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(Thanks to Jeff Peterson for sharing this with the group)

<https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/compass/2017/01/17/southern-forest-products-an-economic-engine/>

## Southern Forest Products: An Economic Engine

Learn more through the interactive story map

by Zoe Hoyle, SRS Science Communications • January 17, 2017



A story map developed by U.S. Forest Service researchers allows users to interactively chart the ebb and flow of forest products across the southern states.

Using Forest Service Inventory and Analysis (FIA) data loaded onto Esri's [ArcGIS Online \(AGOL\)](#) platform, *Southern Forest Products – An Economic Engine*, provides a constantly updated guide to southern timber product outputs and the mills that process them — and shows the declines that occurred over the past decades.

“This is one of a suite of tools we’ve developed using FIA data,” said **Chris Oswalt**, research forester with the [Forest Service Southern Research Station FIA unit](#). “The story map platform allows us to tell a more captivating story, which increases the reach of the data and engages partners we may not have worked with before.”

*The Southern Products* story map shows total outputs of different forest products – hardwood and softwood roundwood, sawlogs, pulpwood, and veneer – down to the county level. Users can access layers already developed for a product, and/or map information for specific products at the county, state, and region levels.



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“A user can download the FIA data and layers in different formats such as maps and pdfs they can use in presentations and other communication products,” said Oswald. “In addition to telling a story, the interface helps us provide the current information our industry, state, and other partners are already asking for in a format they can adapt to their own purposes.”

The story map includes a layer on primary wood processing in the South that allows the user to click on an individual mill for information on the type of wood mix (hardwood or softwood) used. The user can also click on each state for information on the number of mills and the number of people employed in wood processing mills in that state, as well as links to FIA harvest and utilization reports. The layer also includes a link to the mill directory developed and maintained by the Southern Group of State Foresters.

A special set of maps in *Southern Forest Products* illustrates the decline in number of mills operating in southern states that has taken place since FIA started collecting data. Another set of maps tells the story of how wood flows from one state to another, with statistics for each state on production versus amount retained within the state.

“These maps illustrate the storytelling power of using FIA data in story maps,” said Oswald. “*Southern Forest Products* charts the history of southern forest products, mills, and the people who depend on them, and can be used to help forecast changes in areas such as bioenergy. One of the great strengths of the story map platform is the ability to update maps or generate new maps as soon as data is updated or added.”

**Access Southern Forest Products – An Economic Engine.**

For more information, email Chris Oswald at [coswalt@fs.fed.us](mailto:coswalt@fs.fed.us).

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