

# A Landowner's Guide *for a Successful Harvest*

**"Healthy Woods Grow on Good Advice"**



*Call Before  
You Cut*



# WHY SELL TIMBER?

Your woods represent one of your most valuable resources. The decision to harvest, and how to do so, can either improve or set back the future value of your land, its potential for wildlife habitat, and as a source of income for you and your family.

**There are several reasons why you might decide to sell timber.**

The timber represents a source of income.

The health and vigor of your woods, and habitat for some species of wildlife, can be improved if you develop a harvesting approach that fits your needs.

Trees that may be damaged due to ice, wind, snow, storm, fire, insects, and disease can be salvaged to allow you to recover some of their value.

**WHATEVER the reason for harvesting, a professional forester is uniquely qualified to assist you with a timber harvest that helps to meet your needs and expectations.**

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# KNOW YOUR OBJECTIVES

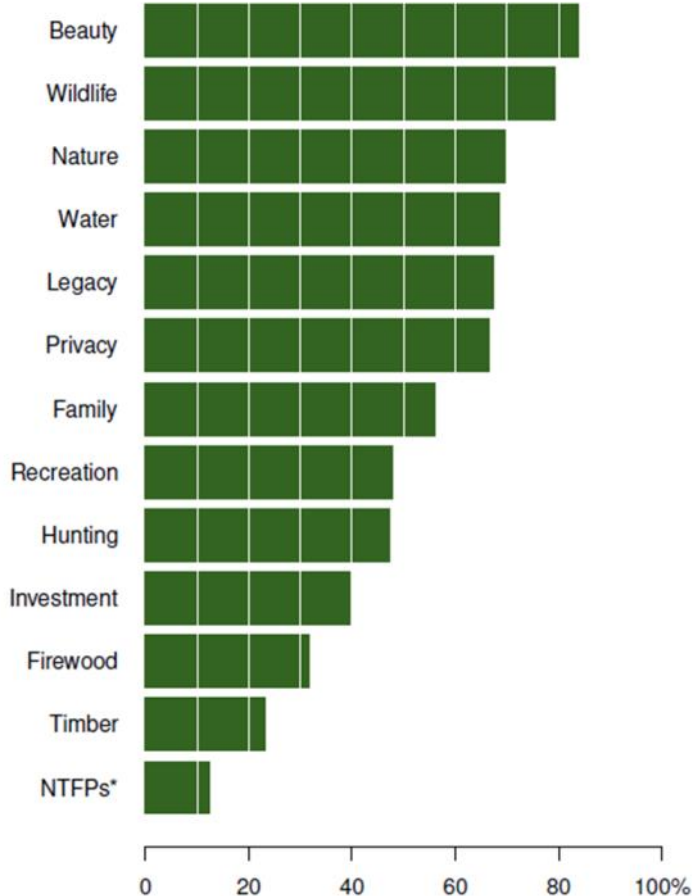
If you are like most Ohio woodland owners, selling timber is not the primary reason for owning your woodland. Fortunately, a timber harvest can be a tool that can help you accomplish a variety of objectives. However, this can only be the case if you have clearly thought about why you own your woodlands and set specific goals for them. So before you harvest your timber ask yourself:

- Why do you own your woodlands?
- What are some of the benefits that you hope to receive from them?
- How do you plan to get there?

In order to make sure that a harvest helps you to accomplish your objectives, we recommend that you work with a professional forester to develop a plan to help you get there. If a harvest makes sense for you, a forester can help to design one that is compatible with your reasons for owning your woodland. For example, a properly designed and implemented harvest could help to improve the overall health of your woodland, improve wildlife habitat and provide much needed income. Depending on your goals, different trees may need to be harvested. A professional forester is trained to select the right trees to cut, as well as those to keep, to help you reach your intended goals.

## Reasons for Owning Woods

The percentage of landowners in this group who cited each of these reasons for owning lands as important or very important to them.



TOOLS FOR ENGAGING LANDOWNERS EFFECTIVELY  
**Woodland Owner Profile**

All Family 10+ Acres  
Ohio

For more information on Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively visit [engaginglandowners.org](http://engaginglandowners.org).

# INVENTORY YOUR WOODS

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Having an inventory of your woods is like having an appraisal of your home's value. It's a key part of knowing your overall financial worth. Without an inventory it is difficult to make an informed decision about selling your timber.

An inventory also helps to identify other resources in your woodland like wildlife habitat, unique features or recreational areas. It can also help you to evaluate the condition of your forest and identify potential problems, such as,

- over-crowded conditions
- insect and disease issues
- or even the presence of non-native invasive species

The inventory also provides a baseline to monitor your progress and can help you to set reasonable goals for your property. An inventory can even help you to reduce your income taxes once you do decide to harvest your timber.

