

WORKING THE FOREST



So, you have sold some timber and now you are waiting on the harvest to begin. You are wondering what will happen next and what to expect when the harvest starts.

I am assuming that you have gone through a process of having your woodlot marked and know exactly what you have sold, and have an appropriate contract.

If you have not completed any pre-harvest planning, do it before the cutting crews show up. This process will be different for each property and each landowner.

If your non-forested land is leased to another person who is farming the land, you must contact him for his permission to cross and use the leased ground with trucks and logging equipment. A land lease is considered the same as a rented apartment and the leasee does have legal rights.

If there is not readily apparent access to the woodlot and a landing where trees will be cut up and stored an area should be marked out. If your woodlot does not have a system of roads and trails then you should mark the trails where you wish them to be. This should be done in conjunction with the log buyer or cutting foreman. This will ensure that the landings and trails will satisfy both parties' requirements.

If you have any specific areas on the property that you do not wish to be disturbed, they should be identified at this time.

All roadways within the woodlot should be a minimum 16 feet wide and as straight as possible with all secondary roads branching off. Most log skidders are 11 to 12 feet wide. If the existing roads are too narrow, you will have trees damaged along the trails.

If you have not notified your neighbours already, you should contact them prior to cutting and advise them that you will be harvesting. This is imperative if the woodlot boundaries are not very clear. If there is a dispute over the boundaries, it is a lot easier to deal with before the trees are cut than afterwards.

Most companies will give you short notice of when they intend to start cutting, usually 1 or 2 days. When they notify you, you should ensure that an *Intent to Cut* form has been sent to the Municipality. Most of these forms are written that either the cutter or the landowner are responsible for them. Some Municipalities require a specific time to lapse from when they receive the *Intent to Cut* form and the actual starting of the harvest. Make sure you know of your area's requirements and comply with them.

The day has come that the cutting crew has arrived. You should show the crew your woodlot, identify boundaries, sensitive areas and areas of special interests. Landings and main skid roads should also be identified. Your expectations should also be explained, but, do not be too overbearing. Most of the cutting crews today are professionals that try to do the best job possible. These people should be treated as professionals until they prove they are not.

Lands & Forests Consulting

Toll Free: 1-888-923-9995 Website: Lands & Forests Consulting

Dave Taylor, Hanover, ON 519-364-tree (8733) email: trees@bmts.com

John Todd, Paris, ON 519-442-3102 email: toddj@execulink.com

Harold Frost, Clinton, ON 519-482-7176 **Eleanor Reed**, Orillia, ON 705-328-4584 email: eleanorreed@xplornet.com

Toll Free: 1-888-923-9995 Web: www.landsandforests.com

At this point you should leave and let the crew work. If you wish to stay and watch for a while, ask if it is all right. Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act only personnel directly involved in the harvesting operation are allowed in the work area. If the cutting foreman asks you to leave you must leave.

The best time to check on their progress is at noon when they are eating lunch or after they have stopped working for the day.

The main things to look for while inspecting a harvesting operation are:

- 1) little or no damage to the residual stand
- 2) 20% or less of the stand is covered by skid trails
- 3) rutting on skid roads is less than 1 foot deep
- 4) areas of dense regeneration are left undisturbed where possible
- 5) fences are not damaged
- 6) tree tops and roads are left in the manner agreed upon

Every harvesting operation changes the appearance of your woodlot. Do not expect it to look the same. Treetops and branches will be littering the ground and do not look very appealing. The brush and treetops contain a high percentage of a trees nutrient value and should be left on site to break down and become fertilizer. Tops and brush should be compacted as low to the ground as possible to ensure fast breakdown and that the nutrients go to the ground and not into the atmosphere.

Cut inspections should be completed on a regular basis to ensure that the cutters know they are being watched. Like everyone, they tend to work a little better when someone is watching them. If you cannot complete the harvest supervision personally you should ensure that someone who knows about harvesting is watching for you. If you do not know anyone, talk to your consultant.

