



# American Tree Farm System

## Inspector Manual



American Forest Foundation



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# ATFS Inspector Manual

Welcome to the American Tree Farm System! As an ATFS Inspector you are helping to get more good forestry implemented on the ground. The ATFS network of state committees, partner organizations and ATFS staff are committed to assisting you in your important role.

This manual is a guide for how to be an Inspector with the American Tree Farm System program. It contains important information on the American Forest Foundation Standards of Sustainability, requirements of the program for landowners and inspectors, the ATFS certification program, other outreach and educational activities, and how to conduct ATFS inspections.

We give our sincere thanks to all of you who have chosen to become an integral part of the ATFS network!

## The American Tree Farm System ®



The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS), a program of the American Forest Foundation, works nationwide and in partnership with local, state and national groups to provide hands-on support for America's 10 million family forest owners, giving them the tools they need to manage healthy and sustainable woodlands. ATFS is the largest and oldest sustainable woodland system in America, internationally recognized. Clean air, clean water, habitat for wildlife, wood for sustainable building and nature for hiking, hunting and fishing – all come from family forests. And ATFS helps family forest owners meet stringent third-party standards for managing nearly 26 million acres of forestland. *The American Tree Farm System grows stewardship from the roots.*

## The American Forest Foundation



American Forest Foundation

The American Forest Foundation (AFF) works on-the-ground with families, educators, and elected officials to promote stewardship and protect our nation's forest heritage. A commitment to the next generation unites our nationwide network of forest owners and educators working to keep our forests healthy and our children well-prepared for the future they will inherit.

To grow the next generation of leaders ready to inherit America's natural legacy, AFF also works with tens of thousands of educators every year through its environmental education program Project Learning Tree® (PLT). Project Learning Tree uses forests as a window on the world and provides educators with supplemental curriculum materials that can be integrated into lesson plans for all grades and subject areas. In an era where more and more children are disconnected from nature, more than 500,000 teachers nationwide have been trained to use this curriculum, opening a door to America's outdoor heritage. Thanks to these efforts, 75 million students have learned how to think, not what to think, about complex environmental issues and help them learn the skills they need to make sound choices about the environment. *The American Forest Foundation grows stewardship every day.*

## **POLICY STATEMENT ON COMPLIANCE WITH ANTITRUST LAWS**

Fair and vigorous competition is essential to the maintenance of this country's free enterprise system. In furtherance of this principle, all activities are to be conducted in strict compliance with antitrust laws. Staff, officers, directors, members, and committee members are reminded that they are required to comply with the spirit and requirements of the antitrust laws.

A free exchange of ideas on matters of mutual interest to representatives of the forest community and others is necessary for the success of all meetings. Such an exchange of views is essential to the success of each meeting. It is not the purpose of this policy to discourage the exploration in depth of any matters of legitimate concern to meeting participants. Nevertheless, to ignore certain antitrust ground rules, either through ignorance or otherwise, is to create a hazard business people cannot afford.

The Sherman Antitrust Act, the Clayton Act, the Federal Trade Commission Act, and the Robinson-Patman Act comprise the basic federal antitrust laws, which set forth the broad areas of conduct considered illegal as restraints of trade. In general, agreements or understandings between competitors that operate as an impediment to free and open competition are forbidden. The broad language of the Clayton Act suggests the scope of federal antitrust prohibitions by forbidding any "agreement or understanding . . . to substantially lessen competition or trend to create a monopoly in any line of commerce."

This is, at best, only a general outline of some of the areas that pose antitrust dangers in discussions between competitors and between sellers and their customers. They are provided to guide discussion during meetings, and in connection with social or other gatherings on those occasions.

If any question arises about an item on a meeting agenda, it should be reviewed by legal counsel before the meeting. If the question does not arise until the meeting has begun, or if a questionable topic is about to be discussed in connection with any gathering, whether or not a formal meeting, that discussion should be immediately stopped and not resumed until approved by legal counsel.

## Have a question? Who do you call?

Name in bold is primary contact

November 2011

Address changes/updates – **Sara Anrrich**

Advocacy/Policy questions – **Rita Hite**, Melissa Harden, Emily Marx

AFF/ATFS governance – **Paul Trianosky**, Liz Sandler

AFF Standards – **Sarah Crow**, Quincey Blanchard, Liz Sandler, Paul Trianosky

ATFS Education Grants program – **Caroline Kuebler**, Sara Anrrich

ATFS website corrections and suggestions – **Sara Anrrich**, Caroline Kuebler

Carbon aggregation – **Mary Snieckus**

Certification – **Sarah Crow**, Quincey Blanchard, Liz Sandler, Paul Trianosky

Committee documentation (MOUs, Workplans, Reports) - **Caroline Kuebler**, Sara Anrrich, Mike Burns

Convention and National Leadership Conference – **Liz Sandler**, Amy Yambor

Convention or National Leadership Conference registration – **Sara Anrrich**, Amy Yambor

Database questions – **Amy Yambor**, Quincey Blanchard

Display request – **Sara Anrrich**

Ecosystem services markets – **Mary Snieckus**

Environmental Education and Project Learning Tree (PLT) – **Kyle Cooper**

Farm Bill Questions – **Caroline Kuebler**, Rita Hite

Green Building – **Melissa Harden**, Sarah Crow, Liz Sandler

Inspector certificates and manuals – **Quincey Blanchard**, Sarah Crow

Inspection/Inspector questions – **Quincey Blanchard**, Mike Burns, Sarah Crow

Insurance rider requests – **Sara Anrrich**

Landowner Engagement Strategy – **Liz Sandler**, Mike Burns, Paul Trianosky

Materials or logo items – **Amy Yambor**, Sara Anrrich

Monthly Leadership Update Newsletter – **Sara Anrrich**, Caroline Kuebler

Program resources, policies and Leadership Handbook – **Caroline Kuebler**, Amy Yambor

Reimbursements – **Sara Anrrich**

Recognition and awards – **Sara Anrrich**, Amy Yambor

Speaking and travel requests – **Liz Sandler**

State committee Capacity Building – **Mike Burns**

Third Party Audits/Assessments – **Sarah Crow**, Quincey Blanchard, Liz Sandler

Tree Farmer Magazine and communications – **Brigitte Johnson**

Tree Farm signs – **Sara Anrrich**

Verification of certified properties – **Quincey Blanchard**, Sarah Crow

### American Tree Farm System Contacts

Sara Anrrich	Program Coordinator, ATFS	202-463-2733	sanrrich@forestfoundation.org
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Emily Marx	Program Coordinator	202-463-2431	emarx@forestfoundation.org
Kyle Cooper	Program Coordinator, PLT	202-463-2754	kcooper@forestfoundation.org
Sarah Crow	Manager, Certification	202-463-2738	scrow@forestfoundation.org
Melissa Harden	Manager, Public Policy	202-463-2456	mharden@forestfoundation.org
Rita Hite	VP, Public Affairs	202 463 2594	rhite@forestfoundation.org
Brigitte Johnson	Tree Farmer Magazine	202 463 5163	bjohnson@forestfoundation.org
Caroline Kuebler	Outreach Manager	202 463 2450	ckuebler@forestfoundation.org
Liz Sandler	Director	202 463 2421	lsandler@forestfoundation.org
Paul Trianosky	Interim VP of Forestry	202 463 2781	ptrianosky@forestfoundation.org
Mary Snieckus	Conservation Incentives	202 463 5181	msnieckus@forestfoundation.org
Amy Yambor	Operations Manager	202-463-5172	ayambor@forestfoundation.org

# ATFS Resources

The following is a list of available resources for Inspectors and Tree Farmers. If you have any questions at all, please contact ATFS staff at [inspectors@forestfoundation.org](mailto:inspectors@forestfoundation.org).

## Websites:

**American Forest Foundation Website** – [www.forestfoundation.org](http://www.forestfoundation.org)

- **Tree Farm Website** – [www.treefarmssystem.org](http://www.treefarmssystem.org)
- **Certification** – [www.treefarmssystem.org/certification](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/certification)  
*Information on certification programs and procedures*
- **Recognition programs** – <http://www.treefarmssystem.org/awards-recognition>  
*Information on Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year, Inspector of the Year, and Hard Hat awards*
- **Standards** – <http://www.treefarmssystem.org/standards-for-certification>  
*Information on the 2010-2015 Standards and associated documents such as the Standards Guidance document*
- **Woodland Owners Resource** – <http://www.treefarmssystem.org/woodland-resources>  
*The Woodland Owners is your one stop shop for researching special sites and other items covered by the 2010 Standards by state.*
- **In Your State:** <http://www.treefarmssystem.org/in-your-state>  
*Inspectors and Tree Farmers can find the contact information for the State Tree Farm Program by clicking on their state.*
- **Services Directory** – <http://www.treefarmssystem.org/services>  
*Inspecting foresters who have completed at least one inspection since the current application of the current standards may request their information be posted on the Services Directory. E-mail [inspectors@forestfoundation.org](mailto:inspectors@forestfoundation.org) to get your contact information posted.*
- **Inspectors' Corner** – [www.treefarmssystem.org/inspectorscorner](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/inspectorscorner)  
*Visit the Inspectors' Corner for past issues of the Sightline and Sightline Express newsletters, award nomination forms, and 004 inspection forms.*
- **Webinars** – <http://www.treefarmssystem.org/atfswebinarseries>  
*ATFS Webinars are a great educational resource for both Inspectors and Tree Farmers. Foresters may receive CFEs for attendance of ATFS Webinars.*

## What are these various resources?

### Standards Guidance Document

The Standards Guidance document is a guide for landowners on how to implement the 2010 2015 Standards on their Tree Farm and for inspectors on how to assess Tree Farmer conformance to the Standards.

### Tree Farmer Magazine

All ATFS inspectors receive a free, annual subscription to the Tree Farmer Magazine. This magazine provides practical, how-to and hands-on information that helps Tree Farmers get the most out of their woodlands.

### Forests & Families

The Forests & Families newsletter is published 2-3 a year and sent to all certified Tree Farmers. Forests & Families includes ATFS programmatic updates and other informative articles.

### Sightline

The Sightline newsletter accompanies the Forests & Families newsletter and is developed exclusively for ATFS inspectors. Read here for information on the ATFS program and for answers to your questions in the "Stumped" column.

### Sightline Express

Sightline Express, our e-newsletter to inspectors, is a quick monthly update on all things Tree Farm.



# Program Participation and Policies

## CATEGORIES OF TREE FARM PARTICIPATION

There are six categories of participation in the American Tree Farm System: Certified, Pioneer, Member, Heritage, and Windbreak.

**Certified Tree Farm**: meets the AFF Standard, current inspection, within acreage limit (or falls under grandfather clause), non-industrial private forestland and meets AFF Board of Trustees approved Eligibility Rules.

**Pioneer Tree Farm**: designed for new Tree Farmers that do not meet AFF Standard, not ATFS Certified

**Member Tree Farm**: Tree Farms not inspected within the traditional five-year reinspection cycle. No additional properties have been added to the member category since December 31, 2005. These properties are no longer ATFS Certified. States have the option of reaching into the pool to bring the Member Tree Farms back into the system with an inspection.

**Heritage Tree Farm**: recognizes industrial forestland participation in ATFS, not ATFS Certified

**Windbreak Tree Farm**: recognizes properly placed windbreaks or shelterbelts, not ATFS Certified

**Demonstration Tree Farm**: recognizes sustainably forestry and outreach and education activities conducted on non-eligible lands.

**CERTIFIED TREE FARM – for most current certification documents, see [www.treefarmssystem.org](http://www.treefarmssystem.org)**

The Certified Tree Farm category is the highest level of participation in the program. ATFS Certification requires landowners to meet the AFF Standard and remain subject to an inspection under a yearly national sampling system after required initial inspection. Landowners must meet the ATFS eligibility requirements and own between 10 acres and no more than 20,000 contiguous acres. Properties between 10,000 – 20,000 contiguous acres must be certified through an Independently Managed Group (IMG) Organization or individually third-party certified by an ANAB accredited certification body. State committees may not bring new Tree Farms exceeding 10,000 contiguous acres into ATFS. All ATFS certified properties must meet the ATFS eligibility requirements.

The American Tree Farm System offers third party certification to lands meeting the ATFS Eligibility Requirements. Landowners have three options to ATFS certification. *Please refer to the Tree Farm website ([www.treefarmssystem.org/certification](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/certification)) for more information.*

1. Individual Third Party Certification
2. Group Certification through Independently Managed Group (IMG) Organizations
3. Group Certification through ATFS Regional State Programs

### **PIONEER TREE FARM**

The Pioneer Tree Farm category allows interested landowners, who may not quite meet the AFF Standard, to participate in the American Tree Farm System. The Pioneer category also serves as a corrective action program for landowners who were found through an inspection or other contact to be out of conformance with the Standards and program requirements. Tree Farms out of conformance may be assigned to the Pioneer category if the landowners are committed to taking the steps necessary to bringing their management into conformance .

The goal of the Pioneer Tree Farm category is to provide landowners an opportunity to work towards certification, whether they are new to the Tree Farm system or were previously certified but must update their management. Pioneer status is an introductory level of participation in the program, however, is not a mandatory starting point for Tree Farmers meeting all requirements of ATFS Certification. Landowners meeting the AFF Standard should be considered for ATFS Certification.

**Requirements of Pioneer Tree Farm:**

1. Minimum of 10 and Maximum of 10,000 contiguous forested acres.
2. Meet the ATFS Eligibility Requirements.
3. Pioneer Tree Farms may have a written forest management plan, but the plan is not required prior to initial inspection and designation as a Pioneer Tree Farm. In order to achieve ATFS Certification, a
1. Pioneer Tree Farmer must begin following a written plan that meets the AFF Standard before graduation to Certified status can occur.
4. Pioneer Tree Farms must meet the AFF Standard within five years or be removed from the program.
5. Pioneer Tree Farms may not display the Certified Tree Farm Sign. State committees may voluntarily develop a special letter or certificate acknowledging the Pioneer status. If Certified at a later date, Tree
2. Farm Sign and certificate are provided.

**MEMBER TREE FARM**

The Member Tree Farm category is a probationary level to maintain communications with previously Certified Tree Farms whose inspection has lapsed. Tree Farms could only lapse to Member status prior to the implementation of the national required sampling system in 2006. **There are no new Member Tree Farms.** State Tree Farm Committees are not responsible for maintaining communications with remaining Member Tree Farms, but may choose to do so. These properties are no longer considered Certified, but can be reinspected and if appropriate, recertified at any point. Member Tree Farms were those which had entered into this category automatically after the 6<sup>th</sup> year since last inspection (prior to implementation of sampling system).

**HERITAGE TREE FARM**

The Heritage Tree Farm program recognizes industrial forestlands that have historically supported the American Tree Farm System. The forest industry has been a valued and supportive element of ATFS for over 65 years, and the Heritage Tree Farm program seeks to recognize these properties and organizations. Heritage Tree Farms are not ATFS Certified, yet may display the Heritage Tree Farm Sign for public relations purposes.

**Requirements of Heritage Tree Farm:**

1. Must currently be supporting ATFS.
2. Heritage Tree Farm Signs, if displayed, are purchased at cost by the participating company.

**WINDBREAK TREE FARM**

In wide-open spaces such as the Plains States, wind can erode soils and cause problems for people, crops and animals. Properly placed windbreaks or shelterbelts can help reduce these effects. State Tree Farm Committees can choose to recognize Windbreak Tree Farms; however, these properties are not considered ATFS Certified unless they encompass at least 10 forested acres and meet the AFF Standard.

**Requirements of Windbreak Tree Farms:**

1. Area should be at least one (1) acre. Smaller areas of special merit can be considered at the committee's discretion.

2. Planted windbreaks must be at least three (3) years old.
3. The windbreak must be designed to protect soil, water, range, aesthetic quality, recreation, timber, fish and wildlife resources.
4. The planting must be protected from livestock damage, wildfire, insects, disease, rodents and other destructive influences.
5. Windbreaks should be properly maintained to enhance long-term health and productivity. In the process of thinning, weeding or replacing trees, every effort should be made to make use of cut trees for useful products.

### **DEMONSTRATION TREE FARM**

Whether small or large, State Tree Farm Committees may recognize excellent forestry on lands which do not meet the ATFS eligibility requirements as “Tree Farm Demonstration Areas.” These properties may display the Tree Farm sign, but must carry an additional sign identifying the area as a demonstration area and include the wording, “Tree Farm Demonstration Area”. Tree Farm Demonstration Areas will not be ATFS Certified and will not be assigned a Tree Farm number.

### **Requirements of Tree Farm Demonstration Areas:**

1. Area must be used to demonstrate sustainable forestry concepts.
2. State committee must apply to CFF Operating Committee for any new demonstration areas.  
*Reference document 1.4.4 for application.*

## **American Tree Farm System Certifier Eligibility Requirements**

**The following minimum education and/or experience requirements are necessary for professionals certifying and inspecting Tree Farms.**

- All inspectors must successfully complete the Certifier Training Program. Inspectors must complete the refresher training every five years, which will coincide with AFF Standard revisions.

