

Woodland

YOUR CONNECTION TO AMERICA'S FORESTS



A Publication of the



American
Forest
Foundation



Thank you for your support!

Thank you to everyone who has supported the Family Forest Carbon Program (FFCP) to get us this far! Whether you are a landowner, donor, forester, credit buyer, investor, or any of the other members of our community, your contributions make our mission possible. Your partnership is crucial to unlocking the potential of family forests to combat climate change and empower family forest owners.

Now, we want to hear how you prefer to stay engaged.

Please let us know if you are interested in attending future events, field trips, or other ways you want to follow and be part of FFCP's progress. We appreciate your feedback, ideas, and partnership.

**Contact Nate Meehan with any suggestions
at nmeehan@forestfoundation.org.**



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BY RITA HITE
PRESIDENT & CEO
AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION

You Are An Important Part of Helping Family Forest Owners

If this is your first time receiving a copy of *Woodland Magazine*, you've picked a great time to come alongside our work and I'm so grateful you're on this journey with us. At the American Forest Foundation (AFF), we know that family forest owners have long made vital contributions to our nation's conservation efforts and that, with your support, we can do even more for our environment and our economy—all while giving family forest owners the opportunity to achieve their own goals.

Climate change is impacting our planet and our forests at increasing rates and yet solutions that activate forests for climate action, like carbon credits, do need improvements. **Equipped with more than 80 years of working with family forest owners to care for their lands, our new strategic direction tackles this challenge head-on.** We are building the highest quality forest carbon

credit while improving forest health and creating meaningful benefits for rural family forest owners.

Using an innovative public-private partnership model, the organization's Family Forest Carbon Program (FFCP) removes barriers to the voluntary carbon market for landowners to improve their forests' health and generate financial opportunities. So, whether you are a donor, a family forest owner, someone who has purchased carbon credits or you work for an organization who cares about our mission—or maybe you wear more than one of these hats—I hope you'll take the time to read more about this new strategic direction for AFF, and why it is so important that we start now toward our ambitious and important goals (see page 6). **I can never tell you how much we appreciate you being on this journey with us.**

Continued On Next Page

“You make everything we do possible. Thank you for your continued support and your enthusiasm for our new strategic direction and for your tireless support of family forest landowners.”

For me, and I hope for you, too, nothing helps illustrate why our staff is hard at work with partners and coalitions on significant policy work in Washington (page 8) or why we all need to learn about this carbon jargon (see page 22), then hearing directly from those who are impacted by our work. In each quarterly edition of *Woodland*, you have the opportunity to read profiles of forest landowners from around the country who are a part of AFF's programs. Once a year we even have the special opportunity to profile our National Tree Farmers of the Year (see page 16).

When you flip to page 14 you can read about the Brubeck family from West Virginia. Their story is inspirational like so many other wildlife-loving family forest owners who have been proud to have land which has been passed down from one generation to the next. However, like so many others, you will also read that they have struggled with needing income from the land to support its management, especially between lengthy harvests.

“I didn’t see any downside, “Jeremy (Brubeck) said. “It just seemed like a perfect fit. Here’s a program that will pay us not to cut our timber for 20 years—and we have professionals at no expense who are going to help us. To me, it’s a no brainer.”

We are excited to update our quarterly metrics in each edition of *Woodland* magazine and on page 15 you’ll see that we’ve have provided you an overview of the FFCP’s highlights for all of 2022 so you can get a full picture of how things went for the entire year. I would also urge you to read

Angela Wells’ insights on page 13 and consider reaching out to her for a full annual report of the FFCP program if you did not yet receive one or to join our online Family Forest community.

Finally, there has been a lot of discussion recently in the media and at various events I have attended around the quality of carbon credits and what distinguishes one. At AFF, we certainly take this topic very seriously and have had a lot of hearty conversations with landowners, companies and everyone involved in the carbon markets about this topic. I could not possibly encourage you more wholeheartedly to read Nathan Truitt’s piece about this beginning on page 9.

One of the things Nathan Truitt offers up as a hallmark for high quality projects is that they are going to be eager to answer your questions and engage with you. I think you’ll agree with me after you read the article that AFF is a standout in what we’re delivering to the voluntary carbon market. Also, I would always encourage you to reach out to our team with any questions you may have at any time. **You can email any member of our team through our website and donors and investors should especially feel free to reach out to Nate Meehan, Climate Funding Stewardship Manager, at nmeehan@forestfoundation.org.**

AFF will only be able to capture and store one billion tonnes of carbon by 2050 with the support of people like you. You make everything we do possible. Thank you for your continued support and your enthusiasm for our new strategic direction and for your tireless support of family forest landowners. ▲

AFF Announces New Strategic Direction

Organization's Plan Will Enable Family Forests to Capture and Store One Billion Tonnes of Carbon by 2050

BY WILL MARTIN

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS,
AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION

In February of this year, The American Forest Foundation (AFF) announced its bold new strategic direction that will harness the power of family forests as a critical element in the fight against climate change. Through expanding access to the voluntary carbon market for family forest owners, the strategic direction will help thousands of rural landowners care for their land, improve forest health, and increase timber growth as a practical path to mitigating the threats of climate change. AFF seeks to enable family forests to capture and store one billion tonnes of carbon in healthy forests and sustainable wood products by 2050, producing the highest quality carbon credits on the market along the way.

As the world's oldest carbon capture technology, forests and forest products already remove 13% of our country's annual greenhouse gas emissions.

"AFF seeks to enable family forests to capture and store one billion tonnes of carbon in healthy forests and sustainable wood products by 2050, producing the highest quality carbon credits on the market along the way."

