Building Aboriginal and Tribal Partnerships

Indigenous peoples in North America and around the world have long relied on forests for cultural, spiritual and material needs. The Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard is based on principles that promote sustainable forest management, including measures to protect water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, special sites, species at risk, and forests with exceptional conservation value. To be certified, forest operations must be audited by an independent, third-party accredited certification body.

Forest Certification to the SFI Standard
Through five organizations which include almost 30 aboriginal or tribal communities, SFI has almost 7 million acres (3 million hectares) of lands owned by or managed for indigenous communities that are certified to the SFI Standard - more than any other certification standard in North America. This is a source of pride for the SFI program, which continues to look for ways to expand certification with Aboriginal and Tribal interests across North America.

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to responsible forestry and future forests. The users of the SFI forest management standard include landowners, land managers, public agencies, Aboriginal communities, Tribes, academic institutions and conservation groups.

SFI Inc. is led by a Board of Directors that represents environmental, social and economic interests equally. SFI has brought indigenous interests onto the Board through the appointment of David Walkem, Chief of the Cooks Ferry Indian Band in southern British Columbia, President of Stuwix Resources Joint Venture which manages a forest licence for eight shareholder First Nations in British Columbia.

“SFI certification addresses much that is important to First Nation communities — from recognizing indigenous people’s rights and traditional knowledge to environmental values such as wildlife habitat to social and economic values such as stable jobs and markets.”

— David Walkem, President, Stuwix Resources
Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The SFI program was developed to meet the needs of communities and land managers in North America, where laws and enforcement are in place to safeguard environmental and social values. A core principle requires that participants comply with all applicable laws — including those related to environmental practices and the rights of indigenous peoples, workers and communities.

Many SFI Standard requirements reflect and support the values and approach to land management important to Aboriginal and Tribal communities:

- Water – Objective 3 requires protection and maintenance of rivers, streams, lakes and other water bodies, a top priority for Aboriginal and Tribal communities that rely on naturally functioning water resources for sustenance.
- Special sites – Objective 6 calls for the protection of special sites and requires program participants manage lands that are ecologically, geologically, historically or culturally important in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities. This would include sites special to Aboriginal and Tribal values.
- Research – Objective 15 requires support for forestry research, science and technology — Aboriginal and Tribal land managers work with a variety of agencies to advance research and combine it with cultural ideals, objectives and values.
- Indigenous Rights - Objective 14 calls for program participants to have a written policy demonstrating their commitment to comply with social laws, such as those covering civil rights, equal employment opportunities, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment measures, workers’ compensation, indigenous peoples’ rights, workers’ and communities’ right to know, prevailing wages, workers’ right to organize, and occupational health and safety.
- Training – Objective 16 requires that program participants train personnel and contractors so they can support sustainable forestry practices — Aboriginal and Tribal communities working in forestry value this opportunity to build capacity within their communities.
- Community involvement – Objective 17 encourages public involvement in the practice of sustainable forestry, which means providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Tribal communities to provide input about plans for traditional lands and their use.

"The Yakama Nation has a traditional timber-based economy so we rely on sustainable forest practices to foster economic development and community growth while maintaining harmony with nature — SFI certification confirms that we are meeting these goals."

— Steve Andringa, Program Manager, Tribal Forestry

Yakama Nation

SFI Certified Lands Under Aboriginal Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CERTIFICATION</th>
<th>PEOPLE</th>
<th>ACRES</th>
<th>HECTARES</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Capacity Forest Management</td>
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<td>45,455</td>
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<td>Lake Nipigon Forest Management Inc.</td>
<td>Animiibiogoosagun Economic Development Trust, Red Rock First Nation Business Trust, Papasay Management Corporation, and Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek Development Corporation</td>
<td>2,224,118</td>
<td>900,069</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>6.8 million acres</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.7 million hectares</strong></td>
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Tk'emlups te Secwepemc: Bridging First Nations Elders with Youth through Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment Development in First Nation Communities

The Tk'emlups te Secwepemc First Nations people of southern British Columbia received $33,900 to work with their elders to describe cultural heritage resources (CHR) in the Kamloops Timber Supply Area and train younger First Nation members to work with the forest industry to protect these resources. Cultural Heritage Resources are defined as the legacy of physical artifacts, tangible attributes, and intangible attributes and values of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. The Forest and Range Practices Act in British Columbia requires the conservation and protection of CHR.

