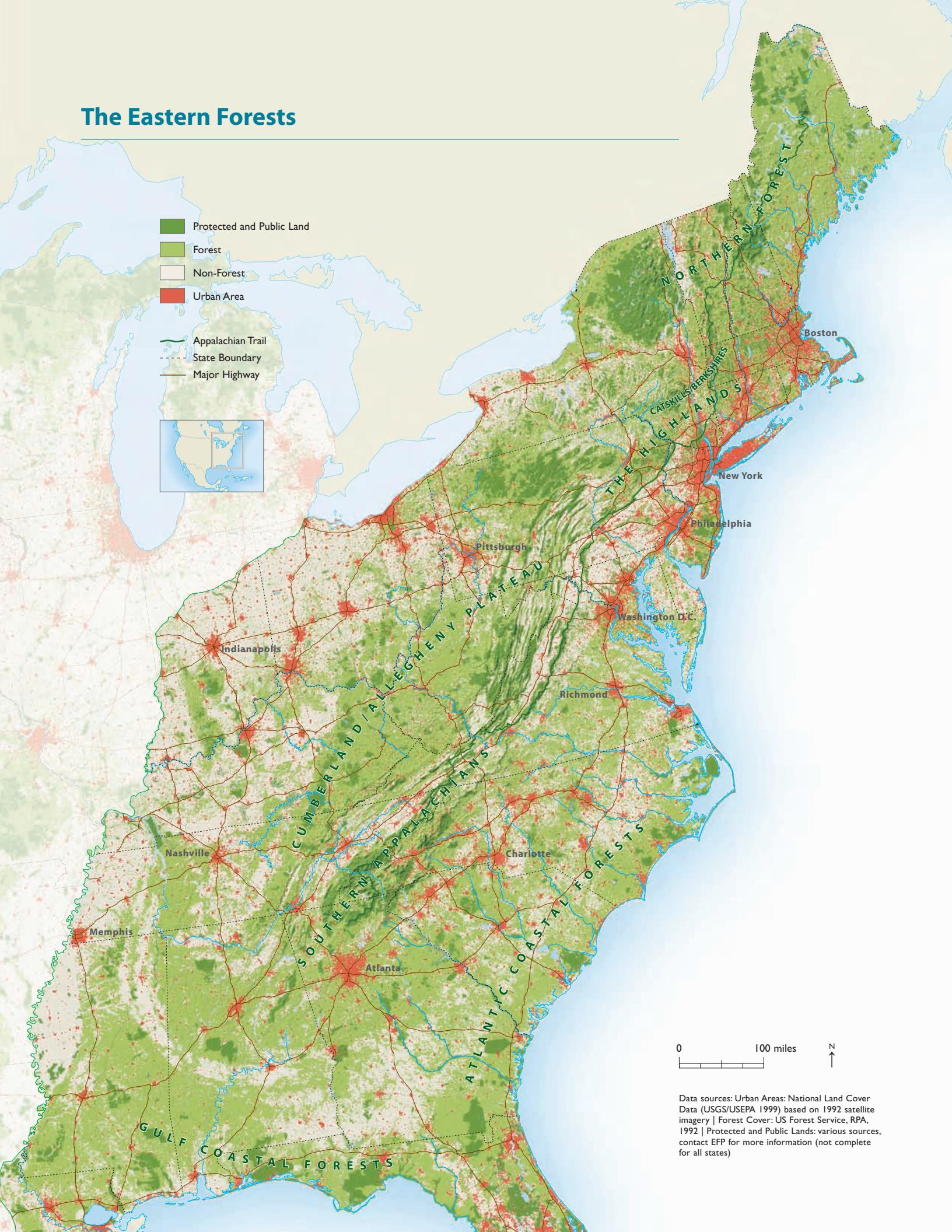
The Eastern Forests

Priceless Lands for Sale



Eastern
Forest
Partnership

The Eastern Forests



Forests for Life

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America's Waterworks

From bustling cities and vast suburbs to small rural communities, the eastern forests are the source of public water supplies for more than half of the American people. New York City is a typical example, slaking its thirst from the water-rich forests of the nearby Highlands region (page 6) and Catskill Mountains (page 7). The densely populated eastern states face a stark choice: either conserve our forested watersheds or spend billions on new water treatment plants and flood control.

