

## Telling the American Tree Farm System® Story

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### BRAND STRATEGY



## **THE AMERICAN TREE FARM SYSTEM®**

The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS), a program of the American Forest Foundation, works nationwide and in partnership with local, state and national groups to provide hands-on support for America's 10 million family forest owners, giving them the tools they need to manage healthy and sustainable woodlands. ATFS is the largest and oldest sustainable woodland system in America, internationally recognized. Clean air, clean water, habitat for wildlife, wood for sustainable building and nature for hiking, hunting and fishing – all come from family forests. And ATFS helps family forest owners meet stringent third-party standards for managing nearly 26 million acres of forestland.

## **THE AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION**

The American Forest Foundation (AFF) works on-the-ground with families, educators, and elected officials to promote stewardship and protect our nation's forest heritage. A commitment to the next generation unites our nationwide network of forest owners and educators working to keep our forests healthy and our children well-prepared for the future they will inherit.

To grow the next generation of leaders ready to inherit America's natural legacy, AFF also works with tens of thousands of educators every year through its environmental education program Project Learning Tree® (PLT). Project Learning Tree uses forests as a window on the world and provides educators with supplemental curriculum materials that can be integrated into lesson plans for all grades and subject areas. In an era where more and more children are disconnected from nature, more than 500,000 teachers nationwide have been trained to use this curriculum, opening a door to America's outdoor heritage. Thanks to these efforts, 75 million students have learned how to think, not what to think, about complex environmental issues and help them learn the skills they need to make sound choices about the environment.

***The American Forest Foundation grows stewardship every day.***

# INTRODUCTION

*Telling the American Tree Farm System Story: Brand Strategy* is intended to provide the ideas and language needed to tell an emotionally compelling narrative for ATFS, as well as simple guidelines for putting these ideas into practice. This Brand Strategy book is the result of listening to our network of ATFS leadership, volunteer foresters, and Tree Farmers. We spent 2010 conducting research which included focus groups and a national network survey. This book was developed in response to what we heard. We are giving you the tools you need to more effectively communicate to landowners, foresters, industry, policy makers, and environmental groups about the importance of family forests and the vital work that we all do as part of the American Tree Farm System.

We all share the same goal of ensuring a future of sustainable forestry on our nation’s family forests. In order to reach these goals, we need to better deliver the ATFS value proposition and reach more family forest owners. This Brand Strategy is one tool to help achieve that goal.

ATFS has a powerful story to tell about Tree Farmers who are working hard to protect America’s natural heritage and to instill in the next generation the importance of a stewardship ethic. This document is about telling that story so we can help carry on that legacy.

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## THE AMERICAN TREE FARM SYSTEM AND THE AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION

Our nation has a growing reliance on the benefits private woodlands provide – clean air, clean water, recreation, renewable resources to build our homes and communities, and good paying jobs. But as a nation, we often make choices that force family woodland owners into an impossible position, torn between a desire to embrace their heritage and the need to make ends meet.

Family woodland owners know the threat to their land is real and growing every day. Owning a piece of America’s natural heritage means facing massive pressure to sell or parcel out tracts, struggling to stave off pests and pathogens, worrying about catastrophic fire and climate change. And through it all, having questions about whether the next generation is prepared for the heritage they will inherit.

The American Forest Foundation’s work is about what type of country America will be 20, 50, 100 years from now. Will we still be a nation rooted in its natural heritage? Will our citizens understand that heritage, and feel connected to it? Will they have the skills required to understand complex environmental challenges? By promoting sustainable management of America’s private forests, the American Forest Foundation addresses the fundamental cornerstones of healthy communities and a prospering nation.

The American Forest Foundation has five fundamental long-term goals:

1. To increase public awareness and understanding of the role that forests and the environment play in our lives, and build the skills and commitment needed to conserve and sustain them.
2. To develop and advance policies and programs that support conservation, environmental education, and sustainable forests.
3. To enhance the ecological, social, and economic viability of family forestland ownership.
4. To increase the number of family forest owners who sustainably manage natural resources.
5. To support research that fills gaps in our understanding of forest ecology, the socio-economic dimensions of forest ownership and management, and the impact of public policies on forest sustainability.

