



Forests in Poland and Europe

Characteristics and management

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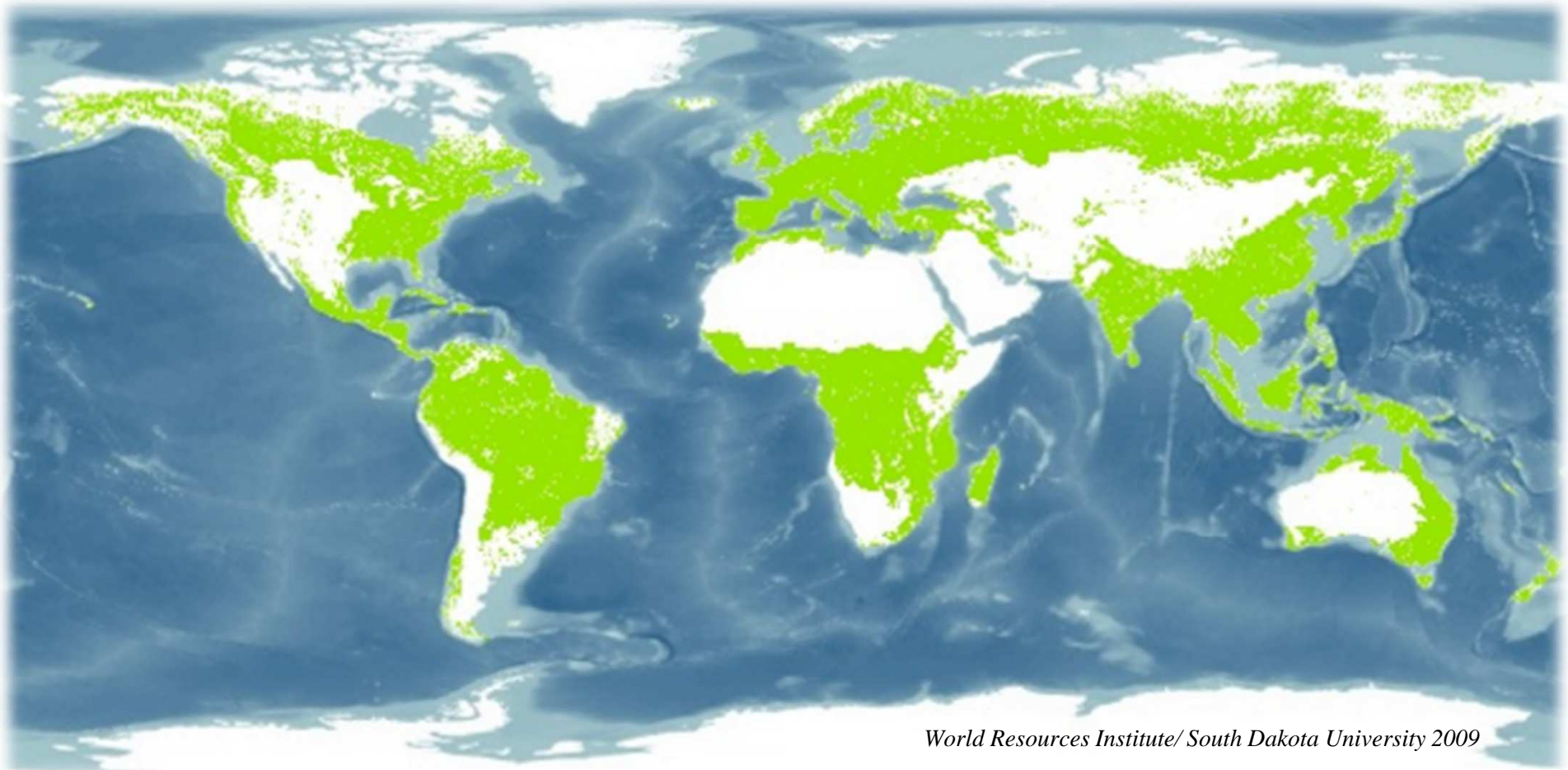


Original forest cover

Today forests cover **35%** of European landscape.
But it wasn't always like that. Humans started settling this
land and consuming its resources.
Forests used to cover about **90%** of Europe's area.



