

FACT SHEET

No. 44

Timber & Timber Harvesting in West Virginia

Spring, 2002

What is a Tree Farm?

Many people, when they see the green and white, diamond-shaped sign or hear the words “Tree Farm” think immediately of Christmas Tree plantations. The program, however, is much more than that. There are two primary goals – 1. disseminating information about the benefits of proper forest management and 2. establishing good forest management practices on as many as possible acres.

The American Tree Farm System was first organized in 1941 and is the Nation’s oldest certifier of privately owned forest land. Under it, woodlands are dedicated by their owners to the continuous and environmentally responsible growing and harvesting of timber and other forest products. Tree Farms also provide additional benefits such as watershed and water quality protection, better habitat for wildlife and improved opportunities for outdoor recreation. Tree Farms range in size from a small farm woodlot to large industrial forests. The program is organized through state Tree Farm committees in 46 states. Overall guidance is provided by the American Forest Foundation (AFF.)

Landowners interested in becoming certified Tree Farmers begin by contacting their state Tree Farm committee, which, in turn, makes arrangements for a forester to visit and inspect the property. To qualify, a woodland must:

1. Contain no less than 10 or more than 10,000 forested acres.
2. Have a *written* forest management plan.
3. Be actively managed for the production of timber or other forest products.
4. Be protected from fire, insects, disease, erosion and the destructive effects of grazing.

Farms that do not meet the stated requirements may begin as a Pioneer Tree Farm. This provides access to information and technical assistance which makes it easier to work toward Tree Farm certification while also implementing good forestry practices. Pioneer and Certified Farms are inspected each five years.

Certified Tree Farmers are recognized with a certificate and a Tree Farm sign. In addition, they receive a one-year complimentary subscription to TREE FARMER magazine, newsletters, bulletins and other items thought worthwhile by the state Tree Farm committee. In

some states, Tree Farmers receive a premium price for their timber due to groups that recognize “*Green Certified*” forest products as being of higher value.

AFF conducts Outstanding Tree Farmer contests and hosts an annual national convention. The green and white Tree Farm sign on a property is accepted nationally as recognition that good forestry is being practiced thereon.

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