

CERTIFIED WOOD BRANCHES OUT

FOREST CERTIFICATION'S EVOLVING ROLE IN GREEN BUILDING RATING SYSTEMS

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Learning Objectives

After reading this article, you should be able to:

- Discuss how forest and chain of custody certification contributes to green building.
- Explain why recognizing all forest certification programs increases supply and purchasing options.
- Identify government initiatives and agencies that recognize multiple forest certification standards in the context of green building.
- Identify various green building rating tools that recognize multiple forest certification standards.
- Evaluate the effect of LEED Pilot Credit 43 on forest certification programs.

*Photo by Sierra Pacific Windows,
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Wood has been used as a building material for thousands of years. Its desirable aesthetic, superior environmental characteristics and ease of construction have made it a popular choice among architects for residential and commercial projects alike. During the last few decades, there has been an emergence of forest certification programs whose mission it is to promote responsibly managed forests. This article will discuss the major North American forest certification programs, profile how they are currently accepted by various green building rating systems and by government agencies in regards to their role in green building, and highlight new opportunities for recognition in the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Pilot Credit 43.



Photo by Mike McMurray, Plum Creek, Michigan

Managed forests provide many public benefits.

FOREST CERTIFICATION: GOOD FOR YOU, GOOD FOR OUR FORESTS

Wood from responsibly managed forests is an excellent choice for any new construction or renovation project. Overall, there are many studies that demonstrate wood production consumes less energy, emits fewer greenhouse gases, releases fewer pollutants into the air and generates much less water pollution compared to competing materials like steel and concrete. In addition, trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as they grow, sequestering and storing the carbon while producing oxygen — and this reduces greenhouse gases and improves air quality. They provide numerous other benefits, including clean air and water, habitat for wildlife, commercially valuable products like wood and medicinal plants, and employment for local communities.

Because wood comes from the forests, it's important that those forests are managed in a responsible way. Much of the wood products sold in the United States comes from U.S. and Canadian forests. American forest landowners plant approximately two billion trees annually, and others reseed naturally, so that forest growth has consistently exceeded harvest since the 1940s. Today, the United States has more forested area than it did in the 1920s, and forest management is regulated to ensure that forests are legally harvested and managed to meet society's long-term demand for forest products. Forests in the United States are threatened by development pressures, so it is important to support markets for forest products in order to maintain working forests and prevent their conversion to non-forest uses.

According to the World Resources Institute (WRI), forest management is not a driver of change that impacts deforestation. WRI cites the two major drivers of change that affect the quantity and quality of U.S. southern forests as: suburban encroachment and reversion of agricultural land (WRI 2010, www.seesouthernforests.org/discover-southern-forests/welcome/change). For this reason, it is important to support markets for forest products derived from well-managed forests in order to maintain working forests and prevent their conversion to non-forest uses. Green building rating tools can support markets for well-managed forests by recognizing all forest certification standards which together represent 10 percent of the world's forests.

According to the Canadian Forest Service, Canada's forested, other wooded land and other land with tree cover extend over about half of the country's total land surface — nearly 988 million acres/400 million hectares — from coast to coast. Most of Canada's forests are publicly owned, 77 percent under provincial or territorial jurisdiction and 16 percent under federal jurisdiction. As a result, governments at three different levels have set legislation and regulations for the protection and management of forests. Much like the U.S., Canada is committed to responsible forestry to support markets for forest products in order to maintain working forests.

Forest certification programs are one way to help promote responsible management of forest land. Voluntary third-party forest certification began in the 1990s partly in response to market concerns about forest management and illegal logging. Today, forest certification programs promote sustainable forest management, including environmental, social and economic factors.

While they may take different approaches, typically forest certification programs incorporate the following:

- Protection of biodiversity, species at risk and wildlife habitat; sustainable harvest levels; protection of water quality; and prompt regeneration (e.g., replanting and reforestation).
- A certification process, called chain-of-custody certification, employed to track fiber from a certified forest or responsible sourcing process through processing to the customer. Chain of custody can be used through a percentage-based approach or through a segregation approach.
- Third-party certification audits performed by accredited certification bodies.
- Publicly available certification audit summaries.
- Multi-stakeholder involvement in a transparent public standards development process.
- Complaints and appeals process.



Forest certification protects critical habitats.

It's worth noting that wood is the only building material that has third-party certification programs in place to verify that products originate from responsibly managed sources.