So if you are thinking about a timber harvest, work with a consulting forester to inventory your woodland. It is not only key to determining if a harvest makes sense, but it can help you determine the timing of the harvest and the types of trees that should be removed to accomplish your ownership goals.





# KEEP YOUR WOODS HEALTHY

Taking note of what you want your woods to look like, and the benefits it will provide now and in the future, provides a road map towards a healthier woodlot.

## Preparing Your Woods for a Harvest

Certain pre-harvest actions should take place prior to any harvesting of trees. Marking trees to be harvested:

- Ensures that only the trees you want harvested are removed
- Minimizes confusion during the harvesting process
- Potential buyers will know exactly what is being sold and harvested
- As the seller, you can compare buyers' bids for the same trees marked for harvest

Controlling invasive and undesirable species:

- Openings created in the harvest are often quickly colonized by invasive plants, including undesirable trees, which will interfere with your native trees if they are not dealt with before harvesting takes place.
- Grape vines can overload trees with weight, especially when covered with ice and snow, which can cause damage to limbs or entire trees. They also shade out desirable trees.



Trees should be marked at eye level and at the base to indicate which trees should be harvested.



### Items to consider when marking your trees for harvest

- Use a paint color that is visible and different from the color used to mark your property boundaries.
- Make two marks on each tree to be harvested: a slash or circle about 4 ½ feet above the ground and a dot at the base along the ground line (allows you to verify stumps as marked trees post-harvest).

# KEEP YOUR WOODS HEALTHY

## How Can I Protect My Soil and Water Resources?

The use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) during timber harvests helps protect water quality by reducing erosion. When conducting a harvest, the landowner, logger, and forester are legally responsible for protecting water resources under the Forestry Pollution Abatement Rules and Standards. Ohio's manual outlining these practices is called [\*BMPs for Erosion Control for Logging Practices in Ohio\*](#).

Some examples of forestry [BMPs include](#):

- Properly designing logging roads
- Installing water bars on skid trails
- Re-seeding bare soil
- Planning the proper use of stream crossings

To reduce these risks:

- Include BMPs to be used on the harvest site in your contract
- You or your forester should monitor the harvest site for proper BMP use throughout the contract period
- File a voluntary [Timber Harvest Plan](#) with your local [Soil and Water Conservation District](#) (SWCD). The plan helps you select and document BMPs that will be used to reduce erosion and maintain the harvest site to the state standards found in the [Forestry Pollution Abatement Rules and Standards](#)



Water bars are installed diagonally across skid trails to divert surface water runoff and prevent erosion. This site was also re-seeded and covered with mulch.


# WORKING TOGETHER

Prior to a harvest we recommend you work with a qualified forester to develop a long-term plan to guide you through your forest management activities. When it's time to harvest, a consulting forester can help you develop a harvest plan that meets your needs.

## Using a Qualified Forester

A consulting forester can help you with your harvest in the following ways:

- Choose the best timber harvest method
- Select and mark the trees to be harvested and trees to be left for the future
- Advertise your harvest to the best potential buyers and obtain competitive bids
- Help you find the right logger for your harvest
- Ensure that regulations and laws are followed during your harvest
- Enhance wildlife habitat
- Ensure soil and water quality protection during the harvest
- Resolve any issues with the timber buyer or logger
- Identify threats to future woodland health, including non-native invasive plants



**Before choosing a consulting forester, be sure to ask for references from prior clients and make sure that you have a written agreement specifying services provided and fees.**

To find a forester or to verify their **credentials**, visit the Ohio Society of American Foresters Directory of Members Providing Forestry Services at [osafdirectory.com](https://osafdirectory.com), or the Association of Consulting Foresters directory at [www.acf-foresters.org](https://www.acf-foresters.org).



# WORKING TOGETHER

## Loggers Play an Important Role

The Ohio Master Logger Program is a voluntary program that trains loggers in Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce soil erosion, protect water quality, and reduce the impact to your woodland during a harvest. They also:

- Are trained in safe and efficient timber cutting and logging practices
- Have current certification in CPR and First Aid
- Maintain Workers' Compensation coverage on all employees
- Participate in advanced training and periodic recertification training
- Provide liability insurance on request

To find a Master Logger in your area, contact the Ohio Forestry Association at [ohioforest.org](http://ohioforest.org). Be sure to ask for references from previous clients before hiring a logger.





# CHOOSE TREES CAREFULLY

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The decision to cut a tree depends on many things, including its age and maturity, its contribution to your woods' health, and your own goals and needs. Make sure that your decision to harvest it is based on all these things and not just its current dollar value .

When planning for a harvest in your woodland, chances are you aren't going to harvest every tree. So which trees do you leave and how do you choose the trees to cut? Many harvests in Ohio use methods that are not good for the future of the woodland.

