



SOUTH DAKOTA FAMILY FORESTS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Winter 2021-2022

Semi-Annual

SDFFA Members Win National Tree Farmer of the Year! MARY LAHOOD & BOB BURNS



Mary LaHood & Bob Burns manage 320 acre LaHood-Burns Family Forests with their children in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

"The National Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year is selected from the top nominations from all over the country. The LaHood-Burns Family Forest selection is a true testament to the hard work and many accomplishments and their leadership in promoting sustainable forestry on private forest lands throughout the region." said Bob Bauer, chair of the Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year Committee.

Burns and LaHood are being recognized for decades of conscientious, pro-active, hands-on stewardship of the land and for their dedication and advocacy for the family forest landowners.

LaHood-Burns Family Forest focuses on multiple uses that protect the timber stands, reduce wildfire danger, promote water quality, reduce the threat of Mountain Pine Beetles, reduce noxious weeds, and enhance wildlife habitats while improving recreation such as camping and hiking. They have also worked closely with the US Forest Service on their properties bordering their farm and helped in the reduction of off-highway vehicles' impact on pristine riparian areas.

But it's not only their efforts on their own forest. "They are doing a lot of impressive outreach and advocacy by giving back to their community to provide values that tree farmers hold dear," said Dr. Salem Saloom (2010 ATFS TFOY) who visited property during the selection process. "This really made them stand out."

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Inspector Summer Socials

2020 was a year of firsts for several of reasons. SDFFA Inspection Committee wanted to encourage inspector engagement and collaboration, so they hosted 2 social events.

These events were held in Custer & Spearfish South Dakota in August. Attendance was minimal, however, being the first social events attempted geared at inspectors, it was a success.

Socials in the future are currently being planned and open the opportunity for SDFFA landowners to interact with inspectors outside of an inspection cycle on their property.

We look forward to future engagements with SDFFA Inspectors, Sponsors, & Landowners.

By: Patricia Weyrich, CF DANR Rural Forestry Program Coordinator



2021 Fall Field Trip

THANK YOU, WOOD RANCH, MATTHEW WALSH, LYNN KOLUND, PARKS BRIGMAN, and EVERYONE who assisted with the success of the 2021 Fall Field Trip & Recognition Banquet Event.

On September 8, 2021, DANR Service Forester Matthew Walsh, private forest landowner Oonagh Wood, and private forest landowner Paul Schipke were honored at the South Dakota Family Forests Association (SDFFA) Banquet and Fall Field Trip.

Matthew Walsh was honored as the 2021 SDFFA Inspector of the Year, while Oonagh Wood was honored as the 2021 SDFFA Tree Farmer of the Year, and a lifetime achievement award was given to Paul Schipke for his contributions to the program.

This banquet included a field trip visiting Mrs. Wood's property which has been sustainably managed since the late 1970s. Management practices have assisted with timber production while enhancing their cattle ranch operations. Precommercial thinning applications by hand crews and mastication equipment was shown while highlighting the multitude of environmental benefits of managing ponderosa pine trees in the Black Hills.

Patricia Weyrich, CF DANR Rural Forestry Program Coordinator



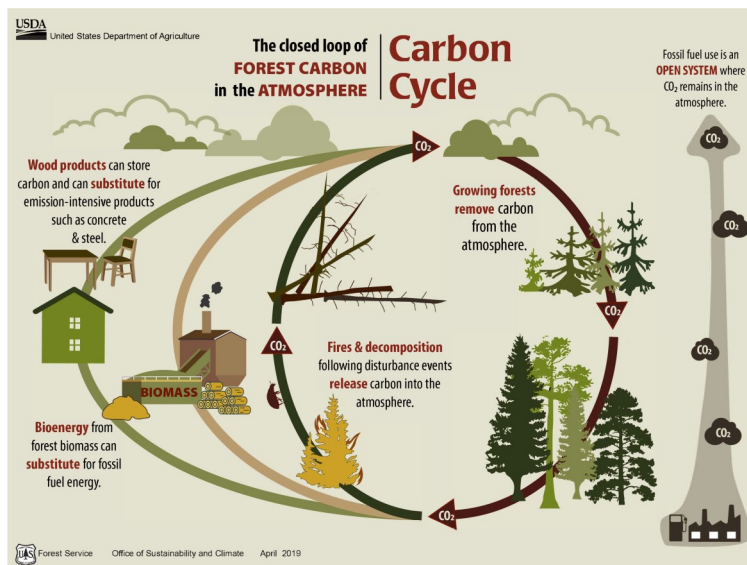
Forests: A Carbon Cycle Checking Account

