



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

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Contact: Karen Brandt, VP, Market Affairs
250 710-9672

SFI HEADS INTO 2010 WITH REVISED STANDARD AND SOLID GROWTH

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The independent Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) program will head into 2010 with a revised standard so it can continue to support responsible forest management and address the growing market interest in products from these forests.

“The SFI program’s tremendous growth and rising market acceptance is good news,” SFI President and CEO Kathy Abusow said at the conclusion of the SFI 2009 annual conference today. “The area certified to the SFI program is up 19 percent over last year – at a time when a United Nations report says the overall growth of forest certification has actually slowed, and is now less than 10 percent.”

Since last September, the amount of land certified to the SFI program in North America has grown to 178 million acres (72 million hectares). It has more than 700 chain-of-custody certificates at about 1,600 locations, and 62 fiber sourcing certificates. The *2008-2009 UNECE/FAO Forest Products Annual Market Review* found that chain-of-custody certification has grown rapidly in some regions in 2008 and that, in terms of numbers, the SFI program had the most significant increase.

The two-day conference attracted a record of number of more than 200 delegates, representing every link of the forest supply chain, including small and large landowners, government, professional foresters, conservation groups, academia, aboriginal communities, auditors, buyers, forest products companies and biologists. They learned about developments in key areas such as green building, responsible procurement, and ecosystem services, and were given a preview of the draft revised SFI 2010-2014 Standard, which takes effect Jan. 1, 2010.

Taylor Holley, senior manager of wood and paper sustainability for Walmart, said certification fits with Walmart’s wood sourcing strategy and supplier assessment. “We will continue to support SFI and third-party certification to promote responsible forest practices by our suppliers and to deliver more transparency throughout the supply chain,” she said.

The revised SFI 2010-2014 Standard is the outcome of a one-year open review process. More than 2,000 individuals and organizations were invited to comment, public advisories were issued at every stage, and more than 300 comments were received. Revisions include adding emphasis on the importance of avoiding controversial or illegal fiber sources, strengthening landowner outreach and logger training programs, and better aligning principles with international criteria and indicators.

“As a result of the transparent review process, the revised standard reflects all values, including important provisions for wildlife habitat and biodiversity,” said Scot Williamson, vice-president of the Wildlife Management Institute, and a member of the task force that reviewed comments. “It is both forward-looking and practical.”

Michael Jenkins, president of non-profit Forest Trends led a dialogue of experts in ecosystem services to discuss developments, including the potential role of forest certification. “The rapidly emerging markets for ecosystem services such as carbon, water and biodiversity will have a major impact on forest management,” Jenkins said. “Forest landowners practising sustainable forestry will be well-positioned for these emerging markets.”

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During the conference, Lawrence (Larry) A. Selzer, President and CEO of The Conservation Fund, won the first Dr. Sharon Haines Memorial Award for Innovation and Leadership in Sustainability for his outstanding leadership in bringing together diverse groups to promote responsible forest management. The award, created by SFI Inc. and International Paper, honors Dr. Sharon Haines, who was International Paper's first director of the Office of Sustainability when she died in 2007.

Other organizations and individuals recognized at the conference included:

- Maine won the 11th annual SFI Implementation Committee achievement award for its community outreach and activities to support responsible forest management.
- International Forest Products Ltd. (Interfor) received an SFI Conservation Leadership Award for a partnership with Aboriginal people along British Columbia's Pacific Coast that will ensure a suitable supply of monumental cedar trees to meet long-term cultural needs.
- Crown Pine Timber LP received an SFI Conservation Leadership Award for Biodiversity Research for conservation partnerships with organizations such as the Nature Conservancy of Texas and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department that will protect and restore longleaf pine woodlands in east Texas.
- Georgia-Pacific Corporation received an SFI President's award for its outstanding efforts in increasing understanding of the SFI fiber sourcing program and how it supports family forest owners across North America.
- Irving Consumer Products received an SFI President's award for consumer education activities, including a partnership with Tree Canada that resulted in thousands of trees being planted across Canada.

"The strength of the SFI program is our work on the ground, through community and conservation partners, training programs, research and outreach," Abusow told delegates. "In 2010, we will build on this through our revised standard and increased emphasis on conservation partnerships so we can continue to support responsible forest management across North America."

-30-

Editors: More information about the SFI awards is posted at www.sfiprogram.org/sustainable-forestry-news.php

About SFI Inc.

SFI Inc. is a 501c(3) non-profit charitable organization, and is solely responsible for maintaining, overseeing and improving the Sustainable Forestry Initiative program (www.sfiprogram.org), which is internationally recognized and among the largest in the world. It is one of the fastest-growing forest certification programs with more than 175 million acres (70 million hectares) of SFI-certified forests across North America. The SFI Standard also includes unique fiber sourcing requirements that promote responsible forest management on all suppliers' lands, and a chain-of-custody certification tell buyers how much certified fiber is in a specific product. The SFI forest standard is endorsed by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes, a global umbrella organization that has strict requirements for endorsement. SFI Inc. is governed by a three-chamber board of directors representing environmental, social and economic sectors equally.