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*We provide you the on-the-ground tools you need to help validate the work that family woodland owners are doing to keep their forest healthy and productive.*

*Working together, we help provide outreach to landowners and promote better forest stewardship.*

#### Contact Us

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#### *We grow stewardship from the roots*

**Dear Amanda,**

We hope you enjoy the June edition of Sightline Express, the e-newsletter exclusively for American Tree Farm System Inspectors.

#### **Tools**

##### **Building Resources for Landowners**

Inspecting Foresters hold the greatest wealth of local forestry resources for landowners. In conjunction with your on-the-ground knowledge and technical expertise, the ATFS national office works to make some of this information available to landowners at their fingertips. Threatened and Endangered Species, High Conservation Value Forests and Special Sites are important parts of our Standards and we need your help raising awareness of them throughout the network and improving our online resources. How do you address these in your state? What resources do you use to determine if these elements are present in the woods of landowners you work with? We invite your feedback and look forward to building out the [Woodlands Resources](#) section of the [Tree Farm](#) website. Is there a resource you use in your state that isn't currently listed? Which resources are the best? Please contact [Justin Lindenberg](#) or [Sarah Crow](#) with ideas and resources.

##### **ATFS Webinar Series**

ATFS values your commitment to good stewardship and we strive to provide the tools you need to keep forests healthy, productive, and enjoyable. The [ATFS webinar series](#) provides

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important information and covers a range of topics from invasive species to legacy planning. Here is what is coming up:

- [Fix the Estate Tax to Keep the Forest in the Family](#)
  - **June 27, 2012, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. EDT**
  - We will provide you with a brief overview of the basics of the federal estate tax and show you some of the tools available to help lessen the burden on family forest owners. Also, find out how you can play a part in the *Keep the Forest in the Family* Campaign, and get the tools you need to be an effective advocate to fix the estate tax for America's family-owned forests.

ATFS is using e-mail to inform our network about the webinars and we encourage you to help spread the word. If you cannot participate in a webinar, live recordings will be posted [online](#) after the completion of each webinar.

## [On the Ground](#)

### **Required Sample Reminder**

Many thanks to our Inspecting Foresters and volunteers for your work on the ground to complete this year's required sample inspections. Thus far, 20% of the required sample inspections have been completed nationally. With the busy summer season coming up, please remember that all Required Sample inspections must be completed and in the database by November 1, 2012.

### **AFF Public Affairs Team Updates**

AFF's Public Affairs team continues to work aggressively in Congress to represent the ATFS network. Here is what we are working on:

#### ***House Agriculture Committee Farm Bill Hearing and John Burke's Testimony***

The House Agriculture Committee held a forestry hearing on May 18<sup>th</sup> and John Burke, AFF Chair of the Board of Trustees, and certified Tree Farmer in Virginia, [testified on behalf of the American Forest Foundation network](#). He highlighted the need to maintain forest owner access to Farm Bill conservation programs and to include forest products in the USDA Biobased Markets program.

In response to the [Senate Agriculture Committee's passage of the Farm Bill](#) on April 26, AFF and coalition partners requested leaders Reid and McConnell to bring the [Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012](#) to the Senate Floor.

#### ***Biobased Markets Program in Farm Bill and New Legislation***

Tree Farm has been fighting to fix policies that discriminate against wood in the marketplace. While wood is one of the most "biobased" materials around, most American forest products have been excluded from the federal government's Biobased Markets Program. Representatives Glenn Thompson (R-PA) and Kurt Schrader (D-OR) introduced H.R. 5873, the "[Forest Products Fairness Act of 2012](#)", which would allow forest products to be included in the Biobased Markets Program. Senators Pryor (D-AR) and Blunt (R-MO) introduced a similar bill in the Senate last month, and the Senate Agriculture Committee proposed a fix to the Biobased program in their Farm Bill that passed in April. AFF has been in daily conversations with our champions on the Hill to open up the Biobased Markets program to forest products in an effort to help strengthen markets for family forest owners. [Please urge your Representatives and Senators to co-sponsor these bills \(or thank them if they have already co-sponsored\).](#)

#### **LEED 2012 comments**

The LEED 2012 fourth public comment period ended Monday, May 28. AFF saw some [positive changes](#) to the fourth draft, but we continue to strongly oppose the U.S. Green Building Council's treatment of forest certification. You can [view a copy](#) of the comments we submitted. August 15 will begin the LEED 2012 Ballot Voting period.

### **Moving Towards the Future**

#### **AFF Legacy Society**

Are you working with landowners who are interested in preserving the legacy of America's forests? Please encourage them to join the American Forest Foundation's Legacy Society - our planned giving program that provides landowners with valuable tax benefits and helps landowners preserve their legacy. To sign up to receive the Legacy Society newsletter in the mail, as well as other useful information on including the American Forest Foundation in wills or estate plans, please contact Laura Tuel at (202) 463-2585 or [ltuel@forestfoundation.org](mailto:ltuel@forestfoundation.org).

#### **Stumped?**

Email [inspectors@forestfoundation.org](mailto:inspectors@forestfoundation.org) to get your *Stumped?* questions answered!

#### **Question:**

If a landowner has less than 10 acres of established forests but has recently planted some acres that put him or her over ten acres, do the newly planted acres qualify (even if they are not technically forested acres yet)? Do the trees need to reach a certain point of growth to actually be considered forested?

#### **Answer:**

Recently planted or replanted acres count as forested for the purposes of ATFS certification, so long as the stocking levels

are adequate and consistent with the landowners management objectives. Adequate stocking levels are prescribed by federal and state reforestation cost-share programs and can be used as a guide, even when cost-share funding is not used. However, certain wildlife species management regimes may favor lower stocking levels than the cost-share program guidelines. Therefore, it is important to make sure that the chosen guidelines are a good match for forest conditions and the landowner's objectives.

Thank you for your participation as an inspector with the American Tree Farm System! Your interaction with family woodland owners is helping to improve the sustainability of our forest resources across the U.S.

As always, check out the latest news of what's happening at the American Tree Farm System on our website - [www.treefarmssystem.org](http://www.treefarmssystem.org).

Please feel free to contact us at any time with any questions or concerns.

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