

# TOOLS FOR ENGAGING LANDOWNERS EFFECTIVELY



CBYC is a six-state initiative aimed at improving the quality of the harvest plan and the logging so that forests can be sustained and environmental problems can be prevented. CBYC believes that if more landowners consult professional foresters before harvesting, the quality of logging will improve.

## Overall Goal of the Campaign

Protect the interests of landowners and improve the quality of harvest planning and logging operations to maintain forest health.

## Desired Behaviors

Landowners inform themselves about the different elements of a good cut and use the services of a professional forester to manage their harvests.

## Communication Objective

Get landowners to call a toll-free number to request information and resources before harvesting their trees.

## Campaign Strategy: Call Before You Cut (CBYC)

### AUDIENCE

The primary target audience for the CBYC campaign is Working the Land (WTL) woodland owners in six states--Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, Ohio, and West Virginia.

Most Prime Prospect landowners in the six campaign states fell into two groups--Working the Land (WTL) owners and Woodland Retreat (WR) owners. Of these two, WTL owners were more likely to harvest trees for timber and to believe in active management and productive use of their woodland. Therefore, they were the better prospects for this campaign.

However, campaign materials were also relevant to all landowners who were planning harvests and were willing to invest time and effort into harvesting trees in the best possible way. This includes many Supplemental Income (SI) landowners and a few Woodland Retreat Owners (WROs).

### MESSAGE

CBYC developed a message that tapped into Working the Land owners' desire to maximize the long-term value of their woodland. For these owners, the term "value" includes the financial, recreational, and emotional benefits of owning woods.

*"Your woods are a valuable asset. If you take care of them, they will serve you and your family well for many years to come. Good decisions at harvest time are crucial for getting the best from your woods now and preserving their value for the future. Call the CBYC campaign for information on how to plan your harvest to get the best value from your woods."*

In print materials, the following was also used:

*"Your woods are valuable  
... for your family's enjoyment  
... as a nest egg for you and your family's future.  
If you are considering a harvest, do right by your land, your finances, and your family. Assure the long term health of your woods by getting advice from a forester and by using a trained logger. You'll be glad you did."*



## EVALUATION

Each state assesses the cumulative impact of its outreach by monitoring the number of people who call the campaign hotline to request additional information about timber harvesting.

Evaluation plans for this project include:

- Tracking calls to record basic information about callers (including demographics, attitudinal segment, where they heard about CBYC)
- A follow-up survey to ask landowners:
  - What did they do differently?
  - Were materials useful?
  - Did they do a timber sale? If yes, did they do something different than they would have otherwise?
    - Have a contract?
    - Get multiple bids?
    - Get advice from a professional forester?
    - Require BMPs?
  - Is there something else they needed that was not in the package?
  - Did they tell others about CBYC? Recommend that others call?

## CHANNELS & MATERIALS

Most woodland owners will harvest trees only once or twice in their lifetime. The challenge for this campaign is to make information available to woodland owners when they need it, i.e., when they are thinking of selling their trees. At other times, landowners are not likely to pay enough attention to campaign messages or to the informational materials provided by the campaign.

With this in mind, the CBYC campaign had two components.

**Step one:** Publicize the availability of informational materials and position the CBYC campaign as the most comprehensive and reliable source of information and resources to help woodland owners harvest trees to maximize value from their woods.

This publicity was designed to generate qualified leads for the campaign—i.e. woodland owners would call the toll-free number or go to the website when they were planning a harvest and the information was relevant for them.

**Step two:** Provide appropriate guidance when people called.

State campaigns employed a folder of printed materials, as well as an easy-to-remember website ([www.callb4ucut.com](http://www.callb4ucut.com)) and a 1-800 number. The tone and feel of the printed materials was simple. Good color photographs and limited text conveyed the message “Call Before You Cut” without overwhelming the reader with excessive details.

## PARTNERS

Partners add credibility and stature to the campaign, help establish the brand and help disseminate the messages more widely. Each state put together a group of partners. For example, in Ohio, the campaign was coordinated by the Ohio Division of Forestry and Ohio State University Extension, with support from:

- The Nature Conservancy
- the Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- the Better Business Bureau
- the Society of American Foresters
- Rural Action
- American Tree Farm System