

Special Issue

Roles and Functions of Forests in Sustainable Rural Development

Message from the Guest Editors

Rural communities worldwide face mounting pressures stemming from climate change, land degradation, and economic marginalization to which forests, as dynamic socio-ecological systems, offer critical pathways to resilience, livelihood diversification, and climate adaptation—yet their integrated potential remains underexploited in policy and practice. This Special Issue seeks to advance evidence-based strategies for harnessing forests as engines of truly sustainable rural development. We focus on interdisciplinary research bridging ecological, economic, and social dimensions, emphasizing community-led approaches that balance conservation with equitable development. We invite original contributions addressing the following topics:

- Forest-based livelihoods (e.g., agroforestry, non-timber forest products, and eco-tourism);
- Climate-smart forest management for rural resilience;
- Governance models (e.g., community forestry and payment for ecosystem services);
- Digital tools (remote sensing and AI) for forest monitoring and rural planning;
- Gender-inclusive and Indigenous knowledge integration.

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About the Journal

Message from the Editor-in-Chief

Forests (ISSN 1999-4907) is an international and cross-disciplinary, scholarly forestry journal. The distinguished editorial board and refereeing process ensures the highest degree of scientific rigor and review of all published articles. Original research articles and timely reviews are released online, with unlimited free access. Our goal is to have *Forests* be recognized as one of the foremost publication outlets for high quality, leading edge research in this broad and diverse field. We therefore invite you to be one of our authors, and in doing so share your important research findings with the global forestry community.

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manuscripts are peer-reviewed and a first decision is provided to authors approximately 16.8 days after submission; acceptance to publication is undertaken in 2.5 days (median values for papers published in this journal in the second half of 2025).