



College of Natural Resources
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Dear Occupational Licensing Board Oversight Subcommittee,

We are writing to increase awareness of the importance of forestry to the citizens of North Carolina and the economy of North Carolina. The NC forest sector annually generates about \$392 million in timber revenues, and when combined with the revenue from the forest products industries, the combined contribution is about \$23 billion to the economy of NC. Clearly forestry is an important industry in the state of NC, and must remain strong.

Approximately 60 percent of the land in North Carolina is capable of growing forests, and 61% of all NC forests are privately owned. The North Carolina family tree farmer contributes to a healthy NC economy, especially in many rural areas where fewer jobs exist. Many NC family farms contain woodlots and the family manages their forests for a variety of reasons; however, a primary management objective is additional income. It is not uncommon for the sale of the timber to coincide with the need to pay college tuition for a son or daughter, or to purchase needed equipment and provisions for the family farm. Unfortunately, many family tree farmers are uncertain of proper forest management (silviculture) practices, their potential return on investment, or even a fair price for their timber. The down-sizing of the number of county forestry extension agents – the historic “go-to” person for technical information - continues to erode the support system needed by NC family tree farmers and threaten the livelihood of the NC family tree farm. If the forest industry is to remain strong in North Carolina, it is essential that family tree farmers have access to forest management and economic information from skilled foresters with both strong technical and ethical training.

The demand for foresters has significantly increased in the last several years and we (Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources in the College of Natural Resources) have successfully placed over 90% of our graduating seniors in well-paying forestry-related permanent jobs. Employers continually remind us that they prefer NC State graduates because the Society of American Foresters (SAF) – the sole national professional and education forestry organization - has accredited our program. This accreditation provides evidence that the forester has the technical and ethical knowledge and skills to manage forest sustainably.

Respectfully,

Dr. Stith Tom Gower, Head
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Dr. Mary C. Watzin, Dean
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