



# **Center for Nonprofit Strategies**

Clear Actionable Advice.

## **CALL BEFORE YOU CUT: CAMPAIGN STRATEGY**

### **PRESENTED TO:**

**The Sustaining Family Forests Initiative  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
Missouri Department of Conservation  
Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
West Virginia Division of Forestry**

**MARCH 2009**

## I. RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

About a third (35%) of all forest land in the US is owned by family forest owners.<sup>1</sup> While individual plot sizes tend to be small<sup>2</sup>, collectively, these individuals, couples and families own and manage more than 250 million acres of woodland. Clearly, their decisions and actions play a large role in determining the overall health and vitality of America's forest resources.

Of the many decisions that family forest owners (henceforth called landowners or woodland owners) make about their woods, none is more significant than when and how to cut trees. Whether cutting for timber, firewood or stand improvement, a well-planned logging operation is critical for the sustenance and health of the forest. If the right trees are cut, at the right time, and in the right way, the forest regenerates quickly and periodic cuts can actually improve the value of the woodland. Conversely, a "bad" cut can completely devastate the ecology of the forest.

From a financial perspective, a competitive bidding process and a carefully constructed contract are important for ensuring that the landowner gets fair market value for his/her timber and that the logger leaves the woods in good shape. Because the sale price of timber depends on so many factors (such as tree species and quality, market trends, logging costs, etc.), it is difficult to accurately ascertain fair market value for a particular timber stand. Inviting multiple bids for a clearly defined job is the best way for landowners to get a competitive price for their timber. Nevertheless, anecdotal data suggest that many landowners end up selling their trees to the first logger that makes them an offer, often with no more binding agreement than a handshake. And many of them end up with a denuded or depleted forest; with less than fair market value for their timber; and certainly with less money than they could have made over the years, had they planned their timber harvests more thoughtfully.

In most cases, landowners can achieve the best results by using the services of a professional forester. Foresters match forest health concerns with the landowner's goals and needs to determine when and how trees should be logged. Thus, they help landowners maximize the long-term return from the forest. However, data from the National Woodland Owner Survey (NWOS) indicate that only 15% of all woodland owners in the six campaign states have received professional advice with regard to managing their woods.<sup>3</sup>

The broad goal of the Call Before You Cut campaign (CBYC) is to protect the interests of landowners and improve the quality of logging to sustain forests and prevent environmental damage. This can be achieved if

### Overall Goal of the Campaign

Protect the interests of landowners and improve the quality of logging operations to maintain forest health.

### Desired Behaviors

Landowners inform themselves about the different elements of a good cut and use the services of a professional forester to manage their harvests.

### Communication Objective

Get landowners to call a toll-free number to request information and resources before harvesting their trees.

<sup>1</sup>Butler, B. (2008): Family Forest Owners of the United States, 2006. Gen. Tech. Rep. NRS-27, Newton Square, PA: US Department of Agriculture, Forest Services, Northern Research Station, 72 p.

<sup>2</sup> According to the National Woodland Owners' Survey (NWOS) 61% of family forest owners own lots of less than 10 acres.

<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise referenced, all statistics are drawn from NWOS data runs conducted specifically for the six campaign states.



(1) landowners are better informed about the silvicultural, financial and legal elements of planning and implementing a cut; and (2) more landowners use the services of a professional forester to plan and manage their cut. Specifically the campaign will ask landowners to call a toll-free number to request informational and resource materials before they cut their trees. These materials will be designed to help landowners manage their harvest better and understand when and how to access professional help.

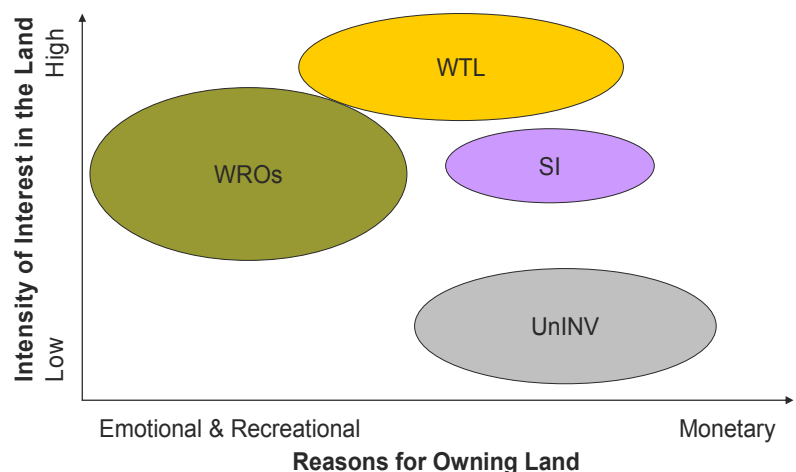
## 2. THE TARGET AUDIENCE

The specific target audience for this campaign is woodland owners in six states—West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and Missouri—who own between 10 and 1000 acres of woodland and fit into the *Working the Land (WTL)* attitudinal segment.

