

Introduction

America's woodland owners are a diverse mix of people who have many and varied reasons for owning land—they include rugged outdoorsmen, country folk, urbanites, farmers, environmentalists, avid hunters, and many other groups. To help make sense of these differences, we have identified key variables that help to predict landowners' decisions and actions.

People own land for a number of reasons, including woodland amenities, financial objectives, or a mix of the two. Their willingness to participate in woodland management activities usually reflects these objectives. While it is true that each landowner is different, the landowning population in the U.S. actually shows quite little variation in what factors they report to be most important to them. Most landowners say that beauty, wildlife, legacy, privacy, and nature are important to them, while fewer own woods for investment, timber, and non-timber forest products. A large proportion say that they plan to do some sort of wildlife habitat improvement on their land—this presents a huge opportunity to engage woodland owners in stewardship activities.

Common barriers to management include lack of knowledge or experience, unfamiliarity with resources and services available, mistrust of authority, and strong opinions about how woods should or should not be managed. It is important to note that most landowners name the same concerns about their land, including keeping it intact for the future, external pressures such as trespassing, and forest health.

Basic Statistics

Number and Acreage

- Estimated number of ownerships in this group: **1,662,000**.
- This group constitutes **100%** of total family woodland owners in this geography with 10+ acres.
- Total acreage covered by these ownerships: **140,453,000 acres**.
- This is **100%** of the total acres held in wooded acreage of 10+ acres.

Land Tenure

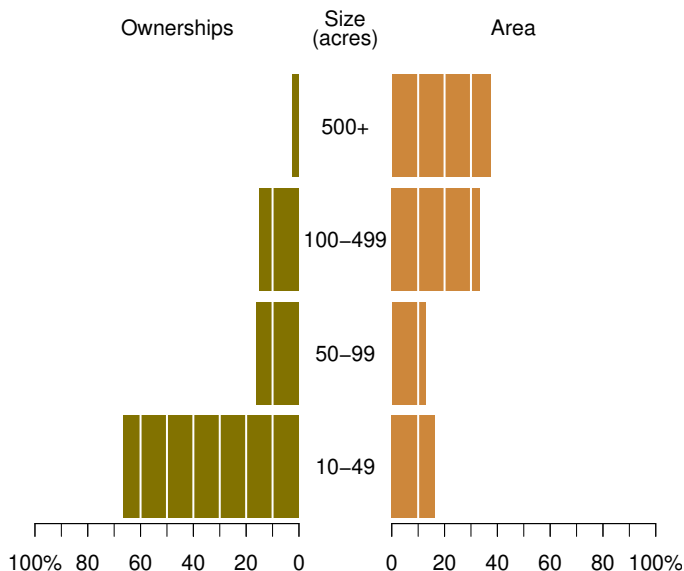
- Average land tenure is **24 years**.
- **18%** have owned this land for less than 10 years.

Percent of landowners that say their woods are

- Part of their home: **59%**
- Part of cabin or vacation home: **12%**
- Part of their farm or ranch: **30%**

Size of Holdings

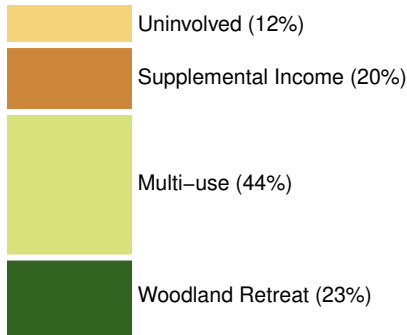
The bars on the left show the proportion of woodland owners in this group who own land parcels of specified sizes. The bars on the right show how the wooded acreage held by this group of landowners is distributed among the specified parcel sizes.



Landowner Attitudes

TELE Segmentation

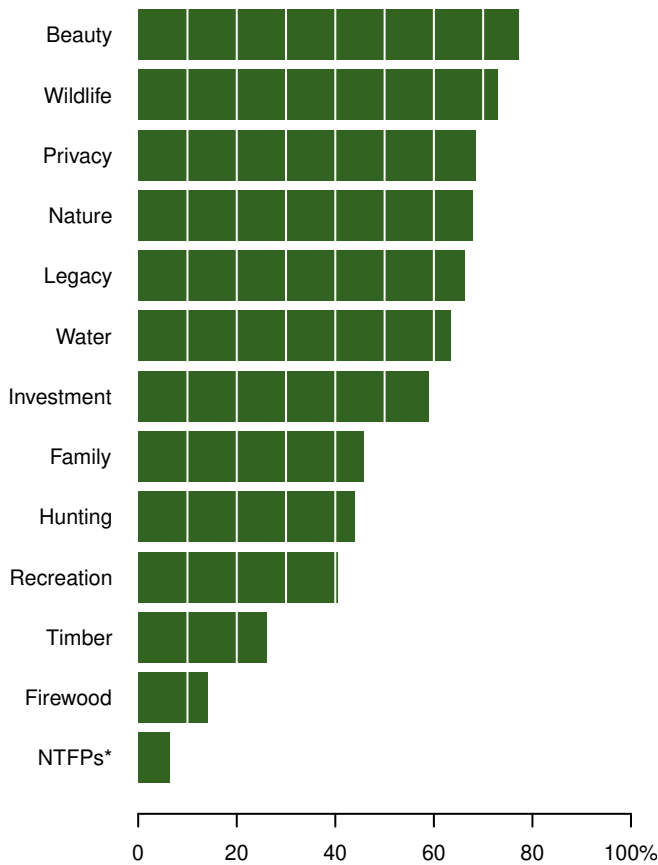
Shows how the landowners in this group are distributed among the TELE attitudinal segments.