While the advantages of wood are undeniable, a growing number of buyers, be they federal agencies or homeowners, want to know they are sourcing products from responsibly managed forests. Forest certification can be a proof point that wood products are from well-managed forests where the perpetual growing of trees is integrated with protection of wildlife, plants, soil and water quality; where responsible forestry is practiced; and where loggers, foresters and family forest landowners are trained in best management practices. Chain of custody certification confirms that a process is in place to track fiber from certified forest content, responsible sources, and/or post-consumer recycled content.

Chain of Custody Certification



Certified forest



Certified logs



Certified lumber



Certified product

Top three photos courtesy of NaturallyWood; bottom photo courtesy of Sierra Pacific Windows, a division of Sierra Pacific Industries

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Program title: "Certified Wood Branches Out" (01/12, page 71). AIA/CES Credit: This article will earn you one AIA/CES Continuing Education Hour (CEH) of health, safety, welfare/sustainable design (HSW/SD) credit. (Valid for credit through January 2013.) **Directions:** Refer to the Learning Objectives for this program. Select one answer for each question by the appropriate letter. A minimum score of 80% is required to earn credit. **To take this test online and avoid handling charge, go to ce.greensourcemag.com**

- Which of the following is/are environmental characteristic(s) of wood?
 - ☐ a. Requires less energy to produce than steel and concrete
 - ☐ b. Comes from a renewable resource
 - ☐ c. Stores carbon
 - ☐ d. All of the above
- World Resources Institute cites the two major drivers of change that affect the quantity and quality of U.S. southern forests as:
 - ☐ a. suburban encroachment and reversion of agricultural land.
 - ☐ b. reversion of agricultural land and deforestation.
 - ☐ c. poor management and logging.
 - ☐ d. deforestation and drought of agricultural land.
- Which building materials have third-party certification programs?
 - ☐ a. Concrete
 - ☐ b. Steel
 - ☐ c. Wood
 - ☐ d. Concrete, steel, and wood
- What is the largest single forest standard in the world?
 - ☐ a. FSC
 - ☐ b. SFI
 - ☐ c. CSA
 - ☐ d. PEFC
- What organization is an international program to endorse forest certification standards?
 - ☐ a. SFI
 - ☐ b. Green Globes
 - ☐ c. PEFC
 - ☐ d. IgCC
- U.S. Agriculture Department recognizes the value of forest certification programs.
 - ☐ a. True
 - ☐ b. False
- The National Association of State Foresters released a resolution in 2008 on green building and a policy statement that calls for:
 - ☐ a. less wood in green building.
 - ☐ b. an inclusive approach to forest certification.
 - ☐ c. the use of a single forest certification standard.
 - ☐ d. greater use of wood from foreign countries.
- What percentage of the world's forests are certified to any of the forest certification standards?
 - ☐ a. 50 percent
 - ☐ b. 75 percent
 - ☐ c. 90 percent
 - ☐ d. 10 percent
- LEED Pilot Credit 43 includes a section on "pre-approved certifications and labels," which lists:
 - ☐ a. only FSC.
 - ☐ b. FSC, SFI, and CSA.
 - ☐ c. FSC, SFI, ATFS, CSA, and PEFC.
 - ☐ d. only PEFC.
- LEED Pilot Credit 43 refers to:
 - ☐ a. structural wood.
 - ☐ b. non-structural wood.
 - ☐ c. structural and non-structural wood.
 - ☐ d. none of the above

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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, about 195 million acres/79 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.

www.sfiprogram.org

NORTH AMERICAN FOREST CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

While only 10 percent of forests worldwide are certified, North America has more certified forests than any other part of the world. All of the major forest certification programs in North America are internationally recognized. There are several credible forest certification programs in North America including:

- The Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Program (SFI®)

SFI is the most widely used forest certification standard in North America. SFI Inc. is an independent, non-profit organization operating under the direction of a multi-disciplinary 18-member board equally represented by environmental, social and economic sectors. SFI's forest land standard applies specifically to U.S. and Canadian forests, but extends to international procurement through SFI's chain of custody and fiber sourcing requirements. With more than 195 million acres/79 million hectares certified to the SFI Standard, SFI is the largest single forest standard in the world. The standard is based on principles and measures that promote sustainable forest management and consider all forest values, and includes unique fiber sourcing requirements to promote responsible forest management on all forest lands in North America. The SFI 2010-2014 forest management standard requires that harvest levels are sustainable, biodiversity and old growth are conserved, water quality and wildlife habitat are protected, harvested areas are reforested promptly, chemical use is minimized, and the rights of local communities and Aboriginal peoples are considered and respected. Through continual improvement of the standard, it also addresses emerging issues such as climate change and bioenergy.