Family forests make up 39% of America's forests and hold massive potential for climate action that improves forest health, much of which can be financed through the voluntary carbon market. But high upfront costs and project complexity have historically locked family forest owners out of participating in the market. At the same time, there are very real concerns about the quality and integrity of forest carbon credits. Our new strategic direction directly addresses these issues.

Using an innovative public-private partnership model, AFF's Family Forest Carbon Program (FFCP) removes barriers to the voluntary carbon market for landowners to improve their forests' health and generate financial opportunities. The program works alongside the traditional forest products industry to provide sustainable and scalable pathways for healthier, more productive family forests and forest products that also move the needle on climate action.

FFCP's first-of-its-kind dynamic baseline methodology ensures the highest standard of quality in carbon credits, raising the bar for the entire market and helping climate-conscious companies reach their net zero goals. Innovation and transparency are at the core of this approach, creating space to learn, adapt, and evolve to meet the needs of landowners, companies, and the planet. ▲

The Family Forest Carbon Program helps landowners **care for their woods while helping the planet.**

Family forests provide a wide array of ecosystem benefits, including wildlife habitat, clean air, and natural water filtration. They also help protect the planet by sequestering and storing carbon. The Family Forest Carbon Program creates a marketplace for landowners to sell carbon credits to environmentally conscious companies working to reduce their carbon footprint. Landowners can earn extra income to help achieve their goals for their land.

The Family Forest Carbon Program is uniquely designed to help forest owners adopt long-term sustainable management that improves carbon sequestration and storage while balancing other essential forest benefits. The program provides expert guidance from a forest professional, creating a forest management plan, and annual payments to implement practices.

Now available in Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Learn more at www.familyforestcarbon.org



American
Forest
Foundation

The Nature
Conservancy 
Protecting nature. Preserving life.



AFF Policy Team Update

BY JAMES MCKITRICK
SENIOR POLICY MANAGER,
AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION

It's a new year and a new Congress. While Republicans gained control of the House of Representatives in last November's election and Democrats maintained their hold over the Senate, the majorities in each chamber remain razor thin, promising difficulty for any legislation that cannot pass on a bipartisan basis. With packed agendas in both the House and Senate, it is anyone's guess which budget or bills will successfully run the gauntlet.

Under the new House majority, Representative G.T. Thompson of Pennsylvania will lead the House Agriculture Committee as the Republican chairman. He will be tasked with working across the aisle with Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow of Michigan, the Democratic leader of the Senate Agriculture Committee, on issues important to family forest owners. The 118th Congress has plenty in store for family forest owners not the least of which is the passage of the next Farm Bill. However, successfully navigating the new, challenging political dynamics will be paramount. That is why AFF's Policy Team is committed to making 2023 the *Year of Landowner Advocacy*!

The Farm Bill is a legislation package authorizing multi-year policies governing most agriculture, conservation, and forestry programs. Today, family forest owners are accessing roughly \$100 million from various Farm Bill programs equating to less than 35 cents an acre across all family lands. AFF has a number of Farm Bill policy recommendations that will increase investments in family forests.

We also want to empower landowners like yourself to get involved in the legislative process through coalitions, direct lobbying, and/or media campaigns—whatever process meets your personal interest.

As Farm Bill discussions continue, AFF hopes to increase our landowner advocacy activity. Please share your powerful stories in support of policy recommendations that improve access for family forest owners. We want to elevate the voices of family forest owners. If you are a forest landowner and want to get involved with AFF advocacy efforts, use the following QR code that will take you to a survey capturing your interest in advocacy campaigns. The survey includes a link for you to subscribe to our newsletter that updates landowners and partners on relevant policy information, organizational updates, and opportunities for action. Despite the challenging and ever-changing political landscape, we will be successful in 2023 with your help! We are looking forward to working with you.

For questions about our AFF Advocacy efforts, please send an email to policy@forestfoundation.org. 🌲



If you would like to get involved with AFF advocacy efforts, use the following QR code to take a survey and get involved.



IMPACT FEATURE

Defining High-Integrity Carbon Credits

And why it matters to landowners, companies, and everyone involved in carbon markets

BY NATHAN TRUITT

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CLIMATE FUNDING,
AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION

If you have paid attention to carbon markets over the past twelve months—and maybe even if you haven't—you have likely read articles or watched reports about “low quality” carbon credits and concerns about whether they are making a real impact on the climate. At the same time, you’ve probably heard the terms “high-integrity” and “high-quality.”

This of course begs the question, “What is a high-quality carbon credit? What makes a carbon credit ‘real’ as opposed to ‘hot air?’” And, perhaps most importantly, “Why does this issue of high-quality matter to me?”

So let’s dive into this topic, and try to clarify what quality is and why it’s important.

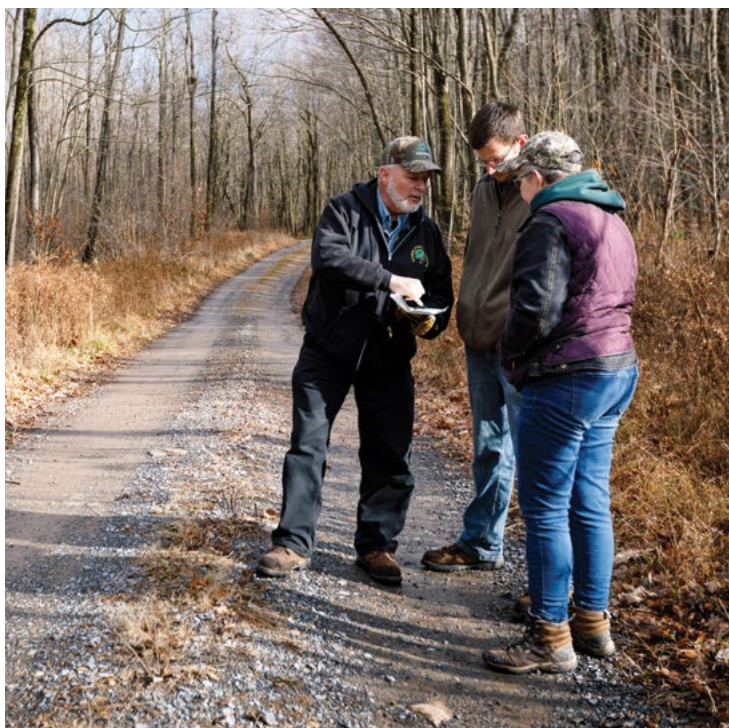
THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Before we get started, let us take a moment to acknowledge that carbon markets are seemingly complicated and complex, full of technical terms like “additionality,” “leakage,” “non-permanence risk” and “buffer pools.” But at their heart, the idea of carbon markets is very simple: on a global level, in order to fight climate change, we want to drive funds to the efforts that produce the **most** benefit to the climate and activate as many effective solutions as possible.

