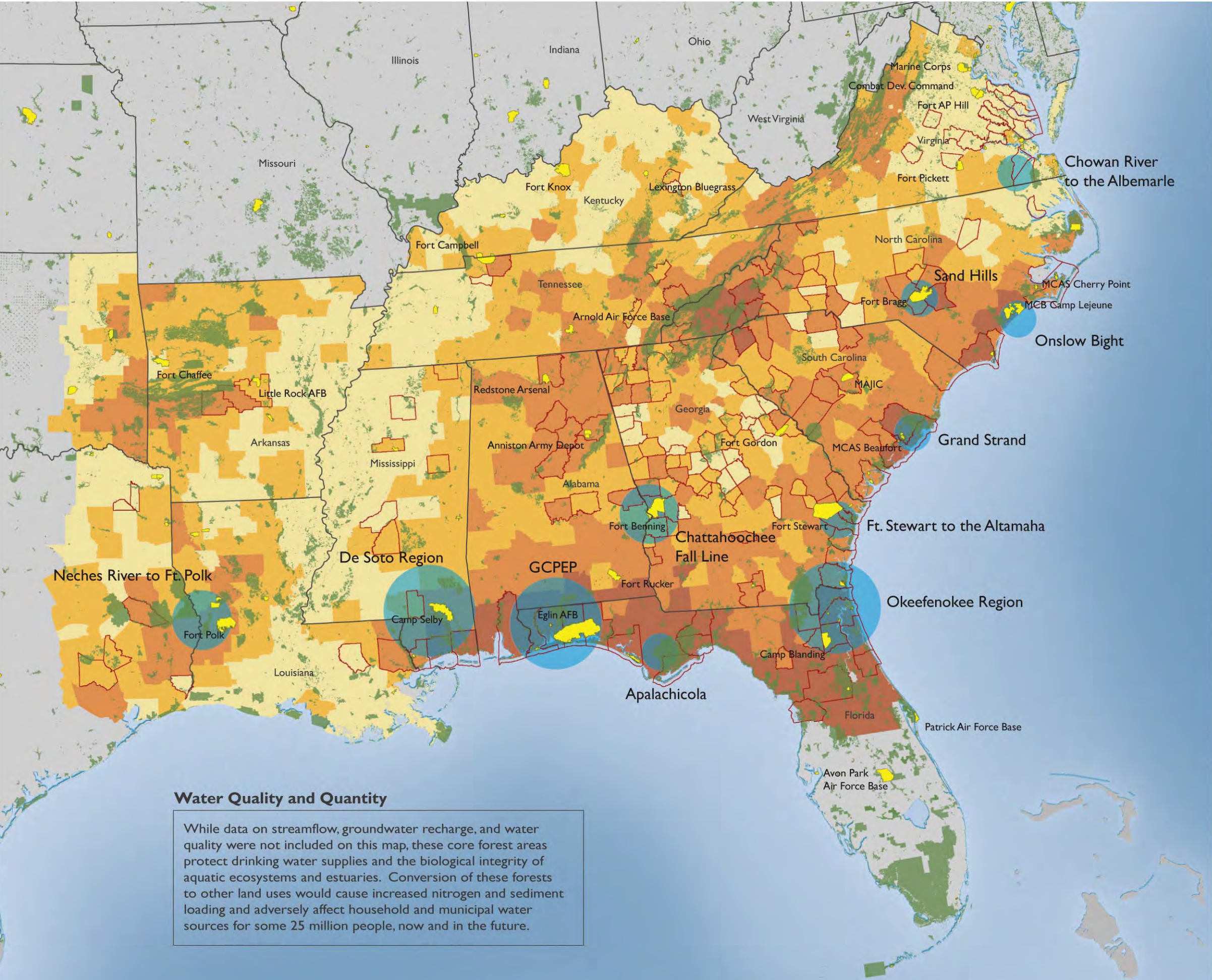


Core Working Forest Areas

Prepared by the **Open Space Institute** in collaboration with the **Partnership for Southern Forestland Conservation**



Water Quality and Quantity

While data on streamflow, groundwater recharge, and water quality were not included on this map, these core forest areas protect drinking water supplies and the biological integrity of aquatic ecosystems and estuaries. Conversion of these forests to other land uses would cause increased nitrogen and sediment loading and adversely affect household and municipal water sources for some 25 million people, now and in the future.



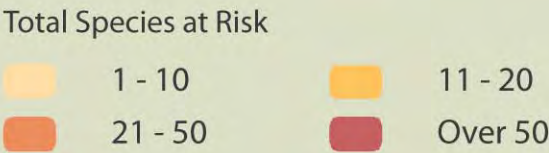
Forest Conversion Pressure

Counties with investor-owned forests predicted to lose more than 10% of forestland by 2060

Conserved/Public Land

Military Installation

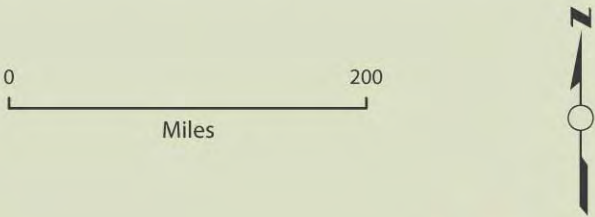
Protected/Public Land



The 11 core working forest areas serve as critical anchors for working forestry, provide multiple environmental benefits and are at risk of conversion to other uses. These regions share the broader challenges of having both excellent tree-growing conditions and are desirable for housing and will ultimately determine the future of working forestry and the multiple public values it provides to the Southeast.

