

As a first step, we compiled a database of landowners with greater than 10 acres of land in order to find out more about land ownership patterns in the region—Who owns land in the region and how much do they own?

With basic land ownership information, we hoped to learn about the relationship these landowners have with their forestland. In the fall of 2001 we sent 530 North Quabbin landowners a survey. Through the survey we identified landowner interest in various forest-related topics, their familiarity with forest management and land conservation options, and range of attitudes toward forest management.

Many community members have lived here for a very long time. They know the terrain, the businesses, and the best fishing spots. Many already have a deep appreciation for local forests whether they enjoy the fall foliage, appreciate a sense of solitude, or make their living from local timber resources.

We do not propose to have completely new information about landowners in the area. We see the survey as an opportunity to support our work in the North Quabbin, to provide information for towns, interested organizations and businesses, and as a chance to create connections within the community.

Strengthening our community's awareness of the benefits that we receive from local forests can influence some of our everyday decisions and positively affect our local economy. From buying locally grown materials and manufactured products to protecting the land that is our livelihood, our recreation, and our health.

What will we do with this information?

The results of the survey provide a remarkable amount of information about landowners in the region. We have not even asked many of the questions that we already have the answers for in our data.

The North Quabbin Woods Program uses the survey results regularly to plan for our outreach programs. In fact, the survey results have been used to help build our new website, www.northquabbinwoods.org. We are also more aware of potential workshop topics and can focus some of outreach efforts to address reason why landowners might not manage their forest. We are happy to share this survey information and hope that local organizations, state and local government might also find it useful.

Below you will find some of the highlights we gleaned from the survey results, followed by the complete results. Use the table of contents to search for a category or in the summary section click on the category in blue that you are interested in.

Survey Highlights

Survey response information

- ❖ Surveys were sent to 530 landowners (or 32% North Quabbin landowners with >10 acres)
- ❖ There were 485 viable surveys (surveys were not counted if incorrect address or if landowner deceased/land sold)
- ❖ We received responses from 45% of those surveyed

Who responded to the survey? [\(Details\)](#)

- ❖ Respondents own a total of 12,656 acres
- ❖ Age -- 70% are over 50 years old and 30% are over 65 years old.
- ❖ Education -- 68% have college or graduate degree
- ❖ Duration of land ownership -- 31% have owned land for >30 years
- ❖ Average ownership/landowner = 60 acres
- ❖ Approximately 67% of respondents live in the North Quabbin region

Goals for owning land [\(Details\)](#)

Respondents rated the following as “Highly Important”:

- ❖ 67%-- Protecting water quality
- ❖ 63%-- Preserving or protecting scenic beauty
- ❖ 60%-- Enhancing wildlife habitat
- ❖ 61%-- Maintaining or enhancing privacy
- ❖ 6% -- Generating immediate income

Landowner Activity [\(Details\)](#)

- ❖ 82% of landowners have done some forest related activities on their land.
- ❖ The most common activities include boundary work, timber harvesting for income, road building/maintenance.
- ❖ 64% of respondents have harvested timber for income, completed some timber stand management, **or** managed for wildlife habitat.

Why landowners might NOT manage their forestland [\(Details\)](#)

Respondents indicated that the following applied to them “very much”:

- ❖ 39% - “I want to protect scenery”
- ❖ 31% - “I don’t like the way land looks after the trees have been cut”
- ❖ 38% - “My land currently meets my needs/desires”
- ❖ 5% - “Forest management has a negative impact on wildlife”
- ❖ 3% - “Forest management may harm the forest’s health”

Management plan information

- ❖ 35% of respondents had completed a management plan on their land in the last 10 years.
 - 38% haven’t decided if they will do a plan on their land.
- ❖ 105 acres is average ownership for those with a management plan
- ❖ 68% of people with a management plan are enrolled in Current Use (Chapter 61)

Landowner involvement in state programs [\(Details\)](#)

- ❖ The average ownership of landowners enrolled in Chapter 61 is 108 acres.
- ❖ For those not enrolled in Chapter 61 or Forest Stewardship Program (FSP):

- 37% are unfamiliar with Chapter 61
- 41% are unfamiliar with FSP

Sources of information [\(Details\)](#)

- ❖ The most common sources of forestry information were “My forester” and “Family/Friends.”
- ❖ 51% indicated they were very likely to take advantage of publications/brochures for management information.
 - 9% for neighborhood meetings
- ❖ 74% of landowners had internet access
 - 56% of those were on-line daily

Workshop Topics [\(Details\)](#)

- ❖ The greatest interest was in “Deciphering human history of the land” and “Tax issues”.
- ❖ Approx. 20-30% had “High” interest in most topics.

