

# Start With a Plan.

You plan for your vacation, your investments, your retirement, but have you taken time to develop a plan for your forest?

1.

**Consider your objectives.** Are you interested in near-term and sustained income, wildlife habitat, recreation, retirement or even savings for college for a child or grandchild?

2.

**Get help.** Get planning help from a qualified resource professional or professional forester and ask for a Georgia Master Timber Harvester when ready to harvest. They can help you plan for reforestation and harvesting and ensure that your plan complies with voluntary guidelines and state and federal regulations.

3.

**Stick to your plan.** Protect the value of your land with a plan that provides for aesthetics, biodiversity, reforestation, responsible harvesting and Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect water and soil quality.

## You're Important to Georgia

Private landowners like you own more than 65 percent of Georgia forests. Decisions you make affect the value of your property but also have many positive benefits for the economy and the quality of life in Georgia. The SFI Implementation Committee of Georgia understands and values the contributions of family forest owners and wants to provide you with resources that will help you sustain your forests today and for the future.



## Working for Georgia Forests

Since 1995, The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) program has existed to promote the perpetual growing and harvesting of trees in a way that's compatible with the protection of wildlife, plants, and soil and water quality.

In Georgia and all across North America, SFI program participants adhere to a set of principles that address how they operate on their own lands and how they conduct procurement practices across all ownerships. Collectively and individually, SFI members promote the practice of sustainable forestry on all lands by funding logger and forester education and encouraging other landowners to manage their forests sustainably. Many SFI program participants have also been third party certified to the SFI Standard by independent auditors.

## Want More Information?

There are many in-depth resources available—often for free—on all of these topics. This information is provided for landowners by the SFI Implementation Committee of Georgia as a quick implementation guide and source for more in-depth information.

For more information or to request a comprehensive SFI landowner information packet, call **706-542-7691** or log on to **[www.sfi-georgia.org](http://www.sfi-georgia.org)**.

## SFI. Growing Tomorrow's Forests Today.

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# Plan Now. Sustain Your Forest.

A quick management guide for Georgia landowners.



## Forest Management Basics

If you grew up around the woods, you're probably familiar with the basics of forest management. Regardless of the amount of experience you have as a forest landowner, your forest management plan should utilize Georgia Best Management Practices for Forestry.



## BMPs for Forestry

Any land-disturbing activity, from construction to timber harvesting, has the potential to impact soil and water quality. Georgia BMPs for forestry are designed to minimize the impacts of forestry activities on your land. Some of the most critical BMP guidelines address road construction and streams and include:

- **Streamside management zones (SMZs)** or buffer strips along streams, lakes and wetlands – These vary depending on stream type, slope or soil type and are designed to maintain shade along streams.
- **Erosion control measures** for roads and skid trails, such as culverts, broad-based dips, and water bars.
- **Stream crossing guidelines to minimize environmental impact** – If necessary, crossings can be made using bridges, culverts or fords. Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act includes 15 mandatory provisions for stream crossings.
- **Waste disposal** – Includes recommendations for oil disposal when servicing heavy equipment in the woods.

*All of these and more are addressed in detail in the Georgia BMP Manual for Forestry. To request a copy, call the Georgia Forestry Commission at 1-800-GA-TREES.*

## Plan for Regeneration First

Unlike the chicken and the egg, it's clear that a regeneration plan should come first. If you wait until after harvest to plan regeneration, you could incur additional and unnecessary expense or have less than desirable results. Consider all of your options, including:



- **Seed Tree/ Shelterwood** – Good for naturally regenerating certain softwoods and hardwoods, seed tree or shelterwood cuts leave 10 to 50 trees per acre.
- **Clearcutting** – This is a good regeneration method if you are willing to invest in site preparation and planting or your site is suitable for natural regeneration of hardwood species like oak, cherry and poplar.
- **Single-tree selection** – Known as selective harvesting, this method is often used for natural regeneration of hardwood forests. Though visually more acceptable, this selective method may be technically challenging for timber harvesters.
- **Thinning** – This practice should remove some of the lower-value trees in a stand and the remaining trees are allowed to continue to grow into more desirable products.

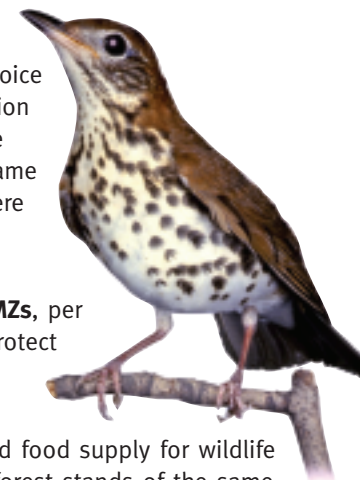
When harvesting by any of these methods, consider visual impact. You can often make a timber harvest more aesthetically pleasing by considering the size, shape and placement of harvest areas in your plan.

Get advice from a qualified resource professional or professional forester before making decisions about harvesting or regeneration and choose a Georgia Master Timber Harvester when you're ready to harvest.

## Planning for Wildlife

Forests of all types and ages provide important habitat for wildlife. If wildlife habitat for hunting or other personal enjoyment is one of your objectives, there are many things you can do to enhance wildlife. Your choice of harvest and regeneration options will influence the type of game and non-game wildlife in your forest. Here are some simple ways to enhance wildlife habitat:

- **Maintain prescribed SMZs**, per BMPs for forestry, to protect fish and other aquatic species.
- **Create edge habitat** and food supply for wildlife by keeping individual forest stands of the same age relatively small.
- **Provide wildlife corridors** or buffers to give wildlife safe passage across your property.
- **Sow native grasses** or plant native nut-producing hardwoods that provide food for wildlife.
- **Leave den trees** for mammals and cavity-dwelling birds as well as snags for birds of prey.



### Species of Special Concern

As a landowner, it's important to be aware of plant, animal, and natural communities that are designated as "imperiled or critically imperiled, threatened, or endangered" and how management activities may affect those species and communities. The Wildlife Resources Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources can provide information on species of special concern. Log on to [www.georgiawildlife.com](http://www.georgiawildlife.com) and click on "Nongame Animals and Plants," or call the Georgia Natural Heritage Program office at 770-918-6411.

