

# **Certified Forest Reserve Tree Farm**

**April 4, 2007**

Clean and Green is working. The program does provide some tax relief. However it does need some tweaking to give Foresters and Farmers needed help to protect their investment including future growth and productivity.

Attention needs to be focused on wetlands, ponds and lakes on Forest Reserve Acres. Forest Reserve Acres have a fair value assigned under clean and green. The wetlands, ponds and lakes are valued under The Working Agricultural Category. This indicates these lands should provide annual income for meeting expenses. Suggestions for wetland, pond and lake production range from: draining the wet areas, plowing the soil and planting trees to starting a commercial fish hatchery. These special tracts of land are protected by law and must be preserved for future generations. The wildlife residing in these lands need also the protection that man can give them for their continued existence. Extinction would result if man did not care for these forms of life. Therefore, wetlands, ponds and lakes are not productive space to be used for crops and should be valued under a new category of The Clean and Green Law, for water only.

Establishment of a one acre tract as a base or building lot on forest land is discriminatory. This acre plot cannot be subdivided and sold out of the Tree Farm. Sale of individual tracts of land is forbidden under The Clean and Green Law. Sale would also include extra expenses like easements, right of ways and other considerations for the new owner. Other farms have the out buildings and home included in AG use or AG Reserve. Trees are a crop just like oats, corn , milk, hay or meat. AG land also provides an annual income to help pay for the cost of operating a farm. A tree farm may harvest a crop, when all goes well, once or twice in eighty or one hundred and twenty years. Tree farms need the same support by

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including the base lot and out buildings with the land in forest reserve. This base or building lot is assessed far in excess of forest land protected in Clean and Green.

Consideration needs to also be given to the types of tree farms protected in Clean and Green. A large tract of land subdivided into mini estates needs a separate category from a certified working tree farm. The mini estate is usually large enough to qualify for tax relief under Clean and Green. The owner of the mini estate usually has no interest in developing his trees as a resource. Without producing a crop this mini estate does not belong listed with a certified working tree farm. Tax relief is the owners only goal.

A working tree farm has plans in place to provide for future reforestation, sedimentation control, harvesting and wildlife habitat. A professional forester is retained to assist with the plans and managing a harvest when it is needed. Annual expenses may include pest control (caterpillars), vegetation control (ferns), reforestation (planting trees), maintaining trails, tree maintenance from winter storm damage, and other functions to care for our crop. A certified tree farm must be inspected every five years or sooner to ensure all goals and plans are being fulfilled and completed. For these reasons a certified working tree farm should have its own category separate from the mini estate. To help tree farmers a possible change in acreage requirements to qualify for Clean and Green should be reviewed. ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL!!

Yours Truly,



M.H. Burkhardt

Tree Farm No. 0035022