



Family Forest (10+ Acres)
Ownership Characteristics

2018

WEST VIRGINIA

WHO IS THE PRIMARY DECISION- MAKER?



63 YEARS
(AVERAGE AGE)

44%
COLLEGE DEGREE

68% MALE

2% MINORITY

PAST 5 YEARS Forest Management Activities

CUT TREES FOR SALE

18%



CUT TREES FOR OWN USE

36%

INSECT/DISEASE MITIGATION

3%

INVASIVE PLANT MITIGATION

19%

IMPROVED WILDLIFE HABITAT

28%

REDUCED FIRE HAZARD

6%



WHO OWNS WEST VIRGINIA'S FORESTS?

PRIVATE
86%

PUBLIC
14%



51%

FAMILY



34%

CORP.



1%

OTHER



10%

FEDERAL



3%

STATE



<1%

LOCAL

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Management advice **8%**
Property tax program **6%**
Management plan **5%**
Conservation easements **2%**
Cost-share programs **1%**
Green certification **1%**

TOP 5 CONCERNS

Trespassing or poaching
Dumping or vandalism
Property taxes
Keeping land intact
Insects or diseases

BY THE NUMBERS West Virginia's Family Forest Ownerships

5,689,000 ACRES

96,000 OWNERSHIPS

177,000 OWNERS

MEAN SIZE

59 acres

Median = 25 acres



TOP 5 REASONS FOR OWNING

Beauty or scenery
Wildlife habitat
Privacy
Water protection
Nature protection



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Data in this report come primarily from the USDA Forest Service, National Woodland Owner Survey (NWOS). The NWOS is implemented by the Forest Inventory and Analysis program to answer questions related to who owns the forests, why they own it, what they have done with it in the past, and what they intend to do with it in the future. The family forest ownership results are based on random sample of 178 family forest ownerships from West Virginia who participated in the NWOS in 2017 and 2018. The sampling errors provided below are important for assessing the reliability of the estimates. Additional results from the NWOS are available in USFS General Technical Report NRS-199 and can be accessed via the [NWOS Dashboard](#) and additional documentation and resources can be found on the [NWOS website](#).

TABLE 1. Forest Ownership

OWNER GROUP	ACRES	SE
Family	6,091,000	133,000
Corporate	4,130,000	132,000
Other private	131,000	31,000
Federal	1,243,000	37,000
State	330,000	37,000
Local	60,000	20,000

TABLE 2. Totals, family forest (10+ ac)

UNITS	TOTAL	SE
Acres	5,689,000	218,000
Ownerships	96,000	7,000
Owners	177,000	12,000

TABLE 3. Demographics, family forest (10+ ac)

DEMOGRAPHIC	ACRES	SE	OWNER-SHIPS	SE
	Percentage			
Age (65+)	62.9	4	48.5	5.1
Education (College)	54.4	4.5	43.7	5.4
Gender (Male)	78.2	2.4	67.8	4.6
Minority	4	1.2	2	<1

TABLE 4. Size of forest holdings, family forest (10+ ac)

SIZE OF HOLDINGS	ACRES	SE	OWNER-SHIPS	SE
(ACRES)	Percentage			
10-49	23	2.7	67.4	6.9
50-99	21.2	2.3	19.1	2.7
100-499	39.4	3.3	12.6	1.5
500-999	6.3	1.5	<1	<1
1,000+	10	1.6	<1	<1

Mean size = 59.3 ac (SE = 4.6); Median size = 25 acres

TABLE 5. Reasons for owning, family forest (10+ ac)

OBJECTIVE	ACRES	SE	OWNER-SHIPS	SE
	Percentage			
Beauty or scenery	76	3.8	84.6	5.8
Wildlife habitat	73.3	3.9	74.5	6.1
Privacy	66.7	3.9	72.6	6.5
Water protection	66.6	3.9	71.6	6.6
Nature protection	67.3	3.9	71.1	6.4
Family legacy	71.6	3.9	68.3	5.8
Raise family	44	3.3	59	6
Recreation	54.6	3.7	57.1	6.2
Hunting	56.1	3.8	50.2	5.4
Land investment	51.9	3.6	44.5	5.3
Firewood	25.3	2.9	22.2	3.9
Timber products	43.4	3.3	21	2.8
Nontimber products	19.3	2.4	19.2	3.8

TABLE 6. Concerns, family forest (10+ ac)

CONCERN	ACRES	SE	OWNER-SHIPS	SE
	Percentage			
Trespassing	79.9	3.7	82	6.1
Vandalism	76.2	3.8	80.2	5.9
Property taxes	77.8	3.7	78.6	6.4
Keeping land intact	73.2	4	74.1	6
Insects or diseases	64.1	4.1	69.3	6.4
Wildfire	61.5	4.1	67.5	6.5
Government regulation	64.2	3.8	67.1	6.5
Water pollution	54.2	3.7	62	6
Invasive plants	49.8	3.6	53.8	6.2
Development	40.7	3.3	52.8	6
Air pollution	45.4	3.6	52.3	5.6
Wind or ice storms	39.1	3.3	51.5	6
Climate change	34.4	3.2	37.4	5.1
Off-road vehicles	38.2	3.1	36.7	5.1
Drought	29.9	3	32.8	4.8
Animal damage	24.2	2.6	23.9	3.8

TABLE 7. Management activities, family forest (10+ ac)

ACTIVITY	ACRES	SE	OWNER-SHIPS	SE
	Percentage			
Controlled burn	3.1	<1	5.1	2.1
Cut trees - own use	32.5	2.7	36.5	4.6
Cut trees - sale	26.5	2.5	18	3.7
Insects management	3.5	1.1	3.3	1.5
Invasives	20.7	2.3	19.5	3.4
Livestock grazing	15.1	2.2	17.8	4
Nontimber products	28.5	2.6	30.1	4.2
Reduced fire hazard	4.5	1.2	5.8	2.2
Roads	26.3	2.5	11.8	2.7
Trails	23.5	2.3	16.8	3.2
Wildlife habitat	27.5	2.6	27.8	4.2
None	20.1	2.3	23.4	3.8

TABLE 8. Management programs, family forest (10+ ac)

PROGRAM	ACRES	SE	OWNER-SHIPS	SE
	Percentage			
Advice	21.7	2.3	8.2	1.8
Conservation easements	3.4	<1	1.8	<1
Cost-share programs	2.5	<1	<1	<1
Green certification	1.5	<1	<1	<1
Management plan	18.9	2.2	5.3	1.0
Property tax program	15.6	2.0	6.3	1.6