

FOREST CERTIFICATION

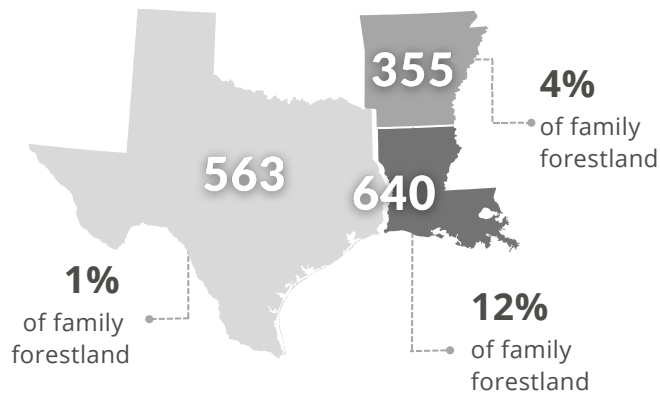
ARLATX COLLABORATION

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.

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*)*



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.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> for landowners PUBLIC RECOGNITION CREDIBILITY EXPANDED MARKETS POTENTIAL PRICE PREMIUMS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> for society and biodiversity ECOSYSTEM SERVICES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife habitat Water and air quality Carbon storage Soil erosion control Educational, aesthetic, cultural heritage, and recreational values |
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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

Family forest ownerships

Industrial and family forest ownerships

Industrial ownerships

ACREAGE

10 - 10,000 ac

No limit or 2,470 ac for family forest ownerships classification

No limit

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

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
\$0.032 per acre } greater

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



FOREST CERTIFICATION



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

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

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

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 advanced. 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.

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HOW IS CERTIFICATION DIFFERENT FROM OTHER PROGRAMS?



FOREST CERTIFICATION

is 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

are 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!



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