The vast canopy of eastern forests, from the cool pines of Maine to the rich bottomland hardwoods of the Deep South, are perhaps America's most critical natural resource area. Eastern forest landscapes like the 26 million-acre Northern Forest (cover photo) provide a stunning backdrop for the densely populated eastern states and essential public resources like clean drinking water, wildlife, timber, and outdoor recreation that meet the needs of local populations and distant cities alike.

Unfortunately, federal studies have revealed that these rich forestlands are being compromised by an unprecedented wave of subdivision and sprawl development. The new U.S. Forest Service *Forests on the Edge* report projects that we will lose an additional 44 million acres to development by 2030, including critical pieces of federally prioritized eastern forest landscapes like the Southern Appalachians, Highlands, and Northern Forest that protect basic resources and quality of life for millions of Americans. We must redouble our federal investment in eastern forest conservation for our families and our future.



Green Infrastructure at Risk



Across the crowded eastern states, communities are seeing the continued loss of forested “green infrastructure” beneath rapidly advancing sprawl development. Eastern forests play a unique role in the crowded eastern states, providing unmatched per capita benefits in water supply protection, open space access, and other public values.

Many major eastern rivers are like the Chattahoochee, which rises deep in the Southern Appalachians and collects pure filtered water from surrounding forests on its way to feed Atlanta and many other communities. Critical watershed lands in the Southern Appalachians and every other eastern forest landscape have only patchwork protection through public ownership and conservation easement and are being lost rapidly to development, threatening water supplies for millions of Americans.

We must conserve the eastern forest landscapes that provide important public benefits like water supplies, wildlife, recreation, and forest-based economic development.

Forest Loss to Development

The U.S. Forest Service projects widespread suburban and exurban development of private forestland across the East, and places all of the top 15 watersheds in the nation for future development in our region (page 9). Some areas are particular hotspots: the Southern Forest Resource Assessment projects annual loss of almost one million acres of forestland across the South in the coming decades.





Landscape Conservation Opportunities: South



Flight by SouthWings © Taylor Barnhill | www.southwings.org

Southern Appalachians

The Southern Appalachian region is America's most biologically rich forest resource area and the source of clean drinking water for cities from Birmingham to Charlottesville and thousands of smaller communities in between. The Southern Appalachians are also remarkably accessible for states across the Midwest and East and include the nation's most visited national park-Great Smoky Mountain NP.

RISK: The Southern Appalachians are within a day's drive of 100 million Americans, including close proximity to booming major cities like Atlanta. This has created exploding residential and second home development, as well as surging recreational use that is straining available recreational resources.

OPPORTUNITY: The federal government has an opportunity to protect critical pieces of this region by funding US Forest Service acquisition of inholdings among the region's 4.5 million acres of national forestland, like the Rocky Fork parcel on the Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee (above) that lies along the Appalachian Trail and adjacent to the Sampson Mountain Wilderness Area.



Southern Coastal Forests

Southern coastal forests include the endangered longleaf pine ecosystem, bottomland hardwood forests in coastal areas like South Carolina's ACE Basin, and the rich coastal forests of the Gulf States. These lands protect important waterways, rare species, and are popular for hunting, fishing, and other recreation. They also include important timber production areas.

RISK: Southern coastal forests are experiencing a development boom from increasing migration of retirees and others drawn by the region's mild climate and natural beauty. Intensive plantation forestry is also significantly impacting the region's forests and shrinking some important native forest types like longleaf pine, which has been reduced to 3 percent of its original range.

OPPORTUNITY: The federal government can help protect southern coastal forests like the Altamaha watershed in Georgia, a multi-year conservation initiative that is using funding from the Forest Legacy Program, and through other federal sources like the Coastal and Estuarine Lands Conservation Program (CELCP) that has helped conserve lands in South Carolina's ACE Basin.



