

WVPOA Forest Management Guidelines & Application Approval Form

Guidelines

One of the major benefits of Wilderness Valley is the serenity of our forestland. Certainly, an objective of the WVPOA is to ensure the preservation of this valued natural resource and to guard against any damage or abuse. Our forest, mostly consisting of hardwoods, is ever changing and we can enhance the quality of our forest with proper forest management techniques. One method to improve future timber growth and quality is to periodically conduct selective harvests and thinning of trees. The objectives of selective harvests and thinning are:

- To develop a quality forest stand by removing defective, damaged and otherwise undesirable trees, thus concentrating growth on fewer, high quality trees. Defective, damaged, diseased or deformed trees occupy growing space and compete with the better trees for moisture, sunlight and soil nutrients. Removing them from the stand will allow desirable trees to grow more rapidly.
- Promote the growth of more desirable trees. Some trees considered to be more desirable (for aesthetic value and wildlife benefits) are the American basswood, white ash, sugar maple, red and white oak, and American beech.
- To regulate the number and distribution of the trees to encourage optimum growth of the stand. Many woodlots contain too many trees for maximum growth. Although the stand may be composed of desirable trees, competition among the trees for available growing space can be severe therefore; thinning is needed to regulate spacing among trees so maximum growth can occur.
- In addition to forest health, thinning can also have a positive effect on wildlife and the environment. It can provide snags for woodpeckers, wood debris for biodiversity, firewood, and income. Selective harvests and thinning operations can be favorable to our forest only by using best forest management practices. Improper methods can seriously damage a stand, which will have long lasting effects and take years to undo.

Forest Management Procedures

1. Read the Wilderness Valley Property Owners Association policy (see below)
2. The WVPOA Board of Directors strongly recommends consulting with a registered Forester to provide the following services (note – all Foresters charge a fee and/or collect a percentage of the timber sale revenue for their services):
 - Assess the property and recommend a forest management plan
 - Prepare a timber sales contract
 - Obtain bids for the harvest and select a logger
 - Select and mark trees for harvesting
 - Ensure compliance of the contract before, during and after the logging operation.

We especially recommend using a registered Forester if you have no experience in this area. **Using the logger to provide the services of the forester and conduct the logging operation can very much be a conflict of interest.**

3. Tom Stone, the regional Michigan Department of Natural Resources Service Forester, Indian River office, is an additional resource available to offer assistance to property owners on forest management. Among the services Tom can provide:
 - Provide expert advice on forest management in Northern Michigan
 - Send printed materials on forest management
 - Forestry information web sites
 - Access to Michigan State University's Forest Management program material
 - Tips and guidelines on conducting timber sales

Tom's phone number is 231-238-4282; e-mail stonet@michigan.gov mailing address Indian River Field Office, 6984 Wilson, Indian River, MI 49749. Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Offices is another resource that offers forest management assistance to property owners.

The following is a current list of area foresters who may be of assistance (updated January 2015).

Geoff Kegerreis
Timberline Forestry Consulting, LLC
Leroy, MI 49655
(231)920-1007

Jerry Lambert
Forest Resource Services, LLC
6223 Hayes Tower Rd.
Gaylord, MI 49735
(989)732-7188

Ivan Witt Forestry Consultants, Inc.
5105 Nowak Rd.
Gaylord, MI 49735
(989)983-3024
(989)370-9754

Forest Management Policy (October 2020)

