

State of the United States Forest Genetic Resources – Summary of a Report to FAO International Technical Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources¹

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Abstract

Among forest-associated plant species in the United States, less than one percent has been determined to be extinct. However, 57 trees or trees/shrubs are officially listed as threatened or endangered by the U.S. Department of Interior Fish and Wildlife Service. Most of these listed species are tropical island endemics; 35 are from Hawaii and 13 from Puerto Rico and/or the United States Virgin Islands. As required by law, these listed species have restoration plans that are in some state of implementation. Federal land management agencies also strive to conserve species that are considered “at risk”. In addition, federal agencies manage for native ecosystems; thereby providing aspects of *in situ* conservation on their land base; which represents one third of all forest land in the United States.

Ex situ conservation efforts within the United States are extensive. Specific conservation collections are made by a number of organizations, including: the Center for Plant Conservation (<http://saveplants.org/>), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Research Service National Plant Germplasm System, the U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management ‘Seeds of Success’ program, and the USDA Forest Service. Breeding and restoration programs, predominantly housed in federal agencies and universities, represent over 150 different *ex situ* collections which include over 100 species of trees and tree/shrubs.

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