



TREE FARM NEWS

BERRY TAKES OVER AS CHAIR OF NC TREE FARM PROGRAM

After serving two years as the vice chair of the North Carolina Tree Farm Program, Bill Berry stepped forward last December to guide the program as its chair for 2010. Berry becomes the third chair of the program since its revival in North Carolina and the first non-landowner to lead the program.

"We appreciate Bill's willingness to come forward and lead our program," stated former chair Dwight Batts. "We continue to seek out quality landowners who are interested in helping to forward our program. We want landowners to be the driving force of our efforts,



Bill Berry

working in conjunction with our great sponsors. Having said that, we are thrilled that Bill with all of his experience with the American Tree Farm System was willing to lead our program."

Prior to retiring to North Carolina a few years ago, Berry spent over 40 years in the forest products industry. He is a third generation forester.

Before his retirement, Berry was the Executive Vice President, Forest Resources and Wood Products for Rayonier, Inc. He was responsible for all of Rayonier's 2.4 Million acres in the United States, New Zealand and Tasmania; its International log and wood products trading organizations; its wood products mills; and Rayonier's U.S. Real Estate Subsidiary.

In addition to the 22 years with Rayonier, Berry worked for Kimberly Clarke & Champion International.

Throughout his career, Berry has been involved with landowner issues and organizations at the local and national level. He has been a trustee of the American Forest Foundation and was the Chairman of The National Tree Farm System 2000-2006.

Berry also chaired the Ad Hoc Wetlands Committee for American Forest & Paper Association formed to address the impact of early wetland regulation on Forestry.

He has also served on the external advisory board of the Warnell School of Forest Resources, University of Georgia.

He continues to serve on the advisory board for a private timber investment management company (TIMO).

Berry holds a bachelor's degree in Forestry from the University of California at Berkeley and a master's degree in Forest Economics from the University of Michigan.

"I am excited about the opportunity to help forward the mission of the American Tree Farm System," stated Berry. "Dwight has done an outstanding job over the past three years as chair. I have some big shoes to fill, that's for sure."

Since the program's revival in 2000, the North Carolina Tree Farm Program has increased its membership to over 950 certified Tree Farmers and over 100 certified Tree Farm Inspectors.

Any certified Tree Farmer who would like to become more involved in the North Carolina program should contact Bill Berry at (919) 544-6013. ■

NC TREE FARMERS NAMED SOUTHEAST REGIONAL FINALISTS

North Carolina's Tree Farmers of the Year in 2009, Riddick and Alice Rick, were named one of the finalist for the 2010 Southeast Regional Tree Farmer of the Year in February. The Ricks were visited by the regional inspectors in April. The regional award winners will be announced in May and the national Tree Farmer of the Year will be awarded in July at the national convention.

If you look at their Tree Farm holdings now - three different locations in Northampton County - Whispering Pines Wildlife Preserve, The Ricks Tree Farm and White Oak Alley - that total over 1,100 acres, you would think that piecing these properties together was a snap. It was not the case. Riddick recalls with amusement how many bids fell short by the smallest amount of dollars. Then a phone call changed Riddick's luck.



(l-r) sitting front row, Elliott Ricks, Lizzie Ricks, (second row) Riddick Ricks, Wil Ricks, Ben Ricks and Alice Ricks at the gate of Whispering Pines Wildlife Preserve.

"A gentleman called me and said, Riddick you may not remember who I am, but I know you and I know your family. Your mother and daddy were good friends to my parents when I was growing up and always did a lot to help us out. My daddy passed away recently, and I would like for you to be able to purchase this property," recalls Riddick.

The property was exactly what Alice and Riddick were looking to acquire - it was adjacent to his father's farm and totaled 140 acres of 13-year old pines. So, in 1991, Alice and Riddick became forest landowners. A year later, they added another 15 acres to the property and started actively

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WHY DO YOU NEED A FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN?

