

Indicator 6.28.

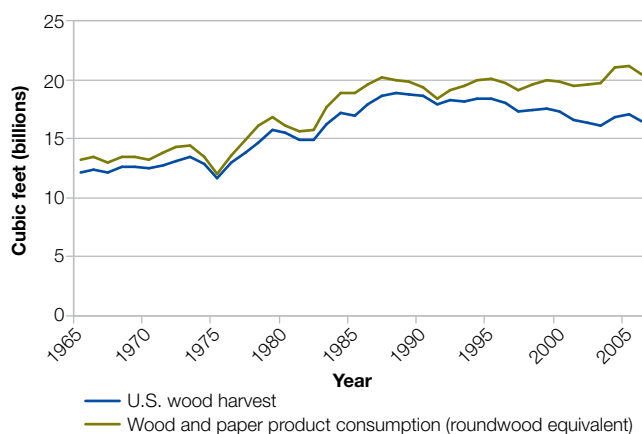
Total and per Capita Consumption of Wood and Wood Products in Roundwood Equivalents

What is the indicator and why is it important?

The quantity of wood and wood products consumed is an indicator of the relative importance of forests as a source of raw materials. Information on the consumption of forest products, especially when compared to production levels, helps to illustrate the balance between supply and demand. When demands for consumption are not balanced by supplies—net domestic production plus imports—the imbalance creates price pressures that often have repercussions in the forest sector or elsewhere in the economy and society that may call into question long-term forest sustainability.

Consumption per capita is an indication of the value people and businesses place on wood products, given their prices, prices of substitutes; their perceived use qualities; and environmental benefits and costs. It is also integrally linked to timber harvest and the many factors that influence it, including investment, management, regulation, and owner objectives. These, in turn, change timber productivity and ecosystem conditions in various regions. Harvest of wood for imports to the United States and export of U.S. products influences forestry and the forest industry in other countries.

Figure 28-1. U.S. wood production (harvest, including fuelwood) and wood and paper product consumption (including fuelwood), in roundwood equivalents, 1965–2006.



Source: USDA Forest Service

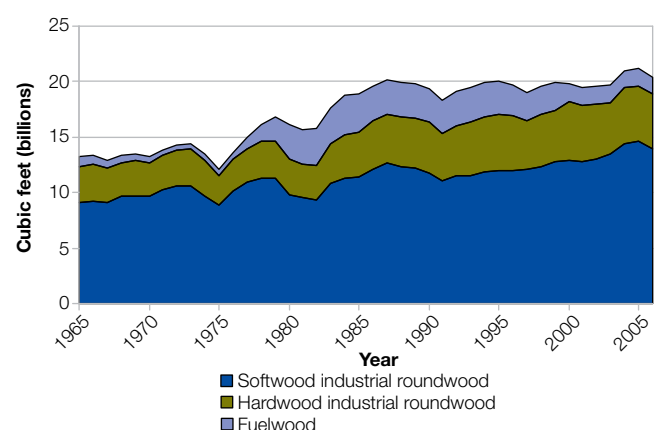
What does the indicator show?

Total consumption of wood and paper products and fuelwood, in roundwood equivalents, increased between 1965 and 1988 from 13.2 to 18.9 billion cubic feet. Since 1988, total consumption has been between 19 and 21 billion cubic feet per year (fig. 28-1). Although, over this same period, U.S. wood harvest declined.

Excluding fuelwood, wood and paper products consumption, in roundwood equivalents, increased steadily between 1965 and 2006, from 12.3 to 18.8 billion cubic feet (fig. 28-2). During this same period, use of softwood and hardwood roundwood increased 53 and 56 percent, respectively. Fuelwood consumption increased to a high of 3.6 billion cubic feet in 1984 and had declined to 1.6 billion cubic feet in 2006. Most of the increase in wood and paper products consumption occurred between 1965 and 1988. The rate of growth in consumption was significantly less between 1988 and 2006.

Per capita consumption of wood and paper products and fuelwood, in roundwood equivalents, increased between 1965 and 1987, from 68 to 83 cubic feet per year. From 1987 through 2006 per capita consumption has declined by 18 percent to 68 cubic feet per year (fig. 28-3).

Figure 28-2. U.S. wood and paper product consumption—subdivided into softwood, hardwood, and fuelwood in roundwood equivalents—1965–2006 (each line is added to the line below).



Sources: USDA Forest Service; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census

Excluding fuelwood, per capita consumption of wood and paper products, in roundwood equivalents, has been relatively stable,—averaging 63 cubic feet per year. So, in roundwood equivalents, wood and paper products consumption has been increasing at roughly the pace of population (fig. 28-4). Fuelwood use per capita increased to 15.3 cubic feet in 1984 and has declined to 5.2 cubic feet in 2006. With increasing net imports to meet consumption needs, per capita harvest declined 28 percent between 1987 and 2006.

