

2002-2004 Edition Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) Program

- **SFISM Program Overview**
- **SFISM Standard (SFIS)**
- **SFISM Verification/Certification Principles and Procedures (SFI-V/CPP)**
- **SFISM Qualification Criteria for Verifiers (SFI-QCV)**

SFISM

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE® PROGRAM



2002-2004 Edition

Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Program

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Sustainable Forestry Initiative Program Overview (SFI Overview)

1. About the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Program¹

The *Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)*SM program is one of the world's most rigorous and widely applied standards of *sustainable forestry*. It sets forth measures by which interested parties –customers, conservation interests, or members of the public – may monitor and evaluate the commitment of *Program Participants* to practice *sustainable forestry*. Not only are *Program Participants* committed to improving the performance of their own operations, but they are also setting new standards for the forest industry and extending those practices to other forest landowners, as well.

Program Participants – many of whom are forest products companies – have a strong record of stewardship on the lands they own and manage. Private forests include some of the most productive forests in the world. Innovative programs to create *habitats* and *landscapes*, and to enhance the diversity of flora and fauna, offer excellent examples of how foresters are working to integrate modern forest science for wood and fiber production with the *protection of biological diversity* and the *conservation* of sites that are unique in their geologic, ecologic, *cultural*, or historic value. *Program Participants* are also working diligently to share their technology and stewardship knowledge with non-industrial private landowners who own most of the forestland in the U.S. They are committed to meeting the needs of society by providing quality products for home and other building needs as well as for printing, packaging and personal use.

2. History of the SFI Program

The two watershed events that prompted the creation of the SFI were the 1987 Brundtland Commission report, *Our Common Future*, which set a vision for global sustainable development, and the 1992 Earth Summit. The Earth Summit focused global attention on the importance of *sustainable forestry*. Resulting discussions have led to general agreement that a definition for *sustainable forestry* must include two key concepts: First, the Brundtland Commission's finding that sustainability relies on the commitment of present generations not to limit the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The second, forest practices must be economically viable, socially acceptable and protective of the environment if they are to be sustainable.

In 1990, the American Forest Council convened a process on behalf of the American Paper Institute (API) and the National Forest Products Association (NFPA) through a *Future of Forestry Conference*, which resulted in the 1992 adoption of *10 Forest Management Principles*. In 1994, the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA, an organization that resulted from the API & NFPA via merger) launched a process to “visibly improve industrial practices and report results.” That process led to the creation of the original *SFI Principles and Implementation Guidelines*.

The 1995 establishment of an External Review Panel (ERP), originally called the Expert Review Panel, formalized stakeholder involvement, as eighteen leading natural resources professionals from government agencies, conservation groups and academic institutions provided their review to the SFI program. (For more information about the ERP, visit www.abouterp.org)

Since its creation, one of the foundations of the SFI program has been continual improvement. In 1998, the SFI program's original *Principles and Implementation Guidelines* were modified to create an industry standard. Later that year, the SFI program added voluntary verification options that allowed first-, second-, and third-party approaches for *Program Participants* to declare their conformance with the *Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard (SFIS)*.

¹Words in italics are defined in Section 5, Definitions.

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In July 2000, the SFI *Program Participants* moved to improve the effectiveness, consistency and credibility of the SFI program even further by establishing a multi-stakeholder *Sustainable Forestry Board* (SFB) to manage the SFI Standard, SFI Verification Procedures and SFI program compliance. In the fall of 2001, the SFB was chartered as a separate not-for-profit entity with full authority for management of the SFIS and associated verification procedures. (For more information about the SFB, visit www.aboutsfb.org.)

Early versions of the SFI program included input from non-industrial landowners, logging professionals, conservation group leaders, leading academicians and researchers. Each succeeding round of program modifications and enhancements has included ever-expanding processes to solicit comment and input from interested third-party stakeholders.

3. The SFI Program Enhancement Process

The latest round of SFI program enhancements in 2001 was the result of an extensive review and revision process that included a fully-open public review and comment process available to all interested parties via the SFB website. With the adoption of these changes, effective January 1, 2002, the SFB has established a three-year review cycle. The next review will occur in 2004, with any resulting changes or enhancements slated to take effect on January 1, 2005. Any changes to the SFIS must be incorporated into a *Program Participant's* policies, plans, and management activities within one year of adoption and publication. Similarly, changes to verification procedures and qualifications for verifiers must be accomplished within one year of adoption and publication.

4. Reporting and Transparency

The SFI program issues an annual report to the public on *Program Participants'* compliance with and progress on *sustainable forestry*, including a listing of all participants. The External Review Panel assists in the preparation of the annual report, including validation of conclusions and the assessment of reported progress. *Program Participants* who wish to proclaim their conformance to the SFIS via *certification* must also provide a public summary of their findings to interested parties.

Program Participants also support a *national forum* of wood producers, landowners and senior industry representatives, who meet annually to review program progress.

For more information and the latest news regarding the SFI program, visit www.aboutsf.org.

5. Definitions

There are a number of terms and definitions associated with *sustainable forestry* and forest resource management that have specific meaning within this standard. The following are definitions of terms used in this document as well as in the SFI Verification /Certification Principles and Procedures and SFI Qualifications for Verifiers documents. Defined terms are also indicated by italics in the document.

5.1 *Afforestation*: the establishment of a forest or *stand* in an area where the preceding vegetation or land use was not forest.

5.2 *Artificial regeneration*: a group or stand of young trees created by direct seeding or by planting seedlings or cuttings.

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5.3 *Available regulatory action information*: statistics or regulatory compliance data collected by a federal, state, or local government agency. *Note: Although conformance with laws is the intent, auditors are directed to look for a spirit and general record of compliance rather than isolated or unusual instances of deviation.*

5.4 *Aquatic fauna*: animals that live on or within water during some stage of development.

5.5 *Aquatic habitat*: areas where water is the principal medium and that provide the resources and environmental conditions to support occupancy, survival and reproduction by individuals of a given species.

5.6 *Best Management Practices (BMPs)*: a practice or combination of practices that is determined by a state or local government, or other responsible entity, after problem assessment, examination of alternative practices and appropriate public participation to be the most effective and practicable (including technological, economic and institutional considerations) means of conducting a forest management operation while addressing any environmental considerations.

5.7 *Best scientific information*: available factual information (that is generally accepted by the broad scientific community), including, but not limited to, peer-reviewed scientific information obtainable from any source, including government and non-governmental sources, which has been verified by field testing to the maximum extent feasible.

