The future of Maryland's forests is controlled by more than 125,000 individuals who own 90% of the state's woodland resource. The forest products industry plays an important role in helping these woodland owners make wise management decisions while contributing significantly to Maryland's economy.

The forest products industry is one of the largest industries in Maryland, directly employing approximately 15,500 people. In Garrett and Allegany counties, the forest products industry is the largest employer and on the Eastern Shore, the second largest. The industry is diverse, including sawmills, a paper mill, pulpwood operations, family logging companies, firewood operators, whole tree chippers, and veneer log brokers, as well as producers of furniture, cabinets and other secondary wood products.

During an average year, 95 million board feet of hardwood timber and 62 million board feet of softwood timber are harvested in Maryland. These harvests produce millions of dollars in income for the state's woodland owners. In 1993, the income from timber sold on Maryland farms, whether as stumpage (price paid to the landowner for standing trees) or cut and then sold, was estimated at $29.3 million. This is a significant increase over the estimated $20.5 million 1988 income (Figure 1). There are many reasons for this increase including the rising demand and price in the United States and overseas for wood, reduced cutting on public lands, and the maturing of forests statewide after extensive harvesting at the turn of the century.

What is the direct economic benefit to Maryland workers derived from Maryland's forest products industry? For every $1 in income paid to landowners for the sale of timber in 1993, $14 in direct wages and salaries was generated for the state's economy. The total annual payroll from the forest products industry in Maryland is over $420 million. This figure includes only direct wages and salaries. The total contribution to Maryland's economy is actually much greater than this. It includes profit to businesses, royalties, rents, taxes on businesses, and payrolls to those indirectly employed by the forest products industry.

While the importance of the forest products industry to the economy is obvious, its contribution to forest health and wildlife is less obvious. In recent years, damage from gypsy moths, southern pine beetles, storms, and other factors has caused the death of large numbers of trees. With help from...
the forest products industry, woodland owners have been able to market these products quickly, earning income and using harvest treatments that reduce the chances of future forest health problems. Such careful harvesting also has improved wildlife habitat for species that require a young forest environment.

Forests are a renewable resource that have recovered well from exploitative cutting at the turn of the century. With prices and demand for stumpage increasing, some resource professionals are concerned that the opportunity for quick economic gain may overshadow informed decisions. For most woodland owners, the sale of forest products takes place once or twice in a lifetime. To ensure the future productivity of their woodland, avoid exploitative cutting, and receive a competitive price for harvested products, woodland owners should:

1) make sure the marketing of forest products is part of an overall written forest stewardship plan,
2) use the services of a registered professional forester to develop the plan and market the products (list available from your county forester or Cooperative Extension Service office), and
3) get all agreements in writing.

The partnership of private forest stewards and the forest products industry is mutually beneficial and provides woodland owners the means to improve tree growth, wildlife habitat and other forest benefits, while contributing to the economic and aesthetic well-being of the region.

Forestry Programs for Youth

As our society becomes increasingly urbanized, many of us fail to make the connection between the natural resources we use and how they are produced. The youth of today, who will be the leaders, citizens, and woodland owners of tomorrow, need sound forestry education. Fortunately, excellent opportunities exist for Maryland students and teachers, including week-long camps, 4-H competitions, and activities for use in the classroom.

The Maryland Cooperative Extension Service's 4-H sponsors a 4-H Teen Leadership Natural Resources Camp for high school students that develops students' leadership skills while teaching them about natural resources. After completing the camp, participants are required to do 15 hours of volunteer work in natural resources. Anyone between the ages of 13 and 18 can apply. This year's camp will be held July 2 - 7 at the Patuxent River 4-H Center.

The Maryland 4-H also sponsors the annual 4-H Forestry Invitational and the 4-H Wildlife Judging Invitational. The forestry judging event tests students' hands-on knowledge and skills. Events include tree and disease identification, tree measurements, and others. The wildlife judging competition focuses on a student's wildlife knowledge, including species identification, aging and sexing, and wildlife foods.

Students ages 14 to 19 are eligible for these competitions. Both events will be held on Sunday, May 7, at the Buckingham State Nursery. Some county 4-H clubs offer training opportunities for these competitions. For information on the Natural Resources Camp or judging competitions, contact your county Cooperative Extension Service office or State 4-H Headquarters, 8020 Greenmead Drive, College Park, MD 21117, (301) 403-4248.

The county Forestry Boards of the Maryland Association of Forest Conservancy Boards sponsor "Maryland Forestry Conservation Natural Resources Week," a summer camp that acquaints high school students in Maryland with careers in natural resources. The camp's program is a combination of field and classroom activities covering a variety of natural resource topics. Expenses are covered by local conservation organizations, civic groups and businesses.

The camp will be held July 30 - August 5 at Hickory Environmental Education Center in Accident, Maryland. Applications are available through April 15 from school guidance offices or from local offices of the Maryland Forest Service.

