

**CHAPTER**



**USER'S GUIDE**



# User's Guide

Each chapter in this handbook builds on the one before it. We therefore recommend that the first time you use the book you work through chapters in the order presented.

Each chapter includes “your turn” sections with practice problems and other how-to suggestions that will help you apply what you learn to your property. **Informational videos** and helpful links also are included to further instruct you on specific topics. Appendices contain additional how-to instructions, such as constructing your own cruiser stick, templates for a preinventory checklist, and sample tally cards.

As you learn more about forest inventories, we encourage you to consult with forestry, wildlife, and natural resources professionals. The Alabama Extension Forestry Wildlife and Natural Resources team is composed of regional Extension agents (REAs) and specialists who work for Alabama Extension.

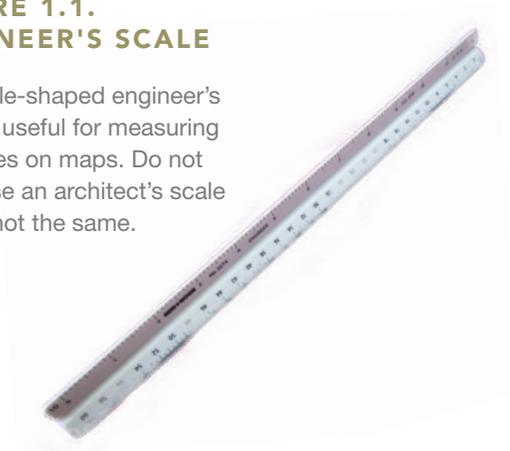
Regional Extension agents work in one of seven regions across the state. These individuals are here to answer questions you might have about forestry, wildlife, aquatics, invasive species, and more. Specialists can answer questions and provide information over the phone, via email or other forms of written communication, and through site visits.

Other natural resources professionals, such as those with the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC), the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, also can help at no charge or at a reduced rate. Registered consulting foresters are privately contracted and represent the landowner. Some states, such as Alabama, require foresters to be registered with a state registration board. A database of Alabama registered foresters and information can be found on the Alabama State Board of Registration for Foresters website.

**AS YOU START TO INVENTORY YOUR FORESTS, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOU ACQUIRE THE FOLLOWING EQUIPMENT:**

**FIGURE 1.1.  
ENGINEER'S SCALE**

A triangle-shaped engineer's scale is useful for measuring distances on maps. Do not purchase an architect's scale as it is not the same.

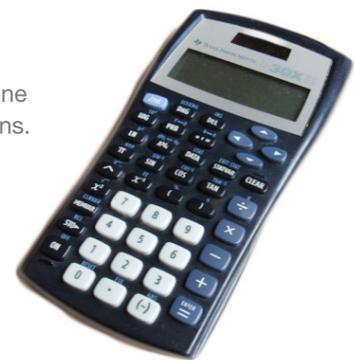


**FIGURE 1.2.  
FLAGGING**

This may be biodegradable plastic or paper and is used for the temporary marking of boundary lines, plot centers, and other areas of note.

**FIGURE 1.3.  
CALCULATOR**

Choose an inexpensive one with trigonometry functions.



### FIGURE 1.4. CLINOMETER

Clinometers are commonly used for tree height estimations and to estimate slope. When purchasing, it is recommended that you buy one with two scales: a percent scale (where height can be read directly at 100 feet from the tree) and a topographic scale (where height can be read directly at 66 feet from the tree).



### FIGURE 1.5. MEASURING TAPE

This should be flexible (cloth or fiberglass) and measure in inches on one side and tenths of feet on the other. It is helpful if it is at least 100 feet long.



### FIGURE 1.6. CRUISER STICK

While not as accurate as using a clinometer or diameter tape, this is a low-cost option for measuring tree diameters and heights. It usually has a Biltmore stick (for measuring tree diameters) printed on one side and a Merritt hypsometer (for measuring tree heights) printed on the other. This can be purchased from a forestry supply company. See Appendix B for instructions on making your own cruiser stick.



### FIGURE 1.7. DIAMETER TAPE

This is the most popular instrument for measuring tree diameter. It is marked for reading tree diameter directly when measuring tree circumference.



### FIGURE 1.8. PROFESSIONAL COMPASS (AZIMUTH TYPE WITH MIRROR)

The bezel starts at 0 and progresses around the face to 360 degrees. This will be used for navigating in the woods and establishing your plot grid.



### FIGURE 1.9. INCREMENT BORER (OPTIONAL)

This is used to take a small core sample from trees, mostly to determine tree age.



### FIGURE 1.10. PRISM (OPTIONAL)

This small glass wedge can be used for quick estimates of tree basal area.



### FIGURE 1.11. LOGGER'S TAPE

This is a larger version of the diameter tape that comes in longer lengths, including 25, 50, 75, and 100 feet. The 100-foot length has the most utility. A nail may be attached to the loop on the end of the tape so that it can be easily secured to the face of a tree or other object.