### Why Working the Land (WTL) Owners?

In 2008, an SFFI-commissioned segmentation study of NWOS data identified four types of woodland owners based on their reasons for owning their land (i.e. the types of uses and benefits they thought important) and their level of interest in their woods. As the figure on the right shows, the Working the Land (WTL) landowners have the highest intensity of interest in the land, and their appreciation of their woods is based on its commercial *and* recreational/emotional value. About a quarter (26%) of all landowners in the six campaign states fall into this segment, and they account for 29% of the land held by family forest owners.

*Figure 1: The four attitudinal segments identified in the SFFI analysis.*



Two other segments that have high levels of interest in their woods are Woodland Retreat Owners (WROs) and Supplemental Income owners (SI). Woodland Retreat Owners are the largest group of landowners—37%, accounting for 34% of woodlands. They own their land primarily for emotional and recreational benefits, such as privacy, hunting and peace and quiet. The Supplemental Income segment is smaller (10% of landowners and 15% of the land) and it is differentiated from the other groups by the emphasis these landowners place on income from timber and investment. Like the SI's, the Uninvolved (UnINV) owners own their land primarily for monetary gain but these benefits matter a lot less to them and they are not psychologically invested in their land. They account for about a quarter (26%) of all landowners and own 22% of the family-owned woodlands in the six states.

In a separate analysis, the SFFI team also identified prime prospects for better land management messages. These are the people who have a high level of interest in land stewardship, but are not practicing many stewardship behaviors, such as seeking the advice

of a forester, developing management plans, getting conservation easements or certification, etc.

A cross-tabulation of the two segmentation schemes shows that the majority of prime prospects are WROs or WTL owners (50% and 30% respectively). Of these two segments, the CBYC campaign team identified WTLs as the primary target audience for this campaign. The main reasons for this decision were:

- WTLs are much more likely than WROs to cut trees (for any reason), and they are much more likely to harvest trees for timber. Thus the message of this campaign—call for information before you cut—is more relevant to this group.
- WTLs are also more likely to believe in managing their woods proactively. They are much more likely than WROs to believe that trees, like crops, need to be tended while they are young and then harvested when they reach maturity.
- Because WTLs see their woods as a valuable financial asset, they invest more time and attention to managing their woods. They may also be more likely to see consultant forester fees as an investment in future returns.
- On average, WTLs have slightly larger land holdings than WROs, which means that outreach activities and land management services can be delivered more efficiently.

## Relevant Characteristics of WTLs<sup>4</sup>

### *Attitudes towards Woodlands*

- WTLs see their woods as among their main assets and want to get the best from their land. Compared to other groups, they use the land more intensively—for timber, firewood, non-timber forest products, hunting and fishing, and other recreation. Their most distinguishing characteristic is that they cite a mix of recreational and commercial uses for their land, and they value both equally. Their decisions about land use are thus guided by their need to balance recreational and productive uses (such as harvesting timber or non-timber forest products).
- While their approach is pragmatic, their interest in their woods is not merely utilitarian. Land ownership is a source of pride and security for WTLs. They are deeply attached to their land and, of all the segments, least likely to say they plan to sell their land in the next five years.<sup>5</sup> Many have farming roots and see land as the only true and real wealth that outlasts all other assets.
- True to a traditional farming philosophy, they also believe that land should be used respectfully (i.e. sustainably) and that it is their duty as a landowner to ensure that the land remains healthy for future generations to enjoy and use. Thus, they try to use the land to the fullest while maintaining its health and productivity for the future.

### *Attitudes towards Land Management*

- WTLs believe in active land management and want to manage their land to balance commercial and recreational uses. They also want to maximize the long-term financial

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<sup>4</sup> This profile of Working the Land owners is compiled from an analysis of NWOS data as well as focus groups conducted by SFFI in August and November 2007 and January, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> According to the NWOS, only 1% plan to sell their land in the next five years.



return from their land. Keeping their woods healthy is thus a primary concern, both for future use and for preserving the value and quality of their land.

