

Planning for a Successful Timber Harvest

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Maine Forest Service
2020



**Forester Districts
Field Staff**
Forest Policy & Management
Department of Agriculture,
Conservation and Forestry
Maine Forest Service

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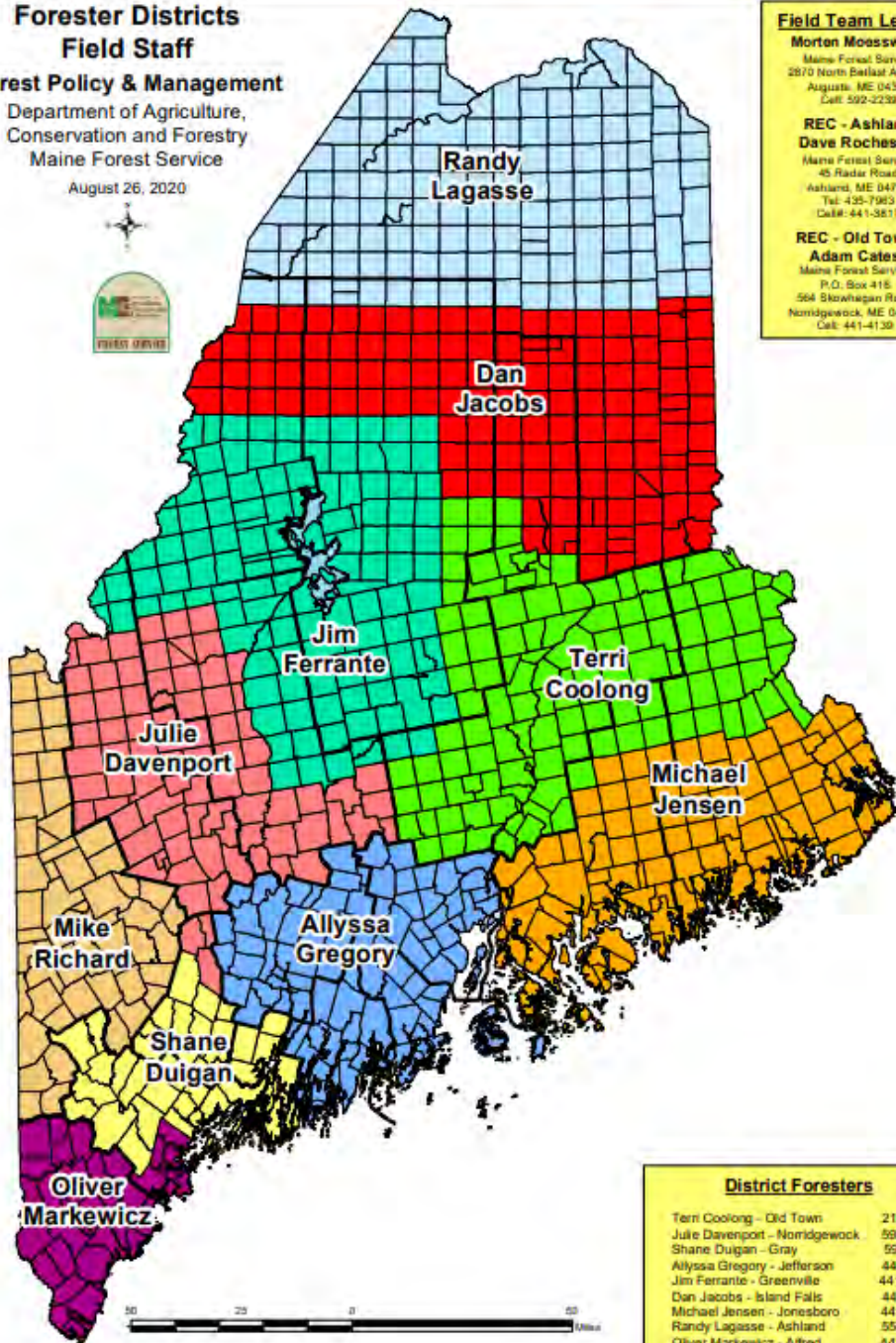


