

Description of the Timber Harvest

Phase I of the Walpole Town Forest timber harvest began in the south section of the Town Forest, east of Washington Street, during the week of February 23, 2014. This harvest was prescribed in the Town Forest Management Plan, which was updated in Spring 2010. Two of the 106 stands identified in the Management Plan are the subjects of this harvest.

On December 7, 2013 an informative walk was organized by the Town Forest Committee (TFC) through this section of Town Forest and offered to the public. About a dozen people attended and took the walk. This walk was an opportunity for townspeople to meet Phil Benjamin, a State Licensed Forester. Phil has worked with the TFC for several years and has also worked with Norton, MA, Rochester, MA, and numerous private land owners for his expertise in timber harvesting operations. A Forest Cutting Plan was formulated, submitted to the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), received approval and a permit was issued to Walpole, based on the Plan.

For about two hours Phil described how forests are "managed" to ensure the overall health of the forest by selectively clearing certain trees. This process will promote species diversity, remove unhealthy trees, thin dense stands, and open the forest canopy, so that sunlight can reach the forest floor to help promote and facilitate new growth within the forest. Many people had questions about the process and after listening to Phil speak to the group, there was a understanding and appreciation for the need to perform the harvest and also confidence in the competence of the individuals involved.

A landing area (a staging area) has been created, inside the Town Forest, near the entrance across from #673 South St. This is where the harvested logs will be stacked prior to being moved to a saw mill. Once the operation is complete, this area will naturally revert back to part of the wooded forest.

Dan Reed, a logger from Taunton, Massachusetts was selected by the TFC after bids had been circulated and the work had been viewed by other loggers, to perform the timber harvest. He runs a family owned business that has been working in the industry for several generations, and comes fully qualified and highly recommended for his fine work. Reed Logging Co., follows the markings of the forester's Plan, Phil Benjamin, and then brings the selected logs of White Pine, Red Oak and Black Oak to a saw mill. Other tree species without lumber value, included in the overall cutting plan, are sold as pulp wood.

Estimated yield for the current timber harvest is:

- 66,785 board feet of White Pine.
- 5,435 board feet of Black Oak.
- 4,765 board feet of White Oak.
- 725 board feet of Red Oak.
- 715 board feet of Red maple.
- 85 cords of fuel wood.

The Walpole Town Forest Committee, following the original intent of the Walpole Town Forest Charter from 1916, receives the monetary value of the timber to pay for the ongoing maintenance and improvements of the forest. All proceeds are deposited into the established Town Forest Trust Fund, through the Walpole Treasurer's Office, and are utilized throughout the years to pay for re-planting, trail maintenance and other

activities in the forest as a great recreational asset of our Town. After expenses, the project will net approximately \$4000 revenue for the Town Forest Trust

For further questions, contact [Dick Adams](#), chairman of the TFC.