**All inspectors must meet at least one of the four recognized requirements:**

- A Bachelor of Science, Forestry degree, or higher from a Society of American Foresters (SAF) accredited program.
- Two-year forestry technician degree from an SAF recognized program.
- Anyone already serving as a Tree Farm inspector prior to July 31, 1999 is grandfathered in as an inspector **provided** their names were included in a list of inspectors submitted by the State Tree Farm Chair to the American Forest Foundation by July 31, 1999 and has completed the Certifier Training Program.
- Anyone professionally practicing forestry and meeting the following minimum educational requirements.

**Forest Ecology and Biology:** A minimum of one course in each of the three broad subject areas of Dendrology, Forest Ecology and Soils is required. Each subject area is described as follows: **Dendrology** -- taxonomy; distribution; tree physiology, including metabolism and growth. **Forest Ecology** -- ecological concepts and principles; characteristics of tree growth, including structure and function of ecosystems, wildlife/fish biology, and ecology. **Soils** -- soil formation, classification, composition, and properties.

**Measurement of Forest Resources:** A minimum of one course in each of the three broad subject areas of Forest Measurements, Sampling Design and Techniques and Surveying and Mapping is required. Each subject area is described as follows: **Forest Measurements** -- forest inventory; growth and yield; volumetric, including measurement of trees, forests, and forest products; wildlife habitat assessment; measurement of water yields and quality. **Sampling, Design and Techniques** -- sampling theory and methods including statistics. **Surveying and Mapping** -- photogrammetry; remote sensing; land surveying, including mapping and area determination; geographic information system applications.

**Management of Forest Resources:** A minimum of one course in each of the three broad subject areas of Forest Management, Silviculture, and Forest Protection is required. Each subject area is described as follows: **Forest Management** -- integrated forest resource management on stand, system, and landscape scales, with consideration of wood, forage, water, wildlife, fish, recreation, cultural, educational, and aesthetic benefits; forest engineering, harvesting, and utilization. **Silviculture** -- to include methods of establishing and controlling the composition, growth, and quality of forest stands. **Forest Protection** -- entomology and pathology, including the study of representative forest organisms and the application of integrated pest management; fire ecology and use of fire.

**Forest Resources Policy and Administration:** A minimum of one course in two of the three broad subject areas of Forest Policy, Forest Economics, and Business Management is required. This area integrates the understanding of the social, cultural, political, legal, economic, institutional, and historical influences of forestry. Each of the subject areas is described as follows: **Forest Policy** -- forest policy history and development; application and administration; land and resource planning; real estate law. **Forest Economics** -- forest or natural resource economics. **Business Management** -- budgeting; financial, and personnel management; accounting.

# American Forest Foundation (AFF) 2010- 2015 Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification

## Standards Prologue

The American Forest Foundation's (AFF) 2010-2015 Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification promote the vitality of renewable forest resources while protecting environmental, economic and social benefits and work to increase public understanding of all benefits of sustainable forestry. They are based on North American and Pan-European guidelines for **sustainable forest management**, encourage **adaptive management**, and serve as the basis for the American Tree Farm System® (ATFS) certification program. **Forest owners** and managers who follow the AFF Standards of Sustainability are encouraged to promote the American Tree Farm System® program by displaying appropriate signs and participating in relevant program activities.

The AFF 2010-2015 Standards of Sustainability address aspects of **sustainable forest management** and incorporate eight standards with various performance measures and indicators. ATFS **qualified Tree Farm inspectors, group managers, and accredited third-party assessors** will conduct field verification of **landowner** conformance to the AFF Standards as prescribed by ATFS policies and procedures. All AFF **sustainability** elements (standards, performance measures and indicators) are important and will be considered in reviews. Responsibilities, task, or obligations that are phrased with the word “*must*,” are core elements that are required to be certified by the American Tree Farm System. *Note: **Bold type** throughout this document denotes words or phrases defined in the attached glossary. An asterisk symbol (\*) indicates guidance provided in the appendix document.*

This document was prepared at the direction of the AFF Board of Trustees. It was developed by the 2008-2009 Independent Standards Review Panel under the process described by the AFF Standards Setting Procedures. Guidance documents (third-party auditing, internal monitoring, and **landowner** guidance) for implementation and interpretations will be used to clarify requirements of the Standards.

Guidance: Please note that all of the indicators for a Performance Measure apply to each property being certified to the 2010 Standard.

The guidance statements are intended to inform the landowner, the inspector and the third-party auditor as to the intent of the Standard. Guidance statements are not the Standard.

Inspectors and auditors are cautioned to apply the Standard as written, avoiding personal preference. Inspectors and auditors are urged to respect the forest owner's opportunity for creative solutions embodied in the Standard.

## Standard 1: Commitment to Practicing Sustainable Forestry

**Forest owner** demonstrates commitment to **forest vitality** by developing and implementing a sustainable forest **management plan**.

### Performance Measure 1.1

**Forest owner** must have and implement a written forest **management plan** consistent with the size of the forest and the **scale** and intensity of the forest activities.

Guidance: Landowner objectives for managing the subject property must be stated in the plan document. The management plan may be comprised of several separate documents that, taken together, comprise the management plan.

#### *Indicator 1.1.1*

**Management plan** must be active, adaptive, and embody the **landowner's** current objectives, remain appropriate for the land certified, and reflect the current state of knowledge about forestry and natural resource management.

Guidance: The management plan must conform to the intent of the landowner's objectives. For example: if the landowner's objective is to increase the occurrence of wild turkey on the property, the management plan is expected to prescribe management activities that will enhance, or at least maintain, suitable wild turkey habitat. Landowner objectives are concise, high-level, statements of what the landowner hopes to accomplish through their management. The detail for achieving the objectives will be reflected in the body of the plan.

Plan detail should reflect the forest and habitat complexity of the property as well as the management intensity planned for the property. The Standard does not require a prescribed management plan information structure or hierarchy. The plan preparer has considerable latitude in developing the plan at a level of complexity that meets the landowner's objectives and provides for an accurate method of prescribing any planned treatments or activities to the forest property or its component parts.

The nature of adaptive management requires that the landowner not be bound to follow the management plan prescriptions when circumstances influencing the property and its management have changed or when the landowner's objectives change. Examples of such changes would include regeneration-harvest of significant portions of the timber, the sale or acquisition of lands included in the certificate and major damage from: storms, fire, pest or disease outbreaks.

Handwritten notes to the plan are acceptable as indications of updates to the plan for individual properties. A more formal or structured system for recording plan changes is to be expected with larger collections of properties whether under one ownership or part of a Group Management structure. A Group Manager is expected to have a system in place that will allow timely retrieval and editing of management plans under its authority and responsibility.

While the plan is not expected to address all possible facets of state-of-the-art forestry or habitat management, the plan is expected to avoid commonly accepted poor forestry or wildlife management practices. For Example: A plan that prescribes practices to maximize short term income should not compromise long term forest health or productivity.

Interpretation (approved by Certification Committee 6.21.2010):

It is widely accepted that management plans can present a suite of options to landowners for their consideration. ATFS does not view management plans as a strict blueprint for landowner action, rather that management plans are adaptive and responsive to a number of factors. Inspectors and third-party auditors should contemplate the following question when assessing the conformance of a management plan to the AFF Standards; does the failure to perform the plan-action constitute a breach of sustainability for this property? If the answer is no - then the landowner is not out of conformance. If the answer is yes - then this is an issue that needs to be addressed.

*Indicator 1.1.2*

**Management plans must:** clearly state **landowner's** objectives, describe desired forest condition, include management activities aimed at reaching the desired forest condition and **landowner's** objectives, document a feasible strategy for activity implementation, and include a tract map accurately depicting significant forest related resources.

Where present, and relevant to the property, the plan must address the following resource elements: forest health, soil, water, wood and fiber production, threatened and endangered species, **special sites**, **invasive species**, **integrated pest management**, and **high conservation value forests**.

Where present, relevant to the property, and consistent with **landowner's** objectives, the plan preparer may consider, describe and evaluate the following resource elements: fire, wetlands, **desired species** (fish, wildlife and plant), recreation, aesthetic quality, biomass and carbon.

Guidance: The plan must clearly state what type of forest conditions (i.e. fast growing conifer plantations, mixed hardwood bottomland forests, older forests of longleaf pine, etc...) the landowner is attempting to achieve, as well as the practices that will be used to achieve the conditions.

The plan must specifically mention the required topics (landowner objectives, forest health, soil, water, wood and fiber production, threatened and endangered species, special sites, invasive species, integrated pest management, and high conservation value forests). If there is no occurrence of an attribute on the required topic list (threatened and endangered species, special sites, invasive species, high conservation value forests) the plan may simply say that the attribute is not present on the subject property. (see Standards 4, 5 and 7)

Integrated Pest Management (see glossary) needs only to be addressed if there is a pest or disease outbreak on the property that warrants management action.

The plan may mention attributes from the optional list (fire, wetlands, desired species, recreation, aesthetic quality, biomass and carbon) if they are present or desired by the forest owner. If the topic is mentioned, the plan must address that property attribute in some way.

There is no requirement for level of detail in the plan. Addressing the attribute may be as simple as saying that "the attribute will be protected during all forest operations in compliance with applicable regulations". Alternately, the plan preparer may provide a detailed description of the management actions or protections specific to the attribute.

It is understood that property recently covered by a written management plan will not necessarily have evidence of plan performance.

*Indicator 1.1.3\**

**Forest owner** should monitor for changes that could interfere with the management objectives as stated in **management plan** (e.g., presence of **invasive species**, pest outbreaks, and indications of trespass). When problems are found, reasonable actions are taken.

Guidance: Monitoring for individual landowners can be achieved by visiting the property at least once per year, riding through it or walking the trails. Landowners are encouraged to walk their property boundary lines.

Landowners are encouraged to keep a written record of monitoring observations to defend themselves from adverse possession claims, substantiate any casualty losses and enable them to make timely response to trespass, illegal dumping, timber theft and insect or disease outbreaks. Records of monitoring may be informal and can be included in the management plan documentation.

Landowners may commission someone else to do their monitoring for them.

Landowners who cannot readily visit their property(s) on a regular basis, as well as Independently Managed Groups, are expected to have a documented record of property visits and monitoring observations.

Landowner records of management activities, over time, should give evidence that the landowner is responding to information inputs from monitoring.



## Standard 2: Compliance with Laws

Forest management activities comply with all relevant federal, state and local laws, regulations and ordinances.

### Performance Measure 2.1

**Forest owner must** comply with all relevant federal, state, county, and municipal laws, regulations, and ordinances.

Guidance: It is recommended that landowners employ the maxim “When in doubt, ask”.

Common forest management activities that are regulated in many states include: state and federally protected species and their habitat, prescribed burning, herbicide and insecticide application, harvesting, road building, pond construction and stream crossings.

Excellent professional resources are available to the forest owner at local natural resource agency offices. Please consult the resource pages for forest owners, on the ATFS website, for additional help on relevant federal and state laws and regulations.

Compliance with all relevant (applicable) laws can be verified in a three-tiered process:

- Step 1 – Observation of conditions on the subject property
- Step 2 – The landowner’s own verbal or written claim of legal compliance
- Step 3 – Research with the state Department of Natural Resources, local Natural Resource Conservation Service office or State Forestry Commission offices

If Step 1 and Step 2 do not raise any issues, then the inspector or auditor is not required to employ Step 3.

### *Indicator 2.1.1*

**Forest owner must** comply with all relevant laws, regulations and ordinances and will correct conditions that led to **adverse regulatory actions**, if any.

Guidance: Full legal compliance to relevant laws, regulations and ordinances is the intent of the Standard. Mistakes may occur in carrying out forest management activities. Forest owners must be committed to correcting inadvertent violations. A pattern of willful violation of relevant laws, regulations or ordinances is not acceptable.

If there is evidence of past non-conformance (see Guidance for 2.1), then the landowner must show proof of a good-faith effort to remedy the non-conformance. If the matter is tied up in court, then the landowner is only disqualified when a final adverse judgment is rendered AND the landowner refuses to comply with the ruling.

*Indicator 2.1.2*

**Forest owner** should obtain advice from appropriate professionals, or contractors who are trained in, and familiar with, relevant laws, regulations and ordinances.

Guidance: Regulatory compliance advice from untrained, non-professionals is discouraged and can lead to costly mistakes.

### **Standard 3: Reforestation and Afforestation**

**Forest owner** completes timely restocking of **desired species** of trees on harvested sites and non-stocked areas where tree growing is consistent with land use practices and the **forest owner's** management objectives.

Performance Measure 3.1

Reforestation or afforestation must be achieved by a suitable process that ensures adequate stocking levels.

*Indicator 3.1.1*

Harvested forest land must achieve adequate stocking of **desired species** reflecting the **forest owner's** management objectives, within five years after harvest, or within a time interval as specified by applicable regulation.

Guidance: The landowner should ask their natural resource professional or check with the state agency responsible for forestry assistance to find out if there is a reforestation law in place, and if so, to ensure compliance with it.

Adequate stocking levels for planted tree stocks are prescribed by federal and state reforestation cost-share programs and can be used as a guide even where cost-share funds were not used. However, certain wildlife habitat management regimes may favor lower stocking rates than the cost-share program guidelines do. Therefore, it is important to make sure the chosen guidelines fit the forest conditions and are consistent with landowner objectives.

Natural regeneration stocking assessments should account for both softwood and hardwood regeneration.

Please refer to the ATFS website for further stocking guide resources.

## Standard 4: Air, Water, and Soil Protection

Forest management practices maintain or enhance the environment and ecosystems, including air, water, soil and site quality.

### Performance Measure 4.1

**Forest owner must** meet or exceed practices prescribed by **State Forestry Best Management Practices** (BMPs) that are applicable to the property.

Guidance: State Forestry BMP compliance is required by the Standard in all states. Forest owners are urged to secure a copy of the state forestry BMP guide from their state forestry agency and to familiarize themselves with the guidelines in it for harvesting, road building, reforestation, habitat management and other forest activities. For many states this information is available free on-line and in printed format.

For states with Forest Practice Acts the statutes, administrative rules, and guidance for the Acts is considered the equivalent of BMP's. Where the AFF standard reads BMP, the inspector or auditor should reference the Forest Practice Act in states where present.

### *Indicator 4.1.1*

**Forest owner must** implement specific BMPs that are applicable to the property.

Guidance: When planning management activities that will cause any soil disturbance or require chemical application, the BMP manual for the state that the property is located in should be consulted and applicable BMP methods employed. Examples of activities requiring BMP application:

- Harvest planning – including block design, haul roads, skidder trails, stream crossings and truck-loading areas
- Reforestation design – mechanical or chemical site preparation, machine or hand planting
- Road maintenance or construction – all facets
- Prescribed burning plans – fire lane construction, smoke management, agency notification

No field evidence of BMP implementation is to be expected where no management activity has occurred. However, if the property shows evidence of water quality impairment originating on the property, that is not caused by the forest owner's actions, the forest owner is strongly encouraged to have plans for remediation.

Examples:

- Forest owner purchases a tract with a forest road that is eroding soil into a water body.
- ATV riders are trespassing on the property and are crossing a stream causing the banks to erode
- Garbage is being dumped on the property near a stream crossing and some of it is getting into the stream during high-water conditions
- Storm damage has impaired the performance of road culverts

*Indicator 4.1.2*

**Forest owner** must minimize road construction and other disturbances within riparian zones and wetlands.

Guidance: State BMP manuals are generally quite detailed on recommended practices for road construction and other disturbances of riparian zones. If there is a point of confusion, the forest owner is advised to consult with a natural resource professional who is experienced in forest road design and installation. In some states, permits may be required for forest roads or other disturbances that intersect a riparian zone.

Forest owners should specify with contractors that state forestry BMPs must be adhered to.

In all cases, the primary concern is to avoid contaminating watercourses that are adjacent to the forest activity.

Performance Measure 4.2

**Forest owner** must consider **integrated pest management** to control pests, pathogens and unwanted vegetation.

*Indicator 4.2.1*

**Forest owner** should evaluate alternatives to manage pest, pathogens and unwanted vegetation to achieve specific management objectives.

Guidance: Integrated pest management (IPM) can take many forms, some of the most effective measures are preventative. Measures that improve forest health or in some other way protect the property from injurious organisms are very cost-effective. Forest Chemical applications are often used only when other control measures are ineffective.

Forest owners should consult with their state forestry agency or natural resource professional to learn about recommended IPM techniques for any particular disease or pest outbreak on their property.

Examples:

Southern Pine Beetle outbreaks are most economically controlled by cutting down all of the affected trees, as well as a buffer of green trees around the zone showing evidence of infestation. Merchantable trees should be hauled to market immediately and the rest laid flat on the ground. SPB outbreaks are discouraged by maintaining healthy stands that are free to grow. Prompt thinning is a good preventative measure.

Annosus root rot outbreaks can be controlled by applying Borax to the freshly cut stumps of harvested trees when thinning softwoods in the affected area. Annosus root rot can be discouraged by avoiding partial cutting in infection areas, favoring less susceptible species in regeneration and use of prescribed fire in certain situations.

*Indicator 4.2.2*

**Pesticides** used must be EPA-approved.

Guidance: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approves the use of pesticides for specific situations and on specific plants or animals, at specified application rates. The forest owner is responsible for ensuring that the planned use of a pesticide is in compliance with the EPA label limitations. Please consult the resource pages for forest owners, on the ATFS website, for additional information on EPA-approved pesticides

*Indicator 4.2.3*

**Pesticides** must be applied, stored and disposed of in accordance with EPA-approved labels and by persons appropriately trained, licensed and supervised.