Like the "GO" arrow on the corner of a Monopoly board game, a forest management plan should be the starting point for every forest landowner, regardless of their involvement level or size of their property. Studies have shown that too many landowners neglect this simple step.

A thoughtful management plan not only provides direction for a landowner, but it also is a crucial piece of documentation that can be the key to the door of opportunity when it comes time to applying for cost-share programs. It also can prove to be a safeguard against far-reaching regulatory agencies.

What is a Forest Management Plan?

There is no one template for a forest management plan since all plans are designed to the specific wishes of the respective landowner.

Is the landowner interested in solely timber production? Or, as in the case with most landowners, what environmental qualities or elements does a landowner want to encourage en route to growing trees that at some point will be harvested for forest products. Often times, the details in the plan are dictated by the location and soil quality of the property, but ultimately, the plan is a reflection of the landowner's goals for the property.

Who Can Write a Forest Management Plan?

As in most forest issues, a private landowner has a few options when it comes time to develop a forest management plan. Foresters working for the North Carolina Division of Forest Resources can write a management plan and this is a free *(continued on page C)*

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THE BUREAUCRATIC SIDE OF TREE FARMING: BEING AN ADVOCATE

By Dwight Batts, NC Tree Farmer

If you are anything like me, there is no place that makes you happier than working out on the farm. The place I hate to be most is dressed up and in some meeting, especially with people of the political persuasion. But I have learned over the past few years that if you want to protect your interest and that of your grandchildren, being in that room with the politician is exactly the best place to be.

Here in North Carolina we have many politicians that were born and raised on a farm and are understanding and "friendly" to our farming and forestry needs. Sadly though, that has been changing over the last two to three decades. Today most people in our state have either been raised in our towns and cities or have moved in from cities in other states and while they all have much to offer our society, experience and sympathy with the needs of farmers is not one of them. Another thing that has happened is that about half of the elected officials in our state legislature are being elected from only fourteen centers of population (counties).

This means simply that these fourteen counties have the ability to make decisions and laws that affect the other eighty-six. As if that is not enough, folks who spend their time studying things like this estimate that over the next ten years of so we will see an increase in our population that is equal to the population of South Carolina.

It is a fact that our rural life, forests, and natural beauty are prime motivators that attract jobs and people to our beautiful state. What most of them do not recognize is that population growth has a way of destroying what attracted them here in the first place. This is why you and I need to spend time in rooms with these politicians, helping to educate them on what our land and forests provide to our state and what we need in the way of laws and assistance to continue to do so.

On May 25th, you have the unique opportunity that many countries do not offer; meet and share your needs and ideas with your representatives. The NCFA sets all of this up for us and makes it so easy for us as landowners to have a real impact on the legislative process. If you value your farms and your families here is how you can help:

- Call Ann Harper at 1-800-231-7723 and make your family's reservation.
- Tell your friends about this and bring them with you.
- Call your representative and make an appointment on that day.
- If you have a personal relationship with any North Carolina or U.S Representative, call or e-mail me and consider becoming one of our Tree Farm advocates.

I think you will be surprised at just how important this visit will be to your representative. We will provide a list of forestry issues to share and leave in your representative's office. Thank you for helping us protect the future of our land, our forests and our families. ■



(l-r) Tree Farmer Dwight Batts poses for a photo with North Carolina Senator A.B. Swindell during last year's Forestry Day in the Legislature.

TREE FARM AND NCDNR WORK TOWARDS MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF PROGRAM STANDARDS

The North Carolina Tree Farm Program and North Carolina Division of Forest Resources (NCDNR) continue to make progress on reaching a general Memorandum of Understanding between the American Tree Farm System and the NCDNR that mutually recognizes the Tree Farm program and the Forest Stewardship program. The goal of the MOU is to reach an agreement where Tree Farmers could automatically opt-in to the Forest Stewardship Program and Forest Stewardship landowners could choose to be Tree Farmers without completing the entire application process.

