



Planning a Timber Sale

As a forest landowner it is conceivable that you will someday contemplate the sale of your timber. Selling your timber is not easy, and you need to be informed about how much timber you have and what it is worth. So, where do you begin? First of all, you need someone who can represent your best interests in selling your timber, a professional forester. This individual has received a bachelor of science degree from a school accredited by the Society of American Foresters, and in some cases is also certified by the Society of American Foresters as a professional forester based upon formal education, training and work experience.

You can contact a forester working with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). Services offered by MDC are free. However, there may be a waiting period before services can be rendered because of a backlog of clients waiting for the same service. Another alternative is to contact a professional forestry consultant. A forestry consultant can offer a wide variety of technical services and can usually provide very timely service for a fee. Scientific studies have shown that landowners who sell their timber using the services of a professional forester (free service or fee-based service) end up with profits equal to or, in most cases, greater than a landowner who chooses not to use a professional forester, even after deducting the consulting foresters fee. Using a professional forester insures your forest will remain healthy, productive, and sustainable for the long-run. This could mean additional harvests from the forest during your lifetime.

The next step involves a site visit by your forester. He/she will identify your property boundaries, ask for a map of the tract or farm, and inquire about the condition/presence of fences, access to the property and a tax statement or deed showing that you own the property free and clear of any liens or other encumbrances. For example, are there any known dangers on the property (old wells, cisterns, power lines, gas lines, etc.).

The forester will then conduct an inventory, mark the timber to be sold, and

prepare reports for you that show what you have and how much it is worth. The forester will prepare a solicitation document advertising your timber for sale. Once timber bids have been received, the forester will help you prepare a timber sale contract which is essential to protect your rights and responsibilities as well as the buyers. After the sale is awarded to the successful bidder the forester will work on your behalf to insure the sale complies with the terms of the contract.

For information on where to contact your state or consulting forester see your local MDC office, county extension service, USDA service center or visit them on line at www.mdc.mo.gov/forest/contacts (local state forester), or ask for a copy of the Missouri Consulting Foresters Association membership directory at the previously mentioned locations, or visit them on line at www.missouriforesters.com/home.htm.

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