We hope these maps can stimulate increased dialogue about the importance of these places, and direct scarce public and philanthropic dollars to ensure their protection.

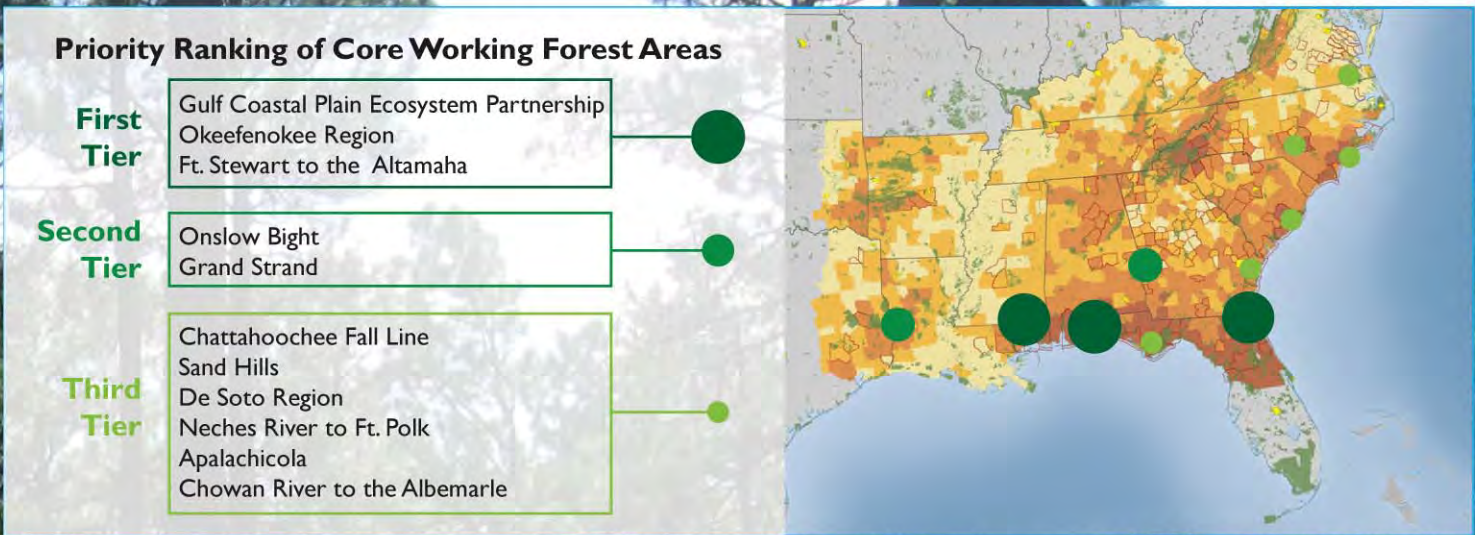
To access related reports, go to www.osiny.org/reports



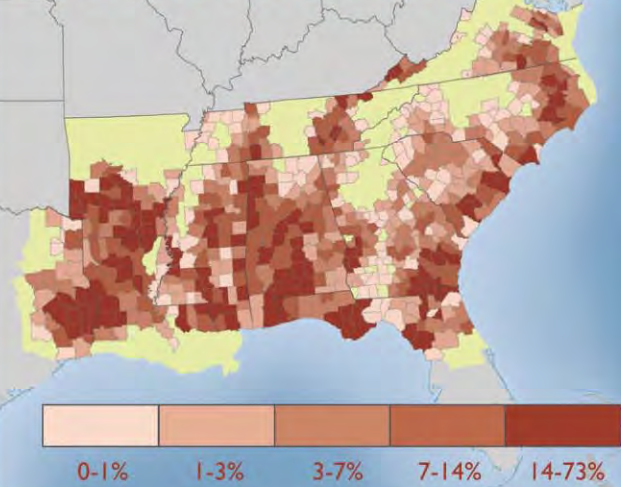
Data Sources
Open Space Institute, U.S. Forest Service
Protected Areas Database, National Conservation
Easement Database, The Conservation Fund, U.S.
Census Bureau, Natural Earth

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A committee made up of NGOs, government and land managers prioritized regions with (1) extensive, large private forest investments, (2) critical to at-risk species, (3) strong wood markets, but (4) at significant risk of conversion. They also considered the amount of existing conservation land, areas with influential political representation, the availability of public and private funding for conservation and the conservation capacity in the area. Each candidate site was given a score and the top 11 scoring regions are included in this map. Long leaf restoration, the presence of Department of Defense bases and water quality were also considered but not ranked separately. The relative scoring of the final core working forest areas are shown to the right.