- All Wilderness Valley property may be considered for selective harvesting or thinning operations by the WVPOA Board of Directors.
- Property owners must submit the **attached application** to the Board of their intentions to conduct selective harvesting or forest-thinning operations. The primary purpose of this is to ensure the property owner thoroughly understands all the policy requirements.
- **We recommend using a registered Forester especially if you have no experience in this area. Using the logger to provide the services of the forester and conduct the logging operation can very much be a conflict of interest.**
- **Property owners must then provide a report of findings or a forest management plan to the board,** normally completed by a Registered Forester, stating their assessment of the property and their recommendation for properly managing the property based on best forest management practices identified in Michigan's Sustaining Forestry Education Guidelines. **A draft copy of the timber sales contract must also be submitted.** The contract shall contain and not be limited to the following:
 - The types of trees to be removed must be specified and **the maximum percentage of trees to be removed is 35%,** unless the Forester provides compelling reasons to exceed that. Selection of multiple tree species and diameters to an optimized target area (target basal area of 70 – 90 square feet) is recommended.
 - **Harvesting only singletree species and diameter limits will not be approved**
 - **High grading (taking only the best trees) will not be approved.**
 - **Massive clear cutting is not permitted,** the only exception is to treat stands that are diseased, insect or other pest infested. Small sections (less than one acre per ten acres) of clear cutting are permitted only for the regeneration of shade intolerant tree species (like aspen or jack pine) where the conversion to a more long-lived species is not possible.
 - Type of operation defined – chipping and/or bolts. **If a “topping” type of logging operation is being conducted, the remaining limbs or slash shall not exceed three inches in diameter. The slash must also be cut up enough to have a clean and uncluttered appearance.** Small piles of slash are permitted for wildlife habitat.
 - The property boundaries must be accurately and clearly marked.
 - **A harvest site sketch must be provided showing the location and the size of the equipment landing area and skidding trails and the areas to be thinned.**
 - Only marked trees will be cut
 - Stump heights shall not exceed 12 inches.
 - Spring poles and hung trees shall not be allowed and must be brought to the ground. Some hung trees should be left for wildlife habitat.
 - The access roads used by the loggers must be specified.
 - **All roads shall be maintained to the original good condition following the operation.**
 - The impact on soil erosion must be specified.
 - The property owner should ensure the logger has proper insurance including comprehensive liability coverage. The WVPOA assumes no responsibility for damage to property or personal injury or death resulting from the tree thinning authorized.
 - The overall harvest site must have a clean appearance following the operation.
 - **Neighbors and adjoining property owners must be advised of your forestry plan and estimated timeframe.**
- **Upon WVPOA Board of Directors approval of the timber sales contact, the contract can then be bid.**
- The property owner is responsible for obtaining all necessary permits, required by Otsego County zoning.
- The forester can then select and mark trees for harvesting by using paint or ribbon. Such marks must be on the trunk and stump, and still remain after the cutting, so that the board may review the harvested trees. Only marked trees can be cut.
- The property owner grants permission for board members to enter the property for purposes of inspecting the work for contract compliance.
- The property owner is responsible for the repairs of any and all roads damaged by logging equipment. The owner assumes responsibility if they approve the operation and dismiss the logger.
- The property owners shall provide themselves, or secure from the company hired to do the work, a bond in the amount agreed upon by the WVPOA Board. The Bond amount shall be determined on a case by case basis, using several factors, such as the roads bordering and/or intersecting the property to be thinned, the size of the tract being thinned, the amount of trees being cut, the equipment to be used, and any special circumstances regarding the property being thinned or the nature of the work. Said bond shall be forfeited to the Wilderness Valley Property Owners Association, if **any** of the following should occur, whether intentional, or not.
 - A. Contract requirements are not met
 - B. Cutting exceeds amount approved in application.
 - C. Cutting exceeds trees that were marked.
 - D. Damage to roads, caused by logging equipment, is not repaired.

- The property owner shall sign **the attached Forestry Application Approval Form** and submit to the Wilderness Valley Property Owners Association Board of Directors, indicating his/her agreement to these terms. Said agreement must be fully approved prior to the start of timber harvest.

WILDERNESS VALLEY PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 871 GAYLORD, MI. 49734

Forestry Application Approval Form

Any Wilderness Valley property considered eligible for selective harvesting or thinning operations must comply with the WVPOA Forestry Management Policy dated October, 2020. Owner of property agrees, by signing below, to fully abide by all rules/restrictions in WVPOA Forest Management Guidelines pursuant to onset of any forestry operations.

Date Submitted: _____ Tract Numbers: _____

Property Owners Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Forester Name: _____ Phone: _____

The following must be submitted and approved by the Wilderness Valley Property Owners Association, Inc., before any forestry operation may proceed either by Landowner or Forester on behalf of Landowner:

- 1) Report of findings or a forest management plan (normally submitted by a registered Forester stating assessment and recommendations).
- 2) A draft timber sales contract containing but not limited to the following:
 - a) Types of trees to be removed and maximum percentage (no more than 35% allowed unless compelling reasons are given to exceed this amount).
 - b) Type of operation defined, i.e. topping, chipping, bolts.
 - c) Property boundaries accurately and clearly defined.
 - d) Access roads used specified.
 - e) Any other information pertinent to forestry plans.
- 3) Harvest site sketch.
- 4) **Performance Bond in the amount of \$ _____, which will be forfeited to the Wilderness Valley Property Owners Association, Inc. if not forested in accordance with the WVPOA Forestry Management Policy.**

I have read the WVPOA Forest Management Procedures, Policy and Guidelines and will abide the rules and procedures therein.

Property Owner Signature _____ Dated _____

WVPOA, Inc. Board Member Approval:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____