

Maryland Tree Farm Program Update

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Maryland Sustainable Forestry Council
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A brief background...

- National program starts in 1941 (2016 is 75th Anniversary); MD joins in 1948
- From the start, State Committees are primarily administered by forest industry and state forestry agencies; mid-late 1990's to early 2000's ATFS converts to "grassroots" Committee organization
- 2002 – MD DNR staff stop doing routine Tree Farm Inspections (due to budget reductions, challenges with Committee)

A brief background...

- 2008-09 – ATFS achieves international recognition and approval as a forest certification system through PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes), the world's largest forest certification system
- 2009 – existing MD Tree Farm Committee disbanded

A brief background...

- 2009 – Required Sample Inspections initiated by ATFS; MD DNR staff assist with completing these Inspections (but still not doing routine Inspections)
- 2010 – first MD Assessment (Audit); no State Committee in place, and very few Inspections completed since 2002 (8 years of minimal Inspection activity and contact via Tree Farm program...)

Tree Farm status in 2010

- 2010 – 1,105 “Certified” Tree Farms (all existing “Member” Tree Farms in the system were classified as “Certified”)
- 99% with no contact via a Tree Farm Inspection (but 66% had been contacted via another MD DNR Forest Service program within the past 5 years)
- 33% of Tree Farms with no contact at all since 2002 (last year of Forest Service Inspections)

Background continued...

- 2011 – new Committee established; MD DNR staff “re-engage” in completing routine Inspections
- 2011-2014 – MD DNR Forest Service staff address primary 2010 Assessment finding > contacting Tree Farms that have not been contacted in over 10 years and completing routine Inspections

Background continued...

- Also during this time (starting 2011), MD Tree Farm Committee is re-vitalized; new volunteers are recruited to serve on the Committee and MD DNR staff join Committee to provide administrative support
- 2014 – second MD Assessment; ATFS Certification Standards have been updated from 2010, new requirements added (FORI, special sites, etc.)

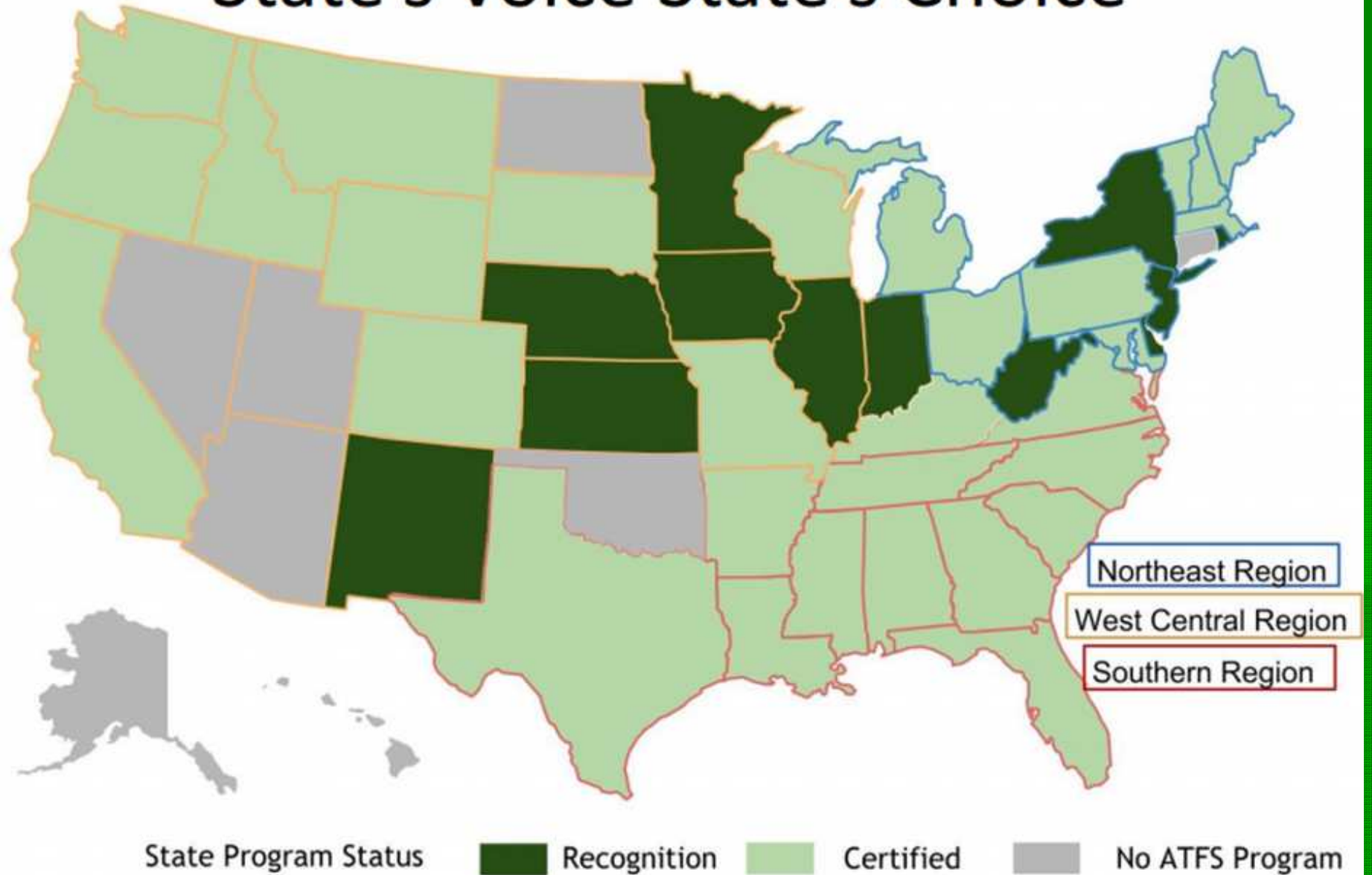
Background continued...

