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# **The Protective Functions of Forests – Report from Poland**

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A protective forest is a forest that fulfills (exclusively or additionally) non-production functions related to the protection of land, water, infrastructure and areas inhabited by man and threatened by the effects of natural phenomena.





National politics regarding the protecting functions of the forests is exercised through laws and ordinances. The Forest Act. Chapter 3, Protective Forests, Article 15-17 [1].

Ordinance of the Minister of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry (Ministry of Environment) regarding detailed rules and procedure for recognizing forests as protective and detailed principles for conducting forest management terrain [3].

[1] Art. 15 ustawy z dnia 28 września 1991 r. o lasach, (Dz.U. 1991 nr 101 poz. 444)

[3] Rozporządzenie Ministra Ochrony Środowiska, Zasobów Naturalnych i Leśnictwa z dnia 25 sierpnia 1992 r. w sprawie szczegółowych zasad i trybu uznawania lasów za ochronne oraz szczegółowych zasad prowadzenia w nich gospodarki leśnej. (Dz.U. 1992 nr 67 poz. 337)



## The forests fulfill the following functions:

- soil and water protective forests (protecting soil against erosion and drying as well as protecting watercourses, water reservoirs and watersheds),
- climate forests - protecting the microclimate from urban and industrial areas,
- recreational and leisurely forests fulfilling the recreational role for the general public,
- spa-climatic forests - protecting spa conditions and surrounding areas.





Protective forests, in accordance with the provisions of the Act regarding the forests [1], may be recognized forests that:

- often referred to as soil protected,
- they protect the soil against washing away or sterilization, prevent soil removal, rocks or avalanches (in the watersheds areas);
- reducing the formation or spreading of volatile sands,
- often referred to as water resisting,
- protect the surface and groundwater resources, regulate hydrological ratios in the catchment and watershed areas,
- where national parks are established (in the watersheds areas),
- form seed stands or refuge for animals and plant sites subject to species protection,

[1] Art. 15 ustawy z dnia 28 września 1991 r. o lasach, (Dz.U. 1991 nr 101 poz. 444)

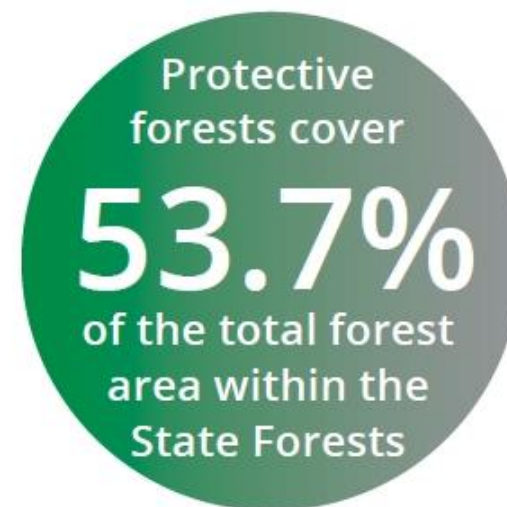


- have particular meaning and natural - scientific significance,
- referred to as large green zones, landscape forests, recreation and leisure,
- are of particular importance for the defense and security of the state (e.g. training grounds),
- are permanently damaged by industrial work,  
are located:
- within the administrative boundaries of cities and at a distance of up to 10 km from the administrative borders of cities with over 50 thousand residents, in the protection zones around sanatoriums and health resorts,
- with predominantly water and soil protection and windproof functions.
- are located in the higher forest border zones (in the watersheds areas).