5.8 *Biological control*: the artificial application of natural control agents (diseases, pests, predators) to regulate pest species.

5.9 *Biological diversity or biological richness*: 1. -the variety and abundance of life forms, processes, functions and structures of plants, animals and other living organisms, including the relative complexity of species, communities, gene pools and ecosystems at spatial scales that range from local to regional to global. 2.-an index of richness in a community, ecosystem or *landscape* and the relative abundance of these species.

5.10 *Biotechnology*: application of modern biological methods at the cellular and molecular level to improve health, create new medicines and improve crops or trees.

5.11 *Certification*: independent verification of conformity to a standard. Thus, SFI verification by an independent third party is certification.

5.12 *Certifiers*: those meeting the qualifications required to perform independent third-party certifications. See *verifier*. Also, sometimes referred to as *auditors*.

5.13 *Conservation*: 1. -protection of plant and animal habitat. 2. -the management of a renewable natural resource with the objective of sustaining its productivity in perpetuity while providing for human use compatible with sustainability of the resource.

5.14 *Core Indicators*: those indicators integral to conformance with the SFIS.

5.15 *Critically imperiled*: a plant or animal or community, often referred to as G1, that is globally extremely rare or, because of some factor(s), is especially vulnerable to extinction. Typically, five

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or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals (<1,000), or acres (<2,000), or linear miles (<10) exist.

5.16 *Culturally*: special sites of importance because of their significance as examples of Native American peoples (e.g., Indian burial mounds).

5.17 *Degree*: professional academic degree (e.g., bachelors) or equivalent.

5.18 *Economic viability*: the economic incentive necessary to keep forest ownerships profitable and competitive and people gainfully employed.

5.19 *Exotic tree species*: a tree species introduced from outside its natural range, excluding species that have become "naturalized" in the area and have a naturally reproducing population. (*Note: hybrids of native species or native plants that have been derived from genetic tree improvement and biotechnology programs are not considered exotic species.*)

5.20 *First-party or self-verification*: verification conducted from within the organization by individuals with appropriate expertise and experience who are not accountable to those directly responsible for the subject matter being verified.

5.21 *Forest Health*: the perceived condition of a forest derived from concerns about such factors as its age, structure, composition, function, vigor, presence of unusual levels of insects or disease and resilience to disturbance.

5.22 *Forestry*: the profession embracing the science, art and practice of creating, managing, using and conserving forests and associated resources for human benefit and in a sustainable manner to meet desired goals, needs and values.

5.23 *Forestry organization*: a distinct forestry operation that has its own functions and administration. For forestry operations with more than one operating unit, a single or multiple operating unit(s) may be defined as an organization.

5.24 *Genetically Improved Seedlings*: seedlings that have been selected or bred to increase growth potential, disease resistance or other desirable characteristics through Mendelian crosses.

5.25 *Geographic Information Systems (GIS)*: an organized collection of computer systems, personnel, knowledge and procedures designed to capture, store, update, manipulate, analyze, report and display the forms of geographically referenced information and descriptive information.

5.26 *GPS (Global Positioning System) Technology*: a commonly hand-held, satellite-based navigational device that records x, y, z coordinates and other data, allowing users to determine their location on the surface of the earth (usually within meters).

5.27 *Green-Up Requirement*: previously clearcut harvest areas that currently have trees at least 3 years old or five feet high at the desired level of stocking before adjacent areas are clearcut or such other more restrictive requirements as established by regulation or law.

5.28 *Growing Stock*: all the trees growing in a forest or in a specified part of it meeting specified standards of size, quality and vigor, and generally expressed in terms of number or volume.

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5.29 *Growth and Yield Model*: a set of relationships, usually expressed as equations and embodied in a computer program or tables, that provides estimates of future stand development given initial stand conditions and a specified management regime.

5.30 *Habitat*: 1. a unit area of environment. 2. the place, natural or otherwise, (including climate, food, cover and water) where an individual or population of animal or plants naturally or normally lives and develops.

5.31 *Imperiled*: a plant or animal or community, often referred to as G2, that is globally rare or, because of some factor(s), is very vulnerable to extinction or elimination. Typically, six to 20 occurrences, or few remaining individuals (1,000 to 3,000), or acres (2,000 to 10,000), or linear miles (10 to 50) exist.

5.32 *Inventory*: 1. a set of objective sampling methods that quantify the spatial distribution, composition and rates of change of forest parameters within specified levels of precision for management purposes. 2. the listing of data from such a survey.

5.33 *Integrated Pest Management*: the maintenance of destructive agents, including insects at tolerable levels, by the planned use of a variety of preventive, suppressive or regulatory tactics and strategies that are ecologically and economically efficient and socially acceptable.

5.34 *Land Classification*: the process of generating and applying land strata that are sufficiently homogenous in their physical, vegetative and development attributes.

5.35 *Landscape*: a spatial mosaic of several ecosystems, landforms and plant communities across a defined area irrespective of ownership or other artificial boundaries and repeated in similar form throughout.

5.36 *Lead Verifier*: person responsible for all aspects of performing an SFI verification (also sometimes known as lead auditor).

5.37 *Least Toxic Pesticide*: pesticide that causes the least impact to the site while providing the necessary degree of control.

5.38 *Licensee*: a company, organization or individual that participates in the SFI Program through a contractual agreement to abide by these Sustainable Forestry Standard Principles and *Objectives*. A licensee is one type of *Program Participant*.

5.39 *Major non-conformance*: any or all of the following:

- a) one or more of the SFI *Objectives* or *Performance Measures* have not been addressed or implemented.
- b) several non-conformances exist that, taken together, lead a *verifier* to conclude that one or more *Objectives* or *Performance Measures* have not been adequately addressed or implemented.

5.40 *Minimize*: to do only that which is necessary and appropriate to accomplish the task or *objective* described.

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5.41 *Minor non-conformance*: an isolated audit finding which does not preclude the *Program Participant* from meeting *Objectives* or *Performance Measures*.

5.42 *Natural Regeneration*: the establishment of a plant or a plant age class from natural seeding, sprouting, suckering or layering.

5.43 *Non-forested wetland*: a transitional area between aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems that does not support tree cover and is inundated or saturated for periods long enough to produce hydric soils and support hydrophytic vegetation.

5.44 *Other Wood Suppliers*: a person who infrequently delivers wood fiber on a small scale. Examples include farmers and small-scale land clearing operators.