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Maine Forest Service District Foresters:

Direct/field & indirect assistance
Landowners, foresters, loggers,
towns, general public

Education/outreach
Workshops, schools, fairs, displays,
publications

Grants to landowners, towns,
nonprofit groups
WoodsWISE, Project Canopy

Forest & harvest monitoring

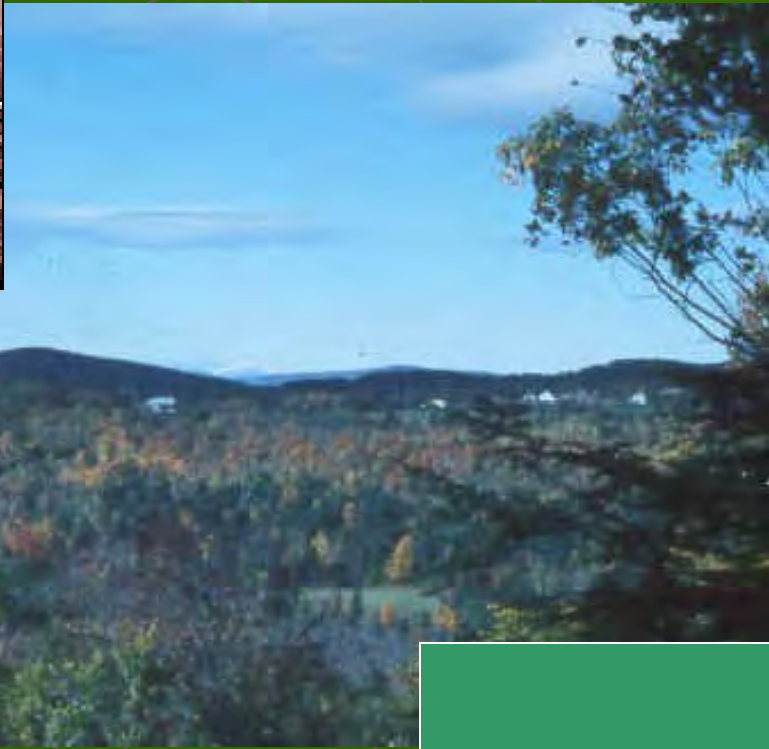
Natural resource regulation

What are your harvest goals?

- ▶ Immediate financial considerations
 - Income – from sale of wood (vs. cost)
 - Wood for your use – boards, firewood, etc.
- ▶ Protect & “improve” your forest for the future
 - Influence/increase future growth/value (tree species & quality, new seedlings, forest health, etc.)
 - When can you return for further harvesting?
- ▶ Protect/balance other resources
 - Recreation, scenery, aesthetics, wildlife habitats, etc.
 - Soil, streams, wetlands, trails, etc.

Planning for your Woodlot (not just one harvest event...)

- ▶ Know what you've got
- ▶ Know how your forest is growing, what it's potential is, what your options are
- ▶ Develop an action plan (10 years+)
 - Harvest now or later? One harvest block? Two or more? When? How?
 - Other projects?
- ▶ Forest Management Plan



*You are writing the
next chapter of your
woodlands...*

?

Planning a harvest

- ▶ Who is involved, who decides what, who's responsible?
- ▶ Where is the harvest?
- ▶ What laws/regulations apply?
- ▶ What trees will be harvested?
- ▶ What products will result, where will they be sold, what are fair prices?
- ▶ When will the wood be paid for?
- ▶ What equipment will be used?
- ▶ How will the harvest area be accessed – trails, roads, log landings?
- ▶ How will the operation deal with slash, water quality, soil conditions, damaged trees, special features, etc.?
- ▶ When will the harvest occur?
- ▶ Will you put this plan/agreement in writing before the harvest?

Types of harvests for particular goals

▶ Thinning

- Improve growth rates
- Favor particular species
- Favor better quality trees (timber, wildlife, aesthetics)

▶ Regeneration harvest

- Small openings for seedlings (looks a lot like thinning!)
- Bigger/more openings for seedlings/sprouts
- Clearcutting

"Selective cut"????

