

TIMBER TALES NEWSLETTER

Applied Management Information from the LSU Extension Forestry and Wildlife Team

Vol. 25 Issue 003

UPCOMING EVENTS

Food Plot Workshop

July 22, 2025, 5 – 7 pm, LSU AgCenter
7101 Gulf Hwy, Lake Charles, La 70607
For more info: [337-721-4080](tel:337-721-4080)

Prescribed Burn Certification Training – Forestland

July 28-30, 2025, LSU AgCenter
Rice Research Station, Rayne, La
For more info email:
vwest@agcenter.lsu.edu

Prescribed Burn Re- Certification – Forestland

July 30, 2025
LSU AgCenter
Rice Research Station, Rayne, La
For more info email:
vwest@agcenter.lsu.edu

CENLA Wildlife Forum

August 28, 2025
5:00 – 8:00 pm
DeWitt Livestock Facility
8125 HWY 71 South
Alexandria, LA 71302
For more info email:
rhutchins@agcenter.lsu.edu



The LSU AgCenter and LSU provide equal opportunities in programs and employment.

Chronic Wasting Disease Update in Louisiana

Luke Stamper, PhD, Extension Wildlife Specialist, LSU AgCenter

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is found among a group of diseases known as the transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE). CWD impacts cervids (e.g. white-tailed deer, mule deer, red deer, elk, moose, etc.) and has similarities to the bovine spongiform encephalopathies (BSE) that are detected in both cattle and domesticated goats and sheep. The disease is caused by misfolded proteins (prions) that are replicated by the host animal and result in severe neuro degradation that limit basic nervous system functions leading to death. CWD symptomology in white-tailed deer includes emaciation, erratic behavior, irregular stances with blank expressions, and excessive drinking and urination. Disease transmission occurs directly between deer through prions that are shed via urine, feces, saliva, and other bodily fluids and tissues.



Figure 1. White-tailed deer stricken with CWD. Photo by Terry Kreeger

The detection of CWD is currently in 36 US states and 5 Canadian provinces within free ranging cervids and/or commercial captive cervid facilities. In Louisiana, positive CWD detections have been found in both free-ranging and captive cervid facilities. The first Louisiana CWD detection occurred during the 2021-22 deer season in Tensas. Since then,

free-ranging positives have been found in two parishes, Tensas and Catahoula, totaling 40 individuals.

Current regulations, emergency declarations, and notice of intent for CWD mitigation in the state of Louisiana can be found at [Chronic Wasting Disease | Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries](#). Further details regarding general information from the LSU AgCenter can be found at [Chronic Wasting Disease](#). Finally, an educational video series [Chronic Wasting Disease | Deer Ecology & Management Lab | Mississippi State University](#) is offered through the MSU Deer Lab website in collaboration with multiple partners across the southeast.

Louisiana Timber Price Trend

Jinggang Guo, PhD, Forest Economist, LSU AgCenter

Timber prices are a cornerstone of Louisiana’s forestry sector, which plays a vital role in the state’s economy. Fluctuations in timber prices directly impact landowners, timber mills, and the broader forest products industry. This article examines quarterly timber prices in Louisiana from 2010 to 2025, compares them to the Southern regional average, and explores the recent market trends. By understanding historical and projected price movements, stakeholders can make informed decisions in an evolving market.

Overview of Timber Prices

Louisiana’s timber prices have experienced notable shifts over the past 15 years. Figure 1 illustrates the quarterly price trends for six key timber products: Pine Sawtimber, Oak Sawtimber, Mixed Hardwood Sawtimber, Pine Chip-n-Saw, Pine Pulpwood, and Hardwood Pulpwood, comparing Louisiana prices (blue) with the Southern regional average (orange).