5.45 *Policy*: a written statement of commitment to meet an *objective* or to implement a defined program or plan to achieve an *objective* or outcome.

5.46 *Protection*: maintain the status or integrity of identified attributes and values.

5.47 *Performance Measure*: a means of judging whether an *objective* has been fulfilled.

5.48 *Principles*: the vision and direction for sustainable forest management.

5.49 *Productivity*: the inherent capacity of a particular site or ecosystem to produce a crop or tree stand, e.g., based on volume or height.

5.50 *Program Participant*: either a member of AF&PA or a *licensee* of the SFI Program.

5.51 *Qualified Resource Professional*: a person whose training and experience qualifies him or her to make forest management recommendations. Examples include foresters, soil scientists, hydrologists, forest engineers, forest ecologists, fishery and wildlife biologists or technically trained specialists in such fields.

5.52 *Reforestation*: the reestablishment of forest cover either naturally or artificially

5.53 *Research Funding*: includes direct financial contributions and in-kind support for either internal or external research.

5.54 *Resource Assessment*: systematic and periodic inventories and compilation of other measures and analysis of forest conditions necessary to develop management plans.

5.55 *Riparian*: related to, living or located in conjunction with a wetland, on the bank of a river or stream or at the edge of a lake or tidewater.

5.56 *Secondary Education*: high school education, or equivalent, which precedes a college or university *degree*.

5.57 *Second-party verification*: a verification conducted by an affiliated or interested group, such as a forest products trade association, another forestry enterprise or a customer.

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5.58 *SFIS Objective*: a fundamental goal of sustainable forest management.

5.59 *SFI Verification*: a systematic and documented verification process to obtain and evaluate evidence objectively to determine whether a *Program Participant's* SFI program conforms to the SFIS.

5.60 *Silviculture*: the art and science of controlling the establishment, growth, composition, health and quality of forests and woodlands to meet the diverse needs and values of landowners and society on a sustainable basis.

5.61 *Skid Trails*: access cut through the woods for skidding.

5.62 *Stand*: a contiguous group of trees sufficiently uniform in age, composition, and structure, and growing on a site of sufficiently uniform quality, to be a distinguishable unit.

5.63 *Sustainable Forestry Board (SFB)*: an independent multi-stakeholder body that manages the SFI Standard, Verification Procedures and Qualification for Auditors among other things.

5.64 *Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Program*: structure, responsibilities, practices, procedures, processes and time frames set by the SFI program for implementing, maintaining and improving sustainable forest management.

5.65 *Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard (SFIS)*: *SFI Principles, Objectives, and Performance Measures* that detail the specific requirements *Program Participants* are required to comply with to make progress toward the goals of sustainable forest management.

5.66 *Sustainable Forestry*: to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by practicing a land stewardship ethic that integrates the *reforestation*, managing, growing, nurturing and harvesting of trees for useful products with the *conservation* of soil, air and water quality, biological diversity, wildlife and *aquatic habitat*, recreation and aesthetics.

5.67 *Technical Expert*: a person who has expertise in *sustainable forestry* with experience appropriate to the scope of the audit. Technical experts must be objective and free of potential conflict of interest and be acceptable to all parties involved in the verification process.

5.68 *Third-party verification*: verification conducted by an impartial and objective group or consultant that is totally independent of the organization being verified.

5.69 *Verification Criteria*: *SFIS Objectives* and *Performance Measures* or other company specific requirements employed to judge against evidence collected from an *SFI Program Participant*.

5.70 *Verification Declaration*: a statement or report indicating the *Program Participant* is in conformance or non-conformance with the *SFIS Objectives* and *Performance Measures*.

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5.71 Verification Evidence: material or data compiled in any of a number of ways, including examination of operating procedures, monitoring of *forestry* practices, meetings with employees, or other means or a combination of the above. Collection of evidence is used to confirm that the *Program Participant* satisfies the requirements of the SFIS *Objectives* and *Performance Measures*.

5.72 Verification Findings: findings after the collected evidence is judged against SFIS *Objectives* and *Performance Measures*.

5.73 Verification Indicators: specific metrics that provide information about an organization's *forestry* and environmental performance that can be used to assess conformance to the SFIS *Objectives* and *Performance Measures*.

5.74 Verification Team: includes a *lead verifier* and other *verifiers* who must meet the qualification criteria outlined in SFI Qualification Criteria for *Verifiers*.

5.75 Verifier: a person or persons qualified to perform SFIS verifications. Qualification criteria for SFI *Verifiers* are provided in SFI Qualification Criteria for *Verifiers*.

5.76 Visual quality or visual resource management: management of the seen aspects of both the land and the activities that occur upon it in ways that minimize the adverse visual effects of forest management activities.

5.77 Wildlife: includes marine and freshwater aquatic and terrestrial fauna.

5.78 Wood Producer: a person or organization involved in harvesting or regularly supplying wood fiber sourced directly from the forest for commercial purposes; includes loggers and wood dealers.



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Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard

1. Applicability of the Standard

Program Participants must apply all relevant portions of the standard -- *Principles, Objectives, Performance Measures* and *Core Indicators*. Indicators demonstrating conformance to the *Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)SM Standard* will change over time as *Program Participants* continually improve their programs and as new scientific information about *sustainable forestry* becomes available.

A common framework for establishing broadly applicable *verification indicators* serves to promote the goals of *sustainable forestry* and continual improvement of *forestry* practices. The SFB has developed a set of *core* and other indicators to assist in the assessment and demonstration of conformance for each Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard *Objective* and *Performance Measure*. The indicators are both systems-based and performance-based. Each *Program Participant* and, where certified, *verifier* will need to ensure that indicators are appropriate for the specific local conditions and circumstances, and for the *Program Participants'* scope and scale of operations.

Indicators can be confirmed by *verifiers* based upon a combination of:

1. existence of internal plans and documentation;
2. field evidence that a *performance measure* is being carried out;
3. interviews with knowledgeable personnel in the organization or community;
4. review of compliance records or internal monitoring; and
5. independent assessment and investigation.

Verification to the SFIS can take three forms. An organization may choose: 1) *first-party or self-verification*; 2) *second-party verification* of its conformance to the SFIS; or 3) *certification*, an independent third-party to conduct the verification and prepare the verification report.