In a nutshell

- ❖ Most landowners are somehow engaged in their forestland.
- ❖ Landowners show a clear appreciation for particular forest values such as scenic beauty, wildlife habitat and water quality.
- ❖ There is moderate interest in most forest-related workshop topics. The North Quabbin Woods Workshop Series will include a well-rounded choice of topics to cater to the interests of as many landowners as possible.
- ❖ There is relatively low enrollment in the Current Use (Chapter 61) and Forest Stewardship Programs and many eligible landowners are unfamiliar with these options. The North Quabbin Woods Project can help to educate landowners about their forest management and conservation options.
- ❖ There is strong potential for disseminating forestry information via e-mail and the internet. The North Quabbin Woods Project can provide accessible information through its website and links to a host of ecology, forest management, and conservation sites.

Detailed Survey Results

Landowner Goals

1. How important to you is each of the following goals for owning land?

Please mark one box for each goal:

Importance to Me

Goal	Importance to Me			No Entry	Total Entries Filled
	High	Medium	Low		
a. Enhance the quantity of timber products	51 (26%)	73 (37%)	74 (37%)	21	198
b. Enhance the quality of timber products	80 (40%)	61 (31%)	58 (29%)	20	199
c. Generate immediate income	11 (6%)	43 (23%)	135 (71%)	30	189
d. Generate long-term income	37 (19%)	75 (38%)	85 (43%)	22	197
e. Produce firewood	48 (25%)	63 (32%)	84 (43%)	24	195
f. Defer or defray taxes	65 (33%)	41 (21%)	89 (46%)	24	195
g. Promote biological diversity	79 (41%)	68 (35%)	48 (25%)	24	195
h. Enhance wildlife habitat	123 (60%)	65 (32%)	16 (8%)	15	204
i. Improve access for recreation (e.g. walking or skiing)	52 (27%)	60 (31%)	82 (42%)	25	194
j. Maintain or enhance privacy	121 (61%)	54 (27%)	23 (12%)	21	198

2. How important to you are each of the following goals for owning land?

Please mark one box for each goal:

Importance to Me

Goal	High	Medium	Low	No Entry	Entries Filled
a. Improve hunting	32 (16%)	40 (20%)	126 (64%)	21	198
b. Improve fishing	29 (15%)	32 (17%)	128 (68%)	30	189
c. Preserve or improve scenic beauty	128 (63%)	61 (30%)	13 (6%)	17	202
d. Protect water quality	134 (67%)	52 (26%)	15 (7%)	18	201
e. Protect unique (e.g. special/cultural) areas	80 (41%)	70 (36%)	46 (23%)	23	196
f. Leave a family legacy	98 (48%)	68 (33%)	39 (19%)	14	205
g. Keep an option to build one or more homes	60 (30%)	58 (29%)	83 (41%)	18	201
h. Leave an area alone to promote old growth forest	66 (33%)	76 (38%)	60 (30%)	17	202
i. Other (please list):	12 (48%)	0 (0%)	13 (52%)	194	25

Landowner Activities

3. Have you engaged in any of the following activities on your land?

For each of the following activities please check any boxes that apply (you may check more than one):

Activities	I have done on my land	I hope to do on my land	I will not do on my land	I haven't decided	No Entry	Total Entries Filled
a. Management plan (in the last 10 years)	70 (35%)	27 (14%)	26 (13%)	76 (38%)	20	199
b. Timber inventory	63 (31%)	47 (23%)	28 (14%)	65 (32%)	16	203
c. Inventory of habitats or rare species	13 (7%)	44 (23%)	47 (24%)	91 (47%)	23	195
d. Mapping of land (e.g. trails or other features)	50 (26%)	39 (20%)	44 (23%)	58 (30%)	25	191
e. Wetland delineation	42 (23%)	34 (19%)	48 (26%)	59 (32%)	36	183
f. Boundary work (e.g. marking or maintenance)	112 (56%)	51 (25%)	13 (6%)	25 (12%)	15	201
g. Invasive exotic plant control/eradication	16 (9%)	20 (11%)	70 (37%)	82 (44%)	27	188
h. Timber stand improvement (e.g. investing time/funds for thinning and/or pruning to improve timber quality)	66 (33%)	57 (29%)	27 (14%)	49 (25%)	16	199
i. Tree planting	47 (24%)	39 (20%)	49 (26%)	57 (30%)	22	192

4. Have you engaged in any of the following activities on your land?

For each of the following activities please check any of the boxes that apply (you may check more than one):