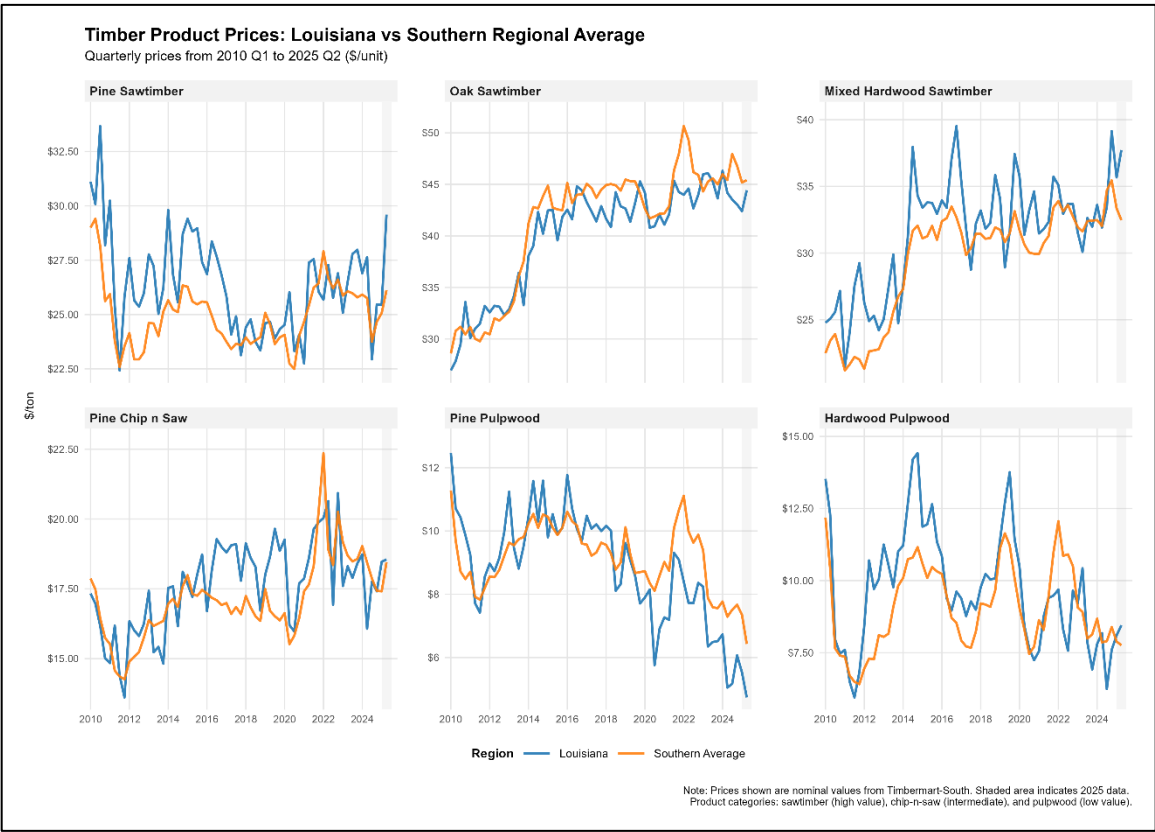


Figure 2. Timber Product Prices: Louisiana vs Southern Regional Average

Louisiana's timber prices have shown distinct patterns across product categories from 2010 to 2025. Pine Sawtimber peaked in 2010, declined sharply through 2012-2013, and has since stabilized, consistently trading below the Southern regional average. In contrast, Oak Sawtimber has trended upward, with Louisiana prices often matching or surpassing the regional average, highlighting its competitive strength. Mixed Hardwood Sawtimber exhibits significant volatility, with Louisiana's prices fluctuating more than the regional average, indicating sensitivity to local market conditions. Pine Chip-n-Saw prices fell from 2010 highs, bottomed out in 2012-2013, and recovered, closely following the Southern average. Pine Pulpwood displays notable volatility, occasionally exceeding the regional average, suggesting periodic local supply-demand imbalances. Hardwood Pulpwood shows the most extreme price swings, particularly in 2014-2016, with Louisiana's market being more volatile than the region.

Comparison with Southern Average

Comparing Louisiana's timber prices to the Southern regional average reveals important competitive dynamics. Pine sawtimber consistently trades at a discount to the Southern average, particularly post-2018, which may reflect the state's abundant private timberland and competitive sawmill capacity. For hardwood products, Oak Sawtimber prices closely track the regional average, while Mixed Hardwood Sawtimber exhibits greater volatility in Louisiana, reflecting local market sensitivities. Pulpwood markets, both pine and hardwood, show higher volatility in Louisiana compared to the region, with periodic price spikes above the Southern average, indicating occasional supply constraints or strong local demand.

Recent Market Update

The latest quarterly data reveals significant market movements across Louisiana’s timber products. Comparing Q2/2025 to Q1/2025, pine sawtimber experienced the most dramatic shift, surging 16.4% from \$25.44 to \$29.60 per ton. This represents a 7.1% increase compared to Q2/2024 when prices stood at \$27.64, indicating both seasonal strength and year-over-year growth.

