



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
October 14, 2007..

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**South Carolina Tree Farmer Johney Haralson**  
**Named 2007 Southern Regional Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year**

Washington, D.C. – The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS), a program of the American Forest Foundation, has named Johney Haralson of Bamberg County, S.C. as the 2007 Southern Regional Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year. Haralson received the award during the National Tree Farmer Convention held in Madison, Wis. This annual ATFS award recognizes outstanding sustainable forest management on privately owned forestland.

The story of Haralson's career as a leader and tree farm advocate began in his early childhood. He was raised on his father's small operating farm during the early days of the old Soil Bank program. The program, started in 1956, was part of the Agricultural Act to pay farmers to idle farm land for up to fifteen years and make improvements to aid conservation. Following college, military obligations and a career as an insurance agent in Denmark, S.C., Haralson acquired his first property in Denmark, S.C. in November, 1988. With guidance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Haralson established the land with 30 foot plots in every field. He later purchased 117 acres of Conservation Reserve Program monoculture and eventually acquired a third field. His 405 acres has been under a written forest management plan since 1996 and was certified as a Tree Farm in 2001. Certified Tree Farmers own at least 10 acres of forestland and actively follow a forest management plan developed in partnership with an ATFS volunteer forester. The plan addresses forest sustainability, wildlife habitat, recreation, and water and soil conservation.

Haralson's management plan emphasizes timber and wildlife conservation as well as the maintenance of woods, roads and firelines; wildlife plantings and prescribed burns. He converted crop land into pine plantations and established forty acres of food patches and wildlife openings on three tracts in Bamberg County, S.C. The combination of these practices provide a thriving habitat for white-tailed deer, wild turkey and fox squirrels. He believes that the woods should not be manicured but closely managed and maintained to maximum utilization. This philosophy includes controlled burning as an essential part of forest maintenance with an average burn every three-to-four years. Haralson learned land management skills through the Master Tree Farmer I & II, the Certified Prescribed Fire Manager Course, GA/SC Longleaf Conference as well as the Wildlife Food Planting Tours program and visits to other well-managed properties.

One of the greatest challenges to his vision had been the destruction of the area wetlands due to beaver activity. While beaver activity does not make headlines like other natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes and ice storms, the South Carolina Forestry Commission reported more than 13,950 acres of land valued at \$5 million were devastated by beavers in 2006. Haralson works with a licensed beaver trapper to effectively address this problem and monitor the waterways associated with his Double K Farms to check for beaver dam buildup and potential flooding.

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Cont. pg 2. – Haralson

Johney Haralson is recognized as a leader and advocate for forestry management and conservation. He was named the 2004 South Carolina Tree Farmer of the Year; is currently Vice-Chairman of the Bamberg Soil and Water Commission; has co-sponsored and hosted several events including *Becoming an Outdoors Woman* and a biomass logging recovery study; and works with students as a mentor and instructor at the local FAA class at the Barnwell County Career Center. Additionally, he is the Chairman of the 8,000-member South Carolina Wildlife Federation. In 2005, Haralson and his wife of thirty eight years, Roxie, demonstrated their commitment to the future of forestry when they established the Double K Farms Annual Forestry Scholarship at the Clemson University Forestry and Wildlife Department. This \$500 educational funding opportunity allows students from South Carolina who major in forestry to pursue their dreams. A passionate and dedicated Tree Farmer, Haralson and his family have worked tirelessly as stewards of forest resources, land, wildlife and the environment. Haralson was nominated for the 2007 Outstanding Tree Farmer Award by two longstanding foresters, Scott Pellum of Hampton, S.C. and Bob Franklin of Walterboro, S.C.

“We are committed to the recognition of family forest owners each year. The prestigious ATFS award honors the hard work and dedication of these true champions of sustainable forestry whose tireless efforts provide tangible and significant support to help ATFS accomplish its mission of getting more good forestry on more acres,” said Bob Simpson, Senior Vice President-Forestry of the American Forest Foundation. “Tree Farmers like Johney Haralson set an example for all forestland owners and most of all, create an environment in their community of flourishing and sustainable forests.”

For more information please contact Brigitte Johnson, APR, Director of Communications, 202.463.5163, Email [bjohnson@forestfoundation.org](mailto:bjohnson@forestfoundation.org) or visit ATFS at [www.treefarmssystem.org](http://www.treefarmssystem.org)

*The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS) is a national program that promotes the sustainable management of forests through education and outreach to private forest landowners. Founded in 1941, ATFS has 27 million acres of privately owned forestland and 87,000 family forest owners who are committed to excellence in forest stewardship. Tree Farmers manage their forestlands for wood, water, wildlife, and recreation with assistance from 4,400 volunteer foresters. ATFS is a program of the American Forest Foundation, a nonprofit organization that works for healthy forests, quality environmental education, and informed decision-making about our communities and our world.*

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