World's primary forest cover



Changes before 20th century



Before people developed other sources of energy, huge areas of forests had been cut down.

Until 18th century, when the sustainable forest management has been developed, no one had been aware of biodiversity being decreased.

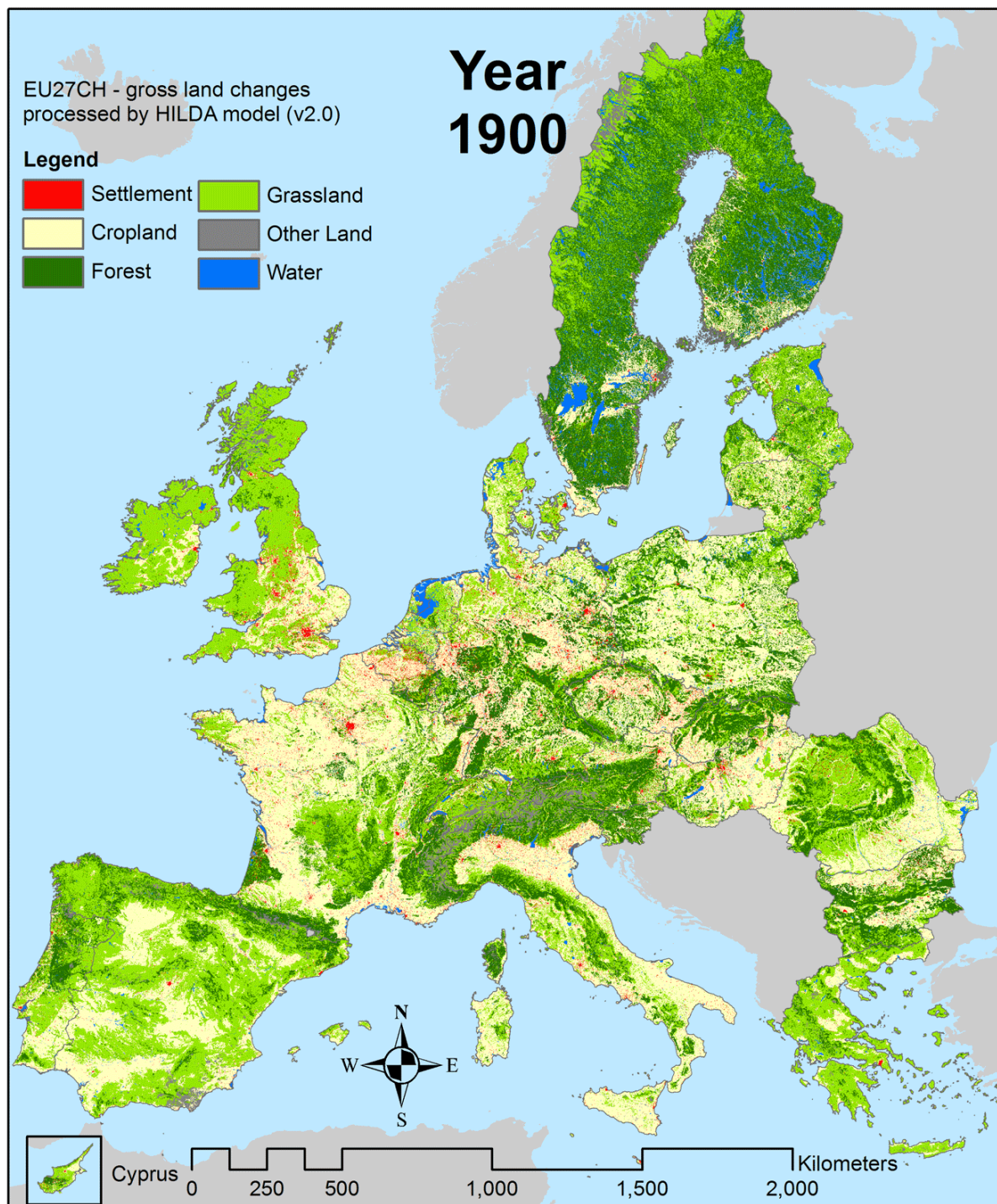
Since then, the area of forested land in Europe has extended. There have still been periods of shortages of wood due to natural disasters and the World War II.



