



# The Dogwood Times

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Tyler County Forest  
Landowner Association

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## Misleading labels and greenwashing: What's a consumer to do?

By LILY PRIMEAUX - STATE IMPACT

Woe is the eco-conscious consumer. Just when they think they're buying green, something screws it all up. The latest group allegedly mucking things up is the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), which is losing corporate sponsors amid allegations of "green-washing."

First, some background. SFI officially started as a division of the the industry group American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA). Although it officially broke away and turned non-profit in 2001, the now-separate organizations remain closely associated. SFI continues to be funded by AF&PA in the form of tax-deductible donations, according to a new report by the watchdog group (and, in a sense, competitors of SFI) ForestEthics. They allege that those timber industry funds given to SFI "support advertising and brand enhancement for the AF&PA-represented paper and timber industry."

ForestEthics says that "out of 543 audits of SFI-certified companies since 2004, not one acknowledges any major issues-such as soil erosion, clearcutting, water quality, or chemical usage-that are known to be problems with large-scale timber operations."

While ForestEthics is the leader of this movement, it isn't alone. Between March and September of last year, several major companies - including Aetna, Allstate, AT&T, Office Depot, State Farm, and Sprint - publicly announced their intention to remove the SFI label from their products and/or to avoid the use of SFI-labeled products in the future. Just last week, according to ForestEthics, several more big brands - including Philips Van Heusen, Shutterfly, and U.S. Airways - decided to let go of SFI as well.

President and CEO of SFI, Kathy Abusow, was quick to rebut the allegations put forth by ForestEthics and said that "ForestEthics' malicious campaigns and bullying tactics will not deter us from [our] focus of responsible forestry and conservation collaboration."

"Behind the green paint on SFI's brand is business-as-usual forest destruction," says Aaron Sanger of ForestEthics. "Today's leading companies want environmentally responsible partners, not the seal of a timber industry-supported organization that leading environmental groups believe is irresponsible."

Many of the companies trending away from SFI have instead chosen to become certified by Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), the regulatory foresting agency that ForestEthics supports. And caught in the middle are consumers, who still aren't sure of a "green" label's worth.

### TFA forwarded the above article to SFI

#### Following is their response - the comment they posted:

The group doing the misleading is ForestEthics, which continues to plant the same old inaccurate information about SFI, which is confusing consumers. As a media organization, you have a responsibility to the public to check the facts

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### A Word About ForestEthics

ForestEthics is an Environmental organization whose stated "mission is to protect Endangered Forests, wildlife, and human well-being." From their Website it can be learned that they are in no way connected to any forest production or the timber industry. "ForestEthics' campaigns consider all of the issues that affect wild places and the wildlife and people that depend on them—from biodiversity to air and water quality to climate change. We expand our work to new regions or issue areas when we can bring the leverage and power needed to win."



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instead of just reprinting press releases. For example, SFI gets absolutely no funding from AF&PA and yet your organization has added to the misinformation by conveying inaccurate information. The truth is, like other third-party forest certification programs, SFI receives funds from those that use its standard, which include landowners, forest product companies; state, provincial and county agencies; colleges and universities; as well as conservation and other non-profit organizations. These funds are used to strengthen forest practices and increase knowledge by supporting conservation partnerships and outreach across North America and beyond. SFI is strong and growing - more and more companies accept and recognize SFI and many have inclusive policies, recognizing all credible standards. Please, don't trust Forest Ethics to do your critical thinking for you. Please turn to trusted forestry experts such as the USDA, National Association of State Foresters, and the Society of American Foresters to get your facts and impressions about SFI - all of these organizations represent experts in this field and they all recognize all forest certification standards including SFI. See what others are saying about SFI at <http://www.sfiprogram.org/others-saying.php>, and learn the truth about SFI at [www.sfiprogram.org/facts](http://www.sfiprogram.org/facts).

### **Removing Privet Helps Restore Native Bee**

**Populations** – Sarah Farmer, Student Intern, USDA, Forest Service, Southern Research Station, Asheville, N.C.

When plants travel the world, they escape the checks and balances of their ancestral ecosystems and can multiply without bounds, competing with native plants for light, nutrients, and water. Do non-native invasive plants also disrupt native bee populations?