Forests influence atmospheric greenhouse gas levels in ways most people don't think about. Scientists describe this as the carbon cycle.

If the atmosphere was a checking account, sometimes things happening in the forests act as credits to the checking account, sometimes they are debits. As trees grow, they absorb carbon dioxide from the air, converting the CO₂ into plant matter by way of photosynthesis. In the case of trees, wood is produced and is about 50% carbon. Scientists call this process of carbon gain *sequestration*. It is, in effect, pulling carbon dioxide out of the air.

Forest fires are in the news a lot these days. In addition to the loss of lives, property, and effects on remaining forests, a fire causes lots of carbon dioxide to be released into the air. When this occurs, greenhouse gas levels increase (see Fig. 1). Trees that die due to insects, disease, fires or old age eventually decay too and release carbon into the soils and carbon dioxide into the air. It's this give and take of carbon dioxide in forests that enables us to call it a cycle.

The use of forest products also plays a role in the carbon cycle.



Since trees are about 50% carbon, using them in long lived buildings “locks up” that carbon for a long time. Using wood in construction is particularly advantageous if it is used in place of concrete and steel which are much more carbon intensive. Additionally, while the benefits of biomass energy are vigorously debated, in the long run the use of biomass energy in place of fossil fuels produces carbon benefits too.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) keeps track of and report all greenhouse gas emissions, be it from industry, transportation, forests, agriculture, or other sources, in the United States. While most of these sectors produce greenhouse gases (acting as what scientists call sources), forests are referred to as carbon sinks. Our forests reduce overall U.S. greenhouse gases by about 14%, annually.

As climate change continues to receive increasing attention, expect more discussion about how to best utilize elements of the carbon cycle as a greenhouse gas reduction tool. Planting more trees, preventing destructive wildfires, efforts to increase overall forest health and substituting forest products for more carbon intensive materials will likely play an increasingly important role in the United States climate mitigation efforts.

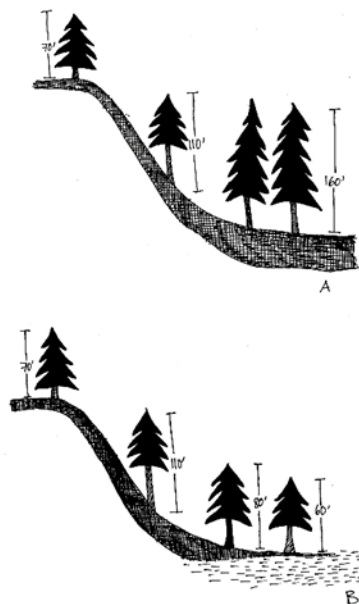
By: Al Steele Co-Director,

USDA Northeast Climate Hub, Physical Scientist and Forest Products Specialist, USFS

Article Written April 2019 and Available at:

<https://www.climatehubs.usda.gov/hubs/northeast/topic/forests-carbon-cycle-checking-account>

Understanding Site Quality



An important factor that a forest landowner should consider when managing their forestlands are the site qualities of their property. As with any agricultural endeavor, knowing the quality of your sites is important in how you might want to manage your forests. For example, a landowner may not want to emphasize growing trees for timber production on poor quality sites. Instead, this site might be better off growing grass.

There are several ways to measure the site qualities on your property. Your property may have a wide range of site qualities depending on the soil depths and content, slope location and aspect. In general, sites that are located on the lower 30% of north to east slopes are almost 20% higher in tree growth potential than sites located on the upper 60% on south to west exposed slopes.

