



# TREES ARE THE ANSWER

## THE IMPORTANCE OF REFORESTATION & AFFORESTATION

You love your forestland, and you want it to thrive — now and for generations to come. But do you actually have a management plan in place to ensure that it will? There's no better time than now to begin planning for the future management of your piece of Texas.

As a forest landowner your land management goals — whatever they may be — should be the focus of your plan. But as you work toward your goals, make sure you take advantage of every opportunity to replace trees that have been removed.

This can be done in two ways: reforestation and afforestation. Reforestation is the natural or intentional restocking of existing forests and woodlands after trees have been removed through harvesting, wildfire or natural disasters. Afforestation involves planting trees and establishing woods and forests in areas that previously had no tree cover, such as old agricultural fields and pastures.

Management goals vary from landowner to landowner. Some plant trees so that they may one day be harvested, sold for income and then used to make homes, furniture, paper and other wood-based products. Some plant trees to create habitats for wildlife and improve the quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink. Others plant trees simply because they enjoy the beauty they bring to the land.

There are several factors to consider when planning reforestation or afforestation, which is why you should consult with a professional forester or other qualified natural resources professional before beginning a project. Proper forest management can help you meet multiple goals while providing a variety of benefits for both you and your fellow Texans.

A tree expert will study your management objectives and help you select the appropriate species, determine how densely it should be planted and develop follow-up activities. For example: if your overall objective is boosting income, then reforestation with a pine species (such as loblolly) in a plantation style (systematic rows and spacing) may be recommended. But if your objective is to increase wildlife habitats while providing supplemental income, reforestation with pine and hardwood may be recommended.

No matter the management objective, prompt reforestation or afforestation is the key. The sooner trees are replanted, the sooner they can begin growing and helping you achieve your management goals. Prompt efforts ensure a sustainable supply of wood and maximize your income opportunity while also ensuring that trees and forests — and the benefits they provide — will be around for future generations.

There is assistance with reforestation and afforestation costs. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Farm Service Agency, the Texas A&M Forest Service, and other professional foresters can assist you in applying for state and federal cost share funds.

**INCOME OFTEN BEGINS AROUND AGE 12 AND CAN CONTINUE ON FOR MANY YEARS. A TYPICAL RATE OF RETURN FOR A WELL-MANAGED FOREST IS ABOUT 12% ANNUALLY. THAT'S NOT TO MENTION THE OTHER BENEFITS FROM RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, PROTECTING WATER RESOURCES, CARBON SEQUESTRATION AND PROVIDING HABITAT FOR WILDLIFE THAT CALL YOUR PROPERTY HOME.**

The application and funding process can take several months so landowners should plan reforestation activities and file their applications well in advance.

In some cases, reforestation expenses can be deducted from your taxable income. Landowners should check with a qualified forester or tax advisor to learn more about the deductions and ensure all federal tax laws are being followed.

### THERE IS NO BETTER TIME THAN NOW TO REFOREST YOUR LAND.

#### Common Reforestation Methods:

##### Advanced Natural Regeneration

In some areas, harvesting practices encourage abundant regeneration and planting is not necessary. However, it's critical to plan for the protection of existing softwood or hardwood tree seedlings or sprouts in the forest understory during and after the harvest.

##### Natural Regeneration after Harvest

This happens when seeds in the ground or from nearby trees germinate after the harvest. Most hardwood species also can reestablish themselves through sprouting from the roots or stump.

##### Artificial Regeneration

The planting of softwood or hardwood tree seedlings by hand or machine. This method gives you more control of your forest composition and often is more compatible with your business management goals.

The pine seedlings being planted today, through selection, tree breeding and advanced techniques have increased yields from 15% to 25% per acre and have reduced the length of time from planting to harvest.

#### In addition:

- Advances in herbicides and fertilizers have enabled landowners to increase survival and growth.
- The Texas A&M Forest Service District Forest offices assist with reforestation in all East Texas Counties.
- Consulting foresters serve East Texas, assisting landowners to plant and manage their timber. Calling on either of these professionals is the best step you can take toward a successful planting job on your property.
- A list of professionals who provide planting services (herbicide applications, mechanical site-preparation, planting services) can be found at the Texas A&M Forest Service web site: <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/uploadedfiles/FRD/VendorList.pdf>.
- A list of professional Foresters can be found at the Texas A&M Forest Service website: <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/uploadedfiles/frd/referral.pdf>
- The Texas Forestry Association and the Texas Logging Council promote safe and environmentally sound harvesting.
- There are state laws that lower property taxes for forestland.