

Foresters and Loggers

By Morten Moesswilde, Midcoast District Forester for the Maine Forest Service

Some people are unsure about the difference between a forester and a logger. A **forester** is a person whose job is to assess woodlands, recommend possible activities, including harvesting designed to reach 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. Some **consulting foresters** specialize in providing services to small woodland owners of 10 to 500 acres, and typically less than 1,000 acres. A Maine Licensed Forester who is hired by a landowner is professionally and ethically obligated to work in the best interests of the landowner that has hired them, and to disclose any potential conflicts of interest. Some foresters represent mills or loggers, and a few Licensed Foresters are also directly engaged in logging.

A **logger** is a person whose primary job is the actual harvesting of trees, that is, cutting down the trees and “yarding” them to a landing, yard or roadside area where they can be trucked to a location or mill that uses the wood. Most landowners who want their woodlands harvested will contract with a skilled, professional logger to do the harvesting. Professional loggers may be “certified” by a private industry organization, such as the Master Logger and/or Certified Logging Professional programs, but there is no state licensure or certification. Some loggers also truck or broker wood for other buyers, do earthwork or road construction, sell firewood, or provide other services.

A forester’s services could include:

Planning:

- ▶ General, one-on-one landowner education
- ▶ Preparing/updating a Forest Management Plan or similar plan
 - e.g. a Tree Growth Management & Harvest Plan, Woodland Resource Action Plan, Stewardship Plan
- ▶ Helping locate boundary evidence
- ▶ Forest inventory & appraisal
- ▶ Mapping
- ▶ Researching/preparing/filing legal requirements or other paperwork
- ▶ Helping set up small projects (thinning, pruning, trail work, etc.)
 - Marking trees to be cut
 - Laying out trails, roads, erosion control
- ▶ Finding specialists and other contractors
- ▶ Helping landowners navigate government financial assistance programs

Harvesting:

- ▶ Forest Operations planning/preparation:
 - Preparing a site specific Harvest Plan or Silvicultural Operation Plan, suitable for attachment to a Timber Sale Agreement or Contract
 - Flagging boundaries and/or harvest area limits
 - Silviculture – determining what will be cut, and why

- Marking or otherwise designating trees to be cut or retained
 - Planning/laying out roads, log landings, major trails
 - Designing Best Management Practices at/around water bodies (erosion control, stream crossings, etc.)
 - Filing notifications/reports, researching legal requirements, obtaining permits (if necessary)
- ▶ Negotiating Harvest Agreements/Contracts on the landowner's behalf
- Estimating timber volume/value
 - Identifying/researching a logger (with the skills & equipment to do the job)
 - Advising the landowner on fair prices
 - Negotiating prices with a logger/buyer
 - Developing a written Timber Sale Agreement/Harvest Contract that spells out prices, rates, expectations and responsibilities
- ▶ Supervising and “administering” the timber harvest contract
- Reviewing the harvest periodically as it's occurring (especially silviculture and protection of resources)
 - Helping ensure wood is being marketed to its optimum value
 - ▶ by working with the logger, and/or by marketing wood directly
 - Reviewing scale slips & disbursing stumpage payments to the landowner
 - Making sure the harvest is completed and “closed out” in accordance with contracted provisions
 - Providing harvest summary information for reporting/tax purposes

A Forestry Services Contract between a Landowner and a Forester is strongly advised. The contract will establish what services will be provided, at what cost, with deadlines for completion of tasks.

Foresters at Maine Forest Service

The Maine Forest Service employs 10 District Foresters in the Division of Forest Policy and Management, whose primary role is to provide education and technical assistance to landowners, loggers, and private foresters, towns, other organizations, and the general public. Several more foresters at MFS are also specialists in water resources, education, urban/community forestry, forest inventory/statistics, forest insects, forest diseases, and other fields. MFS Foresters do not manage state lands – that role is filled by Licensed Foresters employed by the Bureau of Parks and Lands, and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

Forest Rangers are employed by MFS's Division of Forest Protection, and have a different role – they are law enforcement officers who enforce forest laws, and are specialists in wildfire suppression and control. A few of the 50+ Forest Rangers are also Licensed Foresters.