



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SFI FOREST CERTIFICATION CONTINUES RAPID GROWTH

WASHINGTON – The astounding growth of the independent Sustainable Forestry Initiative[®] (SFI[®]) program is a sure sign forest certification is increasingly being used as a tool to demonstrate responsible forest management.

SFI Inc. released its 2008 progress report today, *Sustainable Forestry Initiative: Growing Stronger Together*, which showed a four-fold increase in SFI chain-of-custody certifications in 2008, and continued steady growth in forest and fiber sourcing certifications. At the end of 2008, the SFI program had 154 million acres (62 million hectares) of certified lands across the United States and Canada, 407 chain-of-custody certificates at 1,020 locations, and 39 fiber sourcing certifications – and the numbers continued to climb in 2009.

“The numbers are solid indicators of growth but I find what's behind them is even more compelling,” SFI President and CEO Kathy Abusow said today. “Behind them is a lot of hard work and dedication by the many people who work with us – members of conservation groups, researchers, forest professionals, public employees and representatives of companies who remain committed to sustainable forest management despite incredibly tough times in the forest industry and in the economy.”

Abusow said the SFI program, one of the largest and most widely accepted forest certification programs in the world, is backed by strong endorsements. “Whether it’s the American Consumer Council, the Competition Bureau of Canada, TerraChoice’s North American Environmental Choice eco-logo program or marketplace surveys – it is clear consumers and end users view the SFI program as proof that products are from well-managed forests.”

She said that a time when there is increased sensitivity to environmental claims, the SFI program earns this trust by making sure its labels and claims conform with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission, the Competition Bureau of Canada and ISO 14020’s nine principles for Environmental Labeling designed to promote accurate, verifiable and relevant environmental declarations and claims.

The SFI External Review Panel, a volunteer group of experts representing conservation, environment, professional, academic and public organizations, advises the SFI Inc. Board of Directors on ways to improve the SFI program. Among other things, the panel ensured the 2008 progress report accurately reflects the program’s progress, and its members continue to monitor the open review process that will lead to the revised SFI 2010-2014 Standard. The standard review process has included two public consultation sessions as well as opportunities for on-line input and seven regional workshops across North America.

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“The continued growth of the SFI program is encouraging news to those of us who support the concept of sustainable forestry, and want to see more independently certified forestlands,” said Panel Chair Michael Goergen, Executive Vice President of the Society of American Foresters. “We are also impressed by the commitment of SFI participants to continual improvement through a standard review process that is a model of open, transparent and responsible consideration of public input, scientific and economic factors.”

In addition to the start of the standard review process, the progress report highlights additional achievements through 2008, including:

- **Habitat for Humanity partnerships:** Local SFI Implementation Committees joined forces with Habitat for Humanity chapters to build homes in Hibbing, Minn., and Portland, Maine, using materials from sustainable sources.
- **Investments in forest research:** SFI program participants invested \$88.9 million (US) in 2008 for forest research, bringing the total invested since 1995 to \$1.07 billion (US).
- **Support for forestry training:** Through the SFI program or its recognition of other programs, 6,627 resource and logging professionals were trained in responsible forestry in 2008 – 117,405 have been trained since 1995.
- **Simpler, clearer labels:** The SFI program introduced new on-product labels after thorough market testing, making it easier for consumers to find the information they want.
- **Recognition for conservation leadership:** SFI Leadership in Conservation Research Awards went to projects with strong partnerships led by Rayonier Inc. in Georgia and UPM-Kymmene Inc. in the Canadian Maritimes. The Minnesota Division of Forest Capital Partners LLC won the SFI and Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation Wildlife Stewardship Award for a landmark conservation easement in northern Minnesota.

The progress report is posted on the SFI website at www.sfiprogram.org. More information about the SFI External Review Panel can be found at www.sfiprogram.org/who/external-review-panel.php.

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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 over 160 million acres (65 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 schemes, 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.