
EPILOGUE

Forests always have been important resources for humans. In ancient times, wars were fought over wood rather than oil. Foley *et al.* (2005) estimate 7 to 11 million square kilometres of forested land have been converted in the last 300 years, mostly to agriculture. On a global basis, production of fiber and fuel wood from forests, although high, is not evenly distributed for the needs of human populations. Moreover, the extent that forests will continue to provide a carbon sink for CO₂-generated from consumption of fossil fuels is questionable. Although international policies such as the Kyoto Protocol encourage delay in harvesting forests through financial incentives, countering efforts to produce cellulosic ethanol would lead to shorter rotations. The challenge to forest managers and policy makers promises to be greater than ever, with unprecedented demand to increase growth rates and harvest activities in the face of climate change and a desire to maintain biodiversity and carbon stocks.

To keep up with such rapid changes, continued monitoring of global resources will be essential. For this reason, we do not provide an update of the CD provided with the 1998 edition; rather we will post various models and updates on global conditions at the web site <http://www.ntsug.umt.edu/textbooks/>.

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