Jim Hanula, research entomologist with the SRS Insects, Diseases and Invasive Plants unit, explored this question by comparing bee diversity and abundance in forests where Chinese privet had been removed, had never invaded, and where it still dominated the shrubby layer. Hanula found that removing Chinese privet provided immediate benefits for native pollinators, even when there were no specific efforts to restore native plant communities.

Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinens*), first brought to the United States as an ornamental shrub, now infests over 2.5 million acres of public land across 12 southern states and countless more acres of privately owned land, roadsides, and forested urban areas. Hanula and his team removed privet from study sites in the Piedmont area of Georgia using chainsaws, mulching, and herbicides. They found that within a year, bee populations

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## **State leaders unveil the Texas Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal**

AUSTIN, Texas — Officials with Texas Forest Service and The Texas A&M University System gathered with state lawmakers Friday, April 27, 2012, to unveil new web applications that will help homeowners and communities determine wildfire risk — and take measures to mitigate potential hazards.

Texas Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal, or TxWRAP, allows users to identify wildfire threats for a particular area based on landscape characteristics, historical fire occurrence, weather conditions, terrain and potential fire behavior. It also routes users to resources that can help them implement wildfire prevention practices.

Accessible at [texaswildfirerisk.com](http://texaswildfirerisk.com), the applications are free to use. Professional users such as civic planners, wildland fire managers and elected officials can use TxWRAP to generate a report packaging all the wildfire risk data for their community. Such a tool can be useful in defining mitigation options, allocating resources and prioritizing programs that will better protect communities.

Developed by Texas Forest Service GIS specialists, TxWRAP is the first web portal of its kind in the nation granting public access to risk assessment data that previously hasn't been readily available, particularly in a user-friendly format.

Texas Forest Service Director Tom Boggus called the website a “holistic approach to Texans helping Texans mitigate their wildfire risk.”

“This can and should be a ‘game changer’ for Texans as they learn what their risks are and how to mitigate them,” Boggus said. “It is a tool that neighbor can pass on to neighbor, making Texas a safer place to live.”

Texas Senator Royce West said. “This website will enable homeowners, civic leaders, community planners, elected officials and others to identify the risk wildfire poses to their communities. Developed by Texas Forest Service, this tool empowers Texans to be able to better protect their homes and property.”

Texas Senator Kirk Watson added: “The devastating fires in Central Texas last fall revealed how we need strong collaboration between local, county and state officials. This new Wildfire Risk Assessment Tool furthers the potential for this critical collaboration in disaster management and risk assessment. It’s an important resource for Texans to plan, protect and act.”

### **Resources**

Texas Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal:

[texaswildfirerisk.com](http://texaswildfirerisk.com)

Brief, instructional video:

[www.youtube.com/texasforests-service](http://www.youtube.com/texasforests-service)



## ***Birth of Forest Conservation in America***

Gifford Pinchot, first Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, and generally regarded as the "father" of American conservation, is said to have derived the name for his idea of conservation from "conservancy," the term for a large tract of forest land managed by a "conservator" in British India. Conservation - the management, restoration, protection and preservation of natural resources - was his prescription for finding a balance between human activity and the workings of nature.

One quote attributed to him: ***Unless we practice conservation, those who come after us will have to pay the price of misery, degradation, and failure for the progress and prosperity of our day.***

## **Texans urged to report suspected arson activity**

Law enforcement officials with Texas Forest Service are asking residents to be aware of the potential for arson activity this summer – and to report any suspicious behavior.

Arson can be devastating to Texas landowners, many of whom make their living from farming, ranching and timber sales, said Les Rogers, chief law enforcement officer for Texas Forest Service.

“We’re asking residents to keep an eye out for any suspicious vehicles or unusual activity,” Rogers said. “Arson is a threat to safety and property, and it causes an increased risk for our emergency responders.”

Anyone with information on arson activity in Texas should contact local law enforcement officials or call the toll-free arson hotline: 1-800-364-3470.

## ***Websites of Interest***



***Nonpoint Source Water Pollution Report*** – Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board – <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/reports#nps>

***Using Fences to Exclude Feral Hogs from Wildlife Stations*** by Dr. Billy Higginbotham, document L5533 – <http://agrilifebookstore.org>

***2012 State Water Plan*** – Texas Water Development Board – [www.twdb.texas.gov](http://www.twdb.texas.gov)

***The Impact of the 2011 Drought and Beyond***, Texas State Comptroller’s Office (see page 10 for what others are doing) - <http://www.window.state.tx.us/specialrpt/drought/>

***2009 Economic Impact of the Texas Forest Sector***, Texas Forest Service – [http://texasforests.tamu.edu/uploadedFiles/Sustainable/econdev/Publications/Reports/EconomicImpact2009\\_all.pdf](http://texasforests.tamu.edu/uploadedFiles/Sustainable/econdev/Publications/Reports/EconomicImpact2009_all.pdf).

