

## Unit 10: Policies

### Forest legislation in Finland

#### Description

An extensive package of new forest acts and related decrees has entered into force in the beginning of 2014, as an outcome of the most comprehensive reform process for decades.

The amendments to the **Forest Act** increase the freedom of choice of forest owners in managing their own forest property, improve the profitability of forestry and operating conditions of wood-producing industry, and enhance the biodiversity of forests. One important objective in the reform was to have less detailed regulation on the treatment of forests and to clarify the legislation. The most important changes include allowing uneven-aged forest stands, abolition of age and diameter limits in regeneration, more diverse range of tree species, and increase in habitats of special importance.

The amendments to the **Forest Management Associations Act** allow forest owners more freedom of choice in supervising their interests and purchasing forest services, as well as improve the competitiveness and profitability of forestry and related industries. The act as a whole entered into force in 2015, but the tax-like forest management fees were not collected starting from 2014. At present, the forest management associations will finance their activities by membership fees collected from forest owners and by return on their business operations.



*A young stand of pine after the first thinning. In a thinning a sufficient amount of standing timber must be left according to the regulations of Forest Act*

The purpose of the **Forest Damages Prevention Act** is to ensure good forest health by preventing insect damages, in particular. This is done by setting instructions when and how much coniferous timber can be left or stored in forests, in order to avoid bark beetle outbreaks.

The acts were prepared in collaboration with various stakeholders, and they are supervised by Finnish Forest Centre.



*Recently planted forest fulfills the regeneration obligation of Forest Act*

#### Activities

Forest Act

Decision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on the Application of the Forest Act

Wilderness Act

Act on Trade in Forest Reproductive Material

#### Goals

The main goals for forest acts are to promote sustainable forest management, ensure forest regeneration, safeguard forest biodiversity and prevent forest damages.

#### Impact

The acts have a major impact on Finnish forests, since they stand practically in all forests including private, company, municipal and state owned forests, with the exception of conservation and wilderness areas and some urban areas.

#### Source:

Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry:  
<https://mmm.fi/en/forests/legislation>