

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BETTINA RING RECEIVES SFI PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Westminster, CO — The Sustainable Forestry Initiative Inc. (SFI) announced the 2018 SFI President's Award at the [SFI Annual Conference](#) today. Bettina Ring, Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry and an SFI board member, is this year's winner. Ring is being recognized for her commitment to encouraging diversity in the forest sector and for her leadership in advancing sustainable forestry.

As a senior executive, Ring inspires other women to take on leadership roles. She is well known for promoting diversity in the forest sector. Through the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) and SFI, Ring has championed the role of women for years.

"I have always felt it is important that our organizations reflect the people in the communities we serve," said Virginia's Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Bettina Ring. "Focusing on diversity and inclusiveness is a critical step to ensure that we create healthy forests, healthy people and healthy communities for all."

Ring is the first woman to be appointed Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry in Virginia. She oversees two agencies along with the Department of Forestry, which alone is worth \$21 billion to Virginia's economy. Ring was appointed to Governor Ralph Northam's Cabinet in January. In October, she added to her responsibilities with an appointment to Governor Ralph Northam's Conservation Cabinet emphasizing the important role that the agriculture and forestry industries play in conservation and environmental stewardship in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

"Bettina's leadership has always helped advance sustainability and diversity in the forest sector. Today, I'm thrilled to say her decision to support certification for Virginia's state forests means that all 68,000 acres of Virginia's state forests are now certified to the SFI Forest Management Standard," said Kathy Abusow, President and CEO of SFI Inc.

The Virginia Department of Forestry sought certification through the SFI Forest Partners® Program. The program works to develop innovative approaches to group and coordinated certification for medium- to large-forest ownerships and smaller and medium-sized mills.

Four market leaders—Meredith (formerly Time Inc.), National Geographic, Macmillan Publishers, and Pearson—are SFI Founding Forest Partners®. Together, they are investing in the future of our forests by making multi-year commitments to increase the source of certified forest products. Hearst Enterprises and Boy Scouts of America also partner with the program.

Ring's leadership is also supporting SFI's efforts to encourage diversity in the forest sector. [A Tree, Is A Tree, Is A Tree 101](#), a project supported by SFI and led by the Black Family Land Trust, is engaging African Americans in Southside Virginia to ensure their family forests can create an income stream and preserve the important heritage of African American land ownership.

Prior to becoming Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, Ring was Virginia's State Forester.

About the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Inc. (SFI).

SFI® Inc. is a sustainability leader that stands for future forests. We are an independent, non-profit organization that provides supply chain assurances, delivers conservation leadership, and supports environmental education and community engagement. SFI works with the forest sector, brand owners, conservation groups, resource professionals, landowners, educators, local communities, Indigenous peoples, governments, and universities. SFI standards and on-product labels help consumers make responsible purchasing decisions. Additionally, we oversee the SFI Forest Partners® Program, which aims to increase supply of certified forest products, the SFI Conservation and Community Partnerships Grant Program, which funds research and community building, and Project Learning Tree®, which educates teachers and youth about forests and the environment. SFI Inc. is governed by an independent three chamber board of directors representing environmental, social, and economic sectors equally. SFI believes caring for forests improves everyone's quality of life. Learn more: sfiprogram.org.

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