



Become familiar with Nova Scotia's Wildlife Habitat and Watercourse Protection Regulations, and follow them. Wildlife clumps in harvested and thinned areas and Special Management Zones along watercourses are important in conserving the diversity of our forests.

To determine if your woodlot contains stands that would benefit from commercial thinning, it's a good idea to contact a forest professional. Forest professionals can lay out thinning areas, mark crop trees and assist you with finding markets for your wood.



*A Forest Professional can help you with your thinning layout*

***For detailed information, please visit the following resources:***

**NS Department of Natural Resources**  
[www.gov.ns.ca/natr/woodlot](http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/woodlot)  
1-866-226-7577 [woodlot@gov.ns.ca](mailto:woodlot@gov.ns.ca)

#### **Forest Professionals**

- Registered Professional Foresters Association of Nova Scotia [www.rpfans.ca](http://www.rpfans.ca)
- Nova Scotia Forest Technicians Association [www.nsfia.ca](http://www.nsfia.ca)
- Canadian Institute of Forestry [www.cif-ifc.org](http://www.cif-ifc.org)

#### **Woodlot Owner Organizations**

- Federation of Nova Scotia Woodland Owners [www.fnswo.ca](http://www.fnswo.ca)
- Nova Scotia Landowners and Forest Fibre Producers Association [www.nslffpa.org](http://www.nslffpa.org)
- Nova Scotia Woodlot Owners and Operators Association [www.nswooa.ca](http://www.nswooa.ca)

#### **Harvesting and Silviculture Contractors**

- Nova Forest Alliance [www.novaforestalliance.com](http://www.novaforestalliance.com)
- Atlantic Master Loggers [www.cwfcof.org](http://www.cwfcof.org)

#### **Silviculture Assistance**

- Association for Sustainable Forestry [www.asforestry.com](http://www.asforestry.com)

#### **Woodlot Road Assistance**

- Forest Products Association of Nova Scotia [www.fpans.ca](http://www.fpans.ca)

*A Quick Guide to*

# COMMERCIAL THINNING



FAMILY WOODLOT GUIDE



Commercial thinning is the removal of the poorest quality trees from a mature, even-aged stand of trees. The purpose of this treatment is to give the remaining trees increased space and light so that they will grow faster.

Tree species that respond well to commercial thinning are usually long-lived, shade-tolerant species including red spruce, hemlock, white pine, sugar maple, yellow birch white ash and red oak.

Good planning is an important component of commercial thinning. Because wood is removed from across the entire area of a commercial thinning, the efficient layout of trails is important to avoid damaging the remaining crop trees with extraction equipment.



*Hardwood commercial thinning*

Knowledgeable silviculture contractors often design extraction trails in a herring-bone pattern, which makes wood removal easier.

Trees to be removed during the thinning operation include crooked, forked and damaged trees, as well as tree species that are not wanted for the final harvest. Trees to be retained as crop trees are those with straight stems and healthy bark. They are well-rooted and possess a vigorous crown. It may help to mark these trees before the thinning operation begins.



*Harvesting in a softwood commercial thinning*

Approximately one-third of the trees can be removed during a commercial thinning. As with any partial cutting technique, risks of blow-down and breakage increase as more trees are removed.

Unthinned buffers are often left along exposed edges of the treatment area to create more windfirm conditions..



*Forwarding the harvested wood*

Commercial thinning should not be considered in areas where soils are shallow, drainage is poor or where stands are exposed to wind. Stands that have been previously treated by pre-commercial thinning are apt to be more windfirm than those with no prior treatment.

It is important to ensure that you have secure markets for the wood that you will be removing from a commercial thinning.

Leave some trees that make good wildlife habitat, such as dead snags and trees that will make suitable cavity trees in the future.