Guidance: In most states, forestry chemicals must be applied by a licensed applicator. The forest owner is responsible for ensuring that anyone applying forestry-use chemicals is in compliance with state and federal regulations. In some states landowners can apply certain pesticides on their land without any special permits or licenses. In others they can apply for and receive, a license or permit to apply forestry chemicals on their own lands according to the EPA label limitations. In any event, the requirements for safe use, storage and disposal must be met by forest owners and /or their agents.

**Performance Measure 4.3**

When used, **prescribed fire** must conform with **forest owner's** objectives, the **forest management plan** and pre-fire planning.

Guidance: In many states the state forestry agency employs a permit system for prescribed burning. Many of these agencies provide training for prescribed burning that is available to forest owners. Successful completion of a prescribed burning course is often required before the state forestry agency will issue a burning permit. Many states regulate the amount of open burning that can be conducted on a given day in a county or multi-county zone.

Prescribed burning includes controlled burning of piles, windrows and broadcast fire applications.

A prescribed burning plan is recommended, which will include: reconnaissance of the burning block, estimates of fuel condition, required weather conditions and adequate means of controlling the fire after it is set. Oral discussion of a burning plan with all of the parties involved, before the burn is started on the property, is acceptable – a written burning plan record is not required by the Standard but may be required by the state agency that regulates open burning in the state.

Inspectors and auditors may test for compliance with PM 4.3 by interviewing the forest owner and observing the property. The forest owner may have written records to support conformance claims, but is not required to do so.

**Indicator 4.3.1**

**Prescribed fire** must conform with the **management plan** and state and local laws and regulations.

Guidance: The intent is that the forest owner's plans and good-faith actions in using prescribed fire conform to the management plan and the relevant laws and regulations.

It is recognized that the best laid plans may go awry on any given day. The inspector or auditor is to look for a pattern of wise use of prescribed fire where it is used

## Standard 5: Fish, Wildlife and Biodiversity

Forest management activities contribute to the conservation of **biodiversity**.

### Performance Measure 5.1

Forest management activities must maintain or enhance habitat for threatened or endangered communities and species.

Guidance: State or Federally listed threatened or endangered species and their habitats are protected in the relevant laws and regulations. If landowners become aware of the presence of a threatened or endangered species on their property, it is their duty to become aware of the requirements for protecting the habitat for that species and to take appropriate actions in the management of their property.

### Indicator 5.1.1

**Forest owner** must confer with natural resource agencies, state natural resource heritage programs or review other sources of information to determine occurrences of threatened and endangered species on the property and their habitat requirements.

#### Guidance – Threatened or Endangered Species:

Forest owners are not required to do an exhaustive search for threatened or endangered species on their property. Forest owners are expected to make a good-faith effort to find out if there are known occurrences of a threatened or endangered species on their property.

If there are known occurrences of threatened or endangered species on the property, then the forest owner may be required to make provisions for their protection if specified by regulation.

Contacting the state Natural Resource or Fish & Game service representative is usually an effective way to find out if a forest property is known to contain a threatened or endangered species.

Threatened or endangered species lists are maintained by the US Fish & Wildlife Service in accordance with the Endangered Species Act [ [http://ecos.fws.gov/tess\\_public/](http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/) ].

Nationally listed threatened or endangered freshwater fish that migrate to sea are listed by NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) [ <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/esa/> ].

Some threatened or endangered species are also listed separately by the State Agencies. Please consult the ATFS website for additional resources on threatened or endangered species.

*Indicator 5.1.2*

Forest management activities must incorporate measures to protect identified threatened or endangered species.

Guidance: Forest owners are encouraged to consult with a natural resource professional for assistance in planning to protect threatened and endangered species.

Measures for habitat protections may include:

- no mechanical entry in the habitat area
- restricted pesticide use in the habitat area
- residual tree maintenance in the habitat area
- buffer zone establishment and maintenance around the habitat area
- hunting or fishing restrictions
- signage or marking of the habitat area

Performance Measure 5.2

**Forest owner** should address the **desired species** (fish, aquatic, wildlife, and plant) and/or desired forest communities in the **management plan** and forest management activities.

Guidance: Forest owners may wish to increase the presence, on their property, of one or more desirable species such as deer, persimmon trees or large-mouth bass. While these goals may have been mentioned in the Landowner Objectives, the body of the plan should give some detail on management activities planned to achieve the stated objective(s)

*Indicator 5.2.1*

**Forest owner** should consult available and accessible information on management of the forest for **desired species** (fish, aquatic, wildlife, and plant) and/or forest communities and integrate it into forest management.

Guidance: Several good sources for desired species management are readily available to the forest owner:

- Non profit organizations that focus on the desired species
- State and Federal agencies that focus on fish and game species
- Extension Service publications

Please consult the resource pages for forest owners, on the ATFS website, for additional information on desired species management.



Performance Measure 5.3

**Forest owner** should make practical efforts to prevent, eradicate or otherwise control **invasive species**.

*Indicator 5.3.1*

**Forest owner** should make practical efforts to prevent, eradicate or otherwise control **invasive species** using a range of **integrated pest management** methods.

Guidance: On monitoring visits to the property, forest owners should be alert to the presence of forest-invasive species.

Natural resource professionals can supply the forest landowner with up-to-date information on forest invasive species. When reasonably available, the forest owner should take advantage of learning opportunities about forest-invasive species. Integrated pest management techniques may provide a cost-effective method of control that will avoid forest chemical use.

If control measures for forest-invasive species require the use of forest herbicides, all herbicide applications should be conducted by trained applicators, in accordance with state and federal regulations.

Invasive species are most commonly associated with plants, but in reality can include a wide range of plants, animals and fungi.

Examples: Kudzu, Japanese Privet, Chinese Tallow Tree, Multi-flora Rose, Norway Maple, Scotch Broom, Himalaya Blackberry, Tree of Heaven, feral hogs, Gypsy Moth, Nutria

Performance Measure 5.4

Forest management activities should maintain or enhance **rare species** and **high conservation value forests**.

Guidance - Rare species:

Forest owners are not required to do an exhaustive search for rare species on their property. Forest owners are encouraged to make a good-faith effort to find out if there are known occurrences of a rare species on their property.

Rare species may not be listed on state or federal Threatened & Endangered species lists but may be considered by the landowner to be a rare occurrence on their own property even if regionally abundant. This often happens because the landowner's property is out of the main range for a given species or past management practices have extirpated the species from the local area.

If there are known occurrences of rare species on the property, then the forest owner may be required to make provisions for their protection if specified by regulation.

NatureServe has an on-line database that can be searched at the county level for rare plants and animals

[ <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer/servlet/NatureServe> ]

Examples of rare species occurrence;

- A bear's den
- A patch of natural ginseng
- A morel mushroom patch
- A champion tree

Guidance - High conservation value forests

Most high conservation value forests in the United States that are globally, nationally or regionally significant have been identified and protected by Federal or State government, or have been put under conservation easement by an environmental non-profit organization.

There is no single central clearinghouse of information on high conservation value forests. There is, at this time, no state or federal agency that regulates high conservation value forests on private forest lands. Several organizations have listed areas that they believe merit high conservation value forests status.

High conservation value forests are evaluated at the landscape level rather than the forest stand level. High conservation value forests are areas that need to be sustained for their unique values not a single attribute.

Please consult the resource pages for forest owners on the ATFS website for additional help on high conservation value forests. The Certification Committee has determined that similar resources used to verify the existence of special sites can be used to verify high conservation value forests. These resources include the State Natural Heritage databases (or similar databases), state wildlife action plans, etc. The process to identify these areas is similar to the process used for identifying special sites as well.

## Indicator 5.4.1

Appropriate to the **scale** and intensity of the situation, forest management activities should incorporate measures to protect or mitigate impacts on **rare species** and identified **high conservation value forests**.

Guidance: Forest owners who have identified some or all of their forest property as containing rare species should delineate the area on maps associated with the management plan. Management activities on or adjacent to the designated rare-species-area should not harm or diminish the habitat for the rare species. For rare species identified on the property, the forest owner is urged to confer with relevant state wildlife agencies to gain a better understanding of the legal requirements for habitat protection, as well as protection of the organism(s).

Forest owners who have identified some or all of their forest property as high conservation value forest should delineate the area on the maps associated with the management plan. Management activities on or adjacent to the high conservation value forest should not harm or diminish the high conservation values that lead to the designation of the area.

A more likely scenario, for family forest owners, is that the forest owner's property is adjacent to a state or federally protected area that is identified as a high conservation value forest. Forest owners should consider the impact, to a neighboring high conservation value forest, of planned activities on their forest property.

## Standard 6: Forest Aesthetics

Forest **management plans** and management activities recognize the value of forest aesthetics.

### Performance Measure 6.1

**Forest owner** should manage the visual impacts of forest management activities consistent with the size of the forest, the **scale** and intensity of forest management activities and the location of the property.

#### *Indicator 6.1.1*

Forest management activities should apply **visual quality measures** compatible with appropriate silvicultural practices.

Guidance: Forest aesthetics considerations can be incorporated into management planning with little cost to the forest owner. Employing forest aesthetics considerations into the management plan can produce a much more visually appealing experience on property visits for owners, their guests and passers-by using nearby public roads.

Forest owners can access a very good Forest Aesthetics Guide at <http://www.aces.edu/forestry/aesthetics/>

Print copies can be ordered from Forest Resources Association at [http://www.forestresources.org/PUBLICATIONS/print\\_pubs.html](http://www.forestresources.org/PUBLICATIONS/print_pubs.html)

The guide was produced jointly by American Forest and Paper Association and Forest Resources Association

#### Examples:

- Place log truck-loading zones out of public view
- Leave islands of mast or roost trees within harvest areas
- Put a bend in the entrance road to block view of tract interior
- Follow contour lines and timber type margins with roads and harvest boundaries
- Close and re-vegetate idle roads with wildlife-friendly plants

## Standard 7: Protect Special Sites

**Special sites** are managed in ways that recognize their unique historical, archeological, cultural, geological, biological or ecological characteristics.

### Performance Measure 7.1

Forest management activities must maintain **special sites**.

#### *Indicator 7.1.1*

**Forest owner** must make a reasonable effort to locate and protect **special sites** appropriate for the size of the forest and the **scale** and intensity of forest management activities.

Guidance: Special sites are generally smaller in size than high conservation value forests. Special sites are evaluated at the forest stand or sub-stand level. Most special sites will be a small portion of the property. Special sites may be designated for purely sentimental reasons, or may be sites with significant cultural or archeological significance. Special sites may not be found on every property. The probability of a special site occurrence increases in proportion to the size of the forest ownership.

It is recommended that the forest owner identify special sites on management planning maps and, where appropriate, on the ground. However, the forest owner may choose not to identify some special sites on the ground in an effort to protect them from vandalism or overuse.

Special sites can be identified during property reconnaissance prior to preparing the management plan, from old property maps, from local lore and during monitoring reconnaissance. The forest owner may wish to contact the State cultural heritage program for additional information on local sites that have special historical significance.

Please consult the resource pages for forest owners, on the ATFS website, for additional resources on special sites.

Any special site identified in the management plan must include provisions for its protection, especially during forest management activities.

#### Examples:

American Indian burial sites, historical building ruins, old cemeteries, cave entrances, spring heads, rare mineral outcroppings, Civil War battle ground, a champion tree, a bear's den, a pitcher plant bog, a covered bridge

Inspectors and auditors may test for conformance with PM 7.1 by interviewing the forest owner for awareness, reviewing plan documents and associated operating records, and by observing the property.

## Standard 8: Forest Product Harvests and Other Activities

**Forest product** harvests and other management activities are conducted in accordance with the **management plan** and consider other forest values.

### Performance Measure 8.1

**Forest owner** should use **qualified natural resource professionals** and **qualified contractors** when contracting for services.

#### *Indicator 8.1.1*

**Forest owner** should seek **qualified natural resource professionals** and **qualified contractors**.

Guidance: The services of a qualified natural resource professional can prove very cost-effective for the forest owner. Costly mistakes that involve wasted time, resources or regulatory violations may be avoided.

Many states have registration, or licensing systems for foresters and wildlife managers. The people listed by these systems have passed rigorous entrance exams and are required to regularly obtain continuing education.

State forestry and wildlife agencies often can provide referral-lists of natural resource professionals who are working in the state or county.

The Society of American Foresters has a Certified Forester program  
<http://www.safnet.org/certifiedforester/index.cfm>

The Wildlife Society has a Certified Wildlife Biologist program  
[www.wildlife.org/certification/index.cfm](http://www.wildlife.org/certification/index.cfm)

The Association of Consulting Foresters is a national association of forestry consultants:  
<http://www.acf-foresters.org>

A qualified natural resource professional often will be familiar with the contractors who are doing forestry-related work in the area and can make recommendations.

Please consult the resource pages for forest owners, on the ATFS website, for help in finding contractors who are well trained in BMP and regulatory compliance, as well as, assistance in finding natural resource professionals.

*Indicator 8.1.2\**

**Forest owner** should engage contractors that carry appropriate insurance and comply with appropriate federal, state and local safety and **fair labor rules**, regulations and standard practices<sup>1</sup>.

Guidance: Forest owners are encouraged to stipulate that contractors are required to be in compliance with all relevant laws and regulations. A natural resource professional can help with this process.

Forest Owners are encouraged to discuss liability issues with their insurance agent and their attorney to gain a perspective on appropriate insurance minimums that they might require of contractors.

*Indicator 8.1.3*

**Forest owner** should retain appropriate contracts for **forest product** harvests and other management activities to demonstrate conformance to the AFF Standards.

Guidance:

Forest owners should review the Standard before planning management activities. Forest owners should specify in contracts for forestry activities that appropriate BMPs must be adhered to.

Other contract specifications might include:

- Protection of special sites
- Adherence to labor laws
- Requirements for adequate insurance
- Protection of soil and water integrity
- Residual tree damage
- Forest road maintenance and restoration
- Fence and gate protection and/or restoration
- Litter control
- Hazardous material spill prevention and clean-up

Examples of forestry activities requiring review for AFF Standards compliance:

- Harvest operations including timber and non-timber products
- Site preparation and reforestation
- Forest road construction and maintenance
- Mineral extraction
- Hunting and fishing
- Invasive species control
- Pest management

<sup>1</sup> Auditors shall consider any **complaints** alleging violation of **fair labor rules** filed by workers or organized labor since the previous third-party certification audit. The auditor shall not take action on any labor issues pending in a formal grievance process or before Federal, State or local agencies or the courts, however, until those processes are completed. Absent a record of documented **complaints** or non-compliances, contractors and managers are assumed to be in compliance with this indicator.

Performance Measure 8.2

**Forest owner** must monitor **forest product** harvests and other management activities to ensure they conform to the **management plan** objectives.

*Indicator 8.2.1*

Harvest, utilization, removal and other management activities must be conducted in compliance with the **management plan** and maintain the potential of the property to produce **forest products** and other benefits sustainably.

Guidance: The forest owner may monitor harvesting and other activities personally or they may employ someone else to do it for them. Many forest owners engage a natural resource professional for this function.

The intent of Performance measure 8.2 is to ensure the maintenance of “the potential of the property to produce **forest products** and other benefits sustainably” Good planning, utilizing natural resource professionals, engaging competent contractors and using an effective contract go a long way toward this end.



## Glossary of Terms

**accredited third party assessors** – A natural resource professional who has completed ATFS required training for third party assessors and is contracted or employed by an International Accreditation Forum (IAF) accredited certification body.

**adaptive management** – A dynamic approach to forest management in which the effects of treatments and decisions are continually monitored and used to modify management on a continuing basis to ensure that objectives are being met (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**adverse regulatory actions** – Written warning, citations or fines issued by law enforcement or regulatory bodies.

**biodiversity** – The variety and abundance of life forms, processes, functions and structures of plants, animals and other living organisms, including the relative complexity of species, communities, gene pools and ecosystems at spatial scales that range from local through regional to global (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998).

**complaint** – Labor complaints are those with formal documentation filed through the state's fair labor practices board or similar body.

**desired species** – Those species of flora and fauna designated in the landowner's management plan and not known to cause negative impacts on the local environment.

**fair labor rules** – Include federal, state and local labor legislation and international labor standards cited in Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC) Annex 3, Chapter 3.3.

**forest owner** – Landowner or designated representative such as, but not limited to, professional resource manager, family member, trustee, etc.

**forest product** – [Forest Produce] Any raw material yielded by a forest. Generally defined in Forest Acts or Ordinances, and subdivided conventionally into major forest products, i.e. timber and fuelwood, and minor forest products, i.e. all other products including leaves, fruit, grass, fungi, resins, gums, animal parts, water, soil, gravel, stone and other minerals on forest land (F. C. Ford –Robertson, Terminology of Forest Science Technology, Practice, and Products, Society of American Foresters, 1971.

**forest vitality** – The health and sustainability of a forest.

**group manager** – The individual(s) designated by the Independently Managed Group organization to manage the administrative affairs of implementing and achieving the AFF Standards and Standard Operating Procedures for group programs (SOP-01) for an ATFS certified independently managed group program. Please refer to the ATFS Group Certification Process documentation.

**high conservation value forests** – Forests of outstanding and critical importance due to their environmental, social, biodiversity or landscape values. Due to the small scale and low-intensity of family forest operations, informal assessment of HCVF occurrence through consultation with experts or review of available and accessible information is appropriate.