Oak sawtimber demonstrated steady appreciation, rising 4.8% from Q1/2025 to reach \$44.43 in Q2/2025, though this represents only a modest 0.6% increase from the same quarter last year. Mixed hardwood sawtimber showed notable gains, advancing 5.8% quarter-over-quarter to \$37.73, and posting an impressive 18.2% increase compared to Q2/2024’s \$31.91, making it one of the strongest performers in the Louisiana timber market.

The pulpwood markets exhibited divergent trends. Pine pulpwood faced significant pressure, plummeting 14.3% from Q1/2025 to just \$4.74 in Q2/2025, and down 6.1% year-over-year. This marks it as the weakest performer across all timber categories. In contrast, hardwood pulpwood showed resilience, gaining 4.3% quarter-over-quarter to \$8.45, and up 3.3% from Q2/2024. Pine chip-n-saw remained relatively stable with a minimal 0.4% quarterly increase to \$18.55, though it registered a strong 15.4% gain compared to the same period last year.

Table 1. Recent state's average stumpage prices

Product	Price per Ton			Percentage Change	
	Q2 2025	Q1 2025	Q2 2024	Q2 vs Q1	Q2 vs Q2 '24
Pine Sawtimber	\$29.60	\$25.44	\$27.64	16.4%	7.1%
Oak Sawtimber	\$44.43	\$42.40	\$44.17	4.8%	0.6%
Mixed Hardwood Sawtimber	\$37.73	\$35.67	\$31.91	5.8%	18.2%
Pine Chip-n-Saw	\$18.55	\$18.47	\$16.07	0.4%	15.4%
Pine Pulpwood	\$4.74	\$5.53	\$5.05	-14.3%	-6.1%
Hardwood Pulpwood	\$8.45	\$8.10	\$8.18	4.3%	3.3%

Data source: Timbermart-South

The early 2025 data suggest a period of transition in Louisiana’s timber markets. Pine sawtimber appears to be experiencing a potential breakout from its historical discount to regional prices, possibly indicating tightening local supply or strengthening demand from Louisiana sawmills. The continued strength in hardwood markets, particularly mixed hardwood sawtimber, reflects robust demand for Louisiana’s diverse hardwood resource base.

However, the divergence in pulpwood markets warrants attention. The sharp decline in pine pulpwood prices suggests oversupply or weakening demand from pulp facilities, while hardwood pulpwood’s strength may reflect specific mill requirements or export demand. The stability in pine chip-n-saw prices indicates balanced supply and demand in the intermediate product segment. Market participants should monitor these trends closely, as the unusual price patterns in early 2025 may signal structural shifts in Louisiana’s forest products markets or temporary disruptions that could reverse in subsequent quarters.

What Is It Worth? A Simple Guide to Determining the Value of Forest Land

Robbie Hutchins, Extension Forestry Agent, LSU AgCenter

As I travel through central and southwest Louisiana, I have noticed an unusually high number of forest land tracts for sale. At the same time, I have received several questions about how a professional forester determines the value of forest land. If you have ever wondered the same, this guide offers a simple and practical starting point.

Two Key Components of Forest Land Value

The value of forest land is typically determined by adding two separate components:

1. **Timber Value** – the value of the trees growing on the land.
2. **Land Value** – the value of the bare land itself, without timber or improvements.

Each component is unique to the tract and can be expressed as a total or per-acre value.

Timber Value

To estimate timber value, it is helpful to divide the tract into **timber stands**—areas with trees of similar age, species, and management history. Timber is classified, in general, as either **merchantable** or **pre-merchantable**.

Merchantable Timber

This is timber that can be sold today. A **timber cruise** is conducted to estimate volume by species and product class. Using current **stumpage prices** (such as those in the LSU AgCenter's Quarterly Stumpage Report), you multiply the volume by price to calculate value for each stand. A summation of these gives the total merchantable timber value.

Pre-Merchantable Timber

This includes younger trees not yet ready for harvest. While not immediately marketable, they still hold value due to future growth potential. In Louisiana, planted pine plantations in this category may be worth **\$25–\$90 per acre per year of growth**, depending on factors like site productivity, stumpage prices, rotation age, and management intensity.

