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To: PLT Network and Education Operating Committee

From: Dan Beard, Chairman, American Forest Foundation Board of Trustees

Re: Why is AFF Considering Transferring the National Sponsorship of PLT to Another Party

Project Learning Tree has long been an important part of AFF and we value its presence here. In discussions with a partner organization more than a year ago, the question was raised whether AFF would be open to PLT being managed by another organization, if it was in the best interest of PLT and AFF. The then Chair consulted with the AFF Executive Committee of the Board and said that we would at least be open to hearing what they had to say. For us, the question of whether PLT is a good thing to do is long settled – it is a great thing to do, the question is rather will AFF be the best home for PLT to flourish in the future.

During the last year AFF also updated our strategic plans and we were reminded that our Woodlands work and PLT have different customers (landowners vs. educators), different strategies (engaging landowners vs. engaging educators), different products (tools for landowners to perform stewardship on their land vs. curricula and professional development for educators) but they do have some important overlap in their program delivery networks. All of this means that the two programs are managed separately, dividing management attention and time. There may be benefits to each program strand from greater focus.

PLT has made important strides in recent years but work remains to be done if PLT is to reach its full potential through new partnerships, next generation products and marketing. The question is where is PLT most likely to achieve this full potential? I was reminded that these sort of structural changes have happened in our sector before with the spin-off of SFI and even AFF itself in two separate actions by AF&PA.

While it was not relevant when this notion was first raised, nor should it be the primary reason to consider this, it is important to note that this is a natural time for us to think about what's next for PLT with the longtime leader of PLT, Kathy McGlaulin, announcing her retirement.

We have received two expressions of interest in PLT from other organizations. As a Board we will look for a solution that is in the best long-term interest of AFF and of PLT. That is why we are consulting with the Education Operating Committee (EOC) and the broader network about this opportunity. The EOC has already provided an invaluable list of "anchor points" that we should ensure are addressed in any proposal to assume program leadership.

AFF's Board, staff, and Education Operating Committee are committed to helping PLT and AFF reach our full potential and will make our decision based on what we believe is best for both elements of AFF's work.

During the coming weeks we expect to get further feedback from the EOC that will inform our deliberations. Thank you for your efforts to make PLT all that it is.

Thank you,
Dan Beard
Chairman, AFF Board of Trustees