



SPRING 2012

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A Newsletter for the Inspecting Foresters of the American Tree Farm System®

ON THE GROUND

Inspecting Foresters and ATFS: A Vital Partnership

The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS) operates as a partnership with thousands of Inspecting Foresters across the country. These natural resource professionals provide on-the-ground validation essential for the integrity of the program. By working together, foresters and ATFS are helping to ensure the future health, productivity, and longevity of America's private woodlands.

ATFS offers a host of valuable professional development benefits to Inspecting Foresters. Foresters can connect with local landowners, industry representatives, government natural resource managers, and consulting foresters through the state Tree Farm programs. Inspecting Foresters are invited to the National Leadership Conference, the National Tree Farmer Convention, as well as local Tree Farm events. Inspecting Foresters can receive SAF Continuing Forester Education (CFE) credits for participating in classroom and online trainings, participating in state Tree Farm committees, and completing one inspection per calendar year.

ATFS Foresters may conduct any one of three different types of Tree Farm inspections. The first is a **required re-inspection**, assigned from a list given to every state Tree Farm program at the beginning of each calendar year. The second is an **optional re-inspection**, conducted with the permission of a Tree Farmer. The third is an **initial inspection**, where an Inspecting Forester may recommend certification on a parcel, and bring a new landowner into the ATFS program. Inspection visits serve two important

purposes. First, they verify that practices taking place on the property meet AFF standards, an important component of our internal monitoring system. Second, they provide landowners with an educational opportunity through your expertise and advice.



Inspectors should complete at least one inspection per calendar year to utilize their ATFS Inspector training, engage with the Tree Farm network, and maintain active status in the program.

Please feel free to contact your state committee, or email inspectors@forestfoundation.org with questions. Happy Inspecting!



The American Tree Farm System®: We grow stewardship from the roots.

www.treefarmssystem.org

ATFS Combines the North Central and Western Regions

After successful completion of our first, full 3-year assessment cycle for third-party certification, the ATFS Certification program will be recertified in 2012. The assessment process is valuable in many ways. First, it represents the third-party verification that is a hallmark of a globally recognized and competitive certification program. In addition, the assessment also provides a critical opportunity to engage with Tree Farmers and highlight their excellent on-the-ground stewardship. In addition, through the assessment process, we also learn about opportunities to strengthen and enhance the ATFS certification program into the future.

Reflecting on the lessons gained during our first assessment cycle, ATFS is changing the composition of its regions. Each year, three State Tree Farm Programs are selected to represent their region in the third-party assessments. The State Tree Farm Programs were

originally organized into four assessment regions: Northeastern, Southern, North Central, and Western. In an effort to further promote efficiency in the assessment process, support cost savings, and lengthen the time between assessments for the respective State Programs, ATFS has combined the North Central and Western Regions for assessment purposes. This strategy will not only decrease the number of states involved in the assessment process each year but also reduce the overall assessment costs.

The states representing the North Central and Western Region in 2012 are Montana, Wyoming, and Illinois. Representing the Southern Region are Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. Representing the Northeastern Region are New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania. ATFS looks forward to another successful assessment year!

STUMPED?

Answers to Inspectors' Most Frequently Asked Questions

Question: I work in a state where State Best Management Practices (BMPs) are voluntary. Do landowners have to implement BMPs to be ATFS Certified?

Answer: Yes. The ATFS Standards of Sustainability require that landowners meet or exceed the State BMPs that are applicable to their property. This includes voluntary BMPs that are not required by state law. For example, if there is a water feature on the property, landowners should incorporate the BMPs specified for protecting water quality into their forest management activities. Landowners are urged to secure a copy of the state forestry BMPs from the state forestry agency, become familiar with the guidelines, and work with their forester to implement BMPs for harvesting, roads, reforestation, habitat management, and more.



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