These factors can lead to serious and expensive mistakes.

Forests take decades to grow, but can be destroyed in just a few days of poorly conducted cutting. Landowners can avoid these pitfalls by retaining a professional forester who can identify which trees to be harvested, determine the volume to be removed, and how much value or income the landowner should receive. Foresters have been proven to be well worth the money.

There are two parts to managing forest for forest products and managing for biodiversity are compatible goals. We can have our forest and cut it too!
trees that have the best timber potential, while at the same time utilizing the products generated from the thinning. These thinnings generally take place every decade or two and result in products like firewood, pulp, posts, poles, and small sawlogs. If markets are good, the costs of improvement thinnings can be more than pay for themselves.

These intensive treatments are a slight modification of the way a forest naturally grows. They work well in young and middle-aged stands. The way in which trees are harvested helps determine how quickly the forest regenerates and what kinds of trees will grow in succession.

To make informed land management decisions, landowners need information about the effects of different harvesting techniques. Having a range of options available means landowners can choose a technique that meets their objectives and preserves Rhode Island’s beautiful landscapes.

The following are some commonly applied regeneration harvests for Rhode Island’s forests: Diameter Limit Harvest; Group Selection Method; Shelterwood Harvest; Commercial Clearcut; Silvicultural Clearcut and Coppice with Standards. Depending on the species you wish to encourage, the type of timber products you wish to produce, and the degree to which you also wish to incorporate other forest activities such as enhancing wildlife habitat, one of these timber harvesting methods may best suit your plans and goals.

Contact a state service forester and/or a consulting forester for more information and assistance. Refer to the list of contacts and resources at the end of this factsheet.

What are some marketable wood products and tree species that I can grow?

Think Quality
While red oak and white pine are the two most commonly grown and marketable tree species for Rhode Island, it is important to remember that tree quality is just as important—if not more important—than tree species.

Timber (Sawlogs)
The production of wood products measured in board-feet is also known as sawn lumber. These products are typically higher in value, such as veneer and large sawlogs. For board-foot volume production, the value per foot differs greatly with the tree size, and tree quality. Thus, focusing on volume production alone without considering the characteristics of the site such as soil, pH, and drainage, results in as much or more value than focusing on growing large, high quality trees. Short rotations and only a few, if any, improvement thinning treatments are recommended. However, the income earned through the steady supply of pulpwood. The income from pulpwood production may be enough to pay your ownership costs, as well as earn a profit.

The pulpwood market in Rhode Island is limited and fluctuates dramatically. Species commonly sold for pulpwood include most of the hardwoods and softwoods depending on market demand. Most of the pulpwood sold in RI is shipped to mills in northern New England. Prices for pulpwood tend to be very low.

Miscellaneous Products (Poles, Custom Sawn Wood)
There are some smaller sawmills that market sawlogs that may occasionally be available to the woodland owner. Poles are trees that meet certain manufacturers specifications for use as utility poles, piling, and log cabin stock. Individual trees that meet these rigorous specifications can be of more value to the landowner. Red pine is especially suited for use as poles.

There is a market for trees that can be custom sawn and used to construct such things as posts and beams, for boat building and restoration, etc. This market generally requires trees to be harvested in different lengths and diameters. For fuel wood production, use of these trees while at the same time improving your woodlot by giving desirable crop trees room to grow (improvement thinning).

Fuelwood is produced from lower quality trees that are poorly formed or crooked, or it may come from the tops of trees harvested as sawlogs. Thus, logging plans should be created by the size of the gap that is opened in the overlying forest canopy—either through natural disturbance or artificially through cutting.

There is more than one way to harvest a forest

Effective natural replacement in the forest requires an orderly succession of trees growing to take the place of those that die or are harvested. The way in which trees are harvested helps determine how quickly the forest regenerates and what kinds of trees will grow in succession.

To make informed land management decisions, landowners need information about the effects of different harvesting techniques. Having a range of options available means landowners can choose a technique that meets their objectives and preserves Rhode Island’s beautiful landscapes.

Foreword
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