These goals have been translated into four strategic priorities:

1. Stem the loss of America’s woodlands.

2. Enhance the quality of America’s woodlands.
3. Ensure decision makers and educators understand and value America’s woodlands.
4. Nurture excellence in our education and woodlands networks of volunteers, committees and partners

The American Tree Farm System is AFF’s signature program that advances sustainable forest management on private lands from Maine to California, and is integral to achieving these goals and strategic priorities.

## THE AMERICAN TREE FARM SYSTEM

The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS) is the largest and oldest sustainable woodland system in America, internationally recognized, meeting strict third-party certification standards. For 70 years, ATFS has enhanced the quality of America’s woodlands by giving forest owners the tools they need to keep forests healthy and productive. Stemming the loss of America’s woodlands is vital to our country’s clean water and air, wildlife habitat, recreational activities, and producing the wood and paper products we all need. ATFS provides landowners with the validation that they are doing right by their land, meeting the highest standards of sustainability and being good stewards for the future.

All ATFS external communication is informed by three powerful, emotionally resonant ideas that set us apart:

- We’re about the future.
- We work on-the-ground.
- We give people the tools they need.

***The American Tree Farm System grows stewardship from the roots.***

## AUDIENCE MESSAGING

To ensure the ATFS story is told effectively, we need to acknowledge the diverse audiences ATFS needs to reach. Each audience should hear messages that resonate with them. These messages should communicate key facts that lead the audience to take necessary action to further their individual goals as well as ATFS's strategic goals.

These messages incorporate the themes expressed in the organizational profiles, modified for each audience.

### ATFS AUDIENCES

#### Certified Tree Farmers

- **What they need to know:** ATFS gives them the confidence and validation that they are doing right by their land. ATFS gives family woodland owners and Tree Farmers a voice in Washington, D.C. ATFS is a highly credible and a valuable resource working with industry and policy makers to improve markets and incentive programs.
- **What they need to do:** Remain Certified. Join the ATFS grassroots network and get active in policy. Share their experiences with other family forest owners and with their communities.
- **Primary Message:** ATFS is the largest and oldest sustainable woodland system in America. Tree Farmers are the best ambassadors for well-managed private forests. ATFS knows its members take their forest heritage seriously and gives them the tools to keep their forests healthy, productive and enjoyable. ATFS works on the ground in their communities, through a grassroots network of volunteers, and in Washington, D.C. to make sure family forest owners and Tree Farmers have a voice.

#### Non-ATFS Family Woodland Owners

- **What they need to know:** As the owner of a family forest, they are part of something even larger than their woodlands. Their woods need to be cared for to be healthy. There is a place for them to get the tools they need to take good care of their woods and to protect and enhance the benefits they care about: wildlife, recreation, privacy,

and natural beauty. With help from ATFS and its volunteer network, they can rest assured they are doing what is best for their woods.

- **What they need to do:** Join ATFS. Move up the ladder of stewardship. Take action on woodland owner issues. Spread the word to their friends and neighbors that also own woodlands that there is an organization that can help them do right by their land.
- **Primary Message:** The ATFS network of people is there to work with them and to help them protect and enjoy their woods. We share their love of the land, and can give them easy ways to keep their forest healthy and beautiful.

## Foresters

- **What they need to know:** ATFS is an internationally recognized certification program that validates good stewardship by family woodland owners. Inspecting foresters provide the on-the ground validation that is essential for the integrity of the program. Inspectors give us the confidence that we have an exemplary program. Certified wood from the ATFS network is a principal source of fiber for the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification systems (PEFC) Chain of Custody program.
  - Family woodland owners are central to a thriving green economy. ATFS raises awareness about good stewardship by family woodland owners, and this helps the entire sector.
  - ATFS can be a source of locally grown, sustainable wood.
  - **For consulting foresters:** Tree Farmers represent a way to grow your business. As an inspecting forester, you can meet potential new clients. Your relationship with ATFS is a win- win. For landowners, you are providing them with additional value and as a forester, your relationship with ATFS adds to the trust a landowner has in their services.
- **What they need to do:** Volunteer to become an ATFS Inspecting Forester. Promote the values of ATFS to landowners.
- **Primary Message:** ATFS is the largest and oldest sustainable woodland system in America for private woodland owners. We give them the tools to help validate the work family woodland owners are doing to keep their forests healthy and productive.

