

## ≈≈ Forest Facts from Tennessee Forests Council ≈≈

### HARVEST RATES

- The South now cuts more timber than the rest of the country combined, and more than any other country in the World<sup>1</sup>.
- Over 2 million acres of native forests were cut in Tennessee between 1989 and 1999. Six hundred thousand acres were clearcut<sup>2</sup>.
- To feed the South's 98 paper mills alone takes 175 million tons of trees per year<sup>3</sup>. The 7 million trucks required to deliver these trees would circle the earth's equator more than three times<sup>4</sup>.
- The trucks required to deliver all the trees cut in Tennessee in 2000 would stretch over 7,100 miles<sup>5</sup>.
- Tennessee cuts nearly 5 million tons of pulpwood each year and more than half of this comes from native hardwood forests<sup>6</sup>.

### PLANTATIONS

- Tennessee currently has over half a million acres of pine and oak-pine plantations<sup>7</sup> and the number is expected to more than double in the next several decades<sup>8</sup>.
- Over 130,000 acres of native Tennessee forests have been cut in the last ten years alone and replanted in pine<sup>9</sup>.
- Tennessee's hardwood forests and their habitats are among the most diverse temperate forests in the world<sup>10</sup> while, in comparison, pine plantations—fiber farms for the pulp and paper industry—are biological wastelands.
- Pine plantations provide nesting habitat for less than half as many species of songbirds as native forests<sup>11</sup>.

### BIODIVERSITY

- Tennessee is home to some of the most diverse forests in the temperate region of the world<sup>12</sup>. Our forests contain more species of trees than all of Europe<sup>13</sup>.
- Streams running through the forests of Tennessee's Cumberland Plateau are among the most biologically diverse temperate freshwater communities in the world<sup>14</sup>.
- Tennessee has a larger number of endangered and threatened plants and animals than any other inland state<sup>15</sup>.
- Tennessee's rivers and streams are home to a rich and diverse natural heritage including over three hundred species of fish, the most diverse collection of freshwater fish of any state in the U.S.<sup>16</sup>.
- Tennessee has already lost 60 percent its bottomland hardwood forests, 60-75 percent of its cypress-tupelo forest in West Tennessee, 59 percent of the state's wetlands and more than 90 percent of the state's aquatic mussel beds<sup>17</sup>.
- Tennessee has more federally listed endangered species than forty-six other states and, along with three other states, has the highest percentage of aquatic species at risk<sup>18</sup>.

## **WATER**

- Numerous cities, towns and municipalities rely on forested watersheds on public and private land to provide their water supply. Seventeen municipalities including Nashville depend on the Cumberland River watershed alone<sup>19</sup>.
- Converting hardwood forests to pine plantations may reduce water yield and imperil municipal water supplies<sup>20</sup>.
- Clearcutting can result in as much as 20 times more sediment than selective cutting<sup>21</sup>.
- The EPA has determined that 70% of Tennessee's watersheds need restoration to meet national standards and nearly 20% are designated high priority<sup>22</sup>.
- Sand and dirt washing off disturbed land into streams and rivers is now Tennessee's #1 source of water pollution<sup>23</sup>. Poorly planned logging roads are major contributors to this pollution on logging sites as well as skidder trails, removal of streamside buffers, and stream crossings<sup>24</sup>.

## **ECONOMICS**

- The recent southern pine beetle epidemic cost Tennessee tax payers and forest owners nearly \$500,000,000 including money spent by TDOT, local utility districts, county governments, State Forestry agency, USFS, and homeowners<sup>25</sup>.
- For every million dollars invested, the furniture industry will provide 40 jobs. For every million dollars invested, a chipmill will provide one job<sup>26</sup>.
- More than 5 million people visit Tennessee's forests every year to hike, camp, hunt, and enjoy the outdoors—and in the process contribute over \$3 billion dollars each year to local economies<sup>27</sup>.

## **REGULATIONS**

- The Southern Public believes we spend too little on protecting the environment<sup>28</sup>.
- The Southern Public believes environmental laws have not gone far enough<sup>29</sup>.
- In Tennessee, you need a permit to cut hair, but you can clearcut thousands of acres of forest, devastating wildlife habitats, causing floods, reducing nearby property values, and polluting the water source for millions of people, and you need no permit, whatsoever<sup>30</sup>.