Landscape Conservation Opportunities: Central



Cumberland Plateau/Alegheny Plateau

The Cumberland Plateau is a 400-mile long landscape of biologically rich forests, caves and deep river valleys, an internationally significant assemblage that is the result of its unique geologic history. The adjacent Allegheny Plateau, lying to the north, is a lower but equally extensive plateau punctuated by rippling mountain ridges and rich in biodiversity, water supplies, and outdoor recreation opportunities. Both landscapes are now gaining increasing recognition for their outstanding natural resource values and excellent recreational opportunities.

RISK: Both plateaus remain heavily used for forestry and mining as well as growing development encroaching from fast-growing communities like Chattanooga and Pittsburgh. They are also both subject to significant air pollution.

OPPORTUNITY: The federal government has already used the Forest Legacy Program to help protect critical pieces of this landscape like the Walls of Jericho (above). Many more Forest Legacy project opportunities will likely emerge in the coming years along with strategic opportunities to add to federal lands, such as Cumberland Gap National Park in Kentucky.

Highlands Region

The Highlands region is a three million-acre mountainous catch basin that feeds drinking water to 15 million Americans in Hartford, New York City, Newark, and Philadelphia, among hundreds of other communities, and provides open space to 25 million Americans who live within an hour's drive.

RISK: The Highlands region is most threatened by its proximity to so many major population centers. As a result of this demand, the green ridges of the Highlands are being developed at a rate of more than 5,000 acres per year just in New York and New Jersey alone. Public recreation lands are scarce and heavily used – additional areas like Sterling Forest State Park must be established. Air pollution and invasive species are also major threats.

OPPORTUNITY: The federal government has an opportunity to protect important pieces of the Highlands through the Forest Legacy Program and Highlands Conservation Act funding. Priority areas include natural gems like Connecticut's Skiff Mountain (above), a virtually roadless forest that protects the Housatonic River watershed and abuts the Appalachian Trail, New Jersey's Sparta Mountains, Pennsylvania's Hopewell Big Woods and New York's Sterling Forest.



Landscape Conservation Opportunities: North



Northern Forest

The Northern Forest is a vast and unbroken expanse of 26 million acres stretching from New York's Tug Hill and Adirondacks through Vermont and New Hampshire to the Maine Woods. The Northern Forest contains the headwaters of virtually every major river in the Northeast and provides a 15 billion dollar annual boost to local communities from forestry and tourism.

RISK: The vast expanses of the Northern Forest are changing hands at an alarming rate, including more than 8 million acres since 1997. This has lead to an explosion of subdivision and new second home development in formerly remote areas, triggering loss of public access and potential economic benefit from timber harvest, hunting and fishing, and other forest-related activities.

OPPORTUNITY: In recent years, the Forest Legacy Program has helped to protect historic and valuable pieces of the Northern Forest like the 37,000-acre Katahdin Ironworks parcel (above) that wraps around 17 miles of the Appalachian Trail in Maine's 100-Mile Wilderness and protects the famed Gulf Hagas scenic gorge. Annual land sales of more than a million acres per year from traditional industrial owners will continue to create many more important Forest Legacy project opportunities across the region.

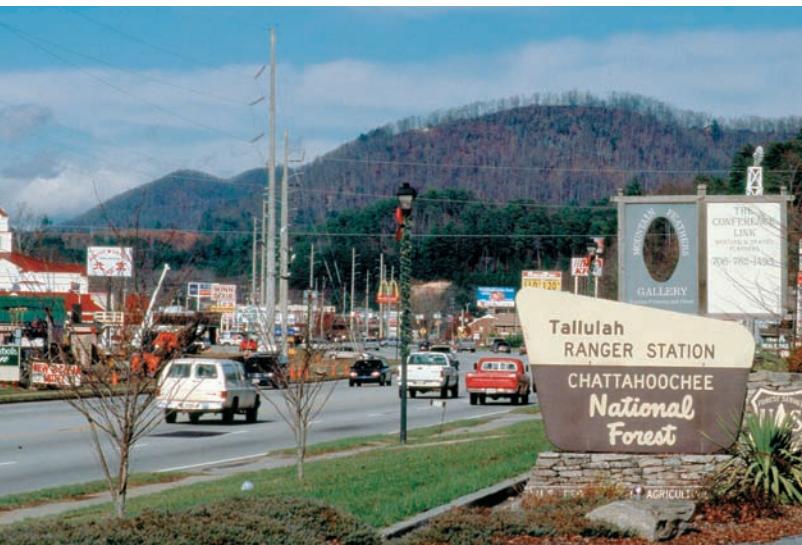
Catskills/Berkshire Plateau

The Catskill Mountains and Berkshire Plateau provide critical linkage from the Central landscapes to the Northern Forest. The water-rich Catskills are an essential drinking water resource area for New York City as well as a world-renowned trout fishing center. The Berkshire Plateau contains many important public water resources as well as easy recreational access for millions of Americans, including 79 miles of the Appalachian Trail.