Now, what does this mean for companies and governments that are on the hook for reducing their own emissions? To answer that question, let’s do a little thought experiment. Let’s say, for the purposes of this experiment, that all the companies on earth have been working on reducing their fossil fuel use, and so far they’ve implemented all the ideas that are easy and currently feasible. But they’ve run into a problem: the next level of ideas, the next level of reductions, is going to be very difficult and very expensive. Some companies run the numbers and discover they can’t afford it and stay in business. So what should they do?

Well, it turns out time and research could get that cost down and make it work. So they invest in innovation. That’s good, we like that, because they’re keeping their eye on the prize. But that research takes time. And in the meantime, it’s getting *really* hot in here. Shouldn’t they be doing something while they wait for the research?

Well, it turns out that there are these people called forest landowners, whose properties don’t really have emissions, or have negative emissions because of the nature of their business (growing trees). In theory, they could take more CO₂ out of the atmosphere and store it in their forests if they changed the way they managed their woods.



They could produce a “credit” for their reductions and sell it to companies, who could use it as proof that they were addressing their emissions while their R&D efforts progressed, cancel out those last, hard-to-get-rid-of, residual emissions, and support climate mitigation efforts and rural communities.

This is the potential power of markets: they drive finance toward new innovative solutions and enable us to enhance our ambition as to what is possible in the struggle against climate change.

SIGNIFICANT CAVEATS

Now, that all sounds great in theory. But there are two very big caveats:

1. First, the above example only works if the companies *really do* invest in the R&D and *really do* reduce their own emissions in the long term. In other words, carbon markets aren’t a solution **by themselves**. They are an **enhancer**, a way to quicken progress towards a goal—but we all have to be committed to that progress for them to work. (This is why, as a brief aside, the Family Forest Carbon Program sells carbon credits **only** to companies who have made and are acting on credible commitments to reduce their own emissions in line with what climate science tells us is necessary).

2. Second, and more importantly for our purposes, for the above example to work, the credits the landowners produce must represent **real** changes. If they don’t—if they are, in other words, “low quality,” the atmosphere won’t feel a difference and in fact the climate would have been better off if the company had spent its funds on the higher cost (but higher quality) emissions reductions.

This is why quality matters to carbon markets. If these markets are a bridge, helping us as a society get to a low-carbon future, then **the quality of credits is the keystone, without which the bridge collapses.**

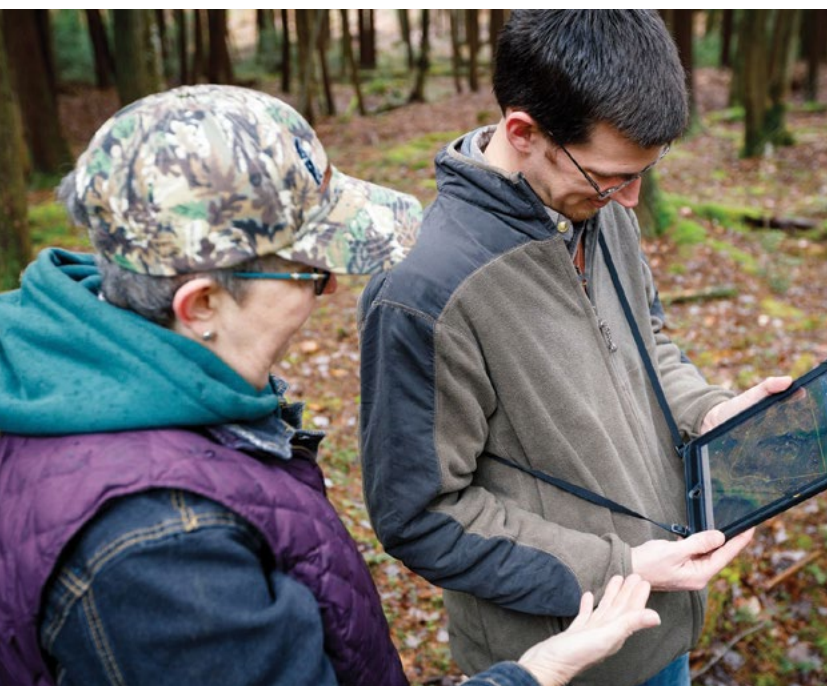
SO WHAT IS QUALITY?

“Sounds good,” you say, “But you still haven’t told us what quality means.”

Quality in a carbon credit is relatively easy to define, and relatively difficult to measure. We’ll try to do both.

A carbon credit is high quality if it represents an *actual* change in the atmospheric concentration of CO₂ in the long term. The quality question is basically, **“Did the atmosphere feel a difference?”** If the answer is yes, the project can be called high quality. If the answer is no, the project is of low quality from a carbon perspective. Crucially, that’s true even *if* the project does all sorts of other things that are great (support biodiversity, promote local economies, etc.)