In the Black Hills, the amount of soil moisture is probably the most important limiting environmental quality factor. The more moisture available through the growing season, the higher the site index. In general, site indexes in the northern hills are higher than in the southern hills due to higher annual moisture.

The 100 year ponderosa site index used in the Black Hills ranges from around 70 or greater on the north slopes with good moisture and soils to 45 to 50 on the southern aspect slopes with thin, dry soils. A site index of 50 means that an average codominant pine will grow to 50 feet in height in 100 years. It is important to note that around the age of 125 years old, the rate of Black Hills ponderosa pine height growth begins to diminish for all site classes, eventually flattening out at around 150 years old. Height growth accounts for about 30% of the volume growth of a tree every year up until about 125 years old. After the tree reaches 150 years old, the only commercial volume growth increase will be through diameter growth.

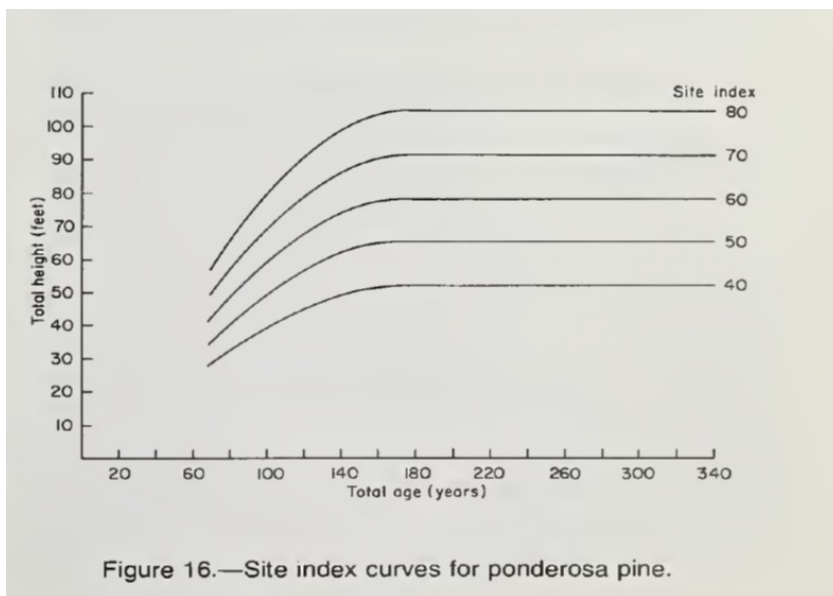


Figure 16.—Site index curves for ponderosa pine.

It is important to note that the diameter of the tree is primarily dependent on the amount of competition from surrounding trees for soil moisture and sunlight. A large diameter tree does not mean the tree is really old. The same is true with small trees. I have seen many trees less than 8 inches in diameter that are over 200 years old. When trying to optimize the stand's growth, you need to consider the potential diameter growth in relation to the number of trees that are growing. Maximizing the individual diameter growth does not mean that that you are maximizing the per acre growth.

Bill Coburn CF, SDFFA Chairman & information from Bolt & Van Deusen's *Silviculture of Ponderosa Pine in the Black Hills: The Status of Our Knowledge* (USDA Forest Service Research RM 124)

Outstanding Inspector of 2021—MATTHEW WALSH

Matthew Walsh moved to South Dakota at the beginning of 2020 at a run.

In 2020 he quickly stepped in to accomplish ATFS inspections. Matt works with SDDFA landowners to accomplish their goals including putting together a USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Implementation Strategy (CIS) for Fall River County and assisted the Custer Conservation District with their CIS application. These projects were accepted by NRCS which has allowed landowners in the designated priority areas to receive project-assistance which might not be available otherwise. Custer Conservation District has expressed their appreciation to Matt's work ethic, willingness to assist them, willingness to assist landowners, completing prescriptions, forest stewardship plans, keeping them posted on project progresses and promoting their programs. He is always prompt, courteous, eager to learn, willingness to learn, and a problem solver.