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

## Industry

- **What they need to know:** Certified wood from the ATFS network is a principal and growing source of fiber and family woodland owners are central to a forest-fortified green economy. Working through ATFS, they can gain access to local, certified sustainable fiber. Private woodland owners will be the primary source if the supply of certified fiber is to continue to grow. ATFS has been the expert in reaching woodland owners for more than 70 years. Raising awareness about family woodland owners helps the entire sector.
- **What they need to do:** Acknowledge ATFS as a preferred supplier by offering Tree Farmers preferential access and any premiums for certified fiber they might offer.
- **Primary Message:** ATFS works on-the-ground to protect America's forest heritage, and to encourage sustainable harvesting in family-owned woodlands nationwide. The ATFS network of certified Tree Farmers follows rigorous standards to produce sustainably managed, locally grown wood. The ATFS network includes family woodland owners who sustainably manage nearly 26 million acres of certified woods.

## Federal Policy Makers

- **What they need to know:** Most of America's forests, 56 percent, are not owned by the government, they are owned privately. Of that 262 million acres are owned by families and individuals (62% of total private forests). These family forests are central to America's natural heritage, economic well-being and quality of life and provide multiple benefits: clean air, water, wildlife habitat, wood, and good paying rural jobs. If you care about America's economic and environmental health, you also need to care about America's family forest owners, who are the caretakers of most of America's private forests. AFF is a leading Washington, D.C. policy voice for ATFS on woodland issues and has the national network to back it up.
- **What they need to do:** Support policies that stem the loss of family forests and improve forest health. Contact or call AFF when you need an expert voice on forests or environmental education.



- **Primary Message:** AFF is the leading voice promoting stewardship and protecting America's forest heritage. AFF speaks for more than 10 million family forest owners nationwide who own 262 million acres of forest. ATFS landowners are the country's best forest stewards. ATFS-certified family forests are managed for multiple purposes - water, wildlife, wood, and recreation- and Americans count on them for clear air, clean water, recreation, and renewable resources. ATFS is the sustainable family forest certification program of the American Forest Foundation.

### Conservation NGOs

- **What they need to know:** Most of America's forests, 56 percent, are not owned by the government, they are owned privately. Of that, 262 million acres are owned by families and individuals (62% of total private forests). Americans count on them for clean air, clean water, recreation, renewable resources to build our homes and communities, and good paying jobs. ATFS is an internationally recognized forest certification program that validates the good stewardship of family forest owners. ATFS has a national network of family forest owners, with powerful stories to tell policy makers. With families and individuals owning most of the nation's private forests, AFF's work on the ground with family forest owners is critical to protecting America's forest heritage. Their constituency cares about wildlife, clean water, open space, and forests. A partnership with ATFS helps us ensure that the resources we all care about are protected.
- **What they need to do:** Work with ATFS to promote the sustainability of our nation's family forests and help ensure the multiple public benefits of private forests are conserved and enhanced.
- **Primary Message:** ATFS works on-the-ground to conserve America's forest heritage, and to encourage sustainable management of family-owned forests nationwide. The ATFS network of Tree Farmers follows rigorous standards to sustainably manage nearly 26 million acres of forests. Family forest owners are providing multiple public benefits from clean air and water, wildlife, to green jobs and forest products. ATFS works closely with its partners in the conservation community to protect America's forests. ATFS is the sustainable family forest certification program of the American Forest Foundation.

## VISUAL DIRECTION

Directly connected to ATFS's organizational profile, visuals should reflect the strong, emotional, and generational connection to the woods. These guidelines apply across various media – print publications, online communications, videos and presentations – and are meant to supplement (not replace) the logo usage and colorways guidelines in the ATFS graphic style and message guide. Showing adults and children enjoying a forest setting drives home the emotional connection of family forest owners as a parent-to-child inheritance.

