



What's the Difference between

TREASURE Forest and Tree Farm?

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Created in 1974 by members of the Alabama Natural Resources Council, TREASURE Forest designation is earned by private forest landowners who affirm the principles of multiple-use forest management. It is the forest landowner recognition program that inspired the national Stewardship program which began in 1991. With its rich history, the TREASURE Forest program has certified over 2,300 landowners across the state, totaling more than 1.9 million acres. TREASURE is an acronym for Timber, Recreation, Environment, and Aesthetics for a Sustained Usable Resource.



Because TREASURE Forest does not offer or conduct 'third party' audits or reviews, the program is not recognized by the international systems of forest certification. TREASURE Forest was never intended to be a 'certification' program following the international rules that govern such programs. TREASURE Forest was – and is – a 'recognition' program endorsed by the 19 member agencies of the Alabama Natural Resources Council.

The American Tree Farm System (ATFS) began on June 12, 1941, when the nation's first 'tree farm' was dedicated near Montesano, Washington. Owned by the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company, the 120,000-acre Clemons Tree Farm launched a nationwide movement. The program's purpose is to educate non-industrial forest landowners about best practices for economic, environmental, and social considerations, and to recognize landowners that adopt these best practices. Today, over 100,000 individual and family-owned forests encompassing over 25 million acres are third-party certified as sustainable. This certification is internationally recognized by customer brands such as large fast food chains and big-box home improvement chains, etc. These customers want to protect their brand and depend on certification as proof that they are using sustainable materials in their products.

What does all of this mean for a landowner? Similar to TREASURE Forest recognition, participation in Tree Farm provides education through print and electronic communications, a field visit from a professional forester, invitations to landowner field days, and acknowledgment of participation through a sign that can be displayed on the farm. In contrast to TREASURE Forest, ATFS is internationally recognized by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), which may provide market access where mills have a target goal for certified wood, and in some cases may provide a price premium. Usually, supply and demand determines a mill preference and/or premium for certified wood, so this possibility is not something anyone should expect.

One major distinction between TREASURE Forest and Tree Farm is that TREASURE Forest recognition requires review and approval from both a forester and a wildlife biologist.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that TREASURE Forest and Tree Farm are not in competition. In fact, many landowners across the state maintain certification in both programs and proudly display their signs at the entrance to their property. The Alabama Natural Resources Council and the Alabama State Tree Farm Committee encourage landowners to consider both programs and are pleased when landowners obtain both.



Arising from differing needs, the two programs began decades ago; however, they have developed over time to become very similar in that they both promote multiple uses of our natural resources.♣