

Woodland Steward Program – Modules

The Woodland Steward Program is a series of 10 modules designed to help landowners learn more about their woodlots. Each module will require 30 to 60 minutes to read and complete, including a multiple choice quiz, which will help test your knowledge of the material presented. The quizzes are only to help you gauge your own understanding of the material, and will not be viewed or shared with anyone.

- 1. Getting Started.** Involves the basics of what a landowner owns and what they want to do with the property. Includes a discussion of location and identifying boundaries (i.e. surveys, maps, satellite imagery), access, posting land, and landowner liability.
- 2. Laws & Regulations.** Focused on legal requirements and responsibilities associated with owning land. Includes discussions related to water quality, Forest Practices Act, Natural Resources Protection Act, current use, and laws protecting landowners.
- 3. What's on Your Woodlot – Looking it Over.** This module will help familiarize landowners with the general ecology on their property. Includes discussions of tree identification, soils, land-use history, wildlife and natural areas, wetlands and streams, and forest health.
- 4. Woodland Ecology – The Forces that Shape your Woodlot.** Light science aimed at landowners to get a better understanding of the natural forces at work on their woodlot. Includes a discussion of the life cycles of trees, the movement of water & nutrients, how water and nutrients affect tree growth, forest succession, and how forests regulate climates.
- 5. Working with Wildlife.** Poll after poll has shown that wildlife viewing and habitat management are major reasons why woodland owners own their land. Includes a discussion of wildlife habitat needs, resources to learn more about Maine wildlife, focus species forestry, and endangered species.
- 6. Insect & Disease.** As world commerce increases and warming trends continue, the threats to the forest from introduced pests increase dramatically. It is important that woodland owners understand how they can reduce the risk. Includes a discussion of current and potential insect threats, current diseases, and an overview of invasive plants.
- 7. A Successful Timber Harvest.** Most small woodland owners only undertake a timber harvest once every 15 to 20 years. Making sound decisions at the time of harvest is critical. Includes a discussion of professional foresters, skilled loggers, logging equipment, fair compensation for wood, scheduling a harvest, legal considerations, contracts, proper record keeping, and a warning about solicitation letters.
- 8. Managing Woodlot Finances.** Many small woodland owners do not understand the financial aspects of owning land. Additionally, financial pressures often lead to actions such as overcutting or fragmentation that can be avoided with the right information. Includes discussion of current use property tax programs, timber as an investment, managing financial aspects of forest investment, documenting land purchases, tax liabilities of selling timber, federal and state landowner assistance programs, and estate planning.
- 9. Non-timber Resources.** Woodland is about more than just timber. There are many other potential products and sources of income for woodland owners. Includes discussion of maple sugaring, mushrooms, Christmas trees and wreaths, ginseng, fiddleheads, and carbon credits.
- 10. Putting it all Together.** This module is an opportunity for woodland owners to explore how everything they have learned fits together, including moving forward with a management plan, sources of assistance, discussion of forest certification, and continuing education.