Another forestry program involving youth and natural resources is Project Learning Tree (PLT). This program trains educators in how to teach students about forestry topics. The PLT guide contains curriculum and planned activities that educators can use. Activities are designed to be interdisciplinary and can be used both in and out of the classroom. PLT training workshops are held throughout the state at various times during the year. For information on the Forest Conservation Camp or PLT, contact John Riley, DNR Forest Service, Tawes State Office Bldg., Annapolis, MD 21401, (410) 974-3776.
Decades of Stewardship

True forest stewardship involves more than improving forests for various objectives. It also includes a desire to improve the land so that it can be passed to the next generation in better condition. Jim Dryden of Worcester County is a landowner who demonstrates this stewardship ideal. Although his 320-acre property was not enrolled in Maryland's forest stewardship program until July 1992, he has been an active land steward for most of his 80-plus years.

In 1950, Jim began looking into alternative uses for some of the marginal cropland on his farm. Although according to the wisdom of the day planting trees didn't make sense, Jim converted 110 acres of his farm to productive pine forests. Jim tells a story of a man shaking his head and telling him he would never live to see these trees harvested. But he recently completed a final harvest and reforestation on 45 acres of those original fields and has commercially thinned another 43 acres.

Over the years, Jim has reforested over 200 acres of woodland, completed non-commercial timber stand improvement on 50 acres, commercially thinned more than 50 acres, and will commercially thin an additional 118 acres in 1995. He also has built more than 1.5 miles of roads through the property. This road system has allowed for management work, provided protection from wildfire, and provided thousands of hours of recreational opportunities for hunters and horseback riders.

Jim Dryden's active participation in managing his land earned him the Maryland Tree Farmer of the Year recognition in 1975. His love for the land is clear to anyone who visits his property, and he is well recognized as an advocate for forests. For over 30 years, he has been an active member of the Worcester Forest Conservancy District Board, serving many years as the chairman. He is also a past president of the State Association of Forestry Boards.

For the past 10 years Jim has presented an Arbor Day program for third graders in Ocean City and has coordinated many other Arbor Day celebrations. His property has been on numerous tours and has been used as a demonstration area for other landowners.

Jim has earned the title of "Steward" and continues to serve as an example and inspiration to those of us who love and respect our forests.

Resources for Landowners

Many forest stewards express an interest in finding organizations and/or publications with information on forest issues that relate to private, non-industrial landowners. The following is a list of some resources that may be helpful:

American Forestry Association - An organization of people interested in forest conservation. They produce a bimonthly magazine, American Forests. Membership dues are $30/year. Contact: American Forestry Association, P.O. Box 2000, Washington, D.C., 20077-4244; (202) 667-3300.

Forest Farmers Association, Inc. - An organization of timberland owners in 17 southern states. They publish the magazine Forest Farmer six times a year. Dues range upward from $40. Contact: Forest Farmers Assoc., Inc., P.O. Box 95385, 4 Executive Park East, NE, Atlanta, GA 30347; (404) 325-2954.

Maryland Forests Association - An organization of forest industry, woodland owners, resource professionals, and others dedicated to the protection, use, and management of forest resources in Maryland. Contact: Maryland Forests Association, P.O. Box 599, Grantsville, MD 21536-0599; (301) 895-5369.

Maryland Woodland Owners Association - A newly formed organization for woodland owners in Maryland. Contact: Sonny Newhall, Rt. 5, Box 100-C, Oakland, MD 21550; (301) 334-2686.


New Resources
Managing Woodlands for Wildlife - a new 24-minute video for landowners. It shows how a woodland owner can evaluate and improve habitat for a wide range of wildlife species. $35 per copy. Order from the Minnesota Extension Service, Distribution Center, 20 Coffey Hall, St. Paul, MN 55108; (612)625-8173.
Natural Resource Video List - a list of videos on a variety of natural resource topics available for loan to individuals, educators, etc. To get a copy of available video resources contact the Western Maryland Research & Education Center, 18330 Keedysville Road, Keedysville, MD 21756; (301)432-2767 or Wye Research & Education Center, P.O. Box 169, Queenstown, MD 21658; (410) 827-8056.

Forest Fires in 1994
During 1994, the Maryland DNR Forest Service responded to 700 wildfires across the state. These fires consumed over 2,000 acres of forest, grass, and marshland. The major causes of this year's fires were debris burning, arson, and children. Although there were more fires this year than in 1993, they consumed fewer acres of forest. For information on proper burning procedures and wildfire protection, contact your local Maryland Forest Service office.

Elm Research Institute
The American elm is a tree species threatened with extinction because of Dutch Elm disease, a fungus that has been killing the trees in the United States. The Elm Research Institute is an organization dedicated to the restoration of the American Elm. They produce a newsletter and sell seedlings and products for fighting Dutch Elm disease. For membership information, contact: Elm Research Institute, Elm Street, Harrisville, NH 03450; (603)827-3048.