



Crop Tree Management prescriptions have been implemented on the hillside behind this abandoned farmhouse. The owner of this tree farm has a stewardship goal for the property.

I. Introduction

Because many of today's landowners are interested in stewardship of the forest resource, they need their woodlots managed with a system they can understand and one that will accomplish varied goals. Crop Tree Management was designed to facilitate communication with landowners and to fulfill a combination of stewardship goals.

This publication will guide you, the forestland manager, in applying Crop Tree Management on private, non-industrial forests of the East. It describes how to manage individual crop trees for timber production, fish and wildlife habitat improvement, aesthetic enhancement, and water-quality maintenance.

In contrast to traditional, single-purpose timber management practices, this system focuses on selecting and releasing trees that will yield **multiple** landowner benefits, including timber. It requires you to obtain a clear understanding of a landowner's property goals. Based on these, you establish objectives for each stand and develop criteria to guide your selection of individual crop trees. A crown-touching release is then applied to free the crop trees from competing trees. Once released, the crop trees respond with accelerated growth and production of landowner benefits.

Although the Crop Tree Management System focuses on selecting and releasing trees that will yield multiple landowner benefits, it can also be used to accomplish a single objective.

This versatile system, which can be applied in both commercially operable and precommercial stands, was designed to help landowners achieve their stewardship goals.

Talking with landowners to discover their interests helps you to develop a management plan that will satisfy their needs.

Although Crop Tree Management was developed for use in private, non-industrial forests where woodlot size is often 100 acres or less, its application is not restricted by the size of the forest to be managed. It can be used to do treatments in both commercially operable and precommercial stands.

This system also works well in riparian areas (streamside management zones). Some of the best sites for production of timber, wildlife, aesthetic, and water-quality benefits are found in these places. However, because certain aquatic and vegetative communities depend on these sensitive areas for existence, management of trees in the riparian zone requires a system that:

- helps maintain vigorous and diverse vegetation,
- regulates stream temperature, and
- traps sediments and filters pollutants.

Crop Tree Management meets these needs.

At a time when private, non-industrial forestland managers are being challenged to assist their clients in achieving multiple stewardship goals, Crop Tree Management offers an effective way to do so.

II. Crop Tree Management –The Process Defined

1.) Identify the Landowner's Property Goals



The first step in the Crop Tree Management process is helping landowners describe their property goals.

This can be done by asking what use the landowner intends to make of the forestland. You might suggest some possibilities and explain how current and future benefits can be obtained.