



# Forest Landowner Briefings

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## **I'm thinking about harvesting some of my timber. I have grandchildren going to college soon and I want to help pay for their tuition. How do I get started in this process?**

Great question! This can feel overwhelming especially if this is the first time you have been involved in a timber sale.

First, search for a consulting forester that can evaluate your forest conditions and timber, solicit the best price for your timber, hire and supervise a logging crew, and help regenerate a new stand of trees post-harvest. Hiring a consulting forester will help ensure that your interests are protected while maximizing your sale income.

There are several ways you can use to find a consulting forester. No matter which method you use, you are assured that the forester you choose is a degreed forester, has experience and is held to a code of ethics. The Association of Consulting Foresters (ACF) is a national credentialing association for professional consulting foresters. Secondly, the Texas Forestry Association (TFA) accredits professional foresters in Texas through the Texas Accredited Forester. Lastly, you can connect with a consulting forester using the "My Land Management Connector" application found at [www.texasforestinfo.com](http://www.texasforestinfo.com), which can link you directly to a variety of forest management professionals. No matter which method you use it is a good idea to interview several consulting foresters to help you find the best professional for managing your timber sale and interests.

After you have hired a consulting forester it is important to meet with them to discuss your objectives and any concerns you have. You should also discuss a contract including aspects such as how long the operation will last, price of timber, property boundaries, trash, and other components. Walking your property with the consultant can be a good opportunity for these conversations..

The consultant should be familiar with all best management practices (BMPs) which help reduce erosion, maintain and improve water and soil quality, as well as benefit fish, wildlife, and native plant populations.

Another great resource to use when considering a timber harvest is the "Plan My Land Operation" on [texasforestinfo.com](http://texasforestinfo.com). This interactive website application allows users to locate their property and view soil, slope, sensitive areas, potential for erosion, and even operational suggestions for logging roads and decks.

Links:

**General BMP info:** <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/BestManagementPractices/>

**ACF:** [www.acf-foresters.org/acfweb](http://www.acf-foresters.org/acfweb) then click "Find a Forester" tab. You can use the search, map, or click for the directory.

**TFA:** <https://www.texasforestry.org/programs/texas-accredited-forester-council>

**Example Timber Sale Contract:** <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/TimberHarvesting/>

## COVID-19 seems to have affected everything lately. Has coronavirus changed the timber industry?

Yes and no. Thankfully, the timber industry is an essential business so foresters, loggers, and mills have been able to keep working.

There have been some economic and logistic impacts of COVID-19, however. Housing starts are one of the biggest stimulants for the timber industry and sawtimber prices. With coronavirus, the amount of new houses being built has significantly decreased.

International trade is another big component of the timber industry and due to public health fears a lot of international trade has been put on pause. With travel and border restrictions for public health and safety, international guest worker visas may be restricted. Many tree planting operations rely on guest worker (H2B) visas. If these are not fulfilled as usual, plantations may not get replanted on time causing future silvicultural challenges.

Although, there is some good news for those in the timber industry! As many of you have probably noticed, there has been a surge in demand for paper products such as toilet tissue. This spike in consumer demand benefits pulp mills and suppliers. More people are also using online delivery services and many of these goods come packaged in paperboard boxes.

Links:

**University of Arkansas:** <https://bit.ly/2Nlt1FB>

**Forest Resources Association:** <https://bit.ly/37VHh17>

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## I hear about invasive species in the news from time to time. Are there any I should be concerned about that could affect my property?

Unfortunately, yes. One invasive species to be aware of is *Triadica sebifera* - “Chinese tallow tree” or “popcorn tree”. In Texas, it is one of many pest species to be considered noxious on both state and federal lists.

This tree was introduced from China to use its oils for soap making and has become an ornamental tree. It has brown furrowed bark and can grow up to 60 ft tall. The leaves are triangular with a wide base and narrow tip, resembling a heart. The fruit is a brown capsule that splits to reveal three white seeds.

Tallow tree spreads rapidly from root and stump fragments transported by equipment and seeds dispersed by birds, water and wind. It is adapted to a wide array of soil types and can grow in a variety of conditions.

