SAMPLE

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Busy year. Where did it go?

A plain-English look at what your books are actually telling you, and what it would take to fix.

Hollenbeck Tree & Land, LLC
Tree removal, trimming and storm work · 14 on the crew
Books reviewed through October 31, 2026

01 SUMMARY

The short version

> **Your books say you keep 61 cents of every dollar you bill. After crew and equipment, you keep 28.**
>
> That gap is not how the business performed. It is where the costs were filed.

The work is there. Your books record $2,184,660 of income in 2025 and $1,903,420 so far in 2026, and somebody is entering transactions most days. That part is working.

What is missing is the monthly check. **None of your six bank accounts or nine cards has ever been reconciled to a statement.** Without that, a charge entered twice, a transfer posted to the wrong account, or a deposit that never matched an invoice all sit there and compound. Nothing here means the business is in trouble. It means the numbers you are making decisions from are not yet the real ones.

What it means in plain terms

- **You do not know what a job makes.** Crew wages, fuel and equipment all sit in overhead rather than against the jobs that used them. Gross margin reads 61%. Put the crew and the iron where they belong and it is closer to 28%.
- **You have been taxed on money you had not earned.** $186,400 of deposits taken for removals not yet performed was recorded as 2025 income.
- **Four fuel and parts accounts show you overpaid them by $71,842.** No supplier is holding your money. Charges are not being entered, so fuel and parts are understated and profit looks better than it is.
- **Nobody can tell you what you are owed.** $218,900 of municipal and HOA invoices is over 90 days, and $84,150 of customer payments was never matched to an invoice, so some of that may already be paid.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

This is not a list of homework. **We do the fixing ourselves**, inside your QuickBooks, alongside whoever enters transactions today, and then we keep the books clean every month. Your part is access and a few short answers. We handle the rest, including the back-and-forth with your CPA and your lenders.

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02 SCORECARD

Where things stand

● FIX FIRST needs cleanup before the numbers mean anything TIDY UP needs attention IN GOOD SHAPE

AREA	STATUS	WHAT WE SEE
Bank & card accounts	FIX FIRST	Six bank and nine card accounts, none ever reconciled. Operating account differs from the bank by $41,308.77.
Job costing	FIX FIRST	Crew wages, fuel and equipment all booked to overhead. No service line separates removal, trimming, stump and storm.
Customer deposits	FIX FIRST	$186,400 of deposits on unperformed work recorded as income in 2025.
Fuel & parts accounts	FIX FIRST	Four accounts without a feed show $71,842 of credit balances. Charges are not being entered.
Equipment loans & depreciation	FIX FIRST	$148,900 of chipper, bucket truck and grinder payments sit in "Ask My Accountant". No principal split, no depreciation since 2024.
Subcontract climbers	FIX FIRST	$94,300 paid to 11 individuals, coded to supplies. No 1099 trail.
Accounts receivable	TIDY UP	$218,900 over 90 days; $84,150 of payments never applied to an invoice.
Owner draws	TIDY UP	Personal and business charges mixed on one card; $22,470 needs splitting before year end.
Chart of accounts	TIDY UP	214 accounts, 71 in use, four duplicate income accounts.
Payroll & daily entry	IN GOOD SHAPE	Payroll ties to the provider's reports every quarter, and transactions are entered most days.

Headline numbers

MEASURE	AMOUNT
Operating account: books vs bank	$41,308.77
Nine cards: total difference vs card companies	$58,744.19
Deposits on unperformed work counted as 2025 income	$186,400.00
Credit balances on fuel and parts accounts	$71,842.00
Equipment payments in "Ask My Accountant"	$148,900.00
Paid to subcontract climbers, coded as supplies	$94,300.00
A/R over 90 days	$218,900.00
Customer payments never applied to an invoice	$84,150.00

These are the books as they stand, before cleanup. Several findings describe the same money from different angles, so please do not add them up.

03 FINDINGS

What we found, and how we'd fix it

Each item says what we found, why it matters to you, and what we would do about it. The last line is what we would need from you, which in most cases is nothing.

HT-01 No account has ever been reconciled

● HIGH

WHAT WE FOUND	The Reconcile screen still shows the first-time setup page. None of the six bank and clearing accounts or nine credit cards has a reconciliation on record, so no balance in the books has ever been proven against a statement.
WHY IT MATTERS	Reconciling is the monthly check that catches duplicates, missing charges and wrong postings. Until it happens, your cash, profit and tax numbers cannot be relied on. Most of the findings below trace back to this one.
HOW WE'D FIX IT	We agree a clean starting date with you, confirm opening balances against statements, and reconcile every account month by month through the current period.
YOUR PART	**Nothing beyond statement access, and we can pull those.**

HT-02 Crew, fuel and equipment are not charged to jobs

● HIGH

WHAT WE FOUND	Wages, fuel, chipper and truck costs are all posted to overhead accounts. Nothing separates removal, trimming, stump grinding and storm work. Reported gross margin for 2025 is 61.4%. Moving crew labor and equipment into cost of sales takes it to roughly 28%.
WHY IT MATTERS	You are bidding work without knowing which kind makes money. Storm work and scheduled removals have very different labor and equipment loads, and right now both land in the same bucket. A 61% margin invites you to price as if there is room that is not there.
HOW WE'D FIX IT	We rebuild the chart of accounts into job costs and overhead, add service lines for removal, trimming, stump and storm, and recode 2025 and 2026 so you can see margin by line.
YOUR PART	**About twenty minutes telling us how you think about your service lines.**