For larger or more complex tracts, with a mix of stand types, it is wise to consult a professional forester for an accurate valuation.

Land Value

Land value is the **fair market value of the bare land**, excluding timber or improvements. It is influenced by how buyers perceive the land's potential use. Forest land typically falls into one of two categories:

1. Traditional Forest Land

Valued based on **bare land value** or **land expectation value**, this reflects what a buyer can pay per acre and still earn a reasonable return from future timber harvests. Key factors include:

- Site productivity (relatively stable)
- Stumpage prices (variable)
- Interest rates (variable)

As a rule of thumb: **higher interest rates or lower stumpage prices reduce land value**, and vice versa. Over the past 30 years, bare land values in Louisiana have ranged from **\$400 to \$1,600 per acre**.

2. Higher and Better Use (HBU) Land

Some forest land may be more valuable for other purposes—such as development, agriculture, or recreation. These tracts often command significantly higher prices. In such cases, timber value may or may not be included in the overall valuation, depending on the intended use.

Blended Valuation and Special Considerations

Most tracts in Louisiana include a mix of features—riparian zones, utility rights-of-way, varied soil types, and both forest and HBU areas. Each component should be valued separately and then combined into a **blended valuation** that reflects the tract's full character.

Access is another critical factor. Legal access suitable for logging operations increases a tract's value. If access is lacking, the cost of securing it should be deducted from the valuation. Remember: **timber is not truly merchantable without legal access for hauling to a mill**.

Final Thoughts

There is no single “correct” way to value forest land. These guidelines are meant to help you think through the process. Some attributes—like family history, scenic value, or personal goals—may not be measurable in dollars but are still important.

Ultimately, your valuation should make sense to you, align with your financial situation, and support your land management goals.

If I can assist you further, feel free to contact me at rhutchins@agcenter.lsu.edu or 318-308-2995.

Bacterial Flux in Hardwood Trees: Causes, Mechanisms, and Ecological Significance

Valerie West, PhD, Extension Forestry Agent, LSU AgCenter

Bacterial flux, also known as wetwood or slime flux, is a common physiological disorder affecting a variety of hardwood tree species, including elms, oaks, maples, and poplars. It is characterized by a dark, foul-smelling liquid oozing from wounds or cracks in the bark. Large light or dark vertical streaks on the tree trunk are another sign of bacterial flux infection in mature trees (Figure 1.). This condition results from bacterial fermentation processes within the tree's heartwood and sapwood, typically initiated after wounding or stress. When affected trees are cut down, the heartwood is darker than the surrounding wood and is often referred to as ‘wetwood’. When affected trees are under additional environmental stress from other factors such as drought, soil compaction, or other root zone complications, the bacteria from the wetwood can move into the sapwood. Symptoms of this transition include yellowing of the leaves, wilting, and branch dieback.

Causes and Mechanisms

Bacterial flux begins when anaerobic or facultative anaerobic bacteria – bacteria that do not need air to survive, such as *Clostridium*, *Bacillus*, *Pseudomonas*, or *Enterobacter* spp., colonize the internal wood tissues through injuries caused by pruning, storm damage, or insect activity. These bacteria ferment sugars and other organic compounds in the xylem, producing volatile fatty acids, alcohols, methane, hydrogen, and carbon dioxide. The pressure from gas accumulation forces the liquid exudate, rich in microbial metabolites and decomposes plant material, out of the tree. The internal environment of the tree often becomes anaerobic due to water saturation or blockage of vascular tissues, which favors bacterial growth. This

process not only causes structural wood degradation but also emits a strong, sour odor due to the production of butyric acid and other fermentation products.

Ecological and Pathological Implications

While bacterial flux is not always fatal, it can compromise tree health by weakening structural integrity and making trees more susceptible to secondary infections or pests. In some ecosystems, however, the exudate can serve as a nutrient source for insects and microorganisms, thus playing a role in the local food web. The liquid produced in this process inhibits the growth of fungi inside the tree that might normally cause interior rot but once it leaves the tree it kills grass and other plants that come into contact within the landscape at the base of the impacted tree.

