

February 18, 2016



RE: HCR 208 - Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the American Tree Farm System

Good Morning,

My name is Mike Barsotti. I am a Linn County forest landowner, Certified Tree Farmer, member of the Oregon Tree Farm System's Board of Directors, and a past Chair of the Tree Farm Board.

This morning I will present a bit of why I think the American Tree Farm System and its Oregon Tree Farm System chapter is important to all Oregon, and why our Legislature should recognize its 75 years of promoting sustainable forest management.

Oregonians appreciate our state's forests for a wide variety of reasons. These green and white diamond Tree Farm sign you see on gates and posts in rural Oregon make the statement that there are healthy, sustainable forests behind these signs, and that these signs say that landowners are addressing the many reasons why Oregonians love their forests.

The American Tree Farm System's (ATFS) is the oldest forest certification system in the United States. Its goal is to promote more good forestry on more acres and keep it there. To achieve this, ATFS has developed a set of internationally approved forest management standards that promote healthy sustainable forests. And to assure everyone that these Tree Farm signs mean sustainable forestry, ATFS pays third party auditors to visit tree farms to confirm that these standards are being followed.

ATFS forest management standards guide landowners who want to sustainably manage their forests. These Tree Farm Standards include:

1. Commitment to Practicing Sustainable Forestry
2. Compliance with Laws
3. Reforestation and Afforestation
4. Air, Water, and Soil Protection
5. Fish, Wildlife, biodiversity, and Forest Health
6. Forest Aesthetics
7. Protect Special Sites
8. Forest Product Harvests and Other Activities

This voluntary approach is big. It is part of the state's vision and strategy as defined in the Board of Forestry's *Forestry Program for Oregon*. It fits the smallest to largest ownership. The standards address the areas covered by the Oregon Forest Practices Act and more. It is accomplished through a process that has professional foresters assisting landowners.

These professional foresters come from all sectors of the forest community. They come from industry, consulting firms, and federal and state governments. They visit with family forest landowners to assist them and assure that their plans and actions improve their forests in ways that promote these ATFS standards. Landowners address the standards through carrying out their individual goals and objectives.

Approximately 20 percent, 866,241 acres, of Oregon's smaller ownerships are part of the Tree Farm system. The smaller acreage forest ownerships are often closest to our towns and cities. They are very visible, primarily in that transition zone between our communities and the industrial and public forests. Small forest ownerships make up 44 percent of Oregon's privately held forests.

Tree Farmers are actively managing their lands. Their management provides jobs, clean water and wildlife habitat. Their lands are along our streams and rivers and provide valuable fish habitat.

I ask that you support HCR 208 that recognizes the role the American Tree Farm System has played these past 75 years in promoting healthy, sustainable forests.

Thank you for affording me this opportunity to be with you this morning.