

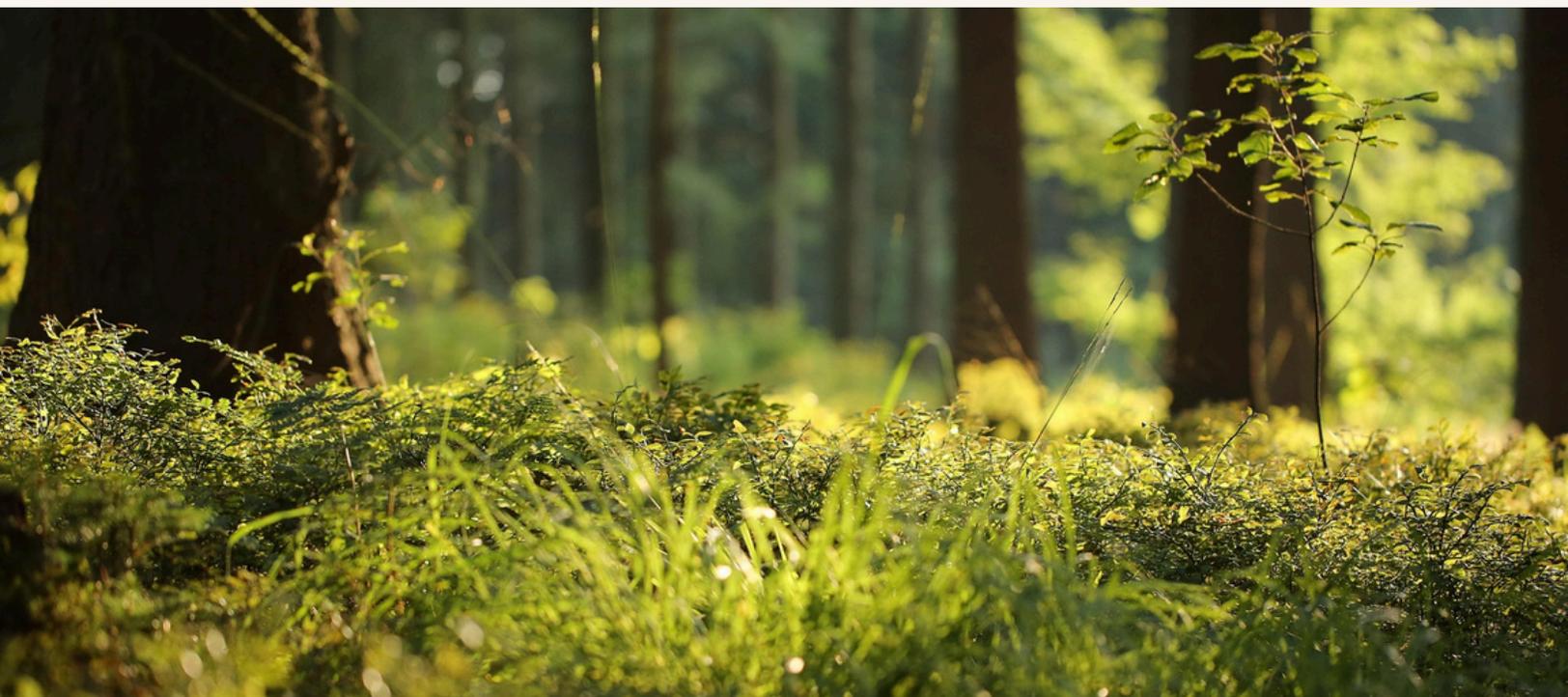


Manage. Enhance. Protect.

A Guide for a Sustainable Forest

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“S’enraciner dans l’avenir”: A Vision for Our Forests

The “S’enraciner dans l’avenir” campaign is a regional initiative designed to promote the sustainable management of private forests in the Montérégie region. Led by the Agence forestière de la Montérégie and its local partners, it is aimed at forest owners who wish to enhance the value of their woodland while preserving its ecological, economic, and social functions.

