

# NEW YORK STATE TREE FARM PROGRAM NEWS & NOTES



MARCH 2015

## From the State Chair

Hello Tree Farmers! Hope everyone survived the cold and snowy winter. As the new State Tree Farm Chair I just wanted to introduce myself and say hello. My name is Christopher Prentis and I live and work in southern New York as a consultant forester for my own forestry consulting firm. I have been involved with the NY Tree Farm Program for about 6 years now, first as an inspector, and for the past 3 years, as the Area 1 chairperson on the State Committee. I look forward to working with everyone during the year to expand the Tree Farm name around the State and to promote sustainable forestry and sound land and resource management. I hope to hear your thoughts regarding the upcoming changes at Tree Farm that are described in this newsletter.

Have a great spring - *Christopher Prentis, CF*

## Standards for Sustainability

The new 2015-2020 American Tree Farm System Standards of Sustainability were released on January 1, 2015. The 2015-2020 Standards reflect a limited number of revisions from the 2010-2015 Standards. The small number of revisions to the Standards are designed to advance forest conservation while providing clarity, flexibility and resources for landowners. Learn more about the changes at [www.treefarmssystem.org/atfs-standards](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/atfs-standards).

Now is the time to dust off your management plans and update them to the 2015-2020 standards. Contact your forester or inspector to make these updates. It is also a good time to see if any changes have occurred with your property or your plan. Operational transition to the 2015-2020 Standards is anticipated to be relatively simple for entities which currently conform to the 2010-2015 Standards.

If your management plan is more than five years old, now is the time to revisit your objectives and make any necessary changes. Remember that management plans are dynamic, they are meant to be changed and modified over time to reflect different objectives or other influences that may affect your land.

## NYS Tree Farm's Assessment

This year the State is undergoing a third party assessment as part of the Tree Farm System certification program. New York is covered under the Northeastern Group Certification Certificate and is being audited, along with Massachusetts, this year as part of the certification protocols. New York was last assessed in 2011; and was found to be performing well during that review. This year, twenty-five properties were chosen at random across twenty-two counties to be audited. These properties range in size from 10 acres up to 37,000 acres and covers private ownership as well as municipal watershed land and Paul Smith's College in the Adirondacks. These properties will be visited by auditors and foresters during the week of May 25-29 to verify that properties are meeting the Tree Farm Standards. Auditors typically will spend approximately 1-½ hours on each property looking at management plans and activities that Tree Farmers are performing on the property. Tree Farmers are encouraged to attend and ask questions and learn about the assessment process. Preliminary assessment results will be available by early June, while official results will be available by late summer.

## Tree Farm Certification Decision Time

2015 is also the year that the NYS Tree Farm Committee must make a decision regarding what path the state should take going forward regarding continuing third-party certification for state Tree Farms. Currently, all NYS Tree Farms are third-party certified. Our program in New York may choose to maintain our third-party certified status (called the "Certified Pathway") or forgo third-party certified status to focus on recognition and outreach (the "Recognition Pathway"). A third pathway is for Tree Farms in some part(s) of the state to continue certification as part of an Independently Managed Group while others choose recognition.

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**PLEASE SHARE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS – send to [nytreefarm@hotmail.com](mailto:nytreefarm@hotmail.com)**

Regular updates (like this newsletter) about the Tree Farm Program in New York State are sent via email throughout the year. Don't miss receiving important information about your Tree Farm.

If you are no longer interested in the Tree Farm Program, please let us know that as well.

Thanks!



NYS Tree Farm Program  
PO Box 541  
Lima, NY 14485

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State Tree Farm Programs choosing the Certified Pathway maintain their third-party certification status. Under this pathway, the State Program, and all the Certified Tree Farmers, in it are covered by American Forestry Foundation's centrally held regional certificates. As a part of the certificate, each State Program undergoes assessment in accordance with accreditation rules, approximately every 4 years.

The main emphasis of the Recognition Pathway will be recognizing and sustaining relationships with woodland owners who are managing to the ATFS Standards, communicating the benefits of participating in ATFS and providing targeted and tailored outreach to unengaged woodland owners with the intent of moving them toward action and sustainable forest management. The recognition pathway will not be third party audited but will still have annual internal audits to maintain program credibility.

**We would like to hear from landowners on what they think is important in the State. Which way do you think the long term direction of Tree Farm should be in New York?** Please email your ideas to State Tree Farm Chair Chris Prentis [chris@lowerhudsonforestry.com](mailto:chris@lowerhudsonforestry.com) or call (845) 270-2071.