

# FOREST FUTURES: LETTING HOPE TAKE ROOT

Key takeaways from the publication



This quick guide illuminates our shared understanding of forest stewardship, presenting three plausible trajectories for the future of our forests.

## FORESTS' PRECARIOUS POSITION

When **forests** are **resilient**, they have a positive impact on the well-being of **people** and the **planet**. Forests have cultural significance, social relevance, and contribute to economic security. Crucially, they offer ecosystem services that keep environmental balances in check.

### • 18 PER CENT

Global proportion of total human-driven carbon emissions<sup>1</sup> that forests removed from the atmosphere each year between 2001 and 2019.

### • OVER A THIRD

Proportion of world's population<sup>2</sup> that relies on forests for livelihoods, food, water, fuel, and medicine.

### • 68 PER CENT

Proportion of mammal species<sup>3</sup> that live in the world's forests, alongside 75 per cent of birds, and 80 per cent of amphibians, with 60 per cent of vascular plant species housed in tropical forests.

But we are in an era defined by the intertwined crises of climate change, biodiversity collapse, and increasing social inequality. **By protecting forests, we protect their ability to tackle these global crises**, enabling them to deliver social, cultural, and economic benefits. The positive impact of forests is not a given – it is **dependent on ongoing sustainable management**, which is still **not widely embraced**.

### • 1 MILLION

Number of animal and plant species<sup>4</sup> that currently face extinction.

### • 70 PER CENT

This is how much more raw materials are extracted<sup>5</sup> from the planet today compared to rates in the year 2000.

<sup>1</sup> WWF 2022 Living Planet Report

<sup>2</sup> WWF Forest Initiatives webpage resource

<sup>3</sup> FAO 2022 State of the World's Forests report

<sup>4</sup> IPBES 2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

<sup>5</sup> WWF 2022 Living Planet Report



## DEFINING STEWARDSHIP

FSC believes **forest stewardship** offers the best path forward, but we need to promote a **greater shared understanding** of this **holistic approach**, which has largely been undervalued by decision-makers.

### FSC'S KEY TENETS OF FOREST STEWARDSHIP



#### 01 | PRIORITIZING BALANCE

It promotes environmental, social, and economic interests in a harmonious balance, encouraging the co-creation of solutions to shape healthy forests that are better placed to drive sustainable economic activity for the benefit of all.



#### 02 | PROTECTING THE NATURAL WORLD

It calls for responsible restoration of degraded land, protection of natural landscapes from future unsustainable practices, conservation of resilient environments, and the ongoing active management of forests. This helps restore lost biodiversity and shape thriving ecosystems capable of mitigating the climate crisis.



#### 03 | CONNECTING FOR INCLUSION

It connects stewards to initiatives that stimulate investments in their outputs and improve their market access. These connections not only serve as economic incentives for stewardship over degradation, but also drive inclusion and diversity, as many stewards who rely on forests for their livelihoods are often-marginalized indigenous peoples, local communities, and smallholders.







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## GLIMPING THREE FUTURES

To **illustrate the benefits and pitfalls** we might experience depending on the **level of effort made toward forest stewardship adoption by 2050**, FSC modelled **three trajectories** for potential forest futures. Four drivers of influence – Forest & Planet; People; Economy & Markets; Governance – served as performance metrics.

These trajectories aren't predictions about what *will* take place, nor are they proposals about what should happen. Rather, they are **conversation-starters** offering a **new perspective** on how we can move forward together.



HOW DRIVERS OF INFLUENCE IMPACT EACH TRAJECTORY				
DRIVERS THAT INFLUENCE		TRAJECTORY 1: SHRINKING CANOPY	TRAJECTORY 2: FRAGMENTED ROOTS	TRAJECTORY 3: FOREST HARMONY
 <b>FORESTS &amp; PLANET</b>	Level of efforts made toward of forest stewardship	Low	Medium	High
	Response to climate change	Lack of responsive focus	Focus on adaptation	Focus on mitigation and adaptation
	Health of biodiversity	Collapsing	Surviving	Thriving
 <b>PEOPLE</b>	Implicit worldview	Me-centred	Group-centred	We-centred
 <b>ECONOMY &amp; MARKETS</b>	Technological advancement	Disruptive	Reinforcing	Catalysing
	Attitude towards forests	Commoditization	Polarization	Cohabitation
 <b>GOVERNANCE</b>	Governance dynamics	Assertive	Combative	Collaborative
	Collaboration dynamics	Fragile: Working separately or alone, efforts to create change fall short	Fragmented: Working together in silos, efforts to create change are unsynchronized	Cohesive: Working in partnership to create change within circles of impact

## KEY LEARNINGS

- 1 | Forests are a beacon of hope**, with the ability to deliver incredible positive impact – but degradation and deforestation can strip these ecosystems of that power. If they are to be our allies in tackling global crises, forests need to be resilient. Forest stewardship is the best way to unleash the true, holistic value of healthy forests.
- 2 | Forest stewardship is pivotal** in the best-case scenario of the trajectories modelling.
- 3 | To activate forest stewardship's full potential**, stakeholders must **accelerate collaborative learning, monitoring, innovation, and action** across sectors, interests, cultures, and knowledge systems.



To read the full version of  
**FOREST FUTURES:  
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by FSC, [click here.](#)