Why now? Because climate challenges, economic pressures, and biodiversity concerns all call for informed and responsible forest management.

This guide is a practical tool to support you in this process, offering concrete strategies adapted to your situation.

This initiative is part of the **2022–2026 Sectoral Development Agreement for the Forest in Montérégie**. The campaign is made possible through the financial support of the Government of Québec, with the participation of three ministries — the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests (MRNF), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAMH), and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ) — as well as fourteen regional county municipalities, the Table de concertation régionale de la Montérégie, and the Agence forestière de la Montérégie.

Avec la participation financière de :



Forest Management Vocabulary 101

Sustainable Forest Management

The planning, management, and responsible use of a forest and its resources, taking into account its ecological, economic, and social functions.

Biodiversity

The variety of animal and plant species, as well as ecosystems, present at the local, regional, or landscape scale.

Selective Cutting

A forestry technique that involves harvesting certain trees while preserving the forest canopy, regeneration, and structure.

Invasive Exotic Species (IES)

A non-native organism introduced into an ecosystem that threatens local species and disrupts the natural balance.

Stand

A group of trees sharing similar characteristics (structure, species composition, age, etc.) that can be distinguished from adjacent tree groups.

Wetland

A transitional habitat between aquatic and terrestrial environments. It remains saturated or flooded long enough to alter the site's characteristics, including soil composition and vegetation.

Forest Pest

An organism, insect, pathogen, or mammal capable of causing damage to a forest.

Forest Resistance

The ability of a forest to withstand stress or disturbance without being significantly affected, maintaining its initial condition.

Forest Resilience

The ability of a forest to recover its normal functioning or growth following stress or disturbance.

Conservation Easement

A voluntary and legally binding agreement by a forest owner to protect part or all of their woodland from development or intensive exploitation.

5 Reasons to Choose Responsible Forest Management



Improve the quality and health of your forest

Responsible interventions enhance the strength, structure, and productivity of your woodlot, while promoting the natural regeneration of stands.



Increase and sustain your woodlot's value

Sound forest management generates income for landowners, supports the local economy, and ensures the long-term preservation of the resource.



Promote environmental benefits

A responsibly managed forest plays a vital role in carbon sequestration, the protection of sensitive habitats, and the preservation of species at risk.



Strengthen community ties

Caring for your woodlot responsibly affirms the forest vocation of your territory and deepens the connection between people and the forest.



Boost climate resilience

A well-structured and diversified forest is more resistant to disturbances and better adapted to a changing climate.

The AFM team can help you take action.
Learn more at afm.qc.ca

Jacques Bouchard: A Forest that Reflects His Values

After returning to the land 35 years later, Mr. Bouchard manages his forest guided by his core values — respect for nature, balance between wildlife and vegetation, and responsibility toward future generations.

- He practices gentle selective cutting.
- He engages in assisted migration by planting tree species native to warmer southern regions.
- He adapts his techniques to protect young shoots from deer.

Even without financial assistance, he remains **true to his principles**.



[Discover his story here \(FR\)](#)



S'enraciner dans l'avenir

An Informative Space Designed for Woodlot Owners

Go further...

Concrete advice, practical tools, and helpful resources to promote the management of a resilient forest — one whose ecological, economic, and social benefits are fully realized.



[Explore it now! \(FR\)](#)

A Sustainable Forest in 10 Key Steps

Clearly define your objectives — the first essential step toward successful management.

1

Your Allies to Get Started

Organizations that support the development of private regional forests by preparing forest management plans and administering financial assistance programs for landowners through their certified forestry advisors.

Example: **Agence forestière de la Montérégie (AFM)**

Regional forestry associations: They provide information, training, and public awareness on healthy, sustainable forest management.

Example: **Association forestière du sud du Québec (AFSQ)**

Surround yourself with professionals for guidance and expert support.

2

Valuable Expertise

Forestry advisors: Independent organizations and specialists offering personalized services to forest owners — from tailored advice to turnkey projects, including the preparation of Forest Management Plans (FMPs).