RISK: The Catskills and Berkshire Plateau are most threatened by second home development connected to the major population centers that lie close on all sides. Rural communities in the Catskills have recently seen controversial large development proposals for iconic natural areas, while Massachusetts is experiencing the nation's fifth fastest loss of forest to development, including important lands across the Berkshires.

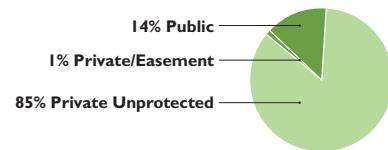
OPPORTUNITY: The federal government has a chance to support conservation of the Catskills and the Berkshires through Forest Legacy funding, building on past Legacy investments. Future opportunities include the new multi-year Quabbin to Cardigan Forest Legacy project that will conserve pieces of the Berkshire Plateau along with adjacent lands in New Hampshire.

Federal Studies Reveal Threats to Eastern Forests



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A wave of state and federal studies completed in recent decades has revealed both the resource significance of eastern forest landscapes and the “perfect storm” of threats to their continued vitality. With only 14 percent of eastern forestland in public ownership and an additional 1 percent under conservation easement, we have little insurance that the eastern forests can withstand these threats into the future.



Eastern Forests Are Threatened by Development:

- 44 million acres (over 11 percent) of private forest – particularly in the East – are likely to see dramatic increases in development over the next thirty years.

[Source: US Forest Service, *Forests on the Edge*, 2005]

- Southern forests are projected to lose 31 million acres to sprawl development between 1995 and 2040 – in part the result of a projected 27 percent increase in the region’s population over 25 years.

[Southern Forest Resource Assessment, USFS et al, 2002]

- The Highlands region is losing almost 5,000 acres of forestland to development each year just in the New York and New Jersey portions alone.

[New York–New Jersey Highlands: Regional Study Update, USFS, 2002]

- The Northern Forest region has seen sale of more than 8 million acres since 1997, with more than 3 million acres going from traditional timberland owners to real estate investment trusts and other owners with development interests.

[The Northern Forest: A Look at Land, Economies and Communities, NEFA, 2004]

Intensive Timber Harvest, Air Pollution, and Invasive Species:

- The US Forest Service projects a 64 percent increase in logging on lands of non-industrial private landowners over the next 50 years – these landowners control 70 percent of eastern forestland.

[Hertel, USFS, 2000]

- The South alone now produces more than half of the nation’s timber supply and more than 16 percent of the world timber supply.

[Southern Forest Resource Assessment]

