

# Completing the Tree Farm Inspection Record

(004 Form and Standards Checklist)

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## **Introduction**

The revised 004 Form integrates the AFF 2015-2020 Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification (Standards) while improving efficiencies in data capturing. It has the capability of being printed as hardcopy for handwritten submissions or being entered electronically for easy emailing and/or upload into the ATFS Database. Because the information entered into this form can be uploaded into the database, it must be filled out correctly or the database will reject it as having errors. This document covers proper use of the 004 Form for inspection and upload.

## **Electronic uploadable PDF 004 Form:**

Inspectors may choose to complete the 004 Form using the writeable, electronic format. Inspectors should follow all guidance listed below to ensure the form is complete and able to seamlessly integrate with the ATFS Database. Typed electronic signatures are acceptable. The PDF can be saved and sent via email to the appropriate parties without issue. Ensure that all required fields are filled.

## **004 Form App:**

An app version of the 004 Form compatible with all Apple and Android devices is available for all qualified inspectors to download and use. The App requires the same information as the PDF form, with the ease of only having to be typed once. Internet connection is not needed when filling out the inspection information; it is only needed when downloading the inspection prior to heading out into the field and when submitting for a final synchronization. All involved parties (landowner, inspector, and approvers) with a valid email receive a copy of the inspection for their records. For more information on downloading and using the app go to <https://www.treefarmssystem.org/app>

## **General Guidelines:**

- 1) Signatures** – Inspecting forester and state representative signatures are required on all forms. All initial inspections must have the Tree Farmer’s signature on the form. Typed in signatures are acceptable. Do NOT use Adobe’s “fill & sign” tool to sign documents as it will lock the form as is and prevent changes or approvals.
- 2) Contact information** – Always be sure to confirm that the contact information on file is current. Most times you will receive a form that is pre-populated with landowner contact information, unless it is an initial inspection.
- 3) Form completeness** – Please review all items on the 004 Form and be sure to check all appropriate boxes on the Standards Checklist, including appropriate comments and figures. *If the form is not complete, a state committee representative or ATFS staff will be in contact for the missing or erroneous information.*

## **Form Sections:**

- 1) Pre-populated information**

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- Most forms will have pre-populated landowner and property information. This is the information that is currently stored in the ATFS database. Review the pre-populated information for completeness and correctness. **If any contact information is incorrect, updates must be made in the Notes/updates portion of the form. If property related information is incorrect, the inspector may erase and type over a field; this will replace what is in the database, so be attentive to these changes.**
  - i. Note: If ownership/primary contact has changed DO NOT erase the individual's name that has been pre-filled. Place the new owners name and information in the notes section.

## 2) Inspection

- State and Tree Farm Number refer to the two letter State abbreviation and the unique Tree Farm number assigned to the property. Initial inspections will not have a Tree Farm number, so leave this field blank.
- For initial inspections, choose the appropriate outcome (certified/recognition, pioneer) in the Initial Inspection box. There is also an optional question on how the landowner learned about ATFS.
- For reinspections, indicate if the inspection results in a recertification/renewal, decertification (and indicate reason), or if the Tree Farm has been designated a Pioneer Tree Farm.
- Enter the date that the field inspection and landowner interview occurred using the mm/dd/yyyy format. Also designate the type of landowner interview conducted.

## 3) Landowner Information (Legal Owner)

- These lines will be pre-populated for all assigned reinspections
- The first line is for an organization's or individual's name. The second line is for another individual/co-owner or a contact person.
- You must designate a single primary contact person from the landowners listed in this section. If the primary contact person changes at any point, make note in the Notes/updates portion.
- If there is a change in ownership, DO NOT enter the new owner here, put the name in the "Notes/Updates" section below. If it is entered here the previous owner information will be lost.