What has changed since 2003?

Trends have not changed markedly since 2003 despite 3 years of robust construction and economic growth in the United States. Total consumption of wood and paper products (including and excluding fuelwood) have continued to increase although at a slower rate. Per capita consumption of wood and paper products alone has remained at about 63 cubic feet. Per capita, and fuelwood consumption has continued to decline.

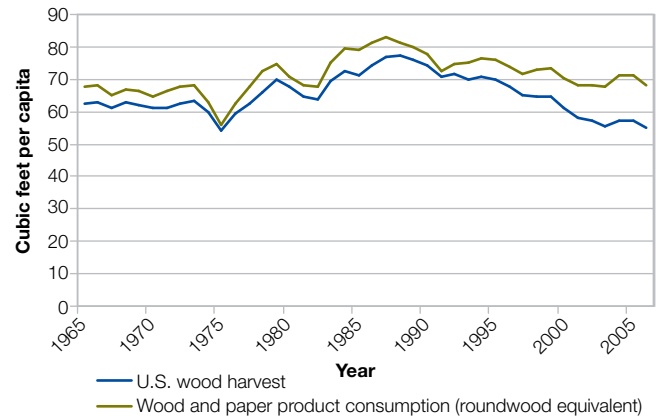
Are there important regional differences?

The data available for this report does not support the calculation of different rates of per capita consumption for different regions in the United States. Given an assumption of uniform per capita consumption rates, total regional consumption will depend directly on population, with the greatest consumption occurring in the populous east, followed by the South, the Pacific Coast, and lastly, by the Rocky Mountain Region, as shown in figure 28-5. In reality per capita use of wood and paper will vary by region. For example, use of wood for structures is higher in the northwest and lower for the southwest than the U.S. average.

Relation to other indicators

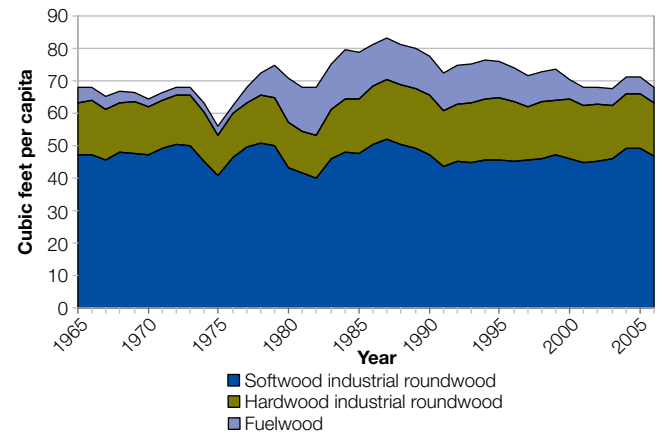
Data from this indicator are being constructed to be consistent with indicators on consumption (Indicator 6.31), recycling (Indicator 6.33), employment (Indicator 6.44), and injury rates (Indicator 6.45) by using consistent data sources and data categories to allow comparisons.

Figure 28-3. Per capita wood production (harvest, including fuelwood) and wood and paper product consumption (including fuelwood) in roundwood equivalent, 1965–2006.



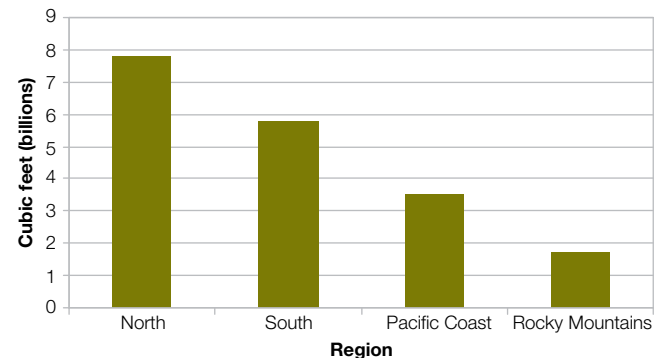
Sources: USDA Forest Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census

Figure 28-4. Per capita U.S. wood and paper product consumption—subdivided into softwood, hardwood, and fuelwood in roundwood equivalents—1965–2006 (each line is added to the line below).



Sources: USDA Forest Service; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census

Figure 28-5. Estimated wood and paper products consumption by Resource Planning Act region assuming uniform per capita consumption, in roundwood equivalent, 2006.



Sources: USDA Forest Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census