

**The Future of the
South Carolina Tree Farm Program
Working Together to Build Our Future**

December 2015 – November 2018

DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN



Provided by:

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Bob Franklin	Chairman – Longleaf Alliance
Randell Ewing	Past Chairman – Tree Farmer
Scott Phillips	Treasurer/Secretary – SCFC
Guy Sabin	Tree Farm Administrator – SCFA
George Kessler	Director– Chair Membership Committee, Tree Farmer
Jimmy Sanders	Director – Tree Farmer
Eric Smith	Director – Chair Inspections Committee, Forest Industry
Walt McPhail	Advisory Member – Chair Outreach & Education Committee
Russell Hubright	Advisory Member – Chair Recognition Committee, SCFC
David Schneider	Advisory Member – Chair Fundraising Committee, Consultant
Sam Cook	Advisory Member – Center for Heirs Property Preservation
Eddie Drayton	Advisory Member – Tree Farmer
David Halley	Facilitator, True North OD Services
Sara Anrrich	Staff, American Forest Foundation

SCFC=South Carolina Forestry Association, SCFC=South Carolina Forestry Commission



December 2, 2015

STRATEGIC PLAN

South Carolina Tree Farm Program

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Our shared vision of the future for the South Carolina Tree Farm Program:

- **Communications/Tree Farmer Outreach:** We improved our direct communications with and among our Tree Farmers, committee members, Inspectors, stakeholders and supporters.
- **Educational Programs to Engage Tree Farmers:** We enhanced our educational opportunities/programs to more effectively help Tree Farmers engage in more active management on their Tree Farms.
- **Retention and Recruitment:** We worked to retain and increase our membership in the South Carolina Tree Farm Program.
- **Attaining Financial Stability:** We developed and created funding streams to fund the program and support other worthy efforts. We also maintained healthy support from our partners.
- **Regional Forestry Groups:** We supported local and regional forestry groups across the state.
- **Tree Farm Inspections/Inspector Corps:** We instituted a more aggressive Tree Farm Inspection Program and grew our core of active Inspectors. Our Inspectors are also more engaged in the program.
- **Tree Farm Plans:** We are getting Tree Farm Management Plans written and updated to meet the new standards.
- **Tree Farm Certification Value:** The wood buying industry recognizes the value of the Tree Farm Program and is willing to provide market advantages to wood/fiber they purchase from Certified Tree Farms.
- **Tree Farm Administrator:** We created/supported a full time Administrator position for the South Carolina Tree Farm Program to increase our professional capacity.
- **Advocacy/Public Awareness:** We are part of an active voice in advocating and supporting the importance of forestry and natural resource management in our state.
- **Support:** The South Carolina Tree Farm Program was more engaged and improved its communication with the National office. We supported National Tree Farm goals, and we shared successes to help other state programs.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

FOCUS AREA #1: We will provide and enhance our educational opportunities and activities to more effectively help our Tree Farmers engage in more active management on their Tree Farms.

If successful:

- We will increase attendance to our programs/events.
- We will attract Tree Farmers that have not attended our programs in the past.
- We will help engage Tree Farmers to be more active in the management of their Tree Farms.
- We will attract forest landowners to become new members of the Tree Farm Program.

	STRATEGIES
<p>Outreach & Education Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walt McPhail (Chair) <p>Field Tour Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roy Boyd (Chair) <p>Publicity Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tom Patton, Jr. (Chair) <p>Membership Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Kessler (Chair) <p>Inspections Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eric Smith (Chair) 	<p>We are currently doing a good job with our education and outreach so we want to continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hold a field tour/meeting at the annual South Carolina Forestry Association meeting each year. Lead: <i>Field Tour Committee & Outreach & Education Committee</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Hold a field tour each year at our Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year's Tree Farm. Lead: <i>Field Tour Committee</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Hold at least two regional field tours on our own or in partnership with another conservation partner (i.e. Clemson University, NWTF, PFC, CFHP, County Landowner Associations, etc.) Lead: <i>Outreach & Education Committee</i>

