



Washington's Working Forests Newsletter February 2021

What are "Working Forests?"

A Working Forest is professionally managed to provide a continuous supply of renewable, sustainable wood products for building materials -- with a focus on protecting fish, water and wildlife. Using scientific practices and adhering to comprehensive state forestry laws, Washington's working forests work to give back to our entire state. Growing working forests absorb carbon, wood products store carbon, and the forest sector taken as a whole currently operates with a negative carbon footprint that supports greenhouse gas reduction goals and rural economies across Washington, a fact that is recognized in state law.

The Good News From the Woods

Younger forests in their growing phase absorb carbon from the atmosphere more quickly

As policymakers, engineers and consumers look for ways reduce the impact of fossil fuel emissions on global climate, innovation is focusing on improving both sides of the carbon equation. We look for ways to trim the amount of carbon in our atmosphere from both ends – by reducing emissions and increasing carbon absorption.

Research is finding that working forests where wood is grown for the purpose of harvest and use – often as a substitute for energy-intensive materials – are very effective engines for removing carbon from our atmosphere, primarily because trees in their growing years absorb more carbon from the atmosphere than older ones. And the science is clear enough to fit on a single sheet of paper.



The National Council for Air and Stream Improvement (NCASI) surveyed a number of peer-reviewed publications dealing with the relationship between age and carbon absorption and has produced a stylish and easy-to-read infographic that aggregates their findings. From [the One Voice Blog](#):

Is age just a number when it comes to trees?

If we're talking about how trees within working forests help address climate change, the answer is 'no,' according to the National Council for Air and Stream Improvement (NCASI). The NCASI, an organization dedicated to helping the forest products industry achieve its environmental and sustainability goals, created an infographic explaining how forests of different ages play different roles in removing carbon from the atmosphere and storing it in wood.

The visualization, which is sourced from a body of peer-reviewed publications, outlines how trees of varying ages within working forests address climate change. Older forests have more carbon sequestered since they have accumulated more carbon than younger forests due to having existed longer. However, younger forests grow rapidly, removing much more carbon dioxide gas each year from the atmosphere than an older forest covering the same area.

The commissioner's \$125 million request would fund a comprehensive strategy of wildfire response, preventive forest restoration, and implementing community-level defensive strategies to prepare neighborhoods and spaces at high risk of fire.

What the infographic shows is very simple: this science flows from our most basic understanding of biology. Trees feed on carbon dioxide – carbon absorption – and younger trees that are still growing absorb substantially more of carbon dioxide than older trees that are close to achieving their full size. As the rapidly depleting pantry of a house where teenagers live will attest, growing organisms consume more of what they need to flourish.

This concept is more than just science for science's sake. The critical role that working forests provide for a natural carbon solution lies at the heart of Washington State's Forest Products Sector—Climate Response Contributions law passed last year. As the economy and lawmakers continue to seek ways to optimize toward a carbon solution, healthy working forests and the state's entire forest products sector represent an ongoing benefit.

Click [here](#) to download a printable color PDF of NCASI's "Forest Carbon from Young vs. Old Forests" infographic.

Follow the Facts

The four pillars of wildfire reduction

Right now, we are in a welcome lull between fire seasons, but we know that a variety of factors will continue to ensure that we are at risk from the impact of catastrophic wildfires. In the past, it was primarily the residents of rural regions who faced the risks. Today, these disastrous events represent a statewide problem – thick, blanketing smoke in every corner of our state, direct destruction of property, and tragic loss of life – that begs for a statewide solution.



Private forest landowners have been making investments in preventive forest health that may serve as a roadmap as Washington considers a much-needed plan

to address wildfire reduction across all lands, as well as provide a reliable infrastructure for fighting fires when they do occur. The history of working foresters experience distilled four key principles of wildfire reduction and management.

1. **Fuel reduction** -- Strategic thinning and clearing away dangerous amounts of dry brush, followed by controlled burns, can drastically improve the health of forestland and reduce the risk of catastrophic fire.
2. **Early suppression** -- Fires are a part of nature; they can't and shouldn't be eliminated, but when the resources are ready and able to attack them quickly they can be reduced in size and severity.
3. **Prevention saves property, habitat and lives** -- Applying preventive measures on state, private and federally managed land encourages healthy forest conditions that help prevent runaway fires.
4. **Post-fire environmental recovery is key** -- By getting to work as soon as possible after fires, science tells us that we can retain the economic value of burned timber and do critical work to control soil erosion that can harm water quality, fish habitat, and create increased risk of landslides.

Are you interested in staying informed about developments in Washington's wildfire policy?

Click [here](#) and we'll add your email to a list that periodically receives special information as it becomes available.

Have You Signed?

Our drive toward the creation of a special Washington state vehicle license plate to support working forests is still moving forward. Your help is still needed. If you haven't already, [sign our petition](#) today and then please share with your friends. Thank you for helping to make sure our voices are heard.

[SIGN THE PETITION TODAY!](#)