Management Implications

Proper tree care, including minimizing mechanical injuries and improving site drainage, can reduce the incidence of bacterial flux. Landscape trees should be protected from sources of stress such as soil compaction or root barriers like driveways and roadways. It was once common practice to drill holes into affected trees and insert pipes to 'relieve pressure' and allow the liquid and gas to escape. This is no longer recommended since affected trees generally survive well without any treatment and drilling holes in the tree creates additional locations where slime oozes out. There are no chemical treatments for the condition, so prevention through good arboricultural practices is essential.



Figure 1. Oxidized slime flux in River birch causing orange coloration.
Photo by Valerie West

Drought Stress in Louisiana Timber: What Landowners Need to Know

Whitney Wallace, Extension Forestry Agent, LSU AgCenter

Louisiana's forests have always faced their share of environmental challenges, but the prolonged drought conditions of recent years have placed unprecedented stress on both pine and hardwood stands. As the summer of 2025 unfolds with continued heat and limited rainfall, many private landowners are seeing signs of decline in their timber—especially in red oaks and southern pines.

Understanding how drought affects trees, recognizing the signs of stress, and knowing how to respond can help landowners protect the long-term health and value of their forested land.

Recognizing the Signs of Drought Stress

Drought stress in trees often begins subtly. In pines, early symptoms include thinning crowns, shortened needle growth, and tip die-back. As the stress intensifies, needles may yellow, turn red, and drop prematurely. One of the most visible signs of beetle activity in drought-stressed pines is the presence of reddish-brown boring dust at the base of the tree or in bark crevices, along with pitch tubes—small blobs of sap that indicate the tree is trying to expel invading insects.

Hardwoods, particularly red oaks, tend to show more dramatic symptoms (Figure 1.). Sudden wilting, browning leaves, and die-back in the upper canopy are common. In some cases, these symptoms resemble oak wilt, a serious fungal disease.

However, in Louisiana, many of these cases are the result of long-term drought stress. Red oaks are especially vulnerable due to their shallow root systems and high-water demand.



Figure 1. Red oak exhibiting upward leaf curl resulting in drooping appearance. Symptoms are triggered by lack of water.

Secondary Threats: Insects and Fungi

Once trees are weakened by drought, they become more susceptible to opportunistic pests and pathogens. Ips engraver beetles and ambrosia beetles are among the most common threats in both pine and hardwood stands. These insects bore into stressed trees, disrupting water flow and often introducing harmful fungi.

In red oaks, secondary infections such as Armillaria root rot and Hypoxylon canker are becoming more prevalent. These fungi thrive in drought-stressed trees and can lead to rapid canopy dieback or even tree death if not addressed.

What Landowners Can Do

The first step is careful observation. Landowners should walk their property regularly and look for external signs of stress or infestation. These include discolored foliage, thinning crowns, boring dust, and pitch tubes. It is important to note that peeling bark to check for beetle galleries is not recommended on healthy trees. Doing so can create wounds that compromise the tree's natural defenses and invite further problems. If beetle activity is suspected, it is best to consult a forester or arborist for proper assessment.

For landowners with the ability to irrigate, it is wise to prioritize young or high-value trees. Deep, infrequent watering—about one inch per week—is ideal. Mulching around the base of trees can help retain soil moisture, but mulch should be kept away from the trunk to prevent rot.

During drought, it is also important to avoid additional stressors. Hold off on fertilizing, pruning, or planting new trees until conditions improve. If pruning is necessary, wait until the dormant season. If beetle-infested trees are found, they should be removed and destroyed promptly. Infested wood should not be left on-site, as it can serve as a breeding ground for pests. After the drought subsides, landowners should inspect their trees for structural damage and consider thinning overcrowded stands to reduce competition for water. Replanting with drought-tolerant native species may also be a good long-term strategy.

Red Oak Watch: Wilt or Drought?

One of the more confusing issues landowners face is distinguishing between oak wilt and drought-induced decline. True oak wilt is caused by a fungal pathogen and spreads through root grafts or beetles. However, many cases in Louisiana that appear to be oak wilt are due to chronic drought stress.

To help differentiate, landowners can look for vascular streaking under the bark (a sign of oak wilt), localized dieback versus whole-tree wilting, and a history of drought or soil compaction. If in doubt, it is best to consult with your local LSU AgCenter forestry agent or a certified arborist.

Stay Informed

The LSU AgCenter offers a wide range of resources for forest landowners, including drought management guides, pest identification tools, and reforestation planning support. For more information, visit www.LSUAgCenter.com or contact your parish extension office.