Texas Forestry Association \* Texas Forest Service \*  
Texas Forest Landowners Council

## **Present an Estate Planning and Taxation Workshop for Forest Landowners**

**August 10, 2012 \* SFASU College of Forestry**

### **Who Should Attend?**

The workshop is designed for forest landowners, consulting foresters, accountants, attorneys, and others who work with forest landowners in matters pertaining to estate planning and timber taxes.

### **What You'll Learn**

Leave the workshop with nuts and bolts of estate planning techniques to forest properties. You'll learn the purpose of an estate plan, strategies to reduce or eliminate estate taxes, basic documents of an estate plan, whether to use wills or trusts, forestry-specific estate planning tools, different forms of ownership and their implications, and implications of potential changes to estate tax law.

### **Speaker**

Dr. Robert Tufts is an Attorney and Associate Professor in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences at Auburn University. Robert earned a B.S. and M.S. in forestry from Louisiana State University and a Ph.D. in forestry from Virginia Tech. His legal education consists of a J.D. from Faulkner University, and a Master of Laws in taxation from the University of Alabama. His current research is focused on estate planning, business entities and property law issues for landowners. Robert also has a part-time law practice limited to tax and estate planning, business entities and property issues.

### **Continue Education Credit**

CFE (Foresters)/CLE (Loggers): 5 Hours

CPE (CPAs): 6 Hours

**For more information, go to the [TFA website](#); you may also register online at the [TFA website](#).**

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were larger and more diverse. In fact, areas where privet had been removed by mulching hosted average bee populations of 418 per plot, while areas where privet had not been removed had average populations of only 35 bees per plot. The bee populations in treated plots continued to soar, and by 2007, bee abundance and diversity in all the treated sites was similar to that in forests that had never been invaded by privet.

Removing privet allowed more sunlight to reach the forest floor, where flowering plants such as pokeweed, wingstem, violets and others began to flourish. Flowering plants and pollinators depend on each other, and mature healthy forests have diverse and abundant bee-supporting plants that are almost completely excluded when native plants are crowded out by non-native invasive plants such as Chinese privet. Hanula concluded that removing Chinese privet benefits native forest pollinators such as bees even without further restoration of native plant communities.

Read the full study at <http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/39743>



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Landowner Association**

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**DO NOT FORWARD**

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Check your membership date above. '12 or greater = OK.

**BOARD MEETING - SATURDAY - August 25<sup>th</sup>**

**Membership 2012**

**Wow!** Where has this year gone? Here it is early June already, the vegetation is growing prolifically, and this newsletter is chalked full of useful information for landowners.

**Have you paid your dues yet?**

**Be sure to check the mailing label above.**

If the 2 digit code is **'12 or greater**, then you are up to date. If you are behind, we only ask that you pay for 2012.

Remember you also are fulfilling one of the requirements for earning the timber tax exemption from the Tyler County Appraisal District.

And you are associated with many others when it comes time to represent you with elected leaders: County, State and Federal.

So look at the mailing label above for the 2 digit number. **If is isn't a '12 or greater**, then consider renewing your membership.

And attend the meetings.

**Board Meeting—Saturday, August 25<sup>th</sup>.  
General Meeting—Saturday, September 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

**For Calendar Year 2012 - TCFLOA**

**Regular Membership:** Private non-industrial owners of five (5) or more acres of land in Tyler Co.  
**Dues:** \$10 per calendar year per couple. One (1) vote per membership.

**Associate Membership:** Any individual not qualifying as a Regular Member who supports the objectives of TCFLOA. **Dues:** \$10 per calendar year per individual or organization.  
Associate Members are non-voting.

**PLEASE BE SURE TO INFORM THE TREASURER OF ADDRESS CHANGES**

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY / STATE / ZIP

PHONE

E-Mail or FAX

Please make checks payable to TCFLOA, and mail to:

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