

2016 CONSERVATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARIES

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Projects Recommended For Funding

Lead Organization Name: NatureServe

Title of Proposal: A Metrics-Based Approach to Quantifying the Contribution of SFI-Managed Lands to Conservation

Key Priority Area: Biological Diversity

Headline: SFI and Partners Collaborate at an Unprecedented Scale to Measure Biodiversity on 280 Million Acres of Forestland

Geographic Location: United States

Project Overview: NatureServe proposes to lead a team of partners in a pilot application of metrics that evaluate the conservation value of sustainably managed forestlands. Through an inclusive process, we will test, refine, and document the methodology in one ecosystem and explore ways to transfer our approach to other SFI-managed forest ecosystems.

By partnering directly with NCASI on the GIS foundation for the project, the effort can ultimately be scaled across SFI certified lands. The project itself will focus on a specific forest type (open pine) in the South, utilize data directly from Program Participants for this “test run”, and establish a model for biodiversity metrics that will be adaptable to all forest types.

Project Partners: Hancock Timber Resource Group, Resource Management Service, LLC, Rayonier, Weyerhaeuser, NCASI, Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources, Florida Natural Areas Inventory, Maine Natural Areas Program

Funding Timeline: Total: \$ 120,000

2017	2018	2019	2020
\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000	-	-

Note: Annual distribution of funds is an estimate.

Leveraged Funds: \$ 284,000

Relevancy to SFI: This project directly relates to a number of focal areas outlined in Section 2 of the RFP for Conservation Grant applications that will address conservation values through a specified set of metrics.

- 1) Through an inclusive process with diverse partners, we propose to develop and apply a set of metrics for rapidly assessing the relative condition and function of matrix ecosystems that will “quantify the contribution of SFI-certified forests, or SFI Fiber Sourcing, toward the attainment of broadly accepted conservation goals in landscapes of conservation interest”.
- 2) By collaboratively establishing metrics for wildlife habitat quality, ecological integrity, and landscape context, we will directly contribute to “rapid ecological or biological assessment on selected SFI certified forestlands to quantify their biodiversity-related values.”

- 3) Key species will be selected from a list of species identified through established, existing regional conservation analyses (such as a State Wildlife Action Plans or Landscape Conservation Designs by LCCs), representing diverse habitat requirements, and finalized by the project team and partners.
- 4) By developing and piloting metrics that can be adapted for managed forest lands throughout the US and Canada, the study will lay the groundwork to “examine the difference in value added of SFI-certified forests versus other forests, in regards to conservation attributes of broad interest (e.g. water, climate adaptation, biodiversity, carbon, etc.)”.

Communication Opportunity:

The scale and impact of this project will approximate that of the ABC project, but will operate at a different level, in that it will attempt to develop an over-arching biodiversity metric based on forest types and condition. Even more importantly, it will also be the first operational attempt to use the NCASI-generated database of Program Participant GIS information to conduct an assessment. In the long run, this project could give rise to using that database for a broad range of inquiries, reaching across water, carbon, etc.

For these reasons, communications regarding this study can focus on two attributes:

- Scale
- Cooperative elements – an unprecedented model of collaboration

Comments: This is a direct manifestation of the original directive of the Sounding Board -- the project will build overarching biodiversity metrics, and test-drive the concept using a guarded GIS database held in confidence by NCASI. This application of GIS across Program Participant ownerships was cited by the Sounding Board as a critical need to attain scale and credibility in Conservation Impact. Partners are strong, and implications for scale are huge, and stretch across Conservation Impact topics. NatureServe actually scaled down their original concept to try to keep costs in line, but at our request inserted elements to ensure scalability of project results.

Lead Organization Name: Saskatchewan Research Council (SRC)

Title of Proposal: Carbon Stocks and Stock Changes on SFI-Certified Landscapes in the Prairie Provinces of Canada

Key Priority Area: Climate Change – Carbon

Headline: Carbon Value of Managed Forests in Three Canadian Provinces

Geographic Location: North America

Project Overview: Forest carbon stocks on selected SFI-certified landscapes will be estimated through a modelling exercise based on data from SFI members and provincial jurisdictions, using the Canadian Forest Service’s Carbon Budget Model (CBM). A roadmap indicating how a carbon assessment for the entire North American SFI landbase will also be provided.