90% of the landowners are classified as Prime Prospects. This means they have good stewardship attitudes but are not highly engaged in managing their land.

Reasons for Owning Woods

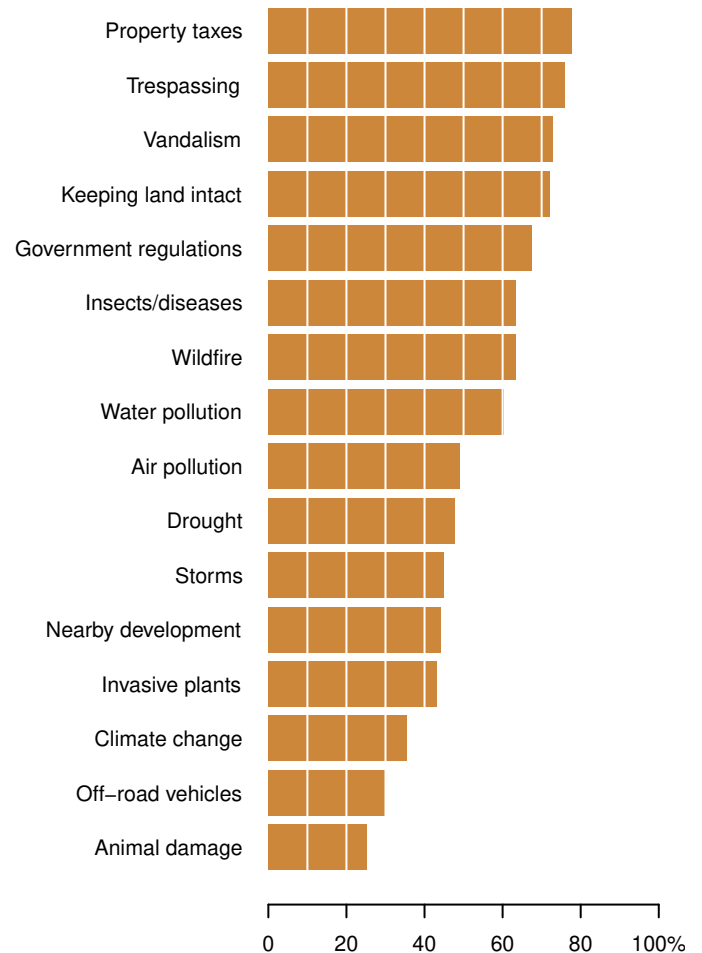
The percentage of landowners in this group who cited each of these reasons for owning land as important or very important to them.



* Non-timber forest products

Landowner Concerns

The percentage of landowners in this group who said they are concerned or greatly concerned about each of these factors.

