

A photograph of a dense, lush green forest. In the center, a tall, slender tree with a large, umbrella-like canopy of ferns stands out against the background. The forest is filled with various shades of green, from vibrant lime to deep forest green. The sky is a pale, overcast blue.

Forest-Land Conversion and Conversion Timber Estimates

Thailand Case Study



Introduction and background

- Thailand has a total land area of 51.3 million hectares, and an estimated forest cover of 16.3 million hectares in 2013.
- Forests in Thailand are managed by the Royal Forestry Department; the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation; and the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources.
- Thailand does not have a distinct law, or legal definition, for conversion.



Scale of land conversion in Thailand

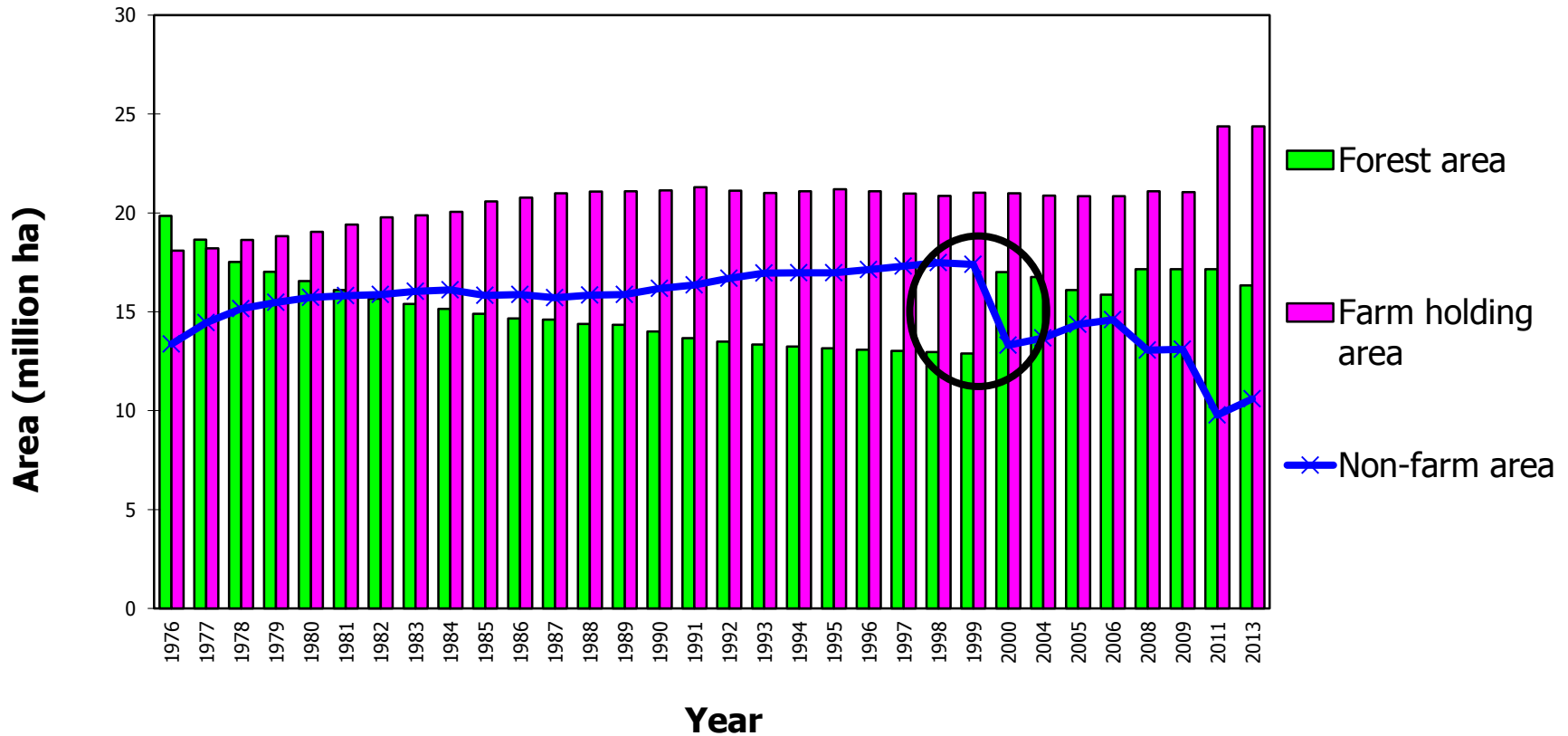


Figure 1: Land uses in Thailand, during 1976 – 2013. Source: RFD, 2013.