Most woodland owners prefer some sort of partial harvest. They indicate that they would use a "select cut" to harvest their timber. Unfortunately "select cuts" or harvests that only remove trees over a given size (diameter limit) often have negative consequences. They frequently:

- Remove only high value trees leaving less poor quality, diseased, insect laden and damaged trees to occupy your woods
- Leave smaller trees that in many cases are about the same age as the larger trees, just not as vigorous or healthy
- Change the mix of trees species in your woodland to a less desirable mix of trees not as capable of providing the benefits that you desire

Your forester can help to design a harvest that can provide short-term income, as well as, the long-term benefits that you desire. Properly implemented harvests can leave trees or regrow new ones that are:

- Diverse and healthy
- Well adapted to the current and future growing conditions in your woodlands
- Capable of providing the benefits that you desire now and well into the future

The differences and benefits of several harvesting methods that can be used in Ohio can be found in the Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet ["Harvesting and Reproduction Methods for Ohio Forests"](#).

# PROTECT YOUR INTERESTS

Market your timber properly to ensure you receive a fair value and oversee the implementation of your harvest carefully so your land is not damaged.

## **Why Should You Have a Contract?**

A timber sale contract is a written agreement between you and the individual or company purchasing your timber. It should:

- Protect you and your woodland during your timber harvest
- Include all of the aspects of the timber sale that have been agreed upon
- Be acceptable to both the timber buyer and you

You and your woodland are unique, and no standardized contract will address all of your concerns. It is recommended that you seek assistance when creating and agreeing to a timber harvest contract.

Consulting foresters are uniquely qualified to develop a contract that is tailored to your individual situation. As with any contract, it is always a good idea to consult with a lawyer.

Important items in a timber sale contract that are often overlooked include:

- A detailed description of the harvest area and the contract expiration date
- A clear explanation of trees to be harvested
- Seasonal and weather restrictions
- The payment amount, payment method, and payment schedule
- Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be used and who is responsible for them
- A description of excessive damage and the buyer's responsibility

A timber sale contract is a detailed document that is **legally binding** after being signed – a qualified forester can help make sure it protects your interests!

To learn more about writing and agreeing on timber sale contracts, refer to the OSU Extension Fact Sheet ["Timber Sale Contracts"](#).

# **PROTECT YOUR INTERESTS**

## **Advertising Your Timber Sale to Get More Money**

Properly advertising your timber sale will often result in more interest in your timber, and consequently, higher prices. A consulting forester will be able to directly target timber buyers interested in purchasing the specific products that you are selling (veneer logs, timber, pulpwood, etc.). When placing your timber up for bid, a forester will:

- Advertise with a description of the timber, such as species, volume, quality, average diameter, and number of trees
- Specify any requirements you have for the harvest
- Request written, sealed bids for the timber by a certain date and time
- Open all bids at the specified time

Select the best offer and agree on a contract, taking into consideration the price being offered, reputation of the logger, and practices they will use to harvest your timber. Remember, as the landowner you have the right to refuse any and all bids if they are not acceptable.





# PROTECT YOUR INTERESTS

## Getting Paid for Your Timber

There are two main methods to receive payment for your timber: a **lump sum sale** or **selling on shares**.

### LUMP SUM SALE

In a **lump sum sale**, you will be paid all at once. This method is less complicated and has many advantages:

- Exact price will be determined before harvesting
- Payment is made before harvesting begins
- If the market price drops or the timber is damaged, the loss falls entirely on the buyer, not on you as the landowner

### SELLING ON SHARES

When **selling on shares**, you get paid for a percentage (e.g., 50%) of what the mill pays the logger for the timber. This is a commonly used method, but not recommended as there are several disadvantages:

- You become a partner when selling on shares, creating possible liability and tax issues
- Exact price you will receive cannot be determined prior to harvesting
- Market prices can fluctuate widely
- You assume monetary loss along with the buyer if market prices drop or the timber is damaged during the sale
- You also assume monetary loss from poor logging practices or marketing strategies

More information on the process of selling your timber can be found in the OSU Extension Fact Sheet [“Getting the Most Return from Your Timber Sale”](#).

# ADDITIONAL HELP

With thoughtful planning and the advice of a professional forester, you and your family will have a positive, lasting impact on your woodlands. There are many good resources available to you, and one simple step is to Call Before You Cut!

Publications mentioned in this packet and more can be found by visiting [callb4ucut.com/ohio](http://callb4ucut.com/ohio) and clicking on **Expert Help**, or by calling your county OSU Extension office.

## Call Before You Cut

[callb4ucut.com/ohio](http://callb4ucut.com/ohio)

1-877-424-8288



## ODNR Division of Forestry

[forestry.ohiodnr.gov](http://forestry.ohiodnr.gov)

1-877-424-8288



## OSU Extension

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