



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Allison Welde, Manager,
Conservation Partnerships and Communications
703 875-9500 ext 24

SFI INC. INVITES COMMENTS ON DRAFT SFI 2010-2014 STANDARD

ARLINGTON, VA – The independent Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) Inc. is inviting comments until March 2 on the draft SFI® 2010-2014 Standard, which is posted at www.sfiprogram.org.

As part of its public review, the non-profit forest certification program will host seven workshops across North America:

- February 18 in Sacramento, California
- February 19 in Vancouver, British Columbia
- March 3 in Minneapolis, Minnesota
- March 26 in Charleston, South Carolina
- April 2 in Little Rock, Arkansas
- April 7 in Portland, Maine
- April 16 in Montreal, Quebec

SFI third-party certification supports responsible forestry practices across North America through a standard based on principles that promote sustainable forest management, including measures to protect water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, species at risk, and forests with exceptional conservation value. To be certified, forest operations must be audited against the current SFI Standard, which is enhanced through an open public process every five years. This is the third full review – it began in June 2008 and will lead to the SFI 2010-2014 Standard, which takes effect on Jan. 1, 2010.

“The changes proposed in the draft SFI 2010-2014 Standard reflect views we received during an initial 60-day public review process last summer – we invited 2,000 individuals and organizations to comment on the SFI 2005-2009 Standard and publicized the process to reach even more people,” said SFI Inc. President and CEO Kathy Abusow. “This helps to ensure the standard addresses the latest science, changing values and new issues. For example, proposed changes refer to the role forests play in mitigating climate change and bioenergy production.”

The draft standard is posted on the SFI website (<http://www.sfiprogram.org/standard-dev-2nd-comment-period.php>), and written comments will be accepted through an on-line survey for 30 days. Those who were invited to comment or submitted comments last summer will receive an email with their existing username and password. New reviewers can visit the SFI website to request a username and password. Individuals who want to register to attend a workshop can also find more information or register on-line at this site.

The revised draft standard also aims to strengthen the unique SFI fiber sourcing requirements, which address the fact that only 10 per cent of the world’s forests are certified. Currently, program participants who buy fiber from lands that are not certified in North America must promote responsible forestry on these lands. If they source fiber offshore, additional requirements apply, including measures to avoid controversial sources of supply including illegally logged forest products.

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“In 2007, 95 percent of raw material used by those involved in our fiber sourcing program was provided by trained loggers and resource professionals,” Abusow said. “The proposed changes should enhance this positive work by requiring, rather than encouraging, the use of trained loggers and resource professionals.”

Members of the SFI Resources Committee are responsible for developing the SFI 2010-2014 Standard. Like the three-chamber SFI Board of Directors, which is solely responsible for the SFI program and the standard development process, the Resources Committee has balanced representation from environmental, social and economic sectors. The SFI External Review Panel, an independent group of volunteer experts who advise the SFI Inc. Board on ways to improve the SFI program, is also monitoring the review process to ensure comments are adequately reflected in the revised standard.

Over time, standard development processes and related public input have led to significant changes in the SFI program. For example, the SFI 2005-2009 Standard included new provisions to conserve old-growth forests; 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 SFI 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.

For further information about the standard development process, contact Allison Welde at Allison.Welde@sfiprogram.org or call 703 875-9500, ext. 24.

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Editors: Two backgrounders are attached – one summarizes significant revisions in the draft SFI 2010-2014 Standard and one outlines the standard review process.

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), that is internationally recognized and among the largest in the world. It is one of the fastest-growing forest certification programs with 154 million acres (62 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.

BACKGROUND
PROPOSED REVISIONS IN THE DRAFT 2010-2014 SFI STANDARD

The SFI 2005-2009 Standard promotes sustainable forest management through nine principles, 13 objectives, 34 performance measures and 102 indicators developed by professional foresters, conservationists, scientists and others. The SFI Standard is reviewed through an open public process every five years, and is subject to continuous improvement so it can incorporate the latest scientific information and respond to emerging issues. The review process for the SFI 2010-2014 Standard began in June 2008, and the revised standard will take effect on Jan. 1, 2010.

Following are examples of some of the proposed revisions – the full draft 2010-2014 SFI Standard is posted on the SFI website at www.sfiprogram.org/sfi-standard.php

- Currently, program participants sourcing fiber outside of North America must promote the conservation of biodiversity hotspots and major tropical wilderness areas as defined by Conservation International. This has been expanded to include protection for areas on the Alliance for Zero Extinction's database of last known sites for vertebrate species. The Alliance for Zero Extinction (www.zeroextinction.org), a joint initiative of biodiversity conservation organizations from around the world, aims to prevent extinctions by identifying and safeguarding key sites.
- The definition of Forests with Exception Conservation Value, a term introduced in the 2002-2004 SFI Standard, has been added, making it clear these are areas with critically imperiled and imperiled species and communities.
- Fiber sourcing requirements have been strengthened to require, rather than encourage, the use of trained loggers and resource professionals when fiber is sourced from lands that are not certified. There are also expanded logger training requirements to address invasive exotic plants and animals, special sites, and emerging technologies and markets such as carbon offsets and bioenergy.
- Requirements for public reporting, currently part of audit procedures and qualifications, have become a new objective for greater emphasis and transparency, with added clarity that public audit summaries must be prepared by the third-party certification body.
- Revisions to improve consistency with international accreditation body standards include a full re-certification every three years instead of every five years, and clarification that annual surveillance audits must take place every 12 months. The continuous certification option has been removed because it is not consistent with accreditation body standards.
- References added to the preamble and performance measures and indicators recognize that sustainable forestry makes an important contribution to mitigating climate change and adapting to changing ecosystems. The new provisions are tempered by the recognition that this is emerging science and regulatory frameworks for the role of managed forests for carbon management are evolving. New language defines bioenergy feedstock production in the context of the standard.
- Organizational changes and clarifications throughout the document include improvements to align principles with objectives and note consistency with the Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators, and changes to ensure the standard appropriately recognizes U.S. and Canadian interests, laws and regulations, social issues and terminology.



BACKGROUND

UPDATED PROCESS LEADING TO SFI 2010-2014 FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD

August 4, 2008

- 60-day public comment period ends

August 2008 to January 2009

- SFI Inc. staff synthesize all comments and post them at www.sfiprogram.org
- SFI External Review Panel reviews all comments to ensure they are given appropriate consideration
- SFI Resources Committee prepares first draft of revised standard for review by SFI Board

January 2009

- SFI Inc. announces regional workshops
- First draft of proposed changes is reviewed by SFI Board, and posted at www.sfiprogram.org
- 30-day public comment period begins Jan. 30

February to April 2009

- SFI Inc. conducts regional workshops throughout the United States and Canada to present and discuss proposed revisions with SFI stakeholders and program participants
 - o February 18 in Sacramento, California
 - o February 19 in Vancouver, British Columbia
 - o March 3 in Minneapolis, Minnesota
 - o March 26 in Charleston, South Carolina
 - o April 2 in Little Rock, Arkansas
 - o April 7 in Portland, Maine
 - o April 16 in Montreal, Quebec
- 30-day comment period ends March 2

March to May

- SFI staff synthesize comments for the SFI Resources Committee, which prepares a second revised draft standard for review by the SFI Board

May 2009

- Final draft standard is presented to SFI Board for a 45-day review as required under board bylaws

July 2009

- SFI Board meets to discuss and vote on the changes

September 2009

- The SFI 2010-2014 Standard is released at the SFI annual conference.

Jan. 1, 2010

- The SFI 2010-2014 Standard takes effect

By Dec. 31, 2010

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