

# Updates for the 2020 OTFY Nomination

We are grateful for the work of the 2019 OTFY Review Committee and are pleased to present the updates to the OTFY nomination process that will go into effect for the 2020 award. The committee presented and received overwhelming support for their recommendations from the ATFS network. Join us in thanking the committee members for their work:

- Chair: Bob Bauer, KY
- Andy Perleberg, WA
- Dennis Galway, NJ
- Greg Marshall, FL
- Salem Saloom, AL
- Susan Stutts, TX
- Allen Chrisman, MT

## General Recommendations for the OTFY Award Process

1. Starting in 2020, and for all years after, the deadline for submitting OTFY nominations will be March 1.
2. The selection process for the Regional and National Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year should be based completely on the accomplishments and activities of the nominated Tree Farmers.
3. Promotion of the ROTFY through social media will be continued to promote the accomplishments of the nominees, finalists and awardees but will not count as a vote in the actual selections process.
4. Timeline from the submittal of the nominees to final selection will be condensed as much as possible given the current review process. The state chairs, who made a nomination in that year, will be notified after each round of judging as to the status of their nominee.

## Recommendations for the First Round of Voting

5. Regional nominations will be voted on by all state Tree Farm Committees/Programs chairs in each region. State Committees that submit a nomination will not be permitted

to vote on the nomination from their state. One vote per state, so committees/programs with co-chairs can only submit one vote.

6. The past four Regional OTFY from each region will be allowed one vote (per couple) for the regional competition in the region where they were selected as the ROTFY.
7. The first-round judges will be given three weeks to review the nomination packets and submit their votes.

## Recommendations for Second Round of Judging: Regional Field Visits

8. Regional field judges should be certified inspecting foresters. Two regional field judges must visit Tree Farms outside of the region(s) where the judges currently reside.
9. A minimum of one of the regional field judges must have previous experience as a regional field judge.
10. Two Tree Farm finalists will be selected to visit in each region.
11. The OTFY Review Committee will develop recommended guidelines that will be provided to the regional field judges to make sure that all regions are inspected in a similar manner including a minimum amount of time spent with the Tree Farmers and in the field looking at past management activities. Regional field judges will also be provided the judges checklist and nomination packets.
12. The Tree Farmers will receive a copy of both the recommended guidelines and the checklist for regional field judges prior to being visited to help them better prepare for the site visit.
13. The Tree Farmer will be given an opportunity to add one page of information to their nomination if selected as the Regional OTFY. This one page can address any activities that came up during the regional field judges' visit but were not mentioned in the nomination form or had been completed since the original nomination was submitted. This needs to be emphasized during the regional field judges' visit.
14. The field judging checklist used for the regional field judges' visit has been updated so the activities are weighted with 60% on Tree Farm accomplishments in the field and 40% for promoting sustainable forestry.

## Recommendations for Third (Final) Round of Judging

15. Each member, including the ex officio members, of the Woodland Operating Committee (WOC) will have one vote for selection of the National Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year. The WOC committee includes active partners that support the Tree Farm program.

16. Any WOC member who participated in the second round of judging will be asked to recuse themselves from the third round of judging, as they had visited one of the ROTFY's Tree Farm but not the others.
17. The past four National Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year will each have one vote (per couple/family) for the selection of the National Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year.
18. Additional input from the inspecting foresters that did the field visits will be made available to those that are voting. For the final round of judging, in addition to the nomination packet and the one-page addendum from each of the Regional Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year (ROTFY), judges will also be provided the regional field judges checklist from the second round of judging.
19. To avoid tie votes, all judges will rank their top three on their ballot. If there is a tie for first place, then the second and third votes will be used to determine the nominee with the most votes.
20. All nominees will be asked to review and sign the Statement for Award Nominees by the March 1<sup>st</sup> deadline.

#### **Statement for Award Nominees**

The Regional/National Outstanding Tree Farmer(s) of the Year (OTFY) award, the Regional/National Outstanding Inspector of the Year award and the National Leadership award are the highest honors bestowed by the American Tree Farm System (ATFS), a program of the American Forest Foundation (AFF). As a nominee, you are viewed with distinction among the AFF's network of landowners, volunteers, sponsors and partners throughout the country. Honorees represent AFF and the ATFS and therefore we ask all nominees for these awards to accept and agree to comply with the rules and ethics for these awards. In addition, we are asking you to attest to the following statements and, if requested, furnish materials to validate that the representations made in this attestation are accurate:

- I understand that all rules, regulations and decisions related to the award program, for which you are being honored, are made by the American Tree Farm System and American Forest Foundation in their sole discretion.
- I understand that as a nominee for one of the ATFS national awards, I will be evaluated in accordance with the highest ethical standards
- I understand that ATFS and AFF maintain a zero-tolerance policy for harassment or disparaging comments about any individual related to gender, race, religion, color, national origin, age, political party affiliation, sexual orientation or physical or mental handicap or condition. As a nominee, I understand that I will be held to the standards outlined in AFF's no-harassment policy.

- I agree that I am not, nor have been, the subject of any controversy which could negatively affect the reputation and goodwill of the American Tree Farm System or the American Forest Foundation;
- I acknowledge that any false statements or failure to disclose information upon request in connection with this nomination may result in my disqualification, rescission of my honor or award, and/or removal from the award review process.