BOUNDARIES
MAINTAINING YOUR FOREST PROPERTY LINES
Maintaining property lines and boundaries is one of the simplest, yet most often overlooked and neglected, management activities. The following presents several methods to mark and maintain property lines and corners.

WHY IDENTIFY PROPERTY BOUNDARIES?

**Timber sales**
Selling timber requires a precise location of the sale area to conduct a legal and legitimate business transaction. Often the costs involved in resurveying poorly marked boundaries can be the most expensive aspect of a timber sale. Timber markers and loggers must have a well marked boundary line to avoid crossing onto adjacent lands.

**Management activities**
Timber harvesting, site preparation and prescribed burning must be conducted within property boundaries. Clearly defined property lines will help avoid conflicts and keep out trespassers. The best protection against timber theft is a well marked boundary line.

**Trespass**
Unwanted trespass and poaching can be minimized. Where hunting is permitted, the placement of posted notices in conspicuous locations can serve as warning notices to persons making unlawful entry.

**Liability**
Property ownership comes with many responsibilities and obligations to invited and uninvited users. Well marked or posted boundaries can help minimize landowner liability.

**CORNERS**
Corner is the term applied to a point established by a survey or by an agreement. Corners should only be established by a professional surveyor. The surveyor should establish permanent monuments as corners. Examples of permanent markers are an iron rod, iron pipe, iron rod embedded in a concrete monument, cut stone monument or treated post.

**BOUNDARY LINES**
Several situations may exist that will influence the best option for maintaining a boundary line:
- **Recent survey:** During the time of new land acquisition, surveyors routinely “brush” or clear property lines for clear sighting between survey points or stations. The most efficient practice is to maintain these cleared corridors before new vegetative growth occurs.
- **Recent survey by adjacent landowner:** If an adjacent landowner contracts a boundary survey, this line can also be maintained on your property. **NOTE:** recently marked boundary lines should be agreed upon by both
landowners; any dispute will require independent surveys.

- **Deed descriptions:** In the absence of a recent survey, locating property corners and the distance and bearings of lines can be obtained from a deed description. Using a compass and measuring tape, property lines can be located. **CAUTION:** Any landowner or forestry consultant may establish a property line with the understanding that they become responsible and thus liable for damages due to any incorrect lines. If there is any doubt, a professional survey is recommended.

**MARKING PROPERTY LINES**

Forest property lines are usually maintained by one or more of several methods: hack marks, blazes, distinctive paint bands or stripes, or 3” x 3” aluminum tags bearing the owner’s name and/or logo.

**Painting method (Figure 1):** Use a drawknife or machete to scrape a smooth 5”-6” band in the outer bark at eye level. Brush a series of painted bands or blazes to mark line position and corners. This method includes:

- **One vertical line for centerline trees (located on the property line):** Centerline trees are painted with a 2” x 6” vertical mark at the point that the tree intersects the property line.
- **One band for interior trees adjacent to the property line (facing the line):** Interior line trees receive a single 3”-4”-wide band facing the property line (only paint the half of the tree facing the lines).
- **Two bands for a change in the line (toward direction of change):** Trees indicating a directional change receive a double 3”-4”-wide band painted on the side of the tree to which the property line changes direction.
- **Three bands to mark a property corner (facing the corner):** Corner trees located within 5 feet of the corner receive a triple 2”-wide band on the side of the tree directly facing the corner stake or post.

Figure 2 illustrates several tools useful for line maintenance. Tools for line marking include the machete, chainsaw, drawknife, hook or bush axe, paint and brush, and posted signs. Always use an exterior oil-based paint for maximum durability. Specially prepared boundary paint, which has a field-tested durability of 10 or more years, is available in highly visible colors. Well marked property lines can last for many years, but should be checked for integrity at least once a year.