

# Tree Farm News

A Quarterly Newsletter of the  
Maine Tree Farm Committee

## The Maine Tree Farm Committee

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## Tree Farm Inspector Training

As promised, the Maine Tree Farm Committee sponsored three Tree Farm inspector workshops around the state. According to Mike Dann, trainer for the workshops, approximately 130 foresters attended these meetings to become Tree Farm inspectors or to update their qualifications as inspectors.

This year's training focused on the updated American Forest Foundation Standards of Sustainability, and the related recertification form, known as the 004 form. For most Tree Farmers, there will be few or no changes. The revised standards may require some Tree Farmers to address issues under Standard 5, "Fish, Wildlife and Biodiversity." More specifically, the new standards state that landowners "should make practical efforts to prevent, eradicate or otherwise control invasive species."

Also, "Forest activities should maintain or enhance rare species or high conservation value forests." Rare species could be any living thing considered rare but not listed as threatened or endangered. High conservation value forests may be part of a large landscape forest owned by more than one owner, and defined as high conservation value by organizations or by a town such as has been done in Raymond.

As always, Tree Farmers should contact their Tree Farm inspector if they have questions about their Tree Farm status. If you do not know whom to contact, see the list of Tree Farm Committee members in this newsletter and contact any one of them for assistance.

## Maine Outstanding Tree Farm Field Day

Please remember to reserve Saturday, Sept. 18, 2010, to visit the Abello/Russell Tree Farm in Edgecomb. A finalized schedule of events and directions to the Tree Farm will be published in the September Tree Farm News. Also, all Maine Tree Farmers should have received the March/April edition of Tree Farmer Magazine. In it is information about the National Tree Farm Convention, which is being held in Burlington, Vermont. What a great opportunity to attend a national convention near home!

## Biomass Crop Assistance Program, BCAP

In the December edition of the Tree Farm Newsletter, there appeared an article about cost sharing for biomass fuels, or whole tree chips, generated from



**A Sign of Good Forestry**

qualified forest properties/producers. Because Tree Farms are third-party certified, the initial BCAP program gave Tree Farmers more certainty in qualifying for the federal cost sharing money. As the cost-share program developed, so did complications associated with the process for meeting the federal requirements. In the end, most Tree Farmers did not experience an advantage over other forest landowners for being certified.

As of April 30, the BCAP program has been suspended, and federal officials have circulated a document requesting comments about it. Approximately 24,000 responses have been generated and are currently under review by officials in Washington, D. C. Farm Services Agency personnel (the federal agency that administers BCAP and other programs) believe funding will be reconsidered this fall, after the comments are reviewed.

It is unknown if BCAP will be reinstated or how it will work, or if having a third-party certified property will give an advantage to Tree Farmers. According to Farm Services Agency, more than \$33 million was paid out under the BCAP program in Maine.

### **Tree Farm Certification and Chain of Custody**

As the nearly 70-year-old American Tree Farm System (ATFS) evolves to keep pace with changing times, Tree Farmers have gained more recognition and marketing options. In July 2009, the American Tree Farm System was fully recognized by Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Systems (PEFC).

PEFC is the world's largest certification organization. It was formed in Europe in 1999. It is a nonprofit entity that provides a means for mutual recognition of national wood fiber certification systems.

PEFC functions as a global umbrella certification system that enables national certification systems to maintain their individuality while certifying that they meet a common set of standards established by PEFC. By doing so, members can participate in global chain-of-custody activities that their individual regional standards might otherwise not permit. PEFC recognizes both SFI and ATFS in the United States. SFI is geared to large landowners, while Tree Farm focuses on family forests.

What does this mean to small woodlot owners in

Maine? Interest in certification and chain of custody purchasing is growing within the forest products supply chain. A chain-of-custody system establishes a paper trail from the forest to the retail customer. More manufacturers and retailers are becoming interested in documenting that products are produced from well-managed, sustainable forests. Some companies measure and report certified wood entering their processes. Others use chain-of-custody system trademark labels on products to provide assurance to customers and end users at the point of sale.

