



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

Good for you. Good for our forests.™

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 25, 2008

Contact: Karen Brandt, VP, Market Affairs
703 875-9500 ext 28

RAYONIER WINS SFI® CONSERVATION RESEARCH AWARD

MINNEAPOLIS – A cooperative research project to benefit the growth of one of Georgia's rarest plants has resulted in a Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) Leadership in Conservation Research Award for Rayonier Inc. of Jacksonville, Fla. The project has received global attention, with media coverage in the United States, and as far away as Germany and New Zealand.

Hairy rattleweed (*Baptisia arachnifera*) is found nowhere in the world except in two Georgia counties, Wayne and Brantley. Historically, hairy rattleweed inhabited the longleaf pine flatwoods community, an ecosystem that is maintained by regular fire. The longleaf pine once covered a reported 90 million acres (36 million hectares) in the southeastern United States, while today only an estimated three million acres (1.2 million hectares) remain for a variety of reasons, including an absence of natural fires.

The research project involving prescribed burns was initiated in April 2008 on timberland owned by Rayonier. Georgia Southern University conducted the research, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) financed the burn and the DNR interagency team included representatives from the Georgia Forestry Commission. The award was presented today at SFI Inc.'s annual conference.

"We have witnessed an 80 percent decline in overall abundance since we began monitoring hairy rattleweed populations in 1986," said Jon Ambrose, assistant chief of the Nongame Conservation Section in Georgia DNR's Wildlife Resources Division. "There are no populations on public lands, so the plant's survival depends on the continued good stewardship of private landowners like Rayonier."

"Rayonier has long supported the Georgia Department of Natural Resources in its efforts to conserve rare and endangered species," said Larry Davis, director of Eastern Forest Resources for Rayonier. "We carefully monitor our timberlands for species of special interest, and our foresters are well versed in spotting unique wildlife and plant species, including the hairy rattleweed."

Fire is known to stimulate flowering and improve seed germination and survival for some fire-adapted communities like longleaf pine forests and their associated species; however, nothing has been previously documented concerning the response of hairy rattleweed to fire.

Hairy rattleweed is an important component of the ecosystem because, like all legumes, it fertilizes the soil with nitrogen from the atmosphere. In addition, it typically occurs in areas of high biodiversity and may be an indicator of the quality of the habitat.

-more-



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

Good for you. Good for our forests.™

... 2/2

Dr. Lissa Leege, associate professor of plant ecology and director of the Office of Sustainability for Georgia Southern University's College of Science and Technology, said preliminary results suggest the species will likely benefit with improved recruitment. "If prescribed burning improves the health of *Baptisia arachnifera* populations, this management tool may be the answer to bringing this highly endangered species back from the brink of extinction, while allowing for productive and sustainable forestry operations," she said. "This is important not only for the local plant community, but also globally."

"This project promotes conservation of native biological diversity in Georgia, and supports critical research to help foresters understand how to better protect this rare species," said SFI Inc. President and CEO Kathy Abusow. "This kind of collaboration, involving public agencies, universities and the forest sector, allows us to conserve endangered species while practicing responsible forestry."

SFI Inc., one of the largest forest certification programs in the world, introduced the Leadership in Conservation Award in 2007 to recognize projects with strong partnerships that achieve ongoing and far-reaching benefits.

-30-

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), that is internationally recognized and among the largest in the world. It is one of the fastest growing forest certification programs with 150 million acres (60 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 can communicate to 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.

About Rayonier Inc.

Rayonier Inc. (www.rayonier.com), with headquarters in Jacksonville, Fla., is a leading international forest products company with three core businesses: Timber, Real Estate and Performance Fibers. The company owns, leases or manages 2.6 million acres (more than one million hectares) of timber and land in the United States and New Zealand. The company's real estate holdings include approximately 200,000 acres (81,000 hectares) in the fast-growing counties along Interstate 95 between Savannah, Ga., and Daytona Beach, Fla. Rayonier is structured as a real estate investment trust.