

# SHAPING THE STANDARDS:

# FOREST CERTIFICATION AS A SUSTAINABILITY SOLUTION



## SFI STANDARDS REVISION UPDATE

**Working together is critical to ensuring the sustainability of our planet.** People and organizations are seeking solutions that go beyond limiting negative impacts and make positive contributions to the long-term health of the planet. Sustainable forests, and products sourced from those forests, are a great tool in moving towards shared sustainability goals such as climate action, reduced waste, clean water, and economic development.

SFI's standards, when leveraged with our three other pillars of work – conservation, community and education - provide practical, scalable solutions for markets and communities working to leverage this growing commitment to a sustainable planet.

Through the SFI Standards, more forests are well managed, which means more effort is put into conserving healthy wildlife, providing clean water and making more sustainable wood, paper and packaging products available for consumers and companies. Choosing SFI is a practical choice that helps combat climate change, conserve nature, and increase the number of products in the marketplace that have a positive impact on the planet.

**A regular, transparent process for revision of the SFI Standards is a critical part of SFI's commitment to continual improvement.** By leveraging expertise across our network through focused engagement, and by including open comment periods, SFI creates standards that are grounded in science, include diverse perspectives, and benefit consumers, communities and ultimately forests across the U.S. and Canada. This commitment to collaboration strengthens the positive impact of our standards in addressing sustainability challenges.



## BETTER CHOICES FOR THE PLANET



# SHAPING THE STANDARDS: FOREST CERTIFICATION AS A SUSTAINABILITY SOLUTION



## SFI STANDARDS REVISION UPDATE

The first draft of the new SFI Standards is now available for public comment. This launches a 60 day public comment period that will run from May 1 through June 30. This draft is based on input from the first comment period last year and reflects a thorough review of all comments by the SFI Standards Revision Task Groups, the SFI Resources Committee, and the SFI Board of Directors.

SFI Standards Revision Task Groups are open to anyone, and include representatives from the forest sector, conservation organizations, academia, researchers, brand owners, resource professionals, landowners, educators, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and governments. Rosters for each Task Group are posted on SFI's [website](https://www.sfi.org/standards-revision).

Subgroups were also formed on key topics such as forest conversion, biodiversity conservation, recognizing and respecting Indigenous Peoples' rights, logger training requirements in both the SFI Forest Management Standard and SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard, a new due diligence system to access risk of controversial sources, and investigating a new urban and community forestry standard. This document highlights those key decisions made by the Subgroups, Task Groups, SFI Resources Committee, and the SFI Board of Directors.

To review the new drafts standards in track change and a clean version, and to submit comments and be a part of the Standard's revision, visit the SFI website at [www.SFIprogram.org](https://www.SFIprogram.org)

A low-angle photograph of a dense forest with tall, straight tree trunks reaching towards a bright sky where sunlight is filtering through the canopy. The text "SFI SOLUTIONS. NOW, MORE THAN EVER" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters.

# SFI SOLUTIONS. NOW, MORE THAN EVER

# TIMELINE FOR SFI 2022 STANDARDS REVISION PROCESS



On October 23, 2019, SFI officially launched the start of the SFI 2022 Standards Revision with a 30-day public comment period and a two-hour facilitated workshop at the SFI Annual Conference. This first comment period kicked off a two-year process which will conclude with a suite of new SFI standards and rules for release by January 2022.

**Below is the 2020-2021 timeline for upcoming phases of the SFI 2022 Standards revision.**

## **MAY AND JUNE 2020 – SECOND COMMENT PERIOD AND STANDARDS REVISION WEBINARS**

Concurrent with the second comment period, SFI will conduct a series of nine webinars each focused on a specific topic of importance. The purpose of these webinars is to introduce the new draft SFI standards and gather additional feedback.

## **SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2020 – TASK GROUP MEETINGS**

When the second comment period concludes, SFI will compile all comments in preparation for the task groups to review. The three task groups will resume their work in September and October reviewing the comments received during the second comment period.

## **JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2021**

The SFI Resources Committee will review all enhancements to the standards and provide a recommendation to the Board for consideration. If additional task group meetings or calls are necessary, SFI will schedule them in January/February.

