

# PENN'S WOODS

WORKING FOR YOU!



*Pennsylvania's woods and trees are amazing resources that provide untold ecological, economic, and social value to the state's citizens and beyond. While many people believe the state owns most of the forest, in reality almost 70% is privately owned. The decisions these owners make today greatly affect all the benefits we receive from our forests now and in the future.*



## Resources (Learn more about Penn's Woods from these organizations)

- Penn State Forestry and Wildlife Extension** – Forestry and wildlife information and educational programs.  
Phone: 800-235-9473  
Website: [extension.psu.edu/forests-and-wildlife](http://extension.psu.edu/forests-and-wildlife)
- Center for Private Forests at Penn State** – Engagement with woodland owners and natural resource professionals, peer volunteer networks, webinars, woodland owners associations, forest landowners conferences.  
Phone: 800-235-9473  
Website: [ecosystems.psu.edu/private-forests](http://ecosystems.psu.edu/private-forests)
- Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry** – Offers a range of information and technical assistance to woodland owners.  
Phone: 717-783-0385  
Website: [www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/)
- Pennsylvania Game Commission** – Wildlife diversity biologists provide guidance to landowners to manage their property for wildlife.  
Phone: 717-783-7507  
Website: [www.pgc.state.pa.us](http://www.pgc.state.pa.us)
- Pennsylvania Tree Farm Program** – Tree Farm inspectors inspect private woodlands, providing management advice and recommendations. Landowners meeting the minimum standards become “certified” as sustainably managed forests.  
Phone: 724-977-0867  
Website: [www.paforest.org/treefarm](http://www.paforest.org/treefarm)
- Pennsylvania Forestry Association** – The nation's oldest grass roots organization encourages management of the Commonwealth's forests.  
Phone: 1-800-835-8065  
Website: [www.paforestry.org](http://www.paforestry.org)
- Sustainable Forestry Initiative of Pennsylvania** – Voluntary, industry-driven program to enhance forest management decisions through loggers, foresters, landowners, and industry outreach.  
Phone: 888-734-9366  
Website: [www.sfiopa.org](http://www.sfiopa.org)
- Pennsylvania Forest Stewards** – Trained volunteers share forest resource understanding through peer-to-peer education and outreach.  
Phone: 800-235-9473  
Website: [ecosystems.psu.edu/research/centers/private-forests/outreach/forest-stewards](http://ecosystems.psu.edu/research/centers/private-forests/outreach/forest-stewards)



*Pennsylvania's forests provide bountiful habitat for wildlife, quiet solitude and recreation for people, 10% of our nation's timber, and many other outstanding benefits for everyone to enjoy.*

## Did you know?

- ✓ 100 large, 40-year-old trees can remove about **430 pounds of pollutants** and over **53 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>** from the atmosphere each year
- ✓ Pennsylvania is home to over **650 trails** covering more than **12,000 miles**
- ✓ Trees stabilize stream banks, **preventing erosion** and **keeping the water cool** for life beneath the surface
- ✓ Time in nature **reduces blood pressure**, heart rate, and muscle tension, and **boosts the immune system**
- ✓ Pennsylvania is home to **83,184 miles** of rivers and streams — that's comparable to traveling Interstate 80 almost **29 times**
- ✓ Penn's Woods supports more than **2,100 forest product establishments** across the Commonwealth, employing over **58,000 Pennsylvanians**
- ✓ Hospital patients who see trees out their windows need **less medication** and have **faster recovery times** following surgery
- ✓ Pennsylvania is home to **480 species** of wild birds and mammals

# Pennsylvania's Land Cover

Total Acreage: 28,991,096 acres (45,299 square miles)

- 92.9% rural land cover (forests, fields, and water)
- 7.1% suburban and urban (cities, towns, and roads)

## Unique Forest-related Land Uses or Conditions

- Today, forests cover 59% of Pennsylvania and total 16.62 million acres
  - 31% – 5.15 million acres – are Public Forests (federal, state, and local)
  - 69% – 11.47 million acres – are owned by Private Forest Landowners
- Pennsylvania is home to 83,184 miles of rivers and streams



# Pennsylvania Forest Facts

## Forest History

- William Penn's 1681 Charter of Rights called for colonists to leave 1 acre of forest for every 5 acres cleared
- Highest historic percentage of forest cover was 90% (1630, pre-settlement)
- Lowest historic percentage of forest cover was 32% (9.2 million acres, 1907)
- Conservation efforts started in the 1900s restored much of the forest cover that was lost to charcoal production, railroads, and construction during the 1800s.
- Forest cover has been relatively constant since 1965, with a slight decrease starting in 2004
- The state's first sawmill started operation in 1662; today Pennsylvania is one of the nation's top producers of hardwood lumber, with revenues from the state's wood products industry reaching \$11.5 billion a year

## Forest Composition

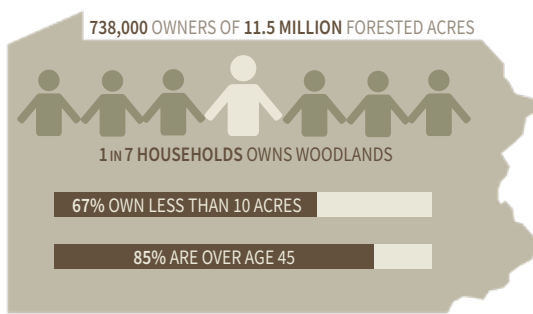
- Mixed oaks and Northern hardwoods are Pennsylvania's most common forest types
- The density of trees, or stocking, is declining due to disease, insects, weather, and cutting
- Statewide, seedling and sapling stage forest areas – new growth of less than 5 inches – are declining
- Statewide, forest areas with large trees – hardwoods with a diameter of more than 11 inches – are increasing

## Private Forest Landowners

- Pennsylvania's total population is 12.5 million people, living in 4.77 million households
- More than 738,000 are private forest owners, or about 1 in 7 households
- Average forest ownership size is estimated at 15.6 acres
- Average tenure is estimated at 19 years
- Average private forest landowner's age is 59 years old

The 10 most common tree species currently found in Pennsylvania's forests:

1. Red maple
2. Black birch
3. Black cherry
4. Beech
5. Sugar maple
6. Hemlock
7. White ash
8. Red oak
9. Chestnut oak
10. Black gum



Top 10 reasons why Pennsylvanians own forests:

1. Solitude
2. Enjoyment of owning
3. Hunting
4. Forest came with the property
5. Enjoying wildlife
6. Estate to pass on
7. Recreation
8. Land investment
9. Personal use of wood (firewood)
10. Timber

# Challenges to Penn's Woods

- PA forest and farmland lost to **urban sprawl** is currently estimated at about 300 acres each day
- **Non-native insects and tree diseases** are impacting Pennsylvania's forests (spotted lanternfly, gypsy moth, emerald ash borer, hemlock woolly adelgid, chestnut blight, Dutch elm disease, oak wilt)
- Without landowner intervention, **invasive plants** are changing forest diversity
- **Insufficient land transfer planning** is resulting in smaller properties and fragmented woods
- **Improper timber harvests** on privately-owned forests are affecting woodland health and resiliency
- **Energy development** – including natural gas, biomass, and wind turbines – is influencing forests and natural wildlife habitats
- **White-tailed deer** populations inflict heavy damage to tree seedlings and are affecting forest species composition in other ways
- **Changing species composition**, as a result of these challenges, is impacting the long-term health of forests and wildlife



Thank you to our 2022 Walk in Penn's Woods donors:

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