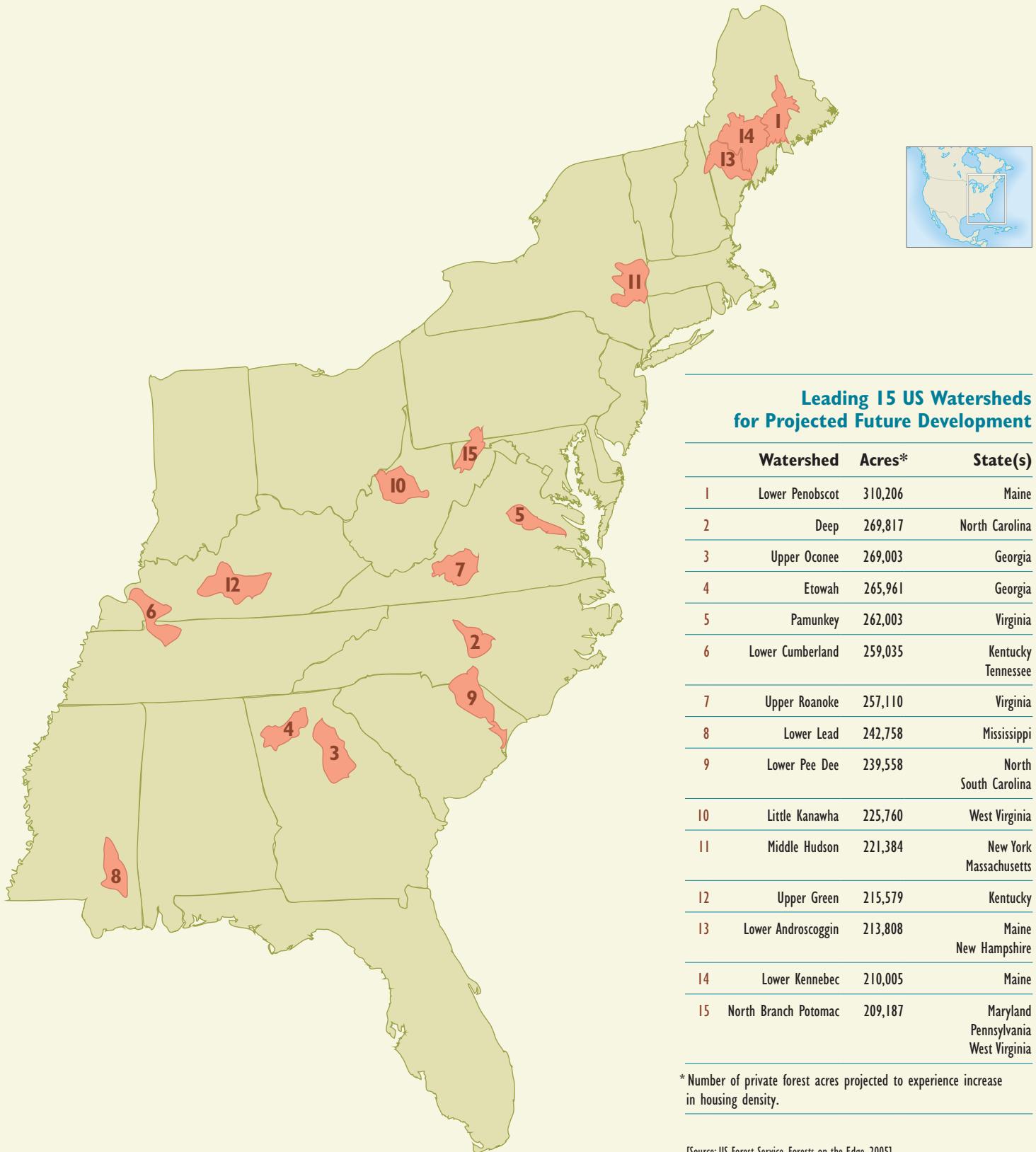
- Approximately 30 percent of hemlock stands in the Highlands region have been affected by the Hemlock Wooly Adelgid and more than 100,000 acres were defoliated in just 2001 alone.

[New York–New Jersey Highlands: Regional Study Update, USFS, 2002]

- Acid rain still plagues the Northern Forest: 41 percent of lakes in the Adirondack Mountain region of New York and 15 percent of lakes in New England exhibit signs of chronic or episodic acidification while forest soils have lost important nutrients.

[Acid Rain Revisited, Hubbard Brook Research Foundation, 2005]

Eastern Watersheds Are Most At-Risk



[Source: US Forest Service, Forests on the Edge, 2005]