But proving whether the atmosphere feels a difference is more difficult. This is because fluxes of CO₂ to and from the atmosphere are incredibly complex, and very difficult to isolate and attribute. And it’s also because ecosystems are connected to each other in ways we can’t ever fully comprehend. What we do in one forest could have impacts far beyond that forest. All of which is to say, we can’t simply hook up a machine to a forest which will tell us, exactly, how much difference the atmosphere felt as a result of different forest management.



What we can do, however, is use a rigorous and scientific framework to conservatively *estimate* the impact of these changes. And, luckily for us, those frameworks already exist, and they have been developed over decades of trial and error to provide ever-improving estimates of the impact of our activities. We just need to figure out how to apply them to family-owned forests.

These frameworks apply to carbon projects through *standards*, which are published by international organizations, and through *methodologies*, which describe the precise steps a carbon project takes to estimate its impact in accordance with those standards. We could fill a whole magazine with information about those standards and methodologies, but what you need to know for now is that together, they form a kind of “recipe” for a quality carbon credit. In FFCP’s case, we use the Verified Carbon Standard and a methodology that the American Forest Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, and TerraCarbon wrote specifically to produce high quality credits on family lands.

There are several key “ingredients” we use in that recipe, and it’s worth a moment to mention three of them:

- **Additionality:** “additional” carbon means carbon that is in “addition to” the carbon that *would have been there anyway* without the carbon program. This is a challenging concept, because it requires us to look into

a parallel universe in which the carbon program never existed—which is, technically speaking, impossible. Instead, we develop methods of *estimating* what the world would be like without the carbon program. For a quick glance at how our innovative, first-of-its-kind methodology delivers on additionality, see the graphic on the following page.

- **Permanence:** permanence refers to the issue of whether the carbon we sequester and store during a project will stay out of the atmosphere for a defined period—usually, 100 years. Different programs address permanence in different ways. Some require landowners to sign 100-year contracts. Other use different accounting systems to try to measure the value of shorter durations. FFCP helps transition landowners to long-term, sustainable management that will *pay for itself* after the program and the contract have expired, we provide ongoing services to landowners after the contract is over, and we monitor and replace carbon that gets re-emitted to the atmosphere.
- **Leakage:** If one forest stops harvesting, the demand from the local mill doesn’t go away. Rather, they harvest trees from somewhere else, and so a large part of the climate benefit “leaks” back into the atmosphere. Depending on the kind of project you implement, the standards require you to reduce your climate benefit to account for leakage. FFCP does that, but also tries to design practices that *increase* the amount of sustainably harvestable timber over time, thus reducing our leakage impacts (and supporting rural communities that depend on timber markets!).

There are other important parts of the recipe that we have to take into account if we want to create a high quality credit. But at its heart, a quality credit is one that represents an **actual** change in CO₂ in the atmosphere, as determined by the project’s adherence to key **standards**, as described in a **methodology**. Those standards include key concepts like **additionality, permanence and leakage**.

Anyone else feeling hungry? Well don’t worry, we’re almost done and you’ve definitely earned yourself a snack!

WHY SHOULD QUALITY MATTER TO YOU?

So I'm sure all of this sounds very interesting, but really, **so what?** Why should you care if the carbon credit you produce from your forestland or that you buy as a company is high quality?

The basic answer is, if it's not high quality, it likely won't do the job you need it to do.

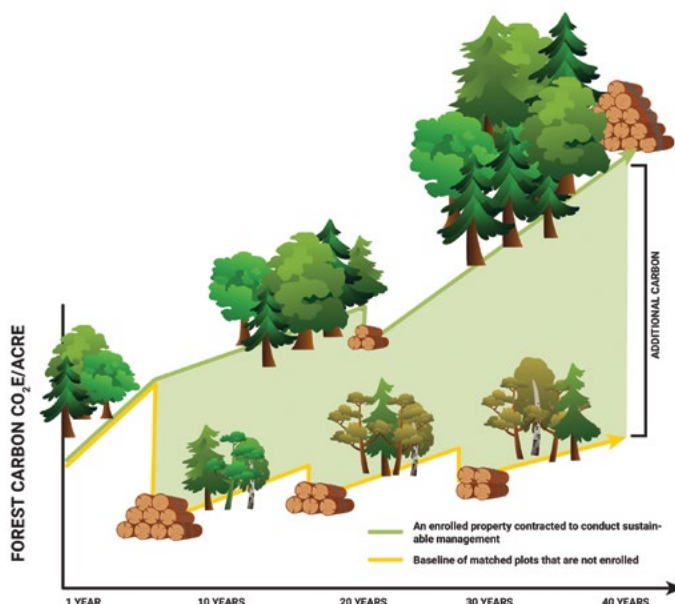
If you're a landowner and you sign up with a project that produces **low quality** credits, they likely won't be sold, or if they are, it will be at a low price—so all the wonderful “potential” benefit you heard about at the beginning of the project probably won't materialize.

If you're a company and you buy a **low-quality** credit from a project, the job you need that credit to do—compensate for a “residual” emission—won't be done because the credit doesn't represent a real change in the atmosphere, and you'll be left with low-quality credits that don't help you meet your climate commitments. And when your stakeholders (like investors, employees, and customers) realize that, the praise you wanted for compensating for your emissions will quickly turn into blame for settling for a low-quality project.

HOW DO I TELL WHAT'S HIGH QUALITY AND WHAT'S LOW QUALITY?

Hopefully, we've managed to show you **what quality in terms of carbon credits means** and **why it should matter to you**. That leaves just one more question: “How do you tell whether the project you're working with is high quality?”

