



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nature Conservancy of Canada and SFI Partner to Protect Bat Populations

KAMLOOPS, British Columbia – The Nature Conservancy of Canada has received a Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) conservation grant to support protection of bat populations in southern British Columbia. The grant enables research to document the locations and health of bat habitat, which will in turn assist conservationists in taking greater measures to protect this sensitive species.

The project will receive a total of \$50,000 through the SFI Conservation and Community Partnerships Grant Program over two years. In addition to the Nature Conservancy of Canada, partners include BC Bat, the British Columbia Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, and SFI-certified International Forest Products Ltd.

"Bats are key indicators of ecosystem health, and we know bats and their habitat are on the decline in British Columbia," said Tim Ennis, Director of Land Stewardship in British Columbia for the Nature Conservancy of Canada. "The Nature Conservancy of Canada is excited to participate in this important bat conservation project that aims to identify and protect bat habitat and keep it free from introduced disease."

When bats are disturbed during hibernation they may abandon their sites, using important energy reserves they need to survive the winter. Human access to bat hibernation sites may also spread pathogens such as white nose syndrome, a fungus that is causing mass bat die-offs across North America.

"Because the SFI Standard includes specific conservation and research requirements, SFI program participants are always looking for new ways to conduct research to better promote biological diversity, protect wildlife habitat and manage special sites," SFI President and CEO Kathy Abusow said. "This project uses a collaborative approach to achieve all of these objectives, and provide land managers with new ways to protect bat populations."

Last year, SFI Inc. created the Conservation and Community Partnerships Grant program to build on the more than \$1.2 billion SFI program participants have contributed since 1995 for research activities, including forestry research, science and technology. The Nature Conservancy of Canada project is the third SFI Conservation and Community Partnerships Grant awarded for 2011, and brings the total for all of the SFI grants awarded to-date to almost \$1 million. Through the involvement of partners, these forestry research projects will leverage additional resources, achieving a total investment of more than \$3 million.

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, and encourages community involvement. The SFI program is the only forest certification standard in North America that requires participants to support and engage in research activities to improve forestry forest health, productivity and sustainable management of forest resources.

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About SFI Inc. (www.sfiprogram.org)

SFI Inc. is an independent 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 73 million hectares/180 million acres are certified to the SFI forest



management standard, making it the largest single standard in the world. SFI chain-of-custody certification tells buyers the percentage of fibre from certified forests, certified sourcing and/or post-consumer recycled content. The SFI program's unique fibre 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.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (www.natureconservancy.ca)

The Nature Conservancy of Canada is Canada's leading land conservation organization, working to protect valuable natural areas and the plants and animals they sustain. Since 1962, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and its partners have helped to protect more than 800,000 hectares/2 million acres coast to coast. Through strong partnerships, the Nature Conservancy of Canada works to safeguard natural areas so that our children and grandchildren will have the chance to enjoy them.

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