

AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION

STRATEGIC 2008-2012 VISION



American Forest Foundation

CONSERVATION ■ EDUCATION ■ THRIVING FORESTS



**Center for
Conservation
Solutions**

**Center for
Environmental
Learning**

**Center for
Family
Forests**

AMERICA'S FORESTS: THEIR FUTURE DEPENDS ON ALL OF US

Most Americans believe that our forests are owned and cared for by the government. That is not accurate. The vast majority of forestland is owned and cared for by private individuals — some 10 million family forestland owners.

During the next 20 years, the number of individuals owning land will increase to 12 million, yet the amount of forestland will not increase. In fact, due to pressures of increased taxes and ever increasing development, the future sustainability of our nation's family-owned forests is threatened now like never before. This future threat to our family-owned forestland is a threat to our water today. It is a threat to wildlife habitat today. It is a threat to our recreational opportunities, wood markets, open space, and sensible development today.

The American Forest Foundation (AFF) believes that the key lies not solely in action, but in understanding. Educated landowners, knowledgeable policymakers, and a well-informed citizenry will lead to sustainable policies and choices that make economic and social sense for landowners and ecological sense for our forestland. Together we can discover the right answers.

AFF is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) conservation and education organization dedicated to ensuring the sustainability of America's family forests for present and future generations. Through the years, our organization has grown and adapted itself to the educational needs of family forest landowners, educators, students, and natural resource professionals through our environmental programs.

Today's threats to our forestland make our work more vital than ever. We invite you to join us and share our mission, our strategic vision, and our goals as we work towards a sustainable, forested future.

GOALS FOR 2008 AND BEYOND

WHAT WE CAN DO

As the North American landscape becomes more fractured and as development spreads, we know we are losing more than just the forests. People are losing an understanding of what forests are, what they can be, and what they mean — not only for the world, but for family landowners, consumers of forest products, and local communities.

We believe a public that understands the complex nature, properties, and benefits of forests is our best ally. We are going to use our award-winning and successful programs to continue educating the public. And we are creating new programs, initiatives, and partnerships as a means of educating and exciting new audiences to share our vision.

Through our partnerships, we will create new markets for family forest landowners, and address the forestry knowledge gap that includes the science of forest ecology and an understanding of socio-economic dimensions of forest ownership. We are going to work to sustain family forestry — through our policies and programs that encourage and make multi-generational stewardship easier and beneficial.

In 2007, AFF collaborated with stakeholders, volunteers, communities, and partners, to identify the Foundation's new goals to move forward.

- Increase public awareness and understanding of the role that forests and the environment play in our lives, and build the skills and commitment needed to conserve and sustain them.

- Develop and advance policies and programs that support conservation, environmental education, and sustainable forests.

- Enhance the ecological, social, and economic viability of family forestland ownership.

- Increase the number of family forest owners who sustainably manage natural resources.

- Support research that fills gaps in our understanding of forest ecology, the socio-economic dimensions of forest ownership and management, and the impact of public policies on forest sustainability.



THREE CENTERS TO POOL EXPERTISE AND MEET THE CHALLENGES



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The new AFF will begin work on the five identified goals through three Centers of expertise: the Center for Conservation Solutions, the Center for Environmental Learning, and the Center for Family Forests. With its long-standing relationships, vast array of networks, and reputation as an independent voice, AFF is positioned to bring leadership to address the many challenges we face.





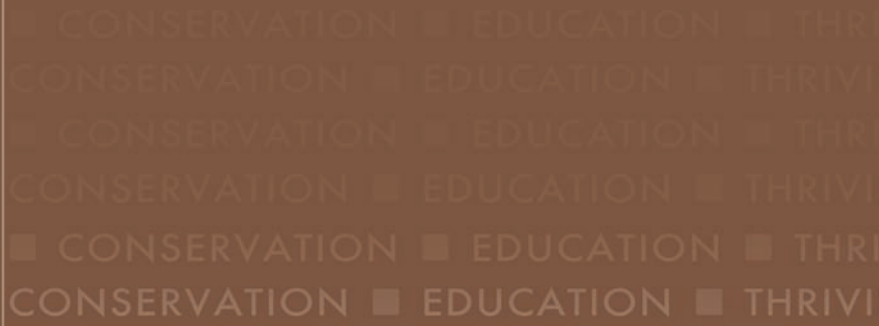
Center for Conservation Solutions

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AFF's Center for Conservation Solutions (CCS) will cultivate conservation initiatives to support a network of family forest landowners, research agencies, nonprofit organizations, and research partners to conserve and create critical habitat for imperiled wildlife species. Our approach to forest conservation challenges is to provide forest landowners with the necessary tools to manage their lands for both ecological and economic gains, which are essential to environmental benefits for all of us.

