



Oregon Tree Farm System

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Oregon Board of Forestry
2600 State Street
Salem, OR 97310

RE: Agenda Item No. 2 – Certification of State Forests

Dear Members of the Board,

I write to you today as you discuss Forest Certification. While your Agenda Item #2 deals with State Forests, I believe it is important that you remain abreast of the opportunities Oregon's family forest landowners have for certifying their lands.

First, I was a bit confused in reading your agenda and staff reports for today's meeting. The Staff Report for Agenda Item No. 2 states that "Forest Certification is an independent scientific review process that determines if a forest is managed in an environmentally responsible manner." It is my understanding that Forest Certification is more than that. It also addresses the economic and social aspects of forest management, very similar to the Oregon Board of Forestry (BOF) Forestry Program for Oregon (FPFO). I'm sure you agree that the optimum set of forest products and values come from the effort to find the balance in addressing the economic, environmental and social components of our forests.

Similar to a goal I've heard Marvin Brown expressed, the American Forest Foundation's American Tree Farm System (ATFS) recognized in the early 1990s the importance in giving family forest landowners options in having their forests certified. ATFS has been strengthening its standards and procedures for over ten years so that it can be one of the options. It now uses the Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators as a foundation in its standards, and has modified its policies and procedures to better find that ever moving balance of the major components our forests provide.

ATFS is seeking Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) Recognition and Endorsement and will soon hear PEFC's response.

In June the PEFC Council Board of Directors unanimously recommended the American Forest Foundation's ATFS Forest Certification scheme be recognized and endorsed. Ballots have been mailed to the PEFC Council General Assembly with August 7, 2008 the date ballots need to be returned. ATFS needs a 60 percent majority vote of the

PEFC Council's General Assembly. We are very optimistic that we will be endorsed as the General Assembly has never voted against a unanimous recommendation of their Board of Directors. There are currently 33 member countries and 24 forest certification schemes endorsed by PEFC

The Oregon Tree Farm System looks forward to working with the Department of Forestry and others in providing our state's family forest landowner assistance in meeting their personal goals and objectives, forest certification, and assuring our citizens that the state's forests are managed to be healthy and sustainable and provide a mix of economic, environmental and social products and values.

And while I have the opportunity, let me offer an invitation to join tree farmers from across the country at ATFS's National Tree Farmer Convention, being held in Portland, October 16th-18th. It is being hosted by the Oregon and Washington Tree Farm organizations. You can learn more about the Convention and registration information at <http://www.treefarmssystem.org/>. The Field Day on October 18th is a great opportunity to see a family forest that has been actively managed for over 40 years and to visit 53 separate activities that deal with active forest management.

Sincerely,



Mike Barsotti, State Chair
Oregon Tree Farm System