

Indicator 7.52:

U.S. Forest Sustainability Indicators <https://www.fs.fed.us/research/sustain/>

Partnerships to support the sustainable management of forests

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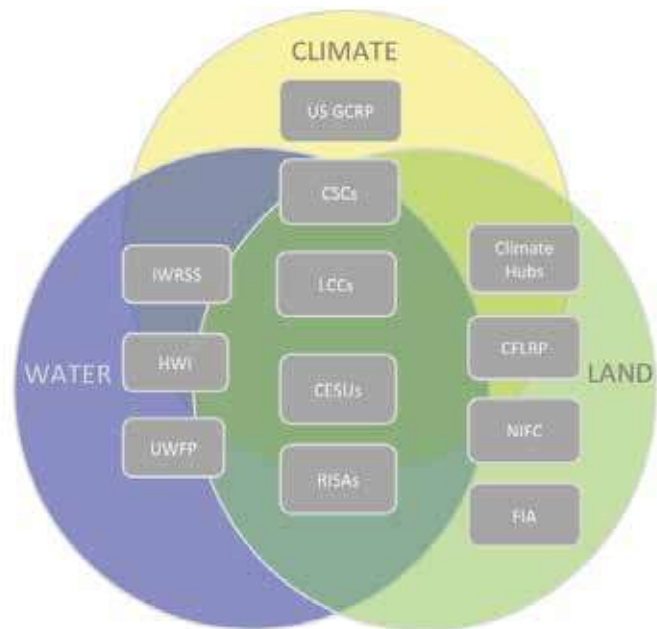
What is the indicator and why is it important?

Partnerships may involve individuals, communities, businesses, and organizations that work together toward a shared purpose and common goals. They can develop within and across sectors with a broad range in scale and with a diversity of actors. They are important tools in building capacity; leveraging financial, technical, and human resources; strengthening political commitment; and developing public support to advance forest sustainability. Increasingly, organizations form partnerships around emerging issues that cut across multiple sectors beyond forests. This indicator is closely linked to Indicator 7.46 describing cross-sectoral policies and programs that support the sustainable management of forests. The two indicators should be cross-referenced for complementarities.

What does the indicator show?

The public and private sectors use partnerships to leverage resources and maximize their effectiveness to meet common objectives. Natural resource and land management organizations have a long history of developing partnerships with public entities at all levels, nonprofit organizations, and private-sector companies in pursuit of shared environmental, economic, and social goals. The public sector increasingly uses partnerships to enhance community participation in governmental decision making, but partnerships also form as a response to static or in some cases declining budgets and related efforts to “do more with less” (see also Indicator 7.53).

Critical partnerships affecting forests evolve around cross-boundary issues, such as climate change, land use and open space preservation, and water conservation.



CESUs = U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Units

CFLRP = Collaborative Forest Land Restoration Program

Climate Hubs = U.S. Department of Agriculture, Regional Hubs for Risk Adaptation and Mitigation to Climate Change

CSCs = U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Climate Science Centers

FIA = U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Forest Inventory and Analysis

HWI = U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Healthy Watersheds Initiative

IWRSS = Integrated Water Resources Sciences and Services Consortium

LCCs = U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives

NIFC = National Interagency Fire Center

RISA = U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments

US GCRP = U.S. Global Change Research Program

Figure 52-1—Selected key partnerships and programs promoted by the United States Government that directly support forest sustainability.

Public, private, and civil society actors increasingly work together to advance climate change science, mitigation, and adaptation (e.g., U.S. Global Change Research Program, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Climate Hubs); landscape science and conservation (e.g., Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments); wildland fire management and response (e.g., National Interagency Fire Center); and water conservation and watershed protection (e.g., Integrated Water Resources Sciences and Services Consortium, Urban Waters Federal Partnership, Healthy Watershed Initiative), among many other conservation and sustainability priorities (fig. 52-1).

Land management agencies, like the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) (manages 500 million acres of public lands) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (manages 193 million acres of public lands), develop and invest in partnerships to promote sustainable resource use and protection at local to national levels and across public and private lands. In fiscal year (FY) 2012, the DOI invested more than \$256 million (about 2.1 percent of its total budget) in grants to State, Tribal, international, community, and private partners for the conservation of wetlands, wildlife, endangered species, Neotropical birds, recreation, landscapes, and other conservation priorities. In FY 2012, the Forest Service invested nearly \$780 million (about 13.2 percent of its total budget) in more than 7,700 grants and agreements with its partners, who invested more than \$535 million dollars in matching funds and resources, for a total value of more than \$1.3 billion focused on a range of issues. These issues included water supply and conservation, forest health and resiliency, ecosystem restoration, and community and youth engagement. Reliance on partners to accomplish public land management agency goals has increased over time, but also has outpaced related resources and capacity to manage more complex relationships and reporting structures in some cases, particularly at the ground level of land management. Private forest landowners and associations have fewer formal or statutory partnership efforts, but many voluntary regional initiatives among private landowners, nongovernmental organizations, and government agencies exist.

State and local forest and land management organizations also rely on partnerships to accomplish forest-related goals. In particular, State forest agencies receive financial and technical support from Federal partners, and they administer key Federal program funds to help private landowners manage their forested lands and protect those lands from insects, fire, disease, and other issues. State agencies also work through the National Association of State Foresters (NASF), a nonprofit organization composed of the directors

of forestry agencies in the States, Territories, and the District of Columbia to collectively advance local priorities in forest conservation and sustainable use. The NASF, which represents State forestry and private forest owners and interests, works in partnership with a broad spectrum of organizations at all levels, including Federal land management and environmental agencies and numerous public and private organizations.

Many nonprofit and other civil society organizations develop and participate in important partnerships associated with forests. There are several congressionally chartered nonprofit organizations that promote sustainable use and conservation of forests and other natural resources, such as the National Forest Foundation, the National Park Foundation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the National Environmental Education Foundation. Also, in 2006, the Governments of the United States and Canada, in accordance with the terms of their Softwood Lumber Agreement, established a not-for-profit corporation, the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Inc. With public and private sector partners, the \$200 million endowment develops educational and public-interest projects addressing issues that affect timber-reliant communities and the sustainability of forests as sources of building materials, wildlife habitat, bioenergy, recreation, and other values.

Private-sector organizations that directly and indirectly affect forests partner with government agencies and other stakeholders to pursue common goals. For example, water utility companies, aware of their dependence on healthy forests and watersheds and the cost-effectiveness of protecting natural water sources and supplies, increasingly engage in a range of partnerships to promote improvements in forest and watershed conditions. Other private-sector companies that depend on clean water supplies are recognizing the value of and investing in healthy forests and watersheds as well. For example, The Coca-Cola Company and the USDA entered into a partnership in 2013 in which Coca-Cola agreed to return at least 1 billion liters of water to the National Forest System in an effort to promote shared conservation goals and protect existing water supplies.

What has changed since 2010?

This is a new indicator and therefore there are no changes to document since the 2010 Report on Sustainable Forests. There has been a large increase, however, in sustainable forest management partnerships in the 2010s involving public and private land ownerships.