

A Forest Is ...

The word forest can be defined in many different ways. Definitions can vary widely from country to country and even among agencies within one country. Compare the following definitions, which are official definitions used by specific agencies around the world.

Different Definitions of a Forest

1. A forest is land that is used for growing and harvesting forest tree species.
2. A forest is a large, densely wooded area that is found in a remote area with few people.
3. A forest is land on which the vegetation is dominated by trees, with the trees providing 25 percent or greater canopy cover.
4. A forest is any land that is capable of producing or has produced forest growth or, if lacking forest growth, has evidence of a former forest and is not now in other use.
5. A forest is land under natural or planted stands of trees, whether productive or not. This category includes land from which trees have been cleared but will be reforested in the foreseeable future, but it excludes woodland or forest used only for recreation purposes. Stands of permanent crops such as rubber, fruit trees, or nut trees, are classified as agricultural lands, not forestlands.
6. A forest is land of more than 0.5 hectares (1.2 acres), with a tree canopy cover of more than 10 percent. The forest is not primarily under agricultural or urban land use.
7. A forest is a minimum area of land of 0.05–1.0 hectares (0.12–2.4 acres) with tree cover of more than 10–30 percent. The trees have the potential to reach a minimum height of 2–5 meters (6.5–16 feet) at maturity.

Source:

Lund, H. Gyde. "When Is a Forest Not a Forest?" *Journal of Forestry* 100, no. 8 (December 2002): 21–28.

Discussion

For a particular definition discuss these questions:

- Does the land have to be covered with trees to be considered a forest?
- Does the vegetation have to be natural to be considered a forest?
- Does the land have to be used for a particular purpose to be considered a forest?
- Can the land be used for recreation to be considered a forest?
- Does the land have to be a certain minimum size to be considered a forest?