2. Core Indicators

Core indicators are those indicators that are integral to conformance with the SFIS. All *Program Participants* must address *core indicators* either by demonstrating conformance with the indicator or, with the concurrence of the verifier, substituting another indicator that more appropriately provides evidence of conformance with the *performance measure*. Substitution of *core indicators* may only be done when a specific *core indicator* is not relevant due to local conditions, circumstances or scope or scale of the operation. Other examples of indicators are listed that may add value in customizing the standard to local conditions and assessing *verification evidence* and a *Program Participant's* conformance to the SFIS. *Program Participants* are encouraged to develop additional indicators to make the verification process more specific to their management systems and conditions.

Verifiers or others should not use indicators as a checklist to directly assess conformance to the SFIS. A *Program Participant's* overall conformance in meeting the SFIS *Objectives* and *Performance Measures*, not a single *core* or other Indicator, is of primary importance.

The numbering of indicators in the SFIS is for convenience only. Numbering does not denote rank, priority or sequence.

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3. Principles for Sustainable Forestry

Managed forests make a vital contribution to the world by providing economic, consumer, environmental and aesthetic benefits indispensable to quality of life. Accomplishing *sustainable forestry* on private land requires a partnership among landowners, wood producers, contractors and the companies that purchase wood.

Sustainably managed forests provide many benefits to society: employment for hundreds of thousands of workers, a viable tax base that supports thousands of communities, essential building and paper products and numerous recreational opportunities. This commitment to social responsibility extends beyond the immediate and obvious benefits of *sustainable forestry*. It also embodies the need to focus on health and safety issues; provide employee training and education; protect water quality, air, soil and wildlife; protect unique resources and communicate the benefits of the practice of *sustainable forestry* to the general public. These program *objectives* are embodied in the SFI Standard and reflected in specific *performance measures*.

Compliance with the SFI Program requires *Program Participants* to take their commitment to responsible stewardship beyond the bounds of their own lands and operations by encouraging others to adopt the SFI Program's *Principles* and *Objectives*. *Program Participants* are required to work with their suppliers to make sure they are meeting program goals for *Best Management Practices*. And, *Program Participants* are required to invest in research to enhance the practice of *sustainable forestry*, add to scientific knowledge, improve *forestry* practices and improve the overall *productivity* of forests.

SFI *Program Participants* must comply with numerous federal and state laws that protect their workers and those who live in the communities in which they operate. Such laws have generated hundreds of thousands of rules and regulations that cover a broad range of issues: civil rights, equal employment opportunities, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment measures, worker's compensation, Native American rights, worker and community right-to-know, worker safety, wage and hour regulations and health and welfare issues. Given the wide range of due process and compliance mechanisms that are in place to ensure conformance with these and other applicable laws and regulations, the SFIS purposefully focuses on continual improvement of the practice of *sustainable forestry*, forest *productivity* and environmental performance.

Program Participants, therefore, support *sustainable forestry* practices on forestland they manage and promote it on other lands. Moreover, *Program Participants* support efforts to protect private property rights and the ability of all private landowners to manage their forestland sustainably. This support stems from *Program Participants*' belief that forest landowners have an important stewardship responsibility and commitment to society. In keeping with this responsibility, *Program Participants* support the following *principles*:

3.1 Sustainable Forestry

To practice *sustainable forestry* to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by practicing a land stewardship ethic that integrates the *reforestation*, managing, growing, nurturing and harvesting of trees for useful products with the *conservation* of soil, air and water quality, *biological diversity*, wildlife and *aquatic habitat*, recreation and aesthetics.

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3.2 Responsible Practices

To use in forests, and promote among other forest landowners, *sustainable forestry* practices that are economically, environmentally and socially responsible.

3.3 Forest Health and Productivity

To protect forests from wildfire, pests, diseases and other damaging agents to maintain and improve long-term *forest health* and *productivity*.

3.4 Protecting Special Sites

To manage forests and lands of special significance (e.g., biologically, geologically, *culturally* or historically significant) in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.

3.5 Legal Compliance

To comply with applicable federal, state or local *forestry* and related environmental laws and regulations.

3.6 Continual Improvement

To continually improve the practice of forest management and also to monitor, measure and report performance in achieving the commitment to *sustainable forestry*.

4. Sustainable Forestry Initiative Objectives, Performance Measures and Indicators

4.1 Objectives for Sustainable Forestry

The following *objectives* provide measures for evaluating *Program Participants'* compliance with the SFIS.

Performance measures in this standard reflect the underlying premise of the SFI program, which is continual improvement. These standard *principles* and *objectives* also recognize the *sustainable forestry* efforts that are underway throughout the forestry community.

4.1.1 Objective 1. Broaden the implementation of *sustainable forestry* by employing an array of economically, environmentally and socially sound practices in the *conservation* of forests – including appropriate *protection*, growth, harvest and use of those forests – using the *best scientific information* available.

4.1.1.1 Performance Measures

4.1.1.1.1 *Program Participants* shall have policies to implement and achieve the Sustainable Forestry Standard *Principles* and *Objectives*.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. A written *policy* for implementing and achieving the SFIS *Objectives* and *Performance Measures*.
2. A long-term resource analysis to guide forest management planning at a level appropriate to the size and scale of the operation, including:
 - a. a periodic or ongoing forest inventory;
 - b. a *land classification* system;

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- c. soils *inventory* and maps, where available;
 - d. access to *growth and yield modeling* capabilities;
 - e. up-to-date maps or a *Geographic Information System (GIS)*;
 - f. recommended sustainable harvest levels; and
 - g. a review of non-timber issues (*e.g.*, including pilot projects and economic incentive programs to promote water protection, carbon storage, or *biological diversity conservation*).
3. Staff roles and responsibilities for achieving SFIS *Objectives* are assigned and fully understood.
 4. Access to relevant laws and regulations in appropriate locations.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. A system for monitoring insects and diseases, fuel loading, stand density and other stress indicators to maintain *forest health*.
2. Training programs to address significant environmental aspects and impacts.
3. A system for monitoring, checking and documenting conformance to the organization's SFIS implementation policies.
4. *Certification* of an environmental management system or forest management to a recognized international or domestic standard.

4.1.1.1.2 *Program Participants* shall (individually, through cooperative efforts or through associations) provide funding for forest research to improve the health, *productivity* and management of all forests.

