

Cutting standing timber

One of Wisconsin's most valuable resources is often found on private property—standing timber lots.

Unfortunately, timber and woodlot owners often don't know the value of their standing timber and problems arise after agreements are made with loggers.

Some timber buyers target elderly and absentee landowners. Problems that surface include broken contracts between landowners and the loggers, non-payment for timber taken from property, destruction of property and trespassing.

Protect yourself

Woodlot owners should learn about the value of their timber stands so that a fair transaction occurs. Consider the following if you are planning to have timber cut from your property:

- Get written estimates from at least three logging companies.

- Ask companies for references. Contact all the references to find out what their experiences were when dealing with the company. Also call the Bureau of Consumer Protection for any complaints about the logger you are considering for the job.

- Don't try to negotiate the sale of timber if you are unfamiliar with the industry or the worth of the timber on your land. Get assistance from a legitimate forester. The Department of Natural Resources can provide a list of foresters.

- For your own protection, get a written contract in all situations. Be sure all conditions and understandings are included and written in clear language. Be very specific if you do not want certain trees removed.

- The name and address of the timber buyer and logger

should be included on the contract.

- Starting and ending dates should be clearly stated and agreed upon.

The sale of timber is a once in a lifetime transaction—once the trees are cut, they are gone forever. It will take decades before the trees grow again.

For more information or to file a complaint, visit our website or contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection.

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