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Forest Inventory & Analysis Report Provides Updated Arkansas Forest Data

LITTLE ROCK, AR – Arkansas’s forests continue to thrive with forested acreage remaining steady at 19 million acres, 56% of the state’s total land area, according to most recent data collected through the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program, a collaborative partnership of the U. S. Forest Service Southern Research Station. FIA foresters with the Arkansas Forestry Commission conduct annual measurements that provide valuable data including updates to forest growth, damage, mortality, health, biomass, ownership trends, timber availability, and land use trends. The 2016 Arkansas FIA report can be found at:

www.aad.arkansas.gov/Websites/aad/files/Content/5945006/2016_Forest_Facts_of_AR_PDF.pdf.

FIA data is obtained from approximately 5,700 permanent inventory plots across the state. FIA foresters collect measurements on 20% of the plots annually and generate state-specific forest data that is reported to the U. S. Forest Service Southern Research Station. Arkansas forest data collected by FIA crews is the main resource for Arkansas forest health and forest industry data. This data was a major factor influencing Sun Paper’s decision to locate its \$1.3 billion pulp mill near Arkadelphia, as announced by Governor Hutchinson last year.

Arkansas forest highlights in the report include:

- Arkansas is home to approximately 11.9 billion trees.
- Since 1978, Arkansas forestland has increased by more than one million acres.
- In terms of forest composition, the two largest forest types are a hardwood mixture of oak and hickory species (41%); and pine species (31%).
- Arkansas contains the largest National Forest area in the South with 2.5 million acres within the Ouachita and Ozark-St. Francis National Forests.
- The most heavily forested county in Arkansas remains Dallas County.
- The least forested county in Arkansas remains Mississippi County.
- The growth rate for hardwood and pine trees continues to be greater than the removal rate.

Compare FIA reports dating back to 2009, and see full forest inventory reports as far back as 1970 through the Southern Research Station, here: <http://www.aad.arkansas.gov/forest-data>.

The mission of the AFC is to protect Arkansas’s forests, and those who enjoy them, from wildland fire and natural hazards while promoting rural and urban forest health, stewardship, development, and conservation for all generations of Arkansans. The AFC is a part of the Arkansas Agriculture Department.

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