

What is a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) and why do I need one?

Registered Professional Foresters (RPF) are licensed by the state of California to practice forestry. A license requires 7 years of combined educational and professional experience. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) Board of Forestry regulates RPFs and maintains a roster on their website (<https://bof.fire.ca.gov/projects-and-programs/professional-foresters-registration/>). Under the Professional Foresters Law [PRC§752], most forest management activities require working with an RPF, especially if you want to develop a management plan or sell, barter, or trade timber resources from your property. Even if a management activity does not require an RPF, you may still want to consult one for their expertise.

Choose an RPF like you would any professional - with great care. You want the RPF working for you to be someone who will listen to your goals and objectives, look out for your financial and environmental concerns, and help you understand laws that can be complex and confusing. You should be prepared to pay for these services.

Speak with several RPFs before selecting one. You want to work with an RPF who's style and approach to forest management compliments yours. Do not be afraid to ask hard questions of a potential RPF and check out their references. Ask for an initial site visit and consultation.

There are several ways to search for an RPF:

- Word of mouth – ask your friends, family, neighbors, community members, and other professionals about their recommendations and experiences
- Call your local Cal Fire office and ask the Resource Officer for a list of local RPFs
- Contact a professional society such as California Licensed Foresters Association (<https://www.clfa.org/>) or the Northern California Society of American Foresters (<https://californiasaf.org/>)
- Search the Cal Fire RPF roster (<https://bof.fire.ca.gov/projects-and-programs/professional-foresters-registration/rpf-crm-rosters/>)

Remember, an RPF works for you and has the legal obligation to look after your best interests.

For more information check out the UC ANR Forest Stewardship Series, #24: Professional Assistance (<https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8323.pdf>).

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