



PRINT ON PAPER AND HEALTHY FORESTS GO HAND-IN-HAND

There is much misunderstanding about the impact of paper and, by implication, print on paper on the environment. Campaigns such as “Go Paperless, Save a Tree,” “National No Print Day,” and “Do Not Mail” suggest that manufacturing paper, mainly for printing and packaging, contributes significantly to destruction of forests.

HERE ARE SOME FACTS TO CONSIDER BEFORE RUSHING TO THIS CONCLUSION:

Trees from tropical forests are not specifically harvested for paper. Of all the trees cut from the world’s forests, 53 percent is used for fuel, 28 percent is used for lumber, and 11 percent is used directly by the paper industry.¹

Of the 11 percent for paper, overall, 33 percent comes from virgin trees, 33 percent comes from wood chips and scrap from sawmills, and 33 percent comes from recycled paper.²

66.8 percent of the paper consumed in the United States in 2011 was recovered for recycling.³

Of the paper consumed in the United States, about 90 percent is produced in the United States.⁴

91 percent of the trees consumed in the United States to make paper comes from privately owned forests; the rest from government and tribal lands.⁵

Private landowners in the United States plant about 4 million trees every day; as a result, forest growth exceeds harvest by 37 percent.⁶

Production forests give private landowners a financial incentive to continue to grow trees rather than sell off their land for other uses.⁷ As trees are felled, they are replaced with seedlings that eventually grow into mature trees. And the cycle continues.

But this is not the whole story. Paper manufacturers and printers often provide chain of custody certification, through FSC, SFI and PEFC, that certify the trees used to make paper have been harvested from forests that support responsible — that is, sustainable — forest management practices. Moreover, the Lacey Act amendments of 2008 require importers of paper to declare that the paper did not come from illegally harvested sources.

In the end, from sustainable forests to the renewable nature of trees and recyclability of paper, the paper and printing industries have a positive environmental story to tell — one in which print on paper and healthy forests go hand-in-hand.

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NOTES ¹ Causes of Deforestation, Direct Causes, Earth Observatory/NASA (2009). ² US EPA, Office of Solid Waste, “Where do the papermaking materials come from?” ³ American Forest & Paper Association, www.afandpa.org/PaperRecycling.aspx. ⁴ Dan Burden, “Forest Profile,” Agricultural Marketing Research Center, 2009 (rev. by Miliinda Geisler, 2011) ⁵ American Forest & Paper Association, www.afandpa.org/forestry.aspx?id=543. ⁶ International Paper, <http://www.internationalpaper.com/apps/gopaper/whowownsamericasforests.html>. ⁷ Edward L. Glaser, Professor of Economics, Harvard University, “A road map for environmentalism, Boston Globe, May 21, 2007.