Louisiana's Timber Industry: Navigating Federal Policy Changes and Market Transformation

Dr. Jinggang Guo, Forest Economist, LSU AgCenter

Louisiana's timber industry faces a pivotal moment as federal executive orders mandate an "immediate expansion of American timber production." Unlike western states, where federal lands dominate, Louisiana's timber economy rests on a unique foundation: nearly 90% of its forestland is privately owned, with federal holdings comprising less than 5%. This distinct structure shapes how federal policy changes will affect the state's \$900 million timber economy, which supports sawmills, paper plants, and wood pellet facilities, primarily in northern parishes. This report explores the implications of these policies, the critical workforce shortage, and potential future scenarios, offering insights into strategic adaptation.

Louisiana's Distinct Forest Ownership Structure

Louisiana stands apart in the national timber landscape due to its ownership structure. Nationally, the U.S. Forest Service manages 193 million acres. In contrast, Louisiana's federal forestland is minimal, leaving 90% in private hands—45% managed by small landowners. This private dominance grants flexibility in management and harvesting, enabling consistent timber production that generates \$900 million in annual payroll. However, this structure also means federal policies targeting public lands will not directly boost Louisiana's timber supply. Instead, the state's industry must brace for indirect effects, such as market shifts driven by increased national timber availability, highlighting its reliance on private landowner decisions rather than federal intervention.

Federal Policy Shift and Its Implications

Recent executive orders aim to reverse a decades-long decline in federal timber harvests, which have been curtailed since the 1980s by environmental regulations, wildlife protections, and other priorities (Figure 1.). The goal is to bolster domestic

timber supply and reduce import reliance, particularly affecting western states with significant public lands. For Louisiana, the impact is less direct but no less significant.

Increased federal timber sales could alter market dynamics, potentially lowering prices if supply surges. This would challenge Louisiana’s private landowners, especially small landowners, who might delay harvests or face reduced profits. Conversely, if western production absorbs the policy’s benefits, Louisiana could maintain stability or gain an edge if Canadian imports decline due to tariffs. The state’s mills, modernized and expanded (Figure 2.), are poised to adapt—but only if supply chains hold.

