



Kentucky Tree Farm Committee Newsletter

The Kentucky Tree Farm Committee consists of individuals representing the fields of forestry, natural resources, and most importantly, woodland owners. The focus of this committee is to provide direction to the 500-plus certified Tree Farms across the state to achieve a balance in timber management for the future, potential wildlife opportunities, recreational interests, and the need to maintain water quality within the woodlands for downstream use. Each landowner can design a workable plan for their woodlands with the guidance of a professional forester for the needs of both the landowner as well as the woodlands potential for the present, but much more importantly, the future. Your woods are part of your family legacy. Being a part of the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) through the Kentucky Tree Farm Committee, you can be assured that your family can continue to enjoy the many benefits that come with woodland ownership.

The Kentucky committee meets twice a year carrying on the work of the Tree Farm program as well as evaluating nominations for Tree Farmer, Logger, and Inspecting Forester of the Year. All three of these individuals are selected annually based upon the efforts they have shown. The awards highlight the Tree Farmer's quality of work managing the land so that it will be better now than when they got it. The logger provides the support of physically harvesting timber while leaving the residual timber for future sustainable growth; and the inspecting forester works with the Tree Farmers and loggers to ensure sustainable woodland management is carried out within the standards the program.

Tree Farm Inspecting Foresters by Sarah Shewmaker

Foresters work on the front lines with landowners and are often the first contact for landowners along the road to sustainable forest management. This process includes a site visit, when foresters get to know the landowners and gain an understanding of their objectives. When these objectives include wildlife, water, recreation, and/or wood management, a forester may recommend joining ATFS. This community of landowners and Tree Farm

inspectors offers many benefits to woodland owners.

When discussing the ATFS with landowners, I find it best to focus on the program's ability to facilitate and strengthen the relationship between forester and landowner. Required recertification inspections keep foresters coming back to your property to update your management plan, and assist you in maintaining your Tree Farm status. Other benefits of joining ATFS include growing certified wood for the timber industry; being nominated for state, regional, or National Tree Farm of the Year; and having the opportunity to advocate in Washington, D.C., for sustainable forestry practices through the Farm Bill.



Brandon Howard, (right) director of the Kentucky Division of Forestry, and Lowell Hamilton, prominent Kentucky Tree Farmer, greet landowners at a Tree Farm event.

The certification process for ATFS is straightforward for landowners. As a national certification program, there are eight standards of sustainability that are written to accommodate a variety of management objectives and are adaptable for a wide range of forest types. Using the certification form, your Tree Farm inspector will walk you through these standards and offer guidance to remain in compliance with these standards.

For more information as to how you can become a part of the Tree Farm System, contact 502.564.4496.