▶ "High-grading" (no consideration of future growth)

- Cut the valuable trees and leave poor quality trees





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WHAT WILL MY WOODS LOOK LIKE?

BEFORE AND AFTER TIMBER HARVESTING



Harvest planning & "administration"

- ▶ Terminology: A timber harvest or "sale" (logging job/operation, timber cut, etc.)
 - a "commercial harvest" = any timber harvest where wood is sold, i.e. the landowner is selling their trees
 - A few landowners will do their own cutting – most will involve a professional logger
 - The buyer may be a logging contractor, procurement forester, trucker, broker, etc.
- ▶ A "precommercial" forest operation
 - cutting is done primarily to improve future growth, no wood is sold, trees cut are left in the woods or used by the landowner

Timber sales

- ▶ Stumpage sale/Pay as cut sale (*most typical*)
 1. Landowner sells trees "on the stump" for an agreed set of prices ("stumpage prices") to the logger/buyer
 2. Logger/buyer re-sells or "markets" the wood to various outlets -
 1. a wood buyer/concentration yard
 2. a mill or procurement forester
 3. Each truckload of wood is measured or "scaled" by the receiving mill or concentration yard (or other buyer)
 1. Sawlogs/veneer – thousand board feet (MBF)
 2. Firewood/pulp/biomass – cords or tons or mlbs.
 3. "Scale slips" or "Mill slips" show volume/quality of each load
 4. Logger pays the landowner based on scaled volume & price agreed

Harvest Preparation

- ▶ Forest Operations planning/preparation:
 - Flagging boundaries and/or harvest area limits
 - Silviculture – determining what will be cut
 - Marking trees to be cut (or to be retained)
 - Planning/laying out roads, log landings, major trails
 - Designing Best Management Practices at/around waterbodies (erosion control, stream crossings, etc.)
 - Filing notifications/reports, researching legal requirements, obtaining permits (if necessary)

Legal Considerations

- ▶ Boundary marking – within 200' of harvesting
- ▶ Forest Practices Act
 - Forest Operations Notification & Landowner Report
 - Clearcutting Requirements (& exemptions), Regeneration Requirements
- ▶ Liquidation Harvesting
 - Buying, cutting, and selling timberland within a 5-year period
- ▶ Natural Resource laws
 - Water quality protection; Statewide Standards for Timber Harvesting in Shoreland Areas; Shoreland Zoning; NRPA, wildlife habitat; slash laws, etc
- ▶ Local Land Use or Harvesting Ordinances
- ▶ Property restrictions (e.g. easements, Tree Growth requirements)

Harvest Preparation

- ▶ Establishing harvesting agreements
 - Estimating timber volume/value
 - Determining the type of equipment is best suited to the type of harvest
 - Identifying/researching a logger/contractor
 - Determining fair prices, negotiating prices with a logger/buyer
 - Developing a written Timber Harvest/Sale Contract that establishes expectations and responsibilities

Harvest Supervision

- ▶ Supervising and "administering" the harvesting contract
 - Reviewing the harvest periodically as it's happening
 - Problem-solving – adjusting to changing conditions
 - Making sure wood is being marketed to its maximum value
 - Reviewing scale slips & stumpage payments to the landowner
 - Making sure the harvest is completed and "closed out"
 - Providing harvest summary information for reporting/tax purposes

Working with Professionals

▶ Forester Services

- Planning, research, silviculture, contracting, supervision

▶ Logger services

- Planning, research, silviculture, contracting, supervision
- Felling and yarding trees (efficiently, safely, protecting remaining trees)
- Building/improving roads, trails, landings, stream crossings
- Marketing/trucking the wood
- Clean up, firewood for landowner's use, etc.?