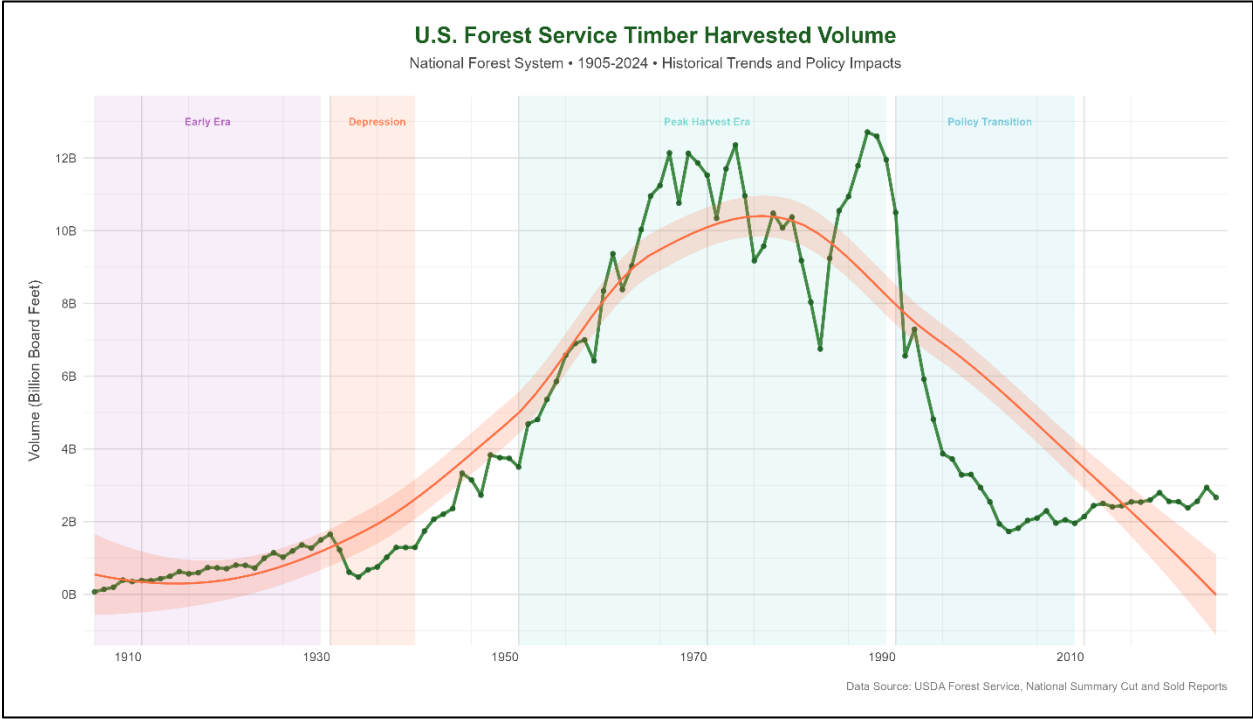


Figure 1. Federal timber harvest trends

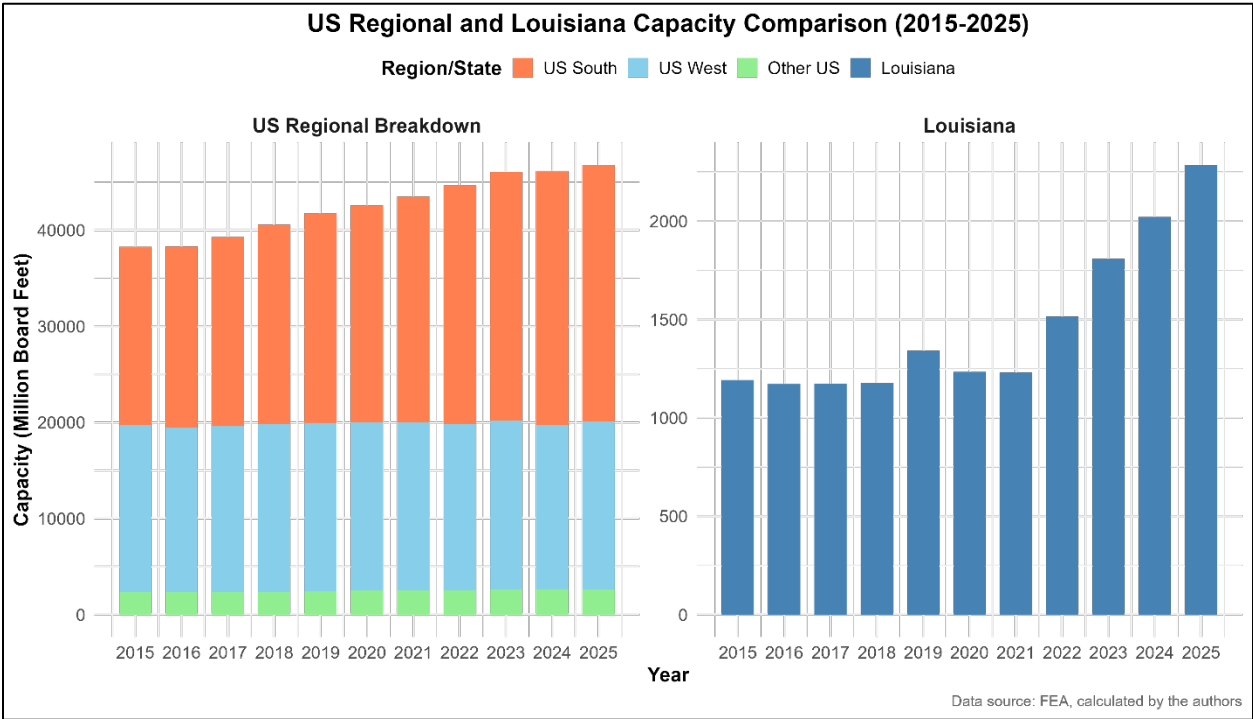


Figure 2. Lumber capacity by region

Critical Workforce Decline Amid Capacity Growth

Louisiana's timber industry faces a paradox: processing capacity has nearly doubled since 2015, yet its workforce has shrunk dramatically. Logger employment has dropped from 1,150 in 2001 to 350-400 by 2019-2025—a 65-70% decline, far exceeding national trends. Forester numbers (Figure 3.) have similarly fallen, from 270 in 2001 to 120-125 today, a 55% reduction compared to a milder national drop (190 to 145).

