

## **Woodlot Improvement Cut, Timber Stand Improvement, TSI, or Non-Commercial Thin**

**CLARIFIER:** A Woodlot Improvement Cut is also known as a Timber Stand Improvement, TSI, or non-commercial thin.

Does your management plan have a non-commercial thin scheduled in one or more stand, or do you think your woods could benefit from one? Need some help with this?

This how-to document will answer the following questions:

- What is a non-commercial thin?
- What is the purpose of the non-commercial thin?
- How do you make this non-commercial thin happen?

Check out the answers to these questions below.

### **What is a “non-commercial thin”?**

A non-commercial thin, Timber Stand Improvement, or TSI, is the felling of poor-quality trees and crowded trees from a stand. It is considered “non-commercial” because the thin can’t be carried out in a way that gives a contractor or the landowner income. In other words, the non-commercial thin costs money to carry out.



Here is a view of a non-commercial thin right after it was done. Over the years the downed trees will decompose. If you burn firewood, you could use these felled trees for firewood.

### What is the purpose of the non-commercial thin?

A non-commercial thin is like weeding a garden. When you weed a garden, you are taking out the weeds that you don't want taking over and don't want competing with the plants you want to eventually harvest or see growing. In the same way, a woods needs to have the undesirable trees thinned out to give the desirable trees room to grow, expand their crowns, and remain healthy. Consider a non-commercial thin like investing money in the stock market. Your investment in the non-commercial thin (paying for it to be done) can earn you higher prices for the timber in that stand. It also speeds up the growth of the trees so you get a better return on your investment, because it matures sooner.



**An aerial view of a non-commercial thin to allow selected crop trees room to grow.**

### How do you make this non-commercial thin happen?

Many consultants that oversee management of your woods will arrange having the non-commercial thin done.

- The consultant may do the non-commercial thin (fell the trees that need to be thinned out).
- The consultant may mark the non-commercial thin and have another contractor actually fell the trees.
- The consultant may mark the non-commercial thin and you as the landowner may fell the trees. If you choose this, make sure you have adequate training in operating a chainsaw and felling trees. There are workshops available to help you learn how to operate a chainsaw and fell trees safely ([link to Game of Logging \(GOL\) classes](#)). If you are not finding what you are looking for, try contacting these two landowner groups that schedule GOL events in New York State: <https://catskillforest.org/>, <https://www.nyfoa.org/>. You could also try the [New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health](#).

Some forestry consultants may not arrange and oversee a non-commercial thin. Or you may not have a forestry consultant presently. You can arrange to get a non-commercial thin done. This involves finding a forester ([link to list of Watershed Qualified Foresters](#)) to make the non-commercial thin happen using one of the three methods above.

WAC can help you with the cost of doing a non-commercial thin. WAC operates the [Management Assistance Program](#) (MAP) which offers cost share to help with the cost of doing a non-commercial thin.

Here is a link to the [application](#) which you or your forester can fill out and send in to WAC to be considered for cost share.