

RENEW YOUR FOREST

Forests are not static. Trees grow and die, and forests change in their composition over time. Natural events, like windstorms and fires, can renew the forest by creating openings for new plant growth and habitat for wildlife. Cutting trees, when done properly, can mimic the results of natural events. Learn more by reading *Caring for your Woods: A 10 Step Plan for Landowners* (Forestry Facts 87).



PROVIDE SUNSHINE AND SPACE

Trees need sunlight and space to grow. Timber harvests are designed to provide sunlight and space for seeds to germinate and young trees to grow. Find out more in *Harvesting and Forest Management* (Wisc. Woodlands G3424).



LEAVE DEAD TREES FOR WILDLIFE

Dead standing trees (snags) and fallen logs in a forest are vital wildlife habitat. Insects and fungi living in the decaying wood are food sources for a wide variety of animals. Cavities in dead trees also provide important nesting and hiding places. Count the number of snags 12 inches in diameter or greater on your land. About 2 to 4 snags per acre provide the best habitat. For more information check out DNR publication *Critter Condos*, (WM-222).



PASS ON A HEALTHY FOREST

In order to pass your family forest on in a healthy condition to your children, the forest will likely need help from you now. Today's increasing threat from non-native invasive plants requires knowledge, watchful eyes and action. Visit the tree identification page of the LEAF program (www.uwsp.edu/cnr/leaf/treeid.shtml) and the Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin website (www.ipaw.org) to learn how to identify plants in your woods.



SOURCES OF WOODLAND INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

Several Wisconsin-based websites can answer landowners' basic questions. One portal for several of these informational websites is www.woodlandinfo.org sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Extension. Check out the numerous publications on the site which can help you with everything from identifying trees to finding a sample timber sale contract. Testimonials from landowners provide insight into how they work in their forest to meet their goals. A link to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources webpage provides you easy access to more information. This is a great place to find a DNR forester or a private consulting forester.

DNR foresters are also available to personally assist you with almost any forest-related question. A DNR forester can assist you in developing a forest management plan or refer you to a consulting forester for hire. Training and experience varies among consulting foresters, so it is wise to get references before hiring one. A list of consulting foresters can be found on the WDNR website, and additionally on the Wisconsin Consulting Foresters website at www.wi-consultingforesters.com/find.htm

Another great resource for landowners is the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association (WWOA). WWOA is a statewide organization, but has local chapters to facilitate local landowner interaction. WWOA events provide opportunities to learn what others are doing on their own woodlots and to get advice about foresters and loggers. WWOA can be found at www.wisconsinwoodlands.org

All publications mentioned are available at:
www.woodlandinfo.org



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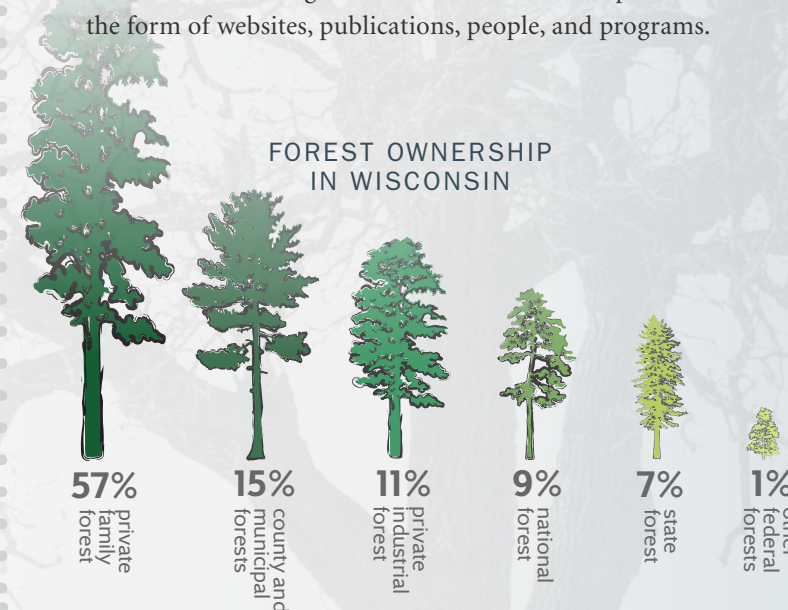
WOODS WORDS

FOR WOODLAND OWNERS WHO WANT TO KNOW MORE

By the UWEX Basin Education Initiative
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WHAT YOU DO COUNTS!