This workforce crisis threatens to undermine the industry's potential. Expanded mills require a steady timber supply, but with loggers at one-third of 2001 levels, bottlenecks loom. Without skilled workers, Louisiana risks missing opportunities from federal policy shifts or market growth, making workforce development an urgent priority.

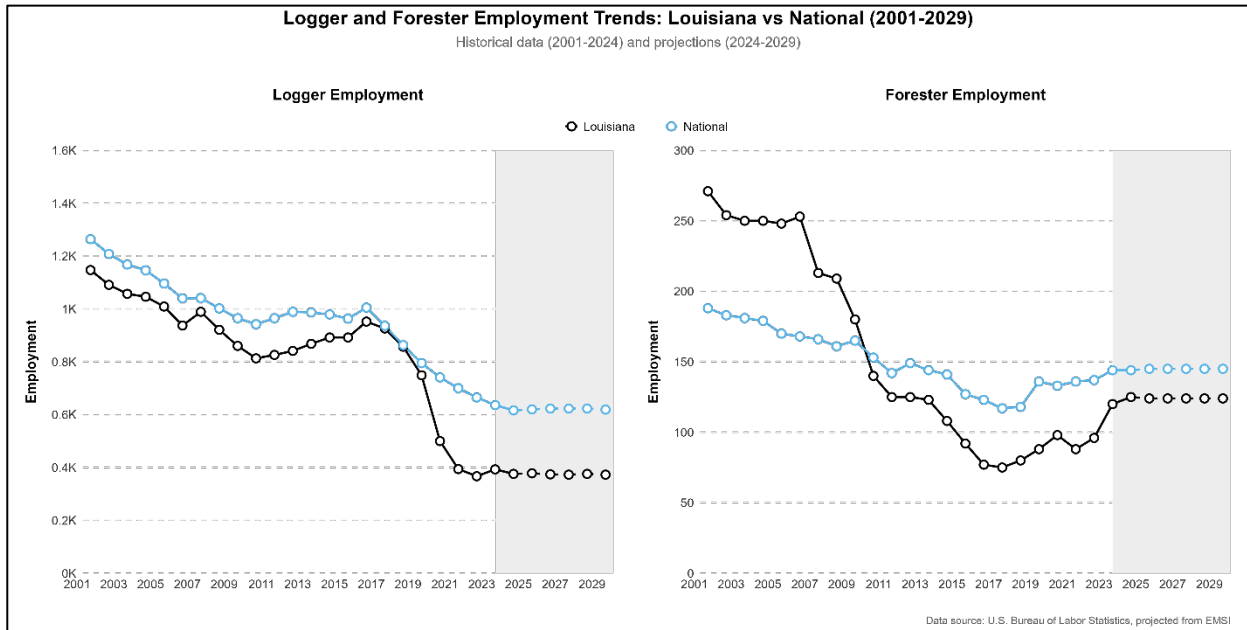


Figure 3. Louisiana logger and forester employment

Potential Scenarios for Louisiana's Future

As federal timber policies take effect, Louisiana's industry could face several outcomes:

- **Western Boom, Southern Stability:** Federal expansion focuses on western public lands, leaving Louisiana's private markets stable. Reduced Canadian competition via tariffs could strengthen the state's position.
- **National Market Disruption:** A flood of federal timber depresses prices nationwide, pressuring Louisiana's landowners, particularly small operators, to cut returns or convert land to non-forest uses.
- **Infrastructure Investment Surge:** Federal supply guarantees spur new mill investments, potentially in Louisiana, leveraging both private timber and shipped federal wood. This could boost rural economies but demands capital and labor. Each scenario requires tailored strategies, from workforce training to infrastructure planning, to ensure resilience.

Conclusion: Preparing for Multiple Futures

The U.S. timber industry, including Louisiana's, navigates a complex landscape of federal policies, market shifts, and workforce challenges. Louisiana's private forest economy offers some insulation from direct federal impacts but remains exposed to national market dynamics. With 13.8 million acres and doubled processing capacity, the state holds immense potential, yet its workforce shortage looms large. Addressing logger and forester declines, alongside advocating for private forest support and wood-based renewable fuel policies, is critical. Strategic preparation will determine whether Louisiana's timber industry thrives amid these evolving national and local conditions.

Contact your area agent/specialist for more information

<u>Name</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Contact</u>
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For more information, contact your local Parish LSU AgCenter Office
Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

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LSUAgCenter.com

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