

Finger Lakes Forests

Forest Land and Timber Harvesting

Best Management Practices (BMPs)


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Tools for planning a timber harvest

Private forest owners have a wealth of tools - information sources that will give you important insights about your woodlot before the timber contract is signed:

Start with a forest management plan

Many forest owners "feel" like they know what they are doing in their woodlots. If you do not have a written management plan, you may be making a lot of decisions that are helpful in the short run, but do not help your forest in the long run. Many forest owners ask a NYS DEC Forester or hire a professional forester to write a plan for them. It includes baseline information about the forest, an inventory of the timber growing there, a description of your goals, and steps on how to reach those goals, while sustaining the productivity and health of forest.

 **Desk Guide to Forest Stewardship Planning** - This US Forest Service publication is for foresters, but will give you a sense of the questions you should already have answers for if a logger comes knocking on your door.

Get assistance from skilled professionals and volunteer forest owners

In New York, consulting foresters play an important role in good forest management. For more information about foresters and forest-owning volunteers, go to the page about **Getting skilled assistance with your forest decisions**.

Meet with DEC Cooperating Consulting or DEC Cooperating Industrial foresters

A Cooperating Consultant Forester is a professional forester who has agreed to maintain ethical and educational standards, in compliance with the Cooperating Forester Program policy. Industrial foresters tend to work for a particular business or economic interest. They usually provide services in exchange for a commitment of harvested timber or for a fee.

 **DEC Cooperating Consulting Forester List**

 **DEC Cooperating Industrial Forester List**

Stumpage price report

Do you know what kinds of prices are being received for logs delivered to mills in NY? The DEC Stumpage Report is issued twice each year, listing the prices being paid for standing timber across New York State to help buyers and sellers compare prices gives the range of prices for different species of logs. Get a copy by calling the DEC Forest Products Utilization and Marketing Program at (518) 402-9425 or request one by asking for a "Stumpage Price Report", Bureau of Private Land Services, 625 Broadway, 5th Floor, Albany, NY 12233-4253

Use a topographic map

There are many places to buy topographic maps on-line, but you'll get better service if you simply call an outdoor outfitting store, a camping store, or your county Soil and Water Conservation District office. Support these local offices and businesses. They will help you select the right map and answer questions about how to use these wonderful tools. Remember - the topographic map contains a lot of useful information for your forest activities. You should have one for every acre of forest you own.

Mark up aerial photos

Aerial photographs will help you get a bird's eye view of your forest. With it, you will see features you've not seen before. Many county Soil and Water Conservation District offices keep good aerial photographs on hand and will copy one or two for you for a small fee. It is worth every penny. Get a lot of copies so you can mark them up with all your forest plans! Satellite imagery is available on-line, but the low resolution is frustrating to work with, unless you have a massive forest. Instead, get the aerial photographs. If you go online, look at the NYS

Inspect the local soil survey

Soil surveys are priceless for all the information they contain with regard to forest management. Not only do they have aerial photography for an entire county, they also indicate different soil types with easy-to-read symbols. The soil survey designates wet spots, drainage patterns, steep slopes, and other good information. For your county soil survey, stop by the local Soil and Water Conservation District or Cornell Cooperative Extension office. You can get a copy of the information or purchase the entire survey.

Develop a written contract for cutting timber

A written contract for a timber sale is the best way to ensure proper conduct by the logging company and equitable terms for both parties. It is the document you will use to make sure that the Best Management Practices detailed on this CD-ROM will be put into place.

[More about Timber Harvesting Contracts, including a sample contract. . .](#)

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