SDDFA would like to extend appreciation and recognition to Matthew Walsh for his great work as an inspector and professional forester in South Dakota.

CONGRATULATIONS & THANK YOU MATT!!

2021 Advocacy Committee Recap

January - March: Citizen Lobbying/Advocacy Legislative Session

SDDFA and its members worked to defeat and/or amend two bills detrimental to landowners.

June: Fly-In Training and Citizen Lobbying

Bob Burns and Bill Coburn participated in training and virtual meetings for the ATFS/AFF Fly-In, meeting with Sen. Thune and Rounds' staff and Rep. Johnson about issues important to SD tree farmers.

June: Post-Legislative Stakeholders Meeting with Legislators

Bob and Bill joined a roundtable discussion hosted Sen. Duval and Rep. Chaffee centering on the importance of ag status in the tax formula to timberland.

August: Meeting with County Commissioner at Ray Tree Farm

Pennington Co. Commissioner Lasseter visited Mike Ray's tree farm. Mike and Bob stressed the importance of ag status to the preservation of small tree farms.

August: SDPB Live Radio Interview

Bob was interviewed on [In the Moment Spotlight](#). *The Role Private Forest Land Plays in the Black Hills* explored the relationship between private forests and the National Forest.

September: SD Delegation Tour of LaHood Burns Tree Farm

Bob, Bill and Ben Wudtke led a tour for Ryan Donnelly (Sen. Thune's D.C. office), Jim Selchert (Sen. Rounds) and Katie Murray (West River Dir., Rep. Johnson), explaining tree farm operations, and emphasizing the value of thinning and cost share programs, and the impact of a well-managed forest on fire, wildlife habitat and the aquifers.

The Advocacy continues to monitor proposed legislation for the 2022 session and will attend AgFest on January 25, 2022.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!!

In 2021 SDDFA was graced with 3 new members joining its ranks:

Warren Draw Ranch—Russel Cameron

Mike & Angela Jarding Membership 125

David Keffeler Acreage 19,171



Thoughts From The Stump

Well, another tough year for our country has come to an end. I am concerned about the hostile tone among our citizens towards others who have different opinions. We have become a country of “Me” rather than “We”. I believe that one of Ben Franklin’s most memorable quotes is very appropriate to take stock of.

“We must, indeed, all hang together or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately”.



Despite a tough year nationally, South Dakota Family Forests Association (SDFFA) has managed to grow our organization in memberships, reach and depth. We have increased our branding and awareness through our involvement in forest landowner issues throughout the state. Our Communications Committee has done a wonderful job in developing an up to date Web Site and Facebook page. Danielle Wiebers and Matt Lottes have joined our Board representing both landowners and the timber industry. We have also increased the number of “Certified Inspectors” working with our members which will allow us to continue our membership growth. SDFFA has also been actively working with our states legislators and county assessors to keep reminding them of the importance fair tax policies and property tax assessments. I would like to thank both Patricia Weyrich and Mary LaHood for their member educational and awareness efforts this past year. They did a superb job.

I am concerned about the United States Forest Service Black Hills National Forest’s (BHNF’s) recent 3 year timber sale announcement. Their numbers dramatically reduce (by over 50%) the amount of timber they plan on selling over the next 3 years. These numbers have potential of shutting down of another large sawmill in near future. We would like to see the BHNF adjust their numbers to ensure that the current timber industry infrastructure stays in place at least until the new forest plan revision is implemented.

Finally, I would like to recognize Mary LaHood and Bob Burns for being selected as the 2021 **National Tree Farmers of the Year**. For those of us who know these two and their families, this should not come as a surprise. They have done an outstanding job, not only in managing their family forest, but also in providing outstanding leadership in AFF national and local efforts.

Bill Coburn, CF, SDFFA Chairperson

Tree Farmer of the Year/Inspector of the Year Nominations

Do you know an outstanding Inspector or Member within the SDFFA Organization?

Would you like to get them local (if not nationally) recognized for their outstanding service?

