



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 2, 2008

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

## **SFI® INC. INVITES COMMENTS ON FOREST STANDARD**

ARLINGTON, VA – The independent non-profit Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Inc. (SFI) is putting forward its existing SFI 2005-2009 forest certification standard for a 60-day public comment period that starts today (June 2) as part of the process leading to the SFI 2010-2014 standard.

This is the third public review of the SFI forest management certification standard. The three-chamber SFI Inc. Board of Directors, which represents environmental, social and economic chambers equally, is totally responsible for the SFI program, including the review process.

“Broad public and stakeholder involvement has always been an important element of SFI forest certification – it is why we have such a strong, science-based standard today,” said Kathy Abusow, President and CEO of SFI Inc. “The review process is easily accessible to all individuals and groups sharing our interest in responsible forest management.”

In addition to the opportunity launched today, there will be a second 30-day public comment period in early 2009, and SFI Inc. will also hold regional stakeholder meetings and workshops across the United States and Canada. Respondents can use an online survey posted at [www.sfiprogram.org](http://www.sfiprogram.org) or download a copy of the survey template to provide comments in writing. Comments should identify a requirement from the SFI forest standard, suggest improvements along with the rationale, and provide recommended new language.

The External Review Panel, an independent group of 18 distinguished volunteer experts who advise the SFI Inc. Board of Directors on ways to improve the SFI program, will once again monitor the review process.

“Our panel found that the process leading to the development of the current standard was open, fair and inclusive, and incorporated the ideas from the many comments submitted,” said Dr. Richard Brinker, Chair of the External Review Panel and Dean, School of Forestry & Wildlife, Auburn University. “I am impressed that SFI Inc. is continuing this open approach, with two opportunities for public comments and workshops across North America, and is once again committed to considering all comments thoroughly.”

SFI Inc. manages a sustainable forestry certification program that is internationally recognized and among the largest in the world. Across North America, 151.4 million acres (61.3 million hectares) are certified to the SFI 2005-2009 Standard, which is based on principles and measures that promote sustainability, including measures to protect water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, species at risk and forests with exceptional conservation value. The SFI Standard also includes unique fiber sourcing requirements that promote responsible forest management on all suppliers’ lands. In addition, SFI Inc. has chain-of-custody certification, which tells buyers how much certified fiber is in a specific product.

- more -

.../2

SFI Inc. completes a review of its forest standard every five years, which is consistent with international auditing protocols. “The five-year review cycle supports our principle of continual improvement,” Abusow said. “It allows the SFI program to address changing values and new issues, such as how forests can mitigate climate change and the emerging role of carbon management.”

Each public review has led to additions to the forest management certification standard. The 2005-2009 Standard included new provisions to conserve old-growth forests and imperiled/critically imperiled species; to strengthen procurement from jurisdictions outside of North America and supply chain monitoring; and to address invasive exotic species. It also introduced new performance measures and indicators related to the certification of public forestlands, including requirements to confer with affected indigenous peoples.

The 2002-2004 standard introduced, among other things, measures to protect forests with exceptional conservation value, and provisions to help prevent illegal logging and to promote the conservation of biodiversity hotspots and major tropical wilderness areas.

The 2010-2014 Standard will be drafted by an SFI Standards Review task group. Like the SFI board itself, the task group has balanced representation from environmental, social and economic sectors. The task group will maintain records of all comments and how they were handled, and will post comments on its website in an easy-to-review format.

Board members must approve the 2010-2014 Standard by fall 2009, and it takes effect on Jan. 1, 2010. SFI-certified companies have one year after a new standard is approved to implement all the new requirements, and must demonstrate conformance to the new requirements at their next surveillance audit.

For further information about the standard review process, contact Allison Welde at [Allison.Welde@sfiprogram.org](mailto:Allison.Welde@sfiprogram.org) or call 703 875-9500, ext. 24.

-30-

### **Editors Note: Two backgrounders attached**

#### **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. SFI Inc. directs all elements of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative program including the SFI Standard, chain-of-custody certification, fiber sourcing requirements, labeling and marketing. SFI Inc. is overseen by a three-chamber Board of Directors representing social, environmental and economic sectors. SFI and its 228 program participants work with others to promote responsible forest management, to ensure that the standard reflects the latest science and emerging values, and to provide the marketplace for forest products that are a sound environmental choice. For more information about the SFI program, visit [www.sfiprogram.org](http://www.sfiprogram.org)



# SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

*Good for you. Good for our forests.™*

## **BACKGROUNDER – PROCESS LEADING TO SFI 2010-2014 FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD**

June 2 to August 4, 2008

- First 60-day public comment period

August 2008

- SFI Inc. staff synthesize all comments and post them at [www.sfiprogram.org](http://www.sfiprogram.org)
- The External Review Panel reviews all comments to ensure they are given appropriate consideration