## Environmental functions of forests

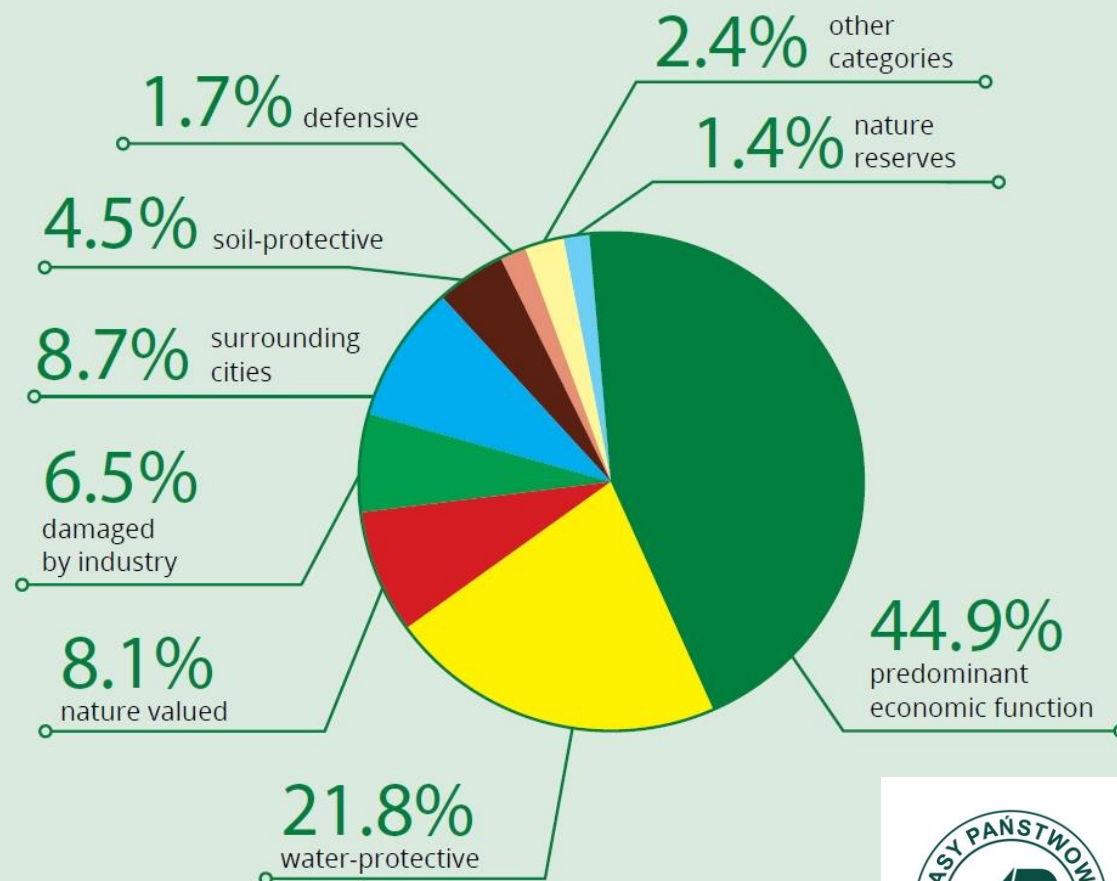
### Protective forests

The earliest regulations on social and environmental forest functions, and especially on distinguishing a category of protective forests, were included in the first post-war *Instruction on Forest Management*, published in 1957. By the year 1975, a total of 1485 thousand ha of forests were designated as protective, which comprised 22.5% of the forest area administered by the State Forests at that time. As of 1 January 2017, the combined area of protective forests increased to 3811 thousand ha, which represents 53.7% of the total forest area, or 55.1% including 103 thousand ha of nature reserves.





The largest share of protected forests are characteristic forest areas of the State Forests located in the southern part of the country in mountainous areas (RDLP Kraków - 91.8%, fir and spruce) and Krosno - 86.3% beech, fir) and in areas under the influence of industry (RDLP Katowice - 84.1% pine, spruce in the mountains and mountain catchments) [2].



SHARE OF PROTECTIVE FORESTS in the State Forests in 2017 (DGSF)





