



Foresters

and the Care of Your Land

Working to Ensure Forests for the Future™



How to select one
& what they do

Working to Ensure Forests for the Future™



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is a nonprofit forest conservation organization.
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The *Forest*

Your forest is a complex, living ecosystem that is always changing. Trees grow, trees die. Wildlife species come and go over time. Insects and disease are always present. Even if you never cut a tree, or even visit your forest for years, it won't stay the same.

For any forest owner there are risks and opportunities. The key is knowing what they are. Foresters can help you recognize them and design alternative management strategies that meet your needs. By practicing sound forest management, landowners can enjoy the full spectrum of benefits from their forests: timber products, clean water, abundant wildlife, aesthetics and peace of mind. No matter what you do with your land, the key to success is making informed decisions.

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What is a *Forester*

A Forester is a professional with a college level education and experience in a broad range of forest-related topics including forest and wildlife ecology, economics, legal issues, and the growing and harvesting of forest products. Foresters in Massachusetts are required to hold a state license which is generally based on experience, training, and ongoing continuing education. Foresters in Connecticut are certified by the state which requires passing an examination and ongoing continuing education.



Foresters and loggers are commonly confused with one another. To understand the difference, consider the roles of architects and builders. Architects work with people to design the kind of home they would like. Based on the desires of a client, they develop a design that incorporates a host of options - tile or linoleum? skylights? 1 or 2 bathrooms? The architect's plan is implemented by a builder who turns it into reality. The best

blueprint isn't worth anything if it isn't in the hands of a good builder. And if an architect does a poor job of drawing up the blueprints, the best builder in the world will construct a flawed home.



Foresters can serve as forest "architects", helping landowners develop goals and understand available options. Foresters outline alternatives based on the landowner's goals for the property, and draw up plans to achieve those goals. Are you interested in timber management for income — wildlife habitat enhancement — recreational trails — or a mix of these benefits? The logger is the "builder" and might be involved with the implementation of this plan or "blueprint" if timber harvesting is involved.



Types of *Foresters*

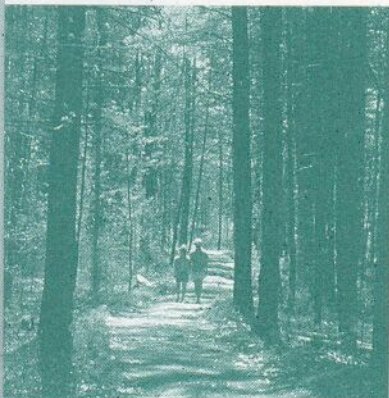
Many times the first forester a landowner will contact is a Public Service Forester. They are

employees of the state's forestry agency who can visit your land and provide you with on-the-ground advice for no fee.

They provide basic information on your forest, its potential

for different benefits and products, and specific information on programs that affect forest property taxation. While they are a great place to start, many landowners need more detailed information and assistance than a public service forester's limited time can provide.

See the back panel of this brochure for information on how to contact your Service Forester.



Private Professional Foresters build on what you and the public service forester begin together — they can provide answers and help you make sound stewardship decisions.

Unlike public service foresters, private foresters charge for their services, but are well worth the investment. Even a small woodlot can be worth thousands of dollars today. What other asset of such value would you own without knowing more about its potential rate of growth, the extent to which it might be at risk, or alternatives for management? Often the only difference between rewarding, enjoyable forest stewardship and poor, even disastrous decisions, is good information.

There are two types of private foresters. **Consulting Foresters** generally work independently or in small firms and are paid directly by the landowner. **Industrial Foresters** are private, professional foresters employed by a sawmill or other wood-using industry. Your public service forester or local Cooperative Extension office can provide you with a list of private foresters who work in your area.

Services Provided by Private *Foresters*

Managing a forest property can be complicated and time consuming. A forester can provide advice and assistance to landowners as they work with you and for you, help you understand alternatives, supply information so you can make informed decisions, and provide some or all of the following services.

Stewardship Plan - A stewardship plan is a good way for a woodland owner to define and organize land-use objectives. The plan describes the natural resources of the woodlot and defines a program of activities for a specified period of time. Potential components of a forest stewardship plan include timber harvesting, fostering wildlife, recreational use, scenic beauty, and protection of water quality.

