
[Myth No. 10: Timber plantations help to address climate change through the production of ethanol.](#)

For those readers of the WRM bulletin who do not know this by now, the Southern US is the largest paper producing region in the world. Over the last 50 years we have been the testing ground for every imaginable destructive forestry practice that once perfected here, is exported around the globe. For example, starting in the 1950's and continuing to today, we have converted nearly 17 million hectares of forests and arable land to monoculture timber plantations making us number one in the world in that regard.

The latest experiment is the plan to combat climate change by growing more tree plantations for the production of ethanol. This will mean greater pressure on natural forests, a rush to convert more forest land to plantations, greater reliance on toxic chemicals in forest management, shorter growing cycles which increase the pressure on soil and water resources, and a major push to develop and implement the use of genetically engineered trees. In a recent letter to the US Department of Agriculture pushing for the deregulation of genetically engineered eucalyptus in the US, International Paper claims that a growth in the tree-based bio-energy market would double the pressure on the forests of the Southern US.

Timber and pulp plantations increase rather than address climate change. Natural forests have been proven to sequester greater amounts of carbon and it has been shown that agrofuels are not a great substitute in terms of emissions for fossil fuel. Deforestation and business as usual forestry are the second largest contributors of Green House Gases behind the burning of fossil fuels, so doesn't it make more sense to protect and restore our forests than to further convert our forests to plantations and continuously mow them down in short rotations in a rush to use less fossil fuel?

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