

# Stewardship Notes

Indiana Division of Forestry



## The Consultant Forester

As the contractor is to the building industry, so is the consultant forester to forest management. Consultant foresters are professionally trained foresters who, through practical field experience, have mastered the art of forest management as it is applied to Indiana woodlands. The consultant forester assists the private woodland owner apply actual forest practices such as timber stand improvement, tree planting and pruning on the forestland. Most consultant foresters are employed by the woodland owner, usually on a contract basis; fees may be based on an hourly, daily, or by-the-job rate, or by a percentage of the gross return.

Consultant foresters perform many forestry practices recommended in management plans prepared for landowners by district foresters. They can also formulate site specific management plans for forest owners, and put those plans into action.



Consultants are often called upon to conduct timber inventories, appraisals and value estimates which can be used to set up depletion allowances for tax purposes, provide testimony in court cases, or assistance in settling estates. You may wish to contact a consultant just to establish a reasonable idea of what your timber is worth.

Consultants also assist in the area of timber sales. Due to the size and obligations of forestry districts, state district foresters are often unable to help landowners mark and sell their trees as soon as they would like. The district foresters also concentrate their efforts on Classified Forests, which have an expressed commitment to long-term forest management. The consultant forester, however, is not limited by size or degree of protection and can carry any sale from beginning to end, and can make sure the purchaser fulfills all terms of the sale contract.

In many cases, the large amount of labor required for many forest management activities is the main reason landowners are unable to properly manage a woodland. With the aid of a consultant forester, this stumbling block is easily overcome. For a reasonable fee, the consultant will carry through all phases of timber management and forest improvement.

Before hiring a consultant, it is recommended you contact two or more foresters from the list to compare services and fees. A list of consultant foresters serving your particular area is available from your district forester, or from the Division of Forestry office.