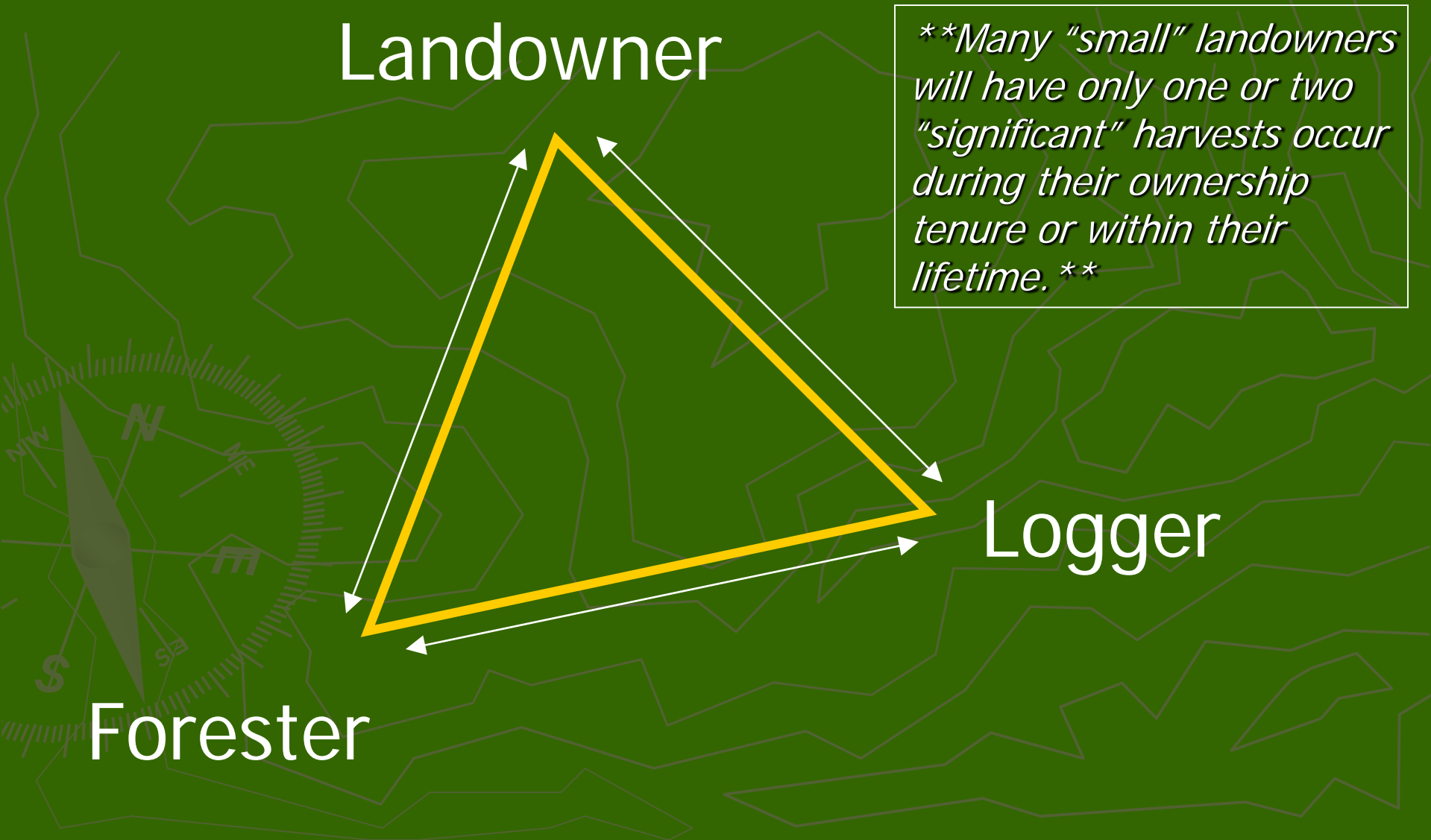
Forest Harvesting Triangle

Landowner

***Many "small" landowners will have only one or two "significant" harvests occur during their ownership tenure or within their lifetime. ***

