

# 9 Forestry Myths



**NEW JERSEY  
HIGHLANDS  
COALITION**

## **MYTH 1: "YOUNG TREES SEQUESTER MORE CARBON AT A FASTER RATE THAN OLDER TREES."**

Fact: Larger trees absorb far more carbon and at a much faster rate and contribute exponentially more storage of greenhouse gases than younger trees<sup>1</sup> Left unlogged, native forest species will live for centuries of accelerating carbon sequestration as they grow. The loss of large trees reduces the forest's ability to store carbon, which will not be regained for decades or centuries

## **MYTH 2: "LOGGING INCREASES BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY."**

Fact: New Jersey forests vary widely in composition and are a host to many species of plants and animals. Many of these species rely on intact, mature, forest interior habitats which are prime targets for logging because they contain the oldest, largest, most valuable timber.<sup>2</sup> When these areas are logged—especially by mechanized equipment—the soils are disturbed, inviting invasive species that replace the native species, which are consumed by overabundant deer populations. The result is a forest which is much less diverse.<sup>3</sup>



## **MYTH 3: "LOGGING IS NECESSARY TO KEEP FORESTS HEALTHY."**

Fact: New Jersey's most mature and least fragmented forests are complex, adaptive systems that are capable of regenerating following a natural disturbance. Native pests and diseases are a natural part of the regenerative process, and forests have the ability to replace dead and dying trees with new growth, providing the appropriate amount of canopy clearance for new species to thrive. Dead and dying trees provide habitat for diverse wildlife species and return nutrients to the soil, which is necessary for new growth.

## **MYTH 4: "LOGGING BOOSTS FOREST RESISTANCE TO PESTS AND DISEASE."**

Fact: Preemptive removal of threatened trees does not make a forest more resistant. Dead trees do not pass on genes for disease resistance.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, logging forests significantly decrease a forest's ability to resist non-native diseases and pathogens borne by non-native species including Beech Leaf Disease, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, and Spotted Lanternfly which will spread more easily among younger, less robust trees.

## **MYTH 5: "THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF 'YOUNG FOREST' HABITAT."**

Fact: Young Forests are overabundant in New Jersey and throughout the Northeast due to human development.<sup>5</sup> Edge habitats exist along roadways, agriculture sites, utility rights of way, suburban parks, and in interior forests when trees die naturally or because of natural events such as windstorms. Early successional habitat and other young forests are abundant and should not be carved out of all-too-rare mature natural forests. Forest interior species (birds and plants) are far more threatened than species that prefer openings and edges.

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## MYTH 6: "LOGGING CAN INCREASE FOREST RESILIENCE."

**Fact:** Our most mature, intact forests are the most climate resilient because they sequester far more carbon than any young or planted forest. These forests support the greatest diversity of species, and provide the highest level of ecosystem services, such as storing and filtering water, and providing access to recreation.<sup>6</sup>



## MYTH 7: "FOREST BIOMASS IS A RENEWABLE, CARBON NEUTRAL FUEL."

**Fact:** It takes decades for a forest to regrow once it is clear-cut. The use of mechanized harvesting equipment disturbs the soil, changes its composition, which alters what will grow back. Invasive species find footholds in the disturbed soils and the new forest edge encourages more deer. The result is that native species are succeeded by invasive species, reducing the biodiversity of the forest. Furthermore, burning forest biomass emits more carbon dioxide than coal.<sup>7</sup>

## MYTH 8: "NEW JERSEY'S FORESTS ARE PROTECTED FROM LOGGING."

**Fact:** Public forests in New Jersey are protected from development, but enjoy no protections against logging for a myriad of reasons. Unlike private forests, there are currently no rules or regulations on how New Jersey public forests should be managed. The most valuable timber in the state is located in mature public forests, and these forests have been targets for logging.

## MYTH 9: "DURABLE WOOD PRODUCTS ARE A GOOD CARBON STORAGE SOLUTION."

**Fact:** Most of the biomass of wood removed from the forest for durable wood products is lost during processing.<sup>8</sup> Every step of processing wood products, including transportation, requires energy and drives up carbon emissions. The loss of trees reduces forests' ability to store carbon, which will not be regained for decades or centuries. Intact, living forests continue to accumulate and increase the rate of accumulation indefinitely.



**For more information**

visit <https://njhighlandscoalition.org/newjerseyforestry> or scan the QR Code

# References



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