



## An overview of Non-industrial Private Forest Owners in Northeastern Michigan

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### ***Demographic characteristics***

- The majority (85%) of respondents is male with an average age of 61 years and has at least “some college” education.
- Approximately half of them (49%) are retiree with an annual income of more than \$ 60,000 (53%).
- Approximately 34% of the respondents reside on their woodlands, while others live on average 228 miles away from their forested parcel.
- Privacy, to enjoy beauty or scenery, to protect nature and biologic diversity, as parts of residence, and hunting or fishing are all important reasons for owning the forest land.
- Approximately 83% of the landowners have purchased their property while 20% have inherited it (Some landowners have both inherited and purchased the forest lands, therefore the total percentage exceeds 100).

### ***Forest Characteristics***

- The respondent landowners own on average 130 acres of natural forest and 36 acres of tree plantation in Michigan.
- On average, 33% of the total forest is comprised of mixed species, 27% comprised of Maple/beech/birch group, 13% comprised of Aspen/birch group; 9% comprised each of Spruce/fir group and White/red/jack pine group; 9% comprised of Oak/hickory group and 1% comprised of Elm/ash/cottonwood group.
- Approximately 57% of the landowners indicated that majority of their forest is comprised of medium sized trees (5 to 12 inches dbh) while 29% have large sized trees dominating their forest lands.
- On average, 1.7 miles of dirt/paved roads are present in the NIPFs.

### ***Forest Management Activities***

- Approximately 56% of the landowners indicated that they do active management of their forest lands.
- On average, 46% have harvested timber from their forests in the past 10 years and 36% are planning to do so in the future.
- Out of those who have harvested trees in the past, more than half (56%) did not have a written management plan and 53% indicated that they did not talk to a forestry or natural resource professional other than logger before harvesting.
- Maintenance of forest health and timber being mature were the most important reasons for harvesting timber by the landowners.
- Lack of interest in harvesting and the perception that income from harvesting might not be worth the effort put into it were the main reasons for not harvesting timber from their forests. The majority of landowners (67%) indicated that they would continue to manage their forests for timber, wildlife or other natural resource benefits in the future. Almost half (49%) of them also indicated that they intended to bequest the forests to their heirs.

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Data based upon 2010 survey of Non-industrial private forest owners (Response rate: 39%)



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### ***Bioenergy from woody biomass***

- The majority of respondents (81%) are aware about alternative energy production (e.g. ethanol) from woody biomass.
- Approximately 59% agreed that alternative fuel production can create economic opportunities for Michigan landowners.
- On average, 42% of the respondents are willing to produce and sell timber from their forests for bioenergy purposes.
- Price of the timber and low investment cost are identified as the most important factors for producing and harvesting timber for conversion to alternative energy by the landowners.
- Lack of interest in harvesting timber, perception that income from harvesting might not be worth the effort put into it, and concern about the ecological impacts of producing and harvesting timber for energy are the main reasons for landowners' unwillingness to harvest timber for bioenergy purposes.
- Only 19% of the landowners are willing to harvest biomass at the current market price of pulpwood (\$24/cord). However, this number increased to 52% when the price was doubled.
- Approximately 15% of the landowners are unwilling to harvest biomass from their forests irrespective of the price offered.
- On average, 26% indicated that the price of biomass should be approximately the same as that of sawtimber, 24% indicated it to be similar to pulpwood prices, and 20% denoted that it should be approximately \$42/cord.
- Approximately 33% of the landowners are willing to establish an energy plantation on their land. However, only 8% are willing to lease their property for the same.

### ***Communication methods deemed effective by landowners***

- Publication/book/newsletter; newspaper or magazine article; field tour and internet were the most frequently used methods of communication by the landowners for obtaining forestry information. These same methods were identified as effective means of communication for the future as well.
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