

# Facts About Managed Forests in Washington

**Managed forests** are those where the forest products industry – including landowners – uses practices of sustainably harvesting forest lands for wood products and to keep forests healthy, including **replanting at least three trees for every one harvested, thinning of dead and dying trees, and removal of underbrush.**

## Managed forests are healthier and less likely to burn

Studies show that managed forests are healthier and less likely to burn than unmanaged forests.<sup>1,2</sup>

Sustainable forest management practices prevent catastrophic wildfires by keeping forests healthy and removing damaged trees and excess underbrush that spread fires.

- *Unmanaged forests are 2 times more vulnerable to catastrophic wildfire.*<sup>3</sup>

## Managed forests are a greater climate benefit than unmanaged forests

Science shows that managed forests provide a greater climate benefit than unmanaged forests because they absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere nearly twice as fast per acre than unmanaged forests.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, Washington's managed forests and wood products offset our state's carbon footprint by 35%.<sup>5</sup>

This can be an important tool in fighting climate change.

- *Managed forests absorb CO2 from the atmosphere nearly twice as fast as unmanaged forests.*<sup>6</sup>

## More than half of Washington forest lands are restricted from management

Unmanaged forests allow drier conditions, disease and insects to weaken trees, contributing to catastrophic wildfires.

These wildfires not only devastate our forests and cause severe air quality problems, they also contribute to climate change by releasing millions of tons of stored carbon into the atmosphere.

Actively managing our forests through sustainable harvesting is an important part of fighting climate change.

- *Unmanaged forests are 2 times more likely to produce dead or decaying trees which emit carbon.*<sup>7</sup>
- *In 2015, the year of the Carlton Complex Fire, wildfires in Washington state emitted nearly 18 million metric tons CO2e—only the transportation sector emitted more.*<sup>8</sup>

## Managed forests are a critical tool for fighting climate change and preventing catastrophic wildfire.

For more information, email [info@wfpa.org](mailto:info@wfpa.org).

1 "Science says thinned forests are healthy forests," United States Forest Service, Mar 2022

2 University of Idaho Moscow, College of Natural Resources Study, "Wildland Fire Management: Are actively managed forests more resilient than passively managed forests?" Oct 2013

3 Congressional Budget Office Report, "Wildfires" Jun 2022

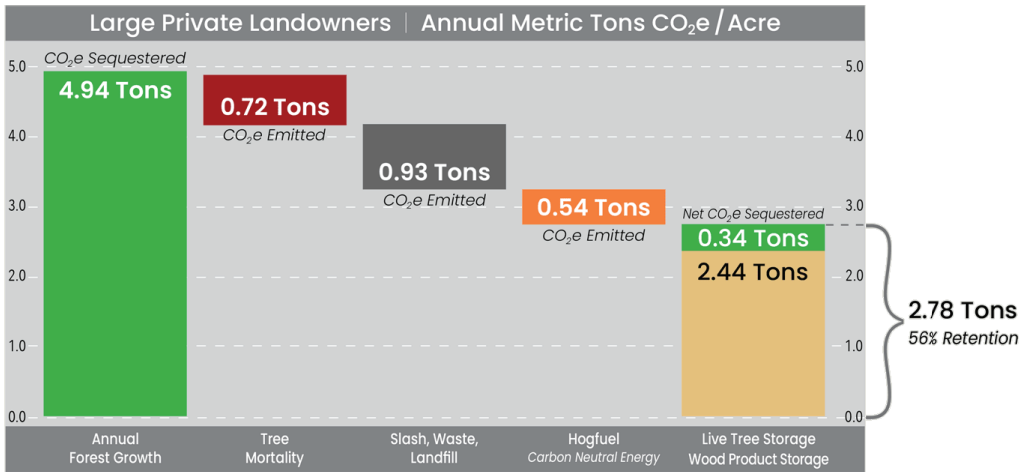
4, 6, 7 University of Washington School of Environmental Sciences Study, "Global Warming Mitigating Role of Forests in Washington State, by Land Ownership Type," 2023

5 "The ECY and CTED Washington State Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Reference Case Projections, 1990-2020," Dec 2007

