



Suggested Interview Questions for ATFS Storytelling

Types of stories you want to tell (or the main point of your stories):

When telling stories for marketing or communications purposes, it's important to make sure that the stories you tell are compelling and deliver a key message. This ensures that not only is it interesting, but it also makes or 'sells' your main point – particularly 'sells' ATFS and its value. Here are a few of the main points your stories may want to make, in order to 'sell' the ATFS program:

- ATFS helps connect landowners to the resources and expertise needed to manage forests
- ATFS helps provide knowledge and best practices for sustainable forest management
- ATFS certification helps add value to wood fiber and timber
- Forest owners can overcome external obstacles (wildfire, hurricane, invasives, regulations, etc.) when they have the right tools (knowledge and information, funds, policies, markets) and trusted resources (foresters, biologists)

Questions to ask landowners to help you gather the full story:

As you go out to gather stories, consider the below interview questions to help you gather the details that make up a compelling story.

1. Determine what the main focus or point of the story is

- o Determine the main point first, using the suggestions above

2. Gather context to help you set up your story

- o Who is the protagonist?
- o What is the setting? What are (or were) the circumstances?
- o How long has the property been in the family or how was it acquired? Other family members involved?
- o How many acres? Types of trees?
- o Wildlife? Endangered species?
- o Lake? Stream, flowing water? Where does the water go?
- o What was it like when you purchased it?
- o Why? What inspired family/you to invest in land? What was your initial goal?

3. What are the big obstacles that the individual encounters?

- o Wildfire? Invasive species? Hurricane? Tornado? Too much development around?
- o Trust? Don't believe land management works?
- o Lack of funds? No markets? No cost share?
- o No resources? Not enough staff/personal? Physical help? No one to pass land onto? Can't find knowledge?
- o Regulation? Red tape? Opposing party lines? No skills with officials?

4. What does the individual do to overcome the big obstacle(s)? (this step is CRUCIAL!)

- How does ATFS help him overcome his challenge?
 - Who helped them from ATFS? What standards did they use/apply? Did he learn something at a Field Day or committee event? Was it his inspector or forester who helped him?
- What actual actions did he take?
 - Treat invasives? Harvest? Thin? Replant? Fix waterways? Prescribed burn?
 - Work with neighbors?
 - Lobby legislators?
 - Apply for and use cost-share dollars (that AFF lobbied for)?
 - Find new markets? Pellets? Cross-laminated timber, custom furniture, sugar maple?

5. What was the resolution in the end?

- Was the barrier overcome?
- Forest back to health?
- Seeing an increase in wildlife? Seeing the return of a wildlife species?
- Water is now flowing? Seeing fish, amphibians and other fish in water? Enough water?
- Became certified?
- Has a partnership established? Partnership is helping landowners?
- Increase in number of ATFS landowners in area?
- New law or regulation passed?
- Has the needed income? Found a new source of income? A new mill being built?