- **The American Tree Farm System (ATFS)** applies to small family forest landowners in the United States. ATFS is a network of more than 83,000 small family forest landowners representing 26 million acres of certified forestland. ATFS does not have its own chain of custody standard or label, however, SFI recognizes the ATFS standard and SFI also recognizes ATFS-certified forest content in the SFI on-product label. This is tracked by using the SFI chain of custody standard.

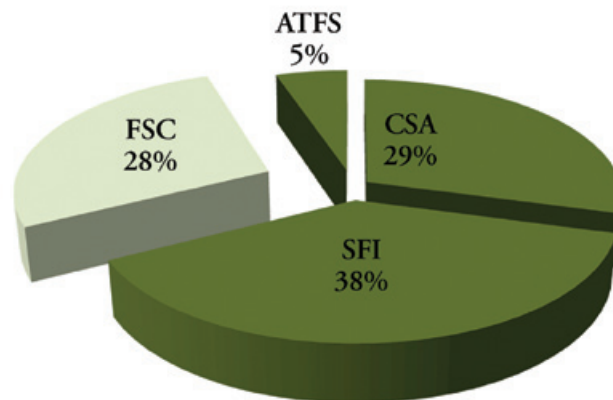
- **The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Sustainable Forest Management System (SFM)** standard applies to Canadian forestland. CSA Z809 is designed for use by larger land managers while CSA Z804 is used by small family woodlot owners. The CSA SFM standards do not have their own chain of custody standard or label, however SFI recognizes the CSA Z809 and Z804 standards and SFI also recognizes CSA-certified forest content for use in the SFI on-product labels. This is tracked by using the SFI chain of custody standard.

- **The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)** is an international recognition program which endorses regional and national standards. FSC has 28 regional or national standards endorsed, with another 60 countries reporting certifications from interim/non-endorsed standards. Wood from all of these endorsed and unendorsed FSC standards can be used to label products under FSC's program. Approximately 90 percent of FSC forest management certifications are outside of the U.S.

- The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest

Certification Schemes (PEFC) is an international program to endorse forest certification standards. There are 30 PEFC-endorsed forest certification standards covering more than 242 million hectares/593 million acres of certified forests. Forest certification standards must go through a rigorous assessment process involving public consultation and the use of independent assessors to be considered for endorsement. Final endorsement is subject to a vote taken by the PEFC general membership. The standards that are endorsed under PEFC in North America include SFI, ATFS and CSA.

**Certified Area in North America
by Certification Standard**



209 million hectares/518 million acres (approx 10 million hectares/24 million acres dual certified)

Note: SFI recognizes CSA and ATFS forest certification standards which do not have their own product label. Almost three quarters of certified forests in North America can be recognized in the SFI chain of custody and labeling program.

Photo by Stephen Slaughter



Using wood from responsibly managed forests helps government agencies meet sustainability goals.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES WITH GREEN BUILDING

Green building plays an important role in government policy, as government agencies strive for energy efficiency, greenhouse gas reductions, and other sustainability goals. Government agencies have been a major supporter of green building; for example, almost 30 percent of all LEED projects are government owned or occupied. Increasingly, government agencies are taking specific actions that recognize the role of forest certification in green building, as evidenced by several recent announcements:

- In September 2011, the U.S. federal government encouraged the use of certified wood in building programs. Based on the findings of a new U.S. Forest Service study, U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack urged the agency to prioritize wood in green buildings, and to actively look for opportunities to demonstrate the innovative use of wood as a green building material using recognized green building standards such as LEED, Green Globes, or the National Green Building Standard. The USDA recognized the value of forest certification standards in the process, saying, "Sustainability of forest products can be verified using any credible third-party rating system, such as Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Forest Stewardship Council or American Tree Farm System certification."
- In December 2011, Maine Governor Paul LePage signed an executive order directing that "any new or expanded state buildings shall incorporate 'Green Building' standards that give certification credits equally to forest products grown, manufactured, and certified under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard, Forest Stewardship Council, American Tree Farm System, and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification systems." LePage said, "We believe that by supporting the full range of forest certification programs, we are advancing Maine's forest industry and the interests of our forest landowners in local, national, and global competition for market share... We are also protecting our valuable natural resources and traditional outdoor heritage."
- The U.S. Department of Education also reached the same conclusion about certified products in its new Green Ribbon Schools Program designed to recognize schools that save energy, reduce costs, feature environmentally sustainable learning spaces, protect health, foster wellness, and offer environmental education to boost academic achievement and community engagement. Among the criteria to demonstrate a positive environmental impact is the use of office paper "from forests certified as responsibly managed by the Forest Stewardship Council, Sustainable Forestry Initiative, American Tree Farm System, or comparable certification standard."

