

Woodland owner “to do” checklist the first 1-2 years

So you’re new to owning or managing a forest or woodland parcel. Following are some things to do and to think about over the next couple of years.

- Think about your long term goals and visions for the property. What do you enjoy? What do you want to do with it? What do you need? What are your constraints (time, money, etc.)?
- Determine property tax status – is the land taxed as forest land? If not, what needs to be done to get and maintain forest tax status?
- Get an aerial photo of the property
- Find your property corners and boundaries
- Walk your property and assess its condition. Find out about its history – past logging and other activities. What kinds of soils do you have? What kinds of trees and other vegetation? What are their conditions? Do you have particular resource concerns, such as eroding roads, trees in poor health, invasive weeds, or others?
- Meet your neighbors
- Attend classes and tours to learn about woodland management. See what other owners are doing.
- Get technical assistance. Have a forester walk the property with you. Get advice from other professionals and woodland owners.
- Make sure your home and access are firesafe. Create defensible space if needed; maintain it. Invite your local rural fire protection district or Oregon Department of Forestry representative out for a visit. Get their advice on making it more firesafe.
- Think about access. If you can get there, you can’t use it or enjoy it. Do you have roads or trails that can be used to access the property? Perhaps you have them, but they are overgrown. What will be needed to daylight them? Do new roads or trails need to be created?
- Learn about relevant rules and regulations related to forest land and forest practices, defensible space, fire and debris disposal, riparian areas, etc.
- Taking into account your objectives and property potential, create an action plan for the next 2-10 years.