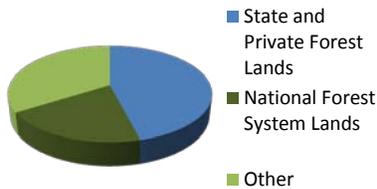




US FOREST SERVICE AND WATER

Watersheds with a large proportion of forest cover are more likely to be associated with good water quality, forest protecting soil, moderated streamflow, and healthy aquatic systems.

Nation's Water Supply



Excluding Alaska, 53 percent of the Nation's total water supply originates from public and private forest lands, which comprise of only 33.2 percent of the land area.

National forest system (NFS) lands in the 48 contiguous States contribute 18 percent of our Nation's annual water supply, while representing only 11 percent of the land base. More than 900 cities rely on national forest watersheds, and 3,400 public water systems serving 66 million people in 33 States are supplied by watersheds within NFS lands.

Benefits to Communities

The nation's water supply and ecosystem services provided by healthy watersheds are priceless, and public and private forests are critical for watershed health. Local communities throughout the country also benefit economically from millions of annual visitors.

- Fishing occurred on about 12.2 percent of the 178.6 million national forest visits in 2007, and was the primary purpose for 12.5 million of those visits
- Those visitors generate an estimated annual revenue from national forest sportfishing is \$2.2 billion and support about 51,000 jobs
- Those revenues generate approximately \$265 million in Federal taxes



Tongass National Forest, Alaska

The Many Uses of Water

Many ecosystem services supplied by watersheds, such as habitat for abundant and diverse plant and animal species and flood moderation, are not assigned an economic value in the market, and hence are sometimes considered free.

- Estimate annual value of water from national forests for in-stream uses is at least \$3.7 billion, and includes operation of more than 200 hydroelectric plants which provide energy to supply public water systems, agriculture, and industry
- Private forest lands play a larger regional role in water supply in the east than in the west. More than 60 percent of national water supply runs off from lands east of the Mississippi River, where 70 percent of the Nation's private and State forests are located.
- Public and private forests in the 20 Northeastern and Midwestern States help protect more than 1,600 drinking water supplies providing more than 4 trillion gallons per day to households of more than 52 million Americans
- Forested watersheds in the Southeastern States contain 56 percent forest cover and produce the country's highest quality water coming largely from surface supplies.
- Three-quarters of irrigated acres are in the 17 conterminous western states, using 86 percent of water withdrawn for irrigation nationwide.



Allegheny National Forest, Pennsylvania



Willamette National Forest, Oregon