



IDNR warns landowners to check the value of their trees

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SPRINGFIELD – Illinois forest landowners stand to be paid record-high prices for their mature forest trees and logs on farm and forest holdings, thanks to outstanding market prices for hardwood logs and lumber. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Division of Forest Resources is urging forest landowners to consult with a professional forester before agreeing to sell.

“Many landowners don’t realize the full market value of their forest trees and because of it, they are often paid only 10 to 30 cents on the dollar. Some of them are never paid at all,” said Paul Deizman, IDNR Forest Inventory, Utilization and Marketing manager. “Though most timber buyers, logging companies, and other forest operators doing business in Illinois are legitimate, some unscrupulous operators may try to take advantage of landowners, especially during times of high timber prices. Bad deals are often initiated directly with unsuspecting landowners at their front door, by mail, or by attractive advertising.”

IDNR foresters want forest landowners to do some homework and exercise caution before agreeing to any timber offer. The IDNR maintains a “Call Before You Cut” toll-free hotline through which landowners can discuss timber and forest management with IDNR Division of Forest Resources personnel, who are available to offer the best advice on how to proceed when selling timber. The hotline number is 1-888-244-1706.

“That advice can help forest landowners protect the forest resource and ensure that they realize the actual, and often significant, market value of their timber,” Deizman said. “Contacting an IDNR forester first is our best advice.”

For a directory of IDNR District Foresters, check the IDNR website at this link:
<https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/Forestry/Documents/DistrictForestersOfficesAndMap.pdf>

For a directory of Illinois professional consulting foresters, check the IDNR website at this link: <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/Forestry/Documents/2016consultingforesters.pdf>

Enforcement of timber laws by IDNR Forest Resources personnel and Illinois Conservation Police remains a priority for the Department. IDNR reminds forest landowners that all timber buyers must be licensed in Illinois. The IDNR website lists licensed timber buyers at this link: <http://dnr.illinois.gov/timberbuyers/>

Some reminders for Illinois forest landowners:

If landowners want to sell timber, they should contact an IDNR District Forester or a professional consulting forester to advise them. Consulting foresters are available to appraise the marketability of, or the market value of, timber holdings. Consulting foresters can also represent the landowner as an agent, or can administer a timber sale for a reasonable fee. Forest landowners should always:

- * Familiarize yourself with your forest and timber;
- * Consider all unsolicited offers for their timber to be suspect;
- * Appraise your timber's worth or compare any offer or deal with others like it;
- * Use a written contract that spells out all financial and other details and timing of the harvest of trees;
- * Receive payment upfront before any cutting operations begin;
- * Discuss and document vehicle and equipment access, operation areas and cleanup in the contract.

Good forestry information and tools for landowners are also available for free from the IDNR Division of Forest Resources, the Southern Illinois University Forestry Department, the University of Illinois Forestry Extension, the Illinois Forestry Association, the Society of American Foresters, and Illinois Professional Consulting Foresters.