GA Tree Farm Program
2019 Year in Review Report for Pledge Supporters

January –
February –
- Nominated Dr. James Granade of Wilkes County for Regional Tree Farm of the Year
- Chair Jim McGurn (Pinova), Mark McClellan (GFC) and PA Frank Green attended the National Leadership Conference in Louisville, KY. They participated in several concurrent breakout sessions and heard the State of the Program report from Tom Martin, AFF President.
- Provided TF report to GA SFI- SIC.

March –
- Conducted TF Executive Committee Mtg., attended PLT Steering Committee Mtg and GFA Silent Auction Committee meeting.
- Conducted the Spring Awards Luncheon for Inspectors -
  - Inspector of the Year – Jamie Pitts, PCA – 34 inspections
  - Elite Inspector – Jim McGurn, Pinova (21 inspections) and Craig Russell, DS Smith(27 inspections)
  - Region Chair of the Year – Kent Huff, Huber
  - District Chair of the Year – Jamie Pitts, PCA
  - Superior Inspectors – Travis Whatley, WestRock (19 inspections), Aaron Burton, AFM (14 inspections), Geoff Hill, ArborGen - 5 inspections and other activities; Chris Howell, GFC, 7 inspections, Lisa Duncan, GFC – 6 inspections;
  - Master Inspectors - Phillip Exley, Interfor, (5 inspections and other activities), Gwinnette Aldridge, FourT, (4 inspections and other activities), Buford Sanders – 3 inspections and other activities; Robert Ploetz, WestRock, (4 inspections), Tommy Joines, Norbord, (6 inspections and other activities), Matt Roach, Rozier, - 4 inspections and other activities;
  - Others recognized for their contributions included:
    - Consulting foresters - Terry Cross, Sam Breyfogle, Mike Matre, Mark Wiles, Steve Davis, Charles Hogan, Diana Gennett, Chris Bordeaux, Ed Withrow, Alex Nixon, Greg Long, Mike Gomez, Jason Waddell and Jonathan Parker,
    - GFC foresters - Matthew Mrizek, Shawn Woodward, Chuck Fore, Paul McDaniel, Keith Murphy, Mike Hinson, Jeff Kastle, Billy Whitley, Chris Thompson, Matt Peterson, Colby Auckland, Justin Mayfield, Matt Davis, Alexandra
Ford, Erin Napoli and Ryan Phillips.

- **Industry foresters** - Steve Duda, Chris Carey, Kersh McIntyre, Robbie Eubank, Cliff Smith, Becky Watson and Jason Oates,
- **Other** – Jamey Kent – Dept of Defense

Participants were provided updates on the Program by members of the Executive Committee. Chair Jim McGurn briefed everyone on accomplishments, No Harassment Policy, TFOY Nominations, College Scholarships, and the upcoming field day. Frank Green went over the inspection accomplishments for 2018, the required inspections for 2019, and the database clean-up efforts needed. Everyone enjoyed a bbq pork chop lunch from This Little Piggy BBQ.

Considering all these professionals have primary jobs and are contributing their time as volunteers, the Executive Committee is proud of them and their accomplishments.

**March cont’d – Inspector Training** – There were 10 participants: 7 consultants, 1 GFC forester, 1 industry foresters, and 1 NRCS forester. Gwinnette Aldridge and Frank Green facilitated the workshop.
- Conducted inspections for TFOY in Dalton, Gray and Ellaville.

**April –**
- ATFS Qtrly Webinar
- GFA Annual Conference mtg

**May –**
- Provided TF report at SFI Qtrly mtg, GFA Annual conference mtg, PLT Steering Committee Mtg,
- Reviewed 3 TFs nominated for Tree Farm of the Year (TFOY). The farm of John Geary in Jones County was selected as 2019 TFOY. A video was produced and will be shown at the GFA Convention in July. The video can be seen at the GFA and GA Tree Farm website.
- Landowner Field Day at Governor Brian Kemp’s Plantation Partners TF in Oglethorpe County. Approximately 100 people attended. Attendees listened to talks regarding timber prices, cost/share programs, and toured the farm on trams with several stops to listen to speakers on water quality, recreational opportunities, wildlife and timber management.

