

Hiram forester named Regional Tree Farm inspector of the year

By Allen Crabtree



Forester Jack Wadsworth recently was named Northeastern Regional Tree Farm Inspector of the Year at the 15th National Tree Farmer Convention in Portland, Oregon.
Photo by Allen Crabtree

For more than 30 years Jack Wadsworth, a professional forester from Hiram, has been advising forest owners in Maine and New Hampshire how to best manage their woodlots as renewable resources. At the 2008 National Tree Farm Convention held recently in Oregon he was named 2008 Northeastern Regional Tree Farm Inspector of the Year in recognition of his successful efforts to educate and assist private family forest landowners as part of the American Tree Farm System (ATFS).

Private family woodlots play an important role in Maine where forests cover 90 percent of the state. Maine has the nation's highest percentage of privately owned woodlands, and managing them as sustainable resources are important for the economic well-being of the state, as well as providing recreation, wildlife habitat, bio diversity and watershed protection. Our traditions and cultural values in Maine and New Hampshire are based on a close, dynamic relationship with our forests.

Successfully managing a private family woodlot involves a commitment of the landowner to follow a forest management plan. From his offices in Cornish, Wadsworth

and the staff of Wadsworth Woodlands help landowners practice sustainable long-term forest management by developing plans customized for their woodlots. Wadsworth also develops harvesting and timber stand improvement schedules and encourages owners to foster watershed protection and enhancement of wildlife habitat resources on their land. He has done this since receiving his B.S. degree in Forest Management from the University of Maine in 1971. Wadsworth Woodlands currently manages more than 60,000 acres of private forestland in our area..

Tree Farm Certification

The gold standard for a properly managed woodlot is ATFS Tree Farm Certification. There are 24 million acres of privately owned woodlands in 46 states certified as Tree Farms. Wadsworth works with forestland owners in Maine and New Hampshire to help them meet the standards and guidelines of ATFS to achieve Tree Farm certification. He also inspects their woodlots when timber is being harvested and re-inspects them every five years as part of the ATFS certification program.

I received a phone call from Wadsworth recently. “Your woodlots in Effingham are due for recertification this year,” he said. “Want to take a walk in the woods? We need to see how the trees have done since your last thinning and if there need to be any changes to your woodlot management plan.”

I am one of his long-term woodlot clients and was pleased that he was reminding me about my Tree Farm reinspection requirement. Wadsworth and I first met in 1985 when he worked for the Woodlands Division of the S. D. Warren Company in Westbrook, Maine. (Wadsworth and his wife Beth later started Wadsworth Woodlands in 1994). He helped me with the selective thinning of trees on my woodlots in 1986 and again in 2005, marking trees to be removed and supervising the logging operation.

Outstanding Tree Farm Inspector

It is this long-term commitment to his clients and his attention to the proper management of their woodlots that were key factors in Wadsworth being nominated as the 2008 Tree Farm Inspector of the Year for both Maine and New Hampshire.

“We singled Jack Wadsworth out for this honor based on the number of woodlot reinspections he has done this year,” said John O’Brian, Chair of the New Hampshire State Tree Farm committee. “We also wanted to recognize everything he has done to promote sustainable forest management on our family woodlots in New Hampshire in his long career in forestry, and his contributions to the New Hampshire Tree Farm Committee.”

David Harvey, Chair of the Maine State Tree Farm Committee nominated Wadsworth as the top Maine tree farm inspector of the year, and echoed similar praise for Wadsworth’s accomplishments. “It is not just his exemplary record of Tree Farm inspections and re-inspections this last year, although that is important,” said Harvey. “Over the years he has also been responsible for bringing countless woodlot owners into the Tree Farm system and has made a significant contribution to sustainable forest management in Maine.”

Harvey also noted that Wadsworth has been a strong, participating member of the Maine Tree Farm Committee for many years and has served as Chair, Vice Chair, and York County Chair, as well as on various Tree Farm sub-committees. He played a key role in negotiations that created a cooperative multiple use easement of the 8,600-acre Leavitt Plantation in Parsonsfield.

Wadsworth has also helped organize Tree Farm Field Days and has been part of the Maine State Parade representing forestry and Tree Farms, hosted Tree Farm County Fair Booths, and assisted in organizing the Maine sponsored National Tree Farm Convention.. He is active with the Fryeburg Fair as a member of the Finance Committee, and he and his wife Beth operate Rock Crop Farm in Hiram where they raise and show registered Herefords.

National Tree Farmer Convention

The AFTS is a national organization and for fifteen years it has held a National Tree Farmer Convention on different parts of the country. In 2008 it was held in Portland, Oregon. Foresters and tree farmers from all over the country attended to learn about new forest management techniques and to recognize those who had made significant contributions to the goals of the AFTS of “promoting the growing of renewable forest resources on private lands while protecting environmental benefits and increasing public understanding of all benefits of productive forestry.”

Four tree farm inspectors were recognized at the National Convention, from the Southern, Western, North Central, and Northeastern Regions of America. Jack Wadsworth was awarded the Regional Inspector of the Year for the Northeastern Region, an honor well deserved. This recognizes not only his accomplishments but also the importance of the Tree Farm program to the economic life and cultural traditions of Maine and New Hampshire. Wadsworth and his colleagues in the Tree Farm program fill a vital role in helping forestland owners deal with development pressures and preserving the family woodlot as a dynamic, living land use.

993 words