



Co-Funded By:
West Virginia Development
Office

Project Partners:
West Virginia University
West Virginia Development
Office
West Virginia wood/forest products industry

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Sustainable Forestry Initiative

Project Summary:

The engineered wood and paper industries are to a large degree dependent on the harvesting of yellow poplar and aspen. These trees grown in relative small groupings of 20 acres and below throughout the hardwood forests of West Virginia. Trus Joist MacMillan, Weyerhaeuser and Georgia-Pacific are relatively new industry members that have located in West Virginia to produce engineered wood from yellow poplar and aspen. Westvaco harvests poplar and aspen from West Virginia for its paper mills at Luke, Maryland, and Covington, Virginia. Plantation planting of soft hardwoods would help insure the competitive availability of these tree types for the engineered wood and paper industries.

West Virginia has 286,400 surface mined acres on 2,008 sites that could be returned to productive use. Most surfaced mined properties have terrain that would enable them in plantation planting. Tree

plantations are proposed for multiple reasons: (1) as a way to demonstrate to the forestry industry the energy and dollar savings associated with harvesting of timber from a plantation versus naturally occurring tree growths; (2) the increased production of biomass; (3) as a measure to return land to productive use. Surface mine sites also have haul roads in place, which makes them conducive to eventual timber harvesting.

Through IOF-WV the Division of Forestry at West Virginia University is working with Westvaco on a poplar plantation demonstration project. This three year project supports 100 acres of poplar plantation planting at multiple surface mined sites. Thirty to thirty-five acres of trees would be planted in each year of the project. We anticipate that this program would be replicated in numerous areas throughout West Virginia. There is growing interest in hardwood plantations in West Virginia.