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AMERICAN TREE FARM SYSTEM CERTIFIES LOCAL FORESTLAND

Danese, W.Va. - John Nobles of Fayette County knows that productive forestland with clean water, healthy wildlife habitat and opportunities for recreation benefits people and protects the environment. The American Tree Farm sign on his property proves it.

As a newly certified member of the American Tree Farm System, Nobles, a forest landowner from Danese, has demonstrated his commitment to practicing sound forestry by passing a rigorous property inspection by a professional forester and by pledging to continue the practice of sustainable forestry on his land.

“More than 58 percent of the productive forests in America are owned by 9.9 million ordinary citizens - not by government or big industry,” said Steve Stasny, landowner assistance forester with the West Virginia Division of Forestry and a tree farm inspector. “Tree farmers like Mr. Nobles hold the key to just what kind of forests future generations of Americans will enjoy.”

The American Tree Farm System is a nationwide community of nearly 65,000 tree farmers who manage 26 million acres of nonindustrial private forestlands and 81 million acres of forest in total. Tree farmers are individuals and families who share a desire for excellence in forest stewardship and a unique commitment to protecting watersheds, wildlife habitat, conserving soil quality and protecting our nation’s forests for future generations. Established in 1941, the American Tree Farm System is the oldest and largest voluntary sustainable forest certification program. There are 665 tree farms in West Virginia that together encompass 1,560,590 acres.

Stasny who provides landowner assistance to forest landowners in Braxton, Clay, Fayette and Nicholas counties said the state needs more private forest landowners to make sound decisions about managing their forests responsibly. “Today only five percent of U.S. forest landowners manage their land according to a written management plan,” Stasny said. “More tree farmers are needed to lead others in the right direction.”

For more information about tree farms in Braxton, Clay, Fayette and Nicholas counties, contact Landowner Assistance Forester Steve Stasny at (304) 872-0830, or stephen.stasny@wv.gov.

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