- To WTLs, Woodland ownership represents and enables a highly treasured lifestyle. Not only do WTLs enjoy being outdoors, they also enjoy working in the woods—cutting trees, clearing the vines, and building ditches. Most of them have owned their woods for many years (82% say they have owned their woods for 10 years or more) and they have spent a lot of that time in their woods. They know a lot about their land’s physical layout and ecology.
- WTLs are on the lookout for more information about how to manage their land better. However, they value experience and wisdom more than technical knowledge or professional expertise. They are well aware that many woodland management decisions are judgment calls that involved tradeoffs (e.g. the grapevine hinders the growth of some trees but attracts and supports wildlife) and believe that experience matters when making these calls.
- They see their woods as a beautiful and valuable asset *that they own*. Not surprisingly, they are very resistant to anything that seems to challenge their sense of ownership and control, whether it be government regulations, a pushy logger or forester, or a family member. They want to do what’s best for their woods, and they will, but they don’t want to be told what to do. Many of them also believe that no one knows their land as intimately as they do and, therefore, no one is more qualified than them to weigh the tradeoffs and make good decisions for the land.
- WTLs are concerned about protecting their woods from diseases, pests and invasive species, as well as trespassers, ATVs and unauthorized hunters. They are also very cautious and fearful of making bad decisions that will reduce the value of their land. Most of all, they are fearful of being misled or cheated by unscrupulous buyers and loggers or by “experts” who may have their own agenda.

#### *Attitudes towards Harvesting and Selling Timber*

- According to NWOS data, 58% of WTLs had harvested trees from their land (40% for commercial use) and 19% said they planned to harvest trees in the next five years. Income from timber is an important reason why WTLs own their land. However, in keeping with their wish to maximize long term returns and enjoyment of their woods, they try to make logging decisions based on a variety of factors, including: current and future value of trees, stand improvement, regeneration, wildlife habitat and overall forest ecology.
- WTLs are somewhat intimidated by the timber market. Because timber prices vary so much and pricing mechanisms are not transparent, it is hard for them to know what their trees are worth and whether they are getting fair market value for their timber. They believe that having insider knowledge and/or access is important for negotiating this market.

#### *Attitudes towards Service Providers*

- WTLs have a very local outlook. They value information from local sources because they feel it is better tailored to their needs. They also trust it more.
- They are wary of “government” in the abstract, but comfortable with their local conservation offices, farm bureaus and district foresters. While a few might think that



state and district foresters push certain programs or points of view, most see service foresters as the most reliable source of information on how to keep their woods healthy and safe from diseases, pests and invasive species.

- WTLs are also aware of consulting foresters and other providers (such as timber sales consultants) who specialize in assisting landowners with timber sales. Not many landowners have used their services, but these consultants are generally thought to be better informed about the timber market than service foresters.
- WTLs view loggers with a healthy skepticism. They realize that unscrupulous or untrained loggers can harm them in many ways—e.g. by under-paying for their timber, by cutting trees before the time is right, or by damaging the woods while logging. They believe that the only way to get a good logging operation is to hire a trustworthy logger and monitor the logging closely.

#### *Demographics*

- Like other landowner segments, WTLs are overwhelmingly Caucasian and tend to skew older than the general population—about 56% are between the ages of 45 and 64, and another 28% are 65 or older.<sup>6</sup> More than half (56%) say they are retired. They are not very highly educated: 55% have a high school education or less, and only 20% have a 4-year college degree.
- As with woodland owners in general, men seem to be the primary decision-makers with regard to the land, or decisions are shared equally. In a small proportion of cases (about 12%) women are the primary decision-makers, often because they are widowed and the sole owners.

### **3. CAMPAIGN CONCEPT**

Most woodland owners will harvest trees only once or twice in their lifetime. The challenge for this campaign, therefore, is to make information available to woodland owners when they need it, i.e., when they are thinking of selling their trees. At other times, landowners are not likely to pay enough attention to campaign messages or to the informational materials provided by the campaign.

With this in mind, the CBYC campaign will have two components:

- The first step is to publicize the availability of campaign materials and to position the CBYC campaign as the most comprehensive and reliable source of information and resources to help woodland owners harvest trees to maximize value from their woods. This publicity is designed to generate **qualified leads** for the campaign—i.e. woodland owners will approach the campaign when they are planning a harvest and the information is relevant for them.
- The second step is to provide appropriate information and guidance when people call. One part of this is to encourage them to use the services of a professional forester. The second, more important, part is to give landowners basic information and

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<sup>6</sup> WTLs are older than the general population, but they are the youngest among the four landowner segments identified by the SFFI segmentation.



decision-making tools so they can plan their harvest better and choose appropriate service providers.

