

ISSUES OF SMALL WOOD MANAGEMENT, MARKETING, AND UTILIZATION

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The issues of small wood management, marketing and utilization are important to the economic well being of a significant portion of the forest landowners in the United States. Economic disincentives are among the reasons of nonindustrial private forestland parcelization and conversion. Much attention is being paid to this situation at the national, state, and local levels with solutions being promoted, ranging from additional regulation to incentives for landowners to maintain their forest lands as productive forests for goods and services. There are significant differences in the needs of NIPF forest landowners versus industrial or public lands. For example, economies of scale make NIPF lands more costly to manage; the average tenure of NIPF ownership is around 25 years; and regulatory impacts on small ownerships frequently result in "takings" that represent a much larger percentage of withdrawals than on larger ownerships. The small wood market is very important to landowners for the following reasons:

- 1) More frequent income from smaller/younger wood will allow some income during the 25-year tenure for most landowners;
- 2) Earlier harvests decrease the carrying costs for capital investments; and
- 3) Acceleration of radial growth on the remaining crop trees or an overstocked situation shorten the rotation age whether on a stand basis or an individual tree basis.

While the benefits are largely economic, there are implications for forest health by decreasing susceptibility to insect and disease problems. Continuing restrictions in public timber, particularly small timber, will adversely affect marketing opportunities for those products as processing facilities close/or move to other locations or restrict production.

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