

TCRPC

Planning Toolkit Fact Sheet

Forestry

INTRODUCTION

What is Forestry? It is the management of forests and timberlands, when practiced in accordance with accepted silvicultural principles, through developing, cultivating, harvesting, transporting and selling trees for commercial purposes, which does not involve land development. Forested landscapes, whether publicly or privately owned, provide many essential economic, environmental, health and recreational benefits for residents and visitors. Today forests cover 59% or 16.7 million acres of Penn's Woods. Of this total, 29% (4.6 million acres) are publicly owned and 71% (11.9 million acres) are owned by 738,000 households. We all can count on these lands for timber, habitat, clean water and air, and recreation. These woodlands are a major connection to the natural world for all residents of the Commonwealth.

The Municipal Planning Code (MPC) explicitly addresses the authority municipalities have on regulating forestry. Some of those important factors are:

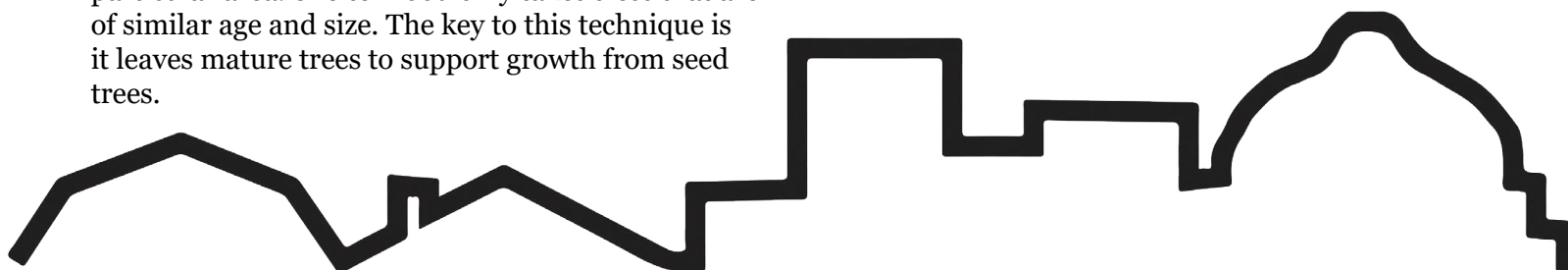
- Timber harvesting is the only use other than agricultural practices that is to be a use by right in all zoning districts. This is to encourage maintenance and management of forested or wooded open space and promote the conduct of forestry as a sound and economically viable use of forested land throughout the state of Pennsylvania.
- A municipality's zoning power under the MPC is limited to the planning for uses and not regulating the details of the operation.

Three different types of logging include:

- **Selective Cutting:** This method is selective because loggers choose only the wood that is highly valued.
- **Clear-cutting:** This method is normally used by large scale logging company. This method removes all the trees in a designated area (typically a woodlot).
- **Shelterwood:** As opposed to taking any tree in a particular area. Shelterwood only takes trees that are of similar age and size. The key to this technique is it leaves mature trees to support growth from seed trees.

The primary concern many people have with logging relates to disturbed soils and excess stormwater. Existing Pennsylvania State Law regulates these impacts of timber harvesting. All timber harvests should have site specific plans to address potential problems before a proposed timber harvest commences. Some of the primary state regulations affecting timber harvesting in Pennsylvania include:

- Erosion and sedimentation control regulations contained in 25 Pa. Code, Chapter 102, promulgated pursuant to the Clean Streams Law, 35 P.S. § 691.1 et seq.
- Stream crossing and wetlands protection regulations contained in 25 Pa. Code, Chapter 105, promulgated pursuant to the Dam Safety and Encroachments Act, 32 P.S. § 693.1 et seq.
- Responsibility for Road Maintenance and Repair; Road Bonding. Pursuant to 75 Pa.C.S.A., Chapter 49; and 67 Pa. Code, Chapter 189, the landowner and the operator shall be responsible for repairing any damage to roadways caused by traffic associated with the timber harvesting operation, to the extent the damage is in excess of that caused by normal traffic, and shall be required to furnish a bond to guarantee the repair of such potential damages.
- Fish habitat must be maintained. Chapter 25 of the Fish and Boat Code (30 Pa. C.S.A. §§2051–2506) prohibits any alteration or disturbance of streams, fish habitat, or watersheds that in any way may damage or destroy habitat without the necessary permits from the DEP, including those required under 25 Pa. Code, Chapters 102 and 105.



BENEFITS

- Forest Management encourages open space conservation
- Forest management increases wildlife food source diversity
- Forest management sustains and improves forest health and resilience
- Forest management can improve recreational opportunities

DRAWBACKS

- Elimination of Forest cover
- Risk of Soil Erosion
- Biodiversity Loss

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Best Management Practices outline ways to harvest timber while protecting soil productivity, stream water quality, wetlands, wildlife habitat, aesthetics, and forest sustainability.
- Replanting forests after harvesting contributes to ecologically sustainable forestry

RESOURCES

- **Forest Management and Timber and Timber Harvesting in Pennsylvania**
- **TCRPC Model Zoning Ordinance**
- **Forestry with Confidence: A Guide for Woodland Owners**