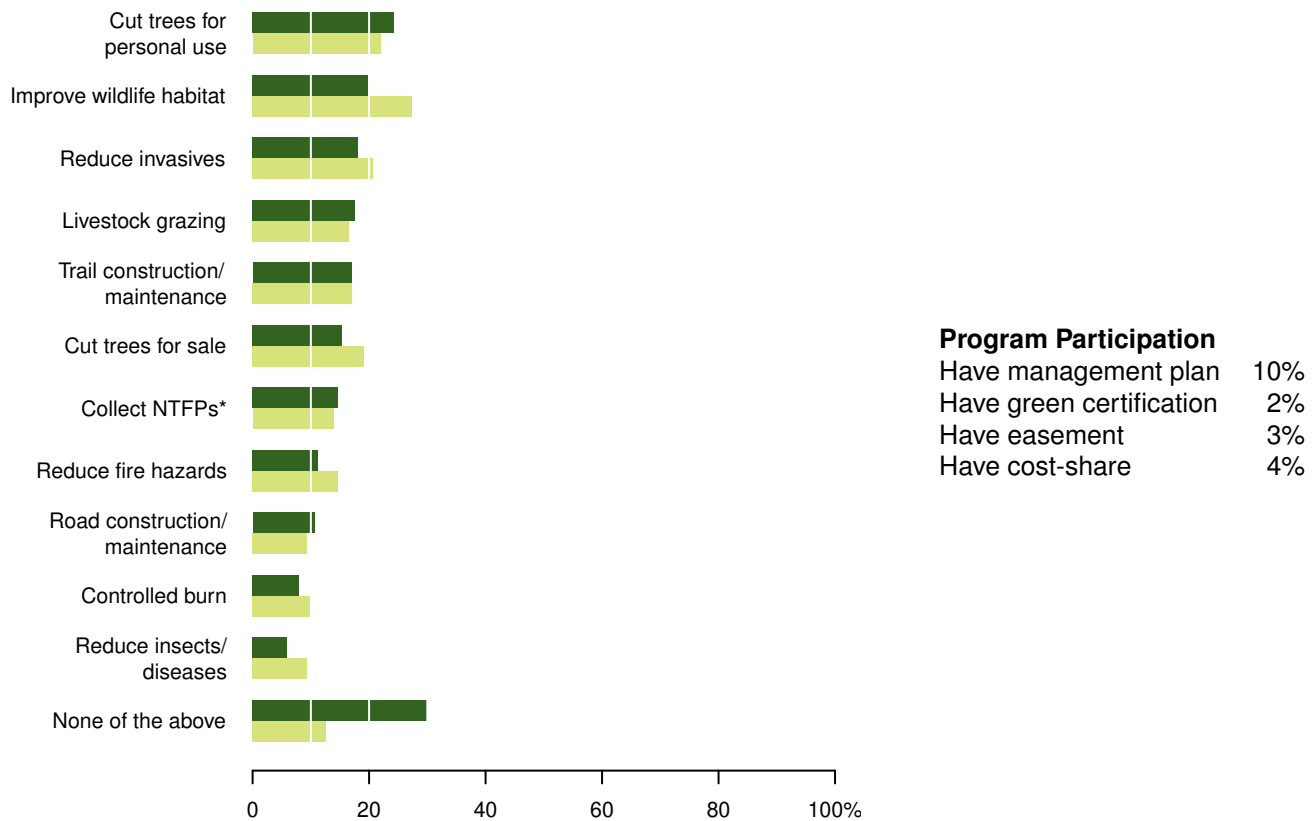


Activities on the Land

TELE classifies **15%** of the landowners in this group as active managers. This means that they have done at least four of the following activities on their land.

Past and Future Activities

The dark green bars show the proportion of woodland owners in this group that have done each of these activities in the past five years. The light green bars show the proportion who say they are likely or extremely likely to do that activity in the next five years.



Program Participation	
Have management plan	10%
Have green certification	2%
Have easement	3%
Have cost-share	4%

Advice

16% of the landowners in this group have received advice or information about care, management or protection of their woodland in the past five years.

Sources of Advice

The proportion of landowners that said they have received advice from each of these sources in the past five years.

State or local government employee	6%
Extension agent/forester	5%
Federal government employee	1%
Private consultant	8%
Another landowner	3%
Family member or friend	4%
Other	1%

Preferred Modes

The proportion of landowners who said that they would prefer to receive advice or information in the following ways.

Talk to someone	12%
Have someone visit my land	8%
Written materials/ publications	3%
Internet	2%
Email	1%
Conference/Workshop	2%
Other	1%

Knowledge and Values

78% of these landowners say they know their woodland very well.

46% of these landowners want to know more about their woodland.

70% of these landowners have a strong emotional attachment to their woodland.

59% of these landowners feel their woodland provides benefits to their community.

Future Plans

85% of these landowners want their wooded land to stay wooded.

17% say they plan to sell or transfer their land in the next 5 years.

26% say they would sell their land if offered the right price.

Demographics

Average age: **66 years**

52% have a college education or higher

11% rely on their woods for at least 5% of their income

Non-minority: **91%** Minority: **9%**

Male: **73%** Female: **27%**



These landowner profiles have been developed by the Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively program (TELE), formerly known as the Sustaining Family Forests Initiative (SFFI). TELE is a collaboration between the USDA Forest Service and the Center for Nonprofit Strategies. TELE aims to gain and disseminate comprehensive knowledge about family forest owners throughout the United States. For more information about TELE, visit www.engaginglandowners.org. The profiles use data from the National Woodland Owner Survey (NWOS) conducted by the USDA Forest Service. The data in this specific summary are based on a sample of 3,075 families and individuals that own 10 or more acres of woodland in Southern U.S. collected between 2017 and 2018. For more information about the NWOS, visit www.fia.fs.fed.us/nwos.