



By Kathy Abusow

## The Evolution of SFI:

### A New Standard and Marketplace Demand for Forest Certification

**JUST AS FORESTS GROW AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE supply chain increases, the standards we hold ourselves to must evolve too, reflecting the latest in science and market realities. This evolution, this progress is a cornerstone of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) program.**

The first way we look at progress and evolution for SFI is in our Standard reviews, which are conducted every five years and support our principle of continual improvement. In June 2008, SFI launched its third public review process for the SFI forest management certification standard. This is an open process that gathers input from a variety of stakeholders and experts, including Canadians, and will lead to the 2010-2014 SFI Standard, set for release in the autumn of 2009.

Forest certification is no stranger to British Columbia. With over 17 million hectares certified to the SFI Standard in BC, which amounts to more than 25% of SFI's total certified area, SFI holds a significant share of the forest certifications in the province. SFI's public land requirements fit nicely with British Columbia's commitment to public participation in land and resource management planning.

The 2010-2014 Standard has been drafted by the SFI Inc. Resources Committee, and like the SFI board itself, the committee has balanced representation from environmental, economic and social sectors. A balanced approach is vital to creating the best forest management processes, meeting marketplace expectations and ultimately improving forest management on a global scale. And with only 10% of the world's forest certified, leadership in forest management is what is required. Our combined efforts are directed to progress rather than debate.

And as every week passes, we are seeing great signs of progress in the marketplace—signs that point to widespread support of responsible forest management, avoidance of 'green washing,' and recognition of certification programs, including SFI. These marketplace trends are another way we look at progress and evolution at SFI. A few notable examples include:

- The Canadian Competition Bureau's report "Environmental Claims: a Guide for Industry and Advertisers," encourages consumers and businesses to look for certified forest products specifically cites SFI among other forest certification standards.
- Terrachoice Environmental Marketing recognizes SFI in their 2009 greenwashing report and lists SFI as being among the credible eco-labels to look for.

Consumers are looking for ways to incorporate environmental thinking into their purchases, and as a program whose label can be used to identify more than 80% of the certified fibre in North America, SFI is ready to meet this rising demand. In fact, SFI is processing, on average, five on-product label requests every day. The SFI label appears on numerous consumer products including tissue paper, copier paper, food and beverage packaging, office supplies, cosmetic packaging, envelopes and more. The momentum is growing and this progress doesn't appear to be slowing down at all.

SFI is working to grow the demand through targeted market-

ing efforts as well. In early 2009, SFI launched a Canadian communications program to maximize the progress and commitment we are seeing here. We've opened a Canadian headquarters and hired a Montreal-based director of market access for Canada. The Canadian campaign is designed to help inform the forest products market that the innovative work forest professionals are doing on the ground puts them a step closer to meeting their sustainability goals and those of their customers. The program includes advertising, trade events, webinars and face to face customer outreach.

For more information on the Canadian communications program please contact Karen Brandt, SFI's British Columbia-based vice-president of market affairs at karen.brandt@sfiprogram.org. To learn more about SFI's 2010-2014 Standard or how to get certified please visit [www.sfiprogram.org](http://www.sfiprogram.org).

*Kathy Abusow is president and CEO of SFI Inc., a non-profit organization that is solely responsible for maintaining, overseeing and improving the Sustainable Forestry Initiative program ([www.sfiprogram.org](http://www.sfiprogram.org)). Join the discussion on responsible forest management on Kathy's blog—[www.goodforforests.com](http://www.goodforforests.com).*



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