

# BMPs FOR WOODLOT HARVEST

## PLANNING A HARVEST

For more information, or to receive a copy of the handbook *A Landowner's Guide to Selling Standing Timber*, contact the Ontario Woodlot Association at 888-791-1103.

A well-managed woodlot should be considered an investment – both for your own benefit and as a legacy for future generations.

Planning properly for a harvest will help you:

- ▶ maximize revenue from your harvest
- ▶ maximize future profit
- ▶ protect and enhance natural features such as wildlife habitat and water resources
- ▶ improve other forest values such as fuelwood and maple syrup production
- ▶ create or enhance recreation opportunities such as hiking and hunting
- ▶ comply with local regulations such as tree-cutting bylaws.

### Before you sell

Your woodlot is a valuable asset. But it's not just timber. Consider everything it contains, including wildlife habitat, water resources, opportunities for recreation, and aesthetic values. Before you harvest, make sure your woodlot is protected!

- ✓ Do some research. If you are unfamiliar with the value of forest products such as veneer or sawlogs, take the time to do some basic research. How can you get a fair price if you don't know what the market is paying?
- ✓ Plan ahead. Take an inventory of your woodlot. Find out about the variety, age and number of trees growing on your land. Prepare a management plan. Whether you're harvesting for a source of revenue or for other objectives, you will benefit from advance planning.
- ✓ Decide which trees to harvest. Select and mark the trees that you plan to sell. Trees must be marked so that you can accurately compare bids from interested buyers. Keep in mind that it's in your best interest to have a healthy, productive woodlot after the harvest.
- ✓ Get more than one bid. Obtain bids from at least three different buyers to ensure that you receive fair value for your timber. A forestry consultant can help you with this.
- ✓ Ask for references and sign a contract. Check references to ensure that your buyer's previous customers were satisfied with the harvesting operation. Ensure you have a signed contract that protects your interests.
- ✓ Monitor the harvest. Spend some time in your woodlot during the harvesting operation to ensure that the work is done to your satisfaction.



Unless you are certified to mark trees, hire a forestry consultant to do this. Proper marking will make you money and protect your investment.

## FOREST HARVEST BUSINESS PLANNING

So it's time to harvest. The woodland management plan has been prepared. The consultant has marked the woodlot and you're ready to sell your standing timber.

But before you plan the harvest, consider the next steps:

- ✓ Tally the marked trees. You need to know how many trees were marked by species to be able to follow up.
- ✓ Obtain an estimate of the harvest volume by species that you plan to sell. Make sure that you have this information by product type: how many veneer logs, sawlogs, cull trees etc. A summary of this information will help the bidding process and give you an estimate of the total value of the harvest.
- ✓ Firm up estimates after scaling. Remember that volume estimates of standing timber are estimates only. Logs at the landing are scaled or assessed to more precisely calculate the merchantable volume of each harvested log. Scaling accounts for but does not include bark and the proportion of the tree volume that is defective through rot, cavities, disease, etc.
- ✓ If you choose to market your own timber – standing or on the landing (after harvesting it yourself) – you can contact loggers, work with a forestry consultant or advertise through the Ontario Forestry Association's *Forest Products Marketing Bulletin* or the Ontario Woodlot Owners Association's *S&W Report*.
- ✓ Determine the best way to sell your timber by talking to a forestry consultant. There are pros and cons to these approaches:
  - ▶ a lump sum bid – one offer for all products from the harvest (scaling of logs is not required for lump sum sales)
  - ▶ a scaled volume sale – the sale is based on agreed-to prices for the various classes of timber, such as veneer, No. 1 logs, etc.
  - ▶ a shared value sale – an agreed-to split with the contractor for the income received from the mill (e.g., 50–50% split).



Work with your consultant when reviewing bids for harvest.

For a sample "Sale of Standing Timber Contract", see page 126.



Selling by scaled volume provides both buyer and seller with an accurate estimate of the total and type of merchantable volume for sale.

