

ARKANSAS



Thirty-five million acres of wetland forests provide valuable ecosystem services for people living in the US South, including:

- Protection from extreme events
- Recreation, tourism, and aesthetics
- Water filtration and waste treatment
- Food and pollination
- Climate regulation
- Raw materials.

Wetland forest ecosystem services are worth more than \$500 billion per year. But wetland forests are constantly under siege by external forces, including urban expansion, invasive species, increased demand for timber, conversion to intensively managed plantations or

agriculture, pollution, sea-level rise, and the changing climate. Over the next 30 years, how will we protect the valuable services our Southern wetland forests provide? What can we gain if we do the right thing? And what do we stand to lose if we do not invest in our forests?

We investigated how the value of wetland forests in the US South would increase if we protected more land, extended natural riparian buffers, and managed forests more responsibly. Here are the best facts from Arkansas.

Arkansas's Wetland Forests Are Worth \$37.4 Billion

- Worth could increase up to \$2.8 billion by investing in conservation
- Wetland Forest Gem: 1,076 acre Seven Devils Swamp
- 2.5 million acres of wetland forest, including 198 swamps and 4,798 streams¹

Protection From Extreme Events: Arkansas's Wetland Forests Provide \$11.2 Billion

- Value in protection from extreme events and water flow regulation could increase up to \$830 million by investing in conservation
- Seven flood events caused over a billion each in damages since 1980²
- Since 1851, there have been 14 major Mississippi river floods, impacting states along the river like Arkansas³

Aesthetics, Tourism, and Recreation: Arkansas's Wetland Forests Provide \$9.4 Billion

- Value in aesthetics and recreation could increase up to \$760 million by investing in conservation
- Arkansas had 29.2 million visitors in 2016, who spent \$7.7 billion and supported 113,300 tourism jobs⁴
- Over 60% of Arkansas residents participated in wildlife-related recreation, spending \$1.8 billion in 2011⁵

Water Supply and Waste Treatment: Arkansas's Wetland Forests Provide \$8.6 Billion

- Value in water supply and waste treatment could increase up to \$680 million by investing in conservation
- More than sixty percent of Arkansas residents rely on public sewer systems. Many public facilities rely on natural infrastructure to reduce costs of waste and water treatment⁶
- Nearly twenty percent of Arkansas residents rely on private water sources like wells. Residents rely on forests to naturally filter pollutants from their water supply⁶

Food and Pollination: Arkansas's Wetland Forests Provide \$5.4 Billion

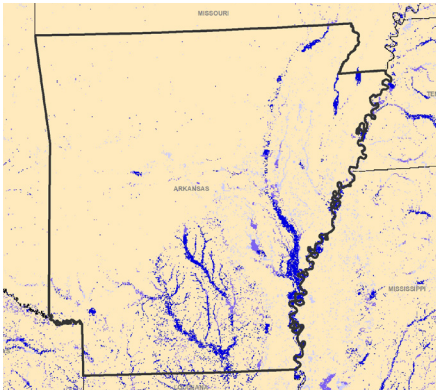
- Value in food and pollination could increase up to \$430 million by investing in conservation
- Arkansas wetland forests provide habitat for pollinators of agricultural crops
- Over 550,000 residents in Arkansas hunt or fish⁵
- In 2016, hunters purchased 300,000 deer hunting licenses⁷
- In 2016, hunters harvested over 100,000 ducks and geese within Arkansas⁸

Regulating Services: Arkansas's Wetland Forests Provide \$2.72 Billion

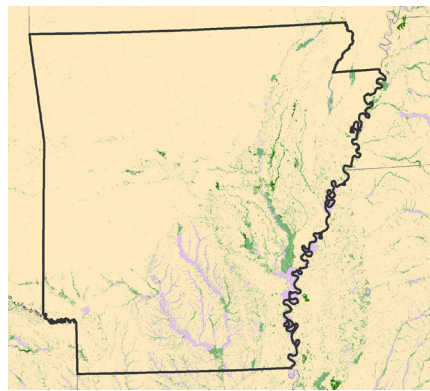
- Value in climate regulation, air quality, soil formation, and erosion control could increase up to \$96 million by investing in conservation
- There are an estimated 104 million megagrams of carbon stored in Arkansas wetland forests, and continual carbon storage reduces the worst impacts of climate change

Raw Materials: Arkansas's Wetland Forests Provide \$86 Million

- In 2011, there were 95 forest product mills (e.g., pulp and timber) employing 9,308 people in Arkansas⁹
- Wetland forests currently provide raw materials worth \$86 million in value, this could increase to \$126 million by investing in conservation



There are 104,638,000 megagrams of carbon stored in Arkansas wetland forests.



Arkansas has 2.5 million acres of protected wetland forest (green), with an additional 2,222,000 acres of wetland forest proposed (purple) to be protected.

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