



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mississippi Committee Wins SFI Achievement Award

BURLINGTON, VT – Mississippi received the 13th Annual Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) Inc. Implementation Committee Achievement Award today for advancing logger training, building community partnerships and raising awareness about the value of third-party forest certification.

Independent SFI Inc. is the only certification program in North America that has a unique grassroots network of 37 regional, state and provincial SFI Implementation Committees so it can address the diverse values and interests of local communities.

“We know our communities, and we understand how important it is to work with local partners so we can achieve the greatest results, and the SFI program provides us with a mechanism to do this,” said Committee Chair Arnulfo Zendejas of Plum Creek Timber Co. “As a result, we are able to create, promote and deliver programs and materials that reach thousands of people, supporting reforestation, best management practices, biodiversity, and a lot more.”

Members of the Mississippi committee include representatives from environmental groups, forestry and natural resources organizations and agencies, as well as the 25 SFI program participants operating in Mississippi. They were recognized for activities which include:

- maintaining a logger and forester education program that has trained 3,000 individuals over 15 years, and conducted more than 500 workshops attended by 20,000 logging contactors and their employees;
- developing a comprehensive continuing education program for loggers and foresters, and conducting five leader training sessions for 126 industry foresters;
- sponsoring more than 700 forest landowner workshops and courses for more than 10,000 landowners, who own a total of over three million acres of forest land;
- working closely with organizations such as Mississippi State University and the Mississippi Tree Farm Committee to advance logger education and forest certification;
- building conservation and community partnerships with groups such as The Nature Conservancy, Mississippi Wildlife Federation and the Mississippi Children’s Museum;
- providing incentives to state winners of Future Farmers of America (FFA) and 4-H national forestry competitions, stimulating a connection between youth and the Mississippi forestry community;
- supporting community outreach and awareness, with an annual lunch for more than 100 legislators in cooperation with the Mississippi Forestry Association and County Forestry Associations; and
- working with Lauderdale County Habitat for Humanity to build a home in Meridian, MS, made with SFI-certified products and certified to the ANSI ICC 700 National Green Building Standard.

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“The Mississippi committee has demonstrated why community-based SFI Implementation Committees are such an enormous source of pride for our program,” said SFI President and CEO Kathy Abusow, who presented the award at the SFI annual conference. “Their work in community outreach and education is so important for our forests and the communities that depend on them.”

SFI Implementation Committees are an integral part of the independent SFI program, and play a vital role in promoting training and landowner outreach, maintaining the program’s integrity, and supporting and promoting responsible forestry. They offer a forum to provide information or answer questions about local forestry operations, and must have a process for responding to questions about forestry practices by SFI program participants.

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About SFI Inc.

SFI Inc. (www.sfiprogram.org) 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, more than 190 million acres/78 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.