

Landowner rights & responsibilities

While good forest management comes with many rewards, it is always wise to check with your particular municipality before proceeding with a project.

Many municipalities have passed Forest Conservation (formerly tree cutting) bylaws that encourage and support your efforts. Check with your municipality to see if a bylaw is in place.

As your management goals are likely to include the removal of some standing timber, property boundaries will need to be identified to avoid trespassing on your neighbours' property.

If you will be selling standing timber, sample contracts are available in the "Landowner's Guide to Selling Standing Timber" available from the Ontario Woodlot Association.

You may also consider contacting a lawyer to assist you with a proper contract between you and the operator, as well as for advice on income tax reporting of forest products.

References and a proper contract will ensure your interests are protected, but these are often overlooked or not complete or reflective of the landowner's goals.



Where to find more information

- ◆ Parry Sound-Muskoka Stewardship Network
Haliburton Highlands Stewardship Council
www.ontariostewardship.org
- ◆ Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
www.mnr.gov.on.ca 1-800-667-1940
- ◆ Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc.
www.westwindforest.ca 1-705-746-6832
- ◆ District Municipality of Muskoka
www.muskoka.on.ca
- ◆ County of Haliburton
www.haliburtoncounty.ca
- ◆ Ontario Woodlot Association
www.ont-woodlot-assoc.org 1-888-791-1103
- ◆ Ontario Forestry Association
www.oforest.on.ca 1-800-387-0790
- ◆ Landowner Resource Centre
www.lrconline.com 1-613-692-2390
- ◆ Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP)
<http://ontariosforests.mnr.gov.on.ca/mftip.cfm>



Muskoka
WATERSHED COUNCIL

9 Taylor Road, Box 482
Bracebridge, ON P1L 1T8
Phone: (705) 645-7393
Fax: (705) 645-7888

Email: watershed@muskokaheritage.org
Website: www.muskokaheritage.org/watershed

Brought to you by:



HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS
STEWARDSHIP
COUNCIL

Caring for your Woodlot

in the Muskoka-Haliburton- Parry Sound region



Your Forest - Your Choice

BEST PRACTICES SERIES

A healthy, well managed woodlot can return 8-14% interest, after inflation!

If you own shoreline property, you already know the importance of maintaining the natural vegetation that protects your investment and water quality.

On our local landscape, much of that natural vegetation is made up of tree species. In fact, about 80% of our local landscape is forested and home to over 200 species of wildlife.

Maintaining and managing this diversity in your woodlot offers many advantages to you as a landowner. These include:

- ♦ providing habitat for wildlife;
- ♦ creating sustainable forest growing conditions that lead to a healthier forest;
- ♦ providing a source of revenue that increases over time; and
- ♦ supplying a continuous flow of forest products for our local economy.

When properly applied, good forest management can actually reverse many of the negative impacts that past, unregulated cutting has created across our forested landscape - all the while providing a guaranteed financial return that can rival many of today's investments.

How to get started

What you decide to do with your woodlot depends on your priorities and long-term goals. First, take stock of what you already have in your forest. The size, relationship to other forests and sources of water, tree species, forest health and wildlife habitat needs are all important items to include in your inventory.

If you are not familiar with assessing your forest values, consider hiring a Forest Consultant to assist you with some or all of your goals.

Hiring a consultant

Practicing good forest management on your property means that you may only be exposed to a logging operation two or three times in your lifetime. This may put you at a disadvantage in understanding how to manage your forest sustainably.

Although most loggers and timber buyers are reputable, working with a local Forest Consultant who is not working for the logging contractor can ensure your interests are achieved and can return large dividends.

Local Stewardship Councils and MNR offices are good sources for locating a consultant in your area. Consider meeting with two or three consultants at your property and chose the one you feel most comfortable with.



Develop a Forest Management Plan and save on your taxes

Not only is having a forest management plan a great way to learn more about the value of your woodlot, in Ontario you can reduce the land taxes on the forested part of your property by 75%.

The Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP) is a voluntary program providing significant property tax reductions for landowners who meet some basic criteria. This includes having over 10 acres of forested land and a willingness to prepare and follow a forest management plan. More information on this program is available through your Forestry Consultant or by contacting the Ontario Forestry Association or the Ontario Woodlot Association.

Making "cents" of forest management

When done properly, not only does a well managed forest look aesthetically pleasing and improve overall forest health, but it can also be a financially rewarding investment.

For example, a managed woodlot is capable of growing 60 board feet per acre per year, on average. Over a period of 20 years, a 100-acre woodlot has the potential to grow 120,000 board feet. One 15-inch veneer maple (\$117.95) grown for 15 years to 18 inches can be worth \$338.75!

Average returns on investments, after inflation, have been in the 8-14% range for managed forests. It just makes "cents" to manage.

Promoting a healthy forest through tree marking

No forest management activity is complete until someone actually identifies the trees on your property that should be removed or retained. In Ontario, The Ministry of Natural Resources certifies tree markers through the Ontario Tree Marker Training Course.

A certified tree marker is trained to manage the forest ecosystem not only for the trees, but also for the wildlife and ecosystems that are dependent on that forest. In addition, tree marking remains one of the most cost-effective tools in forest management.

Caution should be exercised if approached by logging contractors who do not promote and make use of a certified tree marker. Avoid loggers choice or diameter limit cutting options, which often leave your woodlot in a mis-managed state for decades.

