What’s New in the Standards of Sustainability? Keeping it Simple for Landowners

Written by Angela Wells, Director, American Tree Farm System

As a certified Tree Farmer, you are a member of the American Tree Farm System (ATFS). ATFS has approximately 74,000 participating landowners owning roughly 19 million acres, and is the largest forest certification system for family forest owners in the world. Landowners who voluntarily enroll in this program agree to manage their lands to a set of Standards of Sustainability that is internationally recognized and endorsed.

These Standards are revised on a regular cycle, on average every five years, to ensure that they continue to meet criteria that promote the long-term health and vitality of forest systems and the continued provision of responsibly grown and harvested wood supplies, wildlife habitat, clean water, and recreation opportunities. A revised version of the Standards was approved by the AFF Board of Trustees in late 2020 and adopted in January of 2021.

What does this mean for you as a landowner? One of the reasons that ATFS is the largest certification program for family forest owners is that its Standards are tailored to the scale and intensity of management typically occurring on family forest lands, as well as the skills and capacity of the landowners themselves. For that reason, changes to the Standards during any revision are scrutinized and informed by a panel of independent stakeholders (the Independent Standards Review Panel or ISRP) and a multi-phased public comment period. Last year, the overwhelming feedback AFF received from Tree Farmers, foresters, and State Tree Farm Program leadership was to make as few changes as possible in the revision, and then only to maximize benefit to the landowner and clarify guidance.

The following summarizes the changes to the Standards that most affect Tree Farmers.

To download the full handout on the changes in the Standards or access other handouts designed for forest landowners, visit the Arkansas Tree Farm Program website at www.arkforests.org/treefarm.

The full Standards and Tree Farm eligibility criteria may be viewed at www.treefarmsystem.org/view-standards. For a paper copy please contact the Arkansas Tree Farm Program office at 501-374-2441.

Session Keeps AFA Active

The Arkansas 93rd General Assembly convened Monday, January 11, and is expected to recess on Friday, April 30 – a span of 110 days that has kept the Arkansas Forestry Association actively advocating for its members. Here is a quick summary of the most significant bills that AFA has worked on and their current status at press time:

• HB 1210 – by Rep. David Hillman, R – Almyra is now Act 361. Supported by AFA, it maintains AFA’s ability to recommend qualified candidates by providing at least two names to the Governor, who will select one of AFA’s recommendations.

• HB 1389 – by Rep. Ken Bragg, R – Sheridan, is now Act 399 and creates the Foresters for the Future Scholarship program to be administered by the Forestry Division of the Arkansas Agriculture Department. AFA supported the bill.

• UAM Center for Forest Business – AFA sent a letter of support to the Governor requesting funding for a Center for Forest Business at UAM. Rep. Bragg is leading the effort for this much-needed center devoted to serving the forestry sector in Arkansas.

• HB 1495 – by Rep. Jeff Wardlaw, R – Hermitage, would increase the maximum gross weight to 90,000 pounds for a five-axle vehicle transporting precursor raw materials for paper products, unfinished and unprocessed forest products, or logs. It received a Do Pass vote in the House Public Transportation Committee but has yet to be considered by the full House.

• HB 1636 – by Rep. DeAnn Vaught, R – Horatio is now on its way to the Governor. It will amend the law regarding feral hogs. A feral hog would be deemed a public nuisance and an imminent threat to public health and safety. The bill also...
Required Pesticide Usage Tracking

Written by Tabitha Holloway, County Forester, Arkansas Department of Agriculture - Forestry Division

What are pesticides?
‘Pesticide’ is a broad term that includes herbicides, insecticides, and other pest control tools. Forest landowners primarily use herbicides, which are designed to control vegetation.

Why are herbicides used in forestry?
Fast-growing brush, weeds, and invasive plants compete with new or young trees for nutrients, sunlight, and water. Herbicides can be used to improve the survival of newly planted tree seedlings after a timber harvest or other activities.

As indicated in the article on page 1, the Tree Farm Standards were updated at the beginning of the year. For the most part, the Standards stayed the same. However, there was one pretty significant change. This change was to the Performance Measure 4.2.2, which deals with pesticide usage. The previous Standard had this performance measure as Tree Farmers should document records, but it was not required. With the new Standard, records documenting all pesticides’ usage are now required.

The kind of record depends on the size, scale, and scope of use. At a minimum, records should document pesticide name, purpose, and date of application. You may note this in the margin of a management plan, a separate ledger, or the ATFS addendum. If you prefer to use a computerized file, the Arkansas Tree Farm Committee has developed a table to make it easier for you. The table can be saved electronically and updated as pesticides are used and printed to be included with the management plan. You may download the Pesticide Usage Tracking Form at www.arkforests.org/treefarm.

Mark Your Calendars

education opportunities for forest landowners

May 13
WOW Lunch & Learn: Know Your Limits...Forest Boundary Lines in Arkansas
11:30 a.m., Zoom

May 13
WOW Lunch & Learn: Feral Hogs in Arkansas
11:30 a.m., Zoom

May 13
AFA Night with the Travs
6:10 p.m., Dickey Stephens Park, N. Little Rock

June 10
WOW Lunch & Learn: Food Plots
11:30 a.m., Zoom

June 25
Landowner Lunch & Learn: Pine Management
11:30 a.m., Zoom

July 15
WOW Lunch & Learn: Stand Development Patterns in Bottomland Hardwoods
11:30 a.m., Zoom

July 23
Landowner Lunch & Learn: Silvopasture
11:30 a.m., Zoom

For more information or to register for workshops, visit www.arkforests.org

Further tightens the requirements regarding the capturing and killing of feral hogs, as well as transporting them.

- HB 1674 – by Rep. Wardlaw is now Act 451. Rep. Wardlaw’s bill will authorize the issuance of a special permit by the State Highway commission to transport forestry equipment. The fee for the permit will not exceed $250.

- HB 1706 – by Rep. Wardlaw is now Act 594. It creates the Logging and Wood Fiber Transportation Job Creation Incentive Act and the Arkansas Wood Energy Products and Forest Maintenance Income Tax Credit. It was developed as an incentive to attract new wood-using industries to Arkansas.

- HB 1818 – by Rep. Howard Beaty, Jr., R – Crossett would create a sales and use tax exemption for parts purchased to repair agriculture equipment and machinery and forest equipment and machinery. The House Revenue & Tax Committee is deciding which exemption bills they will approve.

- SB 312 – by Sen. Blake Johnson, R – Jonesboro, would amend the law concerning foreign ownership and possession of real property. It failed on a voice vote in the House Agriculture, Forestry & Economic Development Committee. AFA opposed the bill. It has now been amended to be a “reporting only” bill in regards to the ownership of agricultural land. AFA continues to engage on this bill.

- SB 385 – by Sen. Alan Clark, R – Lonsdale, would establish a residential community logging permit and require an individual logging in a gated residential community to follow the Arkansas Best Management Practices for Water Quality. AFA opposed this bill. The sponsor pulled the bill down but may bring it back at a later time.

- SB 637 – by Sen. Missy Irvin, R – Mt. View, would make minor changes to the Arkansas Unpaved Roads Program by clarifying that the program is now under the administration of the Arkansas Agriculture Department. It is now on its way to the Governor.