Choosing the Right Consulting Forester for Your Family Forest

Where to look for a consulting forester

The list of individuals and firms who can provide service as a consulting forester is constantly changing. However, places where you can look to find a list of potential consulting foresters include:

- Association of Consulting Foresters: www.acf-foresters.org/
- Society of American Foresters: www.eforester.org/Main/Certification/Why_Hire_a_Certified_Professional.aspx
- Ask other landowners for names of consulting foresters they work with and trust.
  - Oregon Small Woodlands Association: www.oswa.org/
  - Oregon Tree Farm System: www.otfs.org/
- Ask a forester.
  - Oregon Department of Forestry: www.oregon.gov/ODF/Working/Pages/FindAForester.aspx
  - Oregon State University Extension Service: extensionweb.forestry.oregonstate.edu/directory

Consulting foresters work for you to provide forest management services, including the development of management plans, marking and administration of timber sales, forest management recommendations and many other services. A consulting forester should serve landowners in the manner of a fiduciary, putting the landowner’s interests first and acting independently of forest products firms and logging companies. As a professional consultant, a consulting forester should work with you to meet your goals while adhering to all relevant regulations.

A good consulting forester manages forests daily and has relationships with loggers, log buyers, tree planters and herbicide applicators. These relationships help the forester meet your goals and ensure the work is carried out to high

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An experienced consulting forester can generate better financial returns, enhance the long-term value of your forest, and help you attain your management objectives.

To find the right consultant, ask candidates questions about their approach to your specific needs. The questions below are not the only questions you could ask and should not replace trusted relationships or “gut feelings.” These questions are meant to help you think through what to ask and what the contractors’ responses mean.

Questions to ask potential consulting foresters

What qualifications do you have?

Consulting foresters can come from many different backgrounds. Look for one who has training and experience as a consultant and is familiar with the best forestry practices in your area. This training may be formal (a college degree in forestry) or informal (many years working with an experienced forester). Look for a consulting forester who is familiar with any recent regulatory changes and forestry practices and has invested in new technologies that improve accuracy and efficiency.

Do you hold a professional certification?

Consulting foresters are not required to hold professional certifications in the state of Oregon. However, members of the Association of Consulting Foresters must meet requirements that are similar to certification. For example, members of the Society of American Foresters must pass knowledge exams and take continuing education to earn a Certified Forester designation. Members of the society must also adhere to a code of ethics. There are members of the society who do not adhere to a code of ethics. These foresters must meet qualifications that are similar to certification. For example, members of the society who do not adhere to a code of ethics must have a minimum of five years of experience in forest management and must adhere to a code of ethics. Members of the society who do not adhere to a code of ethics must have a minimum of five years of experience in forest management and must adhere to a code of ethics. Members of the society who do not adhere to a code of ethics must have a minimum of five years of experience in forest management and must adhere to a code of ethics.

What services do you provide?

Consulting foresters can help you identify consultants who have met established standards. They can also help you identify consultants who have not met established standards. Consultants should clearly describe their services upfront. Some services will be offered on a flat fee or bid. Others will be offered on an hourly or daily rate.

Do you have the appropriate insurance coverage?

Before you sign a contract, ask to see the forester’s certificates of coverage. You want to ensure you are financially protected if something were to go wrong.

Do you have an established relationship with the landowner?

Some consulting foresters operate without a written contract when they have an established relationship with the landowner. However, it is in your best interest to have a written contract that specifies the responsibilities of both parties in the transaction. A good consultant will be responsive to your needs and develop the foundation for a long-term working relationship.

What are your qualifications?

Consulting foresters should be willing to share their qualifications and how they have acquired their expertise. They should be able to provide you with references and speak to others with similar property and goals.

Can I speak with some of your clients with similar property?

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