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The Woods and I

Ever since I was little, I've loved going outside and exploring new things. Starting when I was five, my family has owned a piece of land on a mountain in Starksboro which we call the Hundred Acre Woods. However, it has grown to be much more than that, at almost 300 acres, and even on cold winter days we go up there to enjoy the land and its beauty. My family doesn't hunt, but we enjoy it in many other ways: camping, swimming, and cross country skiing just to name a few. We have invested much time and money into our property, but we have also gotten some profit from the land to help pay for these investments. Besides exercise and fresh air, just last year some people tapped our maple trees, and made a good amount of maple syrup from them, some of which we got to keep. We also have had loggers come and they have taken carefully selected trees so that it will help the other wildlife flourish.

My Dad goes up to our woods often to check on the land and animals, and make sure everything is growing as it should be. He did a lot of restoration when we got the land. He fixed the few dirt and gravel roads that go into the forest a ways, and he also fixed the quarter acre pond on the property so that the animals, and we, can enjoy it even better.

There are many costs for owning a forest. Some are annual, such as property taxes, and some are occasional such as our wildlife investments. One way to pay for these expenses is by selling timber. Without good loggers, logs can't be taken from the forest. With increasing workers compensation insurance costs and higher equipment costs, some loggers have gone out of business. It took our family three years for us to be able to find a good logger to do our harvest. That delayed all the wildlife and forest health work we wanted to do. Without good places to sell the logs, or good log prices, we wouldn't earn enough money to pay for the work.

Every Christmas, we go to our woods to get a "Charlie Brown Christmas Tree". A couple days before Christmas, our family went up to our woods together, and we climbed through the snow, and picked out a nice little Christmas tree, this year a red spruce. We also looked at the many different animal tracks in the snow and looked at the areas where they had been logging. We also go ice skating and sledding, and drink hot chocolate. That is just one of the special times that I get to enjoy with my family in the woods.