## Step 1: Driving Qualified Leads to State Forestry Departments

The first part of the CBYC campaign involves motivating woodland owners who have decided to harvest their trees to call their state forestry department to request information and guidance. This requires the development and dissemination of messages that will persuade landowners to make that call.

The main motivation of WTLs with regard to harvesting timber is to maximize the long-term value of their woodland, where the term “value” is used holistically to include financial, recreational and emotional benefits of owning woods.

- WTLs, by definition, see *both financial and emotional/recreational value* in their woods and want to optimize use to get the best of both. The actual emotional and recreational uses of woods vary among landowners, but all want to keep their woods healthy, full of wildlife<sup>7</sup>, and productive.
- WTLs are also focused on *long-term value*—they want to get the most money for their current harvest while keeping their woods healthy, both for their enjoyment and with a mind to future harvests.

This is the motivation that the CBYC campaign will tap into. ***CBYC materials will be positioned as a tool to help landowners harvest trees in a way that maximizes the long-term value they get from their woods.*** We will encourage landowners who are thinking of harvesting their trees to call the campaign for information and resources to help them get the best value from their woods.

In keeping with the strong independent streak in WTL owners, and with their tendency to trust experience and judgment (particularly their own) over expert advice, this campaign will focus on informing woodland owners about how to plan and manage a good harvest. ***The services of a professional forester will be positioned as a resource to help landowners implement their plans and accomplish their objectives for the harvest.***

Thus, the central theme of the campaign is: ***If you’re thinking of harvesting your trees, call the CBYC number to get all the information you need and understand what resources are available to you. This will help you get the best value from your woods, now and in the future.***

## Step 2: Providing Appropriate Information and Guidance

If Step 1 of the CBYC campaign is, indeed, as successful as we would like it to be, more landowners will call their state forestry departments when they are thinking of cutting their trees. How will this increased interest translate into better long-term returns for landowners and more sustainable and environmentally sound harvests?

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<sup>7</sup> Landowners differ with regard to what animals and birds they want to encourage and which they want to keep out. However, most WTLs realize that different plants and animals contribute to forest health in different ways.



All six states have staff foresters, and many offer on-site consultation to landowners. However, service foresters are generally over-extended and cannot be expected to cover the extra demand for professional forester services that this campaign will generate. Moreover, service foresters cannot assist landowners with certain parts of the sale (such as selecting a logger, monitoring the logging operations, estimating taxes, etc.).

The obvious solution is to direct traffic to consulting foresters, who are familiar with timber markets and can use that knowledge in conjunction with landowner needs and silvicultural considerations to get the best results for the landowner. However, this solution is also not without its challenges:

- There are no regulations for practicing forestry consultants, and the quality of practitioners may vary. One option is to direct traffic to SAF certified foresters. However, this certification is based on the training received by the forester and cannot alone guarantee the quality of his/her work. The state forestry departments cannot make specific recommendations or stand behind the work of consulting foresters.
- Some states do not have enough certified consulting foresters to meet demand.
- Many WTLs are resistant to the idea of using consulting foresters, primarily because they are not sure that foresters add value commensurate with the fee they charge. As mentioned earlier, WTLs like to collect information from various sources (including professional foresters), but they are unwilling to cede responsibility or decision-making authority to any particular professional. And not all WTLs are convinced that planning and managing a harvest is complex enough to require special expertise, above and beyond the wisdom that comes from experience.

Given these problems, the best way to fill the demand for information and resources generated by campaign messages is as follows:

- (1) The campaign will distribute an easy-to-use packet that provides landowners with good information about how to manage their harvest and directs them to appropriate resources. The packet will clearly explain the value that professional foresters can provide, and will tell landowners how to access and choose the right consultant for them. However, it will also provide enough information to improve results for landowners who choose to rely on their own judgment and the assistance of other service providers (such as service foresters or master loggers).
- (2) The state forestry departments will develop certain criteria and parameters to systematize their services to landowners so that their time can be spent most productively. For example, states may decide to give priority to landowners who are ready to harvest; have larger lots; cannot afford to hire consulting foresters; etc. The CBYC campaign is likely to generate more qualified leads for the state departments—i.e. people who are ready to harvest their trees. It is in the states' interest to screen these callers and identify those who merit free consultation with service foresters.