Core SFI Indicator:

1. Current financial or in-kind support of research to address *forest health* and *productivity*.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Full or part-time expertise allocated to research in *forest health* or *productivity*.
2. Membership or direct involvement in cooperative research related to *sustainable forestry*.
3. Active working relationships with natural resource graduate schools, private researchers or USDA research stations.
4. Sponsorship of student scholarships and other research opportunities.
5. Service on research advisory boards, peer review panels and professional research societies.
6. Participation in state or national association research committees (*e.g.*, AF&PA Forest Science & Technology Committee, Institute of Paper Science and Technology Forest Biology Initiative, National Council for Air and Stream Improvement Forest Environmental Studies Task Group).
7. Participation in collaborative industry research programs (*e.g.*, AF&PA Agenda 2020).
8. Support of projects that offset carbon emissions (*e.g.*, through *protection* of forest areas slated for harvest and restoration of degraded areas).

4.1.1.1.3 *Program Participants* shall provide recreation and education opportunities for the public where they are consistent with their forest management objectives.

Core SFI Indicator:

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1. Written *policy* describing public recreation and education efforts, consistent with forest management objectives.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Recreation or education expertise on staff or available to develop appropriate programs for the public.
2. Participation in state and local efforts to educate the public about sustainable forest management.
3. Identification and development of recreation areas where the public can visit sustainable forest management operations.
4. Presentations to local groups and clubs about *Program Participants' sustainable forestry* programs.

4.1.1.1.4 *Program Participants* shall ensure that long-term harvest levels are sustainable and consistent with appropriate *growth and yield models* and written plans.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Recommended sustainable harvest levels.
2. Documentation of annual harvest trends in relation to sustainable forest management plan.
3. A forest *inventory* system and a method to calculate growth.
4. Periodic updates of *inventory* and recalculation of planned harvests.
5. Documentation of forest practices (e.g., planting, fertilization, thinning, etc.), consistent with assumptions in harvest plans.

4.1.2 Objective 2. Ensure long-term forest *productivity* and *conservation* of forest resources through prompt *reforestation*, soil *conservation*, afforestation and other measures.

4.1.2.1 Performance Measures

4.1.2.1.1 *Program Participants* shall reforest after final harvest by planting or direct seeding within two years or two planting seasons, or by planned *natural regeneration* methods within five years.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* specifying the time frame for *reforestation*.
2. Designation of all management units for either natural or artificial regeneration.
3. Clear criteria to judge adequate regeneration and appropriate actions to correct understocked areas.
4. Compliance with applicable state laws and regulations mandating successful *reforestation*.
5. Plantings of exotic tree species are *minimized*.
6. Research documentation is available that *exotic tree species*, planted operationally, pose minimal risk.
7. Protection of desirable or planned advanced *natural regeneration* during harvest.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Locally adapted quality seed and seedlings readily available for *reforestation*.

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2. Expertise in *silviculture*, planting, direct seeding or *natural regeneration* available to implement all phases of the *reforestation* program.
3. Ongoing regeneration surveys document regeneration results.
4. Field evidence confirms successful *natural regeneration*, inter-planting or reseeded of areas.
5. Stocking survey results incorporated into *inventory* and modeling systems.
6. Selection of tree species for regeneration appropriately matches soils and site quality.
7. *Genetically improved stock* is deployed appropriately to achieve *reforestation* requirements.

4.1.2.1.2 *Program Participants* shall promote state-level reporting of the overall rates of *reforestation* success and afforestation.

Core SFI Indicator:

1. A system to accurately report *reforestation* information for the SFI annual report and, where applicable, State Implementation Committee (SIC) reports.

Other SFI Indicator:

1. Participation in state associations or cooperatives that encourage and monitor *reforestation*.

4.1.2.1.3 *Program Participants* shall *minimize* chemical use required to achieve management *objectives* while protecting employees, neighbors, the public and the forest environment.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* for the appropriate application and handling of forest chemicals, including legal compliance, storage, transport, spills, drift, signage, public notification and information, restriction of access and retention of records.
2. *Minimize* chemical use required to achieve management *objectives*.
3. Use of narrowest spectrum and *least toxic pesticides* necessary to achieve management objective.
4. Use of *Integrated Pest Management* where feasible.
5. System to achieve continuing compliance with applicable regulatory requirements.
6. *Available regulatory action information* demonstrates a commitment to legal compliance.
7. All persons involved in forest chemical application required to have appropriate training.
8. Designated state-trained or certified applicators supervise forest chemical applications.
9. Relevant copies of state and federal laws for forest chemical use are accessible at appropriate locations.
10. Participation in research projects to:
 - a. increase efficiency;
 - b. reduce chemical use rates; and
 - c. apply *Integrated Pest Management* where feasible.
11. Chemicals applied using *Best Management Practices* appropriate to the situation; for example:
 - a. compliance with label instructions and requirements;

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- b. adjoining landowners or nearby residents notified of applications and chemicals used;
- c. appropriate multi-lingual signs or oral warnings used;
- d. public road access controlled during and after applications;
- e. streamside and other needed buffer strips appropriately designated;
- f. positive shut-off and minimal drift spray valves used;
- g. drift minimized by aerially applying forest chemicals parallel to buffer zones;
- h. water quality monitored or other methods used to assure proper equipment use and stream *protection*;
- i. granular formulations and spot or strip applications used appropriately;
- j. chemicals stored at appropriate locations; or
- k. state reports filed as required.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Licensed pesticide applicators or nutrient management specialists or both available.
2. *GPS* technology used to map application sites and patterns.
3. Contractor and contractor employees properly trained and adequately insured.

4.1.2.1.4 *Program Participants* shall implement management practices to protect and maintain forest and soil *productivity*.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* to protect and maintain forest and soil *productivity*.
2. Soils maps used where available.
3. A process to identify soils vulnerable to compaction and use appropriate methods to avoid excessive soil disturbance.
4. Use of erosion control measures to *minimize* the loss of soil and site *productivity*.
5. Field observations indicate that post harvest conditions are conducive to maintaining site *productivity* (e.g., limited rutting, retained down woody debris, *minimized skid trails*, etc.).
6. Field observations indicate that, where practicing partial harvesting, vigorous trees are retained consistent with silvicultural norms for the area.
7. Criteria to address harvesting and site preparation to protect soil *productivity* in place.
8. Road construction is kept to the *minimum* necessary to meet management *objectives* efficiently.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Forest *productivity* and capability mapped to match tree species and families to optimize growth and *productivity*.
2. Soil *productivity* monitored to determine when appropriate amelioration and fertilization may be appropriate.
3. Abandoned forest roads and trails ripped and planted to return them to production.

4.1.2.1.5 *Program Participants* shall manage so as to protect forests from damaging agents such as wildfire, pests and diseases to maintain and improve long-term *forest health, productivity* and *economic viability*.

