



# Kentucky Tree Farm Committee Newsletter

The American Tree Farm System (ATFS) recently celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this with more than 700 tree farmers in Kentucky. The System has evolved from a recognition program to encourage forest management to a third party certified program that offers a wide range of educational opportunities and assistance to forest landowners. Among the many benefits to members is an engaged government-relations staff that is heavily involved with the political process in Washington, D.C. ATFS is working hard to forge partnerships with a number of organizations and has been successful in addressing a number of issues that have had a positive effect on landowners' ability to manage their woodlands. Below are a number of current issues that are being followed closely in an attempt to improve markets and conditions to sustain management on private forestlands.

**Taxes** - Private forests are critical for safeguarding the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the wildlife we manage. ATFS supports tax policies that encourage sustainable management of family forests and that recognize the important societal benefits family forests provide. Tax policies should encourage family ownership and adoption of sound forest management practices. Overall, tax policies should create a positive environment for keeping forests as working forests—providing clean air, clean water, wildlife, and recreational opportunities in their communities.

**Climate Change** - One of the greatest threats to the health of our planet is climate change. Our nation's forests are a critical piece to fighting this serious threat. Around the world, forest ecosystems sequester about a quarter of all carbon pollution that contributes to climate change. ATFS supports climate-change policies that encourage long-term sustainable management of family forests for carbon storage and other environmental, economic, and social benefits. Climate-change policies should allow both market and non-market opportunities for working family forests to contribute to emissions reductions through carbon capture and storage.

**Renewable Energy** - Families and individuals own roughly 260 million acres of forestland and are the largest forest ownership group in the United States. These lands can supply a large portion of renewable materials for biomass energy production from sustainably managed family forests. Materials harvested from private forests and used in production of renewable energy must be harvested sustainably with verification through appropriate mechanisms to ensure continued health and long-term viability of forests and related resources. Policies that encourage renewable energy production from

forests must consider both the short- and long-term impacts of renewable energy markets on forest resources to prevent unsustainable forest-management practices.

**Forest Health** - Some estimate the damages from invasive species at over \$138 billion annually due to losses in the forest products industry, the tourism and recreation industry, and woodland owner income. If a forest pest infests a family woodland owner's land, it can mean complete destruction of their land and a severe reduction in land-based income. As forest owners adjust to this new threat and work tirelessly to conserve our nation's working forests, decision-makers must provide these woodland owners with the tools they need to do right by their land, while ensuring laws are in place to protect our borders from future foreign pests.

**Water Quality** - Approximately 80 percent of our nation's water originates in forests lands. Most forestland in the United States is owned privately, covering roughly 262 million acres, and is essential green infrastructure that supplies the nation with clean water. However, many of these forests are at risk—roughly 1.5 million acres of forest are lost each year to development. ATFS supports voluntary approaches to encourage water protection while ensuring laws are in place to protect our nation's freshwater resources.

For more information on the Tree Farm Program in Kentucky or legislative issues at the state or federal level contact Bob Bauer at 502-695-3979.

## Kentucky Tree Farm Awards

In April, as part of the Kentucky Forest Industries Association Annual Meeting the Kentucky Tree Farm Committee announced the Tree Farm Awards. Jack Stickney of Estill County was selected as the Tree Farmer of the Year. Steve Thacker of Bell County was selected as the Logger of the Year and Lisa Armstrong KDF Service Forester in the Central Region, was selected as the Tree Farm Inspector of the Year. In addition, Doug McLaren, Retired UK Department of Forestry, was selected as the Communicator of the Year. The Kentucky Tree Farm Committee congratulates all the award winners.



*Teresa and Jack Stickney received the Tree Farmer of the Year Award from Steve Gray, Kentucky Tree Farm Chairman.*