"We are just trying to eliminate the duplication in effort," stated former Tree Farm Chair Bob Cooper, who heads up the sub-committee working on this project along with NCDNR's Sean Brogan. "I happen to be both a Tree Farmer and a Forest Stewardship landowner, and I had to go through two, almost identical, application processes. We think we can save a lot of time, money and effort by our foresters and landowners alike if we can reach some type of reciprocal agreement between the two programs."

After a few meetings of the sub-committee, the group hosted another meeting at the NCFA in April and invited North Carolina State Forester, Wib Owen, NCFA Executive Vice President Bob Slocum and American Tree Farm System Vice President, Bob Simpson for a formal discussion on what steps needed to be taken at this stage to move this idea forward. The consensus in the meeting was the MOU was certainly needed and would ultimately eliminate much of the double efforts taking place statewide among foresters both private and with the state.

While the programs are similar in their mission, the American Tree Farm Program provides globally recognized PEFC certification for all forestlands enrolled in the program. This would allow all Forest Stewardship participants to certify their lands by completing an application process, saving them the time of applying for the Tree Farm certification.

"There is still some work to be done," stated Cooper, "But I was extremely pleased with the progress we have made so far. North Carolina is one of the leading states on this project, and we would like to be one of the first states to achieve this MOU." ■



David Barnes is one of the many landowners in North Carolina who has earned Tree Farm and Forest Stewardship recognition. Barnes was Johnston County's Tree Farmer of the Year in 2002.

Why Do I Need a Forest Management Plan...(from page 1)

service to landowners provided through the country ranger offices. A landowner also can hire a consulting forester who will write a management plan for a fee. Regardless of who authors the document, the document is a living document that can be altered at any time due to management concerns.

What Elements should be in a Management Plan?

Property Objectives: Timber management must be the top priority if you want present use value tax rates and qualify for Certified Tree Farm status. You may also include sections on your objectives for wildlife, water and recreation since they are the other three sides of the Tree Farm sign and are critical components for sound forestry stewardship.

Property Description: It is a good idea to include in the plan the farm number, tract number, property tax identification number, an aerial map, soils and streams map and other maps or information that helps locate and describe the farm. References to deed book and page and a survey, if available, should be included.

Topography maps are also very helpful in defining the property and helping in setting down objectives and executing plans.

A history of the property can be very helpful especially if your family has occupied it over several generations.

Special sites of interest such as graveyards, old buildings, naval store sites, special wildlife habitat sites and others can be helpful in protecting these areas when work is taking place on the property.

Identifying the age, area and type of each forest stand is very important in order to make some general harvesting, wildlife management and other decisions.

Plan Schedule: By including in the management plan a general schedule of the work to be accomplished on the property to meet your objectives, you have laid out for your family, forest consultant, county ranger, wildlife biologist, logger or other professional exactly how you want the plan to meet your objectives.

If weather, market conditions, or other factors interfere with your schedule, it can be adjusted accordingly. That is why a "general" schedule is assembled.

Record of Activities: This is a vitally important part of your plan. It will verify for the tax department that you are actively managing the property if an audit is performed. It would be a good place to put plantings, harvests,

herbicide applications, prescribed fires, fire lanes, storm cleanup, wildlife plots, mowing, discing, or any other activity related to keeping your forest healthy and productive. It is not just the work you do but all the work done by you and others.

If you don't document your work there is no way to verify that it was done and when. It is also a good place to document other things such as a beetle outbreak, a severe storm, wildfire or any other influence on your forestland. It is a good idea to update your records about once per year.

It is acceptable to have a plan for each property or have an overall plan for all properties in a single written management plan.

What Does a Forest Management Plan Do for Me?

First and foremost, a forest management plan provides the documentation that demonstrates a landowner's commitment to managing the property for forestry purposes. As our urban centers continue to grow and shoot out towards more rural areas, landowners' ability to practice forestry, particularly when it comes to the harvest part of this cycle, is coming under more scrutiny every day.