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Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* to protect forests from damaging agents.
2. Forests managed in a healthy and productive condition to *minimize* susceptibility to damaging agents.
3. Participation in, and support of, fire and pest prevention and control programs.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Fuel hazards reduced in fire prone areas and adjacent to structures to *minimize* the possibility of wildfire.
2. An initial fire attack capability maintained or available to keep wildfires small.
3. Prescribed burning used where appropriate to reduce fuel hazards.
4. Forest pest and disease outbreaks monitored and mapped to allow preventative action.
5. *Integrated Pest Management* strategies used where feasible.
6. Participation in, or support of, state level “Keep Green” programs.

4.1.2.1.6 Program Participants that utilize *genetically improved seedlings*, including those derived through *biotechnology*, shall use sound scientific methods and follow all appropriate federal and state regulations and other internationally applicable protocols.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* for appropriate research, testing, evaluation and deployment of *genetically improved seedlings*.
2. All applicable federal and state regulations and international protocols followed for research and deployment of trees derived from *genetic tree improvement* and *biotechnology*.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Use of scientific methods to match trees with appropriate growing sites.
2. Use of seed collection areas or seed orchards to produce quality *growing stock*.
3. Support for research cooperatives, (*e.g.*, the AF&PA Agenda 2020 Program), and other appropriate tree improvement research efforts.
4. Gains in forest growth realized from investments in *genetic tree improvement* monitored and used to update yield calculations.

4.1.3 Objective 3. Protect the water quality in streams, lakes and other waterbodies.

4.1.3.1 Performance Measures

4.1.3.1.1 Program Participants shall meet or exceed *Best Management Practices* developed under Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved state water quality programs and meet or exceed all applicable state water quality laws and regulations and the requirements of the federal Clean Water Act.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* to implement state *BMPs* during all phases of management activities.
2. Field staff and contractors trained in water quality laws and state *BMPs*.
3. A system to achieve continuing compliance with applicable regulatory requirements.

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4. *Available regulatory action information* demonstrates a commitment to legal compliance.
5. Contract provisions specify *BMP* compliance.
6. Plans are in place to address wet weather events (*e.g., inventory* systems, wet weather tracts, defining acceptable operational conditions, etc.).
7. Monitoring of overall *BMP* implementation.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Engineering or hydrology expertise is on staff, under contract or available as a resource.
2. Participation in demonstration projects showing proper *BMP* installation and maintenance.
3. Participation in periodic external audits of *BMP* compliance under a state *BMP* or forest practices act program.
4. Successful programs and measures to protect aquatic resources and wetlands documented.

4.1.3.1.2 Program Participant shall develop (where they do not currently exist), implement and document *riparian protection* measures based on soil type, terrain, vegetation and other applicable factors.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* addressing management and *protection* of waterbody and *riparian* zones.
2. Perennial streams, lakes and other *riparian* zones mapped as specified in state *BMPs* and, where appropriate, identified on the ground.
3. Field observations indicate that waterbody and *riparian* zone management and *protection* plans are implemented.
4. *Non-forested wetlands*, including bogs, fens, vernal pools and marshes of significant size, are identified and protected.
5. A system in place to achieve continuing compliance with applicable regulatory requirements.
6. *Available regulatory action information* demonstrates a commitment to legal compliance.
7. Where regulations or *BMPs* do not currently exist to protect *riparian* areas, experts are involved in identifying appropriate *protection* measures.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Appropriate practices in or adjacent to *riparian* zones may include:
 - a. sediment filters such as straw bales, filter fences and sediment catchment basins;
 - b. temporary stream crossings and skidder bridges;
 - c. substandard culverts are upgraded; and
 - d. seeding of road-sides and other exposed soil areas as appropriate.
2. Access to state laws and regulations related to waterbody *protection* at appropriate locations.
3. Impaired waterbodies mapped and appropriate recovery plans implemented.
4. Stream, lake and *riparian* zone *protection* documented through field audits.
5. Participation in or support of state water quality committees and boards addressing *BMPs*.
6. Participation in cooperative agreements with state agencies, conservation groups, conservation districts and others as appropriate.
7. Participation in state or national association water and wetlands committees.

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8. Cooperation with government agencies, other landowners, *conservation* organizations or others in restoration of natural wetlands.

4.1.3.1.3 *Program Participants* shall, individually, through cooperative efforts, or through AF&PA, provide funding for water quality research.

Core SFI Indicator:

Current financial or in-kind support for research.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Expertise allocated to water quality research.
2. Membership or direct involvement in cooperative research related to *sustainable forestry*.
3. Active work with natural resource graduate schools, private researchers or USDA research stations.
4. Sponsorship of student scholarships and other research opportunities.
5. Participation on research advisory boards, peer review panels or professional research societies.
6. Participation in state or national association research committees.
7. Participation in state *BMP* effectiveness research and monitoring.
8. Participation in or support of water quality research through industry water quality research programs (*e.g.*, National Council for Air & Stream Improvement [NCASI] Water and Wetlands Task Groups).

4.1.3.1.4 *Program Participants* shall require *BMP* training for employees in forest management and wood procurement operations and shall encourage training for forest management and harvesting contractors.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* to train those employees and operators responsible for implementing *BMPs* to protect water quality.
2. *BMP* training sessions for employees are required and documented and similar sessions are encouraged and documented for contractors.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Cooperation with and support of state agency and other *BMP* training programs.

4.1.4 Objective 4. Manage the quality and distribution of wildlife *habitats* and contribute to the *conservation of biological diversity* by developing and implementing *stand-* and *landscape-* level measures that promote *habitat* diversity and the *conservation* of forest plants and animals including *aquatic fauna*.

4.1.4.1 Performance Measures

4.1.4.1.1 *Program participants* shall have *policies* to promote *habitat* diversity at *stand-* and *landscape-* levels.