Selling Timber - For most landowners, the process of harvesting and selling timber is foreign and unknown. Much like your first time in court, it can be a complicated and somewhat intimidating process. Everyone but you seems to know what they're doing. Timber harvesting requires expertise that most landowners do not have such as current price information, familiarity with markets, jargon, and environmental regulations that apply to the operation. Ignorance of these can lead to serious and expensive mistakes. Landowners can avoid these pitfalls by retaining a private forester and benefiting from professional advice.

Foresters identify which trees should be harvested to accomplish your objectives. They determine how much volume will be removed, and how much value or income will be received. They can also draft a contract and supervise the harvest to protect your interests.

Private foresters have proven to be well worth the money. Research has shown that the average landowner makes more money in a timber sale by relying on the expertise of a competent private forester than by selling timber on their own. A consulting forester will usually sell timber on a competitive basis to a number of different loggers or sawmills. An industrial forester will usually purchase standing timber without charging direct fees. The supervision provided by a private forester during the timber sale insures that the forest is left in excellent condition with the owner's concerns for aesthetics and wildlife habitat taken into consideration and that the timber sale conforms to environmental regulations.

Several points to remember include:

- Never conduct a timber sale without the involvement of a professional forester.
- Never sell timber without a written contract.
- Never reach an agreement that results in an unsupervised harvest.

Planning Estate and Taxation Matters - The woodlot planning horizon extends many decades into the future - often well beyond the life span of the current owner. Land values are resulting in estate taxes so large that, unless careful estate planning is done in advance, the land itself must be sold to pay the taxes. While estate planning is complicated and requires expert legal and financial assistance, most foresters are familiar with its important elements and can suggest where to go for additional information.

Forest Inventory and Appraisal - An owner (or potential buyer) of forestland may need to know the quantity and value of the land and the timber on a tract. The forester can provide this information by doing a timber cruise or forest inventory with a site analysis.

Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) - Timber Stand Improvement may include any combination of forest care operations designed to improve growth and quality of timber. Thinning constitutes most of the TSI work performed in New England forests. TSI work may also include weeding, pruning, and planting.

Other forester services include finding, mapping and marking property boundaries and other special features (forest types, trails, streams, habitat locations), wildlife habitat enhancement, and taking an inventory of the age, health and condition of your forest.



STARTING THE ROAD TO STEWARDSHIP

Finding *Foresters*

Managing your woodlot is a lifetime endeavor with serious legal, financial and environmental implications. Choosing a private forester to assist you is an important process.

• Step 1.

Start by contacting your public service forester who can make that free "first visit" and get you started on a rewarding stewardship program.

• Step 2.

Shop around when choosing a private forester to work with and get a second opinion or bid. Just like in any profession, there are a wide variety of capabilities and price structures. Many foresters will make a first, brief visit for free. Also ask for references of satisfied clients and ask if you can visit a prior job site.

• Step 3.

Ask how they will be paid (per diem or per job) and always have the payment method stated in the service contract. If a timber sale, fees can be based on a percentage basis of revenue generated or by the volume of timber marked. Fees can also be based by the hour, by the acre or by the mill purchasing the lumber.

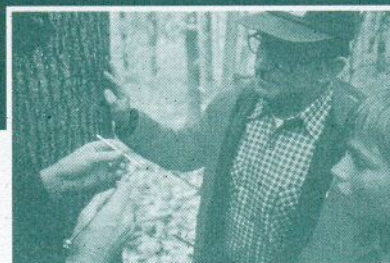
• Step 4.

The most important thing is to find a private forester that you can effectively communicate and work with. Find one with the skills and talents that you need, and who can listen and understand your needs. Remember - it's your woodlot. You must determine your stewardship goals, the nature of the work, and the desired end result.

• Step 5.

As in many aspects of life, there are good and bad consulting foresters, industrial foresters and loggers. In all cases, it pays to get a second opinion and references. Shop around.

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC SERVICE FORESTER AND START THE PROCESS



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CONNECTICUT

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State Extension Forester

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