



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Allison Welde, SFI Director
Conservation Partnerships and Communications
202-596-3452

SFI INVESTS IN CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

WASHINGTON – The Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) forest certification program announced its new Conservation and Community Partnerships Grant program today, furthering its long-standing commitment to research and bringing together diverse partners, including SFI Program Participants, conservation groups, and several government agencies, to deliver conservation benefits across North America and tackle illegal logging issues globally.

SFI Inc.'s initial commitment of \$675,000 to fund nine projects includes a contribution of \$307,500 in 2010 alone. SFI Inc. chose projects that met key criteria, which included, supporting requirements of the SFI 2010-2014 Standard, showing how SFI certification complements existing government initiatives in North America, and building partnerships which promote responsible forestry. Through the involvement of partners, the projects are expected to leverage additional resources and achieve a total value of \$2.7 million.

"Key components of the SFI program are support for research and landowner outreach, and these requirements in our standard have already led to countless benefits in forests and communities across North America," SFI President and CEO Kathy Abusow said today. "These projects are directly linked to standard requirements and will facilitate partnerships so even more benefits are gained on-the-ground – they will reach far beyond certified lands."

The projects announced today include partnerships with numerous SFI Program Participants and are led by:

- **Bird Studies Canada**, along with the Canadian Wildlife Service and Regroupement Québec Oiseaux will work to conserve bird biodiversity across Canada.
- **Clemson University** will help South Carolina landowners adopt and implement practices to improve wildlife habitat on managed forest lands in partnership with local conservation organizations and government agencies.
- **Forest Trends** will hold the fourth Potomac Forum on Illegal Logging & Associated Trade, helping U.S. suppliers navigate legality in the global supply chain.
- **South Coast Conservation Program**, in partnership with nine First Nations holding tenure in British Columbia, will help identify and protect habitat and populations of forest-dependent species at risk along British Columbia's Pacific Coast.
- **The American Chestnut Foundation** will help restore the American Chestnut, including test plantings of blight-resistant trees.
- **The National Council for Air and Stream Improvement**, working with State Natural Heritage Programs and NatureServe will pilot a habitat-based approach to protecting at-risk imperiled species and communities.
- **The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation**, along with 11 state agencies and two Canadian provinces, will enhance the biodiversity of young forest habitats, helping to reverse the declines of some 80 species at risk.
- **The Ruffed Grouse Society** will hold six Wisconsin Coverts workshops, in partnership with the University of Wisconsin's Extension and the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology to help private landowners in the Great Lakes Region manage their land for wildlife.
- **World Resources Institute** will create an online dynamic risk assessment tool to reduce illegal wood imports into the United States.

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Close to 200 million acres/80 million hectares are certified to the SFI forest management standard in North America – making it the largest single forest standard in the world. The SFI 2010-2014 Standard is based on 14 core principles that promote sustainable forest management, including measures to protect water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, species at risk, and Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value. As well as helping program participants meet the SFI Standard's comprehensive requirements, the projects will build knowledge that will become part of future standards.

Since 1995, SFI-certified organizations have invested more than \$1.1 billion US for research activities that improve the health, productivity and responsible management of forest resources. The program also responds to diverse local needs across the United States and Canada through a unique network of 37 SFI Implementation Committees.

Marvin Brown, Chair of the SFI Board of Directors and Oregon State Forester, said the Conservation and Community Partnerships Grants complement the work of state and provincial agencies in the United States and Canada. "SFI certification already achieves more on the ground by going beyond legal requirements, and these collaborative projects will take this even further," he said. "It is building on the enthusiasm, creativity and knowledge of conservation groups and others who are keen to find ways to protect all forest values and advance forest management practices."

"This grant initiative demonstrates SFI's leadership – it harnesses the power of its many partnerships to build knowledge and raise understanding that enables all those concerned about responsible forest management and procurement to more effectively deal with emerging issues and opportunities," said Dr. John A. Helms, Professor Emeritus in Forestry at the University of California, Berkeley, and a member of the SFI External Review Panel. "This initiative is one more example of how the SFI program reaches beyond land certification and leads to ensuring that North American forests remain diverse, healthy, and productive."

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Editors: Background information about the Conservation and Community Partnerships Grant program and initial 2010 projects is attached. For additional information on each project please visit <http://www.sfiprogram.org/forest-conservation/grant-program.php>

About SFI Inc.

SFI Inc. is a 501(c)(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 close to 200 million acres/80 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.



