



North Carolina
Forest Service

FORESTRY Leaflets

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Benefits of a Woodland Plan

If you're like most woodland owners, you know the sense of pride you gain from being a good steward of your land. But you may not realize that your woodland property could be working harder for you and your family, providing more of the benefits you value most. It all starts with a plan! Prepared by a forester or other resource professional and customized for your unique property and interests, your woodland plan is an essential roadmap for going forward. Consider the following advantages of seeking the advice of forestry professionals in planning for the care of your woodland property.

Property Tax Savings

Since 1974, North Carolina woodland owners have been eligible for deferment of property taxes through the State's forestry present-use value program (PUV). To be eligible, qualified woodland of 20 acres or more must be actively engaged in the commercial growing of trees under sound management. A written forest management plan (also known as a woodland plan) is a program requirement. For many landowners, the savings in first-year property taxes are more than enough to cover the cost of the woodland plan. For example, a 22-acre tract in the N.C. Piedmont has a market value of \$4,000 per-acre, whereas its forestry valuation is \$325 per-acre, resulting in 90 percent or more in tax savings annually.

Cost Share Assistance

Some forestry practices, such as tree planting require up-front investments. Cost share funding can lower these out-of-pocket expenses. A woodland plan is a requirement to be eligible for most government cost share programs. Utilizing these programs can nearly double the overall return of your forestry investment vs. paying for the full cost by yourself.

Income Tax Savings

Your plan may include guidance on establishing your timber basis (used to determine taxable gains from the sale of timber), reforestation tax deductions and estate planning that can result in significant tax savings. Fees for professional assistance, including costs associated with woodland plan preparation, are a deductible business expense.

Income Generation

Your woodland plan can help focus your financial resources so your woodland management activities and timber harvest practices are linked to your long-term vision for your property. The plan will provide guidance on when to harvest, methods to harvest by, and strategies for regenerating your trees so you can increase the return on your investment.



Improved Wildlife Habitat

Forestry and wildlife management are often compatible and even mutually beneficial. Woodland management activities such as tree planting, thinning and timber harvesting can be tailored to meet specific habitat requirements for game and non-game wildlife.

Your Plan Opens Doors to Professional Forestry Guidance

A woodland plan is a living document that can help you in achieving your short and long-range goals, including leaving a legacy for your family. Woodland plans typically include lists of forestry professionals and service providers who can help you implement the recommendations in the plan. The first step in developing a sound plan is to seek professional advice.

Studies of Southern woodland owners reveal:

- “Most family forest owners have a deep love for their land and a strong desire to do “what is right,” but they need help in knowing what their options are and what is best for them and their woods.” (Butler 2008)
- Landowners who receive professional forestry assistance are more likely to have commercially harvestable timber, improved wildlife habitat, have planted trees and reduced wildfire risk. (Butler 2013)
- Even in the most conservative case, landowners assisted by a forester received 58 percent greater returns from timber sales than landowners conducting their sales without any forestry assistance. (Cubbage et. al. 1996)

Landowners have several sources to turn to for assistance in developing woodland plans, including private consulting foresters and natural resource professionals in both the public and private sectors. One option includes the North Carolina Forest Service, an agency with a long and successful history of providing woodland plans to North Carolina landowners. Whether you choose the North Carolina Forest Service or another forestry professional to prepare your woodland plan, our foresters and rangers stand ready to assist you.

Related resources:

N.C. Forest Service http://ncforestservice.gov/Managing_your_forest/managing_your_forest.htm

Consulting Foresters List, N.C. Forest Service
http://ncforestservice.gov/Managing_your_forest/consulting_foresters.htm

N.C. Association of Consulting Foresters <http://www.acfnc.org/>

Extension Forestry at NCSU <http://forestry.ces.ncsu.edu/forestry-management/>

N.C. Tree Farm Program <https://www.treefarmssystem.org/north-carolina>

Natural Resources Conservation Service, NC <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/nc/home/>

This leaflet was prepared in partnership with Extension Forestry at North Carolina State University



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