

Forest Products

Background

The Lolo National Forest has a rich history of providing forest products to meet local and national needs. Missoula was the center of a flourishing forest products industry whose jobs and products were a dominant feature of the local economy for nearly a century. This continued after World War II as the Lolo contributed forest products to an expanding national economy.

Beginning in the mid-1960s, stronger environmental laws, increasing foreign imports, and changing mill technology had the following effects:

- A loss of employment related to logging, mills, and related fields; and an associated decline in the economic stability of communities dependent on the forest products industry. Other factors, such as increased mechanization and efficiency, also contributed to the loss of jobs in the forest products industry.
- A decline in the timber volume sold by the Lolo National Forest as shown in the chart below for years 1961 through 2005¹.

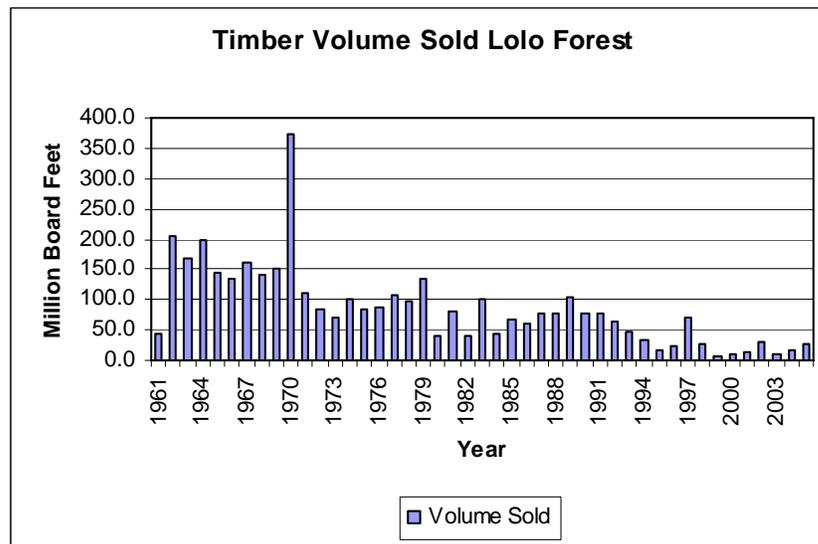


Figure 2: Timber Volume Sold on the Lolo National Forest.

Missoula County has successfully diversified into a regional center for retail, health care, and education. Although the number of wood processing facilities and the timber harvests from the Lolo National Forest have

¹ The large amount of timber volume sold in 1970 is a reflection of a strong market and the sale of several years' worth of previously unsold timber sale offerings.