September to November 2008

- The SFI Standards Review task group prepares a first draft of the revised standard
- The SFI Inc. Resources Committee appoints members to additional ad hoc groups if necessary for specific reviews

December 2008

- First draft of proposed changes is reviewed by SFI Inc. Board, and posted on the SFI Inc. website

January 2009

- Second 30-day public comment period begins

January to March 2009

- SFI Inc. conducts regional workshops throughout the United States and Canada to present and discuss proposed revisions with SFI stakeholders and program participants

April 2009

- SFI Inc. staff synthesize comments for the SFI Standards Review task group, which prepares a second draft of the revisions

May-June

- The SFI Standards Review task group prepares a final draft

July 2009

- The final draft is presented to the SFI Inc. Board for a 45-day review as required under board bylaws

August 2009

- SFI Inc. Board meets to discuss and vote on the changes

September 2009

- Once the SFI Inc. Board approves the final 2010-2014 Standard; it is posted on the SFI Inc. website and printed copies are available within four weeks

Jan. 1, 2010

- The SFI 2010-2014 Standard takes effect

By Dec. 31, 2010

- Program participants must have implemented all elements of the 2010-2014 Standard



## **BACKGROUND -- SFI GOVERNANCE**

### **SFI® Inc. – Balanced and Independent**

Credible third-party forest certification programs represent diverse forest interests. Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Inc. (SFI) is a fully independent non-profit organization devoted to improving responsible forest management through the comprehensive SFI program. Its volunteer Board of Directors represents environmental, social and economic interests equally.

### **Equal representation**

The three-chamber structure of SFI Inc.'s Board of Directors ensures that the SFI program represents economic, environmental and social needs equally. Board members include representatives of environmental, conservation, professional and academic groups, independent professional loggers, small family forest owners, public officials, labor and the forest products industry.

The board is totally responsible for the SFI program – its 18 members set and implement the forest certification standard following a public review process, and it is the only body that can modify the standard.

Article 3 of the SFI Inc. bylaws calls for:

- six directors from non-profit environmental /conservation organizations representing the environmental sector;
- six directors from community or social interest groups such as universities, labor, independent professional loggers, family forest owners or government agencies representing the social sector; and
- six directors from the forest, paper and wood products industry or other for-profit forest ownership or management entities representing the economic sector.

In order to ensure that no sector can control the future of the corporation, board actions must be approved by a minimum of 80 per cent of those present – which must include at least two representatives from each sector or a proxy.

As terms expire or vacancies occur, a nominations committee representing all three sectors prepares a list of nominations for election to the board.

### **Registered charitable organization**

SFI Inc. is a registered charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code, which means it cannot be organized or operated for the benefit of private interests and its net earnings cannot benefit any private shareholder or individual. The program operates across North America.

Like other third-party forest certification programs, SFI Inc. receives fees from users, which include forest product companies; colleges and universities; and state, provincial and county agencies, as well as foundations, and conservation and other non-profit organizations.



The SFI certification process is based on auditing principles and procedures outlined in internationally recognized standards. Audits are conducted by independent certification bodies accredited through the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB) or the Standards Council of Canada (SCC).

George Fenwick, President, American Bird Conservancy, and a former member of the SFI Inc. Board of Director, says:

**“The SFI program succeeds because it fosters collaboration – bringing together stakeholders from all walks of life – from environmental groups, from the academic community, from the forest sector.**

**“Members of the SFI Board and its related committees share a commitment to responsible forest management. They work toward a common vision, finding real, tangible solutions to some of the most pressing environmental issues while at the same time providing the marketplace with the products they need day to day.”**

**Board composition from Article 3 of the SFI Inc. bylaws:**

“The Board of Directors shall strive to represent a diversity of stakeholder groups. It is desirable that Directors have knowledge of sustainable forest management. Six Directors shall be drawn from the forest, paper and wood products industry or other for-profit forest ownership or management entities. These Directors will comprise the Economic Sector of the Board. Six Directors shall be drawn from nonprofit environmental/conservation organizations. These Directors will comprise the Environmental Sector of the Board. The remaining six Directors shall be from other stakeholder groups including community or social interests. These Directors will comprise the Social Sector of the Board.”

List of board members [www.sfiprogram.org/board.cfm](http://www.sfiprogram.org/board.cfm)

SFI Inc. bylaws [www.sfiprogram.org/miscPDFs/SFIIncBylaws.pdf](http://www.sfiprogram.org/miscPDFs/SFIIncBylaws.pdf)