Logger

Forester

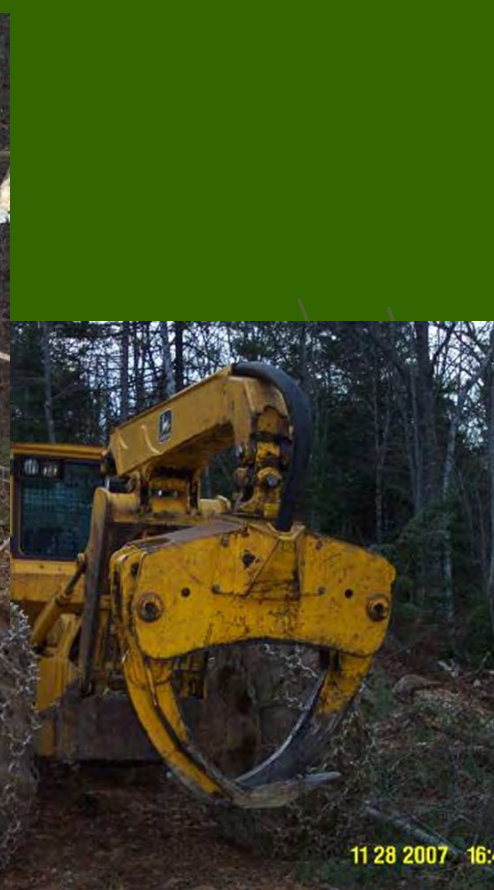
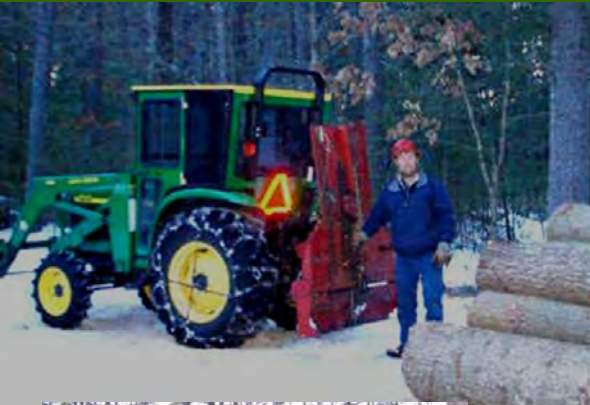


Harvest Operations

- ▶ Felling (controlled/safe)
- ▶ Yarding (skidding/forwarding)
- ▶ Trails
- ▶ Log Landings
- ▶ Roads
- ▶ Stream crossings

What type of equipment can accomplish the type of harvest planned & get the results you want?

What is the operator's level of skill/care?