Activities	I have done on my land	I hope to do on my land	I will not do on my land	I haven't decided	No Entry	Total Entries Filled
a. Road building/maintenance	81 (42%)	17 (9%)	64 (33%)	31 (16%)	22	193
b. Erosion control	46 (26%)	22 (12%)	52 (29%)	59 (33%)	38	179
c. Wildlife habitat improvement (e.g. apple tree cultivation, nest boxes, food plots or cover)	73 (38%)	41 (21%)	39 (20%)	41 (21%)	21	194
d. Creation/maintenance of recreational trails or other recreational access (e.g. bridges/gates to limit access)	53 (28%)	27 (14%)	68 (36%)	42 (22%)	26	190
e. Timber harvesting for income	84 (42%)	39 (20%)	44 (22%)	32 (16%)	18	199
f. Maple sugaring	42 (22%)	23 (12%)	80 (41%)	48 (25%)	25	193
g. Placed a conservation easement on my land	22 (12%)	21 (11%)	53 (28%)	91 (49%)	31	187
h. Other (please list):	5 (22%)	0 (0%)	5 (22%)	13 (57%)	194	23

Landowner Attitudes

5. Some landowners have given the following reasons for hesitating to manage their forestland. How much does each reason apply to you?

Please check the appropriate box for each reason.

Applies to me

Reason	Applies to me			No Entry	Entries Filled
	Very much	Some	Not at all		
a. I don't have enough information about how to do it	40 (22%)	68 (38%)	73 (40%)	38	181
b. I don't need the income	31 (17%)	83 (46%)	67 (37%)	38	181
c. I want to protect the scenery	71 (39%)	69 (38%)	44 (24%)	35	184
d. My trees aren't worth enough to harvest	27 (15%)	73 (39%)	85 (46%)	34	185
e. I don't have the time	35 (20%)	84 (47%)	60 (34%)	40	179
f. I have no interest in management of my forestland.	16 (9%)	55 (30%)	113 (61%)	35	184
g. My land currently meets all my needs/desires	75 (38%)	79 (40%)	43 (22%)	22	197
h. I don't have technical assistance	33 (19%)	56 (32%)	86 (49%)	44	175
i. I believe that forest management has a negative effect on wildlife	8 (5%)	28 (16%)	141 (80%)	42	177
j. I believe that forest management may harm the forest's health	6 (3%)	20 (11%)	153 (85%)	40	179
k. I don't think trees should be cut for income	13 (7%)	34 (18%)	137 (74%)	35	184
l. I don't like the way the land looks after trees have been cut	60 (31%)	63 (33%)	70 (36%)	26	193
m. Other (please describe):	10 (34%)	4 (14%)	15 (52%)	190	29

Program involvement

The following set of questions asks about your involvement in forest management programs and in your community. Your responses will be kept confidential.

Please circle the answer that fits best.

	Yes	No	Unsure	Not Familiar	No Entry	Total Entries Filled
6 Are you enrolled in Chapter 61?	59 (32%)	128 (68%)	NA	NA	31	187
6a. If no, do you hope to enroll in this program in the future?	9 (6%)	40 (27%)	46 (31%)	55 (37%)	68	150
7 Are you enrolled in the Massachusetts Forest Stewardship Program?	17 (9%)	168 (91%)	NA	NA	33	185
7a. If no, do you hope to enroll in this program in the future?	8 (4%)	41 (23%)	56 (31%)	74 (41%)	40	179
8 Have you cooperated with neighbors for forest management purposes (e.g. shared time, equipment, information, access)?	68 (33%)	138 (67%)	NA	NA	12	206
8a. If no, do you hope to do this in the future?	20 (14%)	56 (39%)	66 (46%)	NA	76	142
9 Do you make a conscious effort to buy locally grown/manufactured products?	162 (80%)	40 (20%)	NA	NA	16	202
9a. If no, do you hope to do this in the future?	26 (39%)	17 (26%)	23 (35%)	NA	152	66

Forest Information Resources

10. Where do you get information about your forestland?

Check all that apply.

			No Entry	Entries Filled
40	(21%)	State extension service foresters		
47	(24%)	State publications	25	194
37	(19%)	Non-profit newsletters		
10	(5%)	College courses		
61	(31%)	My forester		
23	(12%)	Magazine subscription		
34	(18%)	My neighbor		
62	(32%)	Family/Friends		
19	(10%)	Internet		
15	(8%)	Television		
24	(12%)	Other (please specify):		

Workshop Topic Interest

11. How interested are you in the following workshop topics?

Please choose one box for each of the following topics:

Topics	Interest Level			No Entry	Total Filled
	High	Medium	Low		
a. Wildlife habitat	63 (32%)	82 (42%)	49 (25%)	25	194
b. Tree identification	61 (32%)	67 (35%)	65 (34%)	26	193
c. Endangered species	39 (21%)	77 (41%)	74 (39%)	29	190
d. Silviculture (how foresters decide which trees to cut and which ones to grow)	64 (34%)	65 (34%)	60 (32%)	30	189
e. Making maps of your property (by hand or with computers)	58 (30%)	67 (35%)	67 (35%)	27	192
f. Land conservation options	60 (31%)	89 (46%)	43 (22%)	27	192
g. Deciphering the human history of your land based on natural clues	72 (38%)	51 (27%)	66 (35%)	30	189
h. Trail layout and construction	33 (17%)	60 (32%)	96 (51%)	30	189
i. Tax issues for forest landowners	74 (38%)	72 (37%)	48 (25%)	25	194
j. Invasive species	44 (23%)	73 (38%)	74 (39%)	28	191

