

Responsible Forestry – The Role of the Forester

A forester manages the trees, soil and water of the forest to provide habitat for wildlife, plants, and for humans. In accomplishing this, the forester uses the utmost care in designing areas to harvest and areas to leave alone. This keeps the forest habitat in balance.

The harvesting techniques used by foresters include selection and clear cutting harvests. In a selection harvest some of the trees are removed and in a clear cut harvest all the trees are cut.

Clear cutting removes all the trees in a given area, much like a wildfire or other natural disturbance would do. It is used most frequently in forests where species such as pine, spruce, aspen and birch require full sunlight to grow. It is also an effective method for creating habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Animals that eat insects and those that eat plants, such as bears and deer, often thrive in recently clearcut areas.

In a selection harvest, foresters leave the best growing trees and remove many but not all of the dead, weak, or non-desirable tree species. Foresters do this to maintain a diverse habitat for plants and animals within the harvest area.

As you learned earlier, different trees require different conditions to grow from sunlight to water to soil type. Trees can be regenerated either naturally by allowing the area to reseed itself, or artificially by planting seedlings or sowing seeds.

