



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **SFI Conservation Grant Promotes Conservation Easements in Southeast U.S.**

WASHINGTON – The Land Trust of Tennessee, the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust and Wildlands Network received a Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) conservation grant today in support of their work to help private landowners and government agencies in the southeastern United States protect special forest sites through working-forest conservation easements.

The three non-profit conservation organizations were awarded a total of \$65,000 over two years to work with hardwood forest owners, government agencies and SFI program participants to encourage owners to consider easements, and to offer advice and technical assistance.

"The SFI program is helping us equip landowners and public agencies with the information and expertise they need to protect more forests through conservation easements," said Camilla Herlevich, Executive Director of the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust.

"We welcome the opportunity to be part of this creative collaboration," said Doug Rodman, Middle Tennessee Project Manager of the Land Trust of Tennessee. "Working-forest conservation easements yield so many benefits – they protect biodiversity, reduce habitat fragmentation, improve air and water quality and increase carbon storage."

Project activities will include community education and outreach workshops, training and technical assistance, and production of materials showing the value of easements. Other project partners are the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission; and The Nature Conservancy – North Carolina Chapter, along with SFI program participants, Louisiana-Pacific Corporation and Resource Management Service LLC.

A working forest conservation easement is a voluntary contract between a landowner and a land trust, government agency or other qualified organization in which the owner places permanent restrictions on future uses of the property to protect forest resources, while still managing it responsibly. It can result in potential tax benefits for the landowner, who still owns the property.

"Easements are one of the voluntary market-based tools we promote in the SFI standard to broaden the practice of sustainable forestry," SFI President and CEO Kathy Abusow said. "This partnership also builds on standard requirements that help to conserve biodiversity and wildlife habitat, protect special spaces and encourage community involvement in sustainable forest management."

"Conservation easements are a great business solution for forest landowners," said Ron Sutherland, Science Director of Wildlands Network. "By promoting connectivity, they can help to sustain wildlife for the long term."

Last year, SFI Inc. created the Conservation and Community Partnerships Grant program to build upon the more than \$1.2 billion SFI program participants have contributed for research activities, including forestry research, science and technology since 1995.

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 the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Inc. ([www.sfiprogram.org](http://www.sfiprogram.org))**

SFI Inc. 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 180 million acres 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 Land Trust for Tennessee ([www.landtrusttn.org/](http://www.landtrusttn.org/))**

The Land Trust of Tennessee is a private non-profit organization that works to protect the unique character of Tennessee's natural and historic landscapes and sites for future generations. Since 1999, they have worked with private landowners to protect nearly 60,000 of land throughout Tennessee. Conservation easements are their primary tool for the permanent protection of working lands, natural resources, wildlife habitat, recreational lands and open space.

**About the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust ([www.coastallandtrust.org/](http://www.coastallandtrust.org/))**

The North Carolina Coastal Land Trust was formed in 1992 to enrich the coastal plain communities of the state through conservation of natural areas and working landscapes, education and the promotion of good land stewardship. Since its inception, the Coastal Land Trust has protected over 47,000 acres/19,000 hectares of barrier island beaches, riparian corridors, and other special natural areas.

**About Wildlands Network ([www.twp.org/](http://www.twp.org/))**

Wildlands Network is restoring, protecting and connecting the best wild places throughout North America because people need nature, and nature needs space to survive. It is connecting the biggest parks and healthiest conservation lands to create Wildways<sup>®</sup> landscapes that are large enough to sustain wildlife for the long-term.

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