## 4. DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

As described above, the CBYC campaign has two components: (1) driving qualified leads to the state forestry departments and (2) providing relevant and useful and guidance to those who call in for information.

The dissemination strategy for the campaign mirrors this two-step concept. It comprises a broad-scale effort to publicize availability and usefulness of campaign materials coupled with more targeted outreach to selected, qualified audiences.

### Publicizing Availability of Campaign Materials

The publicity efforts for the CBYC will be directed at letting all landowners know that relevant information is available to them when they are thinking of cutting their trees. The objective is to present this information enough times and in enough different ways that landowners take note of this offer and store it away at the back of their minds (or in their files) to be retrieved at the appropriate time.

The preferred ways to get this information to landowners are:

- **Regular mailings or mail inserts to landowners.** Several organizations—such as the farm services agency, soil conservation district offices, the tax department, and woodland owners associations—send regular mailings and/or newsletters to landowners. The CBYC will try to partner with these agencies to include simple text advertisements, brief articles and/or mailing inserts with their regular communications.
- **Intensive, geographically targeted, time-bound campaigns.** In marketing, one rule of thumb is that people need to encounter a piece of information about six times, preferably in different media and closely bunched together in time, before it sticks in their mind. To achieve that level of exposure, the CBYC will conduct short, intensive campaigns within a limited geographic area that has a high concentration of woodland owners. For example, in the space of one fortnight, the Campaign may plan for the following kinds of outreach in a particular district:
  - A story in the local newspaper
  - Frequent live reads on a popular radio show and one interview (e.g. with a district forester, the head of a landowner group, or even a local landowner) to promote the campaign
  - Posters and contact cards at the local state agency offices, libraries, farm supply stores, community recycling centers, etc.
  - Campaign booth at local events such as county fairs or town celebrations
  - Educational seminars in the community, e.g. at the meeting of an outdoor group or at the community center (the announcements and reporting of such events themselves constitute impressions of the campaign).

To maximize their impact, these short, but intensive, campaigns will be timed to local events, seasonal changes or other occurrences that would likely prompt people to think about selling their trees. Examples of such events include: the start of the logging season, a rise in the price of timber, feared outbreak of certain pests and diseases, etc.



## Outreach to Select Audiences

In addition to this widespread dissemination in areas where many woodland owners live, the CBYC information can also be disseminated via regular educational and outreach activities such as community seminars and presentations. Such activities are periodically undertaken by state, district and extension foresters. However, prepared CBYC materials can also be made available to other people, such as landowner associations, outdoor groups, and model owners, who can then share the information with their members and peers.

## 5. CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

These campaign messages are intended to drive qualified leads to the state forestry departments. They are designed to get woodland owners who are thinking of harvesting trees to call their state forestry departments for information and guidance.

- 1. Do Right by Yourself and Your Family.** You can only cut a tree once. So plan your harvests carefully to get the best value from your woodland.

### *Proof Points*

- When a tree should be cut depends on many things, such as its age and maturity, its contribution to your woods' health, the market price of different timbers, and your own goals and needs. Make sure that your "select cut" is based on all these things and not just the size of the tree.
- For loggers, it is practical and cost-effective to cut as many trees as possible at every location. As a landowner, you want to know which trees to cut; but you also want to know which trees to *keep* so that your woods will stay healthy and grow in value. A trained forester is the best person to tell you which trees to keep, based on your goals for your woods.

- 2. Enjoy your woods.** Good decisions at harvest time will keep your woods healthy and productive for you and your family to enjoy. You don't have to choose between harvesting timber and enjoying your woods.

### *Proof Points*

- Woods give us so much more than timber—you can't put a price on how you feel when you're out in the woods, alone or with your loved ones. Fortunately, you don't have to. You can harvest trees without destroying your paradise on earth
- Just as you enjoy your woods, so do the many critters that live there. If you plan your harvest well, your woods will still be a good home for wildlife and a place for you to enjoy it.

- 3. Do Right by the Land.** Your woods are valuable; take care of them and they will serve you and your family well for many years to come.



#### *Proof Points*

- The land is always there for you to enjoy, to log, to sell or to give to your children. But it is up to you to keep it healthy and get the best value from it—now and in the future.
- You get so much from your woods; take respectfully and give something back so the land can stay healthy.
- Take the time to learn how to manage your woods; it is time well spent and will pay off in better timber sales and healthier woods.