**integrated pest management** – The maintenance of destructive agents, including insects, at tolerable levels by planned use of a variety of preventative, suppressive, or regulatory tactics and strategies that are ecologically and economically efficient and socially acceptable (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998). A pest control strategy that uses a variety of complementary strategies including: mechanical devices, physical devices, genetic, biological or cultural management and chemical management (US EPA).

**invasive species** – Non-native species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health (Executive Order 13112 (Feb. 3,

1999).
<b>landowner</b> – Entity that holds title to the property to be certified.
<b>management plan</b> – Documents that guide actions and that change in response to feedback and changed conditions, goals, objectives and policies. Management plans may incorporate several documents including, but not limited to, harvest plans, activity implementation schedules, permits, research, etc. For the purposes of the American Tree Farm System® eligible management plans, plan amendments may include letters, notes, and other forms of informal updates in addition to formal plan revisions.
<b>pesticide</b> – Pesticides include chemicals commonly known as herbicides and insecticides.
<b>prescribed fire</b> – A fire ignited by management to meet specific objectives (Helms et al, <u>The Dictionary of Forestry</u> , Society of American Foresters, 1998).
<b>qualified contractor</b> – Forest contractors who have completed certification, licensing, recommended training and education programs offered in their respective states.
<b>qualified natural resource professional</b> – A person who by training and experience can make forest management recommendations. Examples include foresters, soil scientists, hydrologists, forest engineers, forest ecologists, fishery and wildlife biologists or technically trained specialists in such fields.
<b>qualified Tree Farm inspector</b> – A natural resource professional who has completed ATFS required training for certifying forested properties and is eligible to inspect properties on behalf of ATFS. ATFS requires all trained inspectors meet approved eligibility requirements.
<b>rare species</b> – A plant or animal or community that is vulnerable to extinction or elimination.
<b>scale</b> – The extent of forest operations on the landscape/certified property.
<b>special sites</b> – Those areas offering unique historical, archeological, cultural, geological, biological or ecological value. Special Sites include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Historical, archaeological, cultural and ceremonial sites or features of importance to the forest owner;</li> <li>B. Sites of importance to wildlife such as rookeries, refuges, fish spawning grounds, vernal ponds and shelters of hibernating animals;</li> <li>C. Unique ecological communities like relic old-growth, springs, glades, savannas, fens and bogs; and</li> <li>D. Geological features such as terminal moraines, cliffs and caves.</li> </ul>
<b>state forestry best management practice(s) (BMPs)</b> – Forestry BMPs are generally accepted forest management guidelines that have been developed by state forestry agencies with broad public stakeholder input.
<b>sustainability</b> – The capacity of forests, ranging from stands to ecoregions, to maintain their health, productivity, diversity and overall integrity, in the long run, in the context of human activity (Helms et al, <u>The Dictionary of Forestry</u> , Society of American Foresters, 1998).
<b>sustainable forest management</b> – The practice of meeting the forest resource needs and values of the present without compromising the similar capability of future generations (Helms et al, <u>The Dictionary of Forestry</u> , Society of American Foresters, 1998). <i>Note</i> – AFF's Standards of Sustainability reflect criteria of sustainability based on the Montreal Process, 1993, and the Pan-European Operational-Level Guidelines (PEOLGs).
<b>visual quality measures</b> – Modifications of forestry practices in consideration of public view, including timber sale layout, road and log landing locations, intersections with public roadways, distributing logging residue, tree retention, timing of operations and other factors relevant to the scale and location of the project.

American Tree Farm System (ATFS) eligibility requirements were developed to ensure that ATFS certification remains consistent with the mission of outreach to small private landowners, and to positively affect the management of their lands.

### **Acreage Limitations for ATFS Certification**

The acreage of the entire parcel is used for evaluation purposes. The evaluator is to deduct non-forest acres from the total acreage of the parcel. In cases where the candidate parcel is attached to a larger property, or ownership, the parcel is the evaluation unit. Forest owners may choose to certify a portion of their entire property portfolio but may not exempt a portion of a contiguous forest management unity that does not meet the AFF Standards. Forested acres may include features such as food plots, water resources (lakes, ponds, streams), and other non-forested areas as long as these are small enough that they are an integrated part of the forest system.

- Individual forest owners may enroll **contiguous** properties from 10 acres to 20,000 acres.
- **Independently Managed Group** (IMG) programs may enroll **contiguous** properties from 10 acres to 20,000 acres.
- **Individual third-party certificate** holders may include under their certificate, **contiguous** properties from 10 acres to 20,000 acres.
- ATFS acreage limits apply only to **contiguous** parcels.

### **Landowner Requirements for ATFS Certification**

Landowner requirements may be delegated to a land manager; a land manager may implement the requirements of the program on behalf of the landowner. However, landowners must be engaged in the decision to pursue certification.

- Ownership must be **privately held** or held by a **public entity**.
- Properties must be **non-industrial** but may be associated with **small local business**.
- Owner must clearly exhibit commitment to sustainable management through management objectives or management plan.  
Conformance to the requirements of the 2010 AFF Standard is the benchmark for meeting this eligibility requirement.
- Owner(s) demonstrates proactive forest management involvement.  
Forest owners may demonstrate proactive involvement by collaborating on the development of the management plan, by periodic monitoring visits to the property or by hiring a qualified natural resource professional to oversee the management of the property.
- Ownership goals and objectives reinforce the ATFS mission.  
The candidate's conformance to Standard 1 of the AFF Standard is sufficient for meeting this eligibility requirement.
- Owner(s) is engaged in active outreach efforts or can contribute to the effort.  
There are several ways that forest owners can participate in outreach efforts; among them are: hosting forest-related tours on their property; joining a national, regional or local forestry / forest-owner association; supporting legislation that

**Bolded** terms are found in the Glossary Section

Reference: 11-03-2009 ATFS Eligibility Requirements

promotes private forest health and viability; supporting research that enhances the knowledge and practice of forest management on private forests; writing for publications in support of sustainable forestry on private lands; donating resources to these, and similar, forestry and forest landowner initiatives.

A new forest owner may not have a history of doing these things. However, the forest owner must be willing to explore ways to meet the requirement that fit their style and situation.

**ATFS reserves the right to refuse certification to any party.**

ATFS reserves the right to refuse certification to forest owners whose documented actions or values are, in the judgment of ATFS, to be in conflict with the values and mission of the American Forest Foundation.

**Exceptions**

ATFS may review petitions for exceptions, and may make eligible for certification, properties that contribute to the greater mission of American Forest Foundation (AFF) and the conservation of private forest land in the United States.

**Third-Party Certification Assessments**

All certified Tree Farms are to be covered by a third-party certificate issued by an accredited **Certification Body**. Tree Farms enrolled through the State Tree Farm Committees are certified under an ATFS regional certificate and may be included in a sample population during a state program certification assessment. Tree Farms enrolled through an **Independently Managed Group (IMG) program** are certified under the IMG third party certificate and may be included in a sample population during the IMG certification assessment. **Individual Third – Party Certificate** holders are required to undergo their own certification assessment by an accredited **Certification Body**.

**Bolded** terms are found in the Glossary Section

Reference: 11-03-2009 ATFS Eligibility Requirements

## Enrollment Guide

Situation	Enrollment Options		
	State ATFS Program	IMG Group Certification	Individual 3 <sup>rd</sup> -Party Certificate
Individual owner - all contiguous parcels are 10 acres to 10,000 acres	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Individual owner - contiguous parcels greater than 10,000 acres, up to 20,000 acres		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Small Business owner - all contiguous parcels are 10 acres to 10,000 acres	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Small Business owner - contiguous parcels greater than 10,000 acres, up to 20,000 acres		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Public entity (except State Governments) - contiguous parcels 10 acres to 10,000 acres (public entities may enroll in an IMG as a Category 3 member)	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Public entity (except State Governments) – contiguous parcels 10,000 acres to 20,000 acres (public entities may enroll in an IMG as a Category 3 member)		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
State Government – contiguous parcels 10 acres to 20,00 acres		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Investment portfolio property - contiguous parcels 10 acres to 20,000 acres		<b>X</b>	

## ATFS Enrollment Procedures

1. State Tree Farm Committees may enroll individual forest owner properties from 10 acres to 10,000 **contiguous** acres. To enroll in the ATFS State Program, contact the state program representative; find contact information on the ATFS web site. A trained ATFS-approved Tree Farm inspector must visit the property and review the management documentation. If the requirements of the AFF Standard are met, the inspector will complete and submit a form to recommend the property(s) for certification.
2. Properties owned by state governments must undergo third-party certification assessments; properties may not be enrolled through a state Tree Farm committee. State government owned properties may be enrolled through an **Independently Managed Group** (IMG) program or the entity may obtain an **individual third-party certificate**. To enroll a state government owned property, contact the ATFS staff representative; find contact information on the ATFS web site.
3. Properties less than 10,000 contiguous acres owned by **public entities** may be certified through the state Tree Farm committees. Properties larger than 10,000

**Bolded** terms are found in the Glossary Section

Reference: 11-03-2009 ATFS Eligibility Requirements

## ***Eligibility Guidance for Certification by the American Tree Farm System***

Approved May 20, 2011

- contiguous acres owned by **public entities** must be certified through an IMG program or under an **individual third-party certificate**.
4. **Independently Managed Group** (IMG) program properties can be enrolled by the Group Manager and its trained representatives. To enroll in a Group, contact the National ATFS staff representative to learn what Groups may be offering services in your area; find contact information on the ATFS web site.
  5. Entities interested in obtaining an **Individual third-party certificate** should contact ATFS staff for more information on the process and preliminary assessment of eligibility.

**Bolded** terms are found in the Glossary Section

Reference: 11-03-2009 ATFS Eligibility Requirements

***Grandfathered Properties***

Properties smaller than 10 contiguous acres, or larger than 20,000 contiguous acres, certified prior to December 31, 2009, were grandfathered into the program so long as they continue to meet the requirements of the AFF standard. The focus of the grandfather process is at the landowner level, rather than the tract level.

***Grandfathered Properties Transition Requirements under the 2010 AFF Standard***

- All properties larger than 10,000 contiguous acres currently certified by the state Tree Farm committees must undergo third-party certification audits. This requirement may be fulfilled by joining an independently managed group (IMG) organization or by obtaining an **individual third-party certificate**.
- Landowners will have until December 31, 2012, to recertify their lands in conformance with the current eligibility requirements and the AFF Standard.
- Properties larger than 10,000 contiguous acres owned by **public entities** will have until December 31, 2012 to be recertified through an independently managed group (IMG) or by obtaining an individual third-party certificate.
- Properties owned by state governments will have until December 31, 2012 to be recertified through an independently managed group (IMG) or by obtaining an individual third-party certificate.

**Bolded** terms are found in the Glossary Section

Reference: 11-03-2009 ATFS Eligibility Requirements

## **Glossary**

Accredited third-party assessors – A natural resource professional who has completed ATFS required training for third party assessors and is contracted or employed by an International Accreditation Forum (IAF) accredited certification body.

Certification Body (CB) – An International Accreditation Forum (IAF) accredited organization recognized by AFF as trained and approved for third-party auditing to the AFF standard.

Contiguous - contiguous parcels are discrete parcels that share a boundary line or corner point and are held under the same legal ownership name.

Independently Managed Group (IMG) – A company, corporation, firm, authority or institution that is a legal entity. The entity has its own functions and administration, and consists of a Group Manager and individual qualified Group Members seeking to collectively implement and become certified to the AFF Standards and ATFS-IMG- 01. All IMGs are required to undergo audits, by accredited third-party assessors, to ensure conformance with the ATFS standard and ATFS-IMG-01.

**Category 1 Group Members** retain final decision-making authority for management activities to be conducted on their property. This category may include individuals, family ownerships, LLCs and other similar entities. The Group Member may, through contract or other agreement, utilize the Group Organization's services for some management activities. Group Members may also participate in group management plans where management decisions and responsibilities are shared between the Group Organization and the Group Members.

**Category 2** Group Members have knowingly and affirmatively delegated full management responsibility for implementation of the AFF Standards to the Group Manager. Category 2 properties are under aggregated ownership as part of an investment fund portfolio. The Group Organization as the management consultant assumes overall operational management responsibility and performs all of the functions required for conformance to the AFF Standards. This category may include properties that meet the ATFS eligibility requirements and are managed by a Timber Investment Management Organization (TIMO). Category 2 Group Members include those entities referred to as Aggregated Management Groups (AMGs) in the 11-03-2009 ATFS Eligibility Requirements.

**Category 3 Group Members** are government entities. The property owner may have knowingly and affirmatively delegated full or partial authority for management and decision-making to the Group Manager, or the owner may retain all management authority. The Group Organization may perform some, or all, of the

**Bolded** terms are found in the Glossary Section

Reference: 11-03-2009 ATFS Eligibility Requirements



functions required for conformance to the AFF Standards. Examples of Category 3 members are: a local municipality, a public grade-school, a public university, a publically-owned watershed authority, a tribal government, a state or federal agency.

Individual third-party certificate – Certification to the AFF Standard is awarded by ATFS at the recommendation of an approved independent auditing firm after a successful audit of the candidate property(s) and the relevant management documentation.

Non-industrial – An entity whose primary source of revenue is not derived from processed forest products.

Small local business - The definition of a small business can be found in Title 13 of the Code of Federal Regulations: Business Credit & Assistance, Part 121 Small Business Size Regulations. Small business timber tract operations have annual receipts less than \$7 million. Small business logging operations have fewer than 500 employees. All small business wood product manufacturers have fewer than 500 employees. Small business paper manufacturers have fewer than 500-750 employees depending on the sector.

Privately held - Not publically owned; not owned by shareholders whose shares are listed, or traded, on a publically accessible exchange.

Public entity –Examples: a local municipality, a public grade-school, a public university, a publically-owned watershed authority, a tribal government, a federal agency. Properties owned by state governments must be covered by an individual third-party certification or an Independently Managed Group (IMG) program certificate.

**Bolded** terms are found in the Glossary Section

Reference: 11-03-2009 ATFS Eligibility Requirements

# Request for Interpretation of the 2010-2015 Standards of Sustainability

The 2010-2015 Standards of Sustainability were approved by the AFF Board of Trustees November 3, 2009. All Tree Farmers, those in the state programs, group programs or with individual third-party certificates, are required to meet the 2010 Standards from December 31, 2010 onwards.

To assist landowners with their implementation of the 2010 Standards and inspectors and third-party assessors with their inspections, ATFS has released a Standards Guidance document. This document contains clarification on how the 2010 Standards should be implemented on the ground, and will contain any official interpretations developed by the AFF Standard & National Interpretation Committee.

Any party within the American Tree Farm System may request an interpretation of the Standards by the NIC. Requests must follow the procedure below to be considered by the NIC.

## **Interpretations Request Procedure:**

- 1) Submit request by letter to ATFS staff
- 2) Request should reference the Standard element to be interpreted (e.g. Indicator 1.1.1)
- 3) Include an example to illustrate the need for an interpretation for the Standard element in question

Standards interpretations requests will be processed within 60 days of receipt of the letter by ATFS staff. The AFF Standard & National Interpretation Committee is composed of members of the ATFS Certification Committee and is charged by the AFF Board of Trustees to provide official interpretations. Once finalized, interpretations shall be distributed among the ATFS community. Inspections and third-party certification assessments will include review of official interpretations.

# Completing the Tree Farm Inspection Form

(004 Inspection Form including Standards Checklist)

*Print all information except signatures*

## General Guidelines:

- 1) **Signatures** – Inspecting forester and state representative signatures are required on all forms. Inspecting forester initials are required on the Standards Checklist. All initial inspections must have the Tree Farmer’s signature on the form.
- 2) **Contact information** – Unless the information is recorded in the pre-populated portion of the form (unless the form is blank for an initial inspection or optional reinspection) be sure to fill in the necessary information.
- 3) **Form completeness** – Please review all items on the 004 inspection form. Please be sure to check all appropriate boxes on the Standards Checklist, fill in all dates necessary and include comments where appropriate. ***If the form is not complete, a state committee representative or ATFS staff will be in contact for the missing information.***

## Form Sections:

### 1) Pre-populated information

- Required sample forms and some optional inspection forms (5-6 year reinspections) will have pre-populated information in upper left-hand box below the Tree Farm number information. Review the pre-populated information for completeness and correctness. If the information is correct, leave the Tree Farmer and Tree Farm boxes blank (right side of the form below the inspection information). If necessary, update in the Tree Farmer and Tree Farm boxes.

### 2) Inspection

- For initial inspections, fill in the appropriate checkbox in the Initial Inspection box.
- For National Required Sample and optional inspections, indicate if the inspection results in a recertification, decertification (if so, indicate reason), or if the Tree Farm has been designated a Pioneer Tree Farm (more information under *Program Policies and Procedures*).

### 3) Tree Farmer contact

- For initial inspections, record landowner’s name (Organization or Tree Farm name must be accompanied by a contact name) and primary mailing address.
- For reinspections, confirm contact information with landowner.
- If available, be sure to record additional information such as email and phone.