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Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* to promote wildlife *habitat* diversity, forest types, ecological or natural community types and the *conservation* of *biological diversity*.
2. Programs to protect federally listed threatened and endangered species.
3. Training or education for appropriate personnel in endangered species identification and *protection*.
4. *Policy* or plan that sets criteria for *stand*-level wildlife *habitat* elements to be retained (*e.g.*, snags, mast trees, down woody debris, den trees, nest trees, etc.).
5. System to achieve continual compliance with applicable regulatory requirements.
6. *Available regulatory action information* demonstrates a commitment to legal compliance.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Plans in place to protect, appropriately manage to maintain, or enhance species or ecological communities that are *critically imperiled* or *imperiled*, or vulnerable at the global, national, or regional level based upon *conservation* status ranking systems (*e.g.*, Association of Biodiversity Information, The Nature Conservancy, Natural Heritage Network, Conservation International, etc.).
2. Basic *land classification* or mapping system that provides information on forest types, management conditions, ecological or natural community types or broad *habitat* classes, and is used to assess *habitat* diversity or achieve *habitat* management *objectives*.
3. Harvest planning strategy that incorporates diversity goals for indigenous flora and fauna.
4. Silvicultural management to improve *habitat* diversity at the *stand*-level.
5. Funding for the direct *protection* of *biologically rich* areas or contribution to formal *conservation* via cooperative projects, conservation easements or land trades with governments, conservation organizations or others working to protect biologically diverse areas.
6. Identification of invasive exotic plants, animals and other risk factors (such as changed fire disturbance regimes) that directly threaten or are likely to threaten native plant and animal communities -- and implementation of steps to *minimize* their impact, introduction and spread.

4.1.4.1.2 *Program participants* shall, individually, through cooperative efforts or through AF&PA, provide funding for research to improve the science and understanding of wildlife management at *stand*- or *landscape*-levels, ecosystem functions and the *conservation* of *biological diversity*.

Core SFI Indicator:

1. Current financial or in-kind support for direct or cooperative research.

4.1.4.1.3 *Program participants* shall apply knowledge gained through research, science, technology and field experience to manage wildlife *habitat* and contribute to the *conservation* of *biological diversity*.

Core SFI Indicators:

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1. Collection of biodiversity-related data through forest *inventory* processes, mapping or participation in external programs that survey for natural plant communities.
2. Training or education for appropriate personnel in identifying and conserving rare and unique biological communities.
3. A methodology to incorporate research results and field applications of biodiversity and ecosystem research into forest management decisions.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Participation in cooperative ecological *landscape* planning efforts where available.
2. Professional expertise available to assist in developing wildlife, aquatic or biodiversity programs, or staff allocated to wildlife, aquatic or biodiversity research.
3. Participation in appropriate cooperative agreements with external parties on wildlife *habitat* management, federally-threatened and endangered species conservation, *landscape* planning or *conservation of biological diversity*.

4.1.5 Objective 5. Manage the visual impact of harvesting and other forest operations.

4.1.5.1 Performance Measures

4.1.5.1.1 *Program Participants* shall have policies to manage the impact of harvesting on *visual quality*.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* to address *visual quality* management.
2. Incorporation of aesthetic considerations in harvesting, road, landing design and management and other management activities where visual impacts are a concern.
3. Foresters trained in principles of landscape architecture or *visual quality management*.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Aesthetic *BMPs*, techniques and guidelines used to assure impacts have been positively addressed.
2. A *landscape* design system to recognize visually sensitive situations and plan for successful positioning of harvest areas and choice of harvest method.
3. Terrain models and computer visualization tools used in operations planning.

4.1.5.1.2 *Program Participants* shall develop and adopt appropriate *policies* for managing the size, shape and placement of clearcut harvests.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* to monitor and report on clearcut size and number.
2. Average size of clearcut harvest areas does not exceed 120 acres, except when necessary to respond to *forest health* emergencies or other natural catastrophes.
3. Documentation through internal records of clearcut size and the process for calculating the average size.
4. Access to state laws regulating clearcut size and arrangement at appropriate locations.
5. System to achieve continual compliance with applicable regulatory requirements.

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6. *Available regulatory action information* demonstrates a commitment to legal compliance.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Alternatives to clearcut harvests considered and implemented where economically and environmentally preferable.

4.1.5.1.3 *Program Participants* shall adopt a “*green-up*” requirement or other, more comprehensive methods that provide age, *habitat*, and aesthetic diversity.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* implementing the “*green-up*” requirement.
2. Harvest area tracking system to demonstrate compliance with the “*green-up*” requirement.
3. Trees in clearcut harvest areas are at least 3 years old or 5 feet high at the desired level of stocking before adjacent areas are clearcut, or a more comprehensive method to reach the *performance measure* exists.
4. Copies of state laws requiring *green-up* are on file at appropriate locations, where applicable.
5. A system to achieve continual compliance with applicable regulatory requirements.
6. *Available regulatory action information* demonstrates a commitment to legal compliance.

Other SFI Indicator:

1. Overstory removal harvest system that protects advanced regeneration.

4.1.5.1.4 *Program Participants* shall use harvest methods, age classes and judicious placement of harvest units to promote diversity across the forest *landscape*.

Core SFI Indicator:

1. Written *policy* to promote diversity of forest cover across the *landscape*.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Maps or *GIS* systems delineate existing and future harvest units by species, age, size and shape.
2. Plans are adjusted to increase *landscape* diversity.
3. Use of current scientific and research information to achieve diversity.
4. Participation in, or initiation of, *landscape* planning efforts by agencies and landowner groups, consistent with legal constraints.

4.1.6 Objective 6. Manage *Program Participant* lands of ecologic, geologic, *cultural* or historic significance in a manner that recognizes their special qualities.

4.1.6.1 Performance Measures

4.1.6.1.1 *Program Participants* shall identify special sites and manage them in a manner appropriate for their unique features.

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Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* to identify, map and manage special sites.
2. Obtain existing natural heritage data and cooperate with those with expertise in identifying or selecting sites for *protection* of significant ecologic, geologic, *cultural* or historic qualities.
3. Map and catalog existing sites.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. *Land classification* or mapping system(s) that provide(s) information on forest types, management conditions, special landforms, unique *habitats* and special species.
2. Staff trained in identifying unusual plants and animals.
3. Status of protected areas reported as appropriate.
4. Public access for recreation and education uses maintained as appropriate.
5. Effectiveness of management recommendations monitored over time.
6. Transfer of ownership or management rights of special sites to groups with appropriate expertise documented.
7. Development, support of, or participation in plans or programs for conserving old-growth and other native forests with important ecological function within the region of ownership.

