

## **American Tree Farm System Inspecting Forester Compliance Policy**

Qualified ATFS Inspectors, as defined by the then current ATFS Standards of Sustainability and Guidance, are expected to comply with all policies and procedures of the American Forest Foundation (AFF) and American Tree Farm System (ATFS), as well as any applicable legal or professional requirements associated with the forestry profession in the states or counties of practice. These include, but are not limited to, ATFS Standards of Sustainability, ATFS Database Use and Nondisclosure Policy, ATFS inspections procedures, ATFS Volunteer No Harassment Policy, state forestry registration laws, and professional code of ethics sanctioned by partnering organizations such as the Society of American Foresters (SAF) and the Association of Consulting Foresters (ACF). Failure to comply with such policies may result in revocation of credentials as a Qualified ATFS Inspector. Qualified ATFS Inspectors serve at the discretion of the AFF; privileges and affiliation with ATFS and AFF may be withdrawn by the AFF Certification Committee after completion of the review process outlined below.

### Review Process and Procedures

In the event that nonconformance with relevant codes of ethics, legal, or professional requirements of AFF/ATFS policies is alleged, the following steps will be taken to review relevant information and identify corrective actions, up to and including expulsion from the Qualified ATFS Inspector rolls and withdrawal of affiliation with ATFS and AFF programming. All investigations, discussions, and meetings will be held in confidence and shared only on a “need to know” basis to protect the interests of parties associated with the allegations.

1. A written complaint is received or identified by a State Committee or AFF.
2. AFF staff undertake an investigation as to the credibility of the complaint.
3. In the event an AFF staff member brings the complaint, actions will be investigated by the AFF Certification Committee, or their designee(s), unless the complaint alleges a violation of AFF’s No Harassment Policy. AFF staff must follow the No Harassment Policy procedures as outlined in AFF’s Employee Handbook.
4. Actions are investigated by the appropriate individuals as detailed in 2 and 3 above, including review of any relevant documents, to determine the nature and extent of the allegation.
5. The Complainant and Inspector are each interviewed by the appropriate individuals as detailed in 2 and 3 above.
6. State Committee members, Certification Committee members, or others who may be in competition with the Inspector, may present information for consideration in the investigation, but are not, in any circumstance, engaged in recommendations or decision-making regarding the revocation of credentials or affiliation;
7. AFF staff and/or anyone designated by the AFF Certification Committee per this policy, to conduct an investigation will report the findings of said investigation to the AFF Certification Committee.
8. The AFF Certification Committee will review the findings of any investigation conducted per this policy and may make recommendations for action, up to and including the revocation of credentials as a Qualified ATFS Inspector.
9. Recommendations and actions of the AFF Certification Committee, including sanctions as appropriate, will be presented to the Inspector and respective State Committee.
10. In the event Inspector does not agree with the decision, he/she has the ability to dispute the decision, in accordance with AFF Disputes and Appeals Procedures.