Forest cover decline

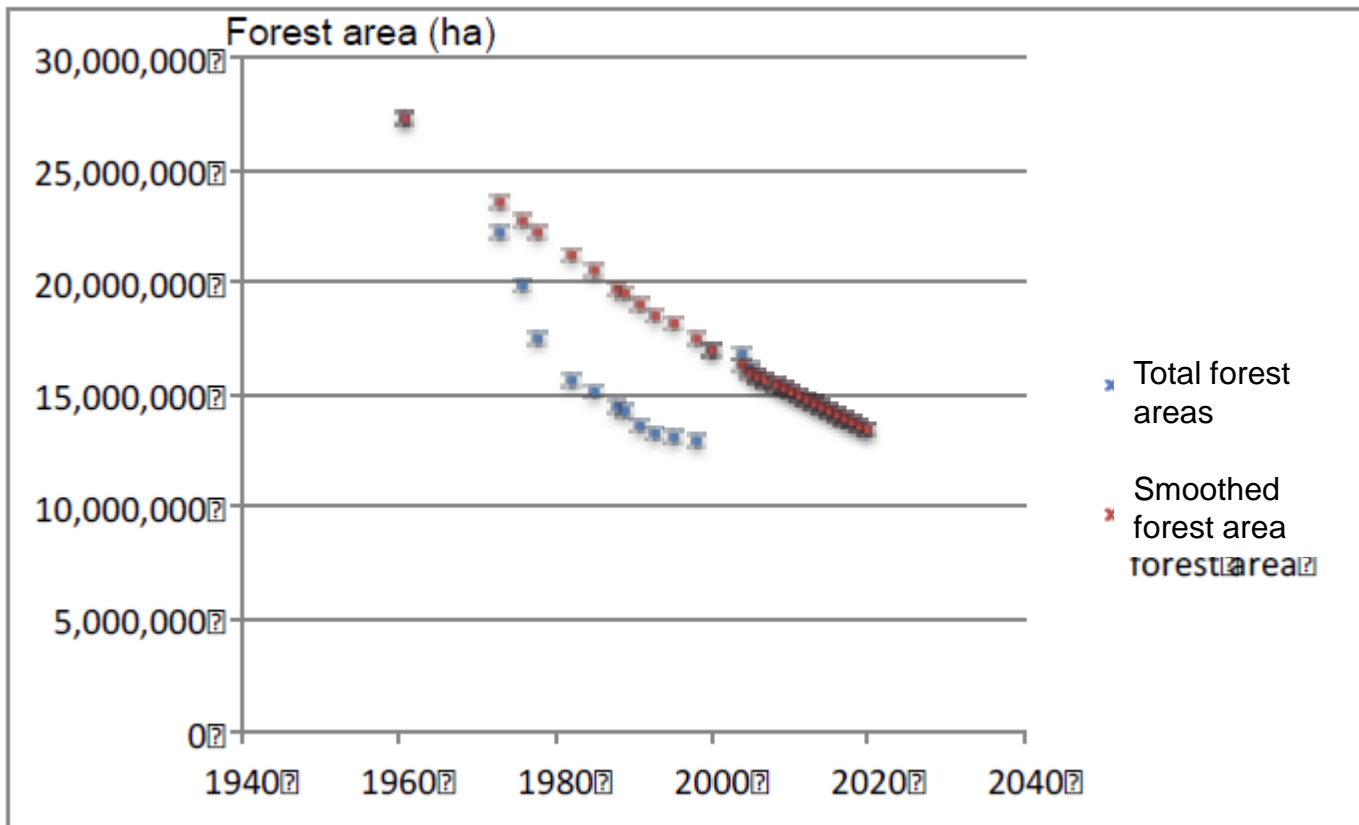


Figure 5: Trend analysis of projected forest cover development until 2020. Source UN-REDD+, 2012



