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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
MAINE FOREST SERVICE
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Working with a Forester Maine Forest Service MidCoast District

Introduction

The Maine Forest Service recommends that Maine woodland owners work with a private Forester when making decisions or undertaking management activities in their woods.

As your **Maine Forest Service District Forester**, I can answer questions on a range of forestry topics, provide publications, or tell you about upcoming workshops or events. I may be able to walk your woodland with you and provide some suggestions. However, as District Forester I cannot provide timber appraisals, write Forest Management or Tree Growth Plans, mark trees for harvest, or supervise timber harvesting. For these and other services I can help you locate private licensed foresters in your area to provide these services.

What is a Forester?

A **forester** is a person whose work is to assess woodlands, identify or estimate timber and non-timber values, recommend/design/supervise possible activities, including harvesting, to accomplish a range of goals, and help landowners plan for the future.

A person practicing forestry in the state of Maine must be licensed by the state, and generally has a university degree in forestry.

By contrast,

- a **logger** is a person whose primary job is the actual logging, or harvesting of trees, including cutting down the trees and "yarding" them to a landing, yard or roadside area where they can be trucked to a mill that uses the wood. Loggers are not licensed by the state.
- An **arborist** is a person who specializes in caring for and/or removing individual trees in parks, around homes and other buildings. Arborists must be licensed in Maine.

Licensed Foresters often provide services to landowners – the most common services are:

- preparing written, long term **Forest Management Plans**, and
- representing a landowner in the planning & oversight of **timber harvesting**.

Even if you only have one project in mind, choose a forester who will be available for future needs/projects – like you might choose an accountant, health care provider, or tax preparer. A more comprehensive list of possible services is given below.

Financial incentives from federal Farm Bill funds are available for some activities and may require special qualifications. Some foresters may be eligible as **Stewardship Foresters** to provide services to landowners participating in MFS's WoodsWISE incentives program. Some are also eligible as **Technical Service Providers** (TSPs) under USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service

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programs. Landowners interested in these programs should ask prospective foresters about their eligibility.

Types of Foresters

Foresters may provide services to individual, small landowners in a variety of ways. The basic question is whether the forester is acting as an independent agent for the landowner, or whether they are working on someone else's behalf at the same time or exclusively.

- **Independent consulting foresters** usually work directly for individual landowners on a contract basis. Often they are in business as individuals or small consulting firms.
- **Landowner assistance/procurement foresters** are those that work for a mill or other wood broker/buyer. They usually are purchasing timber directly from a landowner, and may provide forester services to landowners as part of a timber sale contract or separately. Any actual harvesting is subcontracted to a logger.
- **Forester-loggers** are those whose primary business includes logging. They may provide some forest management and operations planning services as well as logging, depending on the landowner's needs.

Landowners should understand what services the forester is providing, on whose behalf, and how the forester will be compensated. Full disclosure is the best approach.

A Forester Services Contract

If a forester is performing services for a landowner, a written Forester Services Contract can establish what specific services will be provided, when, and at what cost. A Forester Services Contract is usually not the same as a contract to harvest timber.

At a minimum, the forester agreement should clearly spell out the following:

- the parties to the agreement – i.e. landowner and forester
- forester license number (and any other credentials)
- the landowner/forester relationship – who is the forester working for, and whether there are possible conflicts of interest
- the type (and amount) of forester services to be provided (see list below)
- the beginning and end date(s) of the contract, and/or when services will be provided
- how, when, and how much the forester will be paid
 - by the project
 - by the acre
 - by the hour
 - as a percentage of timber revenue
 - other fees (mileage, copies, supplies, etc.)
- other provisions/protections, e.g.
 - certifications or standards required (e.g. Tree Growth, Tree Farm, etc.)
 - insurance/liabilities
 - use of subcontractors (foresters or other special services)
 - proof of ownership
 - right of access to the property
- right of modification or termination of the contract

If a landowner is selling timber and is represented by a forester, a separate **Timber Harvest Contract** with the logger/or timber buyer (prepared by the landowner's forester) usually spells out

the terms/conditions of the harvest operation. A comprehensive Timber Harvest Contract is the most important way to ensure that a harvest will meet all landowner objectives, and provide the logger clear expectations of the work to be done.

If a landowner is entering into a Timber Harvest Contract directly with a forester who is acting as a buyer, and the agreement also includes forester services (see list below), those should be clearly spelled out, with all the information above included.

Why work with a Forester?

A forester is an agent for the landowner whose job is to provide specialized information and help ensure successful results, based on the landowner's goals. Hire a forester if –

- you value the future of your woodland
- you need more information on your forest's future potential – in terms of aesthetics, recreation, forest health, wildlife habitat, wood products or income
- you need help clarifying your goals and deciding what actions to take on your property
- you are not sure how to manage a timber harvest (especially legal issues, prices, etc.)
- you need help assuring that your forest will be in good condition after harvesting
- you need help dealing with various programs such as Tree Growth Tax Law, timber taxes, or government incentives like Stewardship or EQIP.