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

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Backgrounder

SFI Conservation and Community Partnerships Grant Program

Through its Conservation and Community Partnerships Grant Program, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) program has made an initial investment of \$675,000 – \$307,500 in 2010 alone – to support cooperative projects that deliver tangible, on-the-ground benefits to forests. Through the involvement of partners, the projects will leverage additional resources and achieve a total value of almost \$2.7 million.

In its request for proposals, SFI Inc. invited applications for projects that support partnerships between organizations interested in improving forest management in the United States and Canada, supporting responsible procurement globally. Proposals were also requested to demonstrate how the project complements existing government initiatives in North America and which involves collaboration with government agencies.

Areas of the SFI 2010-2014 Standard highlighted through the grant application process included:

- the role of certified forests in the emerging bioenergy/carbon markets;
- avoidance of controversial sources, including illegal logging in the global supply chain;
- improved wildlife habitat management and conservation of biodiversity; and
- support for activities that benefit communities involving organizations such as government agencies, Aboriginal communities and universities.

SFI Support for Conservation Research and Community Outreach

The SFI program is the only independent third-party forest certification program that includes research among its standard requirements. Since 1995, SFI-certified organizations have invested more than \$1.1 billion US for research activities that improve the health, productivity and responsible management of forest resources.

The SFI 2010-2014 Standard includes a new principle for research, which states: "To support advances in sustainable forest management through forestry research, science and technology." Objective 15 of the standard calls on program participants to support forestry research, science and technology; and expands the definition of relevant research to include the environmental performance of forest products and climate change impacts on forests, wildlife and biological diversity. The SFI 2010-2014 Standard is posted at www.sfiprogram.org/sustainable_forestry_initiative_standard.php.

The SFI program also responds to diverse local needs across the United States and Canada through a unique network of 37 SFI Implementation Committees. In 2009, these committees contributed a total of \$3 million to support local programs such as education and training for loggers and foresters, and outreach to family forest owners – bringing the total since 1995 to \$55.1 million.

SFI Inc. values and facilitates this research and outreach work through awards and support for collaborative activities, including the SFI Leadership in Conservation Research Awards.

SFI Standard Requirements

The SFI program introduced a Requirements kit with its new SFI 2010-2014 Standard, bringing together all the program components into one binder – including the forest and chain-of-custody standards, rules for label use, procedures, guidance and more. This is in keeping with the SFI program's efforts to ensure its standard is practical and that all guidance materials are clear, avoid unnecessary complexity and are easy to find. The materials are posted at www.sfiprogram.org/sustainable_forestry_initiative_standard.php.

The Requirements kit includes a section for optional modules, allowing the SFI program to offer guidance on emerging issues or opportunities such as bioenergy and carbon markets or conservation easements.

Summary of Initial Projects for 2010

Bird Studies Canada (www.bsc-eoc.org) will lead a three-year project to provide science-based data and tools to improve forest habitat management beyond regulatory compliance for the conservation of bird biodiversity and species at risk across Canada. Partners include the Canadian Wildlife Service, Regroupement QuébecOiseaux, and Breeding Bird Atlas projects in the Maritimes, Ontario, Manitoba, and British Columbia, and the following SFI program participants – NewPage, Port Hawkesbury Corporation, Bowater Mersey Paper Company Ltd., Abitibi-Bowater, J.D. Irving Ltd., Acadian Timber, and Louisiana-Pacific Corp.

Project contact: **George Finney, President, Bird Studies Canada**
gfinney@birdscanada.org or 519-586-3531, ext 116

Clemson University (www.clemson.edu) forestry and natural resources department will help South Carolina landowners of all sizes adopt and implement practices to improve wildlife habitat on managed forest lands. Practices include promoting aquatic and riparian areas, managing for landscape wildlife habitat features, conserving rare species and communities, protecting special sites, and encouraging partnerships with natural resource agencies and conservation organizations. Partners include Upstate Forever, Nemours Wildlife Foundation, Quality Deer Management Program and the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Project contact: **Dr. Greg Yarrow, Professor of Wildlife Ecology, Clemson University**
gyarrow@clemson.edu or 864.656.7370

Forest Trends (www.forest-trends.org) will receive support for the fourth Potomac Forum on Illegal Logging & Associated Trade in the fall of 2010, which will help U.S. suppliers, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, navigate legality in the global supply chain. The project involves a workshop and policy brief to help U.S. suppliers comply with market and policy demands for legal, wood products, such as the revised U.S. Lacey Act and emerging European Commission legislation and public procurement policies. SFI has sponsored previous Potomac Forums, along with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), U.S. Forest Service and the World Bank.