### ATFS MODEL IMAGES



### NATURE AND WILDLIFE MODEL IMAGES



**INTERGENERATIONAL MODEL IMAGES**



# ATFS BRANDING SUMMARY TOOL

## Our Distinction

ATFS is the largest and oldest sustainable woodland system in America, internationally recognized, meeting third-party certification standards.

## Visuals



## RPM (Repetitive Persuasive Message)

The American Tree Farm System gives people the tools they need to be effective stewards of America’s natural heritage by keeping their forests healthy and productive. These woodlands are vital to our country’s clean water and air, wildlife habitat, recreational activities and producing the jobs, wood and paper products we all need.

## Tagline

We grow stewardship from the roots.

## What We’re About

We’re about the future. We work on-the-ground. We give people the tools they need.

## Context

Family woodlands are essential for the benefits that we all receive from the forests, including clean water, air, wildlife habitat, recreation, green jobs, wood and paper products.

- Family forest owners own 35 percent of America’s forests<sup>i</sup>
- 25 percent of America’s fresh water comes from private forests<sup>ii</sup>
- 60 percent of at-risk wildlife depends on private forests<sup>iii</sup>
- 92 percent of wood and fiber comes from private forests<sup>iv</sup>
- Family woodlands provide opportunities for hunting, fishing and recreation.

Audience	Need to Know	Need to Do	Message
Certified Tree Farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ATFS validates their good stewardship</li> <li>ATFS credible and valuable</li> <li>Voice in Wash., D.C.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay certified</li> <li>Join grassroots network</li> <li>Share their experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They are part of a strong and vibrant network that promotes stewardship values to sustain America’s family forests. ATFS is the largest and oldest sustainable woodland system in America. We know our members take their forest heritage seriously, and we give them the tools to keep their forest healthy, productive and enjoyable. ATFS is their voice in Congress.</li> </ul>
Family Forest Owners: Non-ATFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letting nature take its course ≠ healthy woods</li> <li>We have the tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Join ATFS</li> <li>Learn about stewardship</li> <li>Take action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ATFS is here to work with them to protect the beauty of their woods. ATFS shares their love of the land, and can give them the tools they need to keep their forest healthy and beautiful.</li> </ul>
Foresters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ATFS and its inspectors validate good stewardship</li> <li>ATFS credible and valuable</li> <li>Certified wood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Become an Inspector</li> <li>Reach more landowners</li> <li>Promote ATFS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ATFS is an internationally recognized certification program validating good stewardship by family woodland owners. Inspectors provide the on-the-ground validation which is essential for the integrity of the program. Inspectors give ATFS the confidence that it is an exemplary program. Certified wood from the ATFS network is a principal source of fiber for the SFI and PEFC chain of custody program.</li> </ul>
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Source for certified, local wood</li> <li>Helping family forests helps the entire sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buy certified wood</li> <li>Give Tree Farmers preferred access</li> <li>Provide support for family forests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To continue to have the fiber they need, they need to support ATFS. The ATFS network of certified Tree Farmers follow rigorous standards to produce sustainably managed, locally grown wood. ATFS works on-the-ground to protect America’s forest heritage, and encourages sustainable management in family-owned forests nationwide.</li> </ul>
Federal Policy Makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most private forests are owned by families and ind.</li> <li>Forests at stake</li> <li>AFF is voice in DC for the nationwide ATFS network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support policies</li> <li>Call when an expert voice is needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ATFS is the leading voice promoting private stewardship and protecting America’s forest heritage. ATFS speaks for family forest owners, who own a most of America’s forests and Americans count on them for clean air, clean water, recreation, renewable resources to build their homes and communities, and good paying jobs.</li> </ul>
Environmental NGOs: Forest Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ATFS credible and valuable</li> <li>Families own most of America’s private forests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work together</li> <li>Support policies</li> <li>Help protect private forests for all the public benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ATFS is the largest and oldest sustainable woodland system in America. If they care about clean air and water, wildlife and outdoor recreation, then they have to care about private forests. A partnership with ATFS helps ensure that the resources we all care about are protected</li> </ul>

## KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

### ABOUT FAMILY FOREST OWNERS

Most of America's forests, 56 percent, are not owned by the government, they are owned privately.