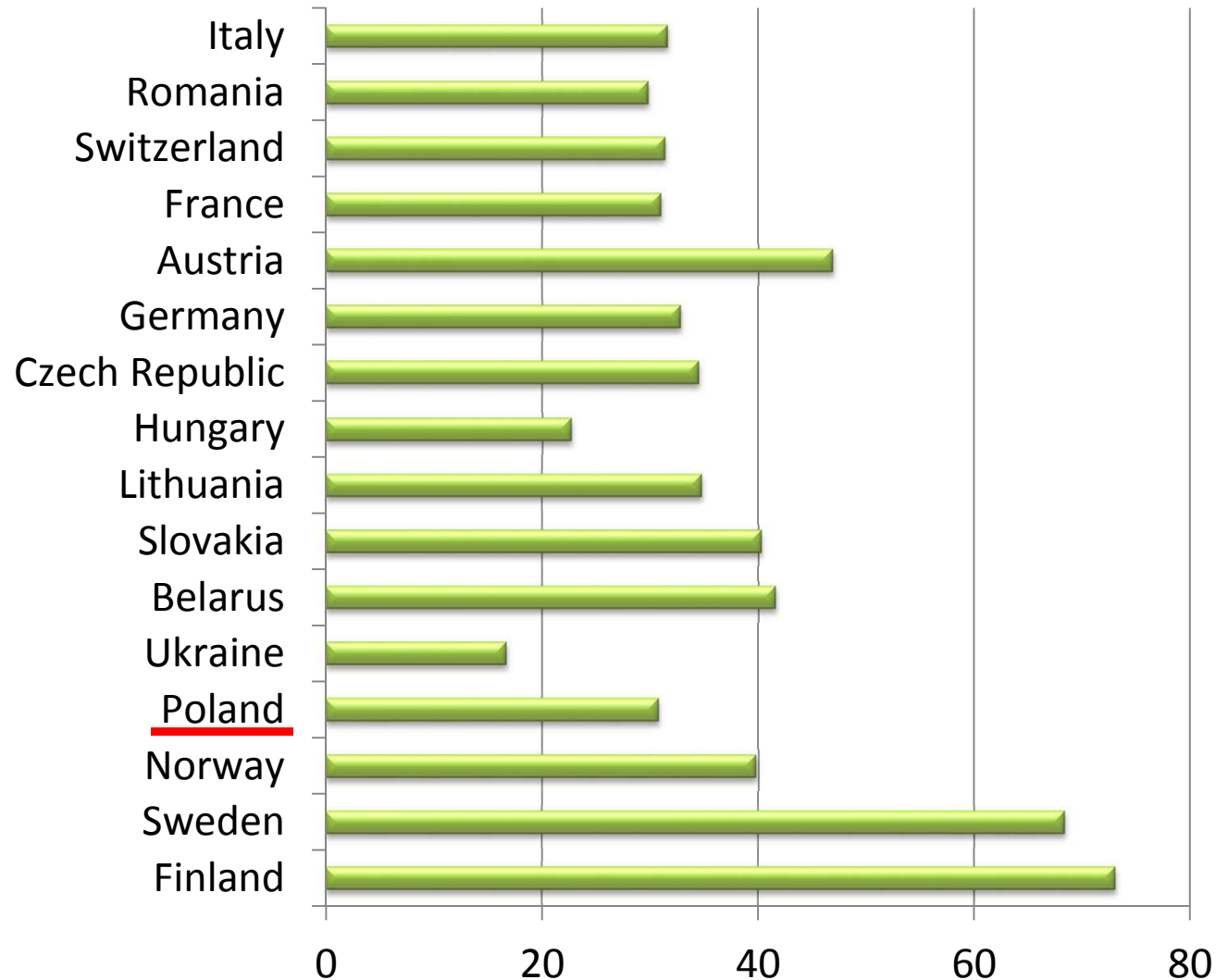
Changes in the 20th century

What has contributed to the fact that Europe's forests grew by a third in the last century?

