

For More Information

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The Extension Services Division provides information on natural resources stewardship and sustainable development to the following clients:

- youth
- Christmas tree growers
- woodlot owners
- forestry industry
- public
- recreationists


NOVA SCOTIA
Natural Resources

Selling Standing Timber? *Here are Some Tips*

There are many things to consider before harvesting wood from your land. The value of the timber is only one consideration. Things such as water quality, wildlife habitat, environmental protection, future timber and woodlot values, and recreation are also important features. These can be maintained or improved if harvesting is done properly. All it takes is knowledge, careful planning and follow through. This brochure lists the steps to follow to make sure the harvest turns out the way you want it to, even if you don't do it yourself.

1 Develop a Woodlot Management Plan

The first step is to have a management plan prepared or updated for your woodlot. It may be enough to have a plan prepared for the area to be harvested, but a plan for the entire woodlot will help you realize the effects on your woodlot.

A management plan allows planning for values that are important to you by listing activities that will help to reach your goals. It may help you see which areas should be harvested first and how a planned harvest will contribute to your overall goals for the woodlot.

You can develop a management plan yourself or hire a professional. Whether you hire a forester or forest technician, you should decide several things before harvesting begins.

- By knowing the age, condition and quantity of wood that

grows annually on your woodlot, you can determine when and how much you might want to harvest. It is a good idea for the harvest to approximately equal growth, unless you have a lot of immature or over-mature wood. There may be a high risk of severe insect or wind damage in over-mature stands that may increase the need for harvest.

- Know which areas need to be harvested first and the layout of the harvest in accordance with other objectives, such as wildlife habitats, stream protection and aesthetics.
- Select the harvest system(s) best suited to the growing sites and the trees you plan to harvest.
- Different harvest systems used on different sites with different tree species can influence the type of regeneration and growth of the next forest stand.



Have a map and management plan prepared for your property before harvesting.

Unless an area is being clearcut, harvesting should remove poorer quality trees and species first, leaving the vigorous ones behind for further growth and to provide seed for future natural regeneration.

2 Estimate Volume of Wood to be Cut

Have the area you want harvested cruised by an experienced forestry professional. Look up forestry consultants in the yellow pages, or contact local forestry groups or associations to get a list of people who offer this service. It is a good idea to have it cruised by someone with no interest in harvesting it, and who is experienced in estimating wood volumes by the different products that can be produced from your woodlot at the highest return. Ensure the cruiser is advised of the planned layout of the harvest and any leave areas. This cruise is more detailed than that required for a management plan and should provide volume by species and product (see Table 1) over the area to be harvested and define the area to be harvested. Having the area cruised is critical if you are not doing the harvest yourself. It helps to ensure you get paid for what is cut. It is useful to get a list of current prices from mills to establish the value of what will be cut.

Stand 1

Species	Product Volume (cords, mfbm, or cubic metres stacked)			
	pulpwood	firewood	studwood	sawlogs
spruce, fir	40		10	10
pine				20
maple, birch		10		5

Table 1

Expect this type of information from a cruise. Volume can be listed in either imperial, metric, or both, and could also include other species and products.

Remember, you will be paid stumpage, or the value of standing timber, which is a percentage of the value of the wood at the mill. Depending on the harvest system, sometimes only a certain percentage of the total volume will be removed.

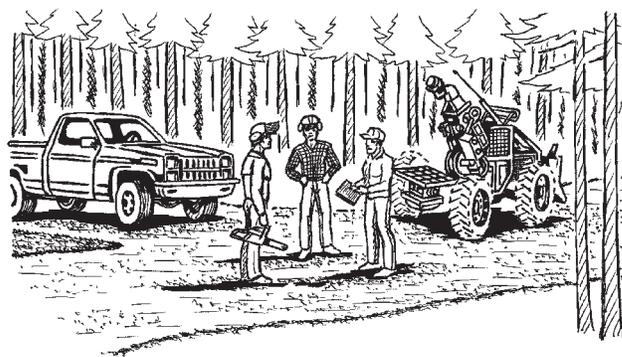
Partial cutting should remove a higher percentage of lower quality products, such as

pulp and firewood, than logs. Harvesting lower quality wood often means less stumpage to you. However, there may be silviculture programs in place that provide financial assistance for doing partial cutting.

3 Consider Your Financial Position

Before harvesting, particularly if it is a lot of timber, you may wish to consult a financial planner. Timing of revenue receipt and implications on taxes should be considered. It may be to your advantage to harvest an area gradually (i.e. some each year) to minimize the taxes you will pay. Others in the forest industry may provide you with advice, and a good source of tax information can be found on the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency website www.ccr-a-drc.gc.ca. A financial planner can also discuss the pros and cons of being paid a lump sum for the complete job or a piece rate as the wood is harvested and scaled.

4 Select a Forestry Contractor



Ensure the contractor has suitable equipment and the right people for the job.

Talk to people who have recently had harvesting done on their woodlots, or get advice from forestry groups and associations. Local saw or pulp mills may have forest contractors or provide harvesting and stewardship services. Once you have some names to choose from, you should contact several. There are some things you should discuss with potential candidates.