A good forester will protect your interests and add value to your woods – in your enjoyment of them, in their potential as wildlife habitat, in immediate income, and in the future value of your trees.

In addition, a Licensed Forester is bound by a professional **Code of Ethics** to protect their clients' interests, be clear about services provided and costs, communicate regularly, keep confidentiality, and avoid or disclose conflicts of interest.

Selecting a Forester

MFS strongly suggests that landowners identify and speak with several Foresters to get a comparison of what different foresters offer. Workshops and events are often a good way to meet other landowners and their foresters.

Landowners will often **speak with and/or meet with at least a few prospective foresters.**

Landowners may spend several weeks or longer selecting a forester. Ideally, a landowner will develop a long-term working relationship with one forester that they trust, and can continue to work with over many years. If you are interviewing several foresters, tell them so. Ask if they intend to bill you for proposed meetings or for any background research they offer.

Landowners should ask prospective foresters about their experience, background, range of services, and specific expertise or credentials. In addition to an on-site meeting, landowners should:

- **request references and interview past clients,**
- **review samples of written plans and maps, and**
- **visit past harvests they have managed**

... for any forester they are seriously considering. In particular, ask questions and look for evidence that the forester communicates well and promptly, provides quality work in a timely way, and delivers results that meet the expectations of landowners.

Prepare to meet prospective foresters by gather maps, deeds, past management plans, timber sale receipts, or other records. Landowners should **communicate** to the forester, being as specific as possible, their values and objectives for the woodland they own. Landowners should **ask questions and take the time** to find a forester who can educate you, apply your own management philosophy to your woods, and successfully implement projects on your behalf. Once you have identified a forester, **ask for a proposed contract** for their services.

Before selecting & hiring a forester, it is important that landowners **get a clear understanding of what specific services a forester will provide, what their fee(s) will be, and how they will be compensated.** An independent, Licensed Forester is ethically bound to serve the interests of you, the landowner, and to disclose any potential conflict of interest.

Possible Forester services

Long-range Planning:

- ▶ Preparing or updating a Forest Management Plan or similar plan (e.g. a Tree Growth Management & Harvest Plan, a Stewardship Plan, or an NRCS/EQIP Plan), including:
 - A statement of the landowner's goals
 - Forest assessment, inventory & appraisal of timber volume/value (may be based on a visual estimate or sample measurements)
 - Mapping
 - Evaluation of other resources/considerations (wildlife habitat, soil & water, natural communities, forest health, historic features, recreation, etc.)
 - Recommended activities to meet the landowner's goals
- ▶ Researching/preparing/filing legal requirements, Tree Growth forms, permits, or other paperwork; navigating government financial assistance programs
- ▶ Understanding and planning for timber income taxes

Small projects:

- ▶ Help setting up small projects (thinning, pruning, firewood cutting, etc.)
 - Marking trees to be cut or pruned
 - Evaluating the health/condition of individual trees or forest stands
 - Dealing with invasive plant species
- ▶ Laying out & designing trails, roads, erosion control measures
- ▶ Help locating boundary evidence, deed research
- ▶ Finding specialists and other contractors

Harvest Planning/Supervision*:

- ▶ Forest Operations planning/preparation:
 - Flagging boundaries and/or harvest area limits
 - Silviculture – determining what trees will be cut/left to meet landowner goals
 - Marking trees to be cut (or to be retained)
 - Planning/laying out roads, log landings, major trails
 - Designing Best Management Practices, erosion control, crossings, at or around waterbodies
 - Filing notifications/reports, researching legal requirements, obtaining permits
- ▶ Negotiating Harvest Agreements/Contracts on the landowner's behalf

- Estimating timber volume/value
- Identifying/researching a skilled, professional, reputable logger
- Advising the landowner on fair prices, negotiating prices with a logger/buyer
- **Developing a written Timber Harvest/Sale Contract
- ▶ Supervising and “administering” the timber harvest contract
 - Reviewing the harvest on site periodically as it’s occurring (especially silviculture and protection of resources)
 - Helping ensure wood is being marketed to its maximum value (by working with the logger, or by marketing wood directly on behalf of the landowner)
 - Reviewing scale slips & handling stumpage payments to the landowner
 - Making sure the harvest is completed and “closed out”
 - Providing harvest summary information for reporting/tax purposes

***Helping prepare a clearly written timber harvest contract adapted to the landowner’s needs and the harvest situation can be one of the most important services of an independent forester.*

Foresters in the Midcoast

01/01/2019

The following list identifies Licensed Foresters active in providing forester services to landowners in the Midcoast District, which includes Waldo, Knox, Lincoln, and Kennebec Counties. Ultimately you as the landowner should feel confident that you have hired the person or firm that best suits your needs. Note that most foresters work in multiple counties, and a working area of up to 1 hour travel time from their business location is common.

This is a partial list only, for the convenience of landowners requesting MFS assistance in finding a forester. A more comprehensive list of licensed consulting foresters is available on the MFS website, <http://www.maine.gov/doc/mfs/fpm/wwi/wwi.htm>, or from the Maine Board of Licensure. This website also has additional information on Maine Forest Service programs, services, and available publications.