Logging takes a lot less time than most people think. One of the biggest mistakes landowners make is leaving the cutting crew for a few weeks before they check on them and when they do check, the harvesting is all done.

Cutting crews will normally start in the back corner and work their way to the front removing everything as they go. They do not have to work in the brush when working in this manner. If you have specific roads that you require open at all times, they should be identified on the contract and explained to the cutting crew. Do not assume the cutting crew has seen or read the contract. Most cutting crews are contracted and many never see the actual contract.

When conducting a harvest inspection, you should expect to see some damage occurring. This is the nature of the operation. You should be asking yourself the question, are they doing the best they can? If you find the answer is no, then you should talk to the crew and advise them of your concerns. The first few days you should be there to find out how they are doing. Once you can establish that everything is satisfactory, then you can back the visits off to one every second or third day. A final harvest inspection should be conducted after the harvest is complete. A key to a successful harvest is open communication. This should prevent any problems before they occur. If you find that you have a problem, ask the cutters to stop cutting until it is resolved. Talk with the purchaser to see if you can resolve the problem. If you had a consultant mark the woodlot ask him for his opinion. Sometimes the problem you are having is that your expectations are too high.

Lands & Forests Consulting

Toll Free: 1-888-923-9995 Website: Lands & Forests Consulting

Dave Taylor, Hanover, ON 519-364-tree (8733) email: trees@bmts.com

John Todd, Paris, ON 519-442-3102 email: toddj@execulink.com

Harold Frost, Clinton, ON 519-482-7176 **Eleanor Reed**, Orillia, ON 705-328-4584 email: eleanorreed@xplornet.com

Toll Free: 1-888-923-9995 Web: www.landsandforests.com

LOGGING DAMAGE ASSESSMENT - Criteria

Type of Injury	Considered Major When.....
Bark Scraped off: Trees 10-31 cm DBH	Any wound greater than the square of the DBH i.e.: a 10 cm DBH - major wound is greater than 100 cm ² Any wound greater than 1,000 cm ² If there is Ground Contact a major wound is considered to be 60% the size indicate for all size classes.
Trees 32 + cm DBH	
Broken Branches	More than 33% of the Crown is destroyed
Root Damage	More than 25% of the root area exposed or severed
Broken off	Any Tree
Bent Over	Any tree tipped noticeably

SKID TRAIL DEPTHS

Minor	Ruts (furrows) 15 cm or less in depth
Moderate	Ruts (furrows) 16 cm to 30 cm in depth
Major	Ruts (furrows) 31 cm to 61 cm in depth
Extreme	Ruts (furrows) greater than 61 cm in depth

DAMAGE STANDARDS

Damage to Residuals	After harvesting 85% of residual basal (10cm+) should be free of major damage and 90% of the residual AGS should be free of major damage.
Damage to Regeneration	After harvesting 85% of regeneration (<10 cm) should be free of major damage.
Skid Trail Coverage	A minimum of 80% of the ground area to be skid trail free. Main skid trail must be delineated. Parallel skid trails should be no closer than 60 metres apart, unless within poorly drained areas.
Damage to Physical Environment	Trees felled over a watercourse. Debris not cleared. Major/Extreme Ruts greater than 30 metres in length.

Summary:

- 1) Plan for the harvest – access, timing etc.
- 2) Be prepared to spend time with the logger before they cut. Be there at the start before problems begin
- 3) If you can not be there, get someone who knows to be there for you. Ask your consultant
- 4) Learn what to look for



Lands & Forests Consulting

Toll Free: 1-888-923-9995 Website: Lands & Forests Consulting

Dave Taylor, Hanover, ON 519-364-tree (8733) email: trees@bmts.com

John Todd, Paris, ON 519-442-3102 email: toddj@execulink.com

Harold Frost, Clinton, ON 519-482-7176 **Eleanor Reed**, Orillia, ON 705-328-4584 email: eleanorreed@xplornet.com

Toll Free: 1-888-923-9995 Web: www.landsandforests.com