- During 2014 Audit preparations, we discover that virtually 100% of Tree Farms are out of compliance with Standard 1 (Management Plan); they are lacking some of the new required elements in the Plan; Addendums are prepared for Audited Tree Farms, and Assessment goes well
- 2014 to present – MD DNR staff work to prepare Addendums for all Tree Farms in the database

Background continued...

- 2014 to present – MD DNR staff also work to clean up database – e.g., decertify land owners that have sold their property or are no longer interested in the program
- 2015 – MD Tree Farm Committee completes all ATFS Certification Benchmark requirements and chooses to remain in national Certification program (at the end of the ATFS “State Voice, State Choice” decision period)

State's Voice State's Choice



Where we are today...

- August 2016 – MD notified selected for the 2017 Assessment
- January 2017 – Opening Meeting of the Assessment
- January-April 2017 – Documentation and Logistics prep. for Assessment
- May (possibly June) 2017 – Assessment field visits

Tree Farm status in 2016

- October 2016 – Assessment prep begins with further database clean-up; Starting Point:
 - 786 Certified Tree Farms / 110,063 acres
 - 64 Pioneer Tree Farms / 14,891 acres
- December 2016 – Assessment prep. completed:
 - 689 Certified Tree Farms / 83,984 acres
 - 150 Pioneer Tree Farms / 35,909 acres

Tree Farm status in 2016

- What happened?
 - MD DNR Staff “Pioneered” a large number of Tree Farms they thought would not meet the Standards (e.g., no Addendum completed or an up-dated Plan needed)
 - Staff also Decertified 59 Tree Farms that needed to be removed from the program as part of the “final clean-up” of the database