8 Washington State Department of Natural Resources Report, "Estimate of Carbon Emissions from 2014-2018 Wildfires in Washington State," Jun 2020

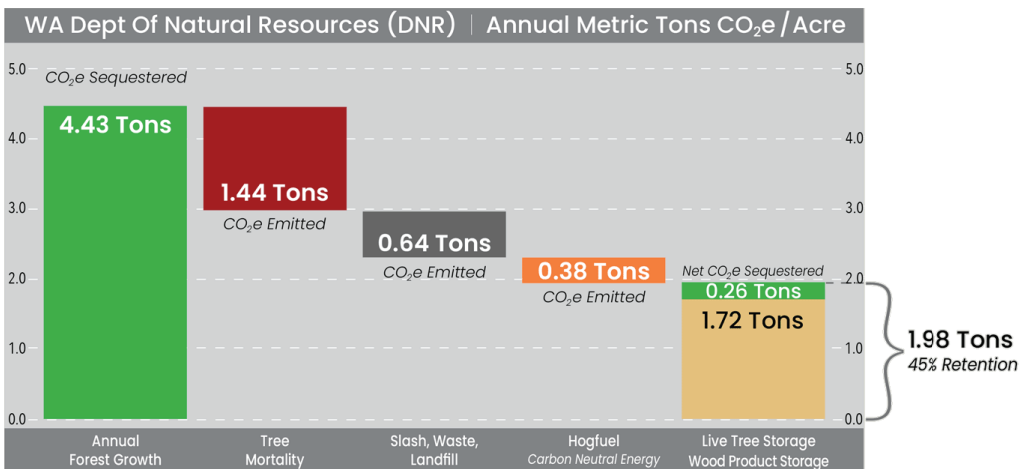


# Managed Forests in Washington Are an Important Part of Fighting Climate Change

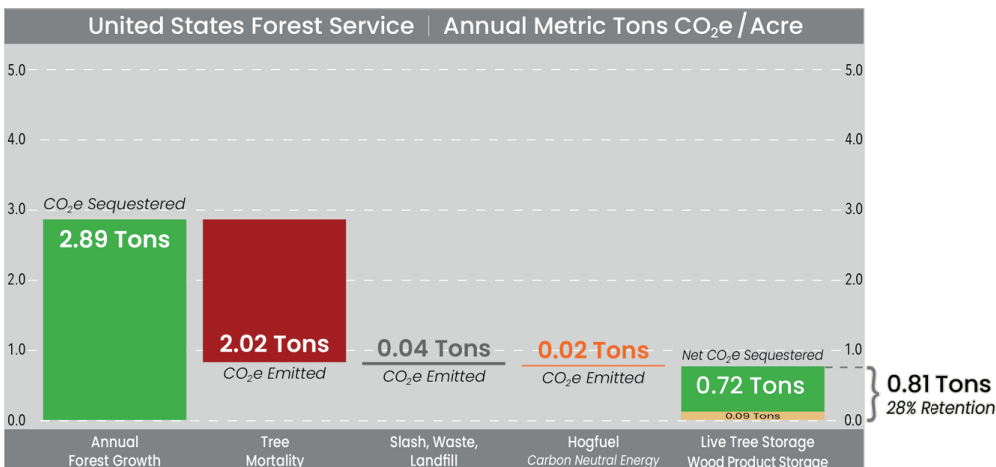


**Managed forests absorb carbon dioxide *nearly twice as fast* per acre than unmanaged forests at 4.94 vs 2.89 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e.**

After deducting emissions from mortality & harvest, carbon stored per acre in live trees and wood products is 3x greater than unmanaged forests at 2.78 vs .81 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e.



**DNR forests are actively managed, but more than 1/2 of these state forests, or a million acres are set aside for conservation.** Carbon absorption per acre is almost as high as intensively managed private forests, but emissions from mortality is doubled to 32% of growth and carbon stored is 30% lower per acre.



**Unmanaged federal forests absorb carbon at about 1/2 the rate per acre as actively managed forests due to overstocked stands that depresses growth and increases the risk for wildfire.** Mortality is 70% of growth and carbon stored in the forest and wood products is just .81 MT/acre – just 1/3 of managed forests.