They are your key entry point to access financial assistance programs.

Organizations in the Montérégie region

Develop a structured management plan to put your goals into action.

3

The Forest Management Plan (FMP)

This essential management tool helps you properly plan your forest operations according to your interests and objectives.

If your property includes at least 4 hectares of forest land, the FMP serves as the basis for registering your woodlot.

Learn more about the FMP in the following pages.

Plan your operations and ensure their responsible implementation.

4

Financial Assistance

Two essential resources to know about Private Forest Development Program

Provides support covering between 80 % and 95 % of the costs for sustainable forest management activities (e.g. planting, thinning, selective cutting).

Property Tax Rebate Program

A tax credit equivalent to 85 % of property taxes (municipal and school, excluding buildings) is offered to registered forest producers carrying out eligible improvement work.

See options and eligibility conditions

Implement long-term protection measures.

5

Who Does What?

Municipalities and RCMs (Regional County Municipalities):

They guide land use and development planning by establishing, among other things, bylaws related to tree and forest management.

Environmental organizations:

Experts in environmental protection specializing in areas such as wildlife, riparian zones, and sensitive habitats.



Good to Know

The **guide for adapting Montérégie forests to climate change** helps landowners and forest managers adapt their forests to changing conditions. It offers a structured approach to assessing risks and identifying adaptation strategies.

[Consult the guide \(FR\)](#)

Harvest your wood using appropriate silvicultural methods.

6

Who Does What?

Forest contractors: Private enterprises that carry out silvicultural and forest roadwork operations. They collaborate with forestry advisors on the technical and regulatory aspects of harvesting.

Producers' unions or boards: Organizations that coordinate the sale of timber from private forests to ensure effective and fair marketing. They also inform, train, and advocate for forest producers.

[Learn more](#)



7

Ensure compliance and safety throughout all operations.

8

Monitor the evolution of your woodlot, adjust practices, and optimize results.

Deepen Your Knowledge

The '**Guide terrain : saines pratiques d'intervention en forêt privée**', published by the Fédération des producteurs forestiers du Québec, provides guidance on good practices and mitigation measures to reduce environmental impacts during forest work.

Consult the guide (FR)



9

Continue to enhance your forest in other ways

Examples: maple syrup production, non-timber forest products, recreational activities, and more.

Share your experience and pass on your vision to inspire and educate others.



10

The AFM team is here to support you every step of the way.

Learn more at senraciner.afm.qc.ca



Managing Your Forest Differently

Simple Practices for a Healthy Woodlot

This section offers concrete, accessible ideas to help you adopt responsible practices — from planning to harvesting — while keeping in mind the protection of natural habitats, biodiversity, and adaptation to climate change.

The Forest Management Plan (FMP): Your Personalized Guide

The **FMP** is much more than a document — it's **your customized game plan** for taking care of your forest according to **your goals**: income, biodiversity, hunting, recreation, or legacy.

Prepared by a professional forester, it considers:

- the **unique features of your property**;
- your **personal priorities**; and
- **achievable actions** over a 10-year horizon.

Most importantly, the FMP is **mandatory** to access **available financial assistance programs** (covering up to 95% of the cost of certain eligible activities!).

What to Expect

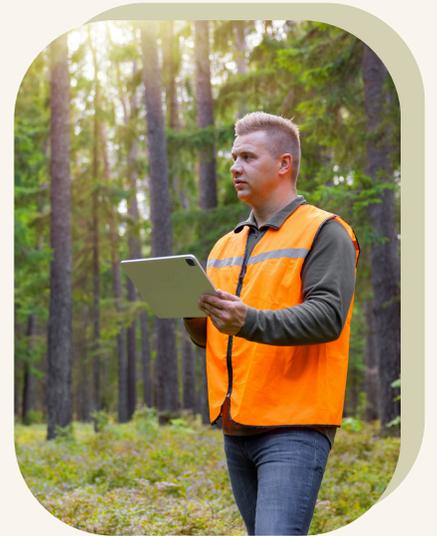
An FMP includes:

- A summary of your objectives;
- A description of your property's forest composition;
- A map identifying:
 - forest stands;
 - sensitive biodiversity elements;
- Recommendations for silvicultural interventions based on your forest's potential and your objectives.

