



**SONOMA  
COUNTY FOREST  
CONSERVATION  
WORKING GROUP**

Protecting forests  
across landscapes  
and through  
generations

[sonomaforests.org](http://sonomaforests.org)

## SONOMA COUNTY

# Forest Landowner Stewardship Directory

### Introduction

If you own forestland in Sonoma County, even as little as one acre, you have the privilege of stewarding some of the most beautiful and biodiverse landscapes in the nation. From rolling Oak-woodlands to Redwood canyons, from mossy bay dells to gorgeous Douglas Fir stands. These forests provide stunning vistas, enjoyable hikes, home for wildlife, wood for the fireplace, and so much more.

### Our Privilege

In Sonoma County, private landowners own and manage over 513,000 acres of forestland. This area constitutes just over half of the entire county. Forested landscapes provide many essential ecological services. *When healthy and functioning*, our forests provide:

- Filtration for our communities' groundwater and air resources
- Connected habitat for the thousands of animal and plant species, including many that are threatened or endangered
- Removal of harmful greenhouse gases from the atmosphere and conversion into stable carbon in the form of timber, vegetation and soil
- Culturally and economically valuable products, such as timber, game, herbs and medicine, berries, mushrooms, basketry materials, and more

### Our Responsibility

With this privilege comes a responsibility. In the absence of responsible management, forest health can decline. Our forests are at risk of:

- Conversion to non-forest agriculture or residential land use
- Conversion to non-forests after stand-replacing catastrophic wildfire
- Overcrowding, which reduces tree health, creates conditions favorable to pests and disease and increases wildfire risk
- Eroding, due to poorly sited and graded roads (including legacy roads); excessive soil erosion also has negative impacts on water resources
- Loss of wildlife, due to a decline in forest habitat
- Decline in quality forest products, due to a decline in forest health

### The Directory

We hope this directory is a useful guide to finding the professional help you need to achieve responsible forest management. This directory is a product of the volunteer-organized Sonoma County Forest Conservation Working Group. The Forest Working Group is a network of private landowners, resource and land managers, foresters, non-profit organizations and local government agencies. To learn more about or participate in the Forest Working Group, visit [www.sonomaforests.org](http://www.sonomaforests.org)

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# **Forest Landowner Stewardship Directory**

This directory is designed to be a useful guide to forest landowners of all parcel sizes to find the professional help they need to achieve responsible forest management. With so many government resources, contractors and community programs available, it might be hard to know where to start. We've organized this guide by size of property and the activities these landowners typically engage in. The footnotes within refer to a list of service-providers at the end of the document.

## **Forest landowners stewarding under 1 acre**

You might be interested in:

- a. Caring for and assessing individual trees with an arborist<sup>1</sup>
- b. Protecting your home from wildfire by creating 100 feet of defensible space with advice from Cal Fire<sup>2</sup> and your local fire safe council<sup>3</sup>
- c. Removing vegetative fire fuels in your defensible space zone and applying for the free chipping service from County of Sonoma's Curbside Chipper Program to process the debris<sup>4</sup>
- d. Hiring a fire-wise vegetation management contractor to reduce vegetative fire fuels<sup>5</sup>
- e. Working with UCCE Master Gardeners or a landscape architect to design a fire-wise, water-wise or native garden<sup>6</sup>
- f. Connecting with the CA Urban Forests Council or Cal Fire's Community and Urban Forestry program if you live in a semi-urban area<sup>7</sup>
- g. Preparing your neighborhood for wildfire with the help of your local fire safe council<sup>3</sup>

## **Forest landowners stewarding 1-20 acres**

You might be interested in:

- a. Caring for and assessing individual trees with an arborist<sup>1</sup>
- b. Protecting your home and other structures from wildfire by creating 100 feet of defensible space with advice from Cal Fire<sup>2</sup> and your local fire safe council<sup>3</sup>
- c. Removing vegetative fire fuels in your defensible space zone and applying for the free chipping service from County of Sonoma's Curbside Chipper Program to process the debris<sup>4</sup>
- d. Hiring a fire-wise vegetation management contractor to reduce vegetative fire fuels<sup>5</sup>
- e. Working with UCCE Master Gardeners or a landscape architect to design a fire-wise, water-wise or native garden<sup>6</sup>
- f. Connecting with the CA Urban Forests Council or Cal Fire's Community and Urban Forestry program if you live in a semi-urban area<sup>7</sup>
- g. Preparing your neighborhood for wildfire with the help of your local fire safe council<sup>3</sup>

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- h. Assessing and mitigating forest pests, disease or invasive species with the University of CA Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Forestry Advisor<sup>8</sup>
- i. Assessing and improving rural roads with a forester<sup>9</sup> or Resource Conservation District<sup>10</sup>
- j. Assessing and improving streams and creeks with a Resource Conservation District<sup>10</sup>
- k. Managing vegetative wildfire fuels with a forester<sup>9</sup>
- l. Inventorying the plants and wildlife on your property with a botanist or biologist<sup>11</sup>
- m. Collaborating with your neighbors on community forestry projects<sup>10</sup>

## **Forest landowners stewarding more than 20 acres**

You might be interested in:

