



FOREST STEWARDSHIP TIPS TO START

Half of Washington state is forest. Your woods are part of a network of over 22 million acres of an iconic range of ecosystems. Follow these tips to get started in learning more about your forest.

DISCOVER SOILS & SPECIES

Soils determine what species of trees and shrubs flourish, and which flounder. They are often complex, but there are tools available to help you get started. Capture a soils snapshot using the USDA's Web Soil Survey - the nation's largest online public soils database. Design a customized soil report at websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov to learn about the soils on your property and how they can support the growth of your trees.



LEARN THE LAND USE HISTORY

Walk your woods. Observe if trees are similar in size, or equally spaced. Look for stumps from previous cuttings, and flat areas that may have been old log roads or landings. Back at home, peruse historic aerial photos from online platforms like [Google Earth](https://www.google.com/earth/), or visit your local museum's archives, to see vegetation change from the sky over time.





DEVELOP A VISION & PLAN FOR YOUR FOREST

Using your research and observations, think about what this forest means to you. Take an honest look at what time, energy, and resources you have to spend. Develop a list of three short term and three long-term goals. Starting with the longest first, work your way backwards to develop a broad timeline for implementation. Washington State University Extension Forestry's Forest Stewardship Planning Resources can help get you thinking. Visit forestry.wsu.edu/resources/#stewardship.



ENGAGE IN ACTIVE LEARNING & MANAGEMENT

Attend educational courses provided by Washington State University Extension Forestry. Schedule a free site visit with [your local conservation district](#) and by the [Washington State Department of Natural Resources Small Forest Landowner Field Office](#). Take advantage of cost-share funding opportunities through your local [USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) office. See if your property qualifies for any of your county's tax exemption programs as forestland. Be sure to set realistic expectations and seek support when needed.

EVALUATE HEALTH & HABITAT

Every forest has its fair share of disease and decay, all are natural parts of any ecosystem. Observe and record while you walk your woods. Count shrub and tree layers as your eye moves from forest floor to canopy. Snags, brush piles, and nurse logs all contribute to good habitat. Look for evidence of animals. Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife's "Living with Wildlife" page at wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/living has resources on wildlife. Washington Department of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Program contains information about important plant species at dnr.wa.gov/natural-heritage-program.



WANT HELP GETTING STARTED?

Conservation Districts work cooperatively with thousands of landowners a year to provide free services on private property. Find your local District at www.betterground.org