- 4. Be Woodwise.**<sup>8</sup> The CBYC provides all the information you need to help you make good decisions for your land and your family and connects you with services and resources in your community.

#### *Proof Points*

- This information is free and there is no obligation. You have nothing to lose by seeing this information and you could gain a lot. You owe it to yourself and your woods to call this number.
- The claim that CBYC provides relevant and useful information can be substantiated by giving examples of the kind of information that is included. For example:
  - How to get fair market value for your timber
  - How to plan for and implement a good cut
  - How to maximize your woodland's value for both timber and recreation
  - How to keep your woods healthy and productive
  - How to avoid expensive mistakes

## **6. SUGGESTED MATERIALS: CONTENT, TONE AND STYLE**

Print Materials to drive traffic to the CBYC Web site and Phone number

### **Suggested materials: A poster, a trifold and a contact card**

These materials will communicate the campaign's key messages (see section 5), which are designed to generate qualified leads for the state forestry agencies—i.e., persuade people who are thinking about harvesting timber to call their state forestry agency for guidance and information before they take any action.

*The objective of this publicity is to convince woodland owners that the information provided by the CBYC is geared to landowner needs, reflects their values, and is credible and unbiased.* These materials are not intended to educate landowners—they should simply let landowners know that more information and guidance is available and to leave them with the feeling that this campaign is, indeed, the best place to seek information about harvesting trees. Along with the web site, these materials will help establish the brand of the campaign.

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<sup>8</sup> If *Be Woodwise* cannot be used, an alternative message is: *Get Informed*.



The key campaign messages are designed to reflect WTL landowners' values, hence convincing them of the relevance and appropriateness of the materials. By emphasizing that CBYC materials are designed to help landowners make good decisions, the key messages also address the question of usefulness. All publicity should also clarify that the information offered by state forestry agencies is free, with no strings attached.

Their state forestry agency is already a credible source for many landowners, except that some people believe that it tries to push certain programs and perspectives on landowners. Therefore, if we can convince people that this campaign offers information designed to help landowners plan and implement a good harvest (rather than push a particular set of ideas or practices) most people will call in to request information.

## Materials to facilitate media outreach

### **Suggested materials: Live radio reads, story ideas for newspapers and newsletters, mail inserts, and simple (text only) advertisements for newsletters**

These materials will also feature key campaign messages and be designed to drive traffic to the campaign web site and toll-free number.

## Mnemonic Toll Free Number and Web Site

As noted earlier in this document, most people cut trees only once or twice in their life and CBYC information will be relevant to them only at those times. The objective of ongoing CBYC publicity is to let people know that detailed information and guidance is available to help landowners with their harvests. We want woodland owners to store this information away (either mentally or in writing) for when they need it, and to share it with their peers.

An easy-to-remember toll-free number, preferably a relevant mnemonic<sup>9</sup> (like 1-888-CUT-TREE or 1-888-HAR-VEST), will greatly help with this objective. The campaign already has a mnemonic Web address ([www.callb4ucut.com](http://www.callb4ucut.com)), but it will help if the phone number and the website address can be coordinated closely and people need to remember just one phrase for both.

## Information Packet

This information packet will be sent to woodland owners when they call the CBYC number to seek information and guidance with regard to harvesting their trees. Thus, the success of this campaign hinges on developing an information packet that is useful and relevant to landowners and leads them to make good decisions for their woodland. For some, this might include hiring a consulting forester to manage their sale; others might choose to use different resources or none at all. Nevertheless, all landowners who attend to this

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<sup>9</sup> Given that mnemonic toll-free numbers are hard to find, the campaign will need to be creative and flexible with regard to locating an appropriate number. One easy trick is to try 800, 888, and 866 numbers. Another is to mix letters and words—e.g. 1-888-2-Harvest. As this example illustrates, the mnemonic doesn't have to be exact—it can exceed the number of letters, so long as the first seven letters represent the right digits. It will, of course, be easier if all the states can subscribe to one number that is directed to the right state office depending upon the area code from which the call is coming in. Most calls will likely be correctly routed via this mechanism and the few that are mis-routed can be manually redirected.



information should emerge with a clearer sense of what makes up a good harvest; what they can do to plan and manage the process better; and what services and resources they can access.