## **APRIL 2021 – BOARD APPROVAL**

The Board will receive the draft standards 45 days before voting to approve them.

## **APRIL 2021 – NOVEMBER 2021 PEFC ENDORSEMENT PROCESS**

Once the Board approves the standards, SFI will work towards PEFC endorsement.

## **JANUARY 2022 – RELEASE OF THE NEW STANDARDS AND RULES**

SFI will release the new standards in January 2022.





# MAJOR ENHANCEMENTS IN THE SFI 2022 STANDARDS



## FOREST CONSERVATION

### **CONVERSION OF FOREST COVER TYPES (FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD - OBJECTIVE 1, PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1.2)**

SFI's requirements relative to forest conversion are critical to addressing climate change, preventing species loss, and depletion of water resources.

The SFI standard has two requirements to safeguard against the negative impacts of conversion of forest types.

1. Certified organizations must exclude any forestlands converted to non-forestland use from their SFI certificate to ensure that any fiber resulting from deforestation, does not count towards certified forest content in any SFI labeled product.
2. The SFI standard requires certified organizations to conduct an assessment to determine ecological impacts and provide appropriate justification if they convert one forest cover type to another forest cover type.

The enhancements made to this Objective address situations when an SFI-certified organization considers converting one forest cover type to another forest cover type

The performance measure now includes a “two-filter” approach when considering conversion of forest cover types. The first filter ensures that the proposed conversion does not pose a threat to important ecological systems, species or natural communities, including a provision to consider scale, which can pose an inherent impact. Principles of the first filter must be satisfied for the second filter to be applied. The second filter constitutes potential legitimate justifications that may be employed, provided the first principles are satisfied. Properly implemented, the landowner or manager must employ both filters, ensuring that the conversion will not result in inappropriate levels of ecological impact, and that the conversion is specifically justified.

### **LANDSCAPE BIODIVERSITY (FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD - OBJECTIVE 4, PERFORMANCE MEASURES 4.1)**

SFI's requirements on landscape level conservation help conserve biodiversity at that scale.

Enhancements ensure that landscape-scale analyses and research inform management decisions at the landscape level. By linking management decisions to analyses of landscape conditions and biodiversity conservation goals, managers will be better able to be responsive to the needs of wide-ranging species, the distribution of ecologically important natural communities, and the role of the managed area toward attaining critical biodiversity outcomes.

### **FORESTS WITH EXCEPTIONAL CONSERVATION VALUE (FECV) (FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD -OBJECTIVE 4, PERFORMANCE MEASURES 4.2, 4.3 AND 4.4)**

Species decline is a global concern, and SFI requires the protection of Forest with Exceptional Conservation Value (FECV), which are defined as forest areas harboring species and ecological communities that are imperiled or critically imperiled.

Specific requirements for attention to FECV provide assurance that forest managers will tailor strategies to protect such populations and natural communities as a specific obligation on their managed lands.

Enhancements to the Standard were also made to ensure the standard reinforces and clarifies conservation requirements relative to “ecologically important” sites and “ecologically important species” and “natural communities”. This language provides greater clarity and consistency toward protective requirements at the species and community

# MAJOR ENHANCEMENTS IN THE SFI 2022 STANDARDS



## FOREST CONSERVATION

scale, replacing and expanding the former term “significant species of concern”. The use, and associated guidance for “ecologically important” species and “natural communities” facilitates the ability of managers to address conservation of species considered vulnerable, locally rare, suffering decline, or otherwise at potential risk.

### **LANDSCAPE BIODIVERSITY IN FIBER SOURCING - (FIBER SOURCING STANDARD - OBJECTIVE 1, PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1.2)**

The small landowner represents the majority of the fiber supply in the U.S. SFI pays special attention to these landowners through requirements in the SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard.

SFI added a new requirement to the Fiber Sourcing Standard for SFI-certified organizations to conduct an assessment on FECVs across their wood and fiber supply area. This strengthens the standard’s requirements for addressing conservation of biodiversity at both the local and landscape level.