Waldo

Jonathan Robbins, Searsmont	207-342-5851
Ken Strickland, Downeast Land Management, Searsport	207-548-2221
Mark Vannah, Robbins Lumber, Searsmont	207-342-5221

Kennebec

Mark Brown, Vassalboro	207-233-9348
Harold Burnett, Jon Doty, Two Trees Forestry, Winthrop & Farmington	207-377-7196
tish carr, Belgrade	207-495-2392
John Churchill, Central Maine Forestry, Readfield	207-685-9380
Jason Tyler, Abigail Glidden, Comprehensive Land Technology, South China	207-445-3151

Knox/Lincoln

Barrie Brusila/Mitch Kihn, MidMaine Forestry, Warren	207-273-4046
Erik Carlson, C&L Forestry, Edgecomb	207-882-9735
Peter Hannah, MacKintosh Forest Services, Bristol	207-563-8300
Paul Miller, Forestry For You, Washington	207-845-3084
Merle Parise, Newcastle	207-563-5778
David Schaible, Timberland Consultants, Nobleboro	207-563-5700

Hancock:

Si Balch, Brooklin	207-578-1003
Teresa Davis, Otis	207-537-3432
Thom Dodd, Acadia Forestry, Lamoine	207-779-7739
Keith Johnson, Fitts Mountain Forestry, Holden	207-843-5489
Steve MacDonald, American Forest Management, Ellsworth	207-944-6501
John Mills, Holden	207-989-1434

Northwest (of the Midcoast region):

Steve Gettle, Woodland Investment Services, Jay	207-491-2803
Bill Haslam, American Forest Management, Farmington	207-860-4113
Bob Leso, Chesterville	207-778-2000
Jeff Meserve, Oversett Forest Management, South Paris	207-743-7521
Lucas Lamond/Brian Savoy - SAPPI, Skowhegan	207-858-4201

Blaine Miller/Colby Leighton, Dirigo Timber, North Anson 207-635-2099
Daren Turner, Kennebec Valley Forestry, Skowhegan 207-474-7338

Southwest:

Rob Bryan, Forest Synthesis, Harpswell 207-725-8942
Clif & Greg Foster, Timberstate G. Inc., Gray 207-657-4441
Rick Jones, Jones Associates, Poland Spring 207-998-5242
Paul Larrivee, New Gloucester 207-926-5356
Rene Noel, Southern Maine Forestry Services, Windham 207-892-6562

North/East:

Kevin Allcroft, Forestree Concepts, Orrington 207-825-3033
Sam Brown, Parkman 207-277-4221
Kirby Ellis, Hudson 207-327-4674
Sean Hutchinson, Bangor 207-624-2900
Doug "Bill" Mahan, Kenduskeag 207-884-8873
Jake Maier, Jake Maier Forestry, Brewer 207-989-1403
Tom Pelletier, American Forest Management, Carmel 207-817-9093
Dale Robinson/John McGeechan, Prentiss & Carlisle, Bangor 207-942-8295
Robert Nelson, Corinna 207-278-2361
Dave Wardrop, Golden Forestry, Orono 207-356-8747

Allyssa Gregory, Maine Forest Service

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Active Steps for Woodland Owners:

- ✓ **Consider your short and long-term goals & discuss with co-owners/family**
- ✓ **Contact a Maine Forest Service District Forester for free information/assistance**
 - **District Foresters can walk your woodland with you at no charge**
 - **District Foresters can help identify private foresters to provide further services**
- ✓ **Choose a private forester – interview/meet with Licensed Foresters & review past work**
- ✓ **Learn about your woods**
 - **Boundaries/boundary conditions & field evidence**
 - **Access (roads and trails) appropriate for your use of the land**
 - **Forest conditions, species, growth, health, timber potential, habitats, etc.**
- ✓ **Consider having a written, comprehensive Forest Management Plan prepared by your forester.**
 - **Review your forester’s recommendations (thinning, pruning, trail work, habitat enhancements, boundary maintenance, commercial harvesting, etc.)**
- ✓ **Implement recommendations based on a Schedule of Activities (part of your plan)**
 - **Ask your forester to help if you need input/additional services.**
- ✓ **If you are having a commercial timber harvest –**
 - **Involve your forester in operational planning, layout, administration, negotiations, contracting, and supervision**
 - **Choose a skilled, responsible, reputable logger (with your forester’s input)**
 - **Have a written harvest agreement with the logger (prepared by your forester)**
- ✓ **Review your plan once a year and update/renew it (usually every ten years)**
 - **If your land is enrolled in Maine’s Tree Growth Property Tax Program, having and following a current plan is required**
- ✓ **Monitor forest conditions and the results of your management activities**
- ✓ **Involve your family in activities & management of your woods**
- ✓ **Include your woodland in your legacy/estate planning**
- ✓ **Enjoy the benefits of woodland ownership!**

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