### *Suggested Content*

- The information packet should address the steps that landowners must take and the decisions they must make while planning their harvest, while executing their harvest, and after the harvest. An easy way to organize the information is to present it in three sections: Before Harvesting, Managing the Harvest, and After the Harvest.
- Before Harvesting: This section would include all the planning, assessment and decisions that a landowner must make before he/she approaches buyers. This includes:
  - Basics: Clarifying the decision to cut (why you're cutting now), inventorying the woods, developing a timber map, determining accessibility to the stand, estimating taxes, etc.
  - Factors in deciding when to cut
  - Factors in determining what trees to cut (landowners' objectives, market prices, forest health and regeneration, forest ecology and wildlife, etc.)
  - Planning the sale and determining what help and services you'll need (includes understanding what help a service forester, industrial forester, timber buyer/logger or consulting forester can offer)
- Managing the Harvest: This section would deal with all aspects of inviting bids, setting up the contract, choosing buyers/loggers and monitoring the operation. This includes:
  - Finding and screening buyers, and inviting bids
  - How to select a good buyer/logger (licensing/bonding, checking references, etc.)
  - How to structure the contract (e.g. bonds, BMPs, regulations, handling payments, who owns the tree tops, etc.)
  - Monitoring the harvest (including safety and BMPs)
  - A list of informational resources and services
- After the Harvest
  - Follow up activities (to maintain healthy woods)
  - Maintaining skid trails and/or rehabilitating the site
  - Protection from diseases, invasive species and pests
- Each of these sections will end with a checklist to help landowners make sure they have addressed all relevant aspects of a good harvest and sale.
- Suggested titles for the packet include:
  - *The (Smart) Landowner's Guide to Harvesting Trees*
  - *Getting the Best from Your Woods—Before, During and After the Harvest*
  - *Managing Timber Sales for Forest Health*
  - *The Complete Guide to Healthy Woods and Productive Harvests*
  - *Doing Right by Your Wallet and Your Woodland.*

### *Style Suggestions*

- Because landowners are very independent and resistant to taking direction, the tone of this packet should be informational—i.e. CBYC is providing landowners with good information to help them make decisions. WTL owners are likely to resist forceful recommendations that sound dogmatic; offering ideas and suggestions (with rationale) is likely to work better with them.
- The language should be simple and folksy, peer-to-peer rather than expert-to-novice.
- The text should be minimal, but well organized, using bullets and similar formats. The advice should be practical.
- Do not evade, dismiss or ignore controversial or opposing points of view. These people are likely to hear them. Acknowledge and address them in the packet.



- Use anecdotes, peer testimonials, analogies and parables to get the point across, rather than statistics or expert recommendations.

## CBYC Web Site

Although Internet usage is spotty among WTL landowners, the campaign web site is a very cost-effective way to convey large volumes of information to people in an organized and personalized way.

### *Suggested Content*

Some of the basic content for the website includes:

- Ability to view and download all parts of information packet or request it; more tools, checklists, etc. for landowners to use
- Include more detailed information on:
  - Different trees and their value (for wildlife, timber, forest beauty, etc.)
  - Dealing with threats such as invasive species, diseases and pests
- Include more up-to-date information on
  - Resources and services (including master loggers and certified foresters)
  - Market trends
- Customization by state—especially with regard to available resources, endemic pests and diseases, native trees, and market trends
- Links to other resources

Other features that would greatly add to the value and usage of this website and perhaps take some of the pressure off the service foresters are:

- FAQs and an interactive “Ask a Forester” page
  - An interactive decision tool—asks questions about their knowledge, woodland, and skill level to see if they’re ready to cut; suggest whether they need a service/extension forester, consulting forester; or point them to more resources
- Mechanisms for collecting data from visitors, assess preferences
- A landowner forum, where woodland owners can recommend loggers or foresters to their peers (a kind of Angie’s list for woodland services)

### *Suggested Style*

The CBYC website should be entirely geared to landowners and should have only non-technical material. Most WTL owners are inexperienced Internet users and not highly educated. With this audience, ease of use, simple language and clear organization will count for a lot more than fancy visuals or features. Because most people are elderly, the screen should be uncluttered and the font should be relatively large.

## Customizable Presentation

This presentation will be developed to enable service foresters as well as other spokespersons to communicate campaign messages at community events. Unlike all other campaign materials, which are either designed to motivate people to seek information from the campaign (all publicity materials) or to convey information to interested landowners (the information packet and web site), this presentation will both inform landowners *and* motivate them to seek more information from the campaign. The content will be a mix of campaign messages and actual information to help plan and manage a harvest. The



presentation should be somewhat customizable so that the motivational or informational elements can be emphasized, depending on the target audience.