Project Partners: Canadian Forest Service- Carbon Accounting Team, Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment Forest Service, Manitoba Sustainable Development, Forestry and Peatlands Management, Weyerhaeuser, Saskatchewan Meadow Lake OSB (Tolko), LP Canada Ltd. - Swan Valley Forest Resources Division

Funding Timeline: Total: \$ 170,000

2017	2018	2019	2020
\$ 85,000	\$ 85,000	-	-

Note: Annual distribution of funds is an estimate.

Leveraged Funds: \$ 450,000

Relevancy to SFI: This project addresses the following Priority Project type listed in the 2016 Conservation Grant Program RFP:

“Application of any established, internationally accepted methodology for quantifying the carbon sequestered by SFI certified forests”.

The CBM is used by the Canadian government for annual reporting on carbon stocks and carbon stock changes resulting from Land Use, Land-use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The model is consistent with internationally accepted approaches for LULUCF reporting as described in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 2003; IPCC 2006; Kurz et al. 2009). In addition, it has been widely applied to Canadian forests at the operational level, resulting in several peer-reviewed publications (e.g. Kurz et al. 2008 a, b), and the model is used internationally, e.g. it has been applied to 26 countries of the European Union (Pilli et al. 2016 a, b).

Communication Opportunity: SRC has proven itself a willing communicator in a variety of media including Op-eds and presenting at the SFI Annual Conference.

Comments: This project is a significant step toward developing a carbon number for SFI managed forests in North America. Dr. Johnston has assembled a strong partnership with Dr. Werner Kurz of the CFS, as well as other leading provincial partners and companies. The project cost is significant; SFI staff plans to meet with SRC and CIF to negotiate greater funding support from CIF, potentially reducing SFI's obligation to the project. We are also investigating a shift in geography to better reflect provinces of greatest relevancy to SFI, but this may be difficult since the listed provincial governments are significant contributors to this work.

Lead Organization Name: Department of Renewable Resources, Boreal Avian Modelling Project, University of Alberta

Title of Proposal: Building partnerships and identifying research needs to enhance conservation value of managed forests

Key Priority Area: Biological Diversity

Headline: SFI Helping Achieve Continental Conservation of Forest Birds.

Geographic Location: CA – Boreal

Project Overview: Our work addresses Objective 4 in SFI’s Standard: Protection of Biological Diversity. We will collaboratively identify the data, science, and tools needed to enhance the conservation value of sustainable forest management for bird biodiversity and species at risk, execute one research case study, and initiate validation of our national models.

Project Partners: American Bird Conservancy (ABC), Bird Studies Canada (BSC), Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), Canadian Forest Products Ltd (Canfor), Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), Louisiana-Pacific (LP), Nature Canada, Université Laval, University of British Columbia (UBC), West Fraser, Weyerhaeuser

Funding Timeline: Total: \$ 30,000

2017	2018	2019	2020
\$ 30,000	-	-	-

Leveraged Funds: \$ 47,750

Relevancy to SFI: Our project will “measure, demonstrate, or establish methodologies to demonstrate, the conservation-related values of SFI-certified forestlands” through the following specific project focal areas outlined in the RFP for Conservation Grant applications.

Project Focal Area	Relationship to our Project
“Studies which measure the numbers or percentage of species by group (e.g., reptiles, birds , mammals) that are utilizing SFI-certified forests, at a regional, sub-national or national scale.”	Our national-scale density maps allow us to estimate the numbers and percentages of ~80 passerine species that use SFI-certified forests during the breeding season.
“Studies that quantify the contribution of SFI-certified forests, or SFI Fiber Sourcing, toward the attainment of broadly accepted conservation goals in landscapes of conservation interest.”	By focusing on species at risk and regionally-specific priority species, our project will quantify the potential contribution of SFI-certified forests toward maintaining habitat for species of interest in the boreal forest.
“Studies that examine the difference in value added of SFI-certified forests versus other	By comparing population sizes and community composition within SFI-certified forests versus

forests, in regards to conservation attributes of broad interest (e.g. water, climate adaptation, biodiversity , carbon, etc.).”	other forests, our project will examine the value added by SFI certification toward maintaining biodiversity.
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To encourage SFI involvement in the project, we will:

- Invite SFI representatives to the workshop.
- Provide project updates to SFI on a regular schedule (e.g., quarterly), if desired.
- Ensure SFI has the opportunity to review all material intended for public circulation.