Project contact: **Kerstin Canby, Director, Forest Trade and Finance, Forest Trends**
kcanby@forest-trends.org or 202-298-3015

South Coast Conservation Program (www.sccp.ca) will develop materials and tools to identify and protect habitat and populations of forest-dependent plant and animal species at risk on 40.7 million acres/16.5 million hectares of forest on British Columbia's Pacific Coast. The multi-partner landscape-based conservation program will build on existing collaborative work to update and expand a field guide/training tool on species at risk for the forestry sector; develop and deliver a training package to field personnel/forestry practitioners, planners and First Nations; and complete a technical review of grizzly bear critical habitat polygons. Partners include the British Columbia Ministry of Environment, as well as SFI program participants Capacity Forest Management (which has certified forest tenures held by coastal First Nations to the SFI standard) and International Forest Products Ltd. (Interfor).

Project contact: **Tamsin Baker, Regional Manager, Lower Mainland Region, South Coast Conservation Program**
TBaker@conservancy.bc.ca or 250-356-2348

The American Chestnut Foundation (www.acf.org) will receive support to establish some of the first plantings of blight-resistant American Chestnuts in the southeastern United States. The American Chestnut, historically a critical food source for wildlife and valuable generator of high-value wood products, was functionally removed from its historic range (Maine to Georgia) during the turn of the century by an exotic fungal disease. This two-year project is a core first step in a process to restore the species, and will also include development of a web-based database to monitor and assess test plantings and management guidelines for reintroduction. Partners include the Tennessee Tree Farm state committee as well as the Tennessee SFI Implementation Committee and program participants Georgia-Pacific and MeadWestvaco (MWV).

Project contact: **Bryan J. Burhans, President & CEO, The American Chestnut Foundation**
bryan@acf.org or 828-281-0047



The National Council for Air and Stream Improvement (www.ncasi.org) will pilot a habitat-based approach to protecting at-risk imperiled species and communities. There will be three pilots, one each in the Southeast, Pacific Northwest and Great Lakes regions. In each pilot region, the investigators will develop a regional list of imperiled species and communities of conservation concern to the forest products industry and a relational database describing key generalized habitat types where the species and communities are known to occur. Researchers will summarize known occurrence of the species and communities by key habitat types, then develop plans for a field test of a habitat-based approach to protecting them. Partners include NatureServe and SFI program participant Weyerhaeuser.

Project contact: **T. Bently Wigley, Manager Sustainable Forestry Research, NCASI**
bwigley@ncasi.org or 864-656-0840

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (www.nfwf.org) will enhance the biodiversity of young forest habitats through a two-year project, helping to reverse the declines of some 80 species of highly imperiled birds and other wildlife species dependent on shrublands and early successional forest habitat. There will be technical assistance to help SFI program participants voluntarily integrate State Wildlife Action Plan and Partners in Flight bioregional management recommendations into their forest operations. Project partners include the Ruffed Grouse Society, National Wild Turkey Federation and Wildlife Management Institute, and government resource agencies in New York, Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, West Virginia and Virginia. Thirty 30 SFI program participants in 14 mid-west, northeast and central east coast states and two Canadian Maritime provinces are also involved.

Project contact: **Daniel R. Petit, Director, Bird Conservation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation** daniel.petit@nfwf.org or 330-814-3186

The Ruffed Grouse Society (www.ruffedgrousesociety.org) will increase the impact of Wisconsin Coverts – A Woodland Wildlife Management Program for Private Landowners in the Great Lakes Region by holding six Coverts workshops over three years. The Wisconsin Coverts Project enlists and educates coverts cooperators about management opportunities for their land for wildlife so they can lead by example and help others better understand their role as land stewards. Partners include the University of Wisconsin – Extension, the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology at UW – Madison, and SFI program participant Louisiana-Pacific US.

Project contact: **Gary Zimmer, Senior Regional Biologist, Ruffed Grouse Society**
rgszimm@newnorth.net or 715-674-7505

World Resources Institute (www.wri.org) will lead a three-year project to create an online dynamic risk assessment tool. The Forest Legality Alliance Risk Tool will reduce the proportion of wood and forest products of illegal origin that is imported into the United States by helping importers and other stakeholders exercise due care within their procurement process. The project is one activity of the Forest Legality Alliance, made up of many retail, industry, government and conservation organizations.

Project contact: **Adam Grant, Senior Associate, World Resources Institute**
agrant@wri.org or 202-729-7623