

UN Recognizes Threatened State of World Forests and Calls for Citizen Attention

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On December 14, 2010 during the United Nations General Assembly, 2011 was deemed the International Year of Forests



UN Logo Representing International Year of Forests

January 26, 2011, Toronto, Ontario. Press Dispensary. No better year than this one to hold the significant title of the International Year of Forests. The United Nations announced 2011's campaign focus on December 14th, 2010 and the official launch of the International Year of Forests will take place on February 2, 2011 at the United Nations headquarters.

The title holds great weight for a number of reasons. Forests are a major contributing factor to the livelihoods of 1.6 billion people around the world, are home to millions of species, and play a fundamental role in mitigating the negative effects of global climate change. Despite these undeniable facts, approximately 50,000 square miles of forest are destroyed every year through deforestation. Since 1950, the world has lost half of its natural forests.

"I think this is an excellent move on part of the United Nations," says Michael Ackerman, COO of [EcoForests](#), a forestry investment management company. "Our world's forests are in a highly vulnerable state and yet the majority of citizens lack awareness of the profound implications of the situation. The United Nations' campaign will aim to establish a new global understanding of the need for the sustainable management, preservation and development of forests."

Forests cover 31 percent of total land area and are home to 80 percent of our terrestrial biodiversity. Having been stripped of their natural homes, deforestation has resulted in the extinction of millions of animal species around the world. If deforestation continues at today's rate, this number will only grow.

Global warming presents a disquieting argument for the conservation of our forests. With emissions accounting for up to one fifth of greenhouse gases, deforestation is a deadly activity in today's environment. Forests play a critical role in the natural

regulation of our global climate and without them, the negative effects of global warming will only hit harder and faster.

Forests provide shelter to people and animals, and are an important source of food, medicine and clean water. Forests are essential to the survival of mankind and without the implementation of sustainable forestry practices, we pose an enormous threat to future generations. If deforestation persists at its current rate, authorities claim that all remaining natural forests will be depleted by the middle of the 21st century.

Despite the plethora of companies contributing to the depletion of our forests, there are some whose practices do just the opposite. One such business is that of EcoForests. Through the growth and management of numerous forest plantations, EcoForests employs sustainable forestry practices on its own fertile land with strict adherence to FSC guidelines. EcoForests specializes in hardwood and softwood tropical timber – a type of wood with high economic value and rapid growth.

“We are a pioneer company in tropical forestry management,” claims Ackerman. “We hold a strong commitment to the preservation of the environment, and we live and breathe this commitment through our development and maintenance of sustainable plantations.”

EcoForests’ plantations are a savvy investment vehicle for institutions and private investors. Over time statistics have shown that, as an investment asset, timberland acts as a stabilizer to investors’ portfolios. EcoForests’ investment opportunities offer attractive Social Returns On Investment (SROI). Beyond its market value at any given time, an EcoForest timberland investment offers additional value in terms of its social, economic and environmental impacts. In turn, the calculated monetary value of the investment is increased.

Timberland investors not only benefit from the fact that timberland is a solid asset with low correlation and volatility, but also from the peace of mind that this is an investment vehicle in support of sustainable forestry practices – which this year, can be acquired in honour of the International Year of Forests.

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