

# Forest Futures

## A Monthly Horizon Scanning Summary



**USES**  
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This publication highlights emerging trends and issues that may have important implications for forestry, the US Forest Service, and all forest stakeholders in the future. It is one product of the “horizon scanning” project between the [USES Strategic Foresight Group](#) and the [University of Houston’s Foresight program](#).

***Horizon scanning** involves searching a wide range of sources for emerging issues in the internal and external environment of an organization or field. The goal is to find emerging indications of important future developments so planners, managers, and policy makers can plan accordingly and take timely action. Horizon scanning emphasizes “weak signals” (early indicators of potential change), scanning broadly (rather than focusing only on changes internal to the forest sector), and the inclusion of possible “wild cards” (low-probability, high-impact events or developments).*

## SCAN HITS

**HORIZON 1 (10 YRS)   HORIZON 2 (10-20 YRS)   HORIZON 3 (20+ YRS)**

### GENERAL

driving forces

- social
- technological
- economic
- environmental
- political

### *What if nature had the rights of a person (or a business)?*

New Zealand’s [Te Urewera Act](#) granted a forest the legal status of a person. Sacred to an indigenous group, the forest is believed to be one of their living ancestors. Granting personhood to forests opens up new complexities for the forest industry.

### *Urban World: The Global Consumers to Watch*

Between 2015 and 2030, three-quarters of global urban consumption growth will be driven by nine groups, with half of this being driven by retiring individuals and elderly in developed economies, China’s working-age population and North America’s working-age population.

### *Degrowth: The Case for a New Economic Paradigm*

A different kind of economic structure is needed for an ecologically constrained world —“degrowth”, an equitable downscaling of production and consumption that will reduce societies’ throughput of energy and raw materials. moving towards degrowth as an economic structure could mean reduced consumption of timber products.

**INDUSTRY**

driving forces

**Wooden sports hall rides *The Wave of sustainable design***

The Wave, a new sports hall in Singapore's Nanyang Technological University (NTU), is the first mass-engineered timber building in Southeast Asia. Engineered wood is revolutionizing sustainable construction.

**INSTITUTIONAL**

driving forces

**Life After the Timber Bust**

Princeville, Oregon, a former timber town, is home now to a number of Facebook and Apple server farms, as well as Les Schwab Tire distribution center. While there are construction jobs, doubt and uncertainty exist as to whether server farms can provide a level of employment comparable to the former timber industry.

**STEWARDSHIP**

driving forces

**Forest Monitoring in Suriname with Conservation International**

As part of a broader forest monitoring program, Conservation International in Suriname is using Conservation Drones to protect pristine ecosystems in a small South American country. Investment in this innovative monitoring system may pay off in ways that traditional environmental monitoring cannot.

**ECOSYSTEMS**

driving forces

**Intense Wildfires to Increase in 21st Century, Says Study**

According to analyses of recent extremely intense wildfires, the prevailing climatic conditions will drive the increase in frequency of wildfires in the 21st century that destroy and kill. This "translates to four extreme fire events for every three that occur now". Weather and climate are important concerns for forests.

**CLIMATE**

driving forces

**Forests fight global warming in ways more important than previously understood**

By regulating the exchange of water and energy between the earth's surface and the atmosphere, trees also impact climate—something that should be considered as policymakers work toward conserving forested land. This affirms the value of forest

**BLOG**

forest futures

**Forest Futures: Knowing Each Tree in the Forest, by Bo Roe (title linked to article)**

How might consumption shift if we knew and could track each tree? As the cost of sensors, connectivity, and data processing fall, the notion of tagging each tree enters the realm of possibility (especially given the value per board foot of prized or highly regulated species). **To read more of this featured blog post, click on the title.**

**For more information about Forest Futures, or if you'd like to volunteer as a scanner, please contact David Bengston at [dbengston@fs.fed.us](mailto:dbengston@fs.fed.us), or Michael Dockry at [mdockry@fs.fed.us](mailto:mdockry@fs.fed.us)**