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The Lyme Timber Company and WMI Receive SFI Conservation Research Award

BURLINGTON, VT – The Lyme Timber Company of Hanover, NH, and the Wildlife Management Institute received a Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) Conservation Leadership Award for Biodiversity Research today for leading a project that is improving forest habitat for the American woodcock in northern New York State.

The Lyme Timber Company, a private timberland investment company, and the Wildlife Management Institute, a non-profit conservation, scientific and educational organization, are collaborating to implement the Northern Young Forest Initiative, a landscape-scale habitat restoration project in the Adirondack region. SFI-certified Lyme Adirondack Forest Company owns about 240,000 acres/97,000 hectares in the area. Other project partners include the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

“This project demonstrates the power of partnerships in achieving conservation goals,” said SFI President and CEO Kathy Abusow, who presented the award at the SFI annual conference. “It also shows how conservation projects directly tied to SFI standard requirements can result in improved forest management plans and can guide future activities for all SFI program participants.”

About half of the forest land in the Adirondack region is publicly owned and designated as a forest reserve, and there are stringent harvest regulations on privately owned forests. Over time, this has led to a reduction in young forests, and a decline in a large number of species, including the American woodcock, which thrive in early successional forests. The woodcock is identified by the New York Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan as a species of greatest conservation need in northern New York State.

“Working with project partners, we modified our harvesting techniques on more than 50 sites, creating forest conditions where woodcock can mate, rear their broods, feed and roost,” said Sean Ross, director of forestry operations for Lyme Timber. “When we acquired the Adirondack property in 2006, just 76 acres were in a young forest condition. We have created nearly 11,000 additional acres of suitable habitat, and in 10 years we aim to have more than 15,000 acres – about five percent of our forest – of brushy early successional woodland, as important habitat for American woodcock and other species.”

As part of the project, survey routes were established in 2006 in the harvested stands. Annual monitoring of woodcock in these areas shows the average number of birds observed per route has increased to nine in 2010 from three in 2006.

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"We've believed for a long time that responsibly managed forestlands, like those certified to the SFI standard, provide significant benefits to wildlife," said Scot Williamson, vice president of the Wildlife Management Institute. "This project illustrates how we can work successfully with landowners to integrate improved habitat and wildlife management along with the production of forest products."

The partnership has also involved outreach through events and meetings to inform the public, government officials, local conservation groups and the forestry community about the importance of supporting harvesting techniques that help create and maintain early successional forests.

SFI Inc. manages the largest single forest certification standard in the world, and is unique among independent third-party forest certification programs in that it includes research as one of its standard requirements. Since 1995, SFI program participants have contributed more than \$1.2 billion for research activities that improve the health, productivity and responsible management of forest resources. The SFI conservation leadership award was introduced in 2007 to recognize projects with strong partnerships that achieve ongoing and far-reaching benefits.

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About SFI Inc.

SFI Inc. (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.

About the Young Forests Initiative

The American woodcock (*Scolopax minor*), also called the timberdoodle, lives in young forest and shrubby areas often near streams, rivers, and wetlands. In the past, woodcock were abundant because plenty of young forest – also called "early successional habitat" – existed in their range. But many brushy areas have grown into mature forest, and thus the species' population has fallen by about one percent each year since the 1960s. The Young Forests Initiative brings together partners to create healthy, productive tracts of young forest through logging, planting native shrubs and trees, controlled burning, and other habitat-management techniques – efforts that help woodcock, along with many other wild creatures including birds such as golden-winged warblers, brown thrashers, and whip-poor-wills; mammals including bobcats and cottontail rabbits; and reptiles like bog turtles and wood turtles. Learn more at www.timberdoodle.org.