### **WATER QUANTITY AND WATER QUALITY (OBJECTIVE 3, PERFORMANCE MEASURES 3.1 AND 3.2)**

Forests maintain and clean our water supplies. Water is a vital resource for both human communities, and for the preservation of aquatic species and ecosystems. Protection of water quality and quantity are both important for the effective protection and maintenance of water resources, and forests play a vital role in ensuring both. Forests protect groundwater by assuring healthy rates of filtering, infiltration, and evapotranspiration. Forests are at least as critical for filtering surface water, and many forested watersheds are vital to human health as a primary resource for downstream communities.

Edits were made to Objective 3, Performance Measure 3.1 and Performance Measure 3.2 to include water quantity to the list of protections.

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ RIGHTS

### **RECOGNIZE AND RESPECT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ RIGHTS (FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD - OBJECTIVE 8)**

At SFI we respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and believe our shared quality of life improves when forests are sustainably managed for current and future generations. These shared values allow for a strong and multi-faceted link between SFI and Indigenous communities across Canada and the U.S. and help support SFI-certified organizations in growing meaningful forest-focused relationships within their operating areas.

The SFI Forest Management Standard is aligned with Indigenous values, including rights, knowledge, and environmental considerations.

Edits were made to Objective 8 so that it clarifies the intent toward a meaningful relationship building and rights recognition process. All SFI-certified organizations must:

- identify the Indigenous Peoples whose rights may be affected by the SFI-certified organization’s forest management practices;
- determine the specific rights that may be affected by drawing on federal, provincial, state laws, treaties and agreements between governments and Indigenous Peoples, and/or the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and,
- provide appropriate training so that all staff and contractors are competent to recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples’ rights and traditional knowledge for the purposes of Objective 8.



# MAJOR ENHANCEMENTS IN THE SFI 2022 STANDARDS

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS

SFI-certified organizations with management responsibilities on public lands will be required to implement additional requirements intended to further enhance their ability to build meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples within their operating areas. These measures include:

- promoting meaningful dialogue through respecting Indigenous Peoples' representative institutions and communications protocols;
- providing opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to review SFI-certified organizations' forest management practices; and,
- ensuring respect for Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge, including non-timber forest products and sites of spiritual, historical and cultural importance.

SFI is developing tools that will assist SFI-certified organizations in training personnel and contractors, rights identification and recognition, and relationship building for the purposes of Objective 8. This will include additional guidance for SFI-certified organizations regarding approaches to identifying and implementing appropriate communications protocols.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

### **CLIMATE SMART FORESTRY (FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD - OBJECTIVE 9)**

Forests play a critical role in addressing climate change and storing carbon. Given the increasing global focus on climate and increased understanding about the important role of forests, SFI developed a new objective focused on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Performance Measure 9.1 requires a program to identify climate change risks to forests and forest operations, and the development of adaptation objectives and strategies. Performance Measure 9.2 requires a program to identify opportunities to mitigate climate-related impacts associated with forest operations. SFI developed guidance that will assist SFI-certified organizations in identifying options for addressing stored carbon and greenhouse gas emissions.

## LOGGER TRAINING

### **LOGGER TRAINING AND CERTIFIED LOGGING COMPANIES (FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD - OBJECTIVE 12 AND FIBER SOURCING STANDARD - OBJECTIVE 6)**

Loggers who are aware of their responsibility as professionals are better equipped to protect the environment, making logger training a core requirement in both the SFI Forest Management Standard and Fiber Sourcing Standard. By the end of 2018, more than 200,000 loggers and foresters had completed SFI-approved training programs.



# MAJOR ENHANCEMENTS IN THE SFI 2022 STANDARDS



## LOGGER TRAINING

Core logger training requirements are now separate from topics that could be incorporated as elements of continuing education training. The new standard also clarifies that training shall occur at least once every two years. To support this increased emphasis on logger training, a new auditable indicator was moved from guidance into the standard itself, that will ensure SFI-certified organizations strive to achieve 100 percent of their raw material deliveries from qualified logging professionals or certified loggers. These enhancements add more structure to the qualified logging professional training requirements and raise the overall quality and impact of logger training.

