



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Five Companies Earn SFI President's Award  
For Making Forest Certification More Accessible**

VANCOUVER, British Columbia – Five companies involved in a partnership to help small- and medium-sized landowners in Maine achieve third-party forest certification received the Sustainable Forestry Initiative<sup>®</sup> (SFI<sup>®</sup>) President's award today.

Time Inc., Hearst Corporation, Verso Paper Corp., NewPage Corporation and Sappi Fine Paper North America, in partnership with SFI Inc. and the American Tree Farm System (ATFS), increased the amount of certified land in Maine through a pilot program that made forest certification to the SFI or ATFS standards more accessible. The award, which recognizes outstanding work and innovative partnerships that promote the value of the SFI program and forest certification, was presented during the 2010 SFI Annual Conference.

“This is a classic example of creative collaboration,” said SFI President and CEO Kathy Abusow. “Five companies committed to responsible sourcing found a way to streamline third-party certification for small- and medium-sized landowners in a state that values all credible certification programs. As a result, a lot more Maine forestland will benefit from certification.”

In the United States, about 10 million family forest owners account for more than 60 percent of private forest lands, and many are not certified because they lack resources and it is not economically feasible. The pilot program began by exploring group certification but ultimately found a way to make the certification process more efficient for small- and medium-sized landowners.

For certification to the SFI 2010-2014 Standard, consultants created and refined a template that medium-sized landowners could use to develop, implement and coordinate management plans – making the process simpler and more consistent. The certification body, NSF International Strategic Registrations, then held a group session for the companies involved – explaining the audit process and setting out an efficient field audit plan. Coordinating the audits saved staff time and travel costs, and meant the audit team had a better understanding of key local issues.

For ATFS certification, an assessment determined that the Maine Forest Stewardship Program, administered by the Maine Forest Service, conformed to the 2004-2009 ATFS Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification. This enables Maine landowners to become members of the Tree Farm System immediately, with annual monitoring and auditing, unless they decline participation.

“Time Inc. helps mills and suppliers work with government officials, landowners and other organizations to promote and encourage higher amounts of certified fiber – and this pilot fits in perfectly,” said Guy Gleysteen, senior vice president of production at Time Inc.

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“As a paper user, Hearst Corporation understands that promoting responsible forestry is not just good for the forests but good for our business,” said David Schirmer, vice president and general manager of Hearst Enterprises.

Abusow said it made sense to conduct the pilot in Maine because of the state’s strong commitment to growing its already significant percentage of certified forests. In 2008, Maine Governor John Baldacci signed an executive order directing state officials to buy wood or paper products from forests certified to a third-party certification standard. “I would encourage more states to follow the lead of Governor Baldacci to raise demand for forest products from certified sources,” Abusow said.

The SFI Standard, the largest single forest standard in the world, is based on principles promoting sustainable forest management, including measures to protect water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, species at risk, and Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value. ATFS is the world's oldest sustainable forestry and certification program, with about 24 million acres/ 10 million hectares of certified forestland in the United States.

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#### **About SFI Inc.**

SFI Inc. is an independent 501c(3) non-profit charitable organization, and is solely responsible for maintaining, overseeing and improving the internationally recognized Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) program ([www.sfiprogram.org](http://www.sfiprogram.org)). Across North America, more than 175 million acres/70 million hectares are certified to the SFI forest management standard, making it the largest single standard in the world. SFI chain-of-custody certification tells buyers how much certified, responsibly sourced and/or recycled content is in a product. The SFI program’s unique fiber sourcing requirements promote responsible forest management on all suppliers’ lands. SFI Inc. is governed by a three-chamber board of directors representing environmental, social and economic sectors equally.