There are countless regulations in terms of land use that can be enforced by state, county and city officials across North Carolina. A forest management plan frequently proves to be the tipping point when it comes time to debating whether an activity is truly forestry based - and in most cases - practicing forestry derives an exemption from many of these regulations.

A forest management plan is frequently a requirement if a landowner wishes to enroll in any type of forestry program for landowners such as the American Tree Farm System or the North Carolina Division of Forest Resources' Stewardship program.

In terms of cost-share and tax programs, a forest management plan is an essential element towards securing funds or acceptance into tax programs, namely the Present Use Value Tax program. This program allows a landowner to have his property taxed as forestry instead of its highest value. This could amount to significant tax savings for landowners who own property in developing counties.

The cost-share programs such as the Forest Development Program (FDP) that is administered through the North Carolina Division of Forest Resources require a forest management plan. There are several elements of forest practices that now are eligible for FDP funds, but a management plan is a requirement.

A management plan is truly a living document - it can change as priorities

change for a landowner or as nature has impacted the property. A hurricane ripping through a tract of timber or a severe ice storm will certainly alter future management activities on that site.

A thoughtful forest management plan can open up even more doors in the new cost-share initiatives that can be found in the new U.S. Farm Bill. Updating a management plan that is focused on meeting one of the new programs will certainly enhance a landowner's chance of securing cost-share funding.

How Does a Forest Management Plan Impact Certification?

Many certification programs, the American Tree Farm System, for example, require a random third party audit of all properties involved in the program. North Carolina was one of the states selected nationwide to be audited this past year.

In all of the Tree Farms sampled in North Carolina, the auditors came to the property with one question on their mind. Is the landowner being true to his management plan? They appeared less concerned with the actual practices on the property and more with were they actually being performed. In other words, the auditors were not there to pass judgement on the landowner's goals, but rather, is the landowner being faithful to the plans. So, if that meant a pre-commercial was called for in 10 years - had the landowner executed the harvest?

It is also important to note that the forest management plan is a living document. If a landowner had it in his plans to perform a final harvest in 2008, but chose to delay the harvest a few

years due to market conditions, that is fine, as long as the plan is updated in a timely fashion to reflect this change.

Conversely, if a landowner decides on a harvest prior to his management plan, it is acceptable as long as the plan gets update with the new harvest and what is going to happen after the harvest.

How Do I Get More Information?

For those landowners who use computers, there are several websites that can be helpful.

American Tree Farm System

www.treefarmssystem.org. Click on: About Tree Farming, then scroll down in the article Getting Started in Sustainable Forestry and click on: management plan template. This will bring up a self help document for a complete management plan.

N.C. State University Forestry Extension

Website: www.ces.ncsu.edu/nreos/forest/pdf/WON/won32.pdf. This will bring up a Woodland Owner Note on Management by Objective: Successful Forest Planning.

N.C. Division of Forest Resources

www.dfr.state.nc.us/Managing_your_forest/pdf/fssp/basiccomponentsofastewardshipplan.pdf.

For those landowners who prefer to pick up the phone and call for more information, here are some contacts.

Tree Farm: Al Weller (252) 948-2744

NC State Extension Forestry: Your County Extension Office

NC Forest Service: Your County Ranger

TREE FARM ANNUAL MEETING TO TAKE PLACE IN PINEHURST

The North Carolina Tree Farm Program conducts several landowner workshops throughout the year with the assistance the program's numerous sponsors. In addition to these workshops, the program also holds an annual meeting in the fall where North Carolina Tree Farmers can get together and discuss the important issues facing Tree Farmers.

"We encourage all Tree Farmers to make our annual meeting a priority," stated program chair Bill Berry. "It is a great chance for landowners to share ideas and learn more about our program."