Invasive species are a threat to the ecosystem because they prevent establishment and growth of beneficial, native plants. Tallow tree is also “allelopathic” meaning it produces a toxin that spreads in the soil to prevent other plants from growing nearby. Invasive species reduce vegetation diversity which alters the availability of food and cover sources for wildlife.

Herbicide application is the best method of control, usually applied to the tree trunk, cut stump, or leaves. This guide explains the methods and herbicides that can be used <https://texasforestinfo.tamu.edu/HerbicideDSS/>. Make sure to read the label when using any chemicals!

## I know Texas can have a lot of wildfires. What can I do to reduce the risk of wildfire on my property?

Prevention is key! As Smokey Bear says, “Only you can prevent wildfires.” Keeping your timber at healthy density and stocking levels can help reduce the fuel load on your property. The more woody debris and higher density of trees can lead to hotter fires because there is a lot that can burn.

Thinning operations can help with this. Loblolly pine stands are usually thinned twice (in some cases only once) before a final harvest. Once the trees’ crowns start to touch each other it is time to start planning a thinning operation. Not only does thinning help reduce your risk of wildfire, it encourages growth of the remaining trees, provides intermediate income, and helps prevent insect and disease problems. A key point to remember is a thinning operation should take out the lower quality trees and leave the best ones to keep growing into larger saw timber.

Prescribed fire or “controlled burns” can also help prevent wildfires and reduce damage if one does occur. This helps decrease the fuel load on your property. Prescribed burning can also improve the nutritional quality of regenerating vegetation for wildlife. Multiple burns may be necessary for optimal fuel reduction and wildlife benefits.

TFS can provide technical assistance for planning and can help landowners access financial assistance programs to help implement management practices.

This link provides other tips to help protect your property from wildfires.

**Texas A&M Forest Service:** <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/PrepareYourHomeforWildfire/>

## Where can I find timber prices in my area?

Texas Timber Price Trends is a bimonthly publication reporting average prices paid for standing timber in Texas. This report is intended only as guide to general price levels. Individuals interested in buying and selling timber can use this report to monitor market trends and get a general idea of what timber is worth. However, it should not be used to judge the fair market value of a specific timber sale, which may vary considerably due to many factors. The March/April 2020 price report is below.

Product	Statewide Average Price		Previous Period Average Price		Percent Change MBF = thousand board feet
	\$/ton	\$/MBF	\$/ton	\$/MBF	
Pine Sawtimber	\$20.57	\$164.53	\$28.59	\$228.72	-28%
Pine Pulpwood	\$7.30	\$19.70	\$8.95	\$24.17	-19%
Pine Chip-n-Saw	\$12.00	\$32.40	\$15.17	\$40.95	-21%
Hardwood Sawtimber	\$32.22	\$290.00	\$36.70	\$330.30	-12%
Hardwood pulpwood	\$5.87	\$16.45	\$10.21	\$28.59	-42%



## Where can I go for help?

Contact the TFS District Office serving the county where your property is located. You can also search by county on this webpage: <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/contactus/county-search/>

### TFS District Offices

Carthage (903) 693-6865	Huntsville (936) 295-5688	Marshall/Longview (903) 938-8712
Conroe (936) 273-2261	Jacksonville (903) 586-7545	Nacogdoches (936) 564-9276
Crockett (936) 544-7798	Kirbyville/Jasper (409) 384-9427	New Boston/Clarksville (903) 628- 2711
Gilmer (903) 734-7007	Kountze/Woodville (409) 246-2484	Palestine (903) 729-7738
Henderson (903) 657-0511	Linden (903) 756-5571	Pittsburg (903) 856-7181
Hudson/Lufkin (936) 875-4400	Livingston/Liberty (936) 327-4832	San Augustine (936) 275-3438

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Texas A&M Forest Service is currently updating the Texas Forest Action Plan and has completed a draft. The agency is requesting comments on this draft. Please go to the following link:  
**<https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/ForestActionPlan/>** and click on **Forest Action Plan** (under 2020 Documents) and **Comments for the 2020 Draft Texas Forest Action Plan**.