

## International Paper's Southern Presence

The impact of the business as usual production of paper packaging at these mills on the rich, diverse forests of the American South is serious. In the last 50 years, the acreage dedicated to pine plantations has gone from virtually zero to about 32 million acres. The South, once a vast landscape of the most bio-diverse temperate forests in the world, now is home to 32 million acres of sterile pine plantations interspersed throughout this precious ecosystem. Because millions of years ago the glaciers did not make it this far South, we have some of the highest concentration of tree species anywhere in the world—which attracts a high number of plant and animal species in the native Southern forests landscape. When natural forests are converted to monoculture pine plantations, we lose that abundance and biodiversity that make the Southern U.S. a hotspot for species diversity and cultural heritage.

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According to the University of Georgia's Center for Paper Business and Industry Studies and the 2005 Lockwood-Post Directory of Pulp & Paper Mills, in the 13 states that make up the US Forest Service's Southern Region, there are 96 mills producing paper packaging. As far as impact to the South, one big player rises to the top. International Paper with a focus on consumer packaging owns 5 container board mills and 4 additional consumer paper packaging mills across the South, including Riegelwood Mill near Wilmington, North Carolina which produces 876,000 tons of paperboard per year, the Augusta Mill located in Augusta, Georgia, which creates 650,000 tons of paperboard per year, the Texarkana Mill located in Texarkana, Texas, which produces 620,000 tons of paperboard per year and in Southeastern Virginia, the Franklin Mill which produces 678,000 tons of office paper and 120,000 ton of bleached board per year.

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### Riegelwood Mill and the Green Swamp

The Riegelwood Mill located on the Cape Fear River in Southeastern North Carolina is a large and efficient mill broadly drawing wood fiber for its production from a large sourcing circle that includes rare and important ecological habitats. Surrounding the mill, leading east to the Atlantic Coast, down into South Carolina and extending north and east is the ecological wonder the Green Swamp.

The Green Swamp, home to massive cypress and tupelo, also contains some of the country's finest examples of longleaf pine savannas. The wetland areas have a very diverse herb layer with many orchids and rare insectivorous plants. There are also ecologically important dense evergreen shrub bogs (pocosin) dominated by gallberry, titi, and sweetbay. [Click here](#) to read more about the Green Swamp [Click here](#).

### Franklin Mill and the Great Dismal Swamp

### Feeder Ditch, Great Dismal Swamp

IP's Southeastern Virginia's Franklin Mill also voraciously feeds on wood fiber harvested from important ecological habitat with a sourcing footprint that stretches from the impressive stands of cypress and Atlantic white-cedar in the Great Dismal Swamp which extends from Southeastern Virginia across into Northeastern North Carolina ranging to the hardwoods of the ridges leading to the Appalachian Mountains. Three plant species in the Swamps deserve special mention including the dwarf trillium, silky camellia, and log fern. The dwarf trillium is located in the northwestern section of the swamp and blooms briefly each year for a two-week period in March. Silky camellia is found on the hardwood ridges and in the northwestern corner of the refuge. The log fern, one of the rarest American ferns, is more common in the Great Dismal Swamp than anywhere else. [Click here](#) to read more about the Great Dismal Swamp. [Click here](#).

### Augusta and Texarkana Mills and Natural Pine Forests

Near Magnolia, Arkansas, United States

Photograph by Mike Gee

IP's large Augusta

Mill is located in Georgia's southeastern plains near the Savannah River and the border with South Carolina and the sourcing footprint for the hungry mill reaches across miles and miles of nearly to Columbia, South Carolina. This mill feeds off of a mixed southeastern forest ecosystem which the World Wildlife Fund recognizes as among the top 10 in the United States in number of endemic reptiles, amphibians, butterflies, and mammals. There are more than 3,600 native species of herbs and shrubs, the highest in North America. The Texarkana Mill in Eastern Texas at the corner of Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana on the edge of the great coastal plain and sources from an area generally know as the Piney Woods Forests which stretch across eastern Texas, northwestern Louisiana, and southwestern Arkansas. Despite its name, the Piney Woods forest historically is considered a oak-hickory-pine forest. Little of the long-leaf pine forests that once dominated this eco-region remain with industrial pine plantations now widespread. [Click here!](#)