In short, this plan provides all the necessary elements to register as a recognized forest producer and access financial assistance programs.

The Enhanced FMP

An improved version of the plan that includes additional information about sensitive features within the forest area of your property, using available cartographic databases. Special attention is given to wetlands, exceptional forest ecosystems, and the presence of threatened, vulnerable, or potentially at-risk species.



[Learn more](#)

Building Lasting Roads to Enjoy Your Woodlot



Creating a road opens access to your land — for operations, hunting, or recreation. But poor road design can lead to costly economic and environmental damage: erosion, stream contamination, road deterioration, and disturbance of wetlands and wildlife habitats.

Best practices:

- Plan **routes that avoid** steep slopes, shallow soils, wetlands, and sensitive habitats.
- Use **proper** water-crossing structures (e.g. culverts) to **maintain natural flow**.
- Manage runoff by redirecting water toward **vegetated areas to prevent erosion**.

These practices ensure a **more stable, longer-lasting road** — and a **better-protected forest**.

Encouraging Wildlife: Simple Actions with Lasting Impact

Your woodlot can become an exceptional refuge for wildlife. By conserving key natural features, you enhance biodiversity without compromising your forest's other uses.

Small changes that make a big difference:

- **Retain or plant fruit-bearing trees** to provide food sources.
- **Keep standing dead trees** (snags) and **fallen logs** as habitat.
- Maintain **mature trees** and **understorey vegetation** to provide feeding and nesting sites.

Avoid excessive “cleaning” of the forest that removes these vital resources for animals.



Protecting Forest Soils During Timber Transport: A Smart Reflex



Heavy machinery can cause **serious damage to forest soils** if not used carefully.

Best practices:

- **Transport wood during frozen or dry periods** — solid ground reduces soil disturbance.
- **Limit travel to designated trails** to concentrate impact and protect surrounding areas.
- **Avoid wetlands and waterways** that are sensitive to erosion and contamination.
- **Stop operations if deep ruts form**; adjust road routes or wait for soils to dry.

These precautions **reduce erosion**, protect tree roots, and **maintain soil health** — ensuring sustainable forest management and **long-term productivity**.

Choosing the Right Trees to Harvest: A Long-Term Investment

Whether your goal is to generate income, improve maple production, or simply thin your stand, selecting the right trees to cut is key to achieving your objectives **while maintaining a healthy, thriving forest**.

Selective cutting priorities:

- Trees that are **diseased, dying, or damaged**;
- Trees that hinder the growth of healthy, vigorous individuals.

Maintain **good diversity** in species, ages, and sizes to strengthen ecosystem resilience and **encourage natural regeneration**.



Controlling Invasive Species Before They Take Over



Certain introduced plants — known as **Invasive Exotic Species (IES)** — can quickly spread through a forest, **outcompeting native species** and **disrupting the ecosystem**.

These aggressive species alter soil balance, forest regeneration, and wildlife habitats.

Key actions:

- **Learn to identify** them;
- **Avoid spreading them** (e.g. don't travel through infested zones);
- **Contain or remove colonies** where possible;
- **Adjust your forest work** (planting, harvesting) to prevent conditions that favor their spread.

This simple vigilance is essential to **protect the long-term health of your woodlot**. By staying alert and acting early, you safeguard your forest's **ecological integrity**, preserve biodiversity, and reduce future control costs.

Reducing the Impact of Insects and Diseases

Even the healthiest forests are occasionally affected by insects or diseases. **Good management** practices can minimize damage.