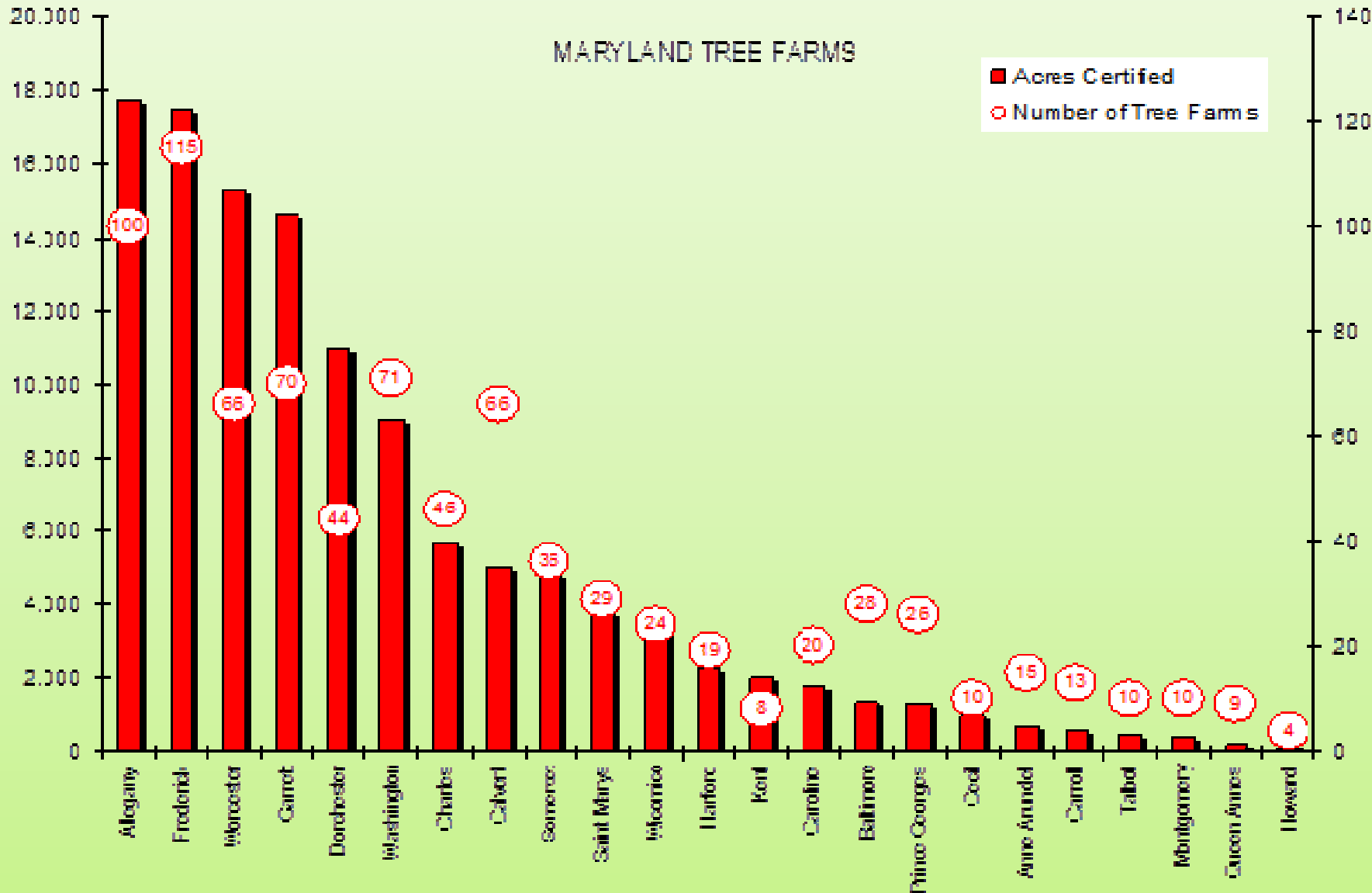
Tree Farm status in 2016

- Any good news?
 - Yes! The good news is that about 82% of Tree Farms currently in the system are “solid” with either Addendums / new Plans > significant progress since the 2014 Assessment (with 0%....)
 - 21 NEW Tree Farms were added to the Tree Farm program in 2016 – the highest number of new additions since the “re-building effort” began in 2011

Tree Farm status in 2016

- What needs to be done next?
 - Complete the Assessment process successfully
 - Work through Pioneer list and bring Pioneer properties back into Certified status via Addendums or up-dated Plans
- Continue to grow the program on a solid footing

