

The Eastern Forests



Eastern Forest Partnership

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.

- Northern Forest Alliance
- Highlands Coalition
- Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition
- Appalachian Mountain Club
- The Wilderness Society
- Southern Environmental Law Center

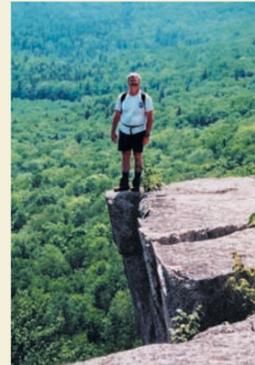
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To learn more about us or to join our email list, please visit us at:

www.protecteasternforests.com



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www.greeninfo.org

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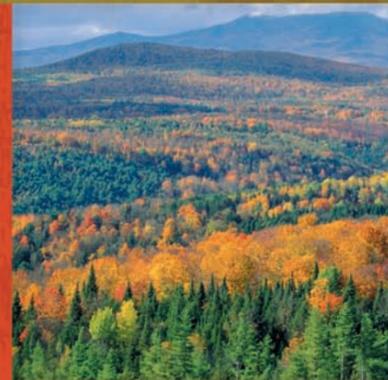
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Treasures Worth Protecting



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Protecting the Forests Out America's Back Door

The Eastern Forest Partnership works to protect and restore the forests out America's back door: the eastern forests.

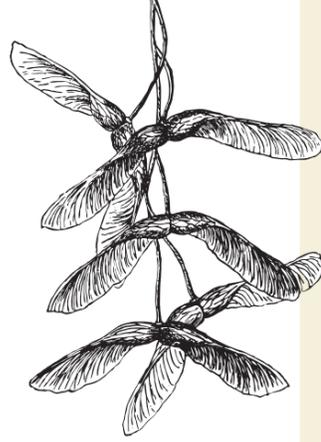
Rising around and among the most densely populated and rapidly developing areas in the United States, eastern forests provide clean air and water, quiet open spaces, and a chance for residents and urban visitors alike to reconnect with nature close to home.

By the early 1900s these forests had been widely cleared for logging and farming, filling rivers with silt and sending some species into extinction.

Until recently eastern forests had seen mostly recovery, renewing the region's wildlife, wild rivers, and deep interior forests. Now this recovery is threatened by a tidal wave of sprawl development, unsustainable logging, and air pollution.

The Eastern Forest Partnership is working to answer these threats, and to continue the restoration of our eastern forests to their former majesty.





Ecoregions of the Eastern Forests

The Appalachian Mountains

The Appalachian region is a band of high peaks and long ridges stretching from Alabama to Maine. This region includes the vast wildlands of the Northern Forest, the pure waters and green ridges of the Highlands, and the soaring peaks and colorful forests of the Southern Appalachians.

These lands are home to some of America's most treasured wilderness areas and recreational assets, including the Appalachian Trail, and provide clean drinking water for millions of eastern residents.

The Coastal Plains

The vast forests of the Coastal Plains stretch from the Deep South all the way to the Northern Forest, and include the biologically rich longleaf pine and bottomland hardwood forests of the Southeast, the Pine Barrens of the Mid-Atlantic and the Down East Lakes in Maine.

These lands are critical for conservation of biological diversity, protection of water supplies, and as open space for the heavily populated and rapidly growing coastal regions of the eastern states.

Threats to Eastern Forests

Sprawl Development

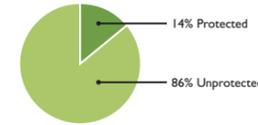
Land is being sold and subdivided at an alarming rate throughout the East, opening up huge tracts to development. Over eight million acres of rural land were developed in the eastern states from 1992 to 1997, an area larger than New Hampshire. When eastern forests are fragmented and paved over their capacity for water filtration, air purification, wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation is lost forever.

Unsustainable Logging

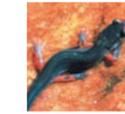
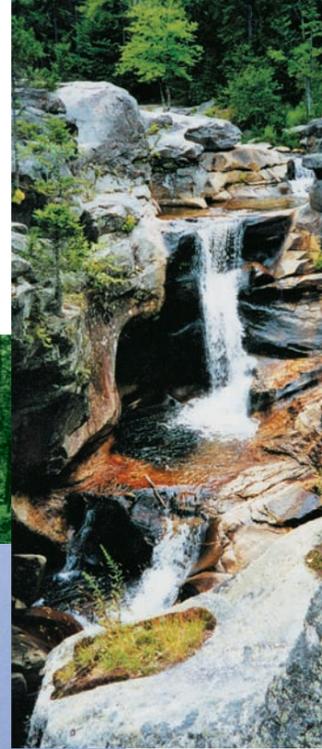
Explosive logging levels have returned to the East as timber companies have abandoned depleted western lands. Eastern forests currently produce over 70 percent of the nation's timber harvest, primarily from the South, with removal exceeding growth in many areas and widespread conversion of native forests to intensively managed monoculture plantations. This mismanagement has caused a gradual decline in the vitality of eastern forests.

Air Pollution

The eastern forests are cloaked in the nation's worst air pollution, and levels are rising. As a result, eastern forest soils and waterways are being seriously damaged by acid rain, and will not recover without a dramatic reduction in emissions. Eastern forests also have persistently unhealthy air quality and hazy vistas, leading to rising respiratory illness and reduced tourism.



Only 13 percent of eastern forestland is in public ownership, with an additional 1 percent under conservation easement. We must expand this base of protected lands.



Our Vision for the Eastern Forests

- A network of protected lands across the eastern forests that is full of dynamic and complex ecosystems, including abundant old growth stands and a full complement of all native wildlife species.
- Protected and restored watersheds that provide clean drinking water and rivers that teem with fish and other aquatic life.
- Pristine air quality that protects public health, provides dominant views from every mountain, and brings an end to acid rain.
- An abundance of accessible and well-managed forests, trails and waterways that meet public needs for outdoor recreation.

There are already positive signs that this vision can be realized. Once-decimated wildlife species like elk, moose, black bear, and bobcat have returned to many parts of the eastern forests. Visitors and residents alike now look to these lands for recreation and spiritual renewal. Many watersheds once clearcut and plagued with erosion have renewed forests that filter water for millions of people and protect aquatic diversity.

Conservation projects are already uniting former fragments of the forest into larger blocks. With further protection and restoration, the eastern forests can be an enduring green infrastructure passed down through generations.

Shrinking forests threaten wildlife: songbirds like the wood thrush are declining at rates of 2 percent per year, while reclusive species like black bear are coming into increasing contact with humans.