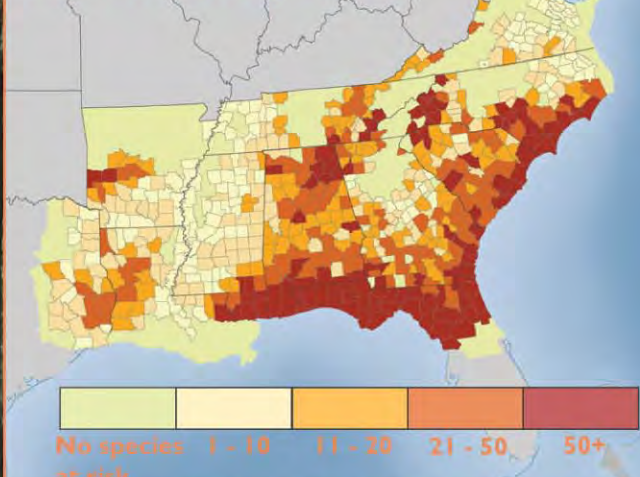
1. Private Forest Investment



A total of nearly 30 Timber Investment Management Organizations and Real Estate Investment Trusts own nearly 23 million acres across the Southeast. This is the largest concentration of industrial forest investment in the United States. These large ownerships create an opportunity to work at broad scales to conserve forestland.

OSI worked directly with private forestland owners and other partners to compile a database of ownerships across the Southeast. As shown here, this data provides a snapshot of the locations of the largest private holdings in the southeastern United States. The concentration of ownerships within the Coastal Plain is evident here with the greatest density of ownerships in the Gulf Coastal Plain. The highest ranked counties have as much as 15% of land in large forest ownerships. Data for all other maps was limited to regions with larger forest ownership.

2. At-Risk Species

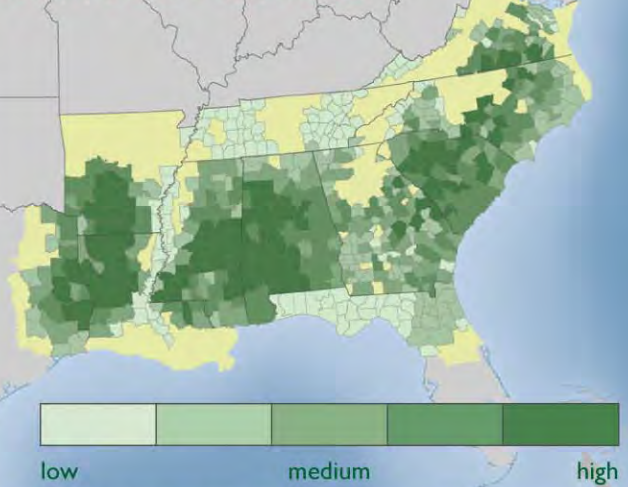


The coastal plain, where the majority of TIMO and REIT land is located, is a critical region for conservation of at-risk species. Traditional plantation management does not provide the diversity of habitats originally provided by long leaf forests. However, these vast acreage of working forests are critical buffers to public conservation lands and increasing incentives for long leaf management are resulting in the restoration of additional long leaf acreage even on industrial lands.

The US Forest Service *Forests On the Edge* project worked with NatureServe in 2009 to develop a dataset identifying the number of at-risk species on private forestlands. The dataset is the first to separate out the contribution of private forestland to at-risk species protection. The data is aggregated by county with the highest ranked housing as many as 128 at-risk species. The data has been generously provided by the USFS for use in this study.

This data layer indicates the locations with the best access to markets, highest prices and best growing conditions for working forests. Access to strong wood markets is critical to retaining land in forest use. Market strength is a composite of mill competitiveness, stumpage prices and tree growth rates. American Forest Management, a forestry consultant, created this index. First they developed a procurement zone around each mill based on the type of mill and the consumption and calculated the overlap to identify the competitiveness for each county. OSI then created a data layer of pine and hardwood stumpage. For these analyses, Timber Mart-South (TMS) reporting service was used for pine saw-timber, pine chip ‘n’ saw, pine pulpwood, mixed hardwood saw-timber, and hard pulpwood. Lastly, the U. S. Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) data was utilized to develop both a pine and a hardwood growth estimate by county.

3. Wood Markets



According to the *Southern Forest Future* project, over the next 50 years, urbanization is forecasted to produce a loss of between 11 million and 23 million acres (7% to 13%) of private forestland across the Southeast. The implication of forest loss is significant. Chattahoochee County, Georgia, is anticipated to lose the greatest amount – a full 85% of private forest cover. This county serves as a critical watershed for Atlanta and the losses will likely have great impact on both water quantity and quality, while decreasing the habitat and recreational opportunities available in this area.

The *Southern Forest Future* project generously provided data for this project.

4. Conversion Pressure