**STANDING TIMBER VALUES (\$ PER 1000 FOOT BOARD MEASURE\*)  
FOR SAWLOGS BY REGION – 2006**

| SPECIES      | EASTERN<br>(LANARK – STORMONT) | NORTH CENTRAL<br>(NORTH BAY – PEMBROKE) | SOUTHWESTERN<br>(NIAGARA – LAMBTON) |
|--------------|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| BASSWOOD     | 100–250                        | 90–150                                  | 135–270                             |
| BLACK CHERRY | 250–400                        | 150–450                                 | 700–1100                            |
| HARD MAPLE   | 150–600                        | 150–350                                 | 550–1200                            |
| RED OAK      | 200–500                        | 100–200                                 | 400–600                             |
| WHITE ASH    | 100–150                        | 75–150                                  | 180–400                             |
| WHITE PINE   | 75–200                         | 100–200                                 | 90–225                              |

Source: *Ontario Forest Products Marketing Bulletin*, July/Aug. 2006

\* 1 fbm = 12 inches square and 1 inch thick

## BMPs FOR HARVEST

Woodland harvest can be done by the owner or, in the case of selling standing timber, by the contractor.

✓ Before harvesting, be sure to consider:

- ▶ season of harvest and timing of operations to avoid damage
- ▶ access points to the woodlot and location of property boundaries
- ▶ compensation for damaged residual trees (with contractor)
- ▶ location of trails, roads and landings
- ▶ appropriate BMPs in sensitive areas such as streams and wetlands.

Well-scheduled harvests can help prevent irreparable damage – especially on fragile sites such as lowland hardwoods.



### Roads and crossings

- ✓ Build roads on well-drained soils and sites (e.g. benches) to avoid rutting and compaction.
- ✓ Avoid wetlands and streams wherever possible.
- ✓ If you must cross streams:
  - ▶ make few crossings
  - ▶ leave buffer vegetation intact
  - ▶ cross at right angles
  - ▶ properly size and place culverts
  - ▶ consider use of portable bridges – they protect site and reduce machine travel and wear.

## Damage avoidance

### *Timing*

- ✓ Harvest in frozen conditions or in late summer/early fall. Special care must be taken during other times of the year. Horse logging is preferred when conditions are not dry.
- ✓ Avoid harvesting from spring to late July. The risk of bark damage is highest at this time.

### *Communication*

- ✓ Talk about it. The best way to prevent misunderstandings is to articulate your expectations. Better still, put them in the contract.:
  - ▶ skidders should ensure proper trail location, winch in tight areas, use bumper trees to protect residual crop trees on curves in skidding trails
  - ▶ proper felling techniques avoid damage to residual trees, e.g., sequential felling (domino effect), and felling the trees so that the butt ends face the skid trail
- ✓ Monitor the harvest during and after with the forestry consultant and the logger.



**Minimize harvest damage – hire a forestry consultant to monitor the harvest.**

## HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES WHEN HARVESTING WOODLOTS

**Unsafe practices while felling, trimming trees, hauling logs and cutting wood can have tragic consequences. Many serious injuries and fatalities can be prevented when safe practices are followed.**

Whether you're working in your woodlot, your fields or your barn, agricultural safety begins with attitude. A safe, well-organized farming operation is also a productive and profitable one. Maintaining equipment and facilities and being careful in production make good business sense. Unsafe practices have led to needless accidents.

The act of cutting and skidding wood falls under the regulations for forestry in the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Individuals cutting wood must be certified and competent in chainsaw use. Basically, while logging is going on, this portion of your farm becomes a forestry workplace, and is regulated.

Safe work practices begin with an understanding of the hazards. To assist farmers in developing safety programs for their operation and employees, the Farm Safety Association offers on-site training sessions, workplace inspections, and self-audits for the farm (Agricultural Safety Audit Program or ASAP). The Farm Safety Association has posted extensive resource materials at [www.farmsafety.ca](http://www.farmsafety.ca).

Another organization, the Ontario Forestry Safe Workplace Association, has information dealing with safety in woodcutting as well as a listing of trainers for chainsaw certification. This can be accessed at their website, [www.ofswa.on.ca](http://www.ofswa.on.ca). Play it safe: take the chainsaw operator's safety course.



**Many so-called accidents are avoidable. Perhaps the most important BMP is to work safely, with a full understanding of potential hazards. Never work alone.**



**Harvesting standing timber presents its own unique set of hazards. Know what these are before you start your chainsaw.**