- 11 million Americans own 423 million acres of forest – that is 56 percent of all the forestland in the United States, an area about the size of New England, Texas, and California *combined*. These owners include families, individuals, industry and other private groups.<sup>v</sup>
- Of the total private forest acreage, 262 million acres are owned by more than 10 million families and individuals (62% of total private forests)<sup>vi</sup>.
  - More than eight million of these forest owners have fewer than 50 acres each.<sup>vii</sup>
- America's family forest heritage is overwhelmingly protected by hard-working, middle-class Americans. 82 percent of family forest owners make less than \$100,000 a year, according to U.S. Census data provided by the National Forest Service.<sup>viii</sup>
- Many of these families nevertheless take a massive estate tax hit when their forest heritage is passed down.
  - If Congress lets the estate tax limit for forests revert to 2001 levels, the number of family forests with an estate tax bill will jump 400 percent.<sup>ix</sup>
  - In 42 percent of the cases where federal estate tax is due on family forestland, timber or land is sold to pay part or all of the tax, according to a study led by Forest Service Staff and published in the *Journal of Forestry* (2006). Most of the time that is because other assets are not available.<sup>x</sup>

### THE BENEFITS OF FAMILY FORESTS

Family forests are an invaluable natural resource.

- 25 percent of America's fresh water comes from private forests<sup>xi</sup> — giving people downstream a cleaner, healthier, and affordable supply. Every dollar invested in watershed conservation in the Catskill Mountains avoided eight dollars of water treatment infrastructure spending.<sup>xii</sup>
- Private forests provide crucial habitat for endangered and threatened species: 60 percent of all at-risk species rely on private forests<sup>xiii</sup>.

- America’s forests are even slowing the pace of climate change—by sequestering 10 percent of the nation’s annual carbon dioxide emissions<sup>xiv</sup>. This could be as much as 20 percent with the right incentives.
- Private forest land store more total carbon than National Forests<sup>xv</sup>.
- Wood building materials—the vast majority of which are harvested from private forests—are a boon for climate protection, as well, by reducing energy use and carbon emissions in manufacturing from 70 percent to as much as 88 percent.

In addition to providing these irreplaceable environmental benefits, family forests are the economic lynchpin of small towns and rural areas around the nation.

- Forestry and other related industries employ 2.8 million people nationwide, and provide essential products such as lumber, furniture, paper, and heating fuel.
- Every 1,000 acres of private forests supports eight good paying jobs<sup>xvi</sup>. Responsible management and use of our private forests will not only sustain nature’s benefits, but sustain small towns and rural areas as well.
  - Each job created in private forests creates an additional 2.95 jobs<sup>xvii</sup>.

### **AMERICAN TREE FARM SYSTEM**

- The American Tree Farm System is the largest and oldest sustainable woodland system in America. It celebrates its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011.
- Family forest owners, with more than 88,000 certified Tree Farms, take care of their land as part of the American Tree Farm System, managing nearly 26 million acres.
- ATFS certification is internationally recognized and meets third party verification and audit standards.
- ATFS-certified family forests meet nine standards of sustainability and are managed for multiple purposes: water, wildlife, wood, and recreation.
- ATFS is the sustainable forest certification program of the American Forest Foundation.

## **APPENDIX 1: ADDITIONAL MESSAGES FOR THE AMERICAN TREE FARM SYSTEM**

To supplement the primary messages, the recommendations below provide additional suggestions to deliver relevant messages to key audiences.

### **Messages for ATFS Tree Farmers**

#### **On-the-Ground Tools**

- Membership in the American Tree Farm System® gives woodland owners the tools they need to have the confidence they are doing right by their land.
- ATFS provides family woodland owners with opportunities to be recognized in their own communities for their stewardship efforts.
- ATFS gives Tree Farmers and woodland owners the opportunity to participate in state and national events that promote the importance of private forest owners to America's economic and environmental health.
- ATFS's network of 4,500 volunteers in 42 states provides on-the-ground support and professional advice to woodland owners.
- ATFS supports a forestry professional infrastructure that enables woodland owners to meet their stewardship objectives with confidence.