Wanted: Collaboration for Conservation



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Sterling Forest Success

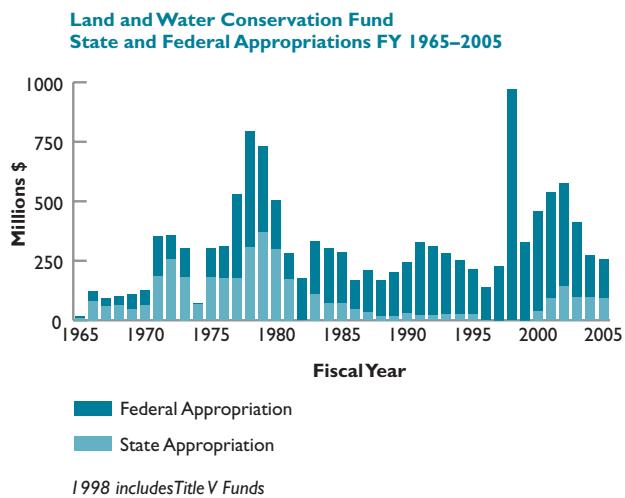
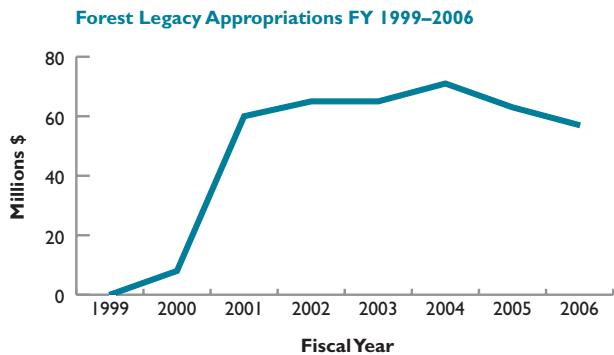
The creation of Sterling Forest State Park (above) protected drinking water for thousands of people, maintained important wildlife habitat, and gave the crowded New York metropolitan area a desperately needed open space outlet. The cost of more than \$80 million to conserve these 20,000 acres could never have been met by one entity alone, but required the efforts of the federal government, New York and New Jersey, and many private contributors.

The greatest conservation successes in the eastern forests have come through collaboration among federal, state, and local government in partnership with private non-profit organizations. These partnerships have delivered public support and a mix of public and private funding to conserve priceless tracts that will positively impact communities forever.

There has been a recent stagnation of Forest Legacy funding and erosion of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. When combined with the absence of new funding mechanisms, this has left cash-strapped states, local governments, and private non-profit conservation organizations unable to keep up with the flow of historic conservation opportunities.

Residents of the eastern states urgently need the federal government to maintain its historic commitment to conservation funding, even in these difficult budgetary times. Investment in our natural resources has made our nation strong and must continue.

A New Commitment to Conservation Funding



1998 includes Title V Funds

Legacy Forests Campaign: \$300M for Forest Legacy and Related Programs

State matching grant funding through Forest Legacy has protected more than 1 million acres essential for public water supplies, wildlife, recreation, and forestry. However, funding is far short of requests to the U.S. Forest Service that now exceed \$300 million per year. Through our multi-year Legacy Forests Campaign, the Eastern Forest Partnership will mobilize an unprecedented coalition of industry, landowner, and conservation interests to increase Forest Legacy and related funding to the level of need by 2011. This includes permanent authorization and funding of complementary programs – the Coastal and Estuarine Lands Conservation Program and Suburban and Community Forestry Program – that would provide Legacy-like state matching grant funding to conserve important areas.

Enhancing Public Lands: LWCF

The federal side of LWCF is still desperately needed for acquisition of private in-holdings and buffer areas in our eastern national parks, forests, and refuges. These lands are being sold for development, creating management challenges for federal agencies while compromising water quality and other natural and recreational resources. Funding must rise for both federal and state LWCF grants.

Funding for Forestry: 2007 Farm Bill

The 2007 Farm Bill must expand funding for forest stewardship and conservation. This includes state support through the Forest Stewardship Program and Urban and Community Forestry Program, incentives and cost-share payments for forestland owners through programs like WHIP and FLEP, assistance for purchase and management of community forests, and new incentive mechanisms for conservation of water supplies and other ecosystem services.

Eastern Forest Partnership



To join us in this effort, please contact:

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The Eastern Forest Partnership is working to permanently protect eastern forests for present and future generations. The Partnership seeks to raise awareness about eastern forests and to create the political will to permanently protect these lands.

- Appalachian Mountain Club
- Appalachian Trail Conservancy
- Environmental Defense
- Highlands Coalition
- National Wildlife Federation
- Northern Forest Alliance
- South Carolina Coastal Conservation League
- Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition
- Southern Environmental Law Center
- Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation
- The Wilderness Society
- Trust for Public Land
- Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

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www.greeninfo.org with cartography by Louis Jaffe using ESRI software



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