

Creating Value From Your Woodlands



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Ever been going down the road, passing miles and miles of timberland and wonder, who owns all of this property? The answer is simple. According to The Greenwood Project, 59% of all timberland is owned by private landowners and of that land, 27% is owned by the public,

and only 14% is owned by the forest industry. While timber products are the largest valued agricultural crop in the United States and the forest products industry employs 1.6 million people, the majority of the forests in this country are still owned by private citizens.

Many hunting and outdoor enthusiasts are lucky enough to own their own piece of recreational property. But many are not experts when it comes to managing their land, their forests and the timber on it. So what is timber management and how can you make sure that you are getting the best return on investment with the wooded areas on your land?

Owners often wonder how they can earn extra income from their land. Selling timber from your property can be a logical way to create another flow of revenue. But without professional assistance it can be difficult to know what to cut, how to cut it and who to sell it to without negatively affecting the wildlife on your land or your property values.

Who Can Help Me With My Timber Management?

It is easy to be confused about the differing roles of a logger and a licensed forester. A logger is an individual or company who works within the forest industry (either buying timber and selling it to a third-party user/manufacturer or buying timber on behalf of the company they are employed by). They specialize in the harvesting of timber, selling and transporting logs.

In contrast, a licensed forester is a third party consultant to the property owner, giving advice and offering guidance based off of the owner's goals. A forester will work with you to determine what your goals are for your land (conservation, attracting wildlife, selling logs off of

your woodlands, etc) then help you to achieve them.

What Can A Forester Assist Me With?

Working with a forester can be a wise decision for a landowner, especially one that needs extra guidance on creating a plan for their property. First, the forester and the owner will work together to formulate a set of goals that the owner is trying to achieve. Is the goal solely to harvest timber for an immediate cash return? Is the goal to harvest some timber but to still attract wildlife? Or is the goal simply to create a long-term conservation plan for your property? A forester can assist property owners by setting realistic goals with them.

A forester can then help an owner by surveying the land and reviewing the differing types of woodlands that are on the property. By doing this, a forester can determine if your goals are

within reach and how to achieve them. They can also analyze the condition of your trees in order to help you decide what trees to harvest and when. In many cases, when a property is properly harvested, a homeowner can actually improve the value of their land and attract more wildlife. The cutting on timber should never be done randomly

— doing so could detract from the value of the property and potentially decrease your long-term return on investment. Foresters are able to help landowners balance harvesting timber as an income source with protecting their land and its value. They can actually make a forest more vital by strategically removing some trees from the forest.

Once a plan is created, a forester can mark what trees should be harvested, as well as how to minimize the impact of logging. Once the trees are harvested, a forester can assist a property owner in some additional areas like researching where to sell the timber, how to get the best price, as well as the nuances such as tax consequences.

Landowners will also find it valuable to work with a forester in order to understand the value of their standing timber. Most rural land lenders will not give value to standing timber unless the property owner has had a study done by a

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The Ohio Department of
Natural Resources,
Division of Forestry
www.ohiodnr.com/forestry

Ohio Forestry Association
www.ohioforest.org

Ohio Society of American
Foresters
www.osafdirectory.com

Call Before You Cut
www.callb4ucut.com

licensed consulting forester. Owners may know they have valuable timber but there must be some science behind the opinion.

Where Can I Find a Reputable Forester?

There are several ways to find reputable consultants that are able to assist with your timber management plan. Many are not aware that the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Division of Forestry offers assistance to private landowners. They have a team of Service Foresters who work on issues like reforestation, timber marking and forest management for property owners in Ohio.

Landowners can also be assisted by the Society of American Foresters, which has a chapter based in Ohio. Their members include consulting foresters, who are independent from a logging company or others in the forest industry. A consulting forester can assist with creating a timber management plan like a state-employed Service Forester.

It's imperative to get references and talk to past clients of any forester to make sure that you are getting an experienced consultant to assist you with your land. Many have degrees, are certified foresters and are involved in professional forestry organizations. It's also important to know what type of insurance coverage your forester has.

Depending on the type of project, the fees for using a forester can vary widely. Landowners and foresters should work together to decide the forester's fee will be based on the scope of the project, on a percentage of the timber sold a lump sum consulting fee.

With planning and professional assistance, landowners will find that by properly managing their timber, they can receive monetary benefits as well as improve their wildlife habitat.

Camping From Page 5

when I saw the photo and read the story on Page 8. S.L. Merriam's article attempts to explain what Michigan DNR officials had on their hands when they raided a 'deer camp' last November in the northern part of that state. Twenty-seven bucks displayed on a 'meat pole' disturbed

me when I heard the accounts of how and where the deer were 'harvested'. In a twisted plan to move — too many — 'big bucks' onto one tiny island so they could be harvested later, just amazes me that no one — to this point — has been prosecuted for trapping and transporting this many wild animals, especially so many coveted deer.

None of this makes sense, other than DNR officials botched the case from the beginning. However, Merriam told me after he interviewed a Michigan DNR supervisor and both Conservation Officers involved in this case, there were some facts involved in the case that cannot be made public at this time that would show how the DNR's investigation

was stymied.

This case, and the investigation may not be over. Stay tuned. To learn more about the case — don't believe all of the rumors — look on the Internet under the key words 'Martin Island poaching'.

Have an opinion on this case? Send me a note on the topic.