You and other private woodland owners play a crucial role in the future of Wisconsin's forests. Together, you own more than 57% of Wisconsin's 16 million forested acres. Owning and maintaining a family forest can be complex and confusing. You may wonder, "What species of trees do I have in my woods? Should I cut some trees, or not? How can I attract more wildlife?" The good news is that there is help available in the form of websites, publications, people, and programs.



Seek Professional Help with Timber Harvesting

A timber harvest will affect your woods for a long time. Many landowners have only one harvest in their lifetime, although a well-managed woodlot could have a harvest every 10 years. Some hardwoods take decades to reach maturity, and individual trees can live for a hundred years or more. Harvests are based on a strategic plan set by a trained forester, but generally you shouldn't see the best trees harvested – those that are tall, straight and free of defects – before they have provided seed for the next generation. Due to the complexity of a harvest, it is best to contact a forester before harvesting or entering into an agreement with a logger.

A Department of Natural Resources (DNR) forester will sometimes receive a call from a landowner with questions like “I have loggers in my woods and I am concerned that they may be taking too many trees. Are they doing the right thing? Did I get a fair price?” Unfortunately, asking these questions when the loggers are already on the site is usually too late. After investigating, a forester may find that the property owner has entered into an agreement that allows the logger to do exactly what they are doing. To prevent this from happening, do some research before allowing a timber harvest on your property. Contact your local DNR forester or a private consulting forester (who can act as your agent) to gather information and advice before signing a contract. Once a contract is signed, there is seldom an inexpensive or easy way to halt the timber harvest. (A good source of information is *Conducting a Successful Timber Sale* (DNR publication FR-254))

Most logging companies are good stewards of our natural resources. A good logging company, run by professionals, will be as concerned about your woodlot as you are. You or your agent should check a logger's references and look at examples of previous logging jobs. Find out if the Great Lake Timber Professionals Association has certified the company as a Master Logger. This performance-based program formally recognizes

those loggers who have attained the utmost level of training and experience, and who demonstrate an unending commitment to sound forest stewardship. Visit www.wpla.org/master.html for a list of Master Loggers. Prior planning and discussion with the logger can increase your satisfaction with a timber harvest. Use a timber sale contract, and include and include all important points, so that your wishes are enforceable.

Loggers usually specialize their harvest operation for certain forest products. Obtaining bids from several loggers is the best way to ensure that you get a fair price for your timber. Bids can vary greatly, as different timber harvest equipment and techniques can greatly change the results and profitability of a timber harvest. Because the process can be quite complex, you should consult a forester for help in understanding the options and choosing what is best for you (see basic questions at right).

Here are some final tips for a successful timber sale. Know the value and volume of your timber before you sell. Talk to a DNR forester or hire a consulting forester to set up and administer the sale for you. Take your time; don't make instant decisions on the doorstep by selling to the first person who contacts you. Get references from other landowners who have worked with the forester or logger you are considering, and visit the sites of previous logging jobs. And finally, research logging companies or individual timber buyers by their name at the Wisconsin Circuit Court's Internet access site: wcca.wicourts.gov

There is always a demand for quality timber, but without the proper research, you could sacrifice high-value timber, devalue your property and end up with an unsightly scar on your landscape. For more information, refer to *Conducting a Successful Timber Sale* (DNR publication FR-254).



BASIC QUESTIONS TO ASK A FORESTER AND LOGGER INCLUDE:

- 1 Does the harvest plan take into account areas that are sensitive to activity, e.g. recreational trails, springs or waterways?
- 2 What species, sizes, and number of trees will be cut?
- 3 How will you be paid for the timber cut? Will it be lump sum or by volume? When will you be paid?
- 4 What equipment will be used? Different types of equipment can cause dramatically different results on the site.
- 5 Where will that equipment be driven? A thoughtful layout of skid trails can increase access to your property while avoiding sensitive areas.
- 6 Where will the wood be stacked? This area will experience traffic from logging equipment and trucks. A level, firm, well-drained site is best.
- 7 Is clean-up work after the harvest included in the contract?
- 8 How will the log trucks come in to pick up the wood? Access for large trucks might require driving over a neighbor's property or onto parts of your property that cannot support a heavily loaded vehicle. Most driveways cannot support a loaded truck in wet weather. Make sure that repairs are covered in the contract.