Certified Wood at the Olympia Children's Museum

Photo by Drew Phillips



Olympia Children's Museum

The Children's Museum in Olympia, Washington, is involved in a 28,000-square-foot expansion project that will double its space and confirm its commitment to green building. The facility is on track for LEED Silver recognition and is pursuing Green Globes certification. As part of the museum's sustainable building

program, wood was used as both a structural and decorative building material throughout, notably in a 20,000-square-foot wood-framed area containing classrooms and learning galleries as well as in a heavy timber structure of fir for the main entry and galleries. "Wood was chosen initially because of economic considerations, and it's turned out to be a good decision," says Builder Drew Phillips, of Berschauer Phillips Construction Company, noting that in addition to its natural beauty, wood is a sustainable choice.

Phillips notes that in the Northwest, wood has been a primary building material for a century, and he's seeing commercial as well as residential structures increasingly using wood. "It just makes sense," says Phillips. "It's much less energy intensive to manufacture wood products than steel. Most of the wood we use in this area is available from within a 500-mile radius, which also helps the local economy."

Much of the wood used in the museum addition is certified wood. The bulk of the structural wood, including the heavy timber beams, girders, and column, as well as the 2x6 studs for all wall framing, are certified according to SFI standards. "From my perspective it's important to specify certified wood," Phillips says. "Wood that comes from sustainably managed forest is just a more environmental approach to building."

- In January 2009, Public Works and Government Services Canada required all wood products used in its building projects to be certified under one of the three certification standards that operate in Canada: the Canadian Standards Association Sustainable Forest Management Standard, the Forest Stewardship Council's system or the Sustainable Forests Initiative's system. The department believes all three of these standards effectively promote more sustainable management of Canada's forest resources. Furthermore, Public Works and Government Services Canada has instructed all project managers not to obtain the certified wood credit in projects using the LEED rating tool, because USGBC's LEED rating tools only award credit for wood certified to FSC standards.

- The National Association of State Foresters (NASF), a non-profit organization comprised of the directors of forestry agencies in the states, territories and the District of Columbia of the United States released a resolution in 2008 on green building and a policy statement that calls for an inclusive approach to forest certification. NASF Resolutions are powerful because they carry the full weight of the organization and support of all State Foresters. The NASF Resolution on green building urges organizations that maintain green building standards to define their standards so as to fully recognize the value of wood in green building construction. The complete resolution can be viewed here: <http://www.stateforesters.org/node/886>.

Over the last few years, numerous government officials, including 14 governors and 87 members of Congress, have written letters to the U.S. Green Building Council urging for the recognition of wood products and equal recognition of forest certification standards in the LEED rating tools.

GREEN BUILDING RATING TOOLS AND FOREST CERTIFICATION

Many credible green building rating systems also recognize the value of multiple forest certification standards and offer credits for products certified to these standards. Among them:

- ANSI/ICC 700-2008: National Green Building Standard.

Developed for residential construction by the National Association of Home Builders and the International Code Council under the ANSI standards process, this standard is for new construction and remodeling for all residential building types including single-family, multi-family, and residential portions of mixed-use buildings.

- **ANSI/GBI 01-2010 Green Building Assessment Protocol for Commercial Buildings.** Operated by the Green Building Initiative (GBI) and derived from the Green Globes environmental design and assessment rating system for new construction, the standard was approved in 2010

as the nation's first and only American National Standard Commercial Building Rating System.

- **Built Green Program.** Owned and managed by the non-profit Built Green Canada, the program is designed for residential construction across Canada.



Photo by Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Many credible green building systems recognize the value of wood from multiple forest certification programs.

Outside of North America, the list also includes CASBEE in Japan and BREEAM in the United Kingdom.

