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**SFI® Awards Montana Forest Restoration Committee for Helping Grizzly Habitat and Restoring Forests**

**MONTREAL, Quebec** — Sustainable forestry is helping improve wildlife habitat for grizzly bears and other species in Montana. The Montana Forest Restoration Committee is cooperating with a variety of groups to restore wildlife habitat in three national forests — Bitterroot, Helena and Lolo. But bears are just part of the story. The committee guides forest restoration work to address wider ecological, economic and social needs, including community vitality.



One of the Montana Forest Restoration Committee's many projects involves realigning logging roads and returning other roads to their natural state to help accelerate the ecological recovery of National Forest lands. Enhancing forest habitat is helping restore habitat connectivity and giving grizzly bears more room.

"The key to public support and successful management of grizzly bears is to work with partners in the forest industry, conservation, government and elsewhere to balance multiple land uses, public safety, and careful consideration of grizzly bear needs," said Robert Bonnie, U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment.

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Inc. (SFI) is proud to recognize the Montana Forest Restoration Committee with a 2014 Conservation Leadership Award for its efforts to restore these important forest habitats. "For more than seven years the Montana Forest Restoration Committee has had the vision to manage forests to enhance grizzly bear habitat, conserve and restore important fish-bearing streams, and improve forest health in US National Forests," said Kathy Abusow, President and CEO of SFI Inc.

"Grizzly-human encounters continue to rise. We are managing our lands and how people access them not only to improve forest health but also to reduce confrontations between people and bears," said Gordy Sanders, Resource Manager at Pyramid Lumber and co-chair of the committee.

The committee includes two forest product companies certified to SFI 2010-2014 Fiber Sourcing Requirements — Pyramid Mountain Lumber and F.H. Stoltze Land and Lumber Company. Other partners include Environmental NGOs like The Wilderness Society, citizens at large, the Montana Forestry Association, the Montana Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Forest Service and other forestry organizations.

"The Montana Forest Restoration Committee was a game-changer because people with diverse interests — SFI Program Participants Pyramid Mountain Lumber and F.H. Stoltze, as well as sportsmen and conservationists — all agreed to work together toward solutions," said Jamie Williams, President of The Wilderness Society. "This kind of collaborative effort is the future of forestry — a future that results in strong conservation outcomes."

The SFI program is the only forest certification standard in North America that requires participants to support and engage in research including conservation activities to improve forest health, productivity and sustainable management of forest resources. Pyramid Mountain Lumber and F.H. Stoltze Land and Lumber Company support conservation activities as part of their SFI fiber-sourcing certification.

**About Sustainable Forestry Initiative Inc. (SFI)**

SFI Inc. is an independent, nonprofit organization that is solely responsible for maintaining, overseeing and improving the internationally recognized Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) program. The SFI Conservation Leadership Award has been awarded annually since 2008. Across the United States and Canada, about 250 million acres are certified to the SFI forest management standard. In addition, the SFI program's unique fiber sourcing requirements promote responsible forest management on all suppliers' lands. SFI chain-of-custody certification tracks the percentage of fiber from certified forests, certified sourcing and post-consumer recycled content. SFI on-product labels identify both certified sourcing and chain-of-custody claims to 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](http://www.sfiprogram.org) and [www.sfiprogram.org/Buy-SFI](http://www.sfiprogram.org/Buy-SFI).

**About The Montana Forest Restoration Committee**

The Montana Forest Restoration Committee (MFRC) is primarily a volunteer consensus-based collaborative group, which was formed in January 2007 to help guide restoration of Montana's National Forests. The MFRC articulated a collective vision of ecologically-appropriate, scientifically-supported forest restoration through a set of 13 principles ratified in August 2007. The group published a booklet, "Restoring Montana's National Forest Lands," outlining the process and the restoration principles. The MFRC set up four restoration committees on three National Forests in Montana: Bitterroot, Helena and Lolo. These committees are utilizing the principles in on-the-ground projects on each forest. Learn more at [www.montanarestoration.org](http://www.montanarestoration.org).

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