



UNIVERSITY OF  
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EXTENSION

Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## Where Does a Forest Landowner Find Forestry Help?<sup>1</sup>

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Forest landowners are often seeking advice and information about improving their forests for production and conservation purposes. Managing forests is a complex process that involves an understanding from a number of disciplines such as biological sciences, social sciences, economics, policy and law. Questions a landowner may have range from how to acquire and sell forest land to the variety of approaches of growing and marketing forest products. Some questions may require a lawyer or tax accountant, others a professional forester or wildlife expert. This publication briefly describes the roles of some of the key agencies and businesses that provide assistance to forest landowners in Florida. Contact information is also provided.

### **University of Florida, Cooperative Extension Service, Agriculture or Natural Resources Extension Agent**

If you are looking for educational materials such as publications or interested in attending workshops, you will find the Cooperative Extension Service (CES) useful. The CES is the outreach arm of the University of Florida. Every county has an extension agent who provides educational programs for landowners, answers questions about forestry, and distributes forestry publications. The University of Florida houses extension specialists who provide

information and assist with educational programs for foresters, county agents, and landowners. They also play an important role in capturing advances from research and translating the new knowledge to appropriate practices. County extension agents also make available timber pricing reports of Timber Mart South. County extension offices can be located in the phone book or at this Web site: <http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/WWW/COUNTY/GRAPHMAP.HTM>.

### **Florida Division of Forestry, County Forester**

Being familiar with specifics unique to a county, the County Foresters of the Florida Division of Forestry are a helpful source of information. Depending on the size of your tract and your objectives, a County Forester can assist in writing management plans for smaller properties. They will refer you to contractors to implement your plans, and to consulting foresters (see below) if your property is relatively large. One program they administer is the Forest Stewardship Program, where the county forester works with the *Florida Game and Fish Commission* to assist you in developing Forest Stewardship Plans. The Division of Forestry is also a place to order seedlings as they have their own nurseries. The Division of Forestry is responsible for

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authorizing all prescribed burns in Florida. County Foresters can be located in the phone book. Their web site is <http://www.fl-dof.com>.

## Forestry Consultants

Consulting foresters provide technical assistance in all phases of forest management for a specific fee or under contract. They can provide more personalized service and in-depth analysis of your needs than a County Forester. They can carry out virtually any practice needed including prescribed burns, wildlife habitat enhancement, and silvicultural treatments. Consulting foresters also assist in all aspects of timber sales and marketing. Often timber is sold to timber dealers who will purchase the wood and then re-sell wood to the mill. Landowners can contact timber dealers or even loggers directly to arrange sales, but these people may not provide as much advice as consulting foresters. Lists of reputable consulting foresters are available from your County Forester.

## Forest Industry and Timber Dealers

Industrial foresters and timber dealers procure wood from private owners who are ready to harvest. There are also forestry companies who have landowner assistance programs that provide technical advice, seedlings, and planning services. Generally the assistance is geared toward intensive timber production. Many of these companies have their own nurseries where landowners can purchase seedlings. County Foresters or extension agents can identify participating forestry industries in your county.

## Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

The NRCS is a federal agency within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). It has technical staff who provide landowners with soil survey information and integrated soil, water, and plant conservation planning. The NRCS work in partnership with other federal, state, and private organizations that assist forest landowners. Programs of interest to forest landowners that the NRCS administer include the Forest Incentives Program (FIP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program

(EQIP), and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). They also work with the *USDA Farm Service Agency* on the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and with the *USDA Forest Service and Florida Division of Forestry* on the Stewardship Incentives Program (SIP). The NRCS have local offices throughout the state. The State Office address is Box 141510, Gainesville, FL, 32614. Phone: 352-338-9500. Their web site is: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>.

## Timber Harvesters (Loggers)

Timber harvesters need to follow Best Management Practices to maintain water quality and protect wildlife habitat during and after logging operations. Finding the right logger who understands environmentally sensitive techniques is important. Loggers who have gone through the Florida Forestry Association's *Master Logger Program* have the training to do the job correctly. County Foresters and consulting foresters can recommend loggers. In some cases permits may be required for activities that may impact water quality. The *Water Management Districts* or the *Florida Department of Environmental Protection* issue permits for such activities.

## Other Organizations

For information about buying, selling or understanding legal aspects of your land refer to a licensed real estate agent or a lawyer, For information about forest income taxes refer to a tax lawyer or accountant. For information about your property taxes visit your County Property Appraiser.

Finally, one of the best sources of advice may come from **Neighboring Landowners** that have experience in forest management. Much can be learned about forest management from talking to a peer. Information can be sought on what forestry practices work and don't work in your area, who are reliable consultants, and where to market timber. Several landowner associations have been formed to catalyze this process of information exchange.

## **Other Sources of Information, Including Publications Workshops, and the Internet**

Landowners interested in furthering their knowledge can find numerous publications about all aspects of forest management from their county extension agent. Many of the publications are written by extension specialists at the School of Forest Resources and Conservation, University of Florida. Increasingly information is available to landowners with Internet access. Publications of the School of Forest Resources and Conservation and links to world wide sources of forestry information are available at this web site:

<http://www.sfrc.ufl.edu/Extension/ExtInfo.html>.

These publications and other relevant agricultural information may also be found at EDIS, the electronic reference source for all current UF/IFAS publications. EDIS' web site is:  
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

County extension agents also organize workshops, usually in cooperation with County foresters. A calendar of events is also listed at the School of Forest Resources and Conservation web site (see above). There are also numerous forestry organizations that have memberships for landowners and provide forestry information that is pertinent to their needs. Three organizations that serve landowners and their web sites are the: Florida Forestry Association (<http://www.fl-ag.com/forest/>), the Forest Landowners Association (<http://www.forestland.org/>), and American Forests (<http://www.amfor.org/>).