- what woodlots have they harvested and who the land owners are
- training (e.g. silviculture, first aid, Provincial Occupational Health and Safety Act)

- compliance with forestry codes such as Nova Forest Alliance's Best Management Practices or the Nova Scotia Code of Forest Practice
- Worker's Compensation or private insurance coverage (you can confirm status by contacting Worker's Compensation)
- prices paid by forest product type - you can get quotes from contractors and mill owners to ensure you receive the best price possible

5 Seal the Deal With a Contract

Having a contract can protect both the contractor and landowner. Some contractors have standard contracts they offer landowners and you may consider having a lawyer review the contract. There are basic elements that go in most contracts, but others may be necessary depending on your situation. The following are some common elements to consider:

- when and what follow-up silviculture will be done
- follow the Wildlife Habitat and Watercourse Protection Regulations
- ruts no larger than a specified maximum
- leave roads, trails and boundary lines in good condition and clear of slash and garbage
- agreements for access across other property, if necessary
- the type of harvest to be done (eg. shelterwood, clearcut)
- description or map of cut areas (aerial photography is good to use) and hazards to the contractor
- products to be harvested and to what extent tree tops will be utilized
- who scales the products, product prices, and how landowner will be paid (you may want to ask for mill receipts)
- when stumpage payment is due
- beginning and end dates of contract

- whether the contractor is covered by Worker's Compensation and other relevant legislation
- ask if any assistance received or contribution required from landowner
- to avoid liability, make sure you live up to the contract as well

Besides having a contract, walk the woodlot with the contractor so that you both understand what is to take place, how much wood is to be harvested, and what trees are to be left uncut.



Signing a contract is smart business for both the landowner and the contractor.

6 Follow up Silviculture Treatments on Sites

Consider follow up silviculture before your wood is harvested. Before signing a contract, ensure that silviculture funding is offered by the contractor or the mill the wood is destined for. The types of silviculture treatments and amount of funding available should be agreed to in a contract before the wood is harvested.

Inquire as to the availability of funding with respect to the Forest Sustainability Regulations. Talk to wood buyers, mills, or the Department of Natural Resources' private land staff.

7 Operations

Before harvesting begins, it is a good idea to mark certain trees, or areas not to be cut with ribbon and/or paint.

Once harvesting has started, regular visits will help to ensure that things are going safely and

according to plan. Track timber from stump to payment; ask for scale tickets or mill receipts. For very large harvests, it may be worthwhile to have the woodlot cruised following harvest to compare pre- and post-harvest information. It may also be worthwhile to count loads of wood leaving your property (particularly if you live on or near your woodlot). This information may be matched to mill receipts as a double-check to ensure all wood is reported. Don't expect the figures to match exactly, but they should be reasonably close.

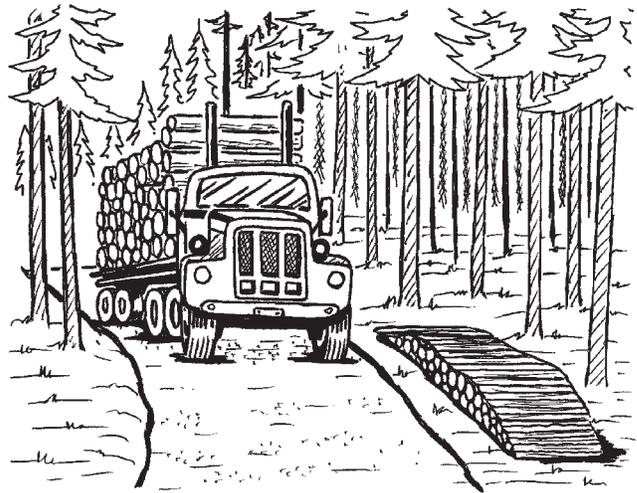
Document as much as possible. Consider retaining a performance bond to ensure the contractor repairs any roads, bridges and landings damaged during harvest.

Careful attention to the above details should ensure that both you and the contractor are satisfied with the job. Use an honest, professional manner to maintain a good working relationship.

8 Summary

Remember, any changes you make to your woodlot today will have long term impacts, so look at your woodlot as an investment with future value. It is important to finalize all details before harvesting begins! The following is a quick list of questions to ask before harvesting:

- Do you have an up-to-date management plan?
- Do you know which harvesting system(s) will be used?
- Do you know what follow-up silviculture is required?
- Do you know how much wood and what products will be harvested?
- Are the cut and leave areas flagged?
- Did you consult with a financial advisor?
- Did you check the credentials of the contractor you have chosen?
- Do you have a contract to protect you?
- Do you plan to have regular checks of the harvest operation once it starts?



Related Information

There are many publications that may help you follow acceptable practices when selling standing timber. To obtain these or other information, contact your local Department of Natural Resources office or visit the website: www.gov.ns.ca/natr/extension/.

Education

Woodlot Management Home Study Series
A series of 13 manuals related to woodlot stewardship, helping both new and experienced woodlot owners manage their woodland.
www.gov.ns.ca/natr/extension/woodlot/

Maps & Aerial Photography

To obtain aerial photography or topographic maps, contact Service Nova Scotia & Municipal Relations toll-free: 1-800-670-4357 or online at: www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/land/

Regulations and Assistance

For information on Forest Sustainability Regulations or Silviculture Assistance, contact your local Department of Natural Resources, or visit the website: www.gov.ns.ca/natr/forestry/


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