12. How interested are you in the following workshop topics?

Please choose one box for each of the following topics:

Interest Level

Topics	Interest Level			No Entry	Entries Filled
	High	Medium	Low		
a. Animal tracking	49 (26%)	59 (31%)	84 (44%)	27	192
b. History of stonewalls	53 (27%)	79 (41%)	61 (32%)	26	193
c. Chainsaw use and safety	31 (16%)	53 (28%)	104 (55%)	30	188
d. Seeing what other landowners have done with their property	37 (19%)	75 (39%)	79 (41%)	28	191
e. How to choose a forester or a logger	54 (28%)	58 (30%)	80 (42%)	27	192
f. How to market your logs	48 (25%)	50 (26%)	91 (48%)	30	189
g. Tours of local sawmills or woodshops	28 (15%)	54 (29%)	105 (56%)	32	187
h. Thinning and pruning your forest	62 (32%)	69 (36%)	60 (31%)	28	191
i. Boundary maintenance	58 (30%)	77 (39%)	61 (31%)	23	196
j. Other (please list):	2 (9%)	1 (4%)	20 (87%)	196	23

13. Please rate how likely you would be to take advantage of each of the following sources of information if they were easily available:

Please check one box for each option.

Options	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Unlikely	No Entry	Total Entries Filled
a. Brochures/publications	103 (51%)	74 (37%)	24 (12%)	18	201
b. Internet websites	54 (28%)	64 (33%)	77 (39%)	24	195
c. Guest speakers	27 (14%)	74 (39%)	91 (47%)	27	192
d. Field trips	28 (15%)	78 (41%)	85 (45%)	28	191
e. One-on-one visits with foresters	58 (30%)	63 (33%)	71 (37%)	27	192
f. Neighborhood meetings	18 (9%)	58 (31%)	114 (60%)	29	190
g. Other (Please Specify):	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	21 (95%)	197	22

Landowner Demographics

						No Entry	Total Entries Filled
14. What is your age?	18-35	36-50	51-65	66-80	>80		
	4 (2%)	58 (27%)	82 (38%)	55 (25%)	18 (8%)	2	217
15. What is your highest level of education?	No formal education	Grade school	High School or GED	College degree	Graduate degree		
	0 (0%)	5 (2%)	64 (30%)	84 (39%)	62 (29%)	4	215
16. For how many years have you owned your land?	<10	10-20	21-30	>30			
	38 (18%)	61 (28%)	51 (24%)	67 (31%)		2	217
17. How many acres of woods do you own in the North Quabbin Region?		Total Acres	Average Acres/ Owner				
		12657	60			7	212

	Yes		No		No Total Entries Entry Filled	
18 Do you have Internet access?	156	(74%)	54	(26%)	9	210
If yes:						
18a. Where do you use the internet?	Home		Work		Town library	
	136	(89%)	16	(10%)	1	(1%)
	65		153			
18b. How often are you on-line?	Daily		Weekly		Monthly	
	88	(56%)	49	(31%)	7	(4%)
	14	(9%)	60		158	
18c. Do you seek information about trees, forests, or your land?	Yes		No			
	54	(32%)	115	(68%)	50	169
18d. If we put forestry information on-line, would you use it?	Yes		No		Maybe	
	78	(46%)	22	(13%)	68	(40%)
	51		168			
18e. How often do use e-mail?	Regularly		Occasionally		Not at all	
	106	(61%)	34	(20%)	34	(20%)
	45		174			

How well does the survey represent landowners in the region?

In order to help determine if the sample of landowners that returned surveys were representative of landowners in the region we compared survey response data with our landowner database. Only a few categories could be compared. Below is a table showing these comparisons:

	Survey Respondents	Database
Total # landowners	219	1619
Total acres	12,657	87,624
Average acreage/ landowner	59.7	54.0
Median acreage/ landowner	32.0	29.6
% of landowners enrolled in Chapter 61 program	32%	16%
% enrolled in Forest Stewardship Program	9%	7%

There was little difference in ownership acreage between landowners that responded to the survey and all North Quabbin landowners with greater than 10 acres. Enrollment in the Forest Stewardship Program was also similar for both groups. However, it appears that landowners were more likely to respond to the survey if they were enrolled in the Chapter 61 program.

Questions or comments about the survey results?

Want to learn more about the North Quabbin Woods Project?

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