The project will create a sound and consistent method for field assessment of CHRs and develop capacity to conduct CHR assessments. It will also improve CHR identification through providing guidance on traditional knowledge to tribal members. Additionally, Tk'emlups te Secwepemc will aim to improve general awareness of CHR in the forest industry community and raise support for sustainable forest management and the SFI program among the First Nation community.

Heiltsuk First Nation: Cultural Forest Heritage Project

Heiltsuk First Nation will receive $66,000 over two years to develop a database process for recording, tracking, managing cultural resources. Specifically this project will utilize spatial analysis in GIS to improve understanding of location and importance of culturally-modified trees distributed throughout Heilstuk Traditional Territory.

Historically, First Nations people would mark or alter trees in the forest by activities such as peeling bark to make cedar hats, or by carving to build canoes or totem poles. These features are all known as Culturally Modified Trees (CMT). The SFI standard and BC provincial legislation protect these resources. A common understanding and recognition of these resources will help the First Nations people work with industry, government and others to conserve these features. This proposal will enable the Heiltsuk to manage these resources in a modern setting, utilizing modern database tools and building upon existing data while improving access and use of the information within the community and for forest management activities. The project supports several elements of the SFI Forest Certification standard, especially those related to Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value, support of training for forest professionals, and managing lands that are ecologically, geographically, or culturally important in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.

Center for Native Peoples and the Environment – State University of New York – College of Environmental Science and Forestry: Exploring Forest Sustainability with Indigenous Youth

The State University of New York Center for Native Peoples and the Environment will develop and implement an educational program that focuses on the sustainability of ecologically and culturally significant tree species that will be incorporated into the Native Earth Environmental Youth Camp (NEEYC). NEEYC is a camp devoted to sustainable science and traditional ecological knowledge that they run in partnership with the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force.
Managing Public Lands

Two-thirds of the lands certified to the SFI program in North America are publicly owned. The SFI Standard requires that program participants with forest management responsibilities on public lands confer with affected Aboriginal and Tribal peoples so they can understand and respect traditional forest-related knowledge; identify and protect spiritually, historically, or culturally important sites; and address the sustainable use of non-timber forest products on these lands that are of value to Aboriginal and Tribal peoples.

Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business

In May 2013 SFI signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) to assist in growing our relationship, engagement and outreach with the indigenous community by encouraging SFI Program Participants to seek certification under their Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) program and support a dual logo process. In May 2014 for just the second time in history, a forestry company has become a member of the CCAB thanks in part to a strategic partnership formed between SFI Inc. and CCAB. As Western Canada’s largest private timber and land-management company, TimberWest is proud to continue its commitments to forming valuable partnerships with Aboriginal business and communities.

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“Partnering with SFI builds the brand of the CCAB’s progressive aboriginal relations (PAR) program. When you look at products, a dual logo is going to highlight both SFI and PAR. It will be a sign that the product comes from responsibly managed forests that involved progressive Aboriginal relations. It’s a good thing.”

— JP Gladu, President and CEO, CCAB

“We found that a lot of the SFI principles matched the objectives and goals of First Nations communities for long-term management of their land base.”

— Corby Lamb, President, Capacity Forest Management
British Columbia

The SFI Standard re-enforces many of the objectives we currently have in managing our forests — protecting special sites, conservation and community involvement. Through SFI certification we can now communicate these important values to our customers and communities.”

— Miitigoog President Chief Lorraine Cobiness