



**SONOMA
COUNTY FOREST
CONSERVATION
WORKING GROUP**

Protecting forests
across landscapes
and through
generations

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

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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 arborist¹
- b. Protecting your home from wildfire by creating 100 feet of defensible space with advice from CAL FIRE² and your local fire safe council³
- c. Removing vegetative fire fuels in your defensible space zone and applying for free chipping service, where available, to process the debris⁴
- d. Hiring a vegetation management contractor familiar with wildfire safety and home defensible space best practices to remove vegetation that increases your property's wildfire risk⁵
- e. Working with UCCE Master Gardeners or a landscape architect to design a fire-wise, water-wise or native garden⁶
- f. Connecting with the CA Urban Forests Council or CAL FIRE's Urban and Community Forestry program if you live in a semi-urban area⁷
- g. Preparing your neighborhood for wildfire with the help of your local fire safe council³ or other community group

Forest Landowners Stewarding 1-20 Acres

You might be interested in:

- a. Caring for and assessing individual trees with an arborist¹
- b. Protecting your home and other structures from wildfire by creating 100 feet of defensible space with advice from CAL FIRE² and your local fire safe council³
- c. Removing vegetative fire fuels in your defensible space zone and applying for free chipping service, where available, to process the debris⁴
- d. Hiring a vegetation management contractor familiar with wildfire safety and home defensible space best practices to remove vegetation that increases your property's wildfire risk⁵
- e. Working with UCCE Master Gardeners or a landscape architect to design a fire-wise, water-wise or native garden⁶
- f. Connecting with the CA Urban Forests Council or CAL FIRE's Urban and Community Forestry program if you live in a semi-urban area⁷
- g. Preparing your neighborhood for wildfire with the help of your local fire safe council³ or other community group

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- h. Assessing forestry related issues with the help of the University of CA Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Forestry Advisor⁸, a registered professional forester⁹, or your local Resource Conservation District¹⁰, such as:
 - mitigating forest pests, disease or invasive species
 - Assessing and improving rural roads
 - Assessing and improving streams and creeks
 - Managing vegetative wildfire fuels
- i. Inventorying the plants and wildlife on your property with a botanist or biologist¹¹
- j. Collaborating with your neighbors on community forestry projects¹⁰

Forest Landowners Stewarding More Than 20 Acres

You might be interested in:

- a. Caring for and assessing individual trees with an arborist¹
- b. Protecting your home and other structures from wildfire by creating 100 feet of defensible space with advice from CAL FIRE² and your local fire safe council³
- c. Removing vegetative fire fuels in your defensible space zone and applying for free chipping service, where available, to process the debris⁴
- d. Hiring a vegetation management contractor familiar with wildfire safety and home defensible space best practices to remove vegetation that increases your property's wildfire risk⁵
- e. Working with UCCE Master Gardeners or a landscape architect to design a fire-wise, water-wise or native garden⁶
- f. Connecting with the CA Urban Forests Council or CAL FIRE's Urban and Community Forestry program if you live in a semi-urban area⁷
- g. Preparing your neighborhood for wildfire with the help of your local fire safe council³ or other community group
- h. Assessing forestry related issues with the help of the University of CA Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Forestry Advisor⁸, a registered professional forester⁹, or your local Resource Conservation District¹⁰, such as:
 - mitigating forest pests, disease or invasive species
 - Assessing and improving rural roads
 - Assessing and improving streams and creeks
 - Managing vegetative wildfire fuels
- i. Inventorying the plants and wildlife on your property with a botanist or biologist¹¹
- j. Collaborating with your neighbors on community forestry projects¹⁰
- k. Developing a Forest Management Plan with a registered professional forester⁹, resource conservation district¹⁰ or local NRCS office¹² to develop and document your management goals and apply for grant funding
- l. Conducting a non-industrial timber harvest with a registered professional forester (appropriate for those who own less than 2,500 acres and are not "primarily engaged" in the manufacture of forest products)⁹
- m. Establishing a conservation easement on your property with your land trust or open space district¹³

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- n. Developing a grazing plan for managing grasslands as part of a holistic land management plan with your resource conservation district¹⁰, local NRCS office¹² or UCCE Range Management Advisor¹⁴
- o. Using fire as a forest management tool with your local prescribed burn association¹⁵
- p. Leasing acreage to a hunting club¹⁶
- q. Harvesting non-timber forest goods, such as mushrooms and herbs¹⁷
- r. Designing recreation areas on your property, such as hiking trails, disc golf courses and zip lines, with the advice of a registered professional forester⁹

Service Providers & Resources By Reference Number

* Providers offering free or low cost services are marked with an asterisk

1. [Search for local, certified arborists 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. Other programs may exist in your area. Contact [Fire Safe Sonoma](#) to learn more.
5. Fire Safe Marin has compiled a [list of local "fire-wise" contractors](#) that can assist in reducing vegetation that increases your property's wildfire risk.
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. [CAL FIRE's Urban and Community Forestry program](#) is another useful resource.
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, registered professional 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.

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10. * Resource Conservation Districts provide educational, financial and technical support to rural and agricultural landowners interested in implementing conservation projects. The registered professional forester on staff assists forest landowners specifically.
 - [Sonoma Resource Conservation District](#) serves east, north and south Sonoma County
 - [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. A simple search online will provide many results.
12. * NRCS (the [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) operated under USDA) provides educational, financial and technical support to rural and agricultural 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 registered professional 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

- [Sonoma County Forest Conservation Working Group](#)
- [Friends of the Upper Mark West Creek Watershed](#)
- [Coast Ridge Community Forest](#)
- [Gualala River Watershed Council](#)

Educational Resources

[Sonoma County Forest Conservation Working Group - Learning Library](#)

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