### 4) Tree Farm

- Record ownership type (if other, please provide details).
- Acreage refers to forested acreage to be certified.
- If the Tree Farm lies in multiple counties, please include primary county in this section, and detail additional counties with acreage in the **notes** section.
- “Property Legal Address” refers to the legal location of the property, e.g. section, township and range

- “Directions to Property” refers to the local directions to help guide future inspectors and third-party assessors to the property if necessary
  - GPS coordinates – please record in any form if available. Central point locations are sufficient.
  - Be sure to indicate if the landowner is an absentee owner.
- 5) Inspecting Forester**
- May be left blank if the pre-populated information in the left-hand side box is correct.
- 6) Forest Management Activity**
- Check all boxes that apply to recent forest management activity (in past five years or since last inspection).
  - Be sure to include descriptive comments on the activity performed if applicable.
- 7) Recommendations**
- Enter brief description of recommendations as appropriate.
- 8) Management Plan Location**
- Use this space to indicate if the landowner holds a current copy of the management plan, or if there it is held by a representative, such as a consulting forester or state agency office.
  - Indicate when the plan was last reviewed, updated or revised.
- 9) Notes**
- Provide any necessary explanations or general notes
  - Include any interesting information about the Tree Farm or Tree Farmer not appropriate elsewhere on the form (e.g. Landowner hosts field days for the local
- 10) Authorization**
- Tree Farmer must sign form if it is an initial inspection. Recommended for all other inspections as well.
  - Inspecting forester must sign all forms, and initial Standards checklist.
  - State approval is required on all forms
  - Must include dates of approval.
- 11) Standards Checklist**
- Review each Standard element (Performance measures and indicators) and check appropriate response box.
    - i. Y (yes) – Indicates that an activity pertaining to the element has been completed and was in conformance (e.g. landowner has a management plan that meets the requirements of PM 1.1)
    - ii. N (no) – indicates that an activity pertaining to the element has been complete but was not in conformance (e.g. landowner has not reforested within five years and is not in conformance with I 3.1.1)
    - iii. N/A (not applicable) – No activity has been completed that pertains to the element (e.g. landowner does not conduct any prescribed burning on the Tree Farm and inspector checks N/A for PM 4.3)
  - All lines must have some check in any of the three checkboxes. Be sure to check the boxes for indicators (I) as well as performance measures (PM)

# American Forest Foundation

## Tree Farm Inspection Record

AFF Form 004 Revised 1/10

State \_\_\_\_\_ Tree Farm Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Reinspection Only:** ☐ Recertification ☐ Pioneer

☐ Decertification

Select a reason below

**Initial Inspection Only:**

☐ Pioneer ☐ Certified

☐ Deceased

☐ Sold

☐ No Interest

☐ Substandard

☐ Missing Owner

\*Field Inspection Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

\*Tree Farmer Interview Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Type: ☐ Field ☐ Phone ☐ Email

### Tree Farmer

Owner

Last or Organization Name

First Name

MI

Address

City

ST

Zip

Phone

E-Mail

### Tree Farm

Ownership

☐ Private (Non-Industrial)

☐ Other

Acreage

County

Property Legal Address\*

Directions to Property

GPS Coordinates

Absentee landowner? ☐ Yes ☐ No

### Inspecting Forester

Name

Last Name

First Name

MI

ID #

Phone

Email

### Recommendations

Harvest Method

Stand Improvement

Reforestation

Protection

Wildlife

Recreation/Access

**Management Plan Location:**

**Notes:**

### Recent Forest Management Activity \*

Harvest Method

Acres

Comments

☐ Coppice

☐ Even-Aged

☐ Uneven-Aged

☐ Other

Total Volume MBF

Stand Improvement

☐ Thinning

☐ Pruning

☐ Fertilization

☐ Vegetation Control

☐ Other

Reforestation

☐ Natural

☐ Seeded/Planted

☐ Other

Protection

☐ Fire

☐ Insect

☐ Disease

☐ Erosion Control

☐ Other

Wildlife

☐ Food Plots

☐ Shelter/Habitat

☐ Other

Recreation/Access

☐ Trails/Roads

☐ Scenic Value

☐ Other

### Authorization

\* State Approval

Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Certification Approved:

☐ Yes ☐ No

Regional Approval

Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Certification Recommended:

☐ Yes ☐ No

\* Inspecting Forester<sup>1</sup>

Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Certification Recommended:

☐ Yes ☐ No

Tree Farmer<sup>2</sup>

Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

1. See last page for AFF Standards of Sustainability Auditor Verification Form.

2. Signature affirms compliance with all relevant laws/regulations and permits agents of ATFS ingress and egress for inspection/verification purposes.

+ = Optional Info \* **Must fill out for required sample inspections**

# American Forest Foundation Standards of Sustainability - Standards Checklist

Performance Measure / Indicator	Y	N	N/A
<b>PM 1.1:</b> Forest owner <b>must</b> have and implement a written forest management plan consistent with the size of the forest and the scale and intensity of the forest activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 1.1.1: Management plan <b>must</b> be active, adaptive, and embody the landowner's current objectives, remain appropriate for the land certified, and reflect the current state of knowledge about forestry and natural resource management.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 1.1.2: Management plans <b>must</b> include: clearly state landowner's objectives, describe desired forest condition, include management activities aimed at reaching the desired forest condition and landowner's objectives, document a feasible strategy for activity implementation, and include a tract map accurately depicting significant forest related resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>REQUIRED:</b> Where present, and relevant to the property, the plan <b>must</b> address the following resource elements: forest health, soil, water, wood and fiber production, threatened and endangered species, special sites, invasive species, integrated pest management, and high conservation value forests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>SUGGESTED:</b> Where present, relevant to the property, and consistent with landowner's objectives, the plan preparer may consider, describe and evaluate the following resource elements: fire, wetlands, desired species (fish, wildlife and plant), recreation, aesthetic quality, biomass and carbon.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 1.1.3: Forest owner should monitor for changes that could interfere with the management objectives as stated in management plan (e.g., presence of invasive species, pest outbreaks, and indications of trespass). When problems are found, reasonable actions are taken.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments _____			
<b>PM 2.1:</b> Forest owner <b>must</b> comply with all relevant federal, state, county, and municipal laws, regulations, and ordinances.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 2.1.1: Forest owner <b>must</b> comply with all relevant laws, regulations and ordinances and will correct conditions that led to adverse regulatory actions, if any.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 2.1.2: Forest owner should obtain advice from appropriate professionals, or contractors who are trained in, and familiar with, relevant laws, regulations and ordinances.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments _____			
<b>PM 3.1:</b> Reforestation or afforestation <b>must</b> be achieved by a suitable process that ensures adequate stocking levels.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 3.1.1: Harvested forest land <b>must</b> achieve adequate stocking of desired species reflecting the forest owner's management objectives, within five years after harvest, or within a time interval as specified by applicable regulation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments _____			
<b>PM 4.1:</b> Forest owner <b>must</b> meet or exceed practices prescribed by State Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) that are applicable to the property.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 4.1.1: Forest owner <b>must</b> implement specific BMPs that are applicable to the property.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 4.1.2: Forest owner <b>must</b> minimize road construction and other disturbances within riparian zones and wetlands.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments _____			
<b>PM 4.2:</b> Forest owner <b>must</b> meet or exceed practices prescribed by State Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) that are applicable to the property.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 4.2.1: Forest owner should evaluate alternatives to manage pest, pathogens and unwanted vegetation to achieve specific management objectives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 4.2.2: Pesticides used <b>must</b> be EPA-approved.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 4.2.3: Pesticides must be applied, stored and disposed of in accordance with EPA-approved labels and by persons appropriately trained, licensed and supervised.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments _____			
<b>PM 4.3:</b> When used, prescribed fire <b>must</b> conform with forest owner's objectives, the forest management plan and pre-fire planning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 4.3.1: Prescribed fire <b>must</b> conform with the management plan and state and local laws and regulations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments _____			

Required Information

Landowner's Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Tree Farm Number \_\_\_\_\_

Inspector's Initials \_\_\_\_\_

# American Forest Foundation Standards of Sustainability - Standards Checklist

Performance Measure / Indicator	Y	N	N/A
<b>PM 5.1:</b> Forest management activities <b>must</b> maintain or enhance habitat for threatened or endangered PM communities and species.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 5.1.1: Forest owner <b>must</b> confer with natural resource agencies, state natural resource heritage programs or review other sources of information to determine occurrences of threatened and endangered species on the property and their habitat requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 5.1.2: Forest management activities <b>must</b> incorporate measures to protect identified threatened and endangered species.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments _____			
<b>PM 5.2:</b> Forest owner should address the desired species (fish, aquatic, wildlife, and plant) and/or desired forest communities in the management plan and forest management activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 5.2.1: Forest owner should consult available and accessible information on management of the forest for desired species (fish, aquatic, wildlife, and plant) and/or forest communities and integrate it into forest management.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments _____			
<b>PM 5.3:</b> Forest owner should make practical efforts to prevent, eradicate or otherwise control invasive species.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 5.3.1: Forest owner should make practical efforts to prevent, eradicate or otherwise control invasive species using a range of integrated pest management methods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments _____			
<b>PM 5.4:</b> Forest management activities should maintain or enhance rare species and high conservation value forests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 5.4.1: Appropriate to the scale and intensity of the situation, forest management activities should incorporate measures to protect or mitigate impacts on rare species and identified high conservation value forests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments _____			
<b>PM 6.1:</b> Forest owner should manage the visual impacts of forest management activities consistent with the size of the forest, the scale and intensity of forest management activities and the location of the property.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 6.1.1: Forest management activities should apply visual quality measures compatible with appropriate silvicultural practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments _____			
<b>PM 7.1:</b> Forest management activities <b>must</b> maintain special sites.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 7.1.1: Forest owner <b>must</b> make a reasonable effort to locate and protect special sites appropriate for the size of the forest and the scale and intensity of forest management activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments _____			
<b>PM 8.1:</b> Forest owner should use qualified natural resource professionals and qualified contractors when contracting for services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 8.1.1: Forest owner should seek qualified natural resource professionals and qualified contractors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 8.1.2: Forest owner should engage contractors that carry appropriate insurance and comply with appropriate federal, state and local safety and fair labor rules, regulations and standard practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 8.1.3: Forest owner should retain appropriate contracts for forest product harvests and other management activities to demonstrate conformance to the AFF Standards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments _____			
<b>PM 8.2:</b> Forest owner <b>must</b> monitor forest product harvests and other management activities to ensure they conform to the management plan objectives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 8.2.1: Harvest, utilization, removal and other management activities <b>must</b> be conducted in compliance with the management plan and maintain the potential of the property to produce forest products and other benefits sustainably.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments _____			

## Required Information

Landowner's Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Tree Farm Number \_\_\_\_\_

Inspector's Initials \_\_\_\_\_



## Management Plan Addendum for the 2010-2015 AFF Standards

*This addendum is a tool for your use. Please complete and attach it to your management plan.*

*Where present and relevant to the property, your management plan must address the following resource elements:  
Please include only those items not already addressed adequately in your current management plan.*

1. Review your management plan to determine if it states a desired forest condition, management activities aimed at reaching that condition, and a general schedule of activity implementation.

2. **Forest Health:** *The previous standards addressed environmental quality generally. The 2010 standards now separate out forest health, soil, and water.*

What is the condition of your forest? Are you conducting any activities to improve the health of your forest?

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3. **Soil:** *The previous standards addressed environmental quality generally. The 2010 standards now separate forest health, soil, and water.*

Do you have any general information on your forest soils? To conduct some preliminary research on your soils, visit the National Resource Conservation Service's (NRCS's) website: <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/> or contact your local office of the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service.

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4. **Water:** *The previous standards addressed environmental quality generally. The 2010 standards now separate out forest health, soil, and water. For more information on your state's Forestry BMPs, visit [www.treefarmssystem.org/woodlandresources](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/woodlandresources).*

Do you have any water on your property (e.g., streams, ponds, vernal pools, etc.)? If relevant, indicate water resources on your tract map. Are you planning any activities (new or continued) to protect these water resources?

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All Tree Farmers must adhere to current State Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) even in those states where BMPs are voluntary. I commit to implementing applicable BMPs on my Tree Farm.

☐ Yes ☐ No

COMMENTS:

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5. **Threatened or Endangered Species:** Are you aware of any occurrences of any threatened or endangered species (listed by your state or the federal government) on your property?

☐ Yes ☐ No

COMMENTS:

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What sources of information have you consulted to determine occurrences of threatened or endangered species on your property? The following are examples of research you may have conducted (please check those you have completed):

- ☐ Walked the property with a knowledgeable natural resources professional

DATE:

COMMENTS:

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- ☐ Consulted the state natural resource agency

DATE:

COMMENTS:

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- ☐ Researched sites provided on the ATFS Woodland Owners' Resource ([www.treefarmssystem.org/woodlandresources](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/woodlandresources))

DATE:

COMMENTS:

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- ☐ Other

DATE:

COMMENTS:

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Please include management activities related to the protection of any special sites found on the property:

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6. **Special Sites:** *Although this is not a new requirement under the AFF Standards, it has been included in the addendum as a result of ATFS inspections and third-party certification assessments have shown this management plan component that could be improved.*

Do you have any special sites on your property? (e.g., historical burial ruins, old cemeteries, cave entrances, rare mineral outcroppings, unique ecological communities).

Special sites can be identified by the landowner or by outside credible organizations such as a state forestry agency.

☐ Yes ☐ No

COMMENTS:

How have you made an effort to locate any special sites on your property? The following are examples of efforts you may have made to locate special sites (Please check those you have completed):

☐ Yes ☐ No

COMMENTS:

- ☐ Walked the property with a knowledgeable natural resources professional

DATE:

COMMENTS:

- ☐ Researched sites provided on the ATFS Woodland Owners' Resource ([www.treefarmssystem.org/woodlandresources](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/woodlandresources))

DATE:

COMMENTS:

- ☐ Reviewed old property maps

DATE:

COMMENTS:

- ☐ Contacted local cultural heritage organization

DATE:

COMMENTS:

- ☐ Other

DATE:

COMMENTS:

Please include management activities related to the protection of any special sites found on the property:

7. **Integrated Pest Management and Invasive Species:**  
What have you done to monitor your forest for the possible presence of any pests and/or invasive species?

Do you have any pest problems or invasive species on your property? If yes, please list.

☐ Yes ☐ No

All Tree Farmers must consider integrated pest management to control pests, pathogens, and unwanted vegetation (including invasive species). I commit to considering a variety of available pest management options when dealing with pest problems on my property. (Remember, integrated pest management techniques may include mechanical devices, physical devices, genetic, biological, or chemical management techniques)

☐ Yes ☐ No

COMMENTS (may include examples of management activities you will conduct to deal with any pests):

8. **High Conservation Value Forests:**  
Are you aware of any forests of exceptional conservation value on your property? (Definition: forests of outstanding and critical importance due to their environmental, social, biodiversity, or landscape values)

Landowner Signature:

Date:

# The Tracking Guide



If Tree Farmers decide to harvest wood, their ATFS Certification should be acknowledged in the marketplace. So, if you harvest timber, be sure Tree Farmers give the essential information to loggers, foresters and mills to ensure their wood is recognized as coming from a well-managed family forest.

There are many benefits to ATFS Certification. Tree Farmer's wood is eligible to flow into "chains of custody" certified by the Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI). A chain of custody traces wood, from the forest to a store shelf. This provides customers with the confidence that the wood products they purchase came from certified, sustainably-managed forests. By differentiating Tree Farm wood as certified, you are also contributing to the continued development of green markets and green jobs in the local community.

## **The important information to give to loggers, foresters, and mills:**

1. ATFS Regional Certificate
2. Tree Farm Number

### **Regional Certificate Numbers:**

**Western Region Certificate:** PWC-AFF-343

California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota and Washington

**North Central Region Certificate:** PWC-AFF-342

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin

**Southern Region Certificate:** PWC-AFF-341

Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia

**Northeast Regional Certificate:** FRS # C00227067

Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and West Virginia

## **RULES FOR USE OF AFF's AMERICAN TREE FARM SYSTEM® OWNED LOGO REGISTERED MARKS**

The American Forest Foundation, Inc. (AFF) is the owner of the following three service and collective marks (hereafter referred to as the “marks/registered marks”).



American Tree Farm System®

Wood Water Wildlife Recreation Certified Tree Farm®



Certified Family Forest™

### American Tree Farm System Marks

AFF owns all right, title and interest in the foregoing marks and exercises legitimate control over the use of the marks.

The purpose of these marks is to indicate membership in the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) collective group that is dedicated to the promotion of forest management. Any other use of these marks by individuals, organizations, or businesses is strictly prohibited.

1. AFF authorizes its ATFS state committees, qualified trained ATFS inspectors, certified ATFS Tree Farmers, ANAB accredited Certification Bodies, and certified Independently Managed Group (IMG) Organizations, and designated others to use the above listed marks provided the following conditions and limitations are strictly adhered to:
  - A. “American Tree Farm System®” the diamond shaped logo, and “Wood Water Wildlife Recreation Certified Tree Farm” are registered marks and must be accompanied by an ® to indicate that AFF owns the marks. “Certified Family Forest™, is also owned by AFF but is accompanied by an ™.
2. The registered marks may be used by ATFS state committees, qualified trained ATFS inspectors, certified ATFS Tree Farmers, ANAB accredited Certification Bodies, certified IMG organizations, and designated others:

- A. In marketing/advertising materials that focus on a summary of ATFS accomplishments or values, community activities, or any combination of the above. Such marketing and/or advertising may not endorse or promote product attributes or make value propositions. If the marks appear on any marketing/advertising materials, the following text must also appear (8 point type is acceptable).

