



Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Earns Third-Party Certification to SFI on 490,000 Acres of WMA Property

Feb. 6, 2017 – The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) has certified approximately 490,000 acres of state-owned wildlife management area (WMA) forestland through the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard.

“This is another method whereby LDWF can show that we’re using proper stewardship managing the property entrusted to us by the citizens of Louisiana,” LDWF Secretary Jack Montoucet said. “Thanks to the SFI Forest Partners Program, the public can remain confident that our forested WMA land is managed in line with the high standards set by SFI. They can also be assured that these forests will remain healthy and productive for generations to come.”

The SFI Forest Partners® Program was founded by Time Inc., the National Geographic Society, Macmillan Publishers and Pearson, with support from Hearst Enterprises. They are investing in the future of forests by making commitments to increase the source of certified forest products, starting in the U.S. South. By collaborating on shared objectives and linking market leaders directly to stakeholder groups, SFI and its Forest Partners are working together to strengthen forest practices and procurement through certification.

“The long-term success of Louisiana’s forestry industry is dependent on sustainable management of the state’s natural resources,” Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards said. “It significantly impacts employment and manufacturing activity. We believe this endeavor boosts our state’s commitment to landowners and timber directors by investing in responsible forest management.”

SFI’s 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard is based upon principles, goals and performance measures that were developed nationally by professional foresters, conservationists and others with the intention of promoting sustainable forest management in North America. SFI and its many partners work together to balance environmental, economic and social objectives such as conservation of wildlife habitat and biodiversity, harvesting forest products, protecting water quality, providing forest industry jobs and developing recreational opportunities.

“We are thrilled that the LDWF has demonstrated their leadership and commitment to responsible forest management by getting these lands certified to SFI,” said Kathy Abusow, President and CEO of SFI Inc. “By doing so, they are contributing to SFI’s mission as a sustainability leader and helping to conserve important habitats for the Louisiana black bear and other species. The LDWF is also highlighting the importance of well-managed forests, and the communities and markets that rely on them.”

Much of the 490,000 certified acres sits in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley, an area heavily populated by the Louisiana black bear.

“The Louisiana black bear and improving its habitat is certainly high on our list of management concerns,” LDWF Forestry Program Manager Duck Locascio said. SFI’s Forest Management Standard helps provide assurances for the protection of rare species, including the Louisiana black bear.

“Accredited third-party auditors evaluate the sustainability of our management of these Department-owned forestlands,” Locascio said. “Certification to SFI allows us to show the private landowners we work with, that are interested in managing for wildlife and long-term forest

sustainability, that we're doing what we say we're doing and what we do works.”

The primary objective for LDWF is to manage these areas to sustain the wildlife populations associated with the forestlands. The SFI certification will allow LDWF wood products to be accepted into the market as sustainably managed wood. Revenue from that will be put back into management of these lands by LDWF.

“Certification will increase the attractiveness of timber sales on our WMAs,” Locascio said. “That will allow our managers greater opportunity and flexibility to provide wildlife habitat enhancement treatments and, thus, further our primary mission to improve wildlife habitat and provide wildlife-oriented recreational opportunities.”

About the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Inc. (SFI)

SFI Inc. is an independent, nonprofit organization that is solely responsible for maintaining, overseeing and improving the internationally recognized SFI program. SFI works collaboratively with conservation groups, local communities, youth, resource professionals, landowners and countless other organizations and individuals who share our passion for and commitment to healthy forests, responsible purchasing and sustainable communities. Since 2010, SFI has awarded 85 conservation and community partnership grants totaling more than \$3 million to foster education, research and pilot efforts to better inform future decisions about our forests. When leveraged with project partner contributions, that total investment exceeds \$9.5 million. In addition, sustainable forestry is promoted through the SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard and the SFI Chain-of-Custody Standard. SFI on-product labels help consumers make responsible purchasing decisions. SFI Inc. is governed by a three-chamber board of directors representing environmental, social and economic sectors equally. Learn more at www.sfiprogram.org and www.sfiprogram.org/Buy-SFI.

For more information on LDWF's Forest Management Program, contact Duck Locascio, Jr., at dlocascio@wlf.la.gov or 225-765-2346.

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