This year's meeting will take place at the Pinehurst Resort on October 26-27, 2010. The meeting kicks off on Tuesday night, October 26th with a reception and awards dinner. On Wednesday, a field tour of an area Tree Farm is the featured activity. Tree Farmers will also hear from guest speakers on various topics pertinent to forest landowners and the Tree Farm program.

The room rates at the Pinehurst Resort are \$159 for North Carolina Tree Farmers. Tree Farmers are encouraged to make their reservations well in advance of the meeting.

While the Tree Farm meeting concludes on the 27th, Tree Farmers are encouraged to participate in the North Carolina Forestry Association's annual meeting that will take place on the 27th and 28th at the same location. ■

NEW TRAINING FOR TF INSPECTORS

The standards of the American Tree Farm System revised its standards in 2009 and consequently, the Tree Farm inspection standards have also been revised. Any forester who completes the three-hour inspection course becomes a certified Tree Farm Inspector. The course will be offered several times in 2010. The first was held on May 4th in Ahsokie. While final dates have not been set, look for sessions to be held in August in the Whiteville and Sanford areas and in September in the Statesville and Asheville areas. The training sessions will be led by the dynamic duo of Al Weller and Dave Woodmansee. For more information on becoming a Tree Farm Inspector, contact Al Weller at (252) 943-1479 or al.weller@weyerhaeuser.com. ■

INSPECTIONS ARE IMPORTANT

Each year, the North Carolina Tree Farm Program is required to complete a pre-determined sampling of the certified Tree Farmers in the state. The sampling, which is generated on a random basis on the national level by the American Tree Farm System, can range from year to year based on what the computer model pulls out of the national sampling. Last year, North Carolina had 30 landowners selected. This year number is 17.

Completing the required inspections in a timely fashion is not only a point of pride for the North Carolina Program, it is crucial to the entire certification process of the American Tree Farm System. The standards of the program have been accepted by the Programme for the Endorsement Forest Certification (PEFC) and must be maintained to keep this certification. Inspections are a key element in the standards. Consequently, the North Carolina Tree Farm Program receives a small reimbursement fee for all re-inspections from the national office.

All prospective Tree Farmers who wish to be enrolled in the American Tree Farm System must meet all the requirements - at least 10 acres and a written forest management plan - and be inspected by a certified Tree Farm Inspector. Currently, the North Carolina Tree Farm Program has an estimated 200 landowners who have expressed interest in becoming a Tree Farmer. In most cases, these landowners are waiting on a management plan. A property cannot be inspected until it has a documented forest management plan by a forester.

Finally, the American Tree Farm System is audited by a third party on an annual basis since it has achieved the PEFC certification. A sampling of states takes place each year. Last year, North Carolina was one of the states selected for the sampling. A total of 30 inspections were completed in 2009 as part of this effort.

The North Carolina Tree Farm Program would like to thank all of the foresters and landowners who have helped with the inspection process over the past year. ■

GENETICS WORKSHOP SCHEDULED

The North Carolina Tree Farm Program will be hosting a workshop on forest genetics this fall at the Hofmann Forest in Jones County. The final date and details are being finalized, but the workshop is targeted for some time in September. The program will include some classroom style discussion and a field tour of the forest. With nearly 80,000 contiguous acres, the Hofmann Forest is the single largest holding of the North Carolina State University's College of Natural Resources. The forest is situated on what was historically referred to as the White Oak pocosin. ■

NCTFP LOSES TWO SUPPORTERS

The North Carolina Tree Farm Program lost two of its biggest supporters over the past few months with the passing of Stan Adams and John Alsup.

"Both of these men were extremely supportive of the Tree Farm program and were key to the program's resurgence in North Carolina," stated Dwight Batts. "The success of our program is determined by men like Stan Adams and John Alsup, who are willing to make the effort to help private landowners succeed."

