

## **Attention: Landowner**

### **RE: Who is Working for YOU?**

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Forestry is important in Alabama. Our forests produce trees, a leading agricultural crop, and our forest product industry is number one in employment and in payroll. Thus, you probably know several people who are called foresters.

## **The Registered Forester**

In Alabama, foresters must be *Registered* to practice forestry. (Exceptions to this law are few, but include Federal or University employees who give *free* advice to landowners or people practicing forestry on their own land.) To become a **Registered Forester** in Alabama one must:

- \* Graduate with a degree in Forestry from an approved 4-year college
- \* Work as a Forestry Intern 2 years
- \* Pass a written or oral State Exam
- \* Maintain minimal continuing education requirements.

Registered Foresters can work directly for you, for the wood products industry, or for a government agency.

## **The Consulting Forester**

A **Consulting Forester** is an independent forester who offers forestry services for a fee. Some consultants demonstrate their qualifications by joining the Association of Consulting Foresters. To be a member of this professional society, a consultant must work as a Candidate for 2-5 years, meet initial and continuing education requirements, have no connection with timber buying and meet high ethical standards designed to protect the landowner who hires an **ACF Consultant**. Some consultants do not meet the standards; others chose not to seek these credentials.

Consultants can be used to manage your forest and to act for you in all forestry matters, or they can be used to perform single forestry projects as needed. They not only provide expert advice, but also manage and/or execute projects in your forest. Consultants frequently assist during timber sales, since mistakes there can have a devastating affect on your forest's future health and income.

Select a consultant as you would any professional. Find one who is well qualified, and whom you can trust and work with easily. You have a unique property and your aspirations may be very different from your industrial or private neighbors. A consultant should meet your objectives for your forest.

## **The Industrial Forester, Timber Buyer, Wood Supplier**

Timber buying companies employ **Procurement Foresters** to buy timber, **Management Foresters** to manage company land, and **Landowner Assistance Foresters** to provide forest landowners with forestry advice, seedlings, sources of vendors, and/or management plans. They also use **Loggers** to harvest your trees. Some companies, such as **Wood Suppliers** or **Wood Dealers**, may have one forester doing all of the above tasks, including management of private lands for a fee.

There are many knowledgeable and personable men and women working in industrial forestry, but all of them earn their salary from the timber company. They can give you advice or services,

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but ethically their loyalty must be to their employer, not to you. If an **industrial forester, timber buyer, or wood supplier** is managing your lands, you will have to evaluate information and negotiate timber sale prices on your own, since they cannot extend fiduciary trust to both their employer and you.

If a forestry professional or logger offers to buy your timber or provide a "free" service on your forest, you may want to contact a **Government or agency Forester** or a **Consulting Forester** to give you an unbiased second opinion from the viewpoint of what is best for you and your forest in that transaction.

### The Government or Agency Forester

Foresters are on the staff of many federal and state agencies: the Alabama Forestry Commission, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Extension Service, and the U.S. Forest Service.

These **agency foresters** are available to provide limited services, but are usually restricted to the amount of time that can be spent with one landowner. You may be charged for some services such as prescribed burning and seedlings; other items, such as brief inspections and management information, may be free. You can take advantage of agency information and expertise, but for jobs that require field work, a big investment of time, or a high level of expertise, you will probably still want to hire a **consulting forester** to manage or perform the work on your property.

### The Forestry Technician, Forest Laborer, or Logger

Some people who work in your forests do not meet all of the requirements for Registration. For example, several 2-year forestry college programs produce **Forestry Technicians**. Forestry technicians and loggers may also learn their trade "on the job" without formal education. People who practice forestry on your timberlands, but are not *Registered* must have their work *directly supervised* by a Registered Forester.

**There are many players in the forestry and logging fields. This makes it very important for you to know and understand WHO IS WORKING FOR YOU?**

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**This article was taken from the Web Site of Forestry Consultants, Inc. Please contact Forestry Consultants, Inc. if you are interested in knowing more about *Who is Working For You?***