



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maine Tree Farmers Josiah and Kathleen Pierce
Named 2007 National Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year

Washington, D.C. – The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS), a program of the American Forest Foundation, has named Jo and Kathy Pierce of Cumberland County, Maine as the 2007 National Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year. The Pierces received the award during the 14th Annual National Tree Farmer Convention held in Madison, Wis. This annual ATFS award recognizes outstanding sustainable forest management on privately owned forestland.

Jo and Kathy Pierce devote their time to teaching people about sustainable forest management and Tree Farm ownership. The sixth generation of his family to reside on the family property, Jo Pierce and his family are considered champions of forest management and conservation. The original Josiah Pierce (Jo's great, great, great grandfather) built his home and established his sawmill business in 1785 in Flintstown (now Baldwin). The Pierce family has been in and out of the lumber business ever since. Originally 360 acres of heavily cut woodlands were reverted back to timber in the late 19th century. Between 1917 and 1920 all of the trees over six inches in diameter were harvested and processed into logs using portable sawmills. In the 1960's Jo's father, Curtis, acquired woodlots to add to the family lots and implemented prudent estate planning to guarantee the land would remain in the family. During the past 20 years, Jo and Kathy Pierce's Tree Farm has grown to more than 2,000 acres. The Pierce Tree Farm was placed under a written forest management plan and became a certified Tree Farm in 1961. 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.

The Pierce Family Tree Farm is the tangible exhibition of the Pierce family pride in land ownership and management. While under a comprehensive management plan since the 1960's, Jo and Kathy Pierce revise their plan every 10 years. The plan underwent significant revisions and updates following a devastating ice storm in 1998. They have pruned over 4,000 pine trees of lower branches up to a height of 17 feet and, with the supervision of a professional forester, precommercially thinned over 30 acres of young growth. Over time, Jo became more comfortable with the basic principles of forestry to prune and thin countless trees and acres. His efforts today include corrective pruning of weevil damaged pines as well as young pine and oak trees. He has planted pines at the rate of 1,000 trees per year for the past three springs to improve aesthetics. Under the skillful guidance of a licensed professional forester, Rene Noel, Jr., the Pierces devised formalized prescriptions to meet their forestry management goals. A highly respected forestry

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consultant, Noel helped the Pierces match their harvesting philosophy to coincide with environmental safeguards. The harvest prescription plan is formulated to improve the growth of the best trees.

Beyond forestry management, the Pierce family is dedicated to wildlife conservation. As partners with the Maine Fish and Wildlife Department, they have successfully relocated wild turkeys in an effort to reinvigorate the bird population in Maine. Additionally, their land is home to deer, bats, barn swallows, red-tailed hawks, moose, and bobcats. A black bear has made a den in a pile of rocks at the 100 year old former railroad construction sight. As part of their wildlife conservation efforts, Jo Pierce was appointed to the Northern Cottontail Group which considered whether to place the rabbits on the endangered species list for protection against extinction. Furthermore, a wild island on the Saco River on the Pierce Tree Farm property has been reserved for canoeists and campers to enjoy the slendors of the Maine wilderness

Active members of numerous conservation and community organizations, Jo and Kathy Pierce are members of the Maine State Tree Farm Committee (2002-present); the Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine (1987-present); the Southern Maine Maple Sugar Makers; the Maine Grange (since 1960) and the Maine Historical Society (since 1978). Jo Pierce's commitment to forestry advocacy and outreach led to his appointment to the Maine Governor's Task Force on Certification; the Baldwin Planning Board and the Governor's Task Force on Public Use of Private Land.

"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 Jo and Kathy 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 or visit ATFS at 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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