



## Setting Your Goals For Your Land

Your goals and objectives are the most important part of your forest management plan. This is where you state your vision for your woods—the values you'd like to protect and what you'd like to achieve there, based on the resources you have available.

That vision will shape how you manage your woods. Defining it will help you invest your time and resources more wisely, communicate more effectively with natural resources professionals, like a forester, who can help you achieve your objectives, and make good short-term and long-term decisions.

Identifying your goals and objectives can seem like a daunting task, but it doesn't have to be. Considering these questions will help you get started:

- Why do you own your land?
- What do you value about it? Its beauty, wildlife, recreational opportunities, income opportunities, special or historic sites, etc., are all values you may wish to protect as part of your objectives for the land.
- How do you currently use your land? (As a primary residence, recreational property, timber investment, etc.?)
- What are your hopes and dreams for the land? Do you want to use it differently in the future?
- Are you interested in working your land (for example, cutting firewood or tapping sugar maples for syrup)? If so, how much time can you devote to that work, and what skills do you have or are interested in developing?
- Are you interested in managing for income from your timber or other wood products?
- Are you interested in managing for wildlife or conserving special habitat on your land? Are there any threatened or endangered species on your land?
- How long do you expect to keep owning your land?
- How would you like your land to be used or managed when you no longer own it?

Answering these questions for yourself and, if appropriate, discussing them with family members will help you to define your goals and objectives for your woods. The statement or vision that emerges from your answers is an essential part of your forest management plan. You or your forester will prescribe management activities that help to realize this vision in your woods—and getting the right technical and financial assistance can make those activities happen.