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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **SFI CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON THE BIGGER PICTURE**

**BURLINGTON, VT** – The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) annual conference put a spotlight on the importance of third-party forest certification programs embracing the bigger picture to achieve the greatest benefits for forests and communities across North America today and into the future.

The conference – **The Bigger Picture: Conservation. Integrity. Community** – brought together 226 delegates, as well as speakers from conservation and Aboriginal communities, the National Council for Air and Stream Improvement (NCASI), World Resources Institute, The Nature Conservancy, TerraChoice, Dovetail Partners, the NAHB Research Center, and many others. Speakers also included three members of the independent SFI Board of Directors, representing Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Habitat for Humanity Canada and Weyerhaeuser Company.

Many of the presentations highlighted ways to bring the responsible forestry messages to a broader audience. “Larry Selzer (President and CEO of The Conservation Fund) gave a compelling keynote address calling for responsible environmentalism and an urgent need to start seeing the social, environmental and economic value of our working forests,” said SFI President and CEO Kathy Abusow. “SFI will be looking for ways to deliver these important messages to as many people as possible.”

Scott Robertson, an associate in the Aboriginal Law Group at Gowlings in Ottawa, moderated a panel on links between the SFI forest standard and traditional Aboriginal values. “Given the alignment between traditional values and SFI standard requirements, it became obvious that there are many ways SFI can engage with Aboriginal communities,” he said. Five million acres/two million hectares of lands held by or managed for Aboriginal peoples are certified to the SFI forest management standard – more than any other standard in North America.

“At PepsiCo, we aim to have the smallest possible environmental impact on land. Therefore, we work with our supply chain to only buy wood fiber-based packaging from responsible sources, such as those certified to SFI,” said Mary White, director, Sustainable Package Sourcing, PepsiCo Inc. “We are inspired by science-based sources such as the Sustainable Packaging Coalition that take an inclusive approach to certification.”

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Abusow said certification must embrace the bigger picture if it is to continue to advance sustainable forest management and provide customers and consumers with responsible choices. “The range of delegates and expert speakers at the conference is evidence SFI is succeeding,” she said. “By mobilizing and invigorating the many people and organizations who work with us, we are able to improve knowledge and achieve results on the ground.”

The largest SFI conference ever, the event was from Sept. 13 to 15 and attracted a broad cross-section of interests from across the United States and Canada, including conservation groups, academia, aboriginal and community leaders, forest professionals, government officials, auditors, customers, biologists, landowners and representatives from companies, large and small. The 2012 SFI Conference will be held Sept. 11 to 13 in Milwaukee, WI.

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#### **About SFI Inc.**

SFI Inc. ([www.sfiprogram.org](http://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.