



# **SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION**

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## Why SFI Matters

### SFI'S MISSION

is to advance sustainability through forest-focused collaboration.

### SFI'S VISION

is a world that values and benefits from sustainably managed forests.

It is critical that we work together to ensure the sustainability of our planet. People and organizations are seeking solutions that not just reduce negative impacts but ensure positive contributions to the long-term health of people and the planet. SFI-certified forests and products are powerful tools to achieve shared goals such as climate action, reduced waste, conservation of biodiversity, education of future generations, and sustainable economic development.

SFI provides practical, scalable solutions for markets and communities working to pursue this growing commitment to a sustainable planet. When companies, consumers, educators, community, and sustainability leaders collaborate with SFI, they are making active, positive choices to achieve a sustainable future.

- Forests certified to SFI are essential to reducing the impacts of climate change because they absorb carbon from the atmosphere at impressive rates and are resilient to climate impacts. This means that SFI-certified companies are helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change through their use of SFI standards.
- SFI-certified forests are sustainably managed to provide habitats for multiple species, including species at risk. SFI standards take a multi-species approach, and SFI-certified companies are held to the highest level of species and habitat conservation.
- There is increasing demand for better packaging. One out of three Americans have actively tried to buy products packaged in something other than single-use plastic. Using the SFI label is a great way to let consumers know that the product comes from a sustainable source.
- There are environmental and economic benefits of building with wood. SFI-certified wood is an environmentally smart choice for construction and renovations because it is a sustainable, natural, and renewable resource. The SFI label means that the forest where the wood comes from is managed sustainably to ensure many benefits, from clean water to wildlife and a range of ecological and ecosystem services.

## Standards

People and companies are looking for better solutions to ease pressures on the planet — practical choices that will conserve nature, combat climate change, and cut waste and pollution. Choosing certified sustainable forest products protects species, combats climate change, reduces plastic pollution, and protects water supplies.

SFI standards have become the fastest growing, highly trusted solution in support of a growing need for products from the forest, and in response to the drive to reduce carbon pollution and waste. SFI is working to shape markets today and ensure that properly managed forests will continue to play a crucial role in keeping the planet healthy.

## **Four Certification Standards**

Getting certified to SFI is one of the best things that organizations can do to support the long-term sustainability of forests and ensure the multitude of benefits that forests provide for future generations.

SFI's standards provide an important solution to the long-term sustainability of our forests. With more than 375+ million acres/150+ million hectares certified by the end of 2020 and tens of millions more positively influenced through fiber sourcing, SFI has the scale and growth trajectory to ensure positive, forest-based outcomes in the marketplace.

- The SFI Forest Management Standard is the largest single forest management certification standard in the world. Among its requirements are measures to protect water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, species at risk, and forests with exceptional conservation value.
- The SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard is designed for manufacturers that source from a variety of ownerships or that don't own forestland. It distinguishes SFI from all other forest certification organizations in that it governs how Certified Organizations procure fiber from non-certified forest landowners in a responsible way, including avoidance of controversial sources in the supply chain.
- The SFI Chain-of-Custody Standard is an accounting system that tracks forest fiber content through production and manufacturing to the end product. This standard also has measures to avoid controversial sources in the supply chain.
- The SFI Certified Sourcing Standard contains the requirements for Certified Organizations to use the SFI-certified sourcing claim and label. This standard also has measures to avoid controversial sources in the supply chain.

The SFI Standards require third-party independent certification audits by competent and accredited certification bodies for all four standards. All certification bodies must be accredited by a member of the International Accreditation Forum — ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB) or the Standards Council of Canada (SCC).

## **SFI Labels**

Once certified, organizations can apply to use SFI on-product labels, which are globally recognized and show customers that products are responsibly sourced. Studies have shown that 52% of consumers are aware of the SFI label and 90% of those, trust it.

The SFI on-product labels provide a tool that allows producers to educate the market and consumers to make responsible purchasing decisions. SFI sourcing solutions, from certification through to the SFI label, provide choices that help support a circular economy, green building, resource renewability, and contribute to a sustainable future.

SFI Chain-of-Custody labels tell the consumer that the fiber in the product is from sustainably managed SFI certified forests and/or that it contains recycled materials. The SFI Certified Sourcing label does not make claims about certified forest content. Rather, it tells the consumer that the fiber in the product was purchased from responsibility managed forestlands. (See a description of all the [SFI on-product labels](#)).

## **Conservation**

There is a growing awareness that if we want to grapple with climate change, water quality, waste reduction, and species loss, taking good care of our forests is of fundamental importance. Unique among certification standards, SFI mandates innovative and impactful conservation research that builds knowledge and improves forest outcomes. We provide a value-added solution for customers of forest products who want to know that the companies they source from are contributing to conservation results that improve the health of the planet.

SFI's conservation work is inextricably linked with our standards and provides leadership, expertise, and resources in order to measure and scale the conservation outcomes on forestlands influenced by those standards. SFI's conservation approach helps provide solutions to sustainability challenges such as species at risk, migratory bird decline, forest health, and climate change. The SFI Conservation Impact Project focuses on quantifying the biodiversity maintained and recovered, the water purified, and carbon sequestered on SFI-certified forestlands, and those affected by SFI's sustainable sourcing. This work is guided by a network of conservation leaders and researchers to ensure credibility and transparency. The work is supported by SFI Conservation Grants, which support independent researchers seeking to improve understanding of the relationship between forest management and important conservation outcomes.

