FOREST CERTIFICATION

WHAT IS IT?
It’s a process involving independent verification that responsible forest management practices are being implemented and that wood products from certified forests can be identified throughout the supply chain.

TOTAL CERTIFIED ACRES (thousands)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Certified Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4% of family forestland

12% of family forestland

1% of family forestland

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?
Sustaining present and future forest benefits across the Upper West Gulf Coastal Plain (AR, LA, and TX) relies on the management decision of about 821,000 family landowners who own 32 million acres of forest. Certification is an effective tool to ensure proper management of forestlands and to achieve sustainability. The benefits of certification extend to landowners and society alike.

ARLATX COLLABORATION
The University of Arkansas at Monticello, Louisiana Tech University, and Texas A&M Forest Service are working together to assist Family Forest Landowners from Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas with the technical and financial assistance needed to enroll their forestland in certification programs.

CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

AMERICAN TREE FARM SYSTEM
Dedicated to sustaining forest and protecting wildlife and water resources

FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL
Promote environmental, social, and economically viable forest management

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE
Focused on the sustainability of industrial forestland and responsible fiber sourcing practices

TARGET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family forest ownerships</td>
<td>10 - 10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial and family forest ownerships</td>
<td>No limit or 2,470 ac for family forest ownerships classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial ownerships</td>
<td>No limit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACREAGE

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TYPES OF CERTIFICATION

FOREST MANAGEMENT (FM)
Verify that forest operations from growing to harvesting comply with standards

CHAIN OF CUSTODY (COC)
Trace certified wood fiber from forest to final product

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HOW DOES IT WORK?
Certification requires annual, independent, third-party assessments of compliance to predetermined standards that aim to ensure:
- Safe work environment
- Fair wages and benefits
- Legal compliance
- Wellbeing of surrounding communities
- Cultural, recreational, and aesthetic values

FOREST CERTIFICATION

BENEFITS

MARKET ACCESS
Forest products companies have a preference for purchasing certified timber
Certified forestlands in the region attract new industries that require sustainable wood sourcing
Demand for certified wood products is in the early stages in the South

PREMIUM PRICING is not guaranteed but it has been reported in some areas of the country

FOREST HEALTH
Certification standards are designed to protect forests and enhance their health, resilience, and adaptability
Healthy forests help with the long-term supply of timber and non-timber products
Many plant and animal species depend on forests to thrive
Healthy forests are critical for the success of wildlife habitat conservation

CARBON CREDITS
Landowners can enroll in certification and carbon credit programs at the same time
Certification fosters better management practices, enhancing elements carbon credit programs seek after, such as increased carbon storage

TAX INCENTIVE
Tax law may benefit landowners who protect, restore, or enhance forest resources
Current tax laws may not support all of your efforts and benefits often vary state by state
Discuss your options with your local CPA
For more information visit the National Timber Tax website: timbertax.org

COSTS

DIRECT
Direct costs can include:
- Initial assessment
- Auditors’ expenses
- Certification fee
Costs vary depending on the certification program and forest size
The more detailed the program, the more it will cost

AMERICAN TREE FARM SYSTEM ANNUAL FEE

ARKANSAS
$75 for the first tree farm
$20 for each additional tree farm
$5,000 maximum fee per landowner

LOUISIANA
$30 per tree farm, whichever is greater
$0.032 per acre

TEXAS
no enrollment fee

INDIRECT
It may be necessary to add or modify certain management practices to meet the standards of the program, including:
- obtain a management plan
- more intensive record keeping
- compliance with standards
- time associated with assessment or reassessment process

Once the certification planning and recordkeeping system is in place, operations run smoother and cost less in the long run
Cost per acre can be lower for larger ownerships or for “group certification”
Cost-share programs can help reduce the cost of management practices

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## HOW TO GET CERTIFIED?

### INITIAL DISCUSSION
Contact the certification program representative for your state or region.

### MANAGEMENT PLAN
Work with a forester to develop a management plan that meet your objectives and the program standards.

