

Forests cover more than one-third of the United States, or more than 730 million acres. The majority of it is owned by private non-industrial landowners. People own and buy forestland – or land that could be forested – for many reasons, from recreation to economic. Whatever the reason, if you own, plan to acquire or want to sell a piece of property, large or small, you need a professional forester to help you:

- Inventory your forest to learn its quality and value
- Identify opportunities, problems and needs
- Develop a forest management plan
- Re-establish trees on bare land
- Convert poor stands into productive ones
- Improve wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities
- Enhance ecological diversity
- Protect soils and water quality
- Improve wildfire protection
- Use prescribed burn to accomplish management purposes
- Prevent or control harmful insects and diseases
- Select timber for harvest and sell timber at a fair price
- Review your tax situation
- Take advantage of financial incentives offered by public agencies and forest industries



Before using any forester, check credentials. A professional forester has earned a bachelor's or higher degree in an accredited forestry curriculum at a college or university. The Society of American Foresters, the national organization of this profession, is the accrediting agency in the United States. Alabama has a registration law, so practicing foresters must have a registered forester's license to practice forestry in this state.

A forester should have a good reputation and be experienced in managing property similar to yours. Check references, preferably not restricting yourself to names the forester may provide. Some consultants work on a time charge basis while others may use a fixed fee or percentage of sales arrangement. Have a written payment schedule before contracting out any services.

Your local county office of the Alabama Forestry Commission will provide a list of forestry consultants active in your area.

SOURCE: Society of American Foresters, "You Need A Forester" brochure



**This information is provided by the Alabama Forestry Commission**

For more information please visit: [www.forestry.alabama.gov](http://www.forestry.alabama.gov)