- a. Caring for and assessing individual trees with an arborist<sup>1</sup>
- b. Protecting your home and other structures from wildfire by creating 100 feet of defensible space with advice from Cal Fire<sup>2</sup> and your local fire safe council<sup>3</sup>
- c. Removing vegetative fire fuels in your defensible space zone and applying for the free chipping service from County of Sonoma's Curbside Chipper Program to process the debris<sup>4</sup>
- d. Hiring a fire-wise vegetation management contractor to reduce vegetative fire fuels<sup>5</sup>
- e. Working with UCCE Master Gardeners or a landscape architect to design a fire-wise, water-wise or native garden<sup>6</sup>
- f. Connecting with the California Urban Forests Council or Cal Fire's Community and Urban Forestry program if you live in a semi-urban area<sup>7</sup>
- g. Preparing your neighborhood for wildfire with the help of your local fire safe council<sup>3</sup>
- h. Assessing and mitigating forest pests, disease or invasive species with the UCCE Forestry Advisor<sup>8</sup>
- i. Assessing and improving rural roads with a forester<sup>9</sup> or resource conservation district<sup>10</sup>
- j. Assessing and improving streams and creeks with a resource conservation district<sup>10</sup>
- k. Managing vegetative wildfire fuels with a forester<sup>9</sup>
- l. Inventorying the plants and wildlife on your property with a botanist or biologist<sup>11</sup>
- m. Collaborating with your neighbors on community forestry projects<sup>10</sup>
- n. Developing a Forest Management Plan with a forester<sup>9</sup>, resource conservation district<sup>10</sup> or local NRCS office<sup>12</sup> to develop and document your management goals and apply for grant funding
- o. Conducting a non-industrial timber harvest with a forester (appropriate for those who own less than 2,500 acres and are not "primarily engaged" in the manufacture of forest products)<sup>9</sup>
- p. Establishing a conservation easement on your property with your land trust or open space district<sup>13</sup>

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- q. Developing a grazing plan for managing grasslands as part of a holistic land management plan with your resource conservation district<sup>10</sup>, local NRCS office<sup>12</sup> or UCCE Range Management Advisor<sup>14</sup>.
- r. Using fire as a forest management tool with your local prescribed burn association<sup>15</sup>
- s. Leasing acreage to a hunting club<sup>16</sup>
- t. Harvesting non-timber forest goods, such as mushrooms and herbs<sup>17</sup>
- u. Designing recreation areas on your property, such as hiking trails, disc golf courses and zip lines, with the advice of a forester<sup>9</sup>

## Service providers & resources by reference number

1. [A list of local, certified arborists can be found here.](#) Arborists are certified professionals that assess and treat the health and safety of individual trees, rather than managing forests (the domains of forestry and silviculture) or harvesting wood.
2. [Readyforwildfire.org](#) is an educational program of CAL FIRE designed to prepare homeowners for wildfire. Find guides for everything from emergency planning to fire-wise landscaping.
3. [Fire Safe Sonoma](#) is the county-wide fire safe council and can connect you with your neighborhood's local fire safe council if one exists. Fire safe councils provide educational, technical and financial support to landowners and neighborhoods that want to learn more about fire preparedness, plan for wildfire and improve their home's defensible space.
4. [County of Sonoma's Curbside Chipper Program](#) is a free chipping service available to residents with parcels less than 5 acres who are processing debris cleared from their 100-ft defensible space zone.
5. Fire Safe Marin has compiled a [list of local "fire-wise" contractors](#) that can assist in reducing vegetative fire fuels on your property.
6. [UCCE Master Gardeners](#) provide a wealth of information free to residents of Sonoma County, addressing a breadth of gardening topics. [Landscape architects](#) are contractors that specialize in the design of beautiful and functional landscapes.
7. [CA Urban Forests Council](#) is a non-profit that advocates for the best possible urban forests in California.
8. [UCCE Sonoma County Forest Advisor](#) can assist you in identifying and managing forest pests and diseases.
9. [Registered professional foresters](#) are essential partners for forest landowners. Consider them "doctors" of the forest. Operating at the landscape level, foresters assist in developing holistic forest management plans to meet the landowner's goals, enhance forest health, improve watershed function, protect wildlife habitat, reduce wildfire risk, prepare for timber harvest, apply for grant funding, assist with legacy planning, and more.
10. Resource Conservation Districts provide no or low cost assistance to private landowners to help them achieve a wide variety of stewardship goals to support ecosystem health and local agriculture.
  - [Sonoma Resource Conservation District serves east, north and south Sonoma County](#)

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- [Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District serves west Sonoma County](#)
11. Botanical surveys, wildlife species surveys, biological resources assessments are provided by a variety of local contractors.
  12. NRCS (the Natural Resources Conservation Service operated under USDA) provides educational, financial and technical support to private landowners interested in implementing conservation projects.
  13. Land trusts and open space districts conserve the rural beauty of Sonoma County by purchasing the development rights from individual landowners, ensuring that properties stay rural forever.
    - [Sonoma County Ag + Open Space District](#)
    - [Sonoma Land Trust](#)
    - [Bodega Land Trust](#)
    - [Redwood Coast Land Conservancy](#)
  14. [UCCE Range Management Advisor](#) can assist landowners in developing grazing plans and connecting with local grazers
  15. Sonoma County's prescribed burn association is the [Good Fire Alliance](#). This group of volunteer landowners, prescribed fire practitioners and fire ecologists support landowners in the use of fire as an effective, efficient forest management tool.
  16. Hunting clubs work gratefully with forestland owners to establish hunting leases on private property. Below are just a few local clubs
    - a. [Cal Deer](#)
    - b. [Golden Rams](#)

[Also consider this resource on managing wildlife from CDFW](#)
  17. The [Sonoma County Mycological Society](#) is a great resource for learning more about the mushrooms in your area. Local foresters can also provide advice on what non-timber goods your forest might produce

## Forest landowner organizations

### National

- [American Forest Foundation](#)

### California

- [Forest Landowners of California](#)

### Local

- [Friends of the Mark West Watershed](#)
- [Coast Ridge Community Forest](#)
- [Gualala River Watershed Council](#)

## Educational resources

- [UCCE Mendocino/Sonoma Forestry Resources](#)

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