The definition of Certified Logging Companies was updated. The current “certified logging professional” definition refers to an individual, whereas the certified logging professional training requirements are directed at the logging company level. A change to the definition was made to ensure it is clear the logging contractor that is the certified entity holds the title of “certified logging company.”

A new Performance Measure was also created to highlight the requirements for a logger-certification program. SFI developed guidance to bring greater transparency and accountability to SFI Implementation Committee recognition of certified logging company programs. The guidance includes details as to how a certified logging training organization can appeal a decision if their certification program is not successful in achieving recognition by an SFI Implementation Committee.

## URBAN FORESTRY

Urban and community forests are a significant resource in the U.S. and Canada and are likely to continue to increase in significance based upon demographic, economic, and environmental trends. The importance of responsible urban forest management will also increase in significance as it contributes to providing ecosystem services such as mitigating storm water runoff, reducing urban heat island effects, and sequestering carbon while contributing to the character, quality of life, and economic and social infrastructure of a community. SFI has the opportunity to explore a leadership position in establishing standards for responsible urban forest management in Canada and the U.S. and support the growth and evolution of this branch of professional forestry. The development of urban forest management certification standards will also contribute to providing pathways to ensure improved utilization and less waste of wood removed from urban areas due to development, hazard abatement, storm events, insect infestation, disease, or other causes.

SFI will create a task group to explore the value, pros, and cons of developing a customized Urban and Community Forest Management Standard.



# MAJOR ENHANCEMENTS IN THE SFI 2022 STANDARDS



## DUE DILIGENCE SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

When procuring fiber, avoiding controversial sources is a critical issue to achieving sustainability targets. Recognizing this, SFI developed a new definition of controversial sources along with expanded requirements for a due diligence system to assess the risk of controversial sources entering a certified organization's supply chain. SFI also has a unified approach to controversial sources and due diligence across all Standards. This new requirement is in the SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard, the SFI Chain-of-Custody Standard, and the new SFI Certified Sourcing Standard.

SFI developed guidance for use by SFI-certified organizations when assessing the risk of controversial sources in their supply chain. This is found in the draft Guidance document.

## SFI CHAIN OF CUSTODY STANDARD

Parts of the SFI Chain of Custody Standard were restructured to add clarity. Requirements for SFI category of origin are now in Part 4. Likewise, the requirements for sales of certified product are now in Part 5.

Edits were made to align more closely with the PEFC Chain of Custody Standard adding efficiencies for SFI-certified organizations those that are dual certified. The credit life for volume credit is now 24 months. The management system requirements (Part 8) were edited to include a system to ensure compliance with applicable social laws and occupational health and safety legislation and requirements for internal audits. Edits were made to the requirements for outsourcing agreements (Part 9).

## SFI CERTIFIED SOURCING STANDARD

Requirements for secondary producers to use the SFI Certified Sourcing Standard were previously located in an appendix to the SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard. These requirements have now been moved into a new SFI Certified Sourcing Standard that allows users to better understand and communicate the value of the certified sourcing requirements. This will also improve the auditing of the certified sourcing requirements.

The standard has the same due diligence system requirements as the SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard and SFI Chain of Custody Standard. The standard has a section with all requirements for the sale of products with the certified sourcing claims and/or label. The management system requirements were edited to include a system to ensure compliance with applicable social laws and occupational health and safety legislation, requirements for internal audits and requirements for outsourcing agreements.

## RULES FOR USE OF SFI ON-PRODUCT LABELS AND OFF-PRODUCT MARKS

This section was restructured for clarity regarding on and off-product label use. Requirements for label use approval by the SFI Office of Label Use and Licensing (Part 2) and requirements for SFI Claims and Labels (Part 3) are contained in their own parts of the document. Additionally, a key enhancement in Part 3 is the inclusion of a matrix that summarizes the different label options by claim (or category of origin) and what SFI certification is needed to use the label(s). New statements are included for SFI-certified organizations to use in combination with SFI on-product labels and with promotional materials that may or may not include the SFI label. The statements are grouped by pillars and provide multiple options for users.