#### **Representation: ATFS is Your Voice**

- The American Tree Farm system represents the interests of woodland owners to industry, trade associations, state and federal policymakers. We are their voice in Washington, D.C. advocating for policies that will support their forest stewardship.



- ATFS educates the public about the unique and critical role private woodland forest owners play in providing all Americans with multiple benefits such as clean air and clean water, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and ways to connect children to the natural world.

### **Validation of Woodland Stewardship**

- ATFS certification is internationally-recognized and meets strict third-party verification and audit standards.
- We are building markets and advocating for ATFS certification to key decision makers in government and industry.
- The ATFS sign is a sign of good stewardship. It tells their community that they are protecting America's forest legacy.

### **Stewardship Legacy**

- ATFS members understand that what they stand on is what they stand for. Their family legacy is part of America's forest legacy.
- ATFS certified landowners are models for other woodland owners who want to be better stewards of their woods.

### **Community of Forest Stewards**

- ATFS is a strong network of woodland owners who share the same core values of hard work, community responsibility and commitment to protecting America's forest legacy.
- They are part of a strong and vibrant network that supports neighbor-to-neighbor learning and promotes stewardship values to sustain America's family forests.
- ATFS honors their passion for their land, the value they place on stewardship and their commitment to future generations.

- We know that the health of America’s forests is not simply an environmental concern; it is about families, a cultural legacy and a way of life.

### **Messages for Partners and Volunteers**

#### **On the Ground**

- ATFS promotes sustainable forestry, and supports a network of family forest owners.
- ATFS supports a vibrant network of professionals who help deliver on-the-ground tools to help improve forest conservation.
- ATFS gives people the tools they need to do right by their land.
- ATFS meets landowners where they are: helping stewardship-minded landowners learn about the incremental steps they can take to care for their woods.

#### **Sustainability Standards**

- ATFS certification is internationally-recognized and meets third-party verification and audit standards.
- ATFS upholds an exemplary standard of stewardship and is the largest and oldest sustainable woodland system in America. It celebrates its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011.
- ATFS-certified family forests meet nine standards of sustainability and are managed for multiple purposes: water, wildlife, wood, and recreation.

#### **A National Voice**

- We work at the state and federal level to promote programs and policies to sustain America’s family forests.

- By working with ATFS, you can promote good forest stewardship more effectively and extend your reach through joint programs and national advocacy.

### **Messages to Reach Non-ATFS Family Forest Owners**

Most of America’s forests, 56 percent, are not owned by the government, they are owned privately. Of that, 262 million acres are owned by families and individuals (62% of total private forests). More than eight million of these forest owners have fewer than 50 acres each<sup>xviii</sup>. These family forest owners rank non-commercial reasons for owning their land much higher than commercial reasons – regardless of whether or not they harvest timber or use their land for other income-producing activities<sup>xix</sup>.

Only 24 percent have received advice or information about the management of their land in the past five years. Of the 44 percent that harvested trees for commercial purposes, only half used a professional forester in their last harvest<sup>xx</sup>.

Seventy percent are “conservation-minded” and 76 percent are concerned about legacy.<sup>xxi</sup>

Among these 4.2 million there are multiple reasons for owning woodlands. Messaging cannot be “one-size fits all” but needs to speak to the more diverse reasons why people own woods. Messages must also serve to help more people who see themselves as “landowners with woods” to self-identify as “woodland owners.”

These family forest owners need to recognize that letting nature take its course on their woodlands is no longer an option, if they care about keeping their woods healthy.

### **Wildlife**

- If they care about wildlife, they need to care about the health of their woods. By taking small steps, they can improve the habitat for the wildlife they love by improving their woodlot. ATFS can show them how.
- Much of America’s wildlife depends on forests for its home. Their woodlot is important to take care of for the sake of the wildlife they love.

- More than 60 percent of at-risk plants and animals in the U.S. rely on private forests<sup>xxii</sup>. ATFS can help them make a better home for wildlife by following easy steps to improve the health of their woodlot.
- If hunting and fishing is important to them and their family, then the health of their woods can mean the difference between a good season or a bad season. ATFS can help keep their woods healthy for recreational interests.

## **Family**

- Their family is a key reason why they have that special place surrounded by trees to enjoy nature together. ATFS can help ensure that their woodlot stays healthy so their family can enjoy the beauty and solitude for generations to come.