- <sup>1</sup> Wear, David N.; Greis, John G., eds. 2002. Southern forest resource assessment. Gen. Tech. Rep. SRS-53. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 635 p. (see Ch. 13, p. 299)
- <sup>2</sup> Schweitzer, Callie Jo. 2000. Forest statistics for Tennessee, 1999. Resour. bull. SRS-52. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 78 p. (see Table 48, p. 76)
- <sup>3</sup> Johnson, Tony G.; Steppleton, Carolyn D. 2002. Southern pulpwood production, 2000. Resour. Bull. SRS-69. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 34 p. (see Table 1, p. 9)
- <sup>4</sup> The 13 southern states produced 175.2 million tons of pulpwood in 2002. Trucks carry 25 tons each so it takes 7,008,000 trucks. Trucks are about 60 ft. (0.01136 miles) in length and dia. of Earth is 24,900 mi. Therefore,  $7,008,000 \times 0.01136 = 79,610.88$  miles.  $79,610.88 / 24,900 = 3.20$ .
- <sup>5</sup> Schweitzer, Callie Jo. 2000. Forest statistics for Tennessee, 1999. Resour. bull. SRS-52. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 78 p. (see Table 36, p. 64. 410,600,000 cu. ft. of trees were cut each year 1989 to 1999. One ton = about 26 cu. ft..  $410.6 \text{ million} / 26 = 15.8 \text{ million tons}$ . Trucks required =  $15.8 \text{ million} / 25 = 631,692$ . Miles of trucks =  $631,692 \times 0.01136 = 7,176$  miles.
- <sup>6</sup> Johnson, Tony G.; Steppleton, Carolyn D. 2002. Southern pulpwood production, 2000. Resour. Bull. SRS-69. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 34 p. (see Table 17, p. 26. Tennessee cut 2,259,883 tons of softwood and 2,630,626 tons of hardwood. All hardwood pulpwood comes from native forests.)
- <sup>7</sup> Schweitzer, Callie Jo. 2000. Forest statistics for Tennessee, 1999. Resour. bull. SRS-52. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 78 p. (see Table 11, p. 34)
- <sup>8</sup> Wear, David N.; Greis, John G., eds. 2002. Southern forest resource assessment. Gen. Tech. Rep. SRS-53. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 635 p. (see Ch. 13, p. 313, Fig. 13.18)
- <sup>9</sup> *ibid.* (see Ch. 16, Table 16.9, p. 378)
- <sup>10</sup> Ricketts, et. al. 1999. Terrestrial Ecoregions of North America, Island Press, Washington, DC. 485 p. (see p 187)
- <sup>11</sup> Evans, Jonathan; Pelkey, N.; Haskell, D. 2002. An assessment of forest change on the Cumberland Plateau in southern Tennessee—small area assessment forestry demonstration project for the Southern Forest Resource Assessment. University of the South, Landscape Analysis Laboratory, Sewanee, TN.
- <sup>12</sup> Ricketts, et. al. 1999. Terrestrial Ecoregions of North America, Island Press, Washington, DC. 485 p. (see p 187)
- <sup>13</sup> Reeves, Reggie. 1998. Rivers and Our Natural Heritage in Tennessee Rivers Assessment—Summary Report - 1998. <http://www.state.tn.us/environment/wpc/publications/riv/natherit1.php>
- <sup>14</sup> Ricketts, et. al. 1999. Terrestrial Ecoregions of North America, Island Press, Washington, DC. 485 p. (see p 187)
- <sup>15</sup> Stein, et. al. Precious Heritage: The Status of Biodiversity in the US. p. 169
- <sup>16</sup> Etnier, David A.; Starnes, Wayne C. 1993. The Fishes of Tennessee. UT Press. Knoxville, TN. 681 p.
- <sup>17</sup> Reeves, Reggie. 1998. Rivers and Our Natural Heritage in Tennessee Rivers Assessment—Summary Report - 1998. <http://www.state.tn.us/environment/wpc/publications/riv/natherit1.php>
- <sup>18</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> Tennessee Source Water Assessment Program Submittal. A document of TDEC, Div. Of Water Supply. Available at: <http://www.state.tn.us/environment/dws/tnswa.php> (see appendix G).
- <sup>20</sup> Wear, David N.; Greis, John G., eds. 2002. Southern forest resource assessment. Gen. Tech. Rep. SRS-53. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 635 p. (see Ch. 21 p. 512)
- <sup>21</sup> *ibid.* (see Ch. 21, p. 510)
- <sup>22</sup> *ibid.* (see Ch. 19, Table 19.9, p. 472)
- <sup>23</sup> Denton, Gregory M.; Sparks, Kimberly J.; et. al, 2002. 2002 305(b) Report—Status of Water Quality in Tennessee. Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Div. of Water Pollution Control, Nashville, TN. (see Intro. p 3)
- <sup>24</sup> Tennessee Dept. of Agriculture, Division of Forestry, 2003. Guide to Forestry Best Management Practices in Tennessee. (see p. 6)
- <sup>25</sup> Tennessee Forest Watch, 2004. The Southern Pine Beetle and the Softwood Forests of Tennessee—a draft report prepared for Tennessee Forest Council. available at <http://www.tennesseeforests.org> 33 p. (see Table 1, p. 14)
- <sup>26</sup> Smith, D. 1997. Chipping Forests & Jobs: A Report on the Economics and Environmental Impacts of Chip Mills in the Southeast. The Dogwood Alliance, Asheville, NC 1997
- <sup>27</sup> Travel Industry Association of America. 2003. The Economic Impact of Travel on Tennessee Counties 2001—a study prepared for the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development. Washington, DC. 89 p. and
- Wear, David N.; Greis, John G., eds. 2002. Southern forest resource assessment. Gen. Tech. Rep. SRS-53. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 635 p. (see Ch. 10, p. 259, Table 10-12)

<sup>28</sup> Wear, David N.; Greis, John G., eds. 2002. Southern forest resource assessment. Gen. Tech. Rep. SRS-53. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 635 p. (see p 184) 62.5% say we spend too little, only 9.2% say we spend too much.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.* 45.5% say we haven't gone far enough, only 13.1% say current laws have gone too far.

<sup>30</sup> In Tennessee, there are no laws regulating timber cutting methods or amounts, no laws requiring logger training or bonding, no laws regulating any non-point source pollution caused by forestry operations, no laws restricting the conversion or elimination of native forests, and no laws requiring registration or review of large-scale industrial forestry operations in the state before they are allowed to expand.

This list of facts was compiled by Tennessee Forests Council (TFC) as a resource for other organizations and individuals to use in their efforts to communicate how special the Forests of Tennessee are as well as the threats that face the forests. This list was well researched and documented and we believe it to be accurate and factual. If you feel any of the facts are in error or misleading please contact TFC at our web site **[tennesseeforests.org](http://tennesseeforests.org)** or e-mail **[forestwatch@aol.com](mailto:forestwatch@aol.com)**. Also, if you have a favorite factoid that you can reference and feel should be included, please let us know.