



North Carolina Tree Farm Program Forests of Recognized Importance

Standard 5 of the 2021 Standards of Sustainability states:

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.

The Standards guidance as to what constitutes a Forest of Recognized Importance (FORI) is extensive. Highlights of the guidance provide that the components of a FORI include:

- Global, national, regional significance
- Large landscape areas
- Exceptional ecological values
- Exceptional social values
- Exceptional cultural values
- Exceptional biological values

These components should be evaluated at the landscape level, and it is a combination of these unique values that constitutes a FORI.

Based on this guidance, the N.C. Tree Farm Program Board of Directors has determined that the National Forests of North Carolina meet the criterion for large landscape areas, and they also provide a combination of “exceptional social, cultural or biological” components. Furthermore, these forests have been, and continue to be, managed to contribute to the conservation of these values. Of paramount importance, the National Forests represent the major ecoregions of North Carolina in the coastal plain, mountains and piedmont.

The National Forests in North Carolina are the Croatan, Nantahala, Pisgah and Uwharrie.

Although there are other small areas on private lands with important species, social, cultural or other values, they do not meet the landscape level that is necessary to be called a FORI. These areas would be consistent with AFF’s definition of special sites and in some instances might warrant management considerations with nearby landowners.