**June –**
- GFA Annual Conference Committee mtg
- TF Executive Committee Conference call.
- TF contributed $650 for the registration of one teacher at the Teacher Conservation Workshop. Also sponsored two students to attend the Billy Lancaster Youth Camp $320 and $200 for the State FFA Forestry Competition.
- ATFS Qtrly webinar.

**July –**
Participated as a sponsor at the GFA Convention where Jim presented award to the family of John Geary (TFOY). With the results of the silent and live auctions, TF received approx. $3,700.00. This money goes into the general fund account.

We received two applications for the Tree Farm scholarship. This year the winners were Elizabeth Dixon from Wilkinson County and Gracie Hunt from Piedmont Academy in Jasper County.

Attended PLT Steering Committee mtg
GFA Annual Conference at Jekyll Island

August –
- Provided TF Report to GA SFI SIC.
- Wheels to Woods Grant mtg.
- GFC Oconee All lands Grant mtg at USFS Hitichiti Office in Jones County
- Frank provided TF update to GFC Stewardship Steering Committee and Landscape Mgt Plan

September –
- ATFS Qtrly Webinar
- Conducted TF Exec Committee conference call.
- Conducted another Inspector Training workshop at GFA with Steve Duda, Ed Withrow, Geoff Hill and Frank Green facilitating. Fourteen people attended. Those attending included 5 consultants, 4 GFC foresters, and 4 industry foresters and one NGO. Frank attended a PLT Steering Committee meeting.

October –
- Region 12 mtg in Thomson
- 65 required inspections were due to National.

November –
- Wheels to Woods Program in Valdosta – 125 4th grade students attended
- Provided TF report to GA SFI SIC
- Wheels to Woods Program in Jefferson - 300+ students attended
- Conducted the final TF Exec Committee Meeting for the year and set budget for 2020.

December –
- ATFS 4th Qtr Webinar
- PLT Steering Committee mtg.

**Expanded Pledge Supporter List** – So far, 18 companies have pledged financial support for the Program through a 3-yr commitment. We are seeking to include wood dealers, equipment companies, forestry consultants, herbicide rep and contractors, seedling producers, etc.

**Database Management** –
- **Pioneer Tree Farm Landowners** – At the start of the year, we had 34 landowners under this classification and are working with the GFC to determine
those with Forest Stewardship Plans. With the financial incentive provided through
the Dutch Biomass grant, we inspected and moved 16 of these to Certified status.
Those remaining landowners will be contacted and plans updated as needed to
become Certified status again.

- **Member Tree Farm Landowners** – At the start of the year, we had 30
  landowners also under this classification and are working with the GFC to determine
  those with Forest Stewardship Plans. Those landowners will be contacted and plans
  updated as needed to become Certified status again. As of Dec 2019, We still have
  30 at this status.

- **2019 Optional Inspections** – National determined a total of 177 tree farms that
  should be inspected during the year to stay on top of inspections.

- **Issues** – At the start of the year, National identified 73 TFs with issues that need
to be corrected. The majority of these (67) were suspected multiple non-contiguous
parcels. We are working with Dist. Chairs and inspectors to correct these. As of Dec
17, 2019, there are now 51 TFs with issues with 41 in this suspected multiple parcels
category.

- **Current Database – (as of Dec 13)** –
  - **New Tree Farms** – 21 farms totaling 5,163 acres have been added so far this
    year. This brings the total # of TFs in GA to 1,607 totaling 1,131,032 acres.
  - **New Re-inspections** – Not including the required inspections as mentioned
    above, 64 other re-inspections were completed and 44 of those were de-certified.
    Of the total inspections, industry foresters completed 52 or 41%, consultants 28
    (21%), GFC 31(25%) and other 18 (13%).

- **New Officers** – Jim McGurn, Pinova, will continue as the Chair. Aaron Burton (AFM)
  will be the Chair-elect.

- **Goals for Next Year** – The location of the next Tree Farm Landowner Field Day will be
  at John Geary’s Lightwood Plantation and are shooting for May 20, 2020.

In the coming weeks, the GA Tree Farm Program will be sending all pledge supporters an
invoice and thanking them for their support.

- Report compiled by Frank Green, Program Administrator