SDFFA accepts nominations year-round for Tree Farmer of the Year, Inspector of the Year, and Volunteer of the Year.

Nominations can be made by visiting the SDFFA website <https://www.treefarmssystem.org/south-dakota>

Or obtaining a nomination form from SDFFA Executive Director at sdreefarm@gmail.com.

Seeking nominations that are engaged in the SDFFA Organization, uphold and exude qualities in high regard for SDFFA such as willingness to assist others, furthering forest stewardship practices, encouraging others, or willingness to implement management strategies.

Thank You Sponsors!!

Jim and Sally Scherrer Charitable Foundation

**DAKOTA EQUIPMENT RENTAL
CHAIN SAW CENTER**



Allyssa Gregory

Bob Burns & Mary LaHood

Dave Lamb & Andrea Anderson

Doug & Denise Miller

Doris McDill

Harry & Barb Ayer

Lynn Kolund, Dakota Forestry

Paul & Julie Schipke



Known Upcoming Events— Tentative

January— Webinar on Carbon & Ponderosa Pine

January 25, 2021 Ag Fest—Legislative Session

March/April—Spring Field Trip

Late Summer SDDFA Social/Field Trip

Other Educational Opportunities

(Not Endorsed By SDDFA)

Biochar in the Woods Workshop—USBI (Webinar & Field Day)

January 27, February 1-3 more info at: <https://bit.ly/3ob5TeP>

Montana Tree Farm Program — Winter Webinar Series

TF Virtual Tours! Photos, Stories, & Projects for the New Year

January 26, 2022 more info at:

<https://www.facebook.com/MTTreeFarm>

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!!

If you would like to volunteer for a specific project or task please contact sdtreefarm@gmail.com

Projects that Committee's are working on:

- ◆ Semi-Annual Newsletter Articles, Ideas, or Help
- ◆ Agricultural Classification Landowner Workshop
- ◆ Member Directory
- ◆ Forestry/Timber TV Commercial
- ◆ New Membership Brochure Update
- ◆ New/Non-Member Outreach
- ◆ Additional Informational Handouts (White Sheets)

What projects would you like to see committee's work on?

SEND US PHOTOS OF YOUR SOUTH DAKOTA FAMILY FOREST: WOOD, WATER, WILDLIFE, RECREATION, and **YOUR** FAMILY. Email your photos to: SDtreefarm@gmail.com

South Dakota Family Forests Association Board

- Bill Coburn: Chairman & Black Hills Forestry Inc.
Forestry Consultant, Tree Farmer (CF)
- Bob Burns: Vice Chairman, Tree Farmer
- Mary LaHood: Tree Farmer
- Executive Director, Treasurer, & Tree Farmer
- Doug Miller: Tree Farmer & Secretary
- Greg Josten: SD Department of Agriculture
and Natural Resources—State Forester
- Ben Wudtke: Black Hills Forest Resource
Association Executive Director
- Matthew Lottes: Spearfish Forest Products Forester
- Mike Ray: Tree Farmer
- Sid Goss: Tree Farmer
- Logan Brown: Wildland Fire Division
Urban Interface Specialist
- Danielle Wiebers: Tree Farmer
- Lynn Kolund: Dakota Forestry LLC
Forestry Consultant

Committee Members

Communication and Public Relations

Mike Ray—Chairperson
Faryn Klebe, Patricia Weyrich, Mary LaHood

Advocacy

Bob Burns - Chairperson,
Sid Goss, Greg Josten, Ben Wudtke

Financial & Fundraising

Bill Coburn - Chairperson,
Mary LaHood, Danielle Wiebers

Certification

Patricia Weyrich— Chairperson,
Logan Brown, Mary LaHood

Membership & Education

Lynn Kolund - Chairperson,
Geri Konenkamp, Mary LaHood



sdtreefarm@gmail.com

P.O. Box 9576

Rapid City, SD 57709

ACCEPTING VOLUNTEERS IN ANY/ALL CAPACITIES.

PLEASE CONTACT ANY OF OUR MEMBERS IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING.