

HARVEST PLAN



SFPNA Sustainable Forestry Program
Working Together for Maine's Forests

HARVET PLAN WINTER 2014-15

**Landowner: Town of Falmouth
Blackstrap Hill Community Forest
C/o Bob Shafto, Ombudsman**

**Address: 271 Falmouth Road
Falmouth, ME 04105**

Phone: (207) 878-8933

Lot Location: Falmouth, Cumberland County, Maine

**Lot Size: 234 Total Acres
154+/- Forested Acres**

Town Tax Map Reference: MAP R08 LOTS 021, 047, 054, 057, 088, 093

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Maine L.P.F. 3306
October 9, 2014**

Introduction

The intent of this harvest plan is to supplement the overall Blackstrap Hill Community Forest Management Plan and utilizes recommendations prepared in the 2009 Forest Management Plan prepared for the Town of Falmouth by Rene Noel (see attached). The resource information in the Blackstrap Hill Community Forest Management Plan and the 2009 forest management plan are still valid. The goal with the harvesting effort will be to remove lower value, poor quality individuals in favor of higher quality white pine and red oak. Sugar maple was also witnessed which will be favored during the harvest.

The forest management objectives of the LMAC have not changed and are focused on long term sound forest management principles to improve the overall health of the forests and to provide habitat to multiple wildlife species. Also timber harvesting activities should maintain and or improve current recreational activities. The harvesting recommendations prepared by Rene Noel are still valid and focus the harvesting effort on removal of lower value, poor quality individuals in favor of higher quality white pine and red oak. The steep ravines will be avoided during the harvest and will be preserved riparian corridors.

Conducting an improvement harvest can be difficult especially when trying to plan the startup of an operation. Weather, markets and contractor availability must be juggled by the forester in order to complete a successful operation. In order to complete this operation the ground should be frozen in order to utilize the hay field as a yarding area. Also, low value product markets must be strong in order to sell forest products harvested at a good stumpage rate. All of these issues require the planning process be complete for when the weather, markets and contractor conditions align.

Harvesting Recommendations

For the purpose of recommending harvesting activities to accomplish objectives set forth in the 2013 updated management plan and the 2009 Forest Management Plan, harvesting will utilize the same stand numbers in the forest management plan. I recommend harvesting on tax map R08 Lots 47, 57 and 88. This will include portions of stands 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

I recommend a timber harvest utilizing individual tree selection to improve growing conditions for high quality growing stock and the shelterwood system to manage areas of white pine. Again, the “worst first” approach will be utilized, removing individuals in decline and of poor quality first.



*Declining white birch would be removed to favor red oak and white pine regeneration.

These recommendations are consistent with the management plan prepared in 2009. Much greater detail regarding the stand level prescriptions can be found in the management plan. In general, this is a low value harvest removal, residual stands should be composed of higher quality and value stems. Given the size and quality of the wood, a whole tree harvesting system is recommended. Also, given the high amount of recreation activities on the lot the chipping will reduce the amount of top wood left lying in the woods.



*Feller buncher and grapple skidder used in whole tree harvesting.

I recommend the yard be located in the hay field on lot 88. Getting trucks to the north end of the field may be difficult during icy road conditions; therefore tire chains on trucks may need to be used. Also, inevitably there will be brush and wood chips that need to be pushed off of the yard at the end of the operation. I like to locate the yard near a slight slope so material can be pushed out of the field and over a bank. This makes the finished job aesthetically pleasing.

I recommend some work be done to the haul road along the river before any trucks attempt to use it. In one area the road is falling into the river. I recommend using rip rap or large rocks to shore up this area and use a rocky material to fill the gap. Also the portion of the road that is mostly clay and wet (near power lines) I recommend using rock or rip rap to stabilize this area. The area it appears is wet most times and is very soft. Using larger material (rocks) will stabilize the area and slow the erosion issues with the road. I would be happy to review these recommendations in the field with the Ombudsman or the LMAC.

The harvest will require the crossing of several small streams with temporary bridges (both wood and steel may be used). All crossings will be closed out at the end of harvesting activities (water bars where needed). All crossings will be hayed and seeded after completion.

The harvest will require the crossing of some recreation trails. The snowmobile trail (used by mountain bikes as well), the yellow trail and blue trail may need to be crossed (see map). Every effort will be made to limit this activity to only what is necessary.

The harvesting could include setting the edges of the fields back and creating young herbaceous growth. This recommendation is to improve habitat and ease of mowing only and has no bearing on timber production. Most of the trees around the immediate field edge are of relatively poor quality and could be removed. I would recommend leaving some larger oak mast trees for a food source and some old field taller white pines for roost and perch trees. When harvesting these trees some brush will be left as the trees are felled to the ground. This is important to remember as the area will not be absolutely clean and free of brush. Based on a recent meeting with Kelly Boland, NEC wildlife specialist, areas of young hardwood growth could also benefit New England Cottontail if any are present.

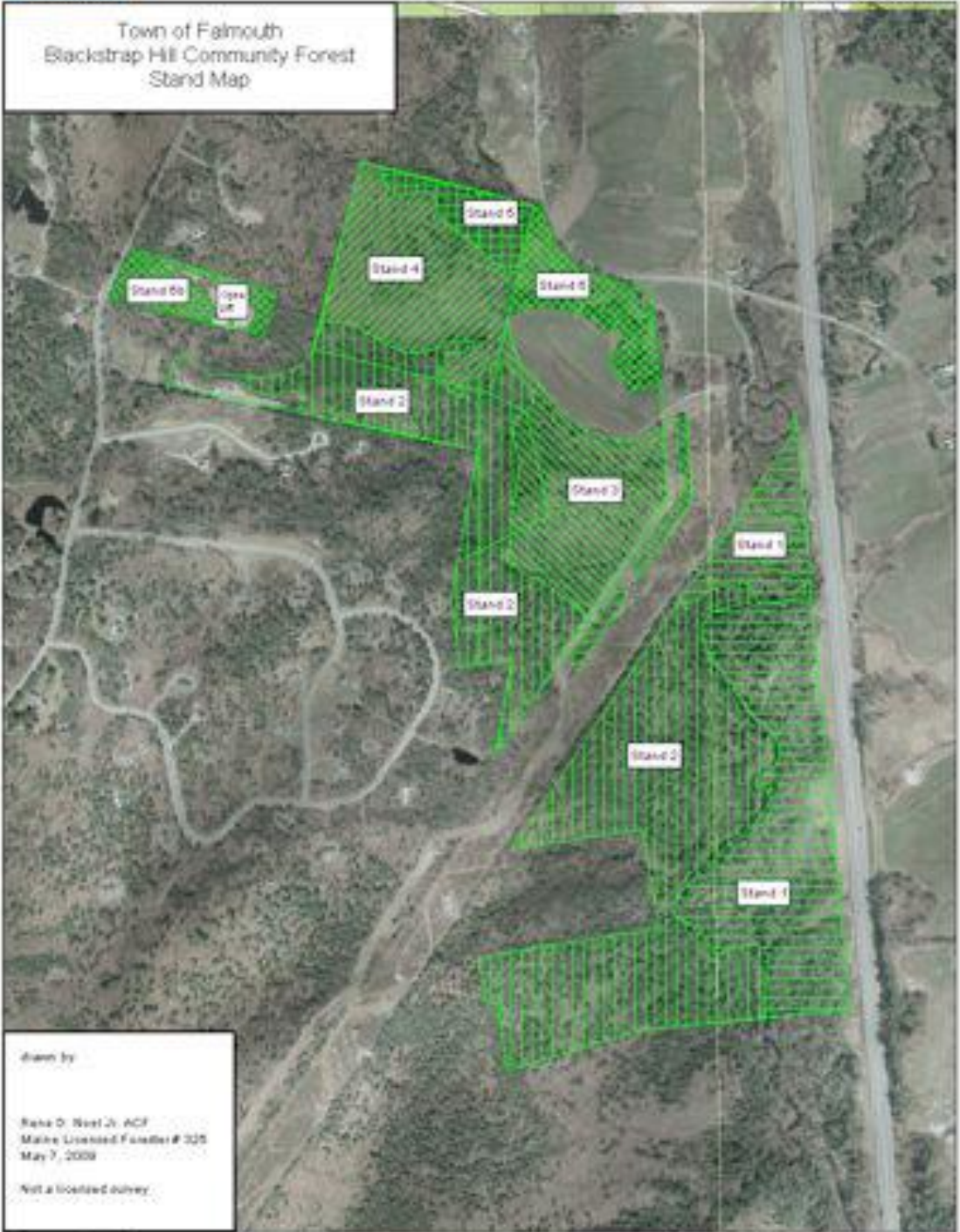
Prior to harvesting activity the boundaries should be examined closely. In my reconnaissance of the lot some boundary evidence was witnessed. However some lines were difficult to locate. Boundary evidence should be flagged with pink ribbon and abutters notified and asked to review the evidence and express any concerns they may have.

Any harvesting should include an informational campaign to explain to the public the goals set forth and expected outcomes. This may include signage, walks and discussions and articles in local newspapers. Abutters should each be notified in writing prior to startup of any harvesting activities.

Steps to Meet Objectives:

Below is a simplistic outline to help facilitate completion of this project. While many other issues may need to be added or reviewed, this is often helpful in keeping projects moving forward.

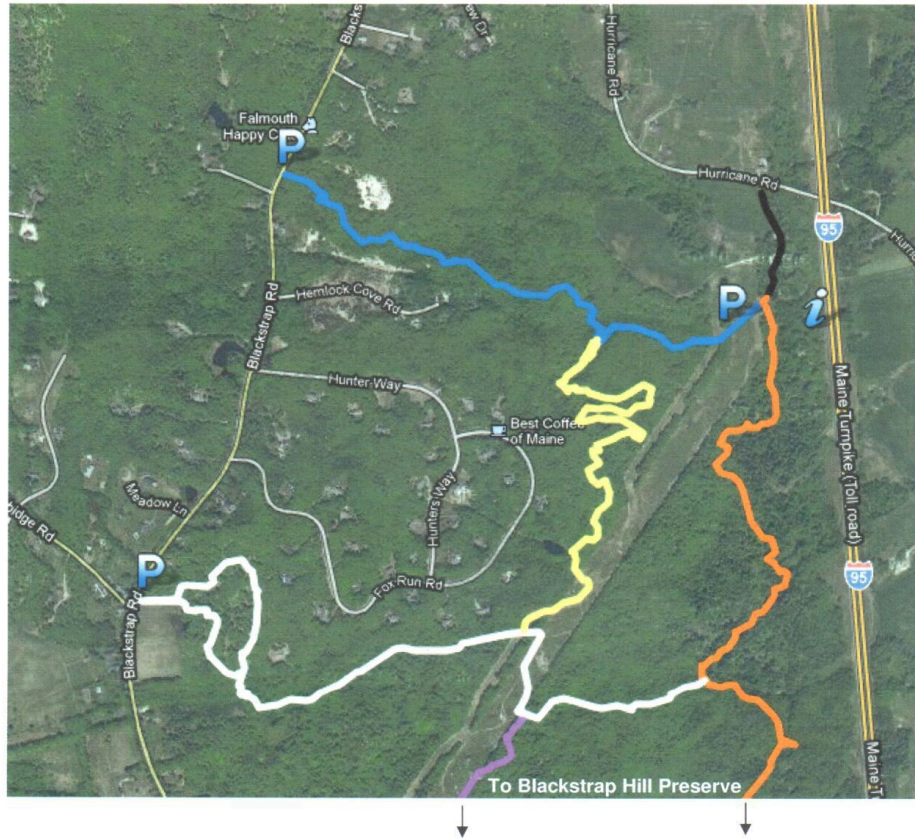
1. Land Management and Acquisition Committee (LMAC) review of harvest plan recommendations.
2. LMAC amends as needed.
3. Council Meeting October 15th.
4. Forester completes thorough review of property lines and any issues that arise notify LMAC.
5. Forester completes thorough review of access for harvesting with the assistance of Ombudsman.
6. Forester contacts harvest contractors for winter availability and onsite review.
7. Forester marks wood and completes layout as necessary.
8. LMAC review of layout and marking.
9. Informational campaign and a scheduled walk with interested parties.
10. Notify abutters and respond to questions.
11. Complete MFS Notification and Contracts, (provide town with all insurances).
12. Time operation to frozen ground conditions.



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Blackstrap Hill Community Forest 2011 Trail System



Map II: Blackstrap Hill Community Forest Parcel Map