First off, as you've learned in this article, these issues are complex at times and sometimes people or projects with the best of intentions end up making mistakes. We're all working together to try to leave a better world for future generations,



Additionality: FFCP compares measurements from enrolled properties (green line) to measurements from Forest Inventory Analysis plots that “look like” the project plots to isolate and quantify the impact of FFCP.

and we need to give each other some grace on these issues. This is all to say, you *should* worry about credit quality but it shouldn't be the *only* thing you worry about when investing or enrolling in a program. You should also think about the match between the program and your own goals, your relationship with and trust in the project, and the other benefits the project brings to you or your communities. These are also important.

However, you can and should ask about credit quality. Here are two crucial questions to help:

1. Ask what standard and methodology the project uses to create credits. Any high-quality project is going to use one of the internationally accepted standards: the Verified Carbon Standard and the American Carbon Registry being the two you're most likely to come across in North America. If an organization isn't using a standard or is creating its own standard, that's a red flag that the project may not meet international quality standards.
2. Ask the project to describe how they plan to create high quality credits, and how they will address permanence, leakage and additionality. If they can't or aren't willing to put you in touch with resources or staff who can explain those things to you in plain English, that's also a red flag that they may not have thought through those thorny issues.

Finally, trust your instincts. Projects that are passionate about quality are going to be happy to talk about quality and what it means to you. They're going to be happy to answer your questions. They're going to want to be a true and trusted partner. If you get that sense, chances are the project is aimed in the right direction; and if you get the opposite sense, chances are the project isn't a good match for what you are trying to accomplish.

Now, go get that snack, you've earned it! 🌲

FORESTS & FAMILIES

New and improved features in the Spring 2023 Issue of *Woodland*

BY ANGELA WELLS

COMMUNITY AND SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT
AND AMERICAN TREE FARM SYSTEM,
AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION



It's been one year since we started featuring 4 landowner profiles in each issue of *Woodland*, and sourcing those stories has truly been a highlight for my team and me. I read every draft before they go to print, and each is both unique and familiar, carrying the same theme of devotion to land, to family, and to community. I've only met a few of our profiled landowners, and yet have the distinct sense of common understanding and shared vision (and tribulation, at times) with all of them!

That's why we are so excited to continue to share landowner stories in the 2023 editions of *Woodland*. In this issue, you'll enjoy profiles on the most recent round of Tree Farmers of the Year from around the country. We will also start featuring more stories on landowners participating in the Family Forest Carbon Program, starting with the Brubecks.* Their tale of leveraging a conservation opportunity to keep land in the family is one that you shouldn't miss.

We hope this will pique your interest, maybe answer a question or two, or prompt a dialogue about the diversity of landowner objectives and opportunities for revenue streams that match them. It makes me proud to see an increasing number of family forest owners raising their hands to be part of the solution to one of the greatest challenges of our time, much as they have previously answered the call to protect habitat and water supplies, keep forests and forests, and provide sustainable wood supplies. If you are not enrolled FFCP but would like a copy of this report, please send us an email at info@forestfoundation.org with the subject line "Request copy of 2022 FFCP annual report."

Family forest owners are a bunch to be celebrated, and we hope this section of *Woodland* serves as a continual reminder. 🌲

*The Family Forest Carbon Program is a program of the Family Forest Impact Foundation, LLC, an affiliate of the American Forest Foundation.

FORESTS & FAMILIES

Family Forest Carbon Program provides boost for family's West Virginia Tree Farm

BY TOM GRESHAM

Jeremy Brubeck recalls one morning decades ago when he was in his late teens or early 20s, sitting in a deer stand at dawn on his family's 143 acre woodland property in Pocahontas County, West Virginia. "As the sun came up, I remember watching the forest come alive," Jeremy said. "And I made the point to myself, 'I'll never forget this.' I felt so insignificant—the scale of all this jaw-dropping beauty was just amazing to me."

The land has been in the Brubecks' ownership since 1989 when Earl Brubeck, Jeremy's father, purchased the bulk of the property. Earl had fallen in love with the area in the late 1970s on regular hunting trips with a friend. The Brubecks routinely visited the land to enjoy the outdoors, traveling from their home in Williamsport, Maryland.

"It's a place that makes me feel better every time," Earl said. "It makes me feel better when I pull out of my driveway at home to go there, and it makes me feel better after having spent time there. It takes you away from the hustle and bustle of day-to-day life and work."



Jeremy Brubeck and his wife and daughter live on the family's Windy Ridge property and are committed to its long-term care.

Jeremy said the property has good, marketable timber, but he and Jeremy agree it will not be ready to cut for another 10 to 15 years—a view supported by forestry professionals who have weighed in. However, the Brubecks need income from the land to help support its management.



Two streams run through the Windy Ridge property. The health of the trees plays an important role in the health of the streams and the creek the streams run into.

That's where the Family Forest Carbon Program is stepping in. The program, developed by the American Forest Foundation and The Nature Conservancy, helps family forest owners access climate finance from carbon markets, empowering them to address climate change while earning income from their land.

Jeremy learned about the program through a Facebook ad. He was intrigued to research further, exploring possibilities for the Brubeck farm.

"I didn't see any downside," Jeremy said. "It just seemed like a perfect fit. Here's a program that will pay us not to cut our timber for 20 years—and we have professionals at no expense who are going to help us. To me, it's a no-brainer."

Earl also expressed excitement about the program's income and free professional forest management support components. "There are some really wonderful benefits to the program," Earl said. "And they will help us keep making the place even better than it is for future generations."

Today, Jeremy, with his wife and 7-year-old daughter, reside off the grid in a solar-powered home on the tree farm. Jeremy's daughter is around the same age he was when his father bought the land, and on a recent night, she pointed out a blinking star with excitement. Jeremy had a reminder for her—one he often has for himself.