Former North Carolina State Forester, Stan Adams, 74, passed away in December of 2009. A champion of the forest landowner, Adams graduated from N.C. State University in 1957 with a bachelor's degree in Forest Management and embarked on his professional career in resource management which spanned over 44 years. He served North Carolina landowners for 15 years as State Forester.

Forester John Alsup Jr., 77, died in March of 2010. He graduated from the University of Georgia Forestry School, receiving a bachelor's degree in Forestry. John was employed as a forester, retiring after 38 years with Riegel-Federal Paper Corporation.

Both men were not only big supporters of the program, they were active Tree Farmers as well. They enjoyed working on their Tree Farms and sharing their passion for forestry with others. ■

NC Tree Farmers Named Southeast Regional Finalist...*(from page 1)*

managing their forests for timber, wildlife and aesthetics. In 1994, they officially enrolled their property into the American Tree Farm System.

"I am not a perfectionist, but if I take on any task, I want to do it the very best I can," explained Riddick.

The word was out - Alice and Riddick Ricks were in the business of being top notch Tree Farmers. While balancing a heavy workload at the animal hospital, the Ricks added to their Tree Farm acreage by acquiring a farm they named "White Oak Alley" via three separate purchases in 2004 and 2005. White Oak Alley now is a 234-acre tract that features mature hardwoods.

The family's investment in its forest management for wildlife, timber and other aesthetic values was no token endeavor. Sure, cost share programs are available, but in the big picture, the funds rarely offset all the costs associated with the forest management goals of the Ricks family.

"At this time, I sat down with Alice and my boys and I said I am committed to doing this right," stated Riddick. "We are going to do it whether we get cost share or not. That was really an important crossroad to make that determination. It had to be a family decision that we were going to invest in sustainable forests that would grow in terms of wildlife and timber."

For all of their forestry work on their two Tree Farms, the Ricks family was recognized by the Northampton Landowners Association as its Tree Farmers of the Year in 2004.

"Alice and I and the boys feel like we are blessed," stated Riddick. "God has blessed us. With that blessing, He expects us to be responsible stewards. This is our heart. It's really what drives us."

In 2006, Riddick's perseverance in forest management paid direct dividends as timber proceeds from a sale on his first Tree Farm, The Ricks Tree Farm, provided the framework for the purchase of Whispering Pines. The property, which was overgrown and neglected to some degree, fit nicely into the Ricks Tree Farm Family based on its location and natural attributes.

"Wildlife is important to our family and dictates what we do from a forestry standpoint, but it is easy for the two to blend together and compliment each other," stated Ricks. "Because, what you do for forestry certainly helps your wildlife, and what you do for your wildlife, is good forest management as well."

Another area of emphasis for Alice and Riddick Ricks is the appreciation of wildflowers and native plant species. Forestry practices such as prescribed burns and pre-commercial thinnings have unveiled a myriad of wildflowers on the property.

"Our native wildflowers add so many benefits and bring joy to us," stated Riddick. "You can go back to them year after year and they present themselves. They are so predictable - almost to the same day or week you saw them the year before."

Riddick has spent countless hours photographing and journaling the wildflowers on Whispering Pines. Alice enjoys research and identification of newly located species, marking them with small flags.

"In this crazy world, it's the things that don't change that are awfully comforting," stated Alice.

There is no better place to take in the beauty of Whispering Pines than from the tower of the Ricks' retreat, The Porches that was constructed in 2009. It serves as a place of peace and tranquility for Alice and Riddick and the starting point for their numerous walks of their property.

As Riddick looks back, he is humbled by how far his family has come with their stewardship goals and is thankful for all of the guidance they have received over the years from others.

"All the pieces of our management plan are coming together," reflected Ricks. "The vision of our forest stewardship has resulted from countless visits from foresters, wildlife biologists, soil and water conservationists, and other tree farmers who shared their advice and expert opinions. Truly, we are seeing the results of our labor." ■



(left) Alice Ricks hosted a wildflower information station during a Tree Farm Workshop at Whispering Pines.