From 2015-2018, AFF, in partnership with outside research firms, conducted a series of spatial assessments and attitudinal studies with family forest owners across four regions of the U.S. — Northeast, South, West and Midwest. Each study received 1,100 to 1,700 responses and focused on key regional issues — biodiversity and wood supply in the South, wildlife habitat in the Northeast and Midwest, and wildfire in the West.

AFF synthesizes the information from the regions into one summary to assess trends across the U.S. on landowner motivations, current actions and challenges to engagement and impact. Data points from the West were not included in the attitudinal comparisons, as the questions asked of landowners in the Western study varied too significantly than those asked of other regions and were not comparable. In some cases, not all responses were offered to each region, in these cases, a bar line is not shown. Demographic information was also compared to the National Woodland Owner Survey, a reoccurring survey conducted by the U.S. Forest Service of all forest owners nationwide in order to showcase regional nuances.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- Western family forest owners own the largest average acreage of forestland, while those in the South have owned their land for almost twice as long as other regions.
- Landowners in the Midwest are more likely to live on or count their property as their primary residence.
- Across the South, Northeast and Midwest, family landowners have a strong desire to maintain their land into the future with an average 86% agreeing or strongly agreeing they want their lands to stay wooded.
- Landowners across the U.S. are very interested in protecting and improving the health of their lands with an average of 83% of landowners naming forest health priorities such as protecting and improving wildlife habitat, protecting nature and biodiversity, and protecting water resources as primary reasons for ownership.
- Landowners in the South had more uncertainty about what activities to do on their land and concerns about doing the wrong thing compared to other regions.
- Landowners in the Northeast view themselves as the most trusted source of information compared to other regions.
- Landowners in the South are more likely than those of other regions to intend to create a forest management plan in the next 12 months.
THREE REGION SUMMARY OF FAMILY FOREST OWNERS

DEMOGRAPHICS OF FAMILY FOREST OWNERS ACROSS THE U.S.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>Years Owned</th>
<th>Primary Residence?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>233.5</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWOS**</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Mean survey responses data
**National Woodland Owner Survey conducted by the U.S. Forest Service

VALUES AND MOTIVATIONS

GENDER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWOS</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PRIORITIES FOR LANDOWNERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Northeast</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>Midwest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I want my wooded land to stay wooded</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want my wooded land to stay in my family</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would only sell my land if it was a last resort</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would sell my land if it was offered above market value</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would only sell my land if offered market value</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REASONS FOR LAND OWNERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Northeast</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>Midwest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To enjoy beauty or scenery</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To protect or improve wildlife habitat</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For privacy</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To protect nature or biological diversity</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To protect water resources</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For recreation, other than hunting</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For hunting</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THREE REGION SUMMARY OF FAMILY FOREST OWNERS

BARRIERS, BENEFITS AND TRUSTED SOURCES

BARRIERS TO MANAGING FOR WILDLIFE

- Unsure about activities I should do
- Concerns doing the wrong thing/harm
- Difficult to find the right professional/help
- Cost of implementing is too high
- Too much time to undertake these activities
- Too much government red tape

- 40% Northeast
- 30% South
- 20% Midwest

*Landowners who Agree and Strongly Agree

BENEFITS TO MANAGING FOR WILDLIFE

- Knowing I’m doing the right thing for wildlife
- Improved health of my wooded land
- Providing recreational opportunities for my family
- Improved aesthetics
- Supporting a strong link to my state’s history/culture

- 80% Northeast
- 60% South
- 40% Midwest

*Landowners who Agree and Strongly Agree

TRUSTED SOURCES FOR RELIABLE INFORMATION

- Self
- University/County Extension
- State DNR/Forest Service
- Private Consulting Forester
- Wildlife Professional
- U.S. Forest Service
- Family Member or Friend
- State Wildlife Agencies
- Federal Agencies (USFWS, NRCS)
- Neighbors or Another Landowner
- Logger
- Nobody

- 50% Northeast
- 40% South
- 30% Midwest

*Landowners who Agree and Strongly Agree
ABOUT THE AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION

The American Forest Foundation (AFF) is a national conservation non-profit that focuses on private and family-owned U.S. forests, helping landowners to protect and improve the clean water, wildlife habitat, carbon storage, and sustainable wood supplies that come from these lands.

AFF deliver measurable positive conservation impact by leveraging its expertise of family forest owner needs, collaborating across a diverse array of partners, and developing innovative solutions to the barriers that landowners face to caring for their land.

METHODOLOGY

FULL REGIONAL REPORTS:

Northeast:

Hidden in Plain Sight: Family-owned woodlands are key to protecting and improving wildlife habitats in the Northeastern U.S.

South:

Southern Wildlife At Risk: Family Forest Owners Offer a Solution

Midwest:

Family Forests: Contributing to the Resilience of Rural Communities in the Upper Midwest

West:

Western Water Threatened by Wildfire: It’s Not Just a Public Lands Issue

Paper surveys mailed to landowners in each of the four regions

FOUR REGIONS

Northeast: CT, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VA, VT, WV

South: AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX

Midwest: MI, MN, WI

West: AZ, CA, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, OR, UT, WA, WY

RESPONSES

Northeast: 1,454 out of 20,000; 8.7%

South: 1,370 out of 20,000; 6.9%

Midwest: 1,125 out of 12,500; 9.0%

West: 1,767 returned surveys

SAMPLING ERROR

South: ±2.78 at 95% confidence

Midwest: ±2.99 at 95% confidence

West: ± 2.33% at the 95% confidence interval

ACTIVITIES

ALREADY DONE IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

DEFINITELY WILL IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

CONSIDERING IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

Three Region Summary of Family Forest Owners