"Not everybody gets to experience what we experience here, and we should always appreciate that," he said. 🌲

Highlights of the Family Forest Carbon Program in 2022

43,388

acres enrolled*

296

individual contracts*

283

total landowners enrolled in the Family Forest Carbon Program*

27,855

acres enrolled in 2022.

175

new landowners enrollments in 2022.

\$2.3

million paid to family forest landowners.

\$8.2 million

in additional payments expected over the next 20 years

Collectively, an estimated

1 million

tons of carbon credits have been generated.

**As of January 1, 2023*

National Tree Farmers of the Year: Doug and Teresa Moore

BY TOM GRESHAM

One day, a boy who was about 12 years old visited South Prong Plantation in Baker County, Florida, about 50 miles west of Jacksonville, for a hunter safety class. Doug Moore, who owns the 2,400-acre property with his wife, Teresa, noticed how intently the boy engaged with the lessons and how much he appeared to be enjoying the experience. Late in the day, the boy approached Doug.

"Mr. Moore, can I ask you a question?" the boy said. "Do you know you live in paradise?"

Doug remembers the moment with fond appreciation. The boy saw the land the same way Doug does—as a true Eden. Doug grew up in love with the woods, particularly obsessed with hunting and everything it entailed. Even then, he dreamed of a property to call his own.

"I always had that passion to own a big piece of timberland," Doug said.

As an adult, Doug owned and ran his family's 2,000-head dairy farm in Jacksonville for more than 30 years. As conditions became more difficult for the business, though, he decided to shift his perspective. In 2002, he and Teresa decided to search for timberland.

They gravitated to a piece of property, now called South Prong Plantation, because of its proximity to their home and other businesses in Jacksonville, and because the timber was young, meaning they could afford to buy more land. The Moores appreciated the diversity of the property which includes a mixture of pine flatwoods, cypress swamps and hydric hammocks, along with a creek and old homesteads. In particular, the Moores recognized the conservation value offered by a 400-acre hardwood swamp that serves as the headwaters of the south prong of the St. Marys River, the feature that gives the property its name.



Congratulations to Doug and Teresa Moore, who were recognized as 2022 AFF's National Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year. Photo credit: Chris Demers

At the time of the purchase, Doug recalls the property was industrial timberland with "nearly no management." In subsequent years, Doug provided "more and more intensive" management of the land as he learned forest management through practice and hundreds of hours of classes. Doug gained the expertise to not only manage his own land with sustainable timber practices and to gain certification for South Prong as a Tree Farm but to start a business helping others with timber and wildlife management, including managing prescribed burns and planting site-specific pines.

"Over 70% of Florida lands are in private ownership," said Ginger Feagle, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Regional Coordinator, Landowner Assistance Program. "Landowners like Doug and Teresa, who successfully integrate timber and wildlife management on South Prong Plantation, are vitally important to the conservation of Florida's fauna and flora."



Prescribed burning is one of the main methods the Moores use to control understory regeneration in their pine stands.
Photo credit: Camilla Guillen

Feagle said the FWC Landowner Assistance Program appreciates the impact Doug and Teresa have had on the forestry community through their efforts to educate others about land stewardship and outdoor recreation.

"They are a great partner and are always willing to share their experience," she said.

The groups that visit South Prong Plantation represent a wide range of interests, encompassing "everyone from the hunters to the tree huggers," Doug said. Doug revels in every opportunity to promote outdoor recreation to a wide audience and help others appreciate the importance of the forestry industry. Doug particularly enjoys helping new hunters, especially youth and women, find their footing and guides them on successful hunts each year. In fact, he said over 65 hunters have harvested their first deer at South Prong Plantation.

In addition to hunters, the Moores host such groups as the University of Florida /IFAS Extension, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Boy Scouts and local native plant societies ("we've got some endangered orchids on the property," Doug said), among others. Fellow forest owners frequently join tours to see the Moores' land and wildlife management

practices in action and to speak to Doug about his strategies managing timber harvests with a smaller-acreage mosaic pattern to create more edge and cover for wildlife, along with using prescribed fire to both reduce hardwood competition and improve native groundcover. Doug extends an open invitation to all landowners who want to learn from his management.

"Whether it's a forester or whether it's somebody who is just interested in us and hardly ever makes it into the woods, we cover it all," Doug said.

The Moores are developing a conservation easement on the property to ensure that it will remain undeveloped, continue sustainable forestry, and be available to others for future education programs. During the week, Doug resides at South Prong to oversee its daily management while Teresa stays in Jacksonville to run a stainless-steel fabrication company. They look forward to their weekends together at South Prong, embracing the property and its possibilities.

South Prong Plantation has proved to be the kind of place Doug dreamed of owning as a teenager spending time in the woods.

"I've got 2,400 acres that I love, and I get to be here whenever I want," he said. "I know how lucky I am to live in paradise."

Western Regional Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year: Ed Easterling

Ed Easterling was born and raised in New Orleans, where he often visited family on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. While spending time in the piney woods of that area, he fell in love with the outdoors. As an adult, he co-owned an approximately 900-acre piece of forestry and recreational property in East Texas, managing the timber on the land for 25 years.

Eventually, Ed decided he wanted to shift to managing a property as a sort of lifestyle business—and to do it somewhere other than in the Texas heat. His research led him to Oregon and its more appealing temperate climate. In 2005, he purchased 775 acres of industrial forestland near Corvallis, establishing Crestmont Farm. The property would progress “beyond the original concept,” Ed said.

“There were several doors that opened for us that had a significant impact on what we were doing,” Ed said.

Today, the Crestmont Family includes three adjoining properties totaling 1,600 acres: Crestmont Farm (timber and silvopasture grazing), Crestmont Ranch (oak woodlands, savanna, and pasture grazing for cattle), and the nonprofit Crestmont Land Trust (public recreation, education, research, and habitat conservation).



