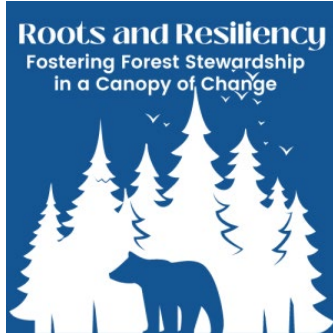


## Current Environmental Topic

### *Roots and Resiliency: Fostering Forest Stewardship in a Canopy of Change*



Forests cover 31% of all land area in the world<sup>1</sup>, making their mark on the landscape and the lives of people around the globe. Wooded landscapes are an integral part of the identity and culture of those who live there. Since time immemorial, Indigenous peoples have made environmental stewardship a keystone to their ways of being and doing. Beyond their sheer beauty, forests continue to serve as a cornerstone for economic vitality, societal well-being, and ecological richness. Fostering resilient forests is not just about trees: it's about safeguarding a legacy that intertwines with our society, economy, and commitment to environmental stewardship.

As the world studies climate change, the significance of the forests becomes even more pronounced. Worldwide, forests are experiencing impacts from extreme weather events due to a changing climate, which will result in changes to individual species and the ecosystem as a whole. To understand long-term impacts, we must understand the roots of forest systems to anticipate how forests may respond to changes and how we can help these ecosystems remain sustainable.

Fostering Forest Stewardship in a Canopy of Change is a call to action that calls on us to examine current forest practices, identify where vulnerabilities may lie, and identify necessary adaptations. In every rustle of the leaves and whisper of the wind, there lies an opportunity to create a harmonious partnership with the natural environment and original stewardship practices. To create viable solutions for future resilient forests, one will have to examine traditional ways and knowledge of stewardship, as well as scientific innovations and techniques.

**Students will learn how climate models, can help predict the impacts of a changing climate on forests; how this data can be used to facilitate conservation; how a changing climate will influence ecosystem shifts in Georgia; how these projected altered ecosystem are expected to impact Georgia forest health; and how these shifts will present challenges to existing forest management and harvest systems.**

<sup>1</sup> [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020](#)

Georgia is an ideal place to live and work – offering a quality of life that is unmatched. We are business friendly, benefit from a temperate climate and boast world class recreational and cultural experiences. Key to this way of life is the state’s robust forest industry, which supports our economy, natural resources and recreational opportunities.

In addition to filtering our water and cleaning our air, Georgia’s 24 million acres of forests support 148,414 jobs and provide \$36.3 billion in economic value. Both the vast acres of forest that span rural Georgia and trees that shade our suburban parks and line our city streets require careful management and investment.

Georgia has more acres of privately owned timberland than any other state in the nation, but many Georgians don’t see working forests in their daily lives. So, the environmental and economic importance to our state may not be obvious. Working forests are like tree farms. These trees are planted for harvest and replanted like other crops. Along the way, those trees produce clean air and clean water, capture carbon and provide jobs—lots and lots of jobs.

Most of the trees covering our state are, in fact, planted, harvested and replanted on farms owned by private landowners. So, like any other crop, it is important for the people who plant those trees to have markets to sell them when they are harvested. From paper and houses to furniture, many of the products you use come from trees.

The whole cycle—from planting and harvesting through use and replanting— is remarkable. It is also fragile. As our state urbanizes and suburbanizes, there is more pressure to develop land. We have a vested interest in ensuring that public policy and healthy markets support the growth and regrowth of trees across Georgia’s countryside, suburban landscapes and in our cities

The majority of the study materials for this topic will come from the National Envirothon's Study Guide for the 2025 Current Issue Topic. This information can be found in the first link under this paragraph (70% of test questions will come from this study guide. Additional links are supplemental information specifically relating to Georgia and the Southeast.(30% of the test will be Georgia Specific)

[2025-Current-Issue-Part-A-Final.pdf](#)

**EVALUATING INFORMATION SOURCES:**

[IsItLegit\\_infographic.pdf - Google Drive](#)

**CLIMATE CHANGE:**

[First Progress Report on the 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan.pdf - Google Drive](#)

[Representative Concentration Pathway.pdf - Google Drive](#)

**FIRE:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?si=Gtn1bUyw4qfZEKK9&v=O6Vayv9FCLM&feature=youtu.be>

**FOREST MANAGEMENT**

[\(346\) How trees talk to each other | Suzanne Simard - YouTube](#)

**GEORGIA/SOUTHEAST STUDY MATERIALS**

[GeorgiaForestFacts.pdf](#)

[Georgia Emerging Forest Threats Fact Sheet 0.pdf](#)

[Current Issue - Georgia Forestry Magazine](#) (figure out which articles)

[Forests - Georgia Climate Information Portal](#)

[The frightful four: the top forest health threats in the South today - Southern Group of State Foresters](#)

[Decision support smartphone application for forest health in the eastern United States — Eastern Forest Environmental Threat Assessment Center](#)