

***Eligibility for Certification by the American Tree Farm System***

ATFS eligibility requirements were developed to ensure ATFS certification remains consistent with the mission to outreach to small private landowners and positively affect the management of their lands. The eligibility requirements evaluate membership suitability based upon trends in land management style and the appropriateness of the AFF Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification. Landowner requirements may be delegated to the land manager, as landowners shall be engaged in the decision to pursue certification, but land managers may implement the requirements of the program. ATFS reserves the right to refuse certification to any party. ATFS may review petitions for exceptions and may make eligible for certification properties that contribute to the greater mission of AFF and the conservation of private forest land in the United States.

Eligibility Requirements:

Acreage Requirements

1. State Tree Farm Committees may enroll properties from 10 to 10,000 contiguous acres
2. Independently Managed Group (IMG) and Aggregated Management Group (AMG) programs may enroll properties from 10 to 20,000 contiguous acres.
3. Individual third-party certificate holders may include under their certificate contiguous properties from 10 – 20,000 acres.
4. ATFS acreage limits apply only to contiguous parcels. Contiguous parcels are defined as discrete parcels that share a boundary line or corner point and are held under the same legal ownership.

Landowner Requirements

1. Ownership must be privately held and not publicly traded
2. Ownership may be a public entity such as municipalities, schools, public and private universities and watersheds.
3. Properties owned by state government organizations must undergo third-party certification assessments. Properties may not be enrolled through a state Tree Farm committee. Properties may be enrolled through an Independently Managed Group (IMG) program or the state may obtain an individual third-party certificate.
4. Properties must be non-industrial but may be associated with small local business.<sup>1</sup>
5. Owner must clearly exhibit commitment to sustainable management through management objectives or management plan
6. Owner(s) demonstrates proactive forest management involvement
7. Ownership goals and objectives reinforce the ATFS mission
8. Owner(s) is engaged in active outreach efforts or can contribute to the effort

---

<sup>1</sup> The definition of a small business can be found in Title 13 of the Code of Federal Regulations: Business Credit & Assistance, Part 121 Small Business Size Regulations. Small business timber tract operations have annual receipts less than \$7million. Small business logging operations have fewer than 500 employees. All small business wood product manufacturers have fewer than 500 employees. Small business paper manufacturers have fewer than 500-750 employees depending on the sector.

***Grandfathered Properties Certification Policy***

Following the approval of the 2004-2009 AFF Standards of Sustainability and the introduction of ATFS eligibility requirements, properties smaller than 10 contiguous acres or larger than 10,000 acres certified by state Tree Farm committees were grandfathered into the program.

Properties smaller than 10 contiguous acres certified before 2004 may continue to be included in the state Tree Farm committee programs.

Properties larger than 10,000 contiguous acres currently certified by the state Tree Farm committees must undergo third-party certification audits. Large Tree Farms may fulfill this requirement by joining an independently managed group (IMG) organization or by obtaining an individual certificate. Landowners will have until December 31, 2012 to certify their lands into conformance with the current eligibility requirements. Currently certified properties larger than 20,000 acres will be afforded the same opportunity.

***Public Summaries of Forest Management Plans:***

Upon formal request, responsible Tree Farm organizations shall make available to interested parties the following information:

- a) For individual certificate holders, the landowner shall provide a summary of the management plan included in the public audit summary compiled by the Certification Body, omitting proprietary information and other confidential information;
- b) For Independently Managed Groups (IMGs), the Group Manager shall provide: 1) a summary of the AFF Standard required components of the management plans of IMG members' properties, and 2) summaries of the Group Members' management plans reviewed by the Certification Body and available in the public audit summary, omitting personally identifiable information, proprietary information and other confidential information;
- c) For Regional Tree Farm Programs, the American Tree Farm System shall provide: 1) a summary of the AFF Standard required components of the management plans of the properties included within the scope of the regional certificate, and 2) summary descriptions of the management plans for properties included in the scope of the audit reviewed by the Certification Body and included in the public audit summary, omitting personally identifiable information, proprietary information and other confidential information.