The presentation should be rich in graphics, and designed to be a stand-alone piece that can be delivered by trained state and extension foresters as well as other spokespersons such as model landowners or members of landowner or outdoor and sporting organizations.

## 7. PARTNERS

Campaigns usually need partners for two main purposes—(1) to add credibility or stature to the campaign and help establish the brand and (2) to help disseminate the messages more widely.

The state forestry agency is already regarded as the most credible source of information on forest health and it does not need the endorsement of other organizations to add credibility to its messages. For this campaign, any partnership effort should be directed at finding new ways to reach woodland owners and drive qualified leads to the campaign web site and/or toll free phone line. The best partners for reaching landowners will vary somewhat by state, but some likely suggestions include:

- The farm services agency (FSA). FSA communicates regularly with farmers, and, in some of the campaign states (like Iowa), many farmers are also woodland owners. Including CBYC information in their mailings is likely a good way to reach woodland owners.
- The Soil Conservation District Offices. Many woodland owners are familiar with their local soil conservation office and many receive regular assistance and materials from them.
- Woodland owner organizations
- Outdoor/sporting organizations. Many WTL owners enjoy hunting, fishing, camping, etc. and can be reached through newsletters of such organizations. Some WTLs may also be reached via environmental organizations like the Audobon Society and the Sierra Club, but many view such organizations with some wariness.
- Local farm supply or home improvement stores.

## 8. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- The CBYC campaign should clearly be seen as aligned with the interests of landowners. It should be neutral with regard to the timber industry, including loggers, buyers and consulting foresters. If it is seen as a mouthpiece for promoting consulting foresters, it will lose its credibility with WTL owners.
- The campaign should not be seen as reflecting an environmental (greenie) or commercial agenda. WTLs do not subscribe to either. They see themselves as knowledgeable, respectful and appreciative users of all the resources that woodlands provide. Although they are united by their desire to keep their woods healthy, they may have different goals and priorities for their woods. The campaign should acknowledge and respect this diversity of goals and perspectives.



- The campaign should also be neutral with regard to hunting. Most WTLs want more wildlife in their woods. Some want to hunt the animals and some want their woods to be a sanctuary for wildlife. The campaign should be equally supportive of both objectives.
- CBYC is about helping landowners harvest their trees to get better long-term value from their land. It should not be used to push lessons in forest management, development of written plans or enrollment in government programs. It should stay focused on helping woodland owners with their immediate need—viz., getting a good harvest. Additional information can be provided afterwards, if landowners request it or if it seems especially relevant to a particular customer.

## 10. TRACKING SUCCESS

The first measure of success for this campaign is the number of qualified leads generated. We expect to see a general uptick in the number of calls to the designated toll-free number. However, we also expect that a greater proportion of these calls will be qualified leads—i.e. from people who are thinking about harvesting their trees and are seeking guidance on how to structure and manage that process.

The CBYC Web site offers a parallel mechanism for seeking assistance. Thus, the number of visitors to the Web site and some indicators about time spent and pages viewed are also valid indicators of how well the campaign is reaching landowners and persuading them to seek information and guidance.

Driving traffic to state forestry agencies is, however, only the first step in a chain of events that should lead to better logging operations in the region. Once these calls come in, people need to be sent the appropriate information. We expect that they will read and use that information, and, hopefully, either seek advice from a service forester or hire a consulting forester to help with their cut. Therefore, other fundamental measures of campaign success are:

- How many materials were mailed (or downloaded from the Web site)
- How useful landowners found this information
- Whether landowners acted on this information (Did they do anything differently based on the information provided to them? Did they, for example, request the services of a state/extension forester, or use a master logger, or hire a consulting forester?)

The latter two indicators require some form of follow-up with a randomly drawn sample of the people who have requested informational materials. For our target audience, this follow-up is best conducted by phone.

Besides these fundamental measures, the CBYC campaign, or individual states, can also institute other measures of how well different aspects of the campaign are doing. For example, you could track individual outreach mechanisms such as attendance at campaign events, media impressions, etc. You could also match specific campaign activities against spikes in incoming calls to see which campaign activities have been most successful in generating qualified leads. Finally, you could also develop and track proxy indicators of the quality of logging in the area (e.g. logging complaints or BMP violations, landowners' overall satisfaction with the harvest, etc.)

