

How to Manage and Care for Your Forest



Forests are Important to both Landowners and Communities

They can provide revenue from timber sales and offer recreational opportunities for landowner. They protect wildlife habitat, air quality, and water supplies. Woodlots create resilient communities by linking natural areas to create corridors, by providing cooling islands near urban areas and removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Landowners who own large tracts of land can enjoy these many benefits by taking care of their land and understanding how to carefully manage and protect natural resources. As a landowner, you are responsible for the stewardship of your property.

Discover the Resources on your Property

The first step in managing forestland is to get to know your property. Walk your land, and check property boundaries. Gather data, review topographic maps and online GIS tools including NH GRANIT and the NH Wildlife Action Plan. Inventory natural resources on your property including water resources, wildlife and soils. Make note of what you enjoy most about your land and how you would like to use it in the future.

Contact Your County Forester

This is a good time to call your County Forester to learn more about the natural resources on your property and the impacts of land management on those natural resources. They can provide advice on potential timber harvest options and they can also help you find other professionals who can provide expertise in areas you are most interested in, like wildlife management or water quality.

Seek help from a Licensed Forester

A professional licensed forester will help you to develop a vision and plan for your property. Working with a forester will help you determine what you want your land to look like in 20 or 50 years by setting goals and establishing what types of harvesting might be appropriate. A professional forester can create a written forest management plan based on the natural resources and your goals and objectives for the future.

Develop a Forest Management Plan

A forest management plan is a guide that tells you what natural resources are on your land and what management practices you can do to help achieve your long-term goals. It is a written document that describes the landowner objectives for enhancing wildlife habitat or improving commercial timber quality. The plan will also include a description of the timber stands on your property and a 10-year plan for harvesting timber and other recommended management activities. Plans can also include cultural, historic and recreational features on your property and the potential impact of timber harvests on those resources.

Follow Best Management Practices

Another benefit of working with a licensed forester is that they will take the lead in hiring a logger and ensure that the timber harvest meets Best Management Practices (BMPs). BMPs are guidelines set by the state to protect natural resources like soils and water quality during a timber harvest. BMPs are summarized in **Good Forestry in the Granite State**, a publication created by UNH Cooperative Extension.

For more information:

Good Forestry in the Granite State online:
<https://extension.unh.edu/goodforestry/index.htm>

Five Reasons to call your county forester
<https://extension.unh.edu/blog/five-reasons-call-your-county-forester>

Woodlot Management
<https://extension.unh.edu/tags/woodlot-management>