<p>Educational Programs (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Maintain and send out our current newsletter twice a year, but look for opportunities to encourage more active management on Tree Farms by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigning committee members or Tree Farmers to write articles to put in the newsletter on active management practices and activities (due by March 1 and June 1) • Highlighting an active Tree Farmer • Promoting upcoming educational programs and opportunities Lead: <i>Publicity Committee</i> <p>We know that educated Tree Farmers are more likely to be engaged in active management so we want to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Create a clearinghouse of landowner education opportunities on our website, newsletter, and FaceBook page. Lead: <i>Publicity Committee</i> □ Develop a marketing process (step by step kit) to improve how we advertize and promote our educational events and the recommended steps. Lead: <i>Publicity Committee</i> □ Develop and conduct a survey to determine what Tree Farmers need or would like to see in future educational programs (workshops) by end of 2016. Lead: <i>Outreach & Education Committee and Membership Committee</i>
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<p>Educational Programs (continued)</p>	<p>We do not know the outcomes/impacts of our educational programs so we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Develop an evaluation process for each of our educational programs to measure our effectiveness and impact they have on Tree Farmers engaging in active management. Lead: <i>Bob Franklin</i> <p>We know that we are not reaching all our Tree Farmers with our educational programs. We need to develop strategies to reach new attendees to our programs and create incentives to reach “uninvolved” Tree Farmers. So we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Support the Heirs Property Stewardship Forest Program initiatives to attract “underserved” landowners into the program. Lead: <i>Outreach & Education Committee with Sam Cook</i> <p>We know we need to build our capacity to deliver our programs so we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Identify and invite seasoned Inspectors to mentor assigned new South Carolina Forestry Commission Foresters about the Tree Farm Program and help them get more involved in the program by the end of 2017. Lead: <i>Inspections Committee with Russell Hubright</i>
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Educational Programs (continued)

- Before the end of 2017 we will meet with the South Carolina Association of Consulting Foresters leadership to discuss strategies to engage more of their consulting forester members to become Inspectors and to discuss ways they might help us write plans and complete inspections from our backlog of Tree Farmers needing them.
Lead: *Inspections Committee with David Schneider*

- Identify forest industry leaders in our state and conduct a face-to-face meeting with them to define their future role and involvement in South Carolina Tree Farm and request list of young foresters in their organization that they would like to see more involved in the Tree Farm Program by end of 2016.
Lead: *Inspections Committee*

- Before the end of 2016 we will meet with the South Carolina Forestry Association to discuss the terms and develop an action plan that will eventually create a full-time position for a South Carolina Tree Farm Administrator position under their organization with the goal of having it in place by end of 2018.
Lead: *Board of Directors*

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT OF TREE FARMERS

FOCUS AREAS #2: We will work to retain our current membership then work to increase our membership in the South Carolina Tree Farm Program.

	STRATEGIES
<p>Membership Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Kessler (Chair) <p>Publicity Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tom Patton (Chair) <p>Inspections Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eric Smith (Chair) <p>Recognition Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russell Hubright (Chair) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We will roll out our Engagement Project. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the step-by-step process of the Engagement Project • Hire three Engagement Project Coordinators to match Foresters with Tree Farmers • Match Tree Farmers with Foresters/Inspectors • Develop a follow up system for tracking progress. • Complete 85% of the identified 200 current dues paying members needing plan updates and/or an inspection by the end of 2016. <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Lead: <i>Membership Committee</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Establish some retention and membership measures of success. <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Lead: <i>Membership Committee</i></p> <p>Promote Membership Benefits (In 2016):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We will re-evaluate membership benefits, with feedback from Tree Farmers. <input type="checkbox"/> Assign a value to the benefits <input type="checkbox"/> Survey members to determine expected returns <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate benefits using Tree Farmers as spokespersons. <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Lead: <i>Membership Committee.</i></p>

<p>Retention & Recruitment (continued)</p>	<p>Promote Membership Benefits (In 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We will document benefits and share them in our newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> We will develop a Welcome Packet for new Tree Farmers <input type="checkbox"/> We will market and sell South Carolina Tree Farm items (hats, shirts, etc.) <p>Lead: <i>Publicity Committee</i></p> <p>Retaining Certified Members (In 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We will track membership participation <input type="checkbox"/> We will provide opportunities to engage members <input type="checkbox"/> We will conduct a special follow up with non renewing members to make sure they do not want to be involved. <input type="checkbox"/> We will be prompt in our response to membership questions. <input type="checkbox"/> We will identify obstacles to retention <input type="checkbox"/> We will develop a Tree Farm Mentoring Program that will allow Tree Farmers to follow up and contact other Tree Farmers <p>Lead: <i>Membership Committee</i></p> <p>Manpower Needs (In 2016 and ongoing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We will work towards having a full time Administrator <input type="checkbox"/> We will increase the number of active Inspectors <input type="checkbox"/> We will provide recognition and incentives for Inspectors <input type="checkbox"/> We will educate Inspectors on the benefits to them and their landowners <input type="checkbox"/> We will engage active Tree Farmers
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<p>Retention & Recruitment (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We will ask Inspectors to do Inspections <input type="checkbox"/> We will do succession planning <p style="text-align: center;">Lead: <i>Special Task Force headed up by Vice Chairman with input from the Inspections and Recognition Committees</i></p> <p>Recruiting New Members (In 2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We will develop Tree Farmer Groups to recruit members in their local area. <input type="checkbox"/> We will make personal invites to individuals to become Tree Farm members <input type="checkbox"/> We will partner with consultants to recruit new members <input type="checkbox"/> We will develop a marketing plan to attract new forest landowners into the program. <p style="text-align: center;">Lead: <i>Membership Committee</i></p>
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