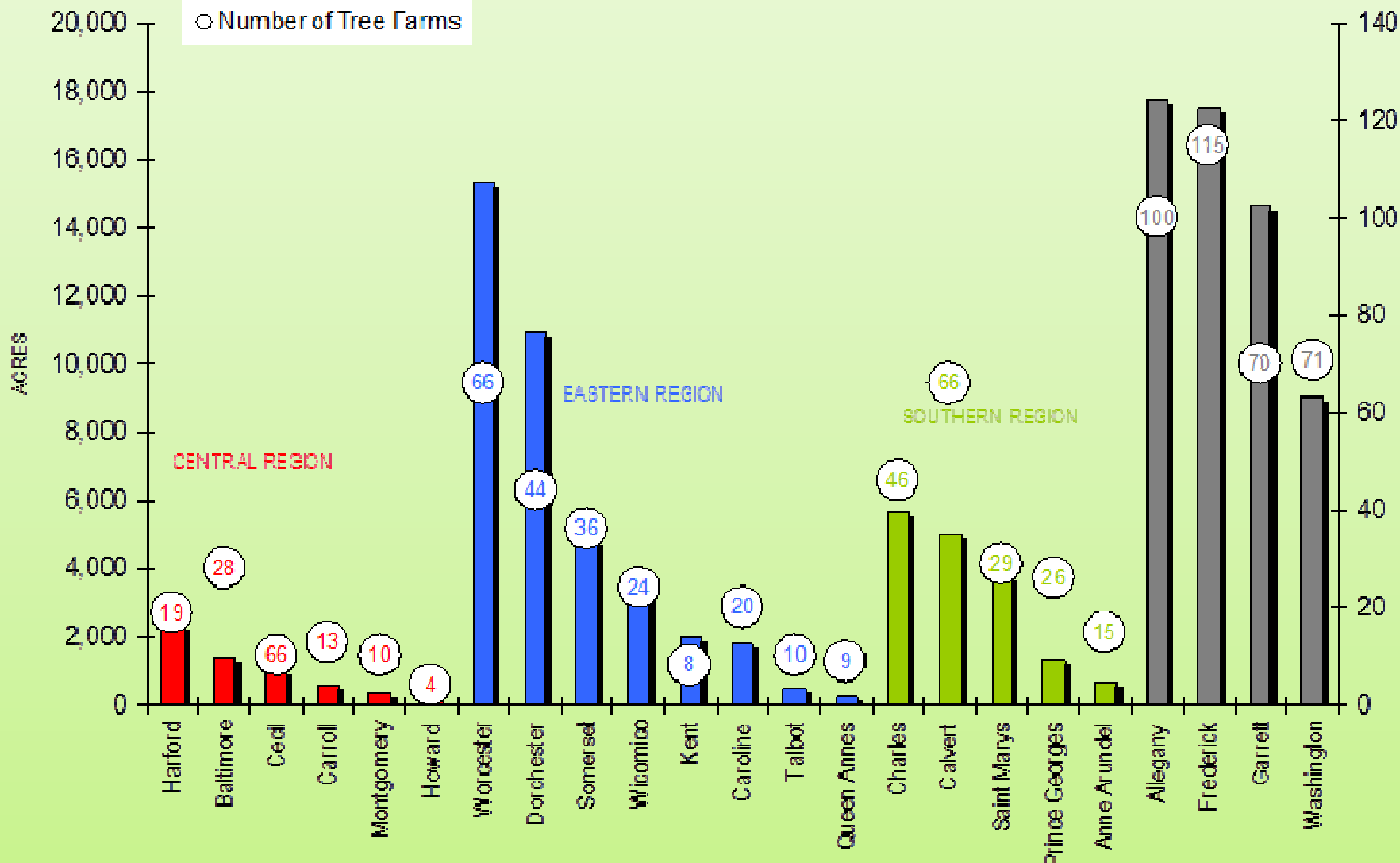
MARYLAND TREE FARMS



MARYLAND TREE FARMS
ACRES AND NUMBERS BY COUNTY
AND DNR REGION

WESTERN REGION

□ Tree Farm Acres
○ Number of Tree Farms



Questions?

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