

Standard 6

THE BEAUTY OF YOUR WOODS

As a forest **landowner**, the visual impact of the work you do to maintain your woods is an important testament to your stewardship activities. By harvesting timber *and* having a visually appealing woodland, you make a powerful public statement about the value of sustainable forestry. **Standard 6** covers the things you can do to make your woodlands more visually appealing to you, your family, and guests, to visitors who tour your property, and to those who pass your Tree Farm while traveling on adjacent roads.

Performance Measure 6.1

Landowner should manage the visual impacts of forest-management activities consistent with the size of the forest, the scale and intensity of forest-management activities, and the location of the property.

INDICATOR 6.1.1

Forest-management activities should apply visual quality measures compatible with appropriate silvicultural practices.

RESOURCES

Several excellent, free resources are available online to help you address the visual impacts and appeal of your forest-management activities. Here are some to get you started:

- Guide to Logging and Aesthetics by Geoffrey T. Jones: <http://www2.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/info/pubs/Harvesting/A%20Guide%20to%20Logging%20Aesthetics.pdf>

CHECKLIST

Some of the things you can do to improve the visual quality of your woods include:

- ✓ Placing log-truck loading zones out of public view;
- ✓ Putting a bend in your entrance road to block the view of the activities taking place inside your property;
- ✓ Picking up and removing trash and equipment parts that are not being used;
- ✓ Minimizing the amount of debris left in your woods after a harvest; and
- ✓ Closing idle roads and revegetate them with wildlife-friendly plants.

These are just some of the things you should consider to improve the aesthetics of your woods. Your state forestry agency or cooperative extension service will have additional resources to help you make your woods visually appealing.

STANDARD 6: Forest Aesthetics

Forest-management activities recognize the value of forest aesthetics.

- Georgia's Best Management Practices for Forestry, Section 7: <http://www.gfc.state.ga.us/resources/publications/BMPManualGA0609.pdf>
- Good Forestry in the Granite State, a publication of the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension Service: <http://extension.unh.edu/goodforestry/toc.htm>
- Contact your state extension foresters at: www.mylandplan.org/extension-foresters

Converting logging decks to wildlife habitat

John Burke Woodford, Virginia

Tree Farmer and former American Forest Foundation board chair John Burke lives and works on Virginia land that has been in his family for more than 160 years—“Six generations, if you count my grandkids,” he says. “I don’t own the land. The land owns me.”

Burke grows and harvests pine and hardwood on Burke Woodlands. His strong belief in careful stewardship and his keen interest in experimental forestry have made this Tree Farm a model of best practices.

One of these best practices is converting used logging decks into thriving food plots that provide prime habitat for deer, turkey, quail, and other wildlife in between thinning and harvesting activities. Not only does this practice provide abundant food sources for wildlife and recreational opportunities for hunters, it also makes Burke Woodlands an aesthetically pleasing showcase of good forest management.

Each year, Burke harvests or thins between 50 and 100 acres of trees. “When you do a thinning or a harvest, you need to get the logging equipment close to where the trees are. Sorting and loading the logs occurs on about an acre

of ground, called the logging deck,” Burke explains. Rather than leaving this land unutilized until the next harvest, he removes the debris, loosens the soil, fertilizes the ground and plants cover crops such as clover, vetch, and turnips.

Burke’s work to create food plots for wildlife goes beyond the best management practices required by state forestry agencies, which merely require landowners to stabilize a site when logging is done. His efforts not only benefit wildlife and members of the local hunt club (who use Burke’s land for recreational hunting), but they’re also good for the land, for water quality, and for an attractive woodland.

For other Tree Farmers considering converting logging decks to wildlife habitat, Burke says financial and educational resources are available from state forestry and natural-resources departments and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service. Local hunt clubs also may be interested in helping with both labor and costs of such projects, since they have a vested interest in attracting game.

“Stewardship—leaving the land better than you found it—and passion for what you’re doing, are the keys,” Burke says. “That’s what the Tree Farm System is all about.”



Rob Amberg



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