

Categories of Tree Farm Participation

Current Categories

Certified or Recognition Tree Farm

The Certified/Recognition Tree Farm category is the highest level of participation in the program. This category requires landowners to meet the current [AFF Standards of Sustainability](#) and [ATFS Eligibility Requirements](#) and remain subject to routine inspections after required initial inspection.

Pioneer Tree Farm

The Pioneer Tree Farm category allows interested landowners, who may not quite meet the [AFF Standards of Sustainability](#), but meet the [ATFS Eligibility Requirements](#), to participate in the American Tree Farm System. The Pioneer category also serves as a corrective action category 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 being a Certified or Recognized landowner, whether they are new to the Tree Farm system or were previously participating but must update their management. Pioneer status can be an introductory level of participation in the program, however, is not a mandatory starting point for Tree Farmers meeting all requirements of the ATFS program. Landowners meeting the AFF Standard should be considered for ATFS Certification/Recognition.

Prospect Tree Farm

The Prospect Tree Farm category is for properties that could potentially become Certified/Recognized based on the expressed interest of the landowner. The property has not yet received an inspection to be enrolled in the program. Prospects are added by the state committee or by national staff when a landowner requests more information through the online form or the postcard from the ATFS brochure.

Demonstration Tree Farm

Whether small or large, State Tree Farm Committees may recognize excellent forestry and outreach and education activities conducted 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 national office for any new demonstration areas. *Reference policies and guidelines for demonstration application.*

Legacy Categories

These categories are not applicable to new Tree Farms, but provide historical context on previously utilized categories.

Member Tree Farm

The Member Tree Farm category was a probationary category to maintain communications with previously Certified Tree Farms whose inspection had 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 can be reinspected and if appropriate, recertified at any point.

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 75 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.