



An Urgent Challenge in Forest History

There is a critical need to capture the voices and documents that memorialize the major changes in forest management during the past half-century, before they disappear.

The last five decades have brought especially significant changes. Yet, these events remain under-documented in archives and libraries and largely unknown to scholars and the public.

The Forest History Society is launching a new project—**Forests of the Last 50 Years**—to capture, protect, and share the pivotal stories and records that document the transformation of North American forests during this important era.

Why the last 50 years?

The past half-century has been a time of immense change in views toward North American forests.

- **Leadership in land management** changed the conception of forests from mere timber resources to complete ecosystems.
- **Investment in forests** shifted the landscape of timberland ownership from forest products companies to institutional investors as millions of acres changed hands.
- **Conflict and cooperation** over the decades helped define a future for forests that considers conservation, climate change, wildfire management, Indigenous land rights, and other ongoing concerns.



FOREST HISTORY
SOCIETY

Our Plan

Through concerted collecting of key oral histories and documents and by convening historians, practitioners, policymakers, and educators, this four-year project will **identify the most significant lessons** from the past half century, **provide important context to today's decisions** affecting our forests resources, and **preserve invaluable source material** for future generations and historians.

Areas of Focus

- **Studying and Measuring Forests:** How have forest science and technology evolved?
- **Managing Forests:** How have approaches to forest management on the ground changed?
- **Owning Forests:** Between private, public, and tribal lands, who has owned forests, and what precipitated the vast transfers of land in this period?
- **Imagining Forests:** How have cultural and political understandings of our forests transformed, and how do experts and the public imagine our forest futures?



Why FHS?

FHS is the leading institution devoted to the collection, preservation, and presentation of forest history.

- **Oral history experience:** Our extensive oral history collection includes 300+ catalogued interviews
- **State-of-the-art facilities:** Our dedicated Starker Forests, Inc. Oral History Studio is fully equipped to produce high-quality recordings, and our Alvin J. Huss Archives are unrivaled in the preservation of forest history.
- **Interdisciplinary advisory group:** A diverse network of scholars, foresters, industry leaders, and supporters will guide the project.
- **Outreach & engagement:** Our industry-leading video, print, and online publications have broad reach into the forest history community.



2025

- Project exploration, proposal development
- 10 oral history interviews
- Forests 50 Advisory Group formed

2026

- 15-20 oral history interviews
- Identification, acquisition, and processing of documents
- Conference and outreach planning

2027

- 15-20 oral history interviews
- Identification, acquisition, and processing of documents
- Forests 50 Conference

2028

- Final oral history interviews
- Website and social media launch
- Themed webinars, blog posts, videos, and publications

To learn more, visit
foresthistor.org/forests50
or call us at (919) 682-9319.