Forests of North Carolina, 2019

North Carolina has an estimated 18,750,216 acres of forest land.
* Percent forest is forest area/total area. Percent forest with water removed from total area is 61%.

This resource update is a brief look at some of the basic metrics that describe the status of and changes to forest resources in North Carolina. This information is based on field data collected using the USDA Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) annualized sample design, and it is updated yearly.

North Carolina has 5,726 sample plots across the State, of which 3,648 are currently forested. Each year, about 14-20 percent of these plots are visited and measured by field crews. Data used in this update were accessed from the FIA database on 04/23/2020.

Forest land ownership

Federal 11.09%
State and Local 5.99%
Private 82.92%

Area of forest land (million acres)

18.81
18.75

Number of live trees on forest land (billion trees)

14.95
14.22

Volume of live trees on forest land (billion cubic feet)

41.38
45.03

57,534 acres of nonforest revert back to forest annually*
62,573 acres of forest land convert annually* to nonforest
399,490 acres of forest land are treated (harvest, thinning, etc.) annually*
111,431 acres of forest land are disturbed annually* by fire
78,581 acres of forest land are disturbed annually* by weather events

*Percent forest is forest area/total area. Percent forest with water removed from total area is 61%.

USDA Forest Service - Forest Inventory & Analysis
The estimates presented are based on data retrieved from the FIA database (04/23/2020) and may not reflect the most recent data available from the FIA program. Note – this publication does not include estimates of uncertainty. The most current data and sampling error for the estimates above can be found by visiting https://www.fia.fs.fed.us/.

*Average annual estimates are based on data collected across 5-10 years and may not be indicative of the nominal year presented in the title by itself.
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How to cite this publication


Archived Versions

This report and archived past versions can be found on the USDA Forest Service publication database, Treesearch using keywords "Forest Inventory" and "North Carolina" here: https://www.fs.usda.gov/treesearch.

National Woodland Owner Survey

The National Woodland Owner Survey (NWOS) collects and reports on multiple attributes of forest land ownership. Details of the NWOS program can be found here: https://www.fia.fs.fed.us/nwos/

The most recent NWOS Factsheet for North Carolina can be found here: https://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/52411/.

Additional Resources

The application that produced this resource update was developed using data from the USDA Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis database (FIADB): https://apps.fs.usda.gov/fia/datamart/datamart_excel.html.

Tables for North Carolina, 2019 can be found here: https://doi.org/10.2737/FS-RU-259-Tables

The FIA one-click application can be found here: https://doi.org/10.2737/FIA-One-Click-State-Report-v1.2


NOTE: Some of the above links will not be active until the resource update has been approved for official publication.