

# LOCAL TIMBER HARVESTING IN THE TOWN OF ITHACA: A FOREST MANAGEMENT GUIDE FOR CONSERVATION ZONE PROPERTY OWNERS

New York State has more forest land than any other northeast state, with 63% of its land area being forested. Of its 18.9 million acres of forest land, approximately 80% is in private hands.

Roughly one third of the 19,478 acres in the Town of Ithaca is undeveloped forest land. Of this, approximately half of the town's forested area is situated within the town's conservation zones, located on South Hill, around Six Mile Creek, the western shore of Cayuga Lake, and the Sapsucker Woods area of the Northeast.

Town residents and officials value our local forests. They provide clean air, water, noise reduction, carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, scenic and recreational opportunities, and timber products for construction, heating, and economic return. As such, it is imperative that forest reserves remain healthy for future generations.

## SUSTAINING LOCAL FORESTS

To retain these resources, the Town has revised conservation zone regulations to require a timber harvesting permit for harvesting activity within these zones. The permit is intended to guide timber harvesting projects by requiring that a forest management plan be compiled by a forester.

The following are exempt from a timber harvesting permit:

- A) Reasonable site clearing preparatory to construction of a building or other structure for which a building permit has been issued, provided such site clearing does not exceed one acre.
- B) Site clearing preparatory to construction of a building or other structure pursuant to a site plan approved by the Planning Board, provided such site clearing does not exceed one acre.
- C) Clearing of land for rights-of-way or utilities.
- D) Clearing and maintenance of land for agricultural purposes (including timber operations that constitute a farm operation), where the principal use of the land is as a farm and the land is located within a county agricultural district
- E) The harvesting of evergreens specifically planted for Christmas trees.
- F) Maintenance of trees or property through the pruning or topping of trees.
- G) Cutting, removing or harvesting trees to prevent or treat disease, to control invasive species, or to remove trees that are dead or damaged or present safety or health hazards.
- H) Any other cutting, removal or harvesting of timber from a parcel in quantities less than 10 standard cords of wood, or 5,000 board feet, in any one year.



## CREATING A FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Conservation Board encourages you to obtain a forest management plan that will help you make smart choices as you cut smaller amounts of wood. A knowledgeable forester can explain how to leave appropriate numbers and types of trees for propagation, and remove those that are diseased or hazardous. They will also explain the downsides of selective cutting; that is, the removal of all large trees, which leaves behind a patchy and irregular crop of poor quality, low value vegetation. In short, proper forest management techniques will ensure that your forest is continually balanced and sustained over time.

The law, along with the entire article governing the Town's conservation zones, can be found online at:

[www.ecode360.com/8661513#15924610](http://www.ecode360.com/8661513#15924610)

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The following links provide additional information and guidance on the harvesting of timber in New York State.

Private Forest Management— NYS Department of Environmental Conservation  
[www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4972.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4972.html)

Forest Land Best Management Practices— Cornell Cooperative Extension  
[www2.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/bmp](http://www2.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/bmp)

ForestConnect— Cornell Cooperative Extension  
[www2.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/forestconnect](http://www2.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/forestconnect)

New York Forest Owners Association  
[www.nyfoa.org](http://www.nyfoa.org)

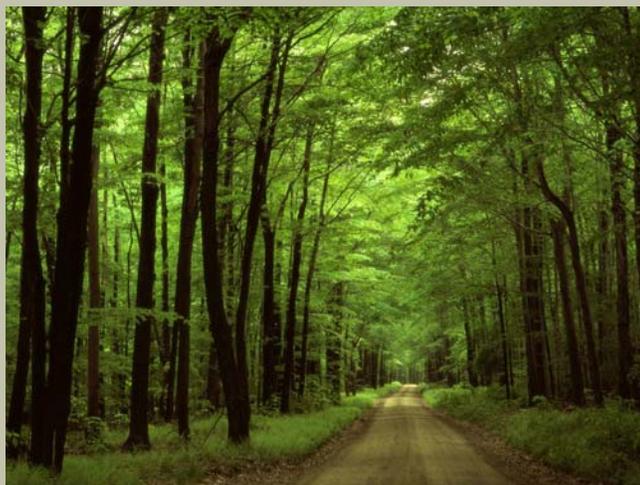
Listing of Local Foresters— NYS DEC  
[www.dec.ny.gov/lands/46800.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/46800.html)

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For more information on forest management, please contact the Town of Ithaca Conservation Board, at:

**Town of Ithaca  
215 North Tioga Street  
Ithaca, NY 14850**

*Thank you for your care in ensuring the sustainable management of our local forests for current and future generations.*



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