



# **BENEFIT YOUR LAND WITH A PLAN**

**Find a Forester Today**



**Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation**





Private landowners care for approximately 14 million acres of forested land in New York State. Private forests provide collective benefits such as scenic beauty, wildlife habitat, clean air and water, forest products, jobs, and carbon storage. Your woods can benefit from a forester's guidance, and active management of your forested land can result in healthier forests, long-term land protection, and sustained income.





## DOESN'T A FOREST MANAGE ITSELF?

Even the “natural” forests we see today have been influenced by humans, a result of agricultural impacts and unsustainable harvesting practices in the 19th century. Today, pressures such as climate change and human development threaten our forests, causing forest health to decline on many private forestlands. Private landowners have the opportunity to help manage their forests by using cutting-edge forestry practices that mimic nature. These practices can promote forest health for generations to come.



## YOUR LAND CAN OFFER MANY BENEFITS

Before taking action, it can be helpful to reflect on what you value about your forest. Having goals for your land—such as generating income or promoting wildlife habitat—will help guide how you manage your forest. Regardless of your goals, a healthy forest will provide you with multiple positive outcomes, such as:

### Aesthetic Value and Forest Health

Harvesting trees might not be pretty in the moment, but identifying a few simple management strategies can help you enjoy the natural beauty of your land long term. A forester can help you plan out methods that promote forest health and aesthetics.

- **Forest thinning** – Thinning out trees helps reduce competition and promotes healthy, visually appealing trees.
- **Regeneration** – Promoting young trees (regeneration) sustains your forest and makes it more resilient to pests and diseases.
- **Forest openings** – Openings can benefit wildlife and promote biodiversity, while providing you with areas to view and enjoy all that your forest has to offer.



Forest openings may look messy at first but they provide important wildlife habitat and great viewing areas.





Many species, including screech owls, depend on tree cavities.

## Helping Wildlife

Promoting adequate wildlife habitat is the key to helping wildlife benefit from your forest. The truth is, not all forests are created equal when it comes to wildlife habitat. There are plenty of ways you can make your forest a better home for the creatures you care about.

- **Standing dead trees** – Trees with cavities (holes) provide shelter for species such as raccoons, owls, and bees.
- **Fallen dead trees** – Decaying trees provide food and shelter for small mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians.
- **Fruit-/nut-producing trees** – Trees such as oak, hickory, and serviceberry are popular food sources for native wildlife.



## Generating Income from Your Forest

When managed properly, your forest can be a source of recurring income. Whether you're saving for retirement or want to invest the money back into your property, taking care of your forest over time pays off. Think about how you can promote crop trees and consider if your forest offers any other valuable forest products.

- **Crop trees** – Crop trees for timber production are healthy, commercially desirable species that can be promoted as a source of revenue.
- **Carbon storage** – Carbon markets allow for the sale of carbon credits when you engage in sustainable forest management.
- **Non-timber forest products** – From maple syrup and ginseng to pinecones, forest products can offer an additional source of income if managed appropriately.



## Managing for Climate Change

A forest is a powerful tool for both slowing climate change and reducing its impacts on society. Trees have the natural ability to soak up and store carbon dioxide from the atmosphere while also protecting us from disasters, like flooding. There are plenty of ways you can help your forest store more carbon dioxide while protecting your land from the worst impacts of climate change.

- **Extended rotations** – Waiting longer to harvest your trees can increase the amount of carbon stored in your forest, helping to slow climate change.
- **Climate-adapted species** – Managing for species that are more likely to survive under intensified climate conditions ensures that forests remain healthy and productive.
- **Riparian zones** – Forested streambanks and wetlands control stream temperatures, improve water quality, and reduce flooding impacts.



Planting and maintaining a tree buffer along streams protects against erosion and flooding, while providing important wildlife habitat.

## PLANNING FOR YOUR FOREST'S FUTURE

Long-term forest planning helps you get the most from your forest and creates healthier, more resilient woodlots. A qualified forester can help steward your land to benefit you, your family, your community, and generations to come.

### A FORESTER CAN HELP PROTECT THE WOODS YOU LOVE

Foresters are specialists with natural resources-focused education, who use their abilities and knowledge of forestry and science to provide professional forestry services. A forester can advise you on a variety of topics, such as developing forest trails, creating wildlife habitat, and conducting a timber sale. Before making any major change to your woodlot, you should get technical assistance from a qualified forester.

A woods walk with your forester is a good time to discuss goals for your forest.



Hans Isaacson for the National Association of State Foresters



## Find a Forester

Don't be caught without a plan—contact a forester today. Foresters can provide you with the technical expertise you need to sustain your land for the long term. The type of forester you will work with depends on the type and complexity of service you're looking for.

- **DEC Stewardship Foresters** – They may provide free technical assistance and basic guidance to landowners.
- **Cooperating Foresters** – These foresters, vetted by DEC's Cooperating Forester Program (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5230.html>), provide services on a fee basis. The list includes both consultant and industrial foresters.
  - **Consultant Foresters** – They work in the private sector, providing a number of different services (including everything from management planning to tree planting) to private landowners, on a fee or contingency basis. They do not have a direct economic interest in a timber procurement or purchasing entity.
  - **Industrial Foresters** – These foresters may work for a wood-using manufacturer or a timber procurement entity. They can provide services to private landowners on a fee basis or other consideration.



Wondering which type of forester is right for you? Call your local DEC office or visit [www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4972.html](https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4972.html) to get started.







## CARE FOR YOUR LAND WITH A PLAN

How you choose to  
manage your forest  
is up to you, but the  
impacts of your choices  
will last for generations.



## WISE FOREST LANDOWNERSHIP

- ☐ Know your land and what's on it;
- ☐ Always make sure to mark your boundaries;
- ☐ Go into a harvest with clear goals and a plan;
- ☐ Ensure you have a contract with your logger; and
- ☐ Think long term and avoid high-grading (a.k.a. “take the best, leave the rest”).



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