Drivers of conversion

1. Agricultural expansion
2. Shifting cultivation
3. Plantation development
4. Infrastructure development



1. Agricultural development

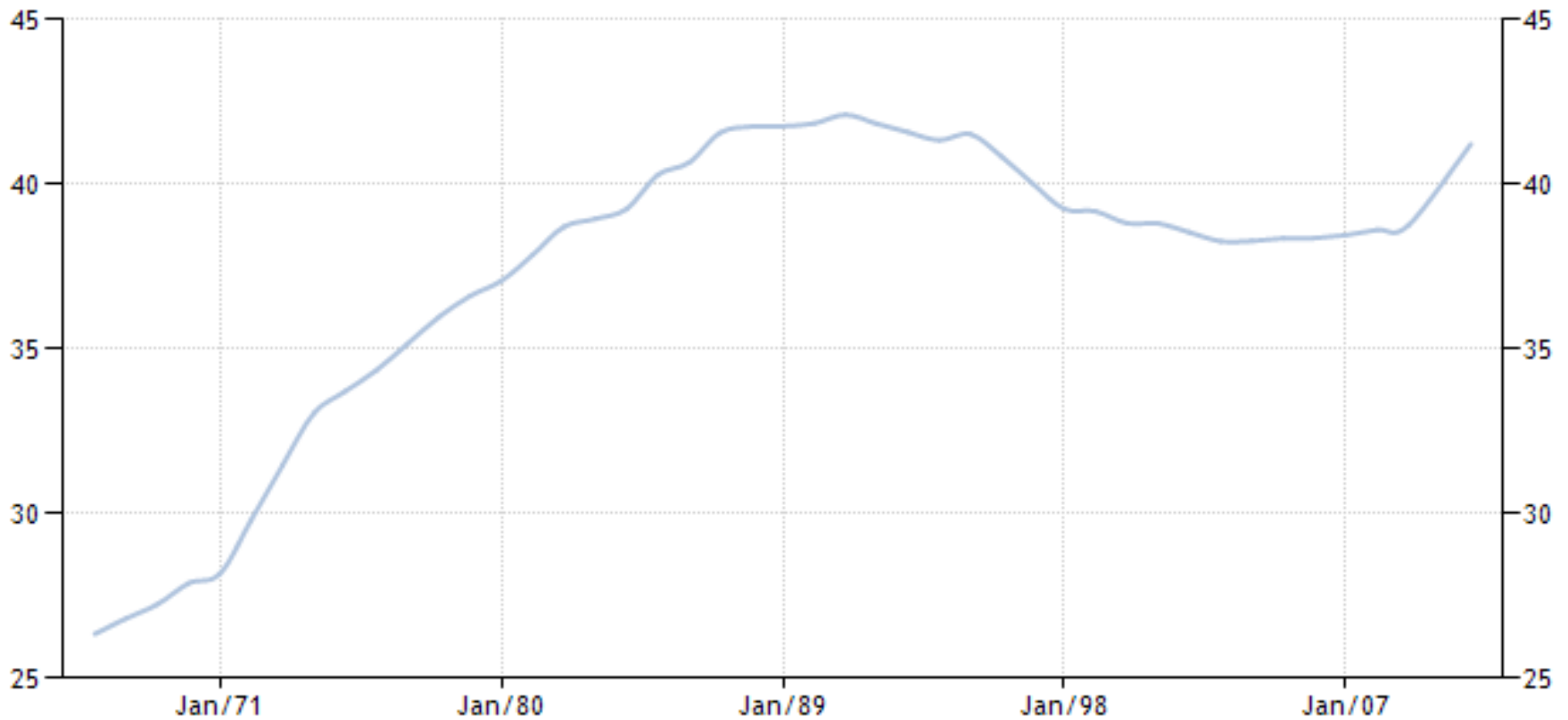


Figure 3: Development of the share of total land classified as agricultural land



2. Shifting cultivation

- Generally attributed to hill tribes and most often takes place in less fertile mountainous areas of Northern Thailand.
- The expansion of agricultural land use and plantations has put pressure on land resources forcing the practice of shifting cultivation further into forests.
- The only available data indicates that 800,000 hectares of land was under shifting cultivation in the mid-nineties (Rerkasem and Rerkasem, 1995).



3. Plantation development

Species	1,000 ha
Rubber	2,019
Teak	839
<i>Eucalyptus</i> spp	443
<i>Acacia mangium</i> and other <i>A.</i> spp	148
Other broadleaved species	541
<i>Pinus merkusii</i> and other <i>P.</i> spp	689
Other conifers	148
Total	4,824

Table 3: Area of plantations species by area (FAO, 2010)

FRA 2010 Categories	Forest area (1000 hectares)			
	1990	2000	2005	2010
Primary forest	6726	6726	6726	6726
Other naturally regenerated forest	10155	9167	8728	8261
...of which of introduced species	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Planted forest	2668	3111	3444	3986
...of which of introduced species	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
TOTAL	19549	19004	18898	18972

Table 4: development of forest categories (FAO, 2010)



4. Infrastructure development

- Roads, water reservoir for agriculture, and power lines right-of-way.
- Water reservoirs for irrigation and power lines right-of-way were the most destructive in terms of forest loss.
- In 2011, about 13,972 and 10,306 hectares were lost to irrigation and power lines right-of-way, respectively (RFD, 2011).
- In 2011 about 5,843 hectares were lost to mining (RFD, 2011).



Legal land conversion

- Commercial logging of National Forest Reserve
 - currently only the FIO
- Establishing plantations
 - Large scale private plantations
 - Small scale community plantations
- Inhabiting and “utilizing” the forest
 - Forest rehabilitation area, National forest reserve, STK certificates
 - Community Land Use Permit)
- Office of Land Reform (OLR) usufruct right program



Illegal logging and land conversion

- Thailand does not have legislation in place to prevent imports of illegally sourced wood products.
- Thailand is under a Martial law enforced by a Coup d'état from May 22, 2014.
- The National Council of Peace and Order (NCPO) has recently issued 2 orders regarding combating deforestation, forest encroachment and illegal logging.
- Thailand and the EU have officially begun negotiations for a VPA, as confirmed in an announcement on 11 September 2013. .



Recommendations

- Secure and clarify land tenure and access to forest resources/natural resources.
- Cooperation and coordination among the agencies.
- Adjust or replace inappropriate or obsolete legislation and regulations.
- Clarify forest and other land classification and boundary identification.
- Enforce environmental and social impact assessment of any infrastructure projects, and improve fire detection and control capability.



A unique perspective

Thank you!

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FSC-SECR-0047 | PEFC/09-44-02 | Presentation © NEPCon

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