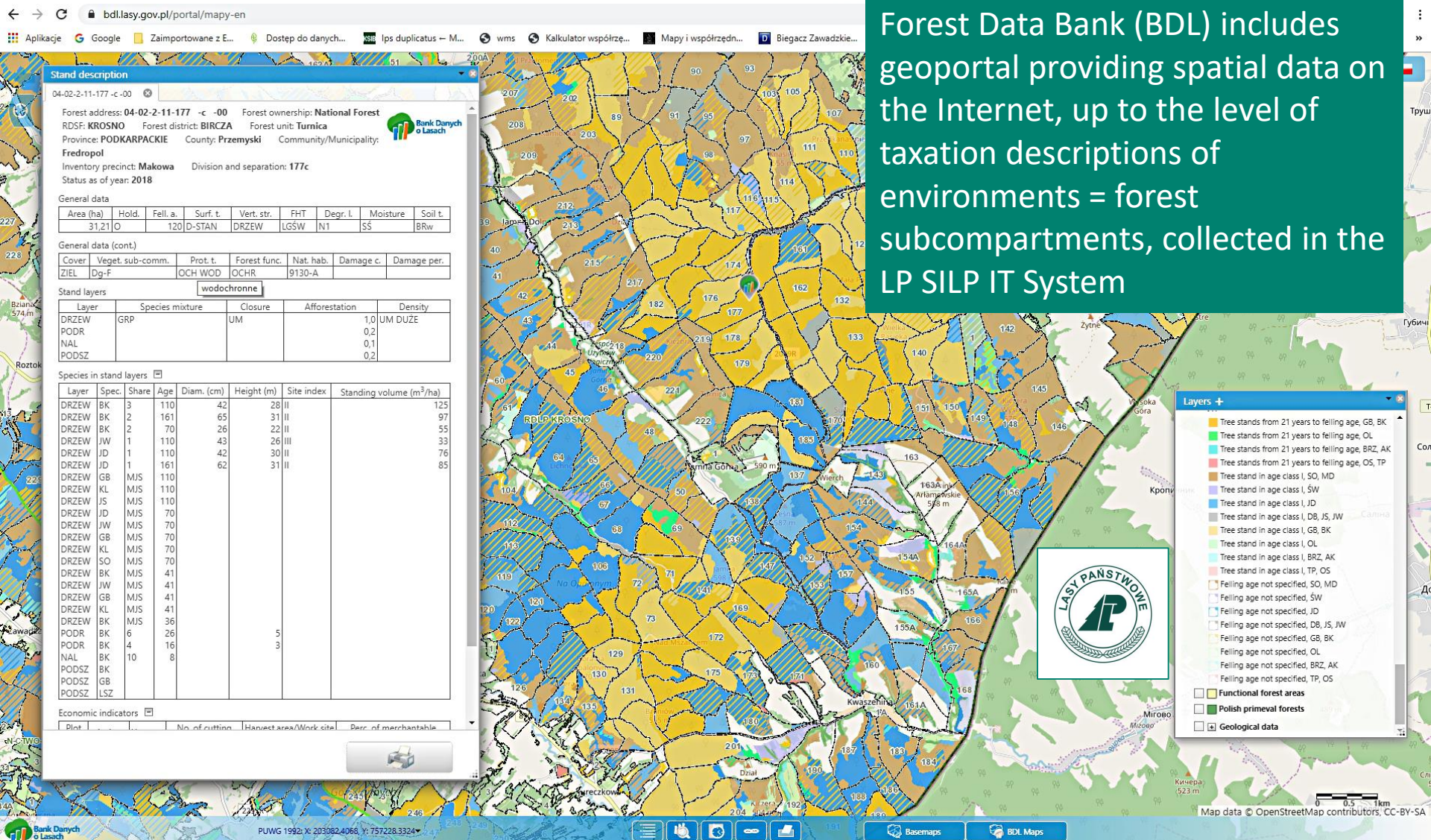
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Forest Data Bank (BDL) includes geoportal providing spatial data on the Internet, up to the level of taxation descriptions of environments = forest subcompartments, collected in the LP SILP IT System



Water projects are implemented from EU (2007-2013, 2014-2020), Norwegian Funds and its own resources mainly from the State Forests, the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management



The aim of the project is to slow down the outflow of water from mountain areas by increasing the retention capacity of the catchment.

This will minimize the negative effects of natural phenomena in the form of: floods, damaging effects of flood waters and drought in mountainous forest areas.

As part of the project, activities are planned to increase the retention capacity of mountain areas (including construction of reservoirs, re-naturalization of streams and wetlands), protecting slopes against excessive surface runoff and guaranteeing the maintenance of proper technical condition of existing hydrotechnical infrastructure.

The investment tasks included comprehensive treatments combining environmentally friendly natural and technical methods.





Project: Prevention of water erosion in mountainous areas associated with the downflow of rainwater

The aim of the project was to increase the effectiveness of protection against natural phenomena in the form of water erosion, floods and drought in mountain forest areas







Thank you for your attention

