

**Charter of the “Maine Forest Harvesting Description and Classification Task Force”
Adopted by Unanimous Vote at the March 21, 2006 MESAF ExCom meeting
Robert S. Seymour, MESAF Chair**

Preamble:

At the Fall, 2005 Annual Meeting, MESAF members urged the Executive Committee to draft a white paper on the subject of forest harvesting. Over the course of the meeting, it became obvious that many widely used terms, particularly “partial cutting” and related practices, are often so ambiguous so as to lack any meaningful interpretation among professionals. In general, it was believed that such a white paper would be helpful to the membership in communicating about this complex topic, as well as serve the Maine Forest Service in their legislatively mandated role of tracking trends in forest harvesting across the State of Maine.

Charge:

The Forest Practices Committee shall attempt to devise a system for describing and classifying all forest harvesting activities in the State of Maine. The ideal outcome would be a decision tree, similar to a dichotomous key for identifying botanical organisms, that allows any harvest to be clearly and unambiguously described to another professional forester. To the extent possible, this harvest classification system should:

- ✓ Use established mensurational criteria and silvicultural terminology to the extent possible. [References here shall be to the Helms’ Dictionary of Forestry published in 1998 and the document “Silvicultural Terminology” prepared by the Silvicultural Instructors’ Subgroup of SAF Working Group D2, dated 1994.]
- ✓ Be as *descriptive* as possible based on objective, observable criteria, not *prescriptive*, in the sense that one would need to know the forester’s or landowner’s intent.
- ✓ Apply to harvests immediately after their completion, in the sense that long-term stand-development resulting from the treatment does not influence how they are described and classified.

The Committee should consider publishing the system as a peer-reviewed article in the Northern Journal of Applied Forestry.

Timetable:

The Committee should have a draft available for discussion and critical review from the MESAF membership for the Spring Meeting (June 8, 2006) where it will be partially “field tested.” The committee will report to the membership at the Fall Meeting in October, after which the draft will be posted on the MESAF website for an extended comment period (until Dec. 1) by all members. A final version of the white paper should be completed by the end of 2006, and submitted for publication.

Membership:

Bob Wagner (Chair), Jeremy Wilson, Laura Kenefic, Kenny Ferguson, Doug Denico, Mike Saunders, and Bob Seymour (MESAF chair) *ex officio*.