

- [WHAT IS A FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN](#)

The intent of a forest management plan is to create a “landowner’s manual” that provides the landowner with an educated description of the features and qualities of the land, as well as recommendations on how to best manage the land for the most optimal benefit of the ecosystem, the wildlife, and the landowner.

- [HOW IS A MANAGEMENT PLAN CREATED](#)

When a consulting forester does an assessment of a property, they perform a systematic survey/inventory of the land wherein they collect data, and document many things including quantitative and qualitative data:

- The current size, number, health, quality, and value of trees across the landscape
- Historic and cultural features such as stone walls and cellarholes
- The presence or absence of rare, endangered, or invasive species
- Wetlands, terrain, and ecologic features as a whole
- The current habitat conditions for forest birds and for other wildlife

The forester will identify opportunities for protecting or enhancing bird habitat, tree regeneration, and ecosystem health and identify options to improve habitat over a 10-year period.

- [DATA COLLECTION](#)

- Timber data for forest surveys is gathered by using what is known as a ‘variable plot- size’ sampling method.
- With this method the forester documents data at a series of sample points that are placed equidistant from each other using a grid layout.
- At each sample point the forester uses a special sighting tool that allows him to document information such as number of trees per acre and the amount of area that trees occupy per acre, both of which are important metrics for assessing timber volume, wildlife habitat, and other important ecologic factors.
- Additionally, measurements such as Diameter at Breast Height

(DBH), merchantable log length, percent canopy cover, as well as numerous qualitative observations including wildlife habitat features and qualities are made at each sample point.

- By entering DBH and Merchantable Log Lengths into a Volume Table created by the USDA that is specific to the northeast US, it can be determined how much volume of usable sawtimber (in board footage) and how much volume of firewood (in cords) is present per acre.

All of this data – both quantitative and qualitative – then gets analyzed and organized, allowing the forester to create a report that defines and characterizes the features and qualities of the land; and makes carefully researched & data-based management recommendations for the landowner so that they can make informed stewardship decisions about their property.