

Process for Conducting a Tree Farm Inspection

Assign Tree Farm Inspection

N.C. Tree Farm Program (NCTFP):

- contacts inspector for help with inspection. Requests completion of field visit and inspection paperwork within 6 weeks. (Inspector informs NCTFP of any schedule changes.)
- emails inspection form and other resources to inspector.
- sends email to landowner (and cc's inspector) with inspector's name and information on next steps in the inspection process.

Contact Landowner

Tree Farm Inspector:

- requests copy of *current* forest management plan and supporting documentation.
- schedules field visit and Tree Farmer interview. Invites Tree Farmer to participate in field visit.

Prepare for Field Visit

Tree Farm Inspector:

- reads [guidance](#) on forest management plan requirements and filling out inspection record.
- reads forest management plan and supporting documentation to become familiar with the property. For re-inspections, inspector makes notes on required information that is missing from the documentation.
- reviews property map to confirm that the tax parcels are contiguous and under the same ownership. If parcels are not contiguous or if contiguity is unclear, inspector contacts NCTFP for next steps.
- makes sure that the management plan, maps and inspection form all show the correct forested and total acreage.
- prepares list of questions/topics to discuss with landowner.
- picks up Tree Farm sign from any N.C. Forest Service District Office if landowner needs a sign.

Conduct Field Visit and Interview Tree Farmer

Tree Farm Inspector:

- takes the Standards of Sustainability Pocket Guide on the field visit and a Tree Farm sign if landowner needs one.
- uses phone to determine GPS coordinates to Tree Farm's main entrance. Enters latitude and longitude in decimal degrees format (dd.dddd) on page 1 of the inspection form.
- interviews Tree Farmer to validate and/or update information on the inspection form.
 - validates landowner information on page 1 of form. If ownership or contact information is incomplete or incorrect, report updates in the Notes/Updates section on page 2 of the 021 Form. Do *not* replace ownership or contact information on page 1.
 - validates Tree Farm information. If Tree Farm location or acreage information is incorrect on page 1 of the pre-populated form, correct the information by typing over the pre-populated data.
- walks the property to determine if conditions on the ground align with the management plan and maps and meet the requirements of the Standards. If there are discrepancies between the plan, maps

and on-site conditions, work with the landowner to update or correct the documentation. Follow the [N. C. Tree Farm Program Guidance on Forest Management Plans](#) for any updates. Ensure that all required elements are addressed in management plan documentation before recommending certification of the property.

- notes any non-compliant conditions and recommended corrective actions on the inspection form and shares this information with the landowner. Inspector does not certify or recertify the property until all non-compliances are corrected.

Complete, Review and Submit Inspection Paperwork

Tree Farm Inspector:

- reviews guidance on filling out the 021 Inspection Form at <https://www.nctreefarm.org/forest-certification/inspectors/inspector-resources/standards-of-sustainability-guidance/>.
- types inspection information directly into the 021 Inspection Form. Use the Notes/Observations section to add details that support compliance.
- types signature in Approvals section. Do not use Adobe's "fill and sign" feature because it will lock the form and prevent further changes. Landowner signature is only required for new Tree Farm certifications.
- downloads ESRI shapefile or KML/KMZ file that shows the boundary lines of the tax/ownership parcel(s) for the certified Tree Farm.
- emails inspection paperwork to ginny.nctreefarm@gmail.com. Attaches to email:
 - completed inspection report in writable PDF format
 - ESRI shapefile or KML/KMZ file that shows the boundary lines of the property.
 - copy of forest management plan and supporting documentation if documentation was updated during inspection process.

Complete Certification Process

NCTFP:

- reviews inspection paperwork and follows up with the inspector for additional information as needed.
- enters map and inspection data in the national database and certifies the property.
- emails confirmation to Tree Farm Inspector that certification is complete.
- mails membership card or new member packet to landowner.

For New Certifications Only

Tree Farm Inspector:

- picks up Tree Farm sign from any N.C. Forest Service District Office and presents to landowner after certification is complete and Tree Farm number is assigned. NCTFP provides one sign per certified Tree Farm.