## **Protecting Nature**

- As a landowner with woods they have a unique opportunity to make a difference in ensuring this beautiful natural area stays healthy and productive for all kinds of birds and other wildlife. By taking small steps, they can improve the health of their woods and ensure that they and their family will enjoy its solitude.
- We all have an obligation to do what we can to protect nature's gifts. ATFS can help them make the right decisions to better protect their woods for all the benefits they provide.
- Learning about how to be a good steward of their woods is the best way to protect the natural diversity on their property.
- More woods are destroyed annually by invasive species than by forest fires, doing nothing in their woods is no longer an option.

## **Be a Good Steward**

- There are threats to healthy woods – pests and invasive plants, development, fire and drought. To be the best stewards of the woods they love, they need to take steps to protect their woods from these threats. Doing nothing only makes for an unhealthy forest.
- ATFS provides them with the confidence and validation that they are doing right by their land.

## APPENDIX 2: KNOW OUR STATISTICS!

### Definitions

**Private Forest Owners:** There are 11 million of these owners and they own 56% of the forest land in the US. These owners include families, individuals, industry and other private groups that own forest land<sup>xxiii</sup>.

**Family forest owners:** Family forest owners are a subset of private forest owners, representing 62% of the total private forest ownership. There are more than 10 million of these owners and they own 35% of all forest land in the US, more than 262 million acres. This owner group includes families, individuals, trusts, estates, family partnerships and other unincorporated groups of individuals<sup>xxiv</sup>.

### American Tree Farm System

As of 2011, the American Tree Farm System represents Tree Farmers who sustainably manage:

- more than 88,000 certified Tree Farm properties
- representing nearly 26 million acres.

Currently we do not have an accurate way of determining the individual number of Tree Farmers vs. properties.

- Largest and oldest sustainable woodland system in America, internationally recognized, meeting strict third-party certification standards.

### Private Forest Owners

- Most of America's forests, 56 percent, are not owned by the government, they are owned privately. The combined ownership of the federal government, state and local governments is 43 percent.
- 60 percent of private forest owners are 55 years or older (more than 15 percent of private forest land is owned by someone 75 years or older)<sup>xxv</sup>.
- 25 percent of America's fresh water comes from private forests<sup>xxvi</sup>
- Every dollar invested in watershed conservation in the Catskill Mountains avoided eight dollars of water treatment infrastructure spending.<sup>xxvii</sup>

- 60 percent of at-risk wildlife depends on private forests<sup>xxviii</sup>
- Private forest land store more total carbon than National Forests<sup>xxix</sup>
- 92 percent of wood and fiber comes from private forests<sup>xxx</sup>
- Every 1,000 acres of private forests supports eight good-paying jobs<sup>xxxi</sup>.
- Each job created in private forests creates an additional 2.95 jobs<sup>xxxii</sup>.

### Family Forest Owners

- Family forest owners own 35 percent of America’s forests<sup>xxxiii</sup> which is the largest ownership group in America. This is more than the percent of forest land owned by the federal government (33%).
- 82 percent of family forest owners make less than \$100,000 a year.<sup>xxxiv</sup>
- In 42 percent of the cases where federal estate tax is due on family forestland, timber or land is sold to pay part or all of the tax<sup>xxxv</sup>.
- More than eight million of these forest owners have fewer than 50 acres each<sup>xxxvi</sup>.
- Only 24 percent have received advice or information about the management of their land in the past five years<sup>xxxvii</sup>.
- Of the 44 percent that harvested trees for commercial purposes, only half used a professional forester in their last harvest<sup>xxxviii</sup>.
- Seventy percent are “conservation-minded” and 76 percent are concerned about legacy.<sup>xxxix</sup>

### General Forestry in America

- America’s forests are slowing the pace of climate change, storing up to 10 percent of carbon emissions.<sup>xl</sup> Forestry and other related industries employ 2.8 million people nationwide, and provide essential products such as lumber, furniture, paper, and heating fuel.

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<sup>xxxvii</sup> SFFI, 2007

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# American Tree Farm System

*We grow stewardship from the roots*