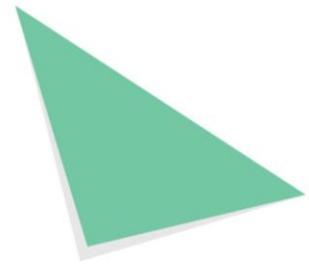


# Two Sides Facts



**The Myth: Harvesting trees to make paper is bad.**

**The Fact: Sustainable forest management benefits people and the planet.**

While it's true that collecting used paper and recycling it into new products is good for the environment, there's a catch. The wood fibers in paper can be recycled only about five times before they get too weak and break down. That's why we need fresh fiber harvested from responsibly managed forests, too. Using fresh fiber creates a sustainable cycle of high-quality recyclable material to continually replenish recycled fiber. And the paper industry's perpetual use of trees discourages the selloff of land for development, encourages sustainable forestry practices and supports hundreds of thousands of U.S. jobs.

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*All cited facts are quoted directly from the source unless otherwise noted. Where indicated, Two Sides U.S. has summarized lengthy information, but links to original sources are provided in the footnotes. Information in brackets was added by Two Sides U.S. for clarification purposes.*

## Why do we need both fresh fiber and recycled fiber?

(*Two Sides Summary*) In the papermaking process, wood fiber can be recycled an estimated four to seven times, after which the fiber breaks down and becomes waste. To make the global fiber cycle work, a continual input of 35% to 65% of fresh wood fiber is needed depending on the grade of paper manufactured. Without wood, the production of paper ceases within six to 18 months depending on the paper grade.<sup>1</sup>

## How does using trees for papermaking help keep land forested and managed responsibly?

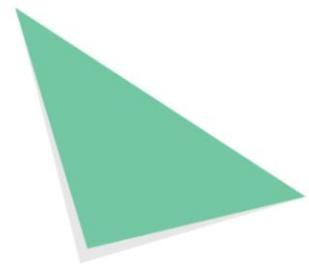
- Papermaking creates the need for a dependable supply of responsibly grown wood fiber. The reliable income landowners receive for trees grown on their land encourages them to maintain, renew and manage this valuable resource sustainably. This is an especially important consideration in places facing economic pressures to convert forestland to non-forest uses.<sup>2</sup>
- Changing forest ownership patterns, and the divestiture of large tracts of forest land by traditional forest management companies in particular, are important trends to consider when analyzing the loss of forest lands. A number of studies have shown that managing forests for timber production can enhance biodiversity and other ecosystem services in certain settings (Gustafson et al. 2007; Miller et al. 2009).

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<sup>1</sup> [Metafore, 2006.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [WBCSD and NCASI, 2005.](#)

# Two Sides Facts



Moreover, where profitable, timber management and the revenues it generates can serve as a hedge against the conversion of forest land to other uses such as real estate development, although the extent to which it can actually do so in the face of rapid increases in land values close to urban areas will vary.

The same issue faces nonindustrial private forest landowners who must balance concerns such as their need for current income and desire to maximize their long-term investments for themselves and their children with their desire to be good stewards of the forests under their care (Stein et al. 2009).<sup>3</sup>

## If I have a choice, isn't using recycled content always better for the environment?

- Determining the best use of recovered and virgin fiber for any paper type— including magazine grades— requires a life cycle perspective with an evaluation of the environmental, economic and technical considerations along the entire supply chain. This includes understanding where fiber is coming from (source), how the paper is made (manufacturing), and how effectively fiber can be utilized depending on the paper type (use).

Maximizing the use of recovered fiber—versus virgin fiber—in appropriate paper grades and under appropriate circumstances can be economically beneficial and significantly reduce environmental impacts. Maximizing recycled content for its own sake without regard to the product type, mill performance or mill location, however, may produce much more serious—if unintended—negative environmental impacts and no economic rationale.<sup>4</sup>

- Converting recovered paper into usable fiber requires a level of processing, the extent of which depends on the end product. Some paper and paperboard products (such as newsprint, kraft bags and corrugated containers) typically don't require a high degree of brightness and, because less cleaning and bleaching is required, these grades can make efficient use of recovered fiber. The brightness and cleanliness specifications for some [higher-quality] grades of paper, such as reprographic and laser print office papers, require additional processing – more cleaning and bleaching – of any recovered fiber used to produce them. As a consequence the manufacture of these products can be more energy intensive. Beyond a theoretical tipping point (probably somewhere between 30 to 50 percent post-consumer fiber content), using increasingly higher percentages of recovered fiber can result in diminished environmental returns because additional processing required could be more fossil fuel intensive and emit more greenhouse gases than avoided.

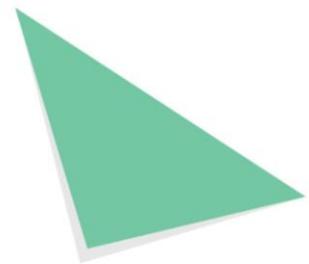
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<sup>3</sup> [USDA Forest Service, 2010.](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Metafore, 2009.](#)

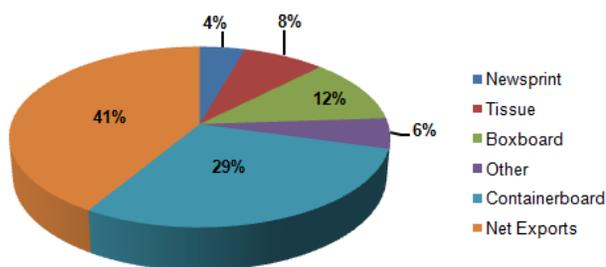


# Two Sides Facts



Using recycled content in coated grades requires significantly higher capital and operating costs based on extra steps needed for cleaning and de-inking, lower yields, and the cost to collect, sort, and transport recovered fiber. This explains why there is currently little capacity for de-inking, bleaching, and pulping of recovered fiber for use in certain grades, such as magazine paper.<sup>5</sup>

**Use of Recoverd Fiber in the U.S.**  
(of 50 million tons recovered, 2009)



SOURCE: PAPERRECYCLES.ORG

## How does making paper help the U.S. economy?

- The paper and forest products industry accounts for approximately 5 percent of the total U.S. manufacturing gross domestic product. Industry companies produce about \$175 billion in products annually and employ nearly 900,000 men and women, exceeding employment levels in the automotive, chemicals and plastics industries. The industry meets a payroll of approximately \$50 billion and is among the top 10 manufacturing sector employers in 48 states.<sup>6</sup>
- The US mailing industry provides 8.7 million jobs and \$1.1 trillion in sales revenue. The production, distribution and handling of mail (including paper and printing) accounts for over 2 million jobs and over \$260 million in sales revenue.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> [GreenBlue, The Paper Life Cycle web site](#)

<sup>6</sup> [AF&PA web site](#).

<sup>7</sup> [Direct Communications Group, 2010](#).