HT-03 Deposits on unperformed work were recorded as income

● HIGH

WHAT WE FOUND	$186,400 of customer deposits taken in 2025 for removals scheduled later was posted straight to income rather than held as a liability. $61,200 of it relates to work performed in 2026.
WHY IT MATTERS	That money was taxed as 2025 revenue before the crews ever turned up. It also inflates a year you may be using to talk to a bank or a bonding agent, which is the worst place to have a number you cannot defend.
HOW WE'D FIX IT	We set up a customer deposits liability account, re-post deposits to it, and release each one to income in the period the work was done. Your CPA confirms the 2025 treatment and whether an amendment is worth filing.
YOUR PART	**A green light for us to talk to your CPA.**

HT-04 Fuel and parts accounts show $71,842 of "overpayments"

● HIGH

WHAT WE FOUND	Four fuel and parts accounts with no bank feed carry credit balances: diesel -$34,118, the parts house -$19,640, a second fuel card -$13,902, chain and bar supply -$4,182. Payments are being entered; the charges behind them are not.
WHY IT MATTERS	Nobody prepays a fuel supplier $34,000. The likely explanation is that roughly that much of real fuel and parts cost is missing from your books, so expenses are understated and profit is overstated by a similar amount. Fuel is one of the two numbers that decide whether a bid was any good.
HOW WE'D FIX IT	We collect statements for each account, enter the missing charges, and set up either a feed or a short monthly statement-entry routine so it stops recurring.
YOUR PART	**Statement access for those four accounts.**

HT-05 Equipment payments sit in "Ask My Accountant"

● HIGH

WHAT WE FOUND	$148,900 of payments on the chipper, the bucket truck and the stump grinder is parked in "Ask My Accountant" with no split between principal and interest. No depreciation has been posted since 2024, and two of the three machines are not on the books as assets at all.
WHY IT MATTERS	Your balance sheet understates both what you own and what you owe, which is exactly the document a lender reads when you go for the next machine. The missing depreciation is also a deduction you have not taken.
HOW WE'D FIX IT	We tie each loan to the lender's amortization schedule, split every payment, add the machines as assets with the right in-service dates, and post depreciation to your CPA's method.
YOUR PART	**Nothing. We request the schedules from your lenders.**

HT-06 $94,300 paid to subcontract climbers with no 1099 trail

● HIGH

WHAT WE FOUND	Eleven individuals were paid a combined $94,300 across 2025 and 2026, coded to supplies rather than to subcontract labor. Nine of the eleven are over the 1099 threshold. No W-9 is on file for any of them.
WHY IT MATTERS	This is the finding with a deadline attached. Unfiled 1099s carry per-form penalties, and coding the cost as supplies also hides it from the job-costing work in HT-02, so your real labor cost per job is understated twice over.
HOW WE'D FIX IT	We recode the payments to subcontract labor by vendor, build the 1099 list with amounts, and prepare the W-9 requests for you to send. Your CPA files.
YOUR PART	**Forward the W-9 requests we prepare. We draft them.**

04 THE PLAN

How we'd take this off your plate

Three phases of cleanup, then we keep it clean every month. We work alongside whoever enters transactions today, so nothing stops while we fix things.

PHASE 1 · WEEKS 1–2

Stop the bleeding

- Agree a reconciliation start date and lock the periods before it.
- Get feeds live on the four fuel and parts accounts so new charges stop going missing.
- Set up the customer deposits account, so this season's deposits are handled correctly from day one.
- Agree a daily-entry routine with whoever does the entering today.

PHASE 2 · WEEKS 2–6

Reconcile every account

- Reconcile all six bank accounts and nine cards month by month to the current period.
- Enter the missing fuel and parts charges from statements.
- Apply the $84,150 of unapplied customer payments and clear what is already paid out of the 90-day column.

PHASE 3 · WEEKS 5–8

Fix the balance sheet and the job costs

- Rebuild the chart of accounts into job costs and overhead, with service lines.
- Recode 2025 and 2026 so margin by service line is real.
- Tie every equipment loan to its schedule; add the assets; post depreciation.
- Re-post the deposits; recode subcontract labor and build the 1099 list.

PHASE 4 · ONGOING

Keep it clean

- Every account reconciled, books closed by the 15th.
- Margin by service line, fuel and equipment per revenue dollar, A/R days, deposits held.
- Books your CPA can file from without a year-end scramble, and a balance sheet you can hand a lender.

WHERE YOU'D BE AFTER PHASE 3

Every bank, card and loan account reconciled to a statement. A P&L that shows what removal makes against what trimming makes. A balance sheet with your machines on it. And no deposit sitting in income waiting to become a tax bill.

05 WHAT WE'D NEED FROM YOU

Honestly, not much

Your plate is full. Here is everything we would ask for. Most of it is a yes or a single screen-share.

FROM YOU	WHAT IT INVOLVES
QuickBooks access	Read and write, as an accountant user.
Statement access	Read-only logins to the bank and card portals, or one screen-share where we download everything together. You do not collect anything yourself.
A green light to contact others	Your CPA, payroll provider and equipment lenders. We do the asking and the chasing.
A few quick answers	Which older customers are still collectible, and how you think about your service lines. We prepare the lists.
Twenty minutes with your bookkeeper	You introduce us. We take it from there.

06 NEXT STEP

No rush. We're here when you're ready.

Nothing in your books has been changed, and nothing here is an emergency. The point of this is to show you that we understand what is going on in your numbers and that there is a clear plan to fix it.

Every finding above came out of your own QuickBooks. The detailed list of transactions behind each one is yours whenever you want it.

THE ONLY NEXT STEP

A 30-minute call at whatever time works for you. We walk through the highlights and answer questions. Nothing to prepare.

Or reply "go ahead" and we take it from there.

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