**No endorsement of this product or service by the American Forest Foundation or the American Tree Farm System® is implied or intended.**

- B. In communications which explain and/or promote the American Tree Farm System, its services and/or participation in ATFS to various external and internal audiences.
- C. On business letterhead and business cards.
- D. In annual reports.
- E. On websites. However, individuals of ATFS state committees may not use the marks unless they meet the requirements of ATFS.

See Appendix for examples.

4. When making written reference to membership in ATFS, ATFSs dedication to the promotion of forest management, or when otherwise using the registered marks, the following statement **must** be included (8 point type is acceptable):

**The American Tree Farm System® is a program of the American Forest Foundation.**

5. AFF grants permission to ATFS state committees, qualified trained ATFS inspectors, certified ATFS Tree Farmers, ANAB accredited Certification Bodies, certified IMG Organizations, and designated others to link to the ATFS website, [www.treefarmssystem.org](http://www.treefarmssystem.org) and the AFF website [www.forestfoundation.org](http://www.forestfoundation.org).
6. The registered marks may **not** appear or be used directly on any:
- Commercial product.
  - Commercial product packaging.
  - Commercial advertising or marketing materials.
7. The registered marks may be used on promotional items (e.g., clothing, hats, desk/ office accessories, and mugs) provided that written permission is obtained from the American Forest Foundation prior to design and production. Layout, design, and artwork must be submitted to AFF's Communications Department to obtain written permission.

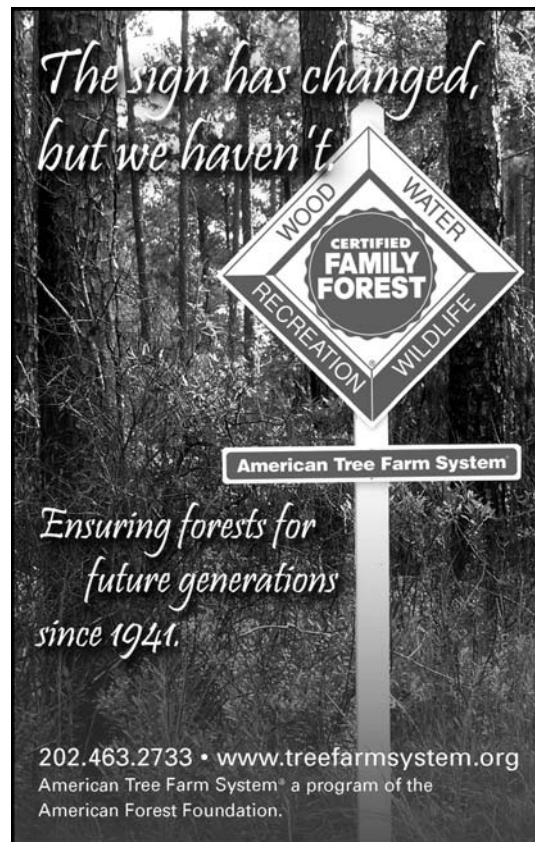
8. Use of the marks must comply with following requirements:
  - A. In presentations of the registered marks the color can be either black or green PMS 349. A reverse out of the diamond shaped logo mark is **not** allowed.
  - B. The ATFS marks may **not** be recreated or altered in any way. The marks are available electronically and on hardcopy stat sheet.
  - C. The marks may not be combined with any other logo or image in such a way as to create a third logo or mark.
  - D. The mark should have adequate clear space around it to ensure its clarity.
9. AFF reserves the right to request samples of all uses of the registered marks. AFF has the right to disapprove the use of the marks. Each ATFS state committee, qualified trained ATFS inspector, certified ATFS Tree Farmer, ANAB accredited Certification Body, certified IMG Organization, or designated others may be asked to identify a “registered mark contact” to whom AFF may direct inquiries and requests for sample use.
10. If AFF determines that an ATFS state committee, qualified trained ATFS inspector, certified ATFS Tree Farmer, ANAB accredited Certification Body, certified IMG Organization, or designated others shall immediately report such improper use to the ATFS state committee, qualified trained ATFS inspector, certified ATFS Tree Farmer, ANAB accredited Certification Body, or certified IMG Organization thirty (30) days in which to make a correction. Failure to make the correction will result in revocation of the right to use the marks.
11. In the event of misuse of the ATFS registered marks, an ATFS state committee, qualified trained ATFS inspector, certified ATFS Tree Farmer, ANAB accredited Certification Body, certified IMG Organization, or designated others shall immediately report such improper use to the AFF Communications Department.
12. The American Forest Foundation strictly prohibits the use of its marks for any purpose by individuals, organizations or businesses other than ATFS state committees, qualified trained ATFS inspectors, certified ATFS Tree Farmers, ANAB accredited certification body, certified IMG organizations, and designated others.

For more information on usage of these marks please contact:

Brigitte Johnson, APR  
Director of Communications  
American Forest Foundation  
1111 Nineteenth Street, NW  
Suite 780  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Phone: 202.463.5163  
Fax: 202.463.2461  
Email: [bjohnson@forestfoundation.org](mailto:bjohnson@forestfoundation.org)

## Appendix

### Advertising Example



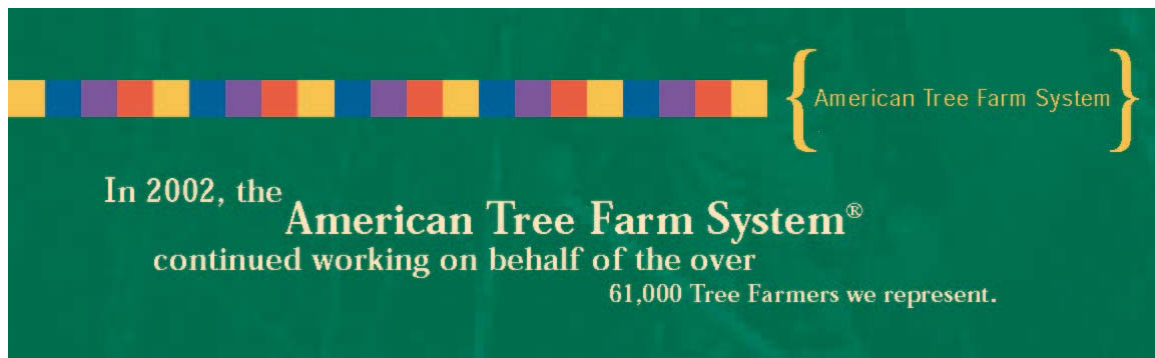
### Website Example



*Welcome to the  
Maine Tree Farm Committee*

*Tree Farming  
A Maine Tradition Since 1952*

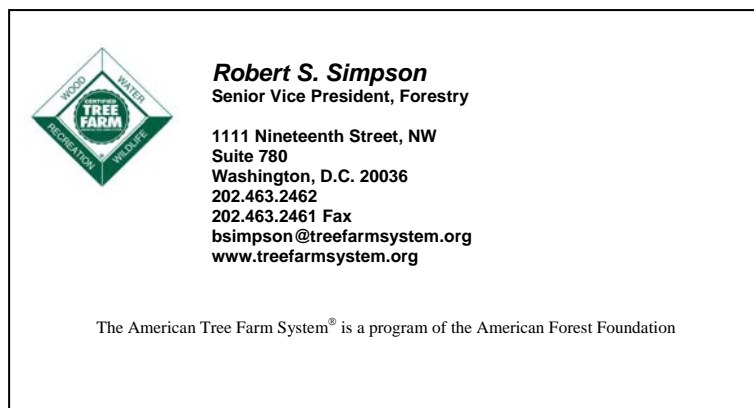
## Annual Report Example



## Communication Example

The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS), a program of the American Forest Foundation, is committed to sustaining forests, watershed and healthy habitats through the power of private stewardship.

## Business Card Example



A Guide for Foresters and  
other Natural Resource  
Professionals on using:  
*Managing Your Woodlands:*  
*A template for your plans for the future*





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## Introduction to the Template and Guide

This guide was developed to assist you, the forester or natural resource professionals, in working with a landowner to develop a forest resources management plan using the *Managing Your Woodlands: A template for your plans for the future*. We encourage you to work with the Landowner as a co-creator in the development of their plan. A landowner who is more involved in the development and has a clear understanding of what their plan outlines will be more likely to implement the management outlined in the plan.

There is also a landowner guide that is available to help landowners prepare materials in advance of working with their foresters. landowner involvement in the development of a plan is very important, as they need to understand and agree with their plan to implement it. This guide includes useful information for landowners including description on the type of information that is necessary to include in the template. There is also a glossary with relevant forestry terms, and a list of available resources. If you are planning on meeting with a landowner, you might want to provide them with a copy of the landowner guide, as the template and guides are tools to assist you in working with the landowner.

### Why this template?

This template allows landowners to participate in several different programs available to them:

#### **American Tree Farm System**

The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS) is the largest and oldest sustainable woodland system in America, internationally recognized, meeting strict third-party certification standards.

For 70 years, ATFS has enhanced the quality of America's woodlands by giving forest owners the tools they need to keep forests healthy and productive. Stemming the loss of America's woodlands is vital to our country's clean water and air, wildlife habitat, recreational activities, and producing the wood and paper products we all need. ATFS provides landowners with the validation that they are doing right by their land, meeting the highest standards of sustainability and being good stewards for the future.

ATFS is a program of the American Forest Foundation.

*The American Tree Farm System grows stewardship from the roots.*

To participate in your state ATFS program, please visit

[www.treefarmssystem.org/stateleaders](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/stateleaders)

#### **Forest Stewardship Program**

The Forest Stewardship Program works through State forest agency and other partners to sustain and improve our Nation's private forest landscapes. The program develops and delivers appropriate technical and planning assistance to enable active, informed, long-term forest management. Forest Stewardship management plans provide landowners with practical guidance for achieving their

own unique objectives in a way that also maximizes public goods and services provided by forests, such as clean drinking water, clean air, carbon sequestration, wood fiber, recreation, and scenic landscapes. Landowners who implement Forest Stewardship management plans are in a much better position to participate in certification programs and access emerging markets, such as those for ecosystem services and biomass for energy

### **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) incentive programs**

NRCS provides financial assistance to private landowners to implement forestry and agroforestry related practices through Farm Bill and discretionary conservation programs. Assistance is also provided for multi-year and permanent easements to conserve forest land to meet program goals. There are several incentive programs including:

- *Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)* offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants including forest owners with management practices on their lands; a forest management plan is required to participate.
- *Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)* offers technical and cost-share assistance for landowners to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat; family forestland is eligible and forestry practices are encouraged.
- *Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)* offers stewardship contracts to landowners who meet a certain threshold of land stewardship and agree to maintain and improve their land.
- *For more information about these and other programs refer to <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/> or contact the local NRCS office.*

## **Where to Begin?**

A management plan should be completed by a forester or other natural resource professional, but the landowner needs to take an active role in the development of their plan. The landowner should be considered a co-creator of the plan with the forester.

An *Understanding Your Plan* Guide is available to forest landowners and is a companion to this guide and the forest management plan template. Foresters and natural resource professionals are encouraged to provide the landowner guide to their landowner clients as a resource. There are several sections of the template that the landowner can either complete or begin before meeting with their forester. The forester can also begin gathering some of this information prior to the first meeting with the landowner:

- **Owner's contact information**
- **Property Description:** complete as much as possible and then review with the landowner.
- **Property History:** most of this information will be provided by the landowner and then reviewed with their forester. The forester can gather information about the area surrounding the landowner's property such as existing landscape or watershed plans.
- **Forest Management Goals:** the forester asks the landowner to identify their goals for their property

- **Property Maps:** collect the appropriate maps of the property (e.g., aerial photos, soil map, etc.) and compare or reconcile with any maps the landowner has.
- **Forest Natural Resources Enhancement and Protection:** the forester or planner will complete this section but the landowner can start to think about their goals related to the different topic areas and provide to the forester. Ask the landowner:
  - Are there any special sites that you and your family have that you want to protect?
  - From your personal knowledge or research, are there special sites, that threatened and endangered species might be using on your property (Reference: [www.treefarmssystem.org/woodlandresources](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/woodlandresources))
  - Have you considered the other section descriptions within the landowner guide and thought about your goals or concerns?
- **Stand Level Information:** the forester will complete this section, but the landowner should identify their objectives for each stand, given the goals that they have outlined.
- **Management Activity Schedule and Tracking:** the landowner and forester, working together, will need to develop the schedule and he/she will be responsible for tracking activities (unless they have designated someone else to be in charge of implementing the management plan). Make sure the landowner understands and are comfortable with the dates documented for the different activities that have been outlined in the plan.

When completing a section, review the requirements in the guide to ensure that you fill in all the appropriate information. When meeting with the landowner initially, review what information they have already compiled from using the landowner guide to gain their perspectives or clarify certain points.

## Cover Page: Owner and Plan Author

This section provides the contact information for the landowner and the plan preparer (the forester or natural resource professional). Be sure to encourage the landowner to keep this section updated. And remind them to inform you and their participating programs if any of the information changes:

- Forest Stewardship Program: State forestry contact or State Forester's office (list of State Foresters is available at [http://www.stateforesters.org/about\\_nasf](http://www.stateforesters.org/about_nasf))
- American Tree Farm System: state American Tree Farm System contact ([www.treefarmssystem.org/stateleaders](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/stateleaders))
- NRCS Incentive program: Local service center (<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>)

Note the date when the plan was originally completed. Encourage the landowner to regularly review their plan, be sure to date and initial any updates or notes that they add.

## Property Description

The legal property description includes the name of the state, name of the county, township number, range number, section number, and portion of a section where relevant. This information can be found on their property deed.

The Tax Parcel Number is the number assigned to their property by their local tax assessor. This number is not required but it can be helpful to record all relevant property information in one location.

If they are planning on participating in a USDA Farm Bill program, then the landowner will need to register at the nearest USDA Service Center.

GPS coordinates are very helpful in locating relevant maps online.

The entire property may not have trees and not all of the woods may be eligible for this plan, but cleared land can be included if the intent is to plant trees on it. Hence the three acreage questions in this section:

- Total ownership acreage: the total acreage of the property
- Total forested acreage: the total acreage with trees
- Total acreage covered by plan: the portion of the acreage that will be described in this plan (forested or not).

For the topography and access information, these are estimates based on your experience on the property. For the slope section, include what percentage of land is in each category.

For the road condition, the percentages represent how much of the roads are accessible to vehicles. For the estimates of road length, include estimated miles of road for each category.

Please include the watershed unit that is appropriate for the state.

## Property History

The Property History is a brief description of the history of the land and ownership including length of current ownership, past management activities, and surrounding environment (whether nearby property is developed, private woods, public forests, etc.). This information can be based on personal knowledge, property records, and local information sources as well as what evidence is seen on the ground, stumps, skid trails, etc.

## Forest Management Goals

Ownership Goals are at the heart of the plan and describes what the landowner wants to gain from their property and resources. We encourage landowners to make a list of their goals and objectives that reflect their expectations, personal values, and the potential of

their woods. Their goal statements should broadly summarize their vision for their land, but should be specific enough to know if they are reaching them. In the landowners guide, we use some information about goal development from the *Good Forestry in the Granite State: Recommended Voluntary Forest Management Practices for New Hampshire* (Bennett, 2010).

## Property Maps

Maps are a valuable tool for forest owners and many mapping tools are now available online for them. For the property maps they will need to include the following:

1. Delineate property boundaries, stands, special sites, threatened and endangered species present, water resources, roads, existing practices, future conservation practices, scale, and a directional arrow. Example of map types could include:
  - A Contour map
  - Aerial photo (for free aerial photo downloads <http://earth.google.com/>) GIS printout
2. Soil Information
  - Soils Map: including legend, interpretations, etc.  
For soil maps, NRCS has developed a web-based map-making tool for private landowners: <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>.  
Or you can check with the local NRCS office (<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>). Soil maps are required for NRCS incentive programs.

Multiple copies of the maps might be necessary to ensure the legibility of information. Some states agencies also have mapping tools available online, check with the state forestry agency for more information.

## Forest Natural Resources Enhancement and Protection

This section relates to the natural resource elements found throughout the entire property. Some of the treatments related to these resource areas may qualify for federal and state incentive programs. Include appropriate activities and treatments in the Management Activity Schedule and Tracking table as well as on the map(s). Complete the Activity Schedule and draw and label the areas of management on the map if using this plan as part of an incentive program application. There is no need to repeat this information in the stand specific section.

For this section, consider the goals that the landowner has identified for their woods. You will also need to address the following information for each section:

1. What treatments/ monitoring/ protection are planned?
2. When will they implement treatments (season, year), follow-up activities, etc?
3. Where will the management take place: entire stand, part of a stand, acres?
4. Do they have applicable permits, professional assistance, and applications for the incentive programs?

## **Protect Special Sites and Social Considerations**

### **Special Sites**

Are there archeologically, culturally, historically, geologically, biologically or ecologically valuable sites or high conservation value forests (HCVF) on the property that should be delineated and protected? The concept of HCVF is one that is used by various organizations, including ATFS, to describe forests of outstanding and critical importance due to their environmental, social, biodiversity or landscape values. What assistance did you seek when identifying special sites or what information did you gather? There are lots of online resources available to help identify special sites in your state. A landowner can visit [www.treefarmssystem.org/woodlandsresources](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/woodlandsresources) to find their state's information.