To promote the outcomes of our project, we will:

- Attend the 2017 SFI conference (and present outcomes of our project, if invited as a speaker).
- Share our project reports on the BAM website, and describe the work in BAM’s annual report.
- Produce outreach material summarizing the project for posting on the BAM website and distribution at conferences and workshops. All materials will recognize SFI and partners.
- Host a webinar at the end of the project to share results with a larger group.

Communication Opportunity: This project has a strong partnership and there is the ability to highlight the large scale of conservation that the group hopes to achieve. Taken together with American Bird Conservancy’s Bringing Back the Forest Birds project, this proposal provides SFI with bird conservation metrics across North America. Efforts will be made to ensure these projects dovetail at the international border.

Comments: This project provides scalability across Canada’s boreal by examining the needs of bird scientists and SFI Program Participants through workshops. The partners have further engaged American Bird Conservancy to help start to establish continental scale to SFI’s bird efforts. The project cost seems to be a high value for the proposed work.

Lead Organization Name: GreenBlue Institute

Title of Proposal: Marketplace Education on Benefits of Responsible Forest Management

Key Priority Area: Carbon, Biodiversity and Water

Headline: America’s Best-known Brands Sustain Nature through SFI

Geographic Location: North America

Project Overview: Utilizing SFI annual reporting data as a framework, GreenBlue and its project partner will design and execute a communications campaign to: 1) educate brands about the benefits of responsible forest management; and, 2) enable brands to communicate to customers and stakeholders, through storytelling, how these benefits support their sustainability goals.

Project Partners: SAPPI North America

Funding Timeline: Total: \$ 50,000

2017	2018	2019	2020
\$ 32,500	\$ 17,000	-	-

Leveraged Funds: \$ 15,000

Relevancy to SFI: GreenBlue is proposing to create a communications campaign supported by webinars, printed brochures, co-located presentations, etc. - designed to educate brands about: 1) how forestry works in North America; 2) the benefits of responsible forestry; and 3) how brands can translate these benefits to tell their own sustainability stories. Our project partner is keenly aware of what messages resonate best with marketplace brands and how to tie SFI into that messaging.

Specifically, all of our communications will be attributed to the generous grant provided by SFI, as well as providing examples of responsible forest management via forest certified to the SFI standard. Our project partner is an SFI member and sources from SFI certified forests in their wood baskets. Materials and communications will include, with permission, SFI and partner company branding.

The first activity will be to develop the materials for the communication campaign for each of three focus areas and a strategic communications campaign to deliver these materials and resources. GreenBlue will leverage proven communications tools and strategies starting with – but not limited to – their growing number of members and stakeholders that number well over 200 leadership companies. Examples of these promotion strategies include webinars, printed materials, infographics, videos, co-locating and SPC Conferences (including site tours), and creating an accessible and actionable methodology for brands to understand conservation benefits and communicate these to their stakeholders.

The first phase of the three part campaign will be to get more brands familiar with the “real” story of the forest management (i.e. how it works, who does it, why it’s important). There is an opportunity here to feature SFI resources including the SFI annual reporting data to provide the foundation to which sustainability and conversation outcomes are measured.

The second phase of the campaign is to tie the sourcing of material from responsibly managed forests to specific conservation benefits (i.e. carbon capture, air and water quality, recreation). This provides another opportunity to promote the SFI annual reporting data as a foundation for measuring sustainability and conservation benefits.

And finally, with an understanding of how forest management works, and the benefits of sourcing from responsibly management, the final phase will be to help these companies make the connection between their corporate sustainability goals and use of forest products. It is a goal to also educate companies who may not be as aware that their packaging and products are associated with forests directly – such as those in GreenBlue’s Sustainable Packaging Coalition including pharma, food and beverage, and retail – who rely of wood fiber but are less aware of the benefits and less likely to communicate about these benefits.