- European Union's agricultural and ecological policy
- new energy sources
- changes in architecture
- the end of communism in Eastern Europe
- development of forest management and conservation
- reduction of farm lands



Percentage of forest areas in some of european countries (in 2015)



Forest resources in Poland



www.lasy.gov.pl

- ✓ **29,4%** of Poland's total area is forest land - **9 197 900 ha**
- ✓ The largest forest cover percentage is in Lubuskie voivodeship (49,2%)
- ✓ Łódzkie voivodeship has the smallest forest area percentage in Poland (21.3%)

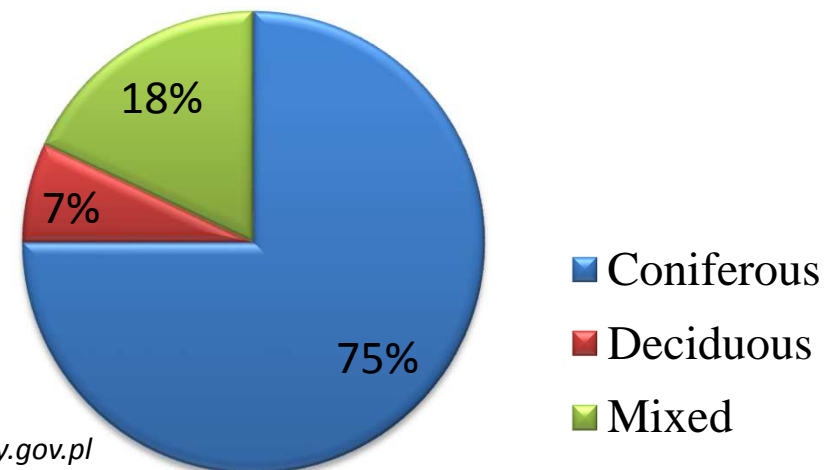
Characteristics of Polish forests



After World War II the species structure of Poland's forests has changed.

Since then coniferous species dominate in Polish forests (accounting for 69.6% of the total forest area).

Present forest management leads to an increase in the amount of deciduous trees.



Characteristics of european forests

European forests are classified according to the type of climate.

In the past the **Mediterranean region** was covered with deciduous woodlands. Due to expanded settlement and natural disasters that region has been degraded. Nowadays, very few of its natural species remain.

In the north of Europe boreal forests (taiga) grow, which are dominated by spruces, pines and rare species such as the flying squirrel or the wild forest reindeer.

Central Europe has been naturally covered with deciduous and mixed woodlands with rich biodiversity. But a big part of them, after all the centuries of wars and overusing their resources, has been replaced with coniferous ones.

Conservation organizations

NATURA 2000

The aim of this organisation is to guarantee the long-term existence of Europe's most valuable, rare and threatened species, as well as natural habitats which are named under the Birds Directive (*Special Protection Area –SPA*) and Habitats Directive (*Special Area of Conservation-SAC*).





FERN

Fern is a non-governmental organisation created in 1995 to keep track of the European Union's involvement in forests. Their work centres on forests and forest peoples' rights and the issues that affect them such as trade and investment and climate change.

Every member state of EU has also it owns nature conservation rules, and manage its unique resources. One of the most popular forest conservation methods is creating protected areas such as national parks, landscape parks or reservations.

Why is it worth our attention?

A lot of people don't appreciate the meaning of forests around us, despite many benefits that we gain from them, like:

- preserving biodiversity
- reducing air pollution and greenhouse gasses
- being the perfect place for recreation and leisure
- producing oxygen
- being the source of energy (biomass)
- making our continent that beautiful!





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