Effective strategies:

- **Maintain vigorous trees** by thinning when necessary;
- **Harvest** weakened trees **preventively**;
- **Avoid injuring trees and compacting** soil;
- **Diversify species** adapted to local conditions;
- **Reduce stress** — for example, limit tapping of unhealthy maples and avoid harvesting during outbreaks.

A well-maintained forest is **more resilient, less vulnerable,** and **more productive** over the long term.



A young maple sapling with vibrant green leaves is the central focus, set against a background of a sunlit forest with tall, thin trees and a forest floor covered in fallen leaves. The lighting is warm and natural, highlighting the texture of the leaves and the slender trunk of the sapling.

Conserving Your Forest: Practical and Profitable Solutions

Much More Than a Stand of Trees — A Resource Worth Protecting

This section presents various ways to preserve and enhance your woodlot — from protecting rare wildlife habitats and promoting forest resilience to climate change, to exploring concrete conservation tools such as easements.

Rare Wildlife Habitats: Could Your Forest Be Home to One?



Some natural areas have been identified as **key zones for the survival of numerous animal species**. These are known as designated habitats. The following types may be found on private forest land:

- White-tailed deer wintering areas (“deer yards”);
- Heron nesting colonies (heronries);
- Fish habitats;
- Areas frequently used by large concentrations of aquatic birds;
- Habitats used by muskrats;
- Habitats of species listed as threatened or vulnerable.

Owning and protecting a designated habitat on your property provides tangible benefits:

- **Rich and diverse wildlife:** Protecting a sensitive species also safeguards the habitat of many others.
- **Enhanced forest value:** Your land gains ecological worth — an asset that strengthens its natural and conservation potential.
- **Available support:** Certain programs offer technical or financial assistance for the sustainable management of these habitats.
- **A healthy ecosystem:** By protecting these areas, you help maintain your forest’s natural balance, resilience, and long-term productivity.
- **Environmental recognition:** Your commitment can be publicly acknowledged, reinforcing your reputation as a responsible land steward.

As a forest owner, you play a key role in preserving these precious habitats.



A Forest Resilient to Climate Change

Growing Pressures on Our Forests

Climate disruption is already affecting our forests — and the challenges will intensify: droughts, storms, disease, and new pests. Fortunately, you can help your woodlot adapt starting today.

Good practices include:

- **Diversifying** tree species and age classes;
- **Creating a forest mosaic** of young, mature, and open areas;
- **Ensuring strong regeneration** to sustain the next generation of trees;
- **Managing deer overbrowsing** and controlling invasive species with adapted strategies.

The result:

A **more stable** forest — **resilient, rich in wildlife, and better equipped** to face the uncertainties of a changing climate.



About Conservation Easements

A **conservation easement** is a voluntary, notarized agreement between you and a recognized conservation organization. Together, you determine which land uses you wish to restrict in order to protect the ecological values of your property.

For example, you may choose to prohibit intensive logging, road or infrastructure construction, or any activity that could harm sensitive natural areas.

What you gain:

- **Potential tax benefits**, such as credits or reduced property assessments (depending on eligibility);
- **Peace of mind**, knowing your forest will remain protected for generations to come;
- **Recognition of your conservation commitment**, often highlighted by your community and environmental partners.



[Learn more about conservation options \(FR\)](#)



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Concrete advice, practical tools, and helpful resources to promote the management of a **resilient forest** — one whose ecological, economic, and social benefits are fully realized.



[Explore it now! \(FR\)](#)



Acting for a Sustainable Forest

Responsible forest management is an investment in the future. By applying sustainable practices, you preserve the health of your woodlot while maximizing its ecological and economic benefits over the long term.

Whether it's enhancing biodiversity, protecting soils, or adapting to climate change, every decision makes a difference.

The resources and practices presented in this guide provide you with the tools to make informed choices and safeguard your forest heritage. By working with professionals and adopting environmentally responsible approaches, you ensure your forest's sustainability while meeting your personal and economic goals.

Care for your forest today — so you can enjoy its rewards tomorrow. Help preserve natural ecosystems for generations to come.