Communication Opportunity: This project should open numerous doors to engage in direct collaborative communications opportunities with brands and Program Participants. By directly linking sustainable materials to conservation outcomes, and developing the stories that link products to conservation outcomes, we can begin to make the SFI story come to life for brand owners and consumers. As the Conservation Impact project develops, the foundation of information available for this story development will expand. So this project could set the framework for conveying conservation values “downstream” through the supply chain, and provide important lessons in communicating with brand owners regarding these values.

Comments: This project seems to align with recent discussions within SFI to clarify the linkage between conservation outcomes and brand owners. GreenBlue project promises to begin to create these linkages. However, SFI staff will work with GreenBlue to identify a clear NGO partner to include, and anticipate adding Brand Owner partners as the project matures.

Lead Organization Name: Manomet

Title of Proposal: Monitoring and Managing for a Changing Climate

Key Priority Area: Climate Change/Carbon

Headline: Conservation Organizations and Forest Products Companies Partner to Assure Forest Health in the Face of Climate Change

Geographic Location: US - North East

Project Overview: The project will develop and test a scalable approach for assessing forest resilience to climate change, demonstrating the adaptation and mitigation value of SFI managed lands, and incorporating climate opportunities and risks in planning and management.

Project Partners: Resource Management Service, Hancock Timber Resource Group, Lyme Timber Company, Maine SFI Implantation Committee

Funding Timeline: Total: \$ 75,000

2017	2018	2019	2020
\$ 30,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 20,000	-

Note: *Annual Distribution of funds is an estimate.*

Leveraged Funds: \$ 75,000

Relevancy to SFI: The proposed project will address the first focal area priority for projects which “measure, demonstrate, or establish methodologies to demonstrate, the conservation-related values of SFI-certified forestlands”. In particular, the project links to “Studies that examine the difference in value added of SFI-certified forests versus other forests, in regards to conservation attributes of broad interest (e.g. water, climate adaptation, biodiversity, carbon, etc.)”.

In addition, the project will assist SFI members in meeting short and long-term needs associated with the 2015–2019 Forest Management Standards. In a general sense, understanding and incorporating climate change in forest management is a baseline condition for meeting the sustainable forestry goals described in 1.4.1 and 1.4.2 of the Forest Management Standard Principles. Specific references to climate change occur in both the Forest Management Standard Objectives and the Forest Management Standard Requirements. Objective 10 in the Forest Management Standard Objectives calls for “Investment in forestry research, science, and technology upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based and broaden the awareness of climate change impacts on forest, wildlife and biological diversity.” Objective 1, Performance Measure 1.1. of the Forest Management Standard Requirements calls for “Periodic updates of forest inventory and recalculation of planned harvests to account for changes in growth due to productivity increases or decreases, including but not limited to improved data, long-term drought, fertilization, climate change, changes in forestland ownership and tenure, or forest health.”

Communication Opportunity: This project includes a couple of unique elements that should become part of the communications story:

- Working directly with Program Participants, Manomet will establish a clear link between sustainable management under SFI, and the resiliency of forests to climate change. This is the only proposal we've received that offers a credible approach to measuring resiliency at scale.
- By virtue of their Climate Change Network, Manomet has a fertile network through which communications could be developed. SFI should work with Manomet to exploit those opportunities.

The results of this project could dovetail with the GreenBlue project, as an additional attribute to be conveyed down through the supply chain as a “story of conservation success and impact” resulting from SFI’s sustainability work. Conservation audiences will understand the resiliency argument readily, while general audiences will need some interpretation, in the frame of “forest health”.

Comments: This is the only project we received that speaks to climate change resiliency. It uses a comparison approach to lands not certified to SFI, but seems to take a sound scientific approach, which is scalable. SFI will work with Manomet to ensure this comparative approach does not denigrate management activities on non-certified lands. Manomet's Climate Change Network helps provide a ready outlet for the results, and such communications are included in the project.