### INITIAL ASSESSMENT
Get audited by an independent, third-party auditor to verify that your operations meet the program standards.

### CERTIFICATION STATUS
If the auditor determines that you meet the program standards, you will obtain a certificate valid for 5 years.

## WHO CAN HELP ME IN EACH STEP OF THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS?

### REPRESENTATIVES
- **American Tree Farm System**
  - Arkansas Forestry Association
  - Louisiana Forestry Association
  - Texas Forestry Association
- **Forest Stewardship Council**
  - Consultants
- **Sustainable Forestry Initiative**
  - Participation Application Form

### FORESTERS
- **Arkansas**
  - County Forestry Division Crew
  - Foresters Board of Registration
- **Louisiana**
  - State Forestry Offices
  - LFA Registered Foresters
- **Texas**
  - Texas A&M Forest Service Forester
  - TFA Accredited Foresters

### CERTIFYING BODIES
- **American Tree Farm System**
  - Arkansas Forestry Association
  - Louisiana Forestry Association
  - Texas Forestry Association
- **Forest Stewardship Council**
  - FSC-accredited Certifiers
- **Sustainable Forestry Initiative**
  - Independent Certification Bodies

## ARE AUDITS REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN THE CERTIFICATION STATUS?
YES! Audits ensure conformance to the certification program standards.

There are two types of audits:
- **Surveillance audits** occur every year
- **Recertification audits** occur at the end of the five-year certification cycle

## HOW TO MAINTAIN THE STATUS?
Conformance with the certification program standards is essential. This may include:
- Comply with national and local laws
- Minimize adverse environmental impacts from the forest management operations
- Implement and keep an updated management plan
- Monitor and keep detailed records of the operations and condition of the forest

## HOW OFTEN WILL THEY ACCESS MY PROPERTY?
Scheduled field visits occur once a year during surveillance or recertification audits.

## AMERICAN TREE FARM SYSTEM
### ANNUAL AUDIT
Annual assessment occurs between February and March. Landowners may have their property assessed yearly based on a sample of Tree Farms.

When a Landowner is selected for Assessment, both forester and landowner are notified in advance. The Assessment normally takes a couple of hours for one day. If the Tree Farmer does not have a forester, one is assigned to do the Assessment.

Every 5 years, third-party auditors do a field verification of a sample of over 30 Tree Farm Properties. This verification requires 3 days of work.
HOW IS CERTIFICATION DIFFERENT FROM OTHER PROGRAMS?

**FOREST CERTIFICATION**
A process to verify that forestlands are managed according to predefined standards of sustainability.

**COST-SHARE PROGRAMS**
Provide federal or state funding to landowners to pay for the costs of installing specific conservation practices.

*Example:* Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

**CONSERVATION EASEMENTS**
Permanent, legal agreements that limit certain uses of the land to protect its conservation values.

*Example:* Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE)

IS CERTIFICATION COMPATIBLE WITH OTHER PROGRAMS?

**YES!** Other programs, such as cost-share, conservation easements, and carbon credit programs, are often compatible with certification. For example:

- Landowners can resort to **cost-share** programs to cover a substantial part of certification-related costs in the case of adding new or modifying certain forest management practices.
  
  *EQUIP* can reimburse at least 50% of the cost of conservation practices like tree planting, forest stand improvement, prescribed burning, and many others.

- Some land trusts and government agencies encourage landowners to get certified in order to conduct forest management in their **easements**.

- Carbon credit programs and their regulating agencies require the landowners’ commitment to sustainable management by enrolling in certification programs.

READY TO GET CERTIFIED?
Reach out to the following contacts in your state to begin the certification process. Financial and technical assistance can be provided.

**ARKANSAS**
**NANA TIAN**
University of Arkansas at Monticello
(870) 460-1894
tian@uamont.edu

**LOUISIANA**
**JOSHUA ADAMS**
Louisiana Tech University
(318) 257-4457
adamsj@latech.edu

**TEXAS**
**ERIC TAYLOR**
Texas A&M Forest Service
(903) 834-6191
eric.taylor@ag.tamu.edu