



American Forest Foundation



**Contact: Sarah McCreary at 202-624-5417 or smccreary@stateforesters.org
Jennifer Jones at 202-463-5188 or jjones@forestfoundation.org**

American Forest Foundation Joins National Association of State Foresters in Request to House Appropriations Committee; Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and related Agencies

Protect America's Forests: Invest in Programs that Support Family Forest Owners

[WASHINGTON DC, March 22, 2012] In testimony today before the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, of the House Appropriations Committee, the [American Forest Foundation](#) (AFF) and the [National Association of State Foresters](#) (NASF) reminded committee members that most of America's forests are owned by families and individuals, not the federal government, and not corporations. For this reason, Congress needs to continue to support programs that provide private forest owners with technical assistance to help them make the best decisions to help advance forest conservation in America.

[In his testimony](#) [PDF], Tom Martin, AFF President and CEO, pointed out that, "Family forest owners are facing a 'perfect storm' of threats. Wildfires, invasive species and other insects and diseases, pressures from development, shrinking forest products markets, and ownership changes make it harder than ever to keep America's forests healthy and productive. It is therefore essential we ensure these families have tools, technical information, and policy support to keep their forests as forests, for current and future generations."

The USDA Forest Service's Forest Stewardship Program provides the nation's 10 million private forest owners access to the information they need to be good stewards of their forests. The program enjoys broad support from landowners across the country as evidenced by the more than [1,200 signatures from private forest owners](#) asking for continued support of the program. The letter noted that the program "represents a smart investment in the health of our environment and our economy." Despite the fact that family forest owners are the largest ownership group in America, less than 6 percent of the USDA Forest Service budget is focused on these lands.

"The Forest Stewardship Program is the most extensive family forest-owner assistance program in the country," said Ken Pimlott, California State Forester and Director of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), also [testifying at the hearing on behalf of NASF](#). "State Foresters

fully appreciate the difficult choices that come with spending decisions. But we hope that the Subcommittee will consider the impact of reductions in forestry programs on family forest owners who own 251 million acres of forestland—and the impact on all Americans who benefit from well-managed, working forests—and keep the current investments intact for FY 2013.”

In Thursday’s testimonies, AFF and NASF urged the Subcommittee to work to maintain funding levels for the US Forest Service’s Forest Stewardship Program, Forest Health Cooperative Lands Program, Forest Inventory and Analysis Program, Research and Development Program, Conservation Education Initiative, and EPA’s Office of Environmental Education.

#

The American Forest Foundation works nationwide and in partnership with local, state, and national groups to provide hands-on support for America’s 10 million family forest owners, giving them the tools they need to manage healthy and sustainable woodlands. Visit www.forestfoundation.org to learn more.

The National Association of State Foresters is comprised of the directors of state and territorial forestry agencies and the District of Columbia. NASF seeks to advance sustainable forestry, conservation, and protection of forest lands and their associated resources. <http://www.stateforesters.org>