



sightline

Summer 2013

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE INSPECTING FORESTERS OF THE AMERICAN TREE FARM SYSTEM®

Best Management Practices for Water Quality

For most foresters, working with water features and implementing forestry best management practices (BMPs) are natural and routine parts of business in the woods. Working with landowners on water quality begins with management plan development and continues with implementing management activities over time.

The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS) Standards address water quality considerations in a couple of key ways. First, landowners in the ATFS Certification program must comply with all relevant laws. This includes stream protection and other state regulations. In addition, compliance with state best management practices is a requirement for ATFS Certification, even in states where BMPs are voluntary.

As a first step, if there are water features on the property, landowners and foresters should identify these features in the management plan, as well as on the property's map. Be sure to make reference to any relevant state laws or BMPs in forest management plans. This reference need not be overly detailed. For example, when noting a water feature, a plan may state that the "the attribute will be protected during all forest management activities in compliance with the (noted) applicable regulations." Alternatively, the plan preparer may provide detailed descriptions of the feature, as well as the management activities and protective measures including buffers or streamside management zones.

When planning management activities that will cause soil disturbance, the state BMP handbook or manual should be consulted and applicable BMPs employed. Some common examples of activities that require BMP application include harvest planning, reforestation design, road maintenance and prescribed burning. State BMP manuals are generally quite detailed on recommended practices for road construction and other disturbances in riparian zones. In some states, permits may be required for forest roads and other disturbances that intersect with riparian zones.

Inadvertent violations of BMPs or water quality laws occasionally occur in the course of management activities. In these cases, to remain ATFS Certified, forest owners must be committed to correcting inadvertent violations and demonstrate good-faith efforts to remedy any nonconformance. Similarly, if a property shows evidence of water quality impairment originating on the property that was not caused by the forest owner's actions, the owner is strongly encouraged to have plans for remediation incorporated into his or her management plan.

The American Forest Foundation and ATFS provide a range of web-based resources on BMPs and water quality for both landowners and foresters. For example, the ATFS Woodland Owner Website (www.treefarmssystem.org/woodland-resources) provides a comprehensive listing of BMPs by state. Also, www.mylandplan.org offers a landowner-friendly overview of water and soil conservation with links to easy-to-use tools.

Join My Land Plan's Forester Directory Today!

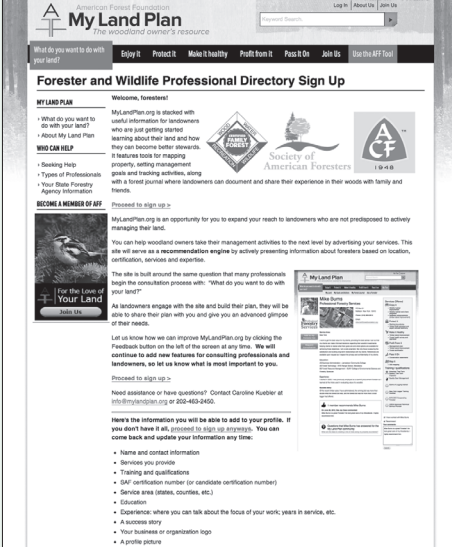
My Land Plan, a resource for woodland owners, also includes an important tool for foresters. On the Forester Directory, you can create a profile and connect with landowners in your area. Join the more than 200 foresters already included in this directory to reach the more than 2,000 landowners who have created accounts on My Land Plan for their 230,000-plus acres. Since the Forester Directory was launched last summer, landowners have used it to identify and reach out to foresters in their area for a consultation or recommend local foresters to other landowners. These interactions will only grow as we continue to promote the site, the directory and the importance of landowners working with professional foresters.

How do I get started?

Visit www.mylandplan.org/forester-signup to create your forester profile. You can include your contact information, list your qualifications and training (including your American Tree Farm System® Tree Farm Inspector status), upload your resume and list the services you offer.

Then what?

After you create your profile, you can use it as your personal website, you can answer questions in the Ask A Forester sections (your answers also show up on your profile) and you can help us grow the site by promoting My Land Plan to woodland owners in your area.



The screenshot shows the My Land Plan website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the My Land Plan logo and the tagline "The woodland owner's resource". Below the navigation bar, there is a search bar and a "Sign Up" button. The main content area is titled "Forester and Wildlife Professional Directory Sign Up". It includes a "Welcome, forester!" message and a list of services offered, such as "Seeking Help" and "Become a Member of ATF". There is also a "Sign Up" button and a "Need assistance or have questions?" section with contact information for Caroline Kuebler.

Stumped?

INSURANCE

Q: I am helping a landowner prepare for a timber sale. In developing the contracts with loggers, are there any insurance considerations or other contractor requirements under the American Tree Farm System® (ATFS) Standards?

A: ATFS Standard 8 covers forest product harvest and related activities. Forest owners should seek out qualified contractors that carry appropriate insurance and comply with federal, state and local safety and fair labor regulations and practices. Landowners are encouraged to discuss liability issues with insurance agents or attorneys to gain additional perspective on minimum insurance requirements for the contractors they work with. These requirements can then be stipulated in contracts with service providers. Other contract specifications to include, if relevant to the property, are the use of BMPs and the protection of water features or special sites. Landowners should retain their contracts for harvesting and other management activities, to demonstrate their fulfillment of the ATFS Standards. Many landowners also find it helpful to file this paperwork with their management plans.