## 4) Primary contact

- These lines will be pre-populated for all assigned reinspections.
- The contact information for the person/organization designated as the primary contact in the previous section is entered here.
- For initial inspections, record landowner's (or organization's with contact person) name and primary contact information.
- For reinspections, confirm contact information with landowner.
- If available, be sure to record additional information such as email and phone.
- Be sure to indicate if the landowner is an absentee owner. Absentee means they do NOT live on or within 1 mile of their property.

## 5) Conservation Organizations Involvement

- This question is optional, but is very helpful in growing partnerships at local, state and national levels. The landowner identifies which other conservation organizations they are members of.

## 6) Tree Farm Information

- County refers to the county the Tree Farm is in. Only include **one** county name. If the Tree Farm lies in multiple counties, identify the county in which the majority of the acreage lies. You may include additional counties in the notes.
- Town refers to a sub-County government that has legal (including taxing) jurisdiction over a defined area. Only include **one** town name. If the Tree Farm lies in multiple towns, identify the one in which the majority of the acreage lies. If there is no organized town government where the Tree Farm is located, leave this line blank.

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- Forested Acreage is the portion of the whole property under forest cover. All figures should be rounded to the nearest whole acre. Forest owners may not exempt a portion of a contiguous forest management unit that does not meet the AFF Standards.
- Location (Legal or GPS) refers to the legal location of the property, e.g. section, township and range, street address, tax parcel ID number or GPS coordinates – all formats are acceptable. Central point locations such as the landowner’s home or the main entrance to the property are sufficient. Local directions to help guide future inspectors and third-party assessors to the property if necessary may be included.
- Ownership Type refers to how the legal owner is most appropriately described. If choosing “Other” please describe in the “Notes” section below.
- Which programs is the property enrolled in? This question is optional, but is very helpful in growing partnerships at local, state and national levels.

#### 7) Notes/updates

- Any special notes or updates of the individual or property can be made here.

#### 8) Approvals

- All dates should be in mm/dd/yyyy format
- The landowner’s signature and date is required only for the initial inspection and is suggested for all other inspections as well. **The landowner signature may be typed in, make sure that the landowner checks the signature confirmation checkbox if they do sign.**
- The inspector must sign and date each inspection. **The inspector signature may be typed.** Next to the inspector signature, the inspector must designate their recommendation for the property, either Certification/Recognition, Pioneer, or Decertification.
- The inspector must type in their full name under their signature if not already pre-populated.
- The inspector ID # is a unique inspector’s number. It may already be pre-populated, but if you do not know it, leave it blank.
- State representative signatures are required on all forms; signatures can be typed in.
- Note: Do NOT use Adobe’s “fill & sign” tool to sign documents as it will lock the form as is and prevent changes.

#### 9) Standards Checklist

- Not all questions in the checklist need to be answered depending on the activities on the ground. Be sure to review the checklist questions in order, or you may answer a question that does not apply.
- Review each element (Standards, Performance Measures, and Indicators), mark the appropriate response box, and make the appropriate comments as applicable.
  - i. Yes – If answering an opening question, this indicates that the activity has taken place on the property. If answering a PM or Indicator, Yes indicates that an activity pertaining to the element has been completed and was in conformance (e.g. landowner has a management plan that meets the requirements of PM 1.1)
  - ii. No – If answering an opening question, this indicates that the activity has **not** taken place on the property and the inspector may skip to the next section. If answering a PM or Indicator, no indicates that an activity pertaining to the element has been complete but was not in conformance or landowner did not complete an activity that is required (e.g. landowner has not corrected conditions on property that led to adverse regulatory actions and is not in conformance with I 2.1.1)
  - iii. No response – No activity has been completed that pertains to the element (e.g. landowner does not conduct any prescribed burning on the Tree Farm and can skip to standard 5)

#### 10) Notes/Observations

- Provide any necessary explanations or general notes for the PM and Indicators in the section that it pertains to.

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- Include any interesting information about the Tree Farm or Tree Farmer not appropriate elsewhere on the form (e.g. Landowner hosts field days for the local community)
- Recent management activities and recommendations may be entered in the notes.
- Notes section is used to help make the case as to why the property should be certified to the Standard.