## **SFI and Climate Smart Forestry**

Climate change is consistently identified as a significant threat to the environment, business, and our collective way of life. Forests are universally cited as an essential nature-based solution because forests and forest products provide a significant opportunity to counter the impacts of climate change by sequestering and storing carbon.

Through our standards, our conservation impact work, our environmental education, and our extensive network, SFI has the scale to make a difference on climate change. *Certified Organizations* act as a driving force in addressing climate change impacts through sound, science-based natural resource management. SFI is in a strong position to elevate the role of sustainable forests in addressing climate change due to our global reach and our focus on communicating the important role forests play in relation to critical global issues.

## **SFI and Conservation Impact**

The motivations to measure conservation values are diverse: brand owners seek to understand the impact of their raw materials sourcing; conservation stakeholders can engage more effectively if they understand the values that certification can provide; and improved tracking will better equip SFI to provide sustainability related metrics, contribute meaningfully to conservation outcomes, and to ensure continual improvement.

For guidance on this work, SFI has convened a diverse group of scientists, drawn from academia, public agencies, the non-profit conservation community, SFI Certified Organizations and SFI leadership. The Conservation Impact Sounding Board helps ensure transparency and provides direct input into conservation project development. The Sounding Board relies on an open process that helps shape this important work and promotes interaction between project leaders and experts from a diverse variety of backgrounds.

## **Community**

Communities rely on forests for jobs and economic development, recreational benefits, and human health. These links between people and forests have always been important but are even more relevant in an increasingly connected and changing world. Our work is focused on nurturing a positive relationship between people who live near and work in forests, and the goals of a sustainable marketplace and healthy forests.

SFI works to promote the value of sustainable forests and build meaningful relationships in the communities where we operate. Our network helps drive our success by facilitating forest-focused collaborations that make an impact. Through our network we engage collaboratively on issues such as logger training, green career pathways, and Indigenous relations.

Thirty-four SFI Implementation Committees, that engage at the state, provincial or regional level work with local, forestry, and professional associations, universities, government agencies, landowner groups, conservation groups, and many others to promote SFI standards as a means to broaden the practice of responsible forestry and achieve on-the-ground progress. SFI is committed to building and promoting forest-focused collaborations rooted in recognition and respect for Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional knowledge. Through networks and partnerships, we work across diverse communities, from urban to rural, to advance awareness of the social and health benefits of sustainable forests. SFI Community Grants promotes collaboration within the SFI network to support local communities' understanding of the value and benefits of sustainably managed forests.

## **Indigenous Relationships**

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. SFI partners with leading organizations like the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business and Habitat for Humanity Canada's Indigenous Housing Partnership.

The SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard is aligned with Indigenous values, including rights, knowledge, and environmental considerations. The SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard recognizes and integrates the principles outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their territories. In adopting the SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard, Certified Organizations commit to building meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples, grounded in respect for their unique rights, traditional knowledge, representative

institutions, and distinctive relationships with the forest. This includes training for personnel and contractors so that SFI-certified organizations are competent to fulfill their responsibilities with respect to Indigenous Peoples rights, as they apply within each Certified Organization's operating jurisdiction and tenure type.

## **Education**

Building a next generation of leadership that will take responsibility for solving environmental challenges and market needs is one of the best investments a society can make. Project Learning Tree and Project Learning Tree Canada are initiatives of SFI. They advance environmental literacy, stewardship, and career pathways using trees and forests as windows on the world.

### **Project Learning Tree**

Project Learning Tree (PLT), SFI's environmental education program, educates teachers, community leaders, and youth about forests and the environment. PLT believes that through environmental education we can develop a new generation of leaders and environmental stewards prepared with the knowledge and skills to address complex environmental issues. Environmental education grows the ability of our youth to think critically, solve problems, and make informed decisions. It encourages youth to take action to keep our natural world healthy, our economies productive, and our communities prosperous and vibrant.

Since its inception, PLT has engaged in thousands of partnerships, including the North American Association of Environmental Education, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the US Bureau of Land Management, USDA Forest Service and the Corporation for National and Community Service. PLT operates programs that are locally relevant, impactful, and have measurable multiplier effects and SFI is always looking for new ways to spread the reach of PLT through strategic partnerships and joint initiatives.

### **Project Learning Tree Canada**

PLT Canada believes in a society that values and benefits from sustainably managed forests and the great outdoors. PLT Canada is committed to using the outdoors to engage youth in learning about the world around them — in rural, Indigenous, and urban communities — and advancing environmental literacy, stewardship, and career pathways using trees and forests as windows on the world.

Since 2018, PLT Canada has placed youth in over 3,000 Green Jobs and supported over 200 employers with wage matching across the country. These young people have gained valuable experience that will help them pursue careers as foresters, wildlife biologists, Indigenous knowledge coordinators, hydrologists, park rangers, and much more. Notably, in a traditionally male-dominated sector, PLT Canada has achieved gender balance in job placements. PLT Canada provides important support to Indigenous youth and others facing employment barriers.

Project Learning Tree Canada offers a 50% wage match to employers hiring youth into forest, conservation, and parks jobs. The jobs inspire leadership in forest stewardship, foster a passion for science-based research and education, and help youth gain skills and experience so they can

transition successfully into future job markets. Green Jobs are considered positions that contribute positively to increasing sustainability in the forest, conservation, and parks sectors.