

VersoView®

A Winning Combination for Healthy Forests: Paper Manufacturers and Family Tree Farmers Keep U.S. Forests Vibrant and Productive for Future Generations

While it might seem counter-intuitive, harvesting trees to make paper and other forest products is one of the most effective ways to keep forests healthy and productive. Much of the wood that goes into U.S.-manufactured paper products, including Verso's, comes from small, family owned forests. The demand for wood to make paper products gives family tree farmers the financial incentive to keep their lands forested rather than selling them for development or conversion to other non-forest uses with lower environmental benefits. And because Verso only uses wood from responsibly managed forests, the landowners we purchase our trees from have an additional incentive to grow, harvest and regrow their trees according to the highest sustainable forest management standards.

A Proud History

Initiatives to keep forests vibrant are nothing new to the U.S. paper industry and our tree farmer partners. We've been at the forefront of advances in responsible silviculture for decades, and the results speak for themselves. According to the U.S. Forest Service and the Society of American Foresters, the amount of forestland in the United States has remained essentially the same over the last 100 years at about 750 million acres. We're very proud of that, especially considering the vast amount of development during the same period. In addition, this forestland is more productive than ever with an increase of nearly 50 percent in

the volume of standing trees over the last half century.

The Future of Forests

Keeping forests healthy is extremely important to Verso, our tree farmer partners, and the forest products industry, and it is vital to the sustainability of our planet. Forests are home to millions of species of animals and plants. They protect soil quality, help clean our water and absorb carbon dioxide, the greenhouse gas that contributes to global climate change.

Two major factors help to ensure we keep the health of forests at the forefront:

- **Increasing demand for paper products made from responsibly managed forests**, which continues to be a primary driver in protecting against natural deforestation by wildfires, insect infestations and disease.
- As a result of the increased demand, the **financial incentives for forestland owners**, which deter them from converting their lands to other uses with lesser environmental benefits, like farming or commercial development.

A Better Use for Forestland?

Some suggest that replacing forests with annual agricultural crops for energy is an idea whose time has come. But on closer examination, such a change promises serious environmental consequences. First, we would erase all the benefits of forest ecosystems described above. In addition, annual agricultural crops require intensive management to



Sustainability

help them grow quickly and productively. In real terms, this would mean more extensive use of fertilizers and pesticides that may further harm the environment. And while annual crops like corn are renewable, the amount of fossil fuel energy needed to grow, harvest and process them for energy use results in significant greenhouse gas emissions that diminish if not completely negate their value as a "clean" energy source.

It's Okay to Use Paper

The recent proliferation of messages like "Save Trees. Please Don't Print This Email" are well-meaning but misguided. The fact is that paper made with wood from responsibly managed forests is actually good for the environment. Paper products are renewable and recyclable. Without them, U.S. landowners would have no market for their responsibly grown wood, would quit growing trees and find more lucrative non-forest uses for their land. So the next time you receive one of these well-intentioned messages, don't feel guilty. Instead, email the sender a copy of this VersoView.

For more information, please contact Verso's Office of Sustainability at 901.369.4154. www.versopaper.com/sustainability