

**Indicator 35. Area and Percent of Forest Land Managed for General Recreation and Tourism in Relation to the Total Area of Forest Land**

<b>Ownership</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>Rocky Mtns.</b>	<b>Pacific Coast</b>	<b>U.S. Total Available</b>
<b>All Federal land</b>	13,740 9.5%	17,848 11.7%	100,089 73.1%	121,508 58.1%	253,185 39.4%
<b>State and local government</b>	27,578 19.2%	5,902 3.9%	6,029 4.4%	41,382 19.8%	80,891 12.6%
<b>Forest industry</b>	11,847 8.2%	24,482 16.0%	2,362 1.7%	10,259 4.9%	48,950 7.6%
<b>Nonindustrial private</b>	90,712 63.0%	104,832 68.5%	28,489 20.8%	36,069 17.2%	260,102 40.4%
<b>All owners</b>	143,877 84.8%	153,064 71.3%	136,989 94.9%	209,218 95.0%	643,128 85.9%

Source: Smith et al. 2001, and National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, 2000–2001.

Table 35-1. Forest land area in the United States available for recreation by ownership category and region, 2002 (thousands of acres and percent of regional or national total that is available).

**What Is the Indicator and Why Is It Important?**

This indicator addresses the capacity of forests to provide recreation benefits. Some of both public and private forest land must be open for recreation if the full spectrum of socioeconomic benefits is to be realized. Outdoor recreation is increasingly popular and significant in people’s lifestyles. As well, significant sectors of the U.S. economy depend on growing recreation markets, and readily available forest lands are essential for that growth.

**What Does the Indicator Show?**

Nationally, there are approximately 749 million acres of forest in the United States. Of forest area nationally, 643 million acres, 86 percent, are available for outdoor recreation (table 35-1). This availability across owners varies from region to region, with most in the East in

private ownership and most in the West in public ownership. Almost all public and industrial forest is open and provides stable capacity for recreation and tourism, especially in the West. In contrast, nonindustrial forest land, a major potential source of capacity, accounts for most of the increases or decreases in the East. In 1985–86, around 25 percent of nonindustrial owners permitted some public access; now only about 11 percent permit access (Cordell 1999). This decrease in recreation capacity has been compounded by population growth from almost 250 million in 1990 to more than 280 million in 2000. Currently, across the United States, approximately 2.3 acres of forest are available per person for recreation, public, and private. Even if the downward trend in available private nonindustrial forest were to cease, population growth by 2020 to around 325 million would reduce capacity to less than 2 acres per person nationally.