

DWIGHT AND JUDY BATT'S NAMED 2012 NORTH CAROLINA TREE FARMERS OF THE YEAR

The North Carolina Tree Farm Program has selected Dwight and Judy Batts of Macclesfield, North Carolina as the 2012 North Carolina Tree Farmers of the Year. The Batts have been Tree Farmers since 2002 and extremely active in the program.

If it were not for his involvement in the program's leadership, Batts probably would have been North Carolina's Tree Farmer of the Year at any point over the past 10 years, but Dwight did not want to be nominated while he was an active member of the state leadership committee.

After earning Tree Farm status, Batts began to volunteer his time and talent to the North Carolina Tree Farm Program. Batts spent two years as Chair-Elect, three years as Chair and three more years as Past-Chair on the North Carolina Tree Farm's Executive Committee.

While he is no longer involved on the state committee, Batts was recruited to serve on the National Tree Farm Woodland Committee and is the advocacy coordinator

for the North Carolina Tree Farm program, meaning he coordinates communications to forestland owners on public policy that is or may impact forest landowners in the state.

In addition to his work with the Tree Farm Program, Batts has served on the NCFA's Board of Directors for several years as a landowner/Tree Farm representative. He is also an active member of the Wilson County Forestry Association, having been named Wilson County's Tree Farmer of the Year in 2001.

Batts, who is retired after a successful career with Abbott Laboratories, is a fourth generation farmer/forestland owner. His Tree Farm totals 350 acres of forestland and is spread over three tracts within a few miles of each other. Dwight and Judy reside on the Batts Farm, which has been in the family for over 100 years and totals 160 acres. The Robbins Nest and Long Path Tree Farms comprise the rest of the forest acreage in the Tree Farm.

Batts takes an active role in the planning and management of his Tree Farm that is home to pines, assorted hardwoods, and a tremendous variety of wildlife and insects. In fact, he and his family may dedicate almost as much time to their wildlife management (bee hives, quail and waterfowl enhancement projects, quality deer management program, etc.) as they do on their trees. ■