The International Green Construction Code (IgCC) recently concluded a two-year consensus process to establish a green code and in its final version recognizes SFI, FSC and PEFC. The IgCC was developed by the International Code Council with support from the American Institute of Architects and ASTM International, and has been adopted by local governments in Washington State, New Hampshire, Arizona, Colorado, Rhode Island, Oregon, North Carolina, Maryland and Florida.

On the international scene, acceptance of multiple certification programs is also gaining ground. Green building councils in jurisdictions around the world — including the Green Building Council of Australia, the Spanish Green Building Council and the Green Building Council Italia — promote the benefits of all certified forest products.

FSC-certified forests account for about one quarter of North America's certified forests. There are 28 different FSC standards globally, with significant variation from country to country. The remaining 75 percent of certified forests in North America are certified to SFI, ATFS and CSA — all of which can be tracked in the SFI supply chain and labeled SFI. The majority of FSC-certified lands are outside of the United States and Canada. Ensuring wood products and forest certification standards have equal access in green building rating tools is of growing interest to government agencies, which have a responsibility to deliver economic benefits to their communities, as well as meet environmental goals.

The entire membership of the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) agrees that “requirements for certification should recognize ATFS, FSC, SFI, and all other credible options...there is no single ‘best’ forest certification program... while in different manners, the ATFS, FSC, and SFI systems include the fundamental elements of credibility and make positive contributions to forest sustainability. Proponents of individual certification programs often promote their option as the best or only option. This has little to do with quality and everything to do with marketing and selling their program. No certification program can credibly claim to be ‘best,’ and no certification program that promotes itself as the only certification option can maintain credibility.”

The 2008-2009 UNECE/FAO Forest Products Annual Market Review says green building initiatives can have both advantages and disadvantages for forest certification. “In fact, (green building initiatives) can be a mixed blessing for wood products,” the report states. “Discrimination against wood can actually be built into (green building initiatives) standards, as wood is often the only material required to demonstrate responsible sourcing. (Green building initiatives) standards giving exclusive recognition to particular forest-certification brands may help drive demand for these brands at the expense of wider appreciation of the environmental merits of wood.”

LEED Reconsiders with Pilot Credit 43

For several years the USGBC has been studying the issue of the certified wood credit to determine whether additional forest certification standards besides FSC should be eligible for the credit. Times have changed. The certified wood market has grown, and there is widespread recognition of all forest certification programs in North America and globally. Whether or not it is certified, lumber is still a major requirement in construction, and while architects can certainly opt to forego the single certified wood credit and earn LEED points for other aspects of design, this may result in the use of uncertified forest products or other non-wood substitutes, and not award those leaders that have taken the extra step with forest certification. After all, only 10 percent of the world’s forests are certified to any of the forest certification standards and recognizing them equally could align well with USGBC’s interest in recognizing leaders and market transformation.

LEED opened up the list of approved certification programs through a vehicle known as “pilot credits.” In June 2011, the USGBC announced a LEED pilot credit for the use of non-structural certified products such as furniture, flooring and windows. Pilot Credit 43 includes a section on “pre-approved certifications and labels” which lists SFI, ATFS, CSA, and PEFC along with FSC. As such, Pilot Credit 43 is distinct from the LEED MR-7 credit and USGBC’s previous treatment of forest certification, and has the potential to encourage greater use of certified wood. LEED says the credit’s intent is to “increase the use of products and materials with life cycles, ingredients, and attributes understood and optimized to improve overall environmental, economic and

social performance.” According to the LEED website, “We want LEED buildings to have more products that we know more about, and fewer products that we don’t know very much about. The credit rewards greater transparency and knowledge about product life cycles. The Certified Products Pilot Credit is a comprehensive approach to valuing certifications according to depth, transparency, and rigor. The credit serves to communicate the present and future certifications that will be recognized in LEED.”

At the project level, this makes it easier for architects and builders to specify at least non-structural wood and at a more macro level, it will potentially drive the demand for more certified lands.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INFLUENCE

Commenting on LEED Pilot Credit 43

LEED uses pilot credits to test drive an idea before it becomes an official credit. In USGBC terms, pilot credits are “multi-stakeholder market tests” and because user input factors heavily into whether the pilot credit is finally adopted, it is an opportunity for architects to voice their position and have some influence on the issue. LEED actually requires users seeking a point under the credit to provide feedback on the applicability of the credit through the LEED user forum (www.leeduser.com/credit/Pilot-Credits/PC43).