Special sites can also include sites that are designated by the landowner, and can represent places or things that are important to them or their family.

### **Adjacent stand or ownership concerns**

How does surrounding management affect their woods and how do the landowner's actions impact their neighbors? Consider aesthetic quality, wildfire concerns, privacy, wildlife movement and habitat, noxious weeds, urban encroachment, if applicable. Aesthetic qualities should be considered throughout this plan as it is being developed.

It might be appropriate to consider a modification of forestry practices in consideration of public view, including timber sale layout, road and log landing locations, intersections with public roadways, distributing logging residue, tree retention, timing of operations and other factors relevant to the scale and location of the project.

For more information on federal and state designated weeds, please visit <http://plants.usda.gov/java/noxiousDriver>

### **Recreation**

If recreation is one of the landowner's goals for their woods then identify the resources and how they will be addressed in their management.

### **Access**

Are property boundaries posted? How are they marked? Does the landowner have legal access to the property? Is public access allowed? Address access for management purposes.

## **Air, Water, and Soil Protection**

### **Soil protection**

Consider steep slopes, woody debris retention, nutrient cycling, vehicle travel, soil compaction, flood runoff, livestock issues, silvopastures, and Best Management Practices (BMPs), if applicable. Include a soil map if desired (**Note:** required for NRCS).

BMPs are essential to ensuring the benefits for air, soil and water that are made possible through sound management of your woods. To find the BMPs in your state, visit



[www.treefarmssystem.org/woodlandresources/](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/woodlandresources/) and search by your state to find the link to BMPs.

### **Roads**

Consider general maintenance, erosion potential, BMPs, if applicable, road surface condition, road runoff, drain-dips, culverts, stream crossings, weed control, and time-of-year use.

### **Streams, wetlands, ponds, lakeshore**

Consider BMPs, if applicable, riparian habitat, wildlife, and road crossings. If a wetlands delineation map is available, include as a reference.

### **Effects of Natural Disasters**

Has the property been affected by floods, wildfire, wind, ice or other natural disasters? Are you at risk? Consider what the landowner should do after a natural disaster occurred, if appropriate.

### **Rangeland Resources (if applicable)**

If there is rangeland on the property then address that resource in this section.

### **Carbon sequestration (optional)**

This is an optional resource that the landowner might want to consider. Include a current estimation of the tons of standing carbon per acre plus growth rate—sequestration per year. Carbon sequestration consideration is not currently a requirement of either the Forest Stewardship Program, American Tree Farm System or NRCS programs.

## **Fish, Wildlife and Biodiversity**

### **Fish & Wildlife**

Consider desired species, habitat improvement, animal control, den sites, nest boxes, snag retention, access, hunting, and the current state of the habitat. What assistance did you seek or information did you gather?

### **State and Federal threatened or endangered species - plants or animals**

What assistance did you seek or information did you gather related to state and federal threatened or endangered species? To search for site specific information visit [www.treefarmssystem.org/woodlandsresources](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/woodlandsresources).

## **Management of Forest Resources**

For the management described in this section include the general management that relates to the natural resource elements found throughout the entire property. For stand specific management activities, please include those in the **Stand Level Information** section.

### **Protection from Pests**



Includes insects, diseases, weeds, invasive species. What inventory, control, monitoring, prevention guidelines will be employed. Consider using a range of integrated pest management including mechanical, physical, biological, cultural or chemical management.

### **Reforestation and Afforestation**

Consider natural seedling recruitment, planting, site preparation, and current conditions that might affect regeneration.

### **Prescribed Fire/Burns** (optional)

Prescribed fires/burns can be a very useful management tool in certain locations and certain times. Consider using prescribed burns for stand/habitat improvement, fuel reduction, Home Firewise Safety (below), current fuel conditions, and degree of wildfire risk.

**Home Firewise Safety:** Home Firewise Safety is a program sponsored by the US Forest Service, US Department of the Interiors and the National Association of State Foresters to encourage local solutions for wildfire safety. For more information about this, please visit <http://www.firewise.org/index.php>

**Firewise Communities Program:** The National Fire Protection Association's ([NFPA](#)) Firewise Communities program encourages local solutions for wildfire safety by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, firefighters, and others in the effort to protect people and property from the risk of wildfire. The program is co-sponsored by the [USDA Forest Service](#), the [US Department of the Interior](#), and the [National Association of State Foresters](#).

To save lives and property from wildfire, NFPA's Firewise Communities program teaches people how to adapt to living with wildfire and encourages neighbors to work together and take action now to prevent losses. We all have a role to play in protecting ourselves and each other from the risk of wildfire. For more information visit [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)

### **Management Plan Implementation Constraints**

Consider available markets for wood products, landowner interest and time, financial limitations, land use ordinances, seasonal access, wildlife activity, insect activity, operability due to slope, etc.

### **Other**

Use this space to include information on any other natural resource enhancements and protection that are not included in the sections above.

## Stand Level Information

### Stand Objectives

Work with the landowner to identify objectives for each stand that relate to the goals that the landowner outlined.

### Stand Current Conditions

**General Description:** This section would include the history, site index, elevation, slope, stand quality and health, average growth rate, summary of size classes, summary of heights, stocking level, density, risk rating, etc. for the stand in question. Further detailed inventory/plot data can be included if desired.

**Current forest type and current age:** For each forest type represented in the stand, include an estimate of its current age.

**The bird's eye view of current stand conditions and structure** are simple graphic representations of the landowner's woods. They are meant to provide the landowner with an understanding of the different spacing and structures that can be found and what their stand looks like at the time their plan was developed. Current spacing shows how far apart different size trees are from each other.

### Stand Desired Future Stand Condition

This section outlines what the stand will look like in the future, based on the landowner's objectives for the stand.

**Desired Forest Type and Expected Longevity:** This section shows the forest type(s) you would like to see in this stand and the maximum age you expect trees to reach before they die of natural causes or they are harvested.

This section also addresses how the tree species would grow either through natural regeneration or planting.

## Forest Management Activities

Once the desired future stand condition has been identified, then this section will outline the forest management activities for each stand.

**Forest Health Management Activities:** These activities include pruning, pre-commercial thinning from above/below, prescribed fires, sanitation, salvage, etc.

**Harvesting:** For these activities, describe the type of treatment: even-aged (clearcut, thinning), uneven-aged (group select, single tree select, overstory removal, understory removal, etc), treatment methods (ground based or skyline), time of year, type of harvest; seed tree, multiage, sanitation, etc.

**Slash management:** For this section, discuss how the slash will be addressed after a management activity. Examples include: leave slash at the stump, jackpot pile, whole tree skid, chipping, pulp. Address the large woody debris and nutrient cycling.

**Post management activities:** These could include burning landings, piles, broadcast or seeding roads and landings and/or weed spray roadsides.

**Permits:** Include a list of permits for which you applied for or will need to apply for, if necessary for the management activities outlined here.

**Best Management Practices:** Is there a wetland or stream within your management activity area? Is it properly marked and are the appropriate laws being followed? BMPs are essential to ensuring the benefits for air, soil and water that are made possible through sound management of your woods. To find the BMPs in your state, visit [www.treefarmssystem.org/woodlandresources/](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/woodlandresources/) and search by your state to find the link to BMPs.

**Monitoring:** After the management activity occurs, how often will the activity area be evaluated to ensure the overall forest management goals are being met?

**Repeat the Stand Level Information sections for each stand identified on the property.**

## **Management Activity Schedule and Tracking**

This section includes the schedule of management activities for each stand and can be used by the landowner to can track when the activities were completed, what incentive programs were used (if any) and what the net cash flow was for that activity. The net cash flow is optional and only a tool to help the landowner track the financial costs/benefits for the different management activities. Encourage the landowner to update the schedule if an activity date changes.

The American Forest Foundation has developed a brochure to help woodland owners. It can be found online:

[http://www.treefarmssystem.org/2008FarmBill/AFFFarmBillBrochure\\_web\\_lo.pdf](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/2008FarmBill/AFFFarmBillBrochure_web_lo.pdf)

If the landowner is planning on applying for NRCS incentive programs, then the NRCS Practice Code will need to be included in this activity schedule. These codes can be found on the NRCS Conservation Practice Standards website

(<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/standards/nhcp.html>).

Common forest practices for NRCS programs:

- [Forest stand improvement](#)
- [Tree or shrub site preparation](#)
- [Tree or shrub establishment](#)

- [Forest trails and landings](#)
- [Road/Trail/Landing Closure and Treatment](#)
- [Forest slash treatment](#)
- [Firebreak](#)
- [Fuel Break](#)
- [Prescribed burning](#)
- [Tree or shrub pruning](#)
- [Riparian forest buffer](#)
- [Silvopasture establishment](#)
- [Multi-Story Cropping](#)
- [Windbreak or shelterbelt establishment](#)
- [Windbreak or shelterbelt renovation](#)
- [Integrated Pest Management](#)
- [Wetland restoration](#)
- [Restoration and Management of Rare and Declining Habitats](#)
- [Early Successional Habitat Development/Management](#)
- [Upland Wildlife Habitat Management](#)
- [Access Control](#)
- [Access Road](#)

Each state NRCS office adds state specific information to these standards and specifications and can be viewed at the state's field office technical guide:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/index.html>

There might also be state run incentive programs that might need to be included in this section as well.

## **Signatures and Approvals**

With this plan, the landowner is eligible to participate in the US Forest Service's Forest Stewardship Program, the American Forest Foundation's American Tree Farm System and NRCS incentive programs. This plan will need to be reviewed and approved by representatives for each of the programs in which the landowner would like to participate.

## References

Bennett, Karen P. editor. 2010. *Good Forestry in the Granite State: Recommended Voluntary Forest Management Practices for New Hampshire (second edition)*. University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, Durham, N.H. [www.goodforestry.org](http://www.goodforestry.org)

Swenson, Steve, 2009. *My Healthy Woods: A Handbook for Family Woodland Owners managing woods in Southwest Wisconsin*. A publication of the Aldo Leopold Foundation and the American Forest Foundation, Baraboo, WI.

<https://www.aldoleopold.org/Programs/myhealthywoods.shtml>

## Resources for the Landowner

- Forest Stewardship Program:  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/fsp.shtml>
- List of State Foresters and their contact information:  
[http://www.stateforesters.org/about\\_nasf](http://www.stateforesters.org/about_nasf)
- American Tree Farm System: [www.treefarmssystem.org](http://www.treefarmssystem.org)
- Your state American Tree Farm System contact:  
[www.treefarmssystem.org/stateleaders](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/stateleaders)
- NRCS: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>
- 2008 NRCS Farm Bill Conservation Programs:  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2008/index.html>
- NRCS Conservation Practice Standards:  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/standards/nhcp.html> Provides information on all the different Conservation Practices and their codes.
- NRCS Field Office Technical Guide:  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/index.html> Technical guides are the primary scientific references for NRCS. Technical guides used in each field office are localized so that they apply specifically to the geographic area for which they are prepared..
- Woodland Owners Brochure on 2008 Farm Bill:  
[http://www.treefarmssystem.org/2008FarmBill/AFFFarmBillBrochure\\_web\\_lo.pdf](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/2008FarmBill/AFFFarmBillBrochure_web_lo.pdf)
- Woodland Owner Resources: <http://www.treefarmssystem.org/woodlandresources/> Provides information on fish, wildlife, biodiversity, special sites and Best Management Practices for you state.
- To find out information on your watershed, visit:  
<http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm>
- **The attached appendices are additional resources for landowners.**

## Appendix 1: Glossary

**Acceptable Growing Stock:** Saleable trees that are of good form, species and quality and would be satisfactory as crop trees.

**Adaptive management:** A dynamic approach to forest management in which the effects of treatments and decisions are continually monitored and used to modify management on a continuing basis to ensure that objectives are being met (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Adverse regulatory actions:** Written warning, citations or fines issued by law enforcement or regulatory bodies.

**Aerial Photo:** Photo taken from an elevated position like on an aircraft.

**Afforestation:** the establishment of a forest or a stand in an area where the preceding vegetation or land was not forest. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Age Class:** A distinct aggregation of tree that originated at the same time, from a single natural event or regeneration activity or a grouping of trees (e.g. ten year age class) as used in inventory or management. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Aspect:** The direction that a slope faces (north, south, etc.)

**Basal Area:** The cross-sectional area of a tree, in square feet, at 4.5 feet from the ground (at breast height). When the basal area of all the trees in a stand are added together, the result is expressed as square feet of basal area per acre, which is a measure of a stand's density.

**Biomass:** A renewable energy source of biological materials derived from living, or recently living organisms, such as wood, waste, and crop residues.

**Biodiversity:** The variety and abundance of life forms, processes, functions and structures of plants, animals and other living organisms, including the relative complexity of species, communities, gene pools and ecosystems at spatial scales that range from local through regional to global (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998).

**Board Feet:** A unit for measuring wood volumes. It is commonly used to express the amount of wood in a tree, sawlog, or individual piece of lumber. A piece of wood 1 foot long, 1 foot wide, and 1 inch thick (144 cubic inches).

**Broadcast:** to spread or apply seed, fertilizer, or pesticides more or less evenly over an entire area. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Canopy:** The more or less continuous cover of branches and foliage formed collectively by the tops, or crowns of adjacent trees.

**Carbon sequestration:** the incorporation of carbon dioxide into permanent plant tissue. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Chip:** a small piece of wood used to make pulp or wood composite or fuel. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Clearcut:** 1. a stand in which essentially all trees have been removed in one operation – *note* depending on management objectives, a clearcut may or may not have reserve trees left to attain goals other than regeneration. 2. a regeneration or harvest method that

removes essentially all trees in a stand. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Contour Map:** A map where each line represents a change in elevation.

**Crop Tree:** A tree identified to be grown to maturity for the final harvest cut, usually on the basis of its location with respect to other trees and its timber quality.

**Cull:** A tree, log, lumber or seedling that is rejected because it does not meet certain specifications for usability or grade. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Culvert:** a device used to channel water. It may be used to allow water to pass underneath a road, railway, or embankment for example. Culverts can be made of many different materials; steel, polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and concrete are the most common. Formerly, construction of stone culverts was common.

**Den Tree:** A living tree with a cavity large enough to shelter wildlife.

**Desired species:** Those species of flora and fauna designated in the landowner's management plan and not known to cause negative impacts on the local environment.

**Diameter Breast Height (DBH):** The diameter of a tree at 4.5 feet above the ground.

**Endangered Species:** Any species of plant or animal defined through the Endangered Species Act of 1976 as being in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range, and published in the Federal Register. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Even-Aged Management:** Forest management with periodic harvest of all trees on part of the forest at one time or over a short period to produce stands containing trees all the same or nearly the same age or size.

**Forest owner:** Landowner or designated representative such as, but not limited to, professional resource manager, family member, trustee, etc.

**Forest product:** [Forest Produce] Any raw material yielded by a forest. Generally defined in Forest Acts or Ordinances, and subdivided conventionally into major forest products, i.e. timber and fuelwood, and minor forest products, i.e. all other products including leaves, fruit, grass, fungi, resins, gums, animal parts, water, soil, gravel, stone and other minerals on forest land (F. C. Ford –Robertson, Terminology of Forest Science Technology, Practice, and Products, Society of American Foresters, 1971).

**Forest Stand Improvement:** See timber stand improvement.

**Forest type:** A category of forest usually defined by its trees, particularly its dominant tree species as based on percentage cover of trees, e.g. spruce fir, longleaf-slash pine, Douglas fir.

**Forest vitality:** The health and sustainability of a forest.

**Fuel management:** the act or practice of controlling flammability and reducing resistance to control of wildland fuels through mechanical, chemical, biological, or manual means, or by fire in support of land management objectives. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Group Select:** trees are removed and new age classes are established in small groups – *note* – 1. the width of groups is commonly approximately twice the height of the mature trees with smaller openings providing microenvironments suitable for tolerant regeneration and larger openings providing conditions suitable for more intolerant regeneration – *note* 2. the management unit or stand in which regeneration, growth, and



yield are regulated consists of an aggregation of groups. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Girdling:** Completely encircling the trunk of a tree with a cut that severs the bark and cambium of the tree. Herbicide is sometimes injected into the cut to ensure death of the tree.

**GPS (Global Positioning System) Coordinates:** a commonly hand held, satellite based navigational device that records x, y, z coordinators and other data allowing users to determine their location on the surface of the earth. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Hack-n-squirt:** A tree treatment method where an axe or hatchet is used to make "hacks" (injections) into the tree's cambium layer. A plastic "squirt" bottle is used to spray a specific amount of herbicide into the cuts placed around the tree.

**Harvesting:** the felling skidding, on-site processing, and loading of trees or logs onto trucks. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**High conservation value forests (HCVF):** Forests of outstanding and critical importance due to their environmental, social, biodiversity or landscape values. Due to the small scale and low-intensity of family forest operations, informal assessment of HCVF occurrence through consultation with experts or review of available and accessible information is appropriate.

**High-grading:** Cutting only the high-value trees from a forest property, leaving a stand of poor quality with decreased future timber productivity.