Ed Easterling at his Tree Farm in Oregon.

Ed said managing the properties has offered the kind of experience he sought when he moved to the northwest.

“The primary driver for me is the challenge and the opportunity to concurrently produce income while also having a beneficial impact on the habitat for plants, wildlife, and people,” said Ed, who lives on Crestmont Farm.

Ed said he and his team take a methodical approach to assessing and planning forest management, striving to stretch internal resources and resource partner contributions to achieve maximum results. The help Ed has received from external partners is part of what explains his extensive efforts as a steward and advocate. He routinely hosts tours, meetings, and public events.



Grazed oak savanna with public trails on Ed Easterling's property.



A forest stand on Ed Easterling's property.



Plantation beside Natural Mixed Species Forest on Ed Easterling's Tree Farm.

"I don't have a formal forestry background," Ed said. "So much of what I try to implement on the property results from input from others in the community—it comes from our Extension Service and our state and national resource partners. That is an element of why I give back. There's a kind of responsibility that we have to pass that information on and to pass on our learning experiences."

Ed said he never expected during his days in the woods on the Gulf Coast that he would one day manage woodlands in Oregon, but it's been "a great journey," and he feels fortunate to have become a Tree Farmer.

"There's a passion among Tree Farmers and woodland owners for their woods and what they do," Ed said. "It's special to be a part of that."

Northeast Regional Tree Farmers of the Year: Charlie and Mabel Niebling

Charlie Niebling always knew he would work in the woods.

"When I was old enough to start thinking about what I wanted to do with my life, I had a very clear sense that I wanted to get into forestry," Charlie said.

Charlie became a professional forester dedicated to forestry, forest policy, land conservation, and promoting sustainably sourced wood as a renewable energy resource. However, he knew his interests could not stop at the professional level. He wanted a piece of land to manage as his own.

"I wanted to own forest land as a spiritual, intellectual, and physical outlet for my passions and interests," Charlie said.

In 2001, he and his wife, Mabel, purchased a 68-acre woodlot near their home in Boscawen, New Hampshire.

"It's allowed me to play out everything I think about and care about," Charlie said. "It's a small enough piece of land that I can actually do it myself. I've never hired anyone to do anything for me out there. All the harvesting, all the road building (except for the original truck road), the tractor shed, my family and I have all done that ourselves, which also has been important to me."



Mabel and Charlie Niebling at their Tree Farm in Boscawen, New Hampshire.

Charlie said the relatively small size of the parcel has allowed him to develop an intimate understanding of the property, and he has benefited from a close group of friends who are all natural resource professionals and have advised, prodded, and provoked him on almost every decision related to the property. Geoff Jones, among those friends, said, "Charlie's personal involvement as a professional forester is evident in every aspect of what has transpired on this property, from his holistic approach to protecting and enhancing its values."

In keeping with that approach, the Nieblings have dedicated one-third of the property to fairly intensive regeneration harvesting, one-third to a more conservative single-tree, group selection harvesting, and one-third to being completely off limits to any tree cutting. Charlie said this decision relied on more than book learning and professional experience.

"A lot of it was spending years walking around and understanding what made this property tick—the microsites and the subtle differences in site index and soil fertility," Charlie said. "All that informed my thinking about where to draw these lines."

Reflecting on his two decades managing the property, Charlie said it has been rewarding.

"It's been an incredible journey of realization of everything I've learned and everything I care about," Charlie said. "It's been this extremely gratifying dedication of time and effort and attention to detail and caring that I've just enjoyed immensely with my wife and family."



Mabel and Charlie Niebling often enjoy hosting family, friends and the community at their Tree Farm in Boscawen, New Hampshire.



Niebling Family Forest Raleigh Hill Bench—Fall 2020.



Tractor on Landing at the Niebling property.

Midwestern Regional Tree Farmer of the Year: Chuck Pogorelnik

For Chuck Pogorelnik, the beautiful Northwoods region of north central Wisconsin has always been a special place. Chuck, who grew up in Milwaukee, started to travel to the area (with a friend whose uncle lived in the area) in the summers when he was 14 years old. He never stopped, visiting every year to hunt, fish, and enjoy the outdoors.

Chuck first became a landowner in the area when he purchased 100 acres in the town of Eau Claire in 1973, mainly using the land for hunting and firewood. In 1993, he got a chance to buy 1,000 acres of land in the town of Ogema after walking the property for three days. Chuck retired from civil engineering the following year. He recognized that his woodlands

had economic value and wanted to pursue their development on a more dedicated basis.

"I saw that it's a property you can manage for timber on a sustainable basis while managing how that impacts the wildlife there," Chuck said.

He launched his second career managing his woodlands. Chuck was keenly aware of his lack of knowledge about managing woodlands. Still, he was eager to learn about the topic.

"I got involved in learning everything that I could about it," Chuck said. "That was important to me. I really enjoy going to the workshops and the landowner meetings and meeting with other people and learning from them because someone else usually has had the same problems that you've got."

From the outset, Chuck recognized the value of working with professionals to help manage his property. Over the years, he has worked with three industrial foresters, three consulting foresters, and two Department of Natural Resources foresters. Working with contract loggers, he has completed ten timber harvests—one at the Eau Pleine property and nine at the Ogema one.



White pine logs being sawn into lumber for use at his property.



Silver Creek which runs through his property in 2011.



Chuck Pogrelcnik in July 2019.



Chuck's grandniece on his property.

Chuck lives on the Ogema property much of the year, starting as early as the middle of March and staying until close to Christmas, tackling tasks such as maintaining, clearing, and mowing roads, controlling invasives, and cutting, splitting, and stacking firewood for his personal use.

"Living on the land gives me something to keep me busy," Chuck said.