CCS will undertake exciting, new activities in addition to continuing its work under Forests for Watersheds and Wildlife™ (F²W²), AFF's habitat conservation program. F²W² works with private forest landowners in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana to restore longleaf and Southern pine which provides critical habitat for more than 300 species, including the imperiled Gopher Tortoise. CCS programs offer a proactive, voluntary, cost-effective approach to conservation on family forestlands.

The creation of national, multi-year, science-based initiatives to address the impact of invasive species, the use of prescribed fire, and the application of conservation incentives on family forests will fall under CCS. These initiatives will strengthen the forestry community's ability to address these issues while working towards very specific conservation goals. CCS will also pool resources and expertise to address the predicted loss of great swaths of southern forests, identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Southern Forest Resource Assessment.





Center for Environmental Learning

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AFF's Center for Environmental Learning (CEL) will utilize and develop programs to increase our awareness and understanding of the role forests and the environment play in our lives, while building the skills and commitment needed to conserve and sustain them. CEL will undertake both formal and non-formal education programs for youth and families, as well as information and outreach activities aimed at other influential audiences, such as lawmakers and journalists.

The world-renowned and award winning Project Learning Tree® (PLT) will continue to produce quality environmental education materials and provide training and professional development opportunities throughout the world. CEL will expand its grant making capability through *GreenWorks!*, the service-learning, community action grant program of PLT. *GreenWorks!* blends service activities with the academic curriculum and addresses real community needs as students learn through active engagement.

The Center for Environmental Learning will launch a flagship program, the *GreenSchools* Initiative, to increase student awareness of environmental issues through classroom studies and to transfer this knowledge into positive environmental action in the school and the community. With completion of the program, schools will discover ways they can provide a safe, clean, and green school that promotes a productive learning environment and in so doing, will help to conserve and protect our valuable natural resources.



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Center for Family Forests

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AFF's Center for Family Forests (CFF) will maintain, support, and mobilize a robust community of forest landowners — along with a diverse network of organizational partners — all committed to sustaining multi-generational stewardship.

Family forests are threatened by development and urban sprawl, invasive species, insects, diseases, wildfires, limited income, and shrinking markets. Continued expansion of urban areas results in the fragmentation of forestland and increases the cost of owning forestland by families. Everyday family forest landowners face the decision of whether to keep their lands as forests or to sell. CFF will work to make the decision to keep the land forested an easier one.

Addressing these threats and ensuring a future of healthy and growing forests depends on many forces and factors — some economic, some social, and some rooted in policy. Effective solutions will require multi-layered initiatives.

The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS), the oldest and largest forest certification program in North America, will continue to grow under this new Center. With more than 87,000 family forest landowners and more than 27.5 million acres in the program today, AFF will continue to serve those interests with education and outreach programs and advocacy activities.

The CFF will deploy research-based social marketing initiatives aimed at the next generation of forest landowners, work for public policies that will make it easier for families to keep their land, help families plan the future of their forests, and reconnect children, their parents, and communities to the forests that surround them.

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POWERFUL SOLUTIONS FOR POWERFUL CHALLENGES

Not every challenge will fit neatly into just one Center — many will overlap, and some will require the talent and expertise found in all of the Centers. AFF will draw on the skills embedded in all three Centers to invest in four major, cross-cutting initiatives. These initiatives will profoundly affect the future of forests and communities.

DEVELOPING HIGH PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIPS — AFF will provide tools, training, and resources needed to bolster the efforts of regional, state, and local organizations as they seek to deliver effective advocacy, outreach, community engagement, and education programs. Leadership training and increased grant making will be prime examples of the direction AFF will take.

NEW MARKETS FOR FAMILY FOREST OWNERS — AFF will work to create more economic opportunities for family forest landowners and to educate the public and landowners about the benefits working forests bring to the environment and communities. This initiative will focus on encouraging forest friendly public policies and market-based strategies.

SUSTAINING STEWARDSHIP FOR THE FUTURE — AFF will confront the massive demographic changes that are threatening family forest ownership and contributing to the annual loss of more than one million acres of family forest. Based in both education and public policy, this initiative will encourage inter-generational planning, provide resources for family forest owners, and advocate for fair tax policy reform.

CLOSING THE KNOWLEDGE GAP — AFF will use its influence and resources to help increase funding for research into forest ecology and the socio-economic dimensions of forest ownership and management. Proposed and existing public policies will also be carefully examined to gauge their impact on our forests.

The new AFF Research Partners Group will be created and supported to achieve these goals. The group will consist of scientists, policy experts, and forest practitioners and will bring the best science and technology to bear on the challenges facing family forest owners.

MOVING FORWARD — TOGETHER

The challenges we face are daunting but not impossible to overcome. Our success depends on the continued passion of those who share our vision and our goals — our partners, volunteers, communities, forest landowners, and state-based organizations. We're continually seeking broad support, from a variety of people, organizations, partners, and communities as we move forward to address the challenges.

***American Forest Foundation —
Working Solutions for Conservation***



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