

Timber Harvest Layout

There is more to harvest layout than simply deciding on a silvicultural prescription and choosing trees to be harvested. Some foresters rely on a logger untrained in silviculture to pick trees themselves based on a general prescription. Other foresters mark trees to be harvested, but with little regard for trail layout, which can result in extensive damage to residual trees and desirable regeneration as the logger attempts to get trees out of the woods by whatever means they can.

At Southern Maine Forestry, we pick and mark each tree to be harvested with careful attention given to how it will be removed from the woods. Central skid trail routes are selected to minimize damage to residual crop trees, desirable regeneration, and soils, and are indicated to the logger with vertical “center stripes.” Where trails make turns, “bumper trees” are selected and indicated with paint. These are trees which will eventually be harvested, but are left standing until the other trees have been removed from the woods. They serve the role of protecting unharvested trees and regeneration from the effects of harvested trees being pulled through the woods by a skidder.

Between skid trails, each tree to be harvested is marked with paint faced in a direction that indicates to the logger operating the harvesting equipment how to approach and fell the tree, and in which direction it should be pulled out of the woods.



Trees to be harvested are designated as bumper trees, and will shield crop trees from skidder damage



Trail center stripes and paint orientation indicate to equipment how to move through the woods

These method of precision harvest layout ensures that silvicultural goals are achieved by not just selecting the proper trees to harvest, but doing so in a way that controls the movement of equipment through the forest to minimize damage to the trees left to grow.