



## Arkansas Tree Farm Program FORI

The AR Tree Farm committee has discussed the Forest of Recognized Importance (FORI) as it relates to the AFF's 2015-2020 Standards of Sustainability. Specifically Standard 5 from the [https://mylandplan.org/sites/default/files/article\\_attachments/fori\\_primer.pdf](https://mylandplan.org/sites/default/files/article_attachments/fori_primer.pdf)

### **It states:**

***Standard 5: Fish, Wildlife, Biodiversity and Forest Health***

***Performance Measure 5.4: Where present, forest management activities should maintain or enhance forests of recognized importance.***

***Indicator 5.4.1 Appropriate to the scale and intensity of the situation, forest management activities should incorporate measures to contribute to the conservation of identified forests of recognized importance.***

As further guidance the same article gives the following information:

### **What are FORIs?**

FORIs represent globally, regionally and nationally significant large landscape areas of exceptional ecological, social, cultural or biological values. These forests are evaluated at the landscape level, rather than the stand level and are recognized for a combination of unique values, rather than a single attribute.

FORIs may include but are not limited to landscapes with exceptionally high concentrations of one or more of the following:

- protected, rare, sensitive or representative forest ecosystems such as riparian areas and wetland biotopes
- areas containing endemic species and critical habitats of multiple threatened or endangered plant and animal species, as identified under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) or other recognized listings
- recognized large - scale cultural or archeological sites including sites of human habitation, cities, burial grounds and in situ artifacts
- areas containing identified and protected water resources upon which large metropolitan populations are dependent
- areas containing identified unique or geologic features including geysers, waterfalls, lava beds, caves or craters

Based on this guidance as given by the American Forest Foundation (AFF) for the Tree Farm Program we have determined the areas in Arkansas that meet the criterion for large landscape areas of “exceptional

ecological, social, cultural or biological values". We consider the following to be Forest of Recognized Importance (FORI) in Arkansas:

- The Ozark National Forest, containing 1.2 million acres, mostly in the Ozark Mountains of northern Arkansas.
- The St. Francis National Forest covers 22,600 acres in eastern Arkansas.
- The Ouachita National Forest covers 1.8 million acres in central Arkansas and southeastern Oklahoma.
- Pea Ridge National Military Park, 4300 acres located in Northwest Arkansas.
- The Lake Maumelle Watershed comprises all the land and stream tributaries that drain into the lake. It covers approximately 88,000 acres in Pulaski, Perry and Saline counties in Central and West Central Arkansas. (Note Lake Winona is also part of this large municipal (Central Arkansas Water System) but is inside the boundary of the Ouachita National Forest). Watershed boundaries can be seen on the Central Arkansas Water website at: <http://www.carkw.com/water-source-info/watershed-management/watershed-maps/>
- The Beaver Lake Watershed which is approximately 759,000 acres in Northwestern Arkansas and is a water source for 4 different water districts. Watershed boundaries can be seen on the Beaver Water District at <https://www.bwdh2o.org/beaver-lake/watershed-maps/>

Although there are other small areas with single important species, social, cultural or other values they would not meet the landscape level that are necessary to be called a FORI. These other areas would be consistent with what the AFF considers a special site and in some instances might warrant management considerations by nearby Tree Farms they would be at a much more local level than a FORI.