

Forests & Their Variety of Uses

Different people see the same landscapes through different eyes, so it's inevitable that there's also a range of opinions on what makes forests worthwhile.

People often disagree on the relative importance of the environmental, social, cultural and economic values of forests.

But there are some things we can all agree on:

- Forests are places of great natural beauty
- Forests provide us with resources that we need and use every day
- Forest environments are the cradle of biodiversity, creating habitat for a wide variety of plant and animal species
- Forests store carbon, filter water and recycle soil nutrients
- Forests are places where people earn a living
- Forests provide opportunities for recreation and inspiration
- Forests grow, die or burn, then grow again



Who Can Put a Value on a Forest?

You can. Anyone can. Everyone has the right to their own opinion about what forests mean – and what they're worth – to them.

Our views are shaped by our perceptions, our life experience and our personal values.

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Finding a Balance

These are all simple facts – each reflects a forest value that must be preserved.

Some seem contradictory – who can be inspired by the peace and beauty of a forest environment with the sound of chainsaws in their ears? How can we build a timber-framed house or read a newspaper without cutting down trees?

It's clear that to enjoy the full range of values that forests provide, we must find a balance between exploitation and preservation – between use and protection – between society's demand for resources and a healthy environment's need for extensive reserved areas of undisturbed natural land.

The way to find that balance is to learn everything we can about our forests so that we can manage the use of them with care, knowledge and understanding.