Publishers and cataloguers were early promoters of forest certification. Time Inc., Hearst, NewPage, SAPPI and Verso Paper Corp. have partnered with SWOAM to increase Tree Farm acres in Maine this year.

Some specialty wood product manufacturers also are involved with chain of custody. As Green Building standards which reward certified wood develop, interest in certified building materials is expected to increase. Demand for certified material is ultimately driven by the end user, not the manufacturer.

Landowners who can present certified wood to customers may improve market access, and may have a stronger negotiating position with some customers.

Landowners certified under the American Tree Farm System can also move ATFS certified wood into both the SFI and PEFC chain-of-custody systems. SFI-certified material is primarily marketed in North America. PEFC material is also recognized in Europe and worldwide, since many national forest certification systems are recognized by PEFC.

How does a Tree Farmer move product through a chain-of-custody system? The key is to document that your wood comes from a Tree Farm when it moves to the interested customer. The trip ticket provides the paper trail for the chain of custody. Your customers who participate in chain-of-custody systems provide similar documentation when their products are delivered to the next steps of the manufacturing supply chain, and so on to the end user.

Check with the mill representatives where your wood is being delivered to see if they are interested in your certified wood. Interested buyers may have protocols they use to identify wood that is certified when it is delivered. Buyers' interest in certified wood and chain of custody varies.

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## CURTIS THAXTER

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

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Jack Erler and his firm work with woodland owners to solve legal problems in forest operations, property taxation, estate planning and environmental land use matters at the State or local level.

Jack has been counsel to SWOAM Land Trust since its inception 20 years ago. He assisted SWOAM in organizing and qualifying the Land Trust. He represents the Land Trust in acquiring all of its woodlands and conservation easements.

Contact him at (207) 774-9000 or [jerler@curtisthaxter.com](mailto:jerler@curtisthaxter.com)

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### ATTENTION: WOODLAND OWNERS

**Robbins Lumber, Inc.** offers a Forestry Landowner Assistance Program providing the following services:



1. Forest Management and Tree Growth Plans
2. Timber estimates and valuation
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5. State Forestry regulation and local ordinance interpretation

**Robbins Lumber, Inc.** has been responsibly managing its lands for over 125 years. Robbins Lumber participates in the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® program. We are offering our forestry program to other private landowners.

For additional information contact:  
Mark Vannah, Licensed Forester #1098  
Robbins Lumber, Inc.

PO Box 9, Searsport, Maine 04973  
Tel: (207) 342-5221 Fax: (207) 342-5201  
[www.rlco.com](http://www.rlco.com)

## Still Time to Donate

SWOAM's Annual Appeal is still on! We hope you received your letter from Rich Merk, our president, in April and have responded. If not, there's still time before the appeal period ends June 30.

Please consider that SWOAM is a network of committed family woodland owners. We promote sound forest management and strengthen long-term woodland stewardship. Everyone benefits -- the families, their communities, all of Maine and beyond.

Your gift to SWOAM goes a long way. Please help. Use the return envelope that came with the letter, or just send a check with a note designating it for the annual appeal. You can also donate online at [www.swoam.org](http://www.swoam.org).

## President's Message

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administrative and management services to the Maine Tree Farm Committee and its many volunteers in the state. In 2010 and 2011, SWOAM will be providing resources to grow the Tree Farm membership, manage the certification audits done on Tree Farms and support the inspectors working with Tree Farmers. It is the hope and anticipation that this arrangement will be good for both SWOAM and Maine Tree Farm.

And as always, the general tasks of supporting and representing woodland owners continued for another year.

## Tree Farm Certification

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When your wood is sold to a customer who is interested in certified wood, talk with the forester, logger and trucker involved with your sale so all are aware of your status as a Tree Farmer and the importance of documenting your Tree Farm status on the trip ticket.

Following the American Tree Farm Standard gives you the satisfaction of knowing that you are being a good steward of your property. PEFC recognition of ATFS provides international recognition of your good work. Tree Farm products are expected to become increasingly recognized in the marketplace.

Certification and chain-of-custody marketing will continue to develop. What the future will bring is not entirely certain, but certification is here to stay.