



Forests & Society Worksheet

Go to a forested landscape (town forest, park, backyard, larger forested tract). It can be a place you are familiar with or one that is new to you. Spend some time sitting and walking, and note any evidence of past human interaction with the landscape.

Recommended Reading: *Reading the Forested Landscape* by Tom Wessels

What are some nearby place names (i.e. road names, local references, landmarks), and what might they tell you about the past or current land use?

Do you observe any signs of current or past human use (i.e. nearby houses or developments, old cellar holes and stone walls, barbed wire, farm equipment, logging roads)?

What do you notice about the species composition of the forest?

- **Does it consist mainly of even- or uneven-aged stands?**
- **Are there any early successional species present (i.e. white pine, poplar, birch, cherry)?**
- **Are there any apple trees or standalone, large “wolf” trees (this can indicate that the land was once cleared for pasture)?**
- **Are there old-growth characteristics present (i.e. mixed-ages and species, stands of large trees, “pit and mound” topography, standing dead and large woody debris)?**
- **Are invasive species present?**
- **Are any rare or endangered species present?**

What are some possible future states of this land based on different management strategies (including passive management)? What are some things to consider when presenting alternatives (i.e. management goals, is it private or public land, slope, presence of rare or endangered species, tree health, proximity to town/urban area, easements, where it is situated within the larger landscape)? What will be the long-term impacts of any recommendations to forest health, economics, wildlife habitat, water quality, and human enjoyment?