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MAINE COMMITTEE WINS SFI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Maine won the 11th annual Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Implementation Committee achievement award for a combination of activities promoting responsible forest management and community outreach.

“In Maine, we value all independent forest certification standards, including SFI,” said Maine Governor John Baldacci. “This is borne out by our strong certification record. I congratulate Maine's SFI Implementation Committee for all that it has done for our state’s forests and communities.”

The SFI Implementation Committee was actively involved in the Maine Green Forest Summit, initiated by Baldacci, which raised awareness about forest certification and market opportunities for certified products. It brought together more than 250 groups and individuals – from architects to logging contractors. One of the outcomes was a partnership with Bank of America to help build a home with Habitat for Humanity of Greater Portland.

“It’s not a surprise that our committee is so active – Maine has the highest percentage of certified lands of any state, and three quarters of these lands meet the SFI forest standard,” said Pat Sirois, coordinator of the Maine SFI Implementation Committee. “We owe it to the people of Maine to manage these forestlands well, and involve them in what we are doing.”

Maine, which is 90 percent forestland, has 5.5 million acres (2.2 million hectares) certified to the SFI standard, as well as mills with SFI chain-of-custody or fiber sourcing certification. In 2008, Baldacci directed state officials to buy wood or paper products from forests certified to an independent certification standard such as SFI.

“The Maine SFI Implementation Committee has found countless ways to improve forest practices and deliver community benefits across the state,” Kathy Abusow, president and CEO of SFI Inc., said today. “Members have been involved in everything from Habitat for Humanity to the Maine Green Forest Summit in addition to their day-to-day work supporting small landowners, promoting best management practices, and delivering logger training and public outreach.”

The committee activities include:

- **Training:** The committee has endorsed two logger training programs, which have significantly improved safety performance, and has developed, facilitated and delivered continuing education programs for loggers, foresters and landowners. More than 2,500 forestry professionals and landowners will have received SFI-related training in Maine in 2008 and 2009.

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- **Public outreach:** Maine was the first SFI Implementation Committee to introduce a toll-free number so the public can ask questions about site-specific forest practices. Although more than 95 percent of calls are not related to lands owned by SFI program participants, the information received is used to develop training in areas such as water quality, aesthetics and harvest practices.
- **Best Management Practices:** The committee helped develop a program administered by the Maine Forest Service to monitor best management practices to protect water quality. Stream crossing maintenance represented the greatest opportunity for improvement so the committee, in partnership with the state and federal agencies, is loaning metal bridges and wooden bridge mats to loggers needing temporary crossings, and arranging stream crossing workshops.
- **Landowner outreach** – The committee worked with the Small Woodlands Owners Association of Maine to reach small landowners, and in 2008 paid to distribute 400 copies of the Small Woodlands Owners Handbook.

The independent, non-profit SFI Inc. is one of the largest third-party forest certification programs in the world, with more than 175 million acres (70 million hectares) certified across North America. There are 37 SFI Implementation Committees at state, provincial or regional levels across the United States and Canada, which extend the benefits of the SFI program beyond SFI-certified lands. Committee members support community outreach, promote best management practices and deliver training programs for loggers and forest professionals.

The Maine SFI Implementation Committee, which received the achievement award at the SFI annual conference today, earlier won the award in 2000. Its members include private landowners, public agencies, forest companies of all sizes, conservation groups, educational programs and universities, and they work closely with a wide range of partners, including environmental organizations.

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About SFI Inc.

SFI Inc. is a 501c(3) non-profit charitable organization, and is solely responsible for maintaining, overseeing and improving the Sustainable Forestry Initiative program (www.sfiprogram.org), which is internationally recognized and among the largest in the world. It is one of the fastest-growing forest certification programs with more than 175 million acres (70 million hectares) of SFI-certified forests across North America. The SFI Standard also includes unique fiber sourcing requirements that promote responsible forest management on all suppliers' lands and a chain-of-custody certification, which is used to tell buyers how much certified fiber is in a specific product. The SFI forest standard is endorsed by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, a global umbrella organization that has strict requirements for endorsement. SFI Inc. is governed by a three-chamber board of directors representing environmental, social and economic sectors equally.