

**Subject:** An important, emerging opportunity for Project Learning Tree (PLT)  
**Date:** Friday, February 17, 2017 at 8:16:49 AM Pacific Standard Time  
**From:** Tom Martin, AFF President & CEO  
**To:** Michael De Lasaux



February 17, 2017

Dear Mike,

All of you, as our American Tree Farm System (ATFS) State Committee Leadership and State Partners are the backbone of our programs at the American Forest Foundation (AFF). We are very appreciative of your continued support, without which our programs would not be successful. Many of you contribute your time, talents, and resources to both the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) and Project Learning Tree® (PLT). Because you are our strongest supporters, I want to give you a heads-up about a potential change in the national sponsorship of PLT.

This information was also shared on the call we hosted yesterday at 4pm eastern.

AFF has received letters of inquiry from two organizations, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative ([sfiprogram.org](http://sfiprogram.org)) and Earth Force ([earthforce.org](http://earthforce.org)), about their interest in assuming national sponsorship of PLT. The Executive Committee of the AFF Board of Trustees and trustee Laura Downey (Co-Chair of the PLT Education Operating Committee (EOC)) reviewed these letters on February 1 and directed staff to consult with the PLT Education Operating Committee on the letters of inquiry at their meeting in Raleigh, North Carolina last week, February 8-9. They also asked staff to work with those organizations to develop full proposals that could be reviewed by the EOC and considered at the upcoming March AFF Board meeting. AFF's Woodland Operating Committee has also been briefed.

AFF's Board and our EOC are considering these inquiries based on their potential to increase the success of Project Learning Tree and AFF. Project Learning Tree is an incredible program that is important to ensuring today and future generations understand, value, and sustain our forests. AFF's governance discussions are aimed at evaluating whether a change in national sponsorship will increase PLT and AFF's ability to continue to prosper.

The EOC met last week and Dan Beard, Chairman of AFF's Board of Trustees, attended much of the meeting. The two organizations, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (a certification and sustainability organization) and Earth Force (an environmental and civic education organization) made presentations to the EOC so the EOC could begin to get to know them better.

As you can imagine the EOC had a rich and robust discussion about this transfer possibility. A number of things came out of that discussion including the following:

- The EOC identified key "anchor points" against which any proposal should be evaluated and which is guiding the proposal process
- The EOC will provide commentary on any proposals that are received so that the Trustees

- have the benefit of our counsel if they decide to make a change
- The EOC has offered to help advise any transition so that staff have the full benefit of the network's input and thinking prior to any formal transfer

There are a number of important touchstones in our conversations with these organizations that will be key to any consideration of a transfer and they include:

- AFF is requesting each organization commit to continuing the forest lens of PLT and to continuing to engage and support our network including state forestry agency partners.
- AFF is seeking to ensure the PLT staff have a smooth transition and that PLT has operating funds to continue. Both organizations are being asked to commit to continued partnership with AFF and the American Tree Farm System®.
- Both organizations are being asked to present their visions and strategies for PLT that would continue to grow and improve upon the great work that is already underway.

We are sharing this information in the belief that we will benefit (as we always do) from the insight of our network and our partners. If a decision is made to make a transfer we want to make the most of this new opportunity for PLT. I know this may seem to be coming at you pretty quickly but we want to get key information in front of you as quickly as possible.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have questions or concerns.

Tom Martin  
President & CEO  
American Forest Foundation

This message was intended for: [mjdelasaux@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mjdelasaux@ucdavis.edu)

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