

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 12, 2011

Contact: Jason Metnick
Senior Director, Market Access and Label Use
602-374-6539

**Forest Certification Pilot Achieves Success in Maine
1.4 Million Acres/570,000 Hectares Certified to SFI Standard**

WASHINGTON – An innovative pilot project involving Time Inc., Hearst Enterprises, National Geographic Society, Verso Paper Corp. and Sappi Fine Paper North America has led to 790,000 acres/320,000 hectares of additional forest lands being certified to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative[®] (SFI[®]) Standard in Maine.

The pilot was an extension of an earlier project involving Time Inc., Hearst Enterprises, Verso Paper Corp., Sappi Fine Paper North America and NewPage Corporation that led to 620,000 acres/250,000 hectares certified to the SFI 2010-2014 Standard in 2010 – bringing the total of additional lands certified to the SFI Standard to 1.4 million acres/570,000 hectares.

“The companies involved are among a growing number of corporate leaders who know certification is key to responsible sourcing of forest products, and embrace credible standards such as SFI,” SFI President and CEO Kathy Abusow said today. “And Maine is just a starting point – they are already looking for ways to expand supply options and promote responsible forest practices by encouraging more landowners to certify their forests to the SFI Standard.”

Increasing demand for SFI-certified products is also fueled by the fact it is recognized by respected organizations around the world, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the UK government’s Central Point of Expertise on Timber, and the Competition Bureau of Canada’s *Environmental Claims: A Guide for Industry and Advertisers*. Just last month, the SFI forest standard was endorsed by PEFC International.

The first phase of the Maine pilot project improved access to SFI certification by creating a template so medium-sized landowners could develop, implement and coordinate management plans in a simpler and more consistent manner. The second phase included additional landowners and land managers such as Katahdin Forest Management LLC and Huber Resources Corporation.

“The pilot showed us how the SFI standard’s training and outreach requirements can help us manage our lands responsibly so our forests can deliver environmental values and support local jobs today and into the future,” said Kenny Fergusson, Maine woodlands forester for Huber Resources Corporation.”

Through forest certification, forest operations meet requirements set out in an independent standard such as the SFI 2010-2014 Standard, and this is verified by a third-party audit. The SFI Standard is based on 14 core principles (www.sfiprogram.org/files/pdf/Section2_sf_requirements_2010-2014.pdf) that promote sustainable forest management, including measures to protect water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, species at risk, and Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value. About 10 million family forest owners account for more than 60 percent of private forest lands in the United States. The State of Maine has more than seven million acres/ 2.8 million hectares certified to the SFI Standard.

-30-

About SFI Inc. (www.sfiprogram.org)

SFI Inc. is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization, and is solely responsible for maintaining, overseeing and improving the internationally recognized Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) program. Across North America, about 195 million acres/79 million hectares are certified to the SFI forest management standard, making it the largest single forest standard in the world. SFI chain-of-custody certification tells buyers the percentage of fiber from certified forests, certified sourcing and/or post-consumer recycled content. 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.