**Incentive Programs:** State and federal agencies will offer landowners the opportunity to apply for incentive programs that will provide support and financial assistance to implement forestry and agroforestry related practices through conservation programs. Assistance can also provided for multi-year and permanent easements to conserve forest land to meet program goals. For more information on the federal incentive programs, see Appendix 4.

**Integrated Pest Management:** The maintenance of destructive agents, including insects, at tolerable levels by planned use of a variety of preventative, suppressive, or regulatory tactics and strategies that are ecologically and economically efficient and socially acceptable (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998). A pest control strategy that uses a variety of complementary strategies including: mechanical devices, physical devices, genetic, biological or cultural management and chemical management (US EPA).

**Intermediate Cut:** Removing immature trees from the forest sometime between establishment and stand harvest to improve the quality of the remaining forest stand. Contrast this technique with a harvest cut.

**Invasive species:** Non-native species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health (Executive Order 13112 (Feb. 3, 1999). **Invasive Species:** is a species that is 1) non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration and 2) whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. Invasive species can be plants, animals, and other organisms (e.g., insects, microbes, etc.). Human actions are the primary means of invasive species introductions. (Invasive Species Definition Clarification and Guidance White Paper Submitted by the Definitions Subcommittee of the Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC), Approved by ISAC Apr 27, 2006.)



**Landings:** a cleared area in the forest to which logs are yarded or skidded for loading onto trucks for transport. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Landowner:** Entity that holds title to the property for which the management plan is being written.

**Large woody debris:** any piece(s) of dead woody material, e.g. dead boles, limbs and large root masses, on the ground in the forest stands or in streams. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Log Rules:** A table showing estimated amount of lumber that can be sawed from logs of given lengths and diameters. Two log rules are commonly used in Missouri:

***Doyle Rule*** is a simple formula rule used in the eastern United States. It underestimates the amount of lumber in small logs and overestimates large logs.

***International 1/4-inch Rule*** is a formula rule allowing 1/2 –inch taper for each 4 feet of length and 1/16-inch shrinkage for each one-inch board. This measure approximates the actual sawmill lumber tally.

**Management plan:** Documents that guide actions and that change in response to feedback and changed conditions, goals, objectives and policies. Management plans may incorporate several documents including, but not limited to, harvest plans, activity implementation schedules, permits, research, etc. For the purposes of the American Tree Farm System® eligible management plans, plan amendments may include letters, notes, and other forms of informal updates in addition to formal plan revisions.

**Mast:** Nuts of trees, such as oak, walnut, and hickory, that serve as food for many species of wildlife.

**Mature Tree:** A tree that has reached the desired size or age for its intended use.

**MBF:** Abbreviation for 1,000 board feet.

**Noxious plant (weed):** a plant specified by law as being especially undesirable, troublesome and difficult to control (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Nutrient cycle:** the exchange or transformation of elements among the living and nonliving components of the ecosystem. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Overstocked:** A forest stand condition where too many trees are present for optimum tree growth.

**Overstory:** That portion of the trees in a stand forming the upper crown cover.

**Overstory removal:** the cutting of trees constituting an upper canopy layer to release trees or other vegetation in an understory. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Pesticide:** Pesticides include chemicals commonly known as herbicides and insecticides.

**Pole Timber:** Trees from 6 inches to 12 inches in diameter at breast height.

**Prescribed Burn/Fire:** To deliberately burn natural fuels under specific weather conditions, which allows the fire to be confined to a predetermined area and produces the fire intensity to meet predetermined objectives. A fire ignited by management to meet specific objectives (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998).

**Pruning:** Removing live or dead branches from standing trees to improve wood quality.

**Pulpwood:** Wood cut primarily for manufacture of paper, fiberboard, or other wood fiber products.

**Qualified contractor:** Forest contractors who have completed certification, licensing, recommended training and education programs offered in their respective states.

**Qualified natural resource professional:** A person who by training and experience can make forest management recommendations. Examples include foresters, soil scientists, hydrologists, forest engineers, forest ecologists, fishery and wildlife biologists or technically trained specialists in such fields.

**Qualified Tree Farm inspector:** A natural resource professional who has completed ATFS required training for certifying forested properties and is eligible to inspect properties on behalf of ATFS. ATFS requires all trained inspectors meet approved eligibility requirements.

**Rangeland** Land on which the historic climax plant community is predominantly grasses, grasslike plants, forbs, or shrubs. Includes lands revegetated naturally or artificially when routine management of that vegetation is accomplished mainly through manipulation of grazing. Rangelands include natural grasslands, savannas, shrublands, most deserts, tundra, alpine communities, coastal marshes, and wet meadows

**Rare species:** A plant or animal or community that is vulnerable to extinction or elimination.

**Reforestation:** the reestablishment of forest cover either naturally (by natural seeding, coppice, or root suckers) or artificially (by direct seeding or planting) – *note* reforestation usually maintains the same forest type and is done promptly after the previous stand or forest was removed. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Regeneration:** The number of seedlings or saplings existing in a stand. The process by which a forest is renewed by direct seeding, planting, or naturally by self-sown seeds and sprouts.

**Regeneration Cut:** Any removal of trees intended to assist regeneration already present or to make regeneration possible.

**Release:** To free trees from competition by cutting, removing, or killing nearby vegetation.

**Riparian:** related to, living or located in conjunction with a wetland, on the bank of a river or stream but also at the edge of a lake or tidewater – *note* the riparian community significantly influences and is significantly influenced by, the neighboring body of water. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Riparian Zone:** The area adjacent to or on the bank of rivers and streams.

**Sapling:** Trees from 2 inches to 6 inches in diameter at breast height.

**Sawtimber:** Trees at least 12 inches in diameter at breast height from which a sawed product can be produced.

**Scale:** The extent of forest operations on the landscape/certified property.

**Seedling:** a young plant.

**Seed-tree Harvest:** A harvest and regeneration method where nearly all trees are removed at one time except for scattered trees to provide seed for a new forest.

**Selection Harvest:** Harvesting trees to regenerate and maintain a multi-aged structure by removing some trees in all size classes either singly or in small groups.

**Shelterwood Harvest:** A harvesting and regeneration method that entails a series of partial cuttings over a period of years in the mature stand. Early cuttings improve the vigor and seed production of the remaining trees. The trees that are retained produce seed and also shelter the young seedlings. Subsequent cuttings harvest shelterwood trees and allow the regeneration to develop as an even-aged stand.

**Single Tree Selection:** Individual trees of all size classes are removed more or less uniformly throughout the stand, to promote growth of remaining trees and to provide space for regeneration. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Site Index:** An expression of forest site quality based on the height of a free-growing dominant or co-dominant tree at age 50 (or age 100 in the western United States).

**Skid:** 1. to haul a log from the stump to a collection point (landing) by a skidder. 2. a load pulled by a skidder. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Skid Trail:** A road or trail over which equipment or horses drag logs from the stump to a landing.

**Skidding:** Pulling logs from where they are cut to a landing or mill.

**Skyline:** harvesting a cableway stretched tautly between two points, such as yarding tower and stump anchor, and used as a track for a block or skyline carriage. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Slash:** the residue, e.g., treetops and branches, left on the ground after logging or accumulating as a result of storm, fire, girdling, or delimbing. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Snag:** a standing, generally un-merchantable dead tree from which the leaves and most of the branches have fallen – *note* for wildlife habitat purposes, a snag is sometimes regarded as being at least 10 inches in diameter at breast height and at least 6 feet tall; a hard snag is composed primarily of sound wood, generally merchantable, and a soft snag is composed primarily of wood in advanced stages of decay and deterioration. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Soil Compaction:** The process by which the soil grains are rearranged, resulting in a decrease in void space and increasing bulk density. Can occur from applied loads, vibration or pressure from harvesting or site preparation equipment. Compaction can cause decreased tree growth, increased water runoff and soil erosion. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Soil map:** A map showing the distribution of soils or other soil map units in relation to prominent physical and cultural features of the earth's surface. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Special sites:** Those areas offering unique historical, archeological, cultural, geological, biological or ecological value. Special Sites include:

- A. Historical, archaeological, cultural and ceremonial sites or features of importance to the forest owner;
- B. Sites of importance to wildlife such as rookeries, refuges, fish spawning grounds, vernal ponds and shelters of hibernating animals;
- C. Unique ecological communities like relic old-growth, springs, glades, savannas, fens and bogs; and
- D. Geological features such as terminal moraines, cliffs and caves.

**Stand:** A group of trees with similar characteristics, such as species, age, or condition that can be distinguished from adjacent groups. A stand is usually treated as a single unit in a management plan.

**Stand Density:** A measure of the stocking of a stand of trees based on the number of trees per area and diameter at breast height of the tree of average basal area.

**Stand Management Recommendations:** The recommended management activities that should be done in that stand, based on the landowner's goals and objectives.

**Stand Structure:** The horizontal and vertical distribution of plants in the forest, including the height, diameter, crown layers, and stems of trees, shrubs, understory plants, snags and down woody debris. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**State forestry best management practice(s) (BMPs):** Forestry BMPs are generally accepted forest management guidelines that have been developed by state forestry agencies with broad public stakeholder input.

**Stocking:** An indication of the number of trees in a stand in relation to the desirable number of trees for best growth and management.

**Sustainability:** The capacity of forests, ranging from stands to ecoregions, to maintain their health, productivity, diversity and overall integrity, in the long run, in the context of human activity (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998).

**Sustainable forest management:** The practice of meeting the forest resource needs and values of the present without compromising the similar capability of future generations (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998). *Note – AFF's Standards of Sustainability reflect criteria of sustainability based on the Montreal Process, 1993, and the Pan-European Operational- Level Guidelines (PEOLGs).*

**Thinning:** a cultural treatment made to reduce stand density of trees primarily to improve growth, enhance forest health, or recover potential mortality. Types of thinning include: chemical, crown, free, low, mechanical, selection. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Threatened Species:** A plant or animal species that is likely to become endangered throughout all or a significant portion of its range within the foreseeable future. A plant or animal identified and defined in the Federal Register in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1976. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Timber Stand Improvement (TSI):** A thinning made in immature stands to improve the composition, structure, condition, health, and growth of the remaining trees.

**Undesirable Growing Stock:** Trees of low quality or less valuable species that should be removed in a thinning.

**Understocked:** Insufficiently stocked with trees.

**Understory:** all forest vegetation growing under an overstory. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Uneven-Aged Management or Stand:** A stand of trees containing at least three age classes intermingled on the same area.

**Visual quality measures:** Modifications of forestry practices in consideration of public view, including timber sale layout, road and log landing locations, intersections with

public roadways, distributing logging residue, tree retention, timing of operations and other factors relevant to the scale and location of the project.

**Volume:** The amount of wood in a tree, stand of trees, or log according to some unit of measurement, such as board foot, cubic foot, etc.

**Watershed:** the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it goes into the same place. For example the Mississippi River watershed includes all the land that drains into the Mississippi River. This watershed is the fourth largest in the world and includes water from 31 states.

**Wetland:** A transitional area between water and land that is inundated for periods long enough to produce wet soil and support plants adapted to that environment. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

**Wolf Tree:** A very large, overmature tree that is or was open grown. These trees tend to have large full crowns and numerous branches.

**Woody Debris:** Any piece(s) of dead woody material (e.g. dead tree trunk, limbs, large root ball) on the ground in the forest or in streams. (Helms et al, The Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters, 1998)

## **Appendix 2 Tax and Business Management**

Woodland owners have to deal with property taxes, income tax for timber harvests and other revenue generating activities, and estate taxes when properties are passed on to future generations. This section was developed to help the landowner consider the tax implication for their property when they are planning for the management of their property.

Some states have special tax programs that can be used by woodland owners to help minimize their tax liability.

Landowners could consider addressing the following in their plan:

1. **Property tax:** The forest management plan should document the current tax status of the property. Their state might have specific property tax programs that you may be eligible to participate in. Please be aware of the program rules and regulations.
2. **Income tax:** Include a statement that timber harvest and other revenue generating activities generally produce a federal and state income tax liability. Tax credits may be available for some management activities.
3. **Federal and State Incentive Programs:** There is tax implication for participating so be aware of those implications.
4. **Estate tax:** Good estate planning can help to lessen tax liability when passing land to heirs and that landowners should seek good planning and tax advice.
5. **Record keeping:** Good record keeping can help landowners manage their assets, increase their revenues, and minimize their tax liability.
6. **Land Use:** Document the land use classifications of the property from the county land use plan.

It is recommended that the landowner works with a professional tax advisor who can assist them in developing this section.

## Appendix 3 Timber Sale Contract Checklist for Private Landowners and Loggers

The following is a checklist of issues private landowners and logging contractors may want to consider on a logging contract. Each of the items should be addressed in a contract to allow for a minimum probability of a dispute. **Issues can be as detailed as both parties find acceptable and economically feasible.**

- \_\_\_ **Property location and legal description are clearly defined**  
Include Tree Farm certification number if applicable.
- \_\_\_ **Property boundaries and harvest units are clearly and accurately marked**  
Logging trespass can result in a minimum cost of 3x value of trees.
- \_\_\_ **Property ownership is documented and type of ownership is specified**  
Either individual, partnerships, corporations, etc.
- \_\_\_ **Insurance is documented**  
Any contractor working for a landowner must have Commercial General Liability \$1 –million, Loggers Broad Form Property Damage Liability \$1-million, Workers’ Compensation \$100,000 or an Independent Contractor Exemption, and Automobile Liability \$1-million. If they do not have these, the landowner will be held liable for any damage or personnel injury that may occur. Insurance can be written to include owner and consulting forester.
- \_\_\_ **Access to the property/harvest unit are specified and documented**  
To avoid trespass or the disturbance of sensitive area access routes should be clearly delineated. If access across other ownerships is required, written and notarized documentation of access permission should be obtained.
- \_\_\_ **Type of harvest is clearly specified for each stand**  
Typically trees are marked both at eye level and on the stump, or harvest tree characteristics are defined by species, diameter, crown characteristic, or residual tree spacing.
- \_\_\_ **Timing of harvest is specified**  
Dates when harvesting and/or other treatments need to be conducted or completed by.
- \_\_\_ **Residual property specifications should be defined**  
This is as detailed as the landowner and contractor can agree upon. Issues can be the completeness of residual logging debris disposal, burn pile rehabilitation, grass seeding, skid trail rehab, noxious weed control, tree planting, noncommercial thinning, access roads- does the logger need to do repairs and bring them up to a particular standard or are they required to put them to bed and pull up the culverts?



- **Best Management Practices (BMP's) responsibilities are designated**  
Compliance to state BMP's is ultimately the landowners responsibility but should be specified in the contract.
  - **Performance bond or contract penalty**  
Create some provision for compensation to the landowner for harvesting activities that deviate from specifications. Having the contractor post a bond is the best protection for the landowner but imposes a risk on the contractor.
  - **Method of payment is clearly defined**  
Could include: **Lump sum** is one payment for the entire estimated log volume, this method may over or underestimate actual value but is simple and can be demanded in advance of the actual harvesting. **Payment by unit** is where payment for logs occurs based upon the actual scaled logs at the mill. Either the contractor pays an agreed upon percentage to the landowner or the mill pays agreed upon percentages separately to the contractor and landowner. Downfall is that in cases of salvaging dead and dying trees a delayed harvesting job can result in losses of standing tree value.
  - **Method of scaling is defined**  
Either direct scaling or weight scaling are used. Direct scaling tends to be more accurate though each mill may use different defect deductions. Weight scaling works for large volume sales that have trees of similar species and diameter. In general logs should be trucked to the mill quickly following harvest or they lose significant water weight or for most accurate conversions a continuous representative sample of logs should be check scaled and weighed.
  - **Notification**  
It is defined if and when the contractor or landowner needs to notify the other party about when activities are to start or end and the type of format – written, e-mail, telephone. This is to avoid issues with blocked access, noise, special sites, etc.
  - **Expiration date**  
Any contract should have a defined end date after which the contract is no longer valid.
  - **Notarization**  
Any legally binding document should have signatures notarized.
- \*\*\* This is simply a recommended check list compiled from a variety of sources including the Montana Logging Association. Any contract can be challenged. It is always advised that a contract be reviewed by an attorney. You may also want an attorney's fees recovery statement in the document that will allow for recovery of legal fees should a dispute require legal action. \*\*\*



## **Appendix 4: The USDA Farm Bill: What is in it for Woodland Owners**

## Certified Family Forest and Certified Tree Farm Signs

Our diamond-shaped, green and white signs bearing the message of wood, water, wildlife, and recreation are recognized across the country. The two signs we offer - **Certified Tree Farm** and **Certified Family Forest** – convey the meaning of sustainable forestry and the history of generations behind these signs on private forestland. Certified ATFS Tree Farmers can order Certified Family Forest sign and Certified Tree Farm sign directly from us at <http://www.treefarmssystem.org/atfssigns>



### Signs prices

- One (1) \$36.99
- Two (2) \$52.99
- Three (3) \$77.99

**Orders are limited to three (3) signs**

### Sign specifications

Material: Recycled aluminum; Size: 24"x24"

Material: Plastic; Size: 24"x24"

### Tree Farmers must agree to the following terms:

The Certified Family Forest and Certified Tree Farm signs remain the property of the American Tree Farm System and the American Forest Foundation and can be withdrawn should the landowner fail to remain in conformance with the American Forest Foundation's Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification on private Forestlands. For questions, please contact [info@forestfoundation.org](mailto:info@forestfoundation.org).