Specifically, USGBC requests feedback that answers the following types of questions:

- As a LEED project team, how difficult was it to locate the applicable pathway level of certifications/labels receiving credit?
- How were you able to obtain certification information for products?
- How difficult was it?
- What were the major barriers to achieving credit performance? Do you think the threshold is reasonable?
- How was the total materials cost for non-structural products found? Is it a calculation that is tracked as part of regular construction process or was the number calculated only for the purposes of LEED?
- What certifications/labels would you like USGBC to consider for inclusion in this pilot credit?

Anyone can post comments or view the full language of the pilot credit at the website. Architects should note, however, that Pilot Credit 43 refers to non-structural wood, rather than structural wood. Those who go online and register feedback for Pilot Credit 43 may want to address the issue that Pilot Credit 43 only applies to non-structural

materials and that it might be more consistent to have the same treatment and recognition of all forest certification standards for structural wood products as well. This is very timely, not only because of Pilot Credit 43 but because LEED is currently developing the LEED 2012 series of rating tools. In the draft LEED 2012 for Homes, no forest certification standards are given credit, whereas in the other LEED 2012 rating tools, FSC pure certification is recognized. LEED 2012 is currently under development and has gone through two public comment periods.



Photo by Dave Chura

LEED Pilot Credit 43 opens up to all certified wood in North America.

Using Wood from Well-Managed Forests

With the various credible forest certification programs operating in North America, architects have ample chance to choose sustainable wood products sourced from responsibly managed forests — and there is green building certification beyond LEED. For example, the Lauderdale County, Mississippi, Habitat for Humanity affiliate specified certified wood for its first green build, an 1,118-square-foot house in Meridian, Mississippi. Most of the lumber and OSB sheets used in the house were grown in Mississippi forests in conformance to the SFI Program Standard requirements and milled by an SFI-certified sawmill, and counted as points necessary for certification to the ANSI/ICC 700-2008: National Green Building Standard for residential construction.

“The use of certified wood fit the theme of green building,” says Ron Honea of the Campbell Group LLC, a timber investment manager. “It demonstrated the Lauderdale County Habitat for Humanity’s desire to use wood grown and manufactured in a sustainable manner. The wood was grown, milled, and used in Mississippi, so it benefits the state and local economy by helping support Mississippi businesses while providing an affordable home for a worthy family.” Honea says he sees a developing interest in the use of certified wood.

“Today the public is more knowledgeable and concerned about green building and the role certified wood can play.”

The most innovative products, design trends, and green technologies are usually incorporated into The New American Home, the official showcase house built each year in conjunction with the International Builders’ Show. In 2009, builder Blue Heron participated in this showcase with a goal to construct an affordable luxury home as a sustainable, net-zero electricity project and to achieve Gold Level Certification under the NAHB National Green Building Program.

In choosing windows and doors, Blue Heron used products that were manufactured by a company that is third-party certified to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. “All the windows and doors carry the SFI on-product label as proof of the sustainable nature of the wood fiber used in the manufacturing process,” says Tyler Jones, owner of Blue Heron.

Certified Wood in MeadWestvaco’s Headquarters



Photo courtesy of MeadWestvaco Corp.

MWV Headquarters, Richmond, Virginia

Packaging solutions giant MeadWestvaco (MWV) was recognized for its new Richmond, Virginia, headquarters by the Green Building Initiative’s highest rating, four Globes. The company used a variety of energy-efficient, eco-friendly products and materials, from recycled glass and rubber to low-VOC products including paints, furniture and carpeting. MWV’s lobby wood walls were created using hand-picked cherry trees from the company’s West Virginia forestlands, which are certified. “We wanted to draw on our heritage as a forest land operator in a sustainable, modern building,” says company spokesperson Tucker McNeil, who finds certified wood an important component of a building project. “Forests can be a sustainable resource — but only if you do it right.”

FOREST CERTIFICATION SUPPORTS GREEN BUILDING

By promoting and encouraging responsible forest management practices, forest certification standards play a valuable part in the use of wood in green building and in helping to meet broad spectrum environmental, social, and economic goals. Architects, designers, and others within the building community have an opportunity to demonstrate their support for responsibly managed forests in North America by specifying SFI and other forest certification standards in new construction or renovation projects.