Log Landings



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Trails





Truck roads



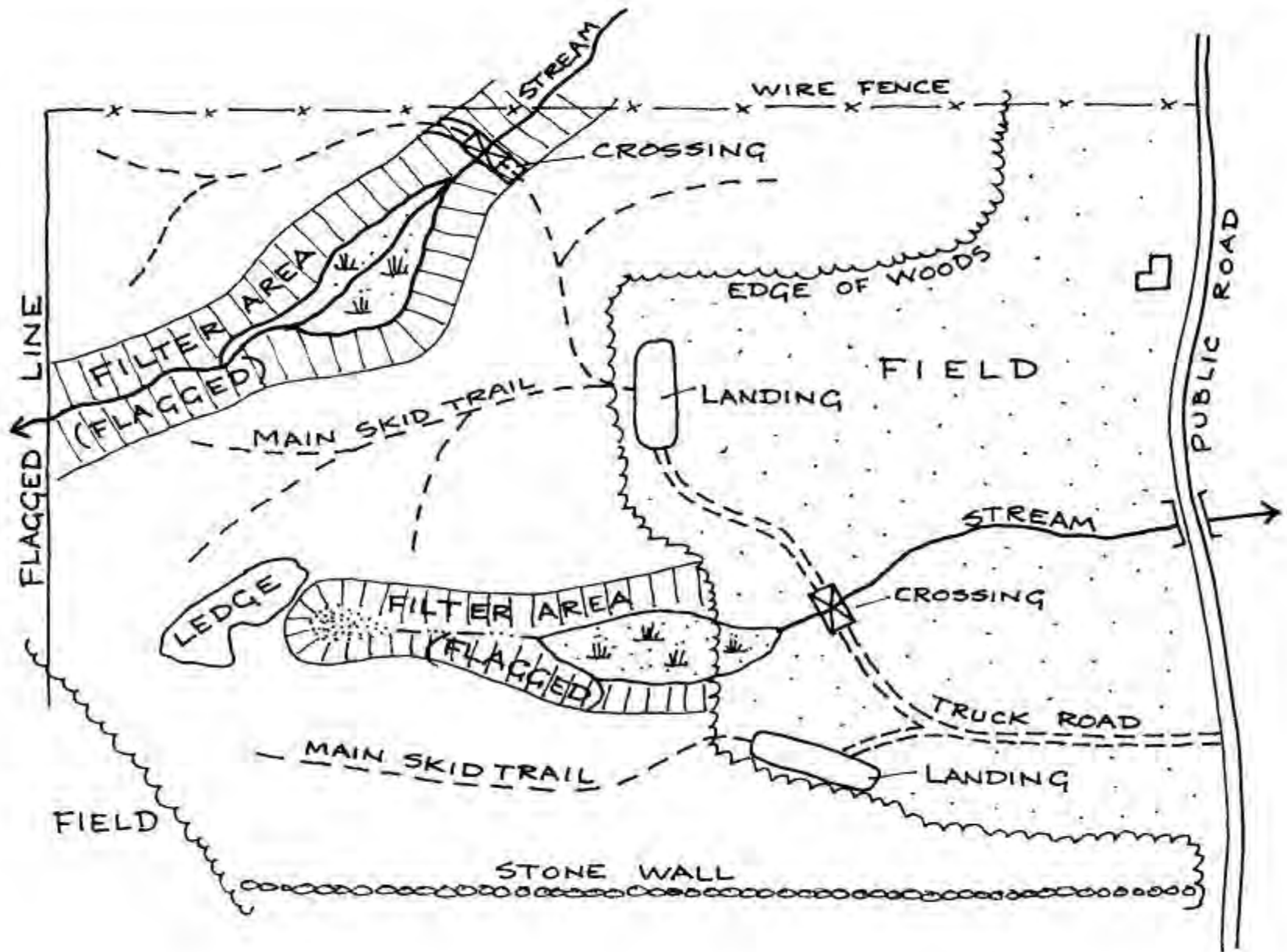
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Contracts

- ▶ Contract with an independent forester
 - Services that he/she will provide to the landowner, at what cost, how/when billed
- ▶ Contract with your logger (or other buyer)
 - "Timber Sale Contract" – an agreement to sell (some of) the landowner's trees, at a pre-determined price, under pre-agreed conditions
 - "Service Contract" – an agreement in which the contractor provides defined services, at a pre-determined cost to the landowner

Timber Sale Contract

- ▶ A Timber Sale contract is between
 - the landowner – the “Seller” – and
 - a purchaser of timber – “Buyer” (usually an independent logger/logging contractor).
- ▶ Ideally developed by
 - an independent forester representing the landowner
 - someone sufficiently knowledgeable to address all the possible considerations and represent the landowner’s interest

Why have a contract??

- ▶ A written contract is a communications tool that outlines a common set of expectations and assurances between the landowner and the logger (and/or the forester)
 - In writing and up front (easier to remember over time)
 - Ensures that decisions/agreements are made in advance, before any work begins

What are the goals, desired results?

*Who's doing what?
- responsibilities*

Ask questions about what is going to happen - if the answer is important it should probably be addressed in the contract

Does the contract "describe" a harvest that will meet your goals?

*This presentation does not constitute legal advice
and should not be construed as such.*

Take-home points

- ▶ Plan ahead (weeks, months, years)!
- ▶ Get to know forestry...
- ▶ Hire a reputable, knowledgeable Licensed Forester to help you
- ▶ Work with a reputable, skilled, professional logger
- ▶ Communicate clearly & often with everyone involved
- ▶ Use detailed written contracts to clarify expectations and responsibilities

Next steps...

- ▶ Go to a few field tours/demonstration forests/harvest sites
- ▶ Talk to several foresters & references
- ▶ Talk to several loggers & references
- ▶ Read books, magazines, newsletters
- ▶ Think about your goals & talk to your family
- ▶ Plan your successful harvest!