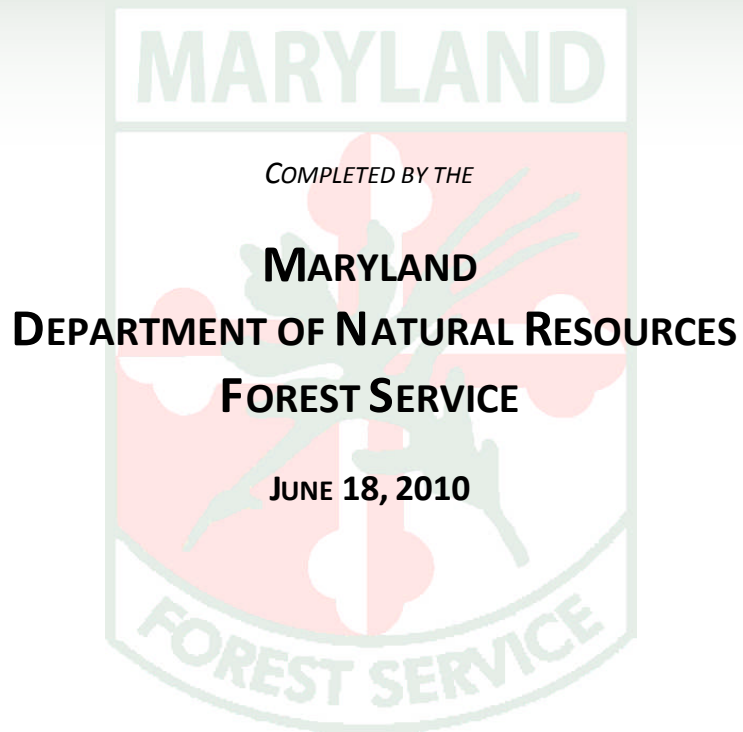


MARYLAND FOREST RESOURCE ASSESSMENT 2010



Executive Summary

The Maryland Forest Assessment is intended to provide information on the current state of forests in Maryland, identify trends from past assessments, and locate areas of the state where forests provide critical services, such as clean air, clean water, plant and animal habitat, carbon sequestration, economic opportunities, and a high quality of life for Maryland's citizens. Forest priority areas for Maryland and at the national level were developed to determine where strategies to maintain, and even increase, forest cover, would be most effective.

Conservation of biological diversity reflects the potential for biodiversity—the number and type of plants and animals—on a landscape. The greatest threat to biodiversity in Maryland's forests has been, and continues to be land development. Maryland lost 151,500 acres of forest between 1986 and 2008, and the US Forest Service estimated in 2008 that 39% of Maryland is forested. Fragmentation of existing forests is exacerbated by development as roads, powerlines, and buildings replace forests, and forested corridors shrink and inhibit the movement of animals.

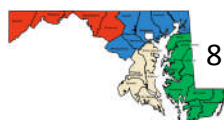
There is a predominance of older trees on the landscape, and about of all forests 63% are considered Oak-Hickory forests, which is well suited for wildlife. The forests continue to grow, and only 58% of average annual growth is harvested.

Development and fragmentation encroaching on existing forest land places greater pressure on forest health as invasive plants and insects like Emerald Ash Borer and Gypsy Moth change the composition of our forests. That composition is also threatened as deer populations increase, the ability of forests to retain its Oak-Hickory composition declines. Climate change is also expected to change the composition of Maryland's forests to more pine as sugar maple, beech, and hemlock are pushed further north. Wildfire is being controlled, particularly where rural areas meet urban areas.

Maryland's forests are protecting drinking water and preventing erosion. Most of the northern and western areas of the state, particularly the urban centers, are supplied with drinking water from surface sources like reservoirs. These areas must be protected and managed, and forest cover in watersheds expanded as water demand increases along with development. Fishable and swimmable streams are a goal, and increasing riparian forest buffers continues to be a priority to help clean up and restore our Chesapeake Bay.

Forests in Maryland are increasingly growing, and as they grow, they capture carbon. Larger tree volumes contribute to carbon sequestration as wood is left standing, but this could be increased with additional forest management. Carbon in biomass is estimated to have increased by 31% between 2004 and 2008.

The forests in Maryland provide multiple socioeconomic benefits to meet the needs of our society. The forest industry remains competitive and is a 4 billion dollar industry, providing paper products, lumber, and finished wood products. It is the fifth largest economic sector in the state. Other benefits include recreation, like hunting and wildlife viewing. Both of which are



estimated to contribute nearly \$200 million each year to Maryland's economy, just on public lands alone.

It is estimated that 76% of the forest land in Maryland is privately owned and that more than 8 out of 10 private forest land owners in Maryland own fewer than 10 acres of forest. This means forests are increasingly bisected by property lines, reducing and complicating forest management opportunities. Government ownership of forests has generally been increasing over the past few years through purchases and easement donations.

Maryland has a robust suite of laws for protecting forests, from the Sustainable Forestry Act of 2009 to the Forest Conservation Act, Critical Area Law, Nontidal Wetlands Law, sediment and erosion control requirements, and local government comprehensive plan requirements. The state is committed to practicing sustainable forest management, and is working to have all state forests certified by third party organizations like the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). Of paramount importance is Maryland's commitment to Chesapeake Bay restoration through increased riparian forest buffers, forest conservation in priority areas, and meeting urban tree canopy goals

Clearly Maryland's forests provide critical services that would otherwise have to be generated artificially and at great cost. As the amount of forest continues to decline in the state, awareness of the value of this resource is perhaps greater now than ever before, as alternative energy, sustainable living, climate change, and habitat protection are mainstream issues.

