

American Tree Farm System®
Sightline Express
January 2013

Dates and Deadlines

February 1, 2013 – Regional Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year Nominations Due
March 15, 2013, Regional Outstanding Tree Farm Inspector of the Year Nominations Due

Special Announcements and Upcoming Events:

Welcome MacKenzie Rawcliffe, ATFS Program Coordinator!

Please join us in welcoming our new Program Coordinator, MacKenzie Rawcliffe. MacKenzie brings a wide range of non-profit work experience to the team – everything from grant monitoring to research to writing and producing publications. But most importantly, MacKenzie brings to ATFS a deep-rooted enthusiasm for forest management thanks to years of helping her father manage their family's woodlands in Maine. MacKenzie will be based in Washington, DC and can be reached at 202-463-5172 or mrawcliffe@forestfoundation.org.

Final call for ROTFY Nominations!

Annual recognition of outstanding Tree Farmers at the state, regional, and national levels is a great way to validate their hard work on the ground. Nominations for the 2013 Regional Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year are due Friday, February 1, 2013. For a nomination template, please contact operations@forestfoundation.org.

Calling all Tree Farm Inspectors!

We are currently seeking four (4) active ATFS Inspectors to judge the eight (8) finalists for the Regional Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year award. Your schedule will need to be flexible in the months of March and April, and ATFS will cover most travel expenses. Judges will be selected based on experience with the Tree Farm program, as well as flexibility and availability to travel during the judging months. Please contact [Sara Anrrich](#) for more info.

Tools

Survey for a 004 Form App!

We're currently scoping a tool to make completing and entering the 004 Form easier by utilizing technology in the form of a Smartphone App. Please take a few minutes to tell us how you use technology in the field. This is an exciting opportunity to potentially deliver a field tool that syncs with the ATFS database, streamlining the format of the 004 Form and eliminating the duplication of work. [Please follow this link and help inform the design of this tool for Inspecting Foresters.](#)

On the Ground

AFF Public Affairs Team Updates

AFF's public affairs team continues to work advocating for Tree Farmers across the country. Here are some activities going on this month:

Where does the fiscal cliff deal mean for woodland owners?

While 2012 was a tough year--with a gridlocked Congress and the focus on election-year politics—we still made a great deal of progress for woodland owners on several issues. In the nick of time, Congress passed a [deal to avert the fiscal cliff, which included some wins and disappointments for family forest owners](#).

- The fiscal cliff deal permanently set the estate tax levels at a \$5 million exemption (adjusted for inflation) and 40 percent tax. While this isn't everything we asked for, we think this is a very good outcome, in light of the circumstances!

- The deal retroactively extended the enhanced conservation easement tax incentives through 2012 and 2013. The tax incentives had expired in 2011, and AFF has advocated for an extension of the tax incentives.
- The fiscal cliff deal [extended current Farm Bill provisions](#) that expired on September 30th for one year. Although the farm bill extension is somewhat disappointing—none of the policy changes and improvements we fought for were included—for the most part, forest owners will continue to have access to tools through the conservation programs (with some program limitations).
- In addition to tax policy and the Farm Bill, the deal also included a 2 month delay on the across the board spending cuts (aka “sequestration”) that were set to take place on January 1st—to all federal spending. While it’s not a permanent solution, this keeps programs like the Forest Stewardship Program and forest health programs from facing as much as an 8% cut in funding on top of cuts that it has already taken in this fiscal year. While we know forest programs should not be immune to spending cuts, we will continue to work to ensure we don’t see disproportionate cuts to programs that will help woodland owners and the economy.

Aside from the final actions in the fiscal cliff deal, we can point to other accomplishments in 2012 that show the progress we’ve made on Capitol Hill. Both the [House Ag Committee and Senate Farm Bills included all of our priorities](#), and we’re confident that we’re in a good position once the committees begin work again on a 5-year bill (tentatively scheduled for February 27 in the House). While it didn’t pass, we built support in Congress for [reducing the estate tax burden](#) on family forest owners with the Keep the Forest and Farm in the Family Act. And, [dozens of Members of Congress](#) and state and local officials stood up for forest products—as we worked to change policies that [discourage the use of wood](#) products.

Researching Biomass Guidelines

A research team from North Carolina State University and the University of Georgia needs your help to assess perceived operational feasibility and environmental impacts of biomass harvesting guidelines. Their research includes surveying those with direct input to the creation of these harvesting guidelines: loggers, forest professionals, forest landowners, and non-profit members. Your participation is critical to ensure an array of perspectives. [Please take this survey and share this link with others in your state who might be interested.](#) The survey will be open from January 28, 2013 until February 22, 2013.

Future

Mark your calendars for the ATFS Fly-in, May 7-8, 2013 – Washington, D.C.

We will hold our 5th Annual Tree Farm Fly-in this coming May in Washington, D.C. At the fly-in, participants get an in-depth briefing on federal policy issues and learn strategies for being effective advocates. On the second day of the event, participants will meet with their members of Congress to ask for their support on policies that give family forest owners the tools to keep their forest healthy and productive—for current and future generations. A limited number of travel scholarships will be available—watch for more details in next month’s LU or contact Melissa Moeller, mmoeller@forestfoundation.org, for more information.

Stumped?

Better Know Your Terms: These words get thrown around a lot but what do they mean?

Accredited third-party assessors – A natural resource professional who has completed ATFS required training for third party assessors and is contracted or employed by an International Accreditation Forum (IAF) accredited certification body.

Certification Body (CB) – An International Accreditation Forum (IAF) accredited organization recognized by AFF as trained and approved for third-party auditing to the AFF standard.

Contiguous - contiguous parcels are discrete parcels that share a boundary line or corner point and are held under the same legal ownership name.

Independently Managed Group (IMG) – A company, corporation, firm, authority or institution that is a legal entity. The entity has its own functions and administration, and consists of a Group Manager and individual qualified Group Members seeking to collectively implement and become certified to the AFF Standards and ATFS-IMG- 01. All IMGs are required to undergo audits, by accredited third-party assessors, to ensure conformance with the ATFS standard and ATFS-IMG-01.

Individual third-party certificate – Certification to the AFF Standard is awarded by ATFS at the recommendation of an approved independent auditing firm after a successful audit of the candidate property(s) and the relevant management documentation.

Non-industrial – An entity whose primary source of revenue is not derived from processed forest products.

Small local business - 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 \$7 million. 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.

Privately held - Not publically owned; not owned by shareholders whose shares are listed, or traded, on a publically accessible exchange.

Public entity –Examples: a local municipality, a public grade-school, a public university, a publically-owned watershed authority, a tribal government, a federal agency. Properties owned by state governments must be covered by an individual third-party certification or an Independently Managed Group (IMG) program certificate.