Chuck said he loves to share the joys of the woodlands with his family. He has planned for the next generation by updating the property's management plans and retaining a professional consulting forester to manage the woodland for them.

"It's just so peaceful and quiet up there," Chuck said. "It's a great place to be." 🌲

Your Carbon Cheat Sheet

BY NICOLE GOODMAN

SENIOR MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER,
AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION

With ever-evolving science and innovations, the carbon market can be confusing and complex even for experts. Offsetting vs insetting, dynamic vs. projected baseline? Wait, what?? Whether you're a landowner, forester, or funder, understanding carbon terms is critical to taking advantage of the market's opportunities and ensuring you're participating in high-quality programs. To help you navigate the carbon market, we've put together a short guide of common terms to know.

THE FUNDAMENTALS

These terms are the building blocks for understanding carbon markets.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Gases emitted that cause climate change by trapping heat in the earth's atmosphere. Carbon dioxide (or "carbon") is the primary GHG emitted through human activity, followed by methane and nitrous oxide.

Carbon Sequestration – The process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon. Trees are nature's oldest carbon sequestration technology, taking carbon emissions right out of the air and storing them.

Carbon Credit – A unit of measurement equal to one tonne of carbon dioxide reduced, sequestered, or avoided. Credits are sold by project developers and can be purchased by individuals and companies.

Net Zero – The process of organizations reducing their greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible, with any remaining, unavoidable emissions offset by the purchase of high-quality carbon credits.

THE POWER OF FORESTS

Forests currently represent one of our best opportunities for sequestering carbon and combating climate change, balancing 15% of our country's carbon emissions.

Natural Climate Solutions – Conservation, restoration and improved land management actions that increase carbon storage or avoid greenhouse gas emissions.

Family Forest Owner – Individuals, families, trusts, and other unincorporated groups of individuals that own forested land. Family forest owners own 39% of U.S. forests and play a vital role in unlocking the carbon sequestration potential of forests.

Forest Co-benefits – The natural resources produced by a forest, such as clean air and water, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, recreational spaces, and economic opportunities for rural communities.

THE COMPONENTS OF HIGH-INTEGRITY CARBON ACCOUNTING

Ensuring high integrity is crucial for carbon projects to make a true impact on the atmosphere.

Additionality – Measuring the difference in the amount of carbon sequestered by the project compared to the amount of carbon sequestered if the project had not occurred. A credible project would prove that their carbon credit is only measuring additional carbon sequestered as a result of their intervention.

Dynamic Baseline – A baseline is the scenario used as a starting point to calculate how much additional carbon is created from the project's intervention. The Family Forest Carbon Program uses an innovative *dynamic* baseline developed by the American Forest Foundation and The Nature Conservancy instead of the typical projected baseline. While projected baselines take current or historical carbon data from a landscape and extrapolate it out to create a future projected scenario, our dynamic baseline compares enrolled landscapes to similar, unenrolled landscapes over time. This allows us to isolate the program as the single variable that contributed to the carbon generated, based on real, observed data.

Permanence – The concept of determining how long the additional carbon remains stored over time without escaping back into the atmosphere. Permanence is vital to fighting climate change—emissions need to be permanently removed or reduced in order to have a meaningful climate impact on our atmosphere.

Learn more about carbon terminology and how the Family Forest Carbon Program is using carbon markets to address climate change at familyforestcarbon.org. ▲



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You Can Make an Even Greater Impact by Becoming A Monthly Donor Today!

Janis Buffham, a founding member of The Giving Tree, is a conservation and climate enthusiast who found the AFF through a Google search. "The American Forest Foundation came up as one of the organizations that is really proactive about protecting, maintaining and improving the quality of American forests."

Now, years later, she has had an opportunity to learn more about how her monthly gift helps AFF innovate in order to deliver meaningful climate impact. "AFF is being responsible with their money," Janis says, "So I feel good about that... and I'm learning more about the amazing efforts that they put forward to protect and improve the quality of America's family forests. **Three years later, I still feel really good about contributing to this organization as a monthly donor.**"

Join **the Giving Tree**, our monthly giving group, today! With your monthly gift, you will be joining a group dedicated to overcoming our most pressing conservation challenges. Members of the Giving Tree are a critical element to creating a steady, reliable source of funds that allows us to undertake the most crucial parts of our mission.

With your generous recurring donation, you will receive benefits* such as:

- Curated and customized communications.
- Member-only phone line for personal inquiries, concerns, or questions.
- Annual choice of American Forest Foundation gear such as hats, coffee mugs and more

Joining is an easy and convenient way to ensure you are making an even bigger, sustaining impact on the work we're accomplishing! Visit <https://www.forestfoundation.org/givemonthly>

We are so grateful to the individuals who are currently making a sustaining monthly gift:

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Wendi Brandt	David Hofer	David Mazariegos	Nathan Truitt
Kyle Brown	David Hughes	Vincent Nadalie	Anonymous
Janis Buffham	Lacy Hunt	Patrick O'Reilly	Anonymous
Scott Deitz	Matt Jagnow	Beth Riley	Anonymous
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If you have any questions, please contact Bethany Mueller, Senior Manager, Climate Donor Relations, at (202) 852-7520.

**Must make four consecutive monthly gifts of at least \$35 or at least one \$140 gift in order to qualify.*

You Can Leave a Legacy of Forest Stewardship for Future Generations



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The Seedling Society

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If you have included the American Forest Foundation in your estate plans, please let us know. We want to thank you for your generous commitment to supporting family forest owners and our nation's ongoing conservation efforts and welcome you to the Seedling Society!

If you have any questions, please contact Beth Riley, Director of Public Climate Finance & Philanthropy, at (202) 765-3644.



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—Landowners Salem & Dianne Saloom,
Seedling Society Founding Members,
Evergreen, AL