4.1.7 Objective 7. Promote the efficient use of forest resources.

4.1.7.1 Performance Measures

4.1.7.1.1 Program Participants shall employ appropriate forest harvesting technology, “in-woods” manufacturing processes and practices to *minimize* waste and ensure efficient utilization of trees harvested, where consistent with other SFIS *objectives*.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* to address efficient utilization of trees.
2. Auditing or monitoring system to ensure efficient utilization.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Landings left clean with little waste.
2. Residues distributed to add organic and nutrient value to future forests.
3. Training or incentives in place to encourage loggers to enhance utilization.
4. Foresters work closely with mill managers for better utilization of species and low grade material.
5. Harvested material merchandized to ensure use for its most beneficial purpose.
6. Markets developed for underutilized species and low-grade wood.
7. Periodic inspections and reports note utilization and product separation.
8. Alternative markets sought to ensure better utilization (*e.g.*, energy markets)
9. Direct support or cooperative research in wood utilization.

4.2 Objectives for Sustainable Forestry by Program Participants in the Procurement of Wood and Fiber

4.2.1 Objective 8. Broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* by cooperating with forest landowners, wood producers, consulting foresters and *Program Participants'* employees who

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have responsibility in wood procurement and landowner assistance programs.

4.2.1.1 Performance Measures

4.2.1.1.1 *Program Participants* shall encourage landowners to reforest following harvest and to use *Best Management Practices*.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* to supply information or services to forest landowners.
2. Support for the development of educational materials, including information packets for use with forest landowners.
3. *BMP* or regeneration training courses, as appropriate, provided for procurement staff.
4. A verifiable auditing or monitoring system in place to evaluate the results of promoting *reforestation* and use of *Best Management Practices* within wood supply systems, and the use of that information to set goals for continual improvement.
5. Cooperation with federal, state or regional government *resource assessments*.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Staff position(s) or time devoted to natural resource education or landowner assistance.
2. Facilitation of landowner access to quality seedlings and seed adapted to the site.
3. Landowners surveyed to determine who received information.
4. Participation in and support of the American Tree Farm System® or other similar programs at the state or national level.
5. Participation in other programs that promote *sustainable forestry* at the local, regional or national levels.
6. Participation in logger and landowner fora.
7. Activities with landowners, loggers and contractors documented as appropriate:
 - a. mailings and contacts;
 - b. contracts specifying adherence to *BMPs* in timber purchases;
 - c. size and scale of landowner assistance programs (LAPs);
 - d. forest management demonstration areas and appropriate signage;
 - e. number of landowners with written forest management plans;
 - f. number of landowners using the services of professional foresters; and
 - g. number of landowners enrolled in the American Tree Farm System® or other LAPs.

4.2.1.1.2 *Program Participants* shall work closely with state logging or *forestry* associations, or appropriate agencies and others in the *forestry* community, to foster improvement in the professionalism of wood producers.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* promoting professional training of wood producers.
2. Participation in or support of SFI Implementation Committees in the development and administration of wood producer training courses that include:
 - a. awareness of *sustainable forestry principles*;
 - b. *Best Management Practices*, including road construction and retirement, site preparation, streamside management, etc.;
 - c. regeneration, forest resource *conservation* and aesthetics;

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- d. awareness of responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act and other measures to protect wildlife *habitat*;
- e. logging safety;
- f. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and wage and hour rules;
- g. transportation issues;
- h. business management; and
- i. public policy and outreach.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. The number of professionally trained wood producers.
2. Support for professional wood producer trade groups.
3. Support for wood producer training and education.
4. Service on professional wood producer education boards or Forest Resource Association (FRA) committees.
5. Incentives for professionally trained wood producers.

4.2.1.1.3 *Program Participants* shall annually report relevant information.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Maintenance of a system to report information annually including:
 - a. the number of landowners who receive information about the SFI program, forest regeneration, *BMPs*, and wildlife *habitat* management from contractors, company employees and others; and
 - b. the percentage of wood delivered by qualified logging professionals.
2. Support of SFI Implementation Committee efforts to collect and report appropriate information.

4.2.1.1.4 *Program Participants* shall encourage landowners to utilize the services of *qualified resource professionals* and qualified logging professionals in applying *principles* of sustainable forest management on their lands.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* to promote the use of *qualified resource* and logging professionals.
2. List of qualified logging professionals maintained.

4.2.1.1.5 *Program Participants* shall ensure that their commitment to the SFIS *Principles* is communicated throughout their organization.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Written *policy* statement of commitment to the SFIS that is communicated throughout the organization, particularly to mill and woodland managers, wood procurement operations and field foresters.
2. Participation in training programs for appropriate personnel.
3. The number of staff completing training programs is documented and reported.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. System for identifying personnel who have direct and indirect involvement with the SFIS.

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2. Annual SFI program performance goals for individuals as well as departments.
3. *Policy* requiring local mill management to sign annual SFI program performance reports.
4. Manufacturing facility management has familiarity and knowledge of SFI program.
5. Presentations promoting the SFI program.
6. Documentation of percentage of staff that have received professional logger training.

4.2.1.1.6 Program Participants shall support and promote efforts by consulting foresters, state and federal agencies, state or local groups and programs like the American Tree Farm System®, to educate and assist forest landowners, and to encourage them to apply *principles* of sustainable forest management.

Core SFI Indicator:

1. Support for efforts of SFI Program Implementation Committees.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Staff serving on state Tree Farm Committee.
2. Number of acres enrolled in the American Tree Farm System® or similar programs.
3. Membership in the state or local woodlot owners association.
4. Landowners encouraged to use professional resource expertise.
5. Demonstration areas maintained or supported that are available for use by various groups and audiences.
6. Support for state forest legislation focused on forest landowners (*e.g.*, tax laws, incentives, right-to-practice *forestry*.)
7. Partnerships established with state *forestry* commissions, USDA State & Private Forestry, USDA Extension Service and *forestry* schools and colleges.
8. Support for state forest fire *protection* and education programs.
9. Staff positions or time dedicated to natural resource education.

4.2.1.1.7 Program Participants shall clearly define and implement their own policies to ensure that mill inventories and procurement practices do not compromise adherence to the *Principles* of Sustainable Forestry.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Procurement *policy* in place for the purchase of raw material from qualified logging professionals, wood producers and *other wood suppliers*.
2. Policies in place to address adverse weather conditions.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Woodlots inspected following harvesting operations to ensure *BMP* implementation and adequate *reforestation*.
2. Process established to receive and respond to public inquiries.

4.3 Objectives for Program Participants for Public Reporting and Involvement in the Practice of Sustainable Forestry

4.3.1 Objective 9. Publicly report *Program Participants'* progress in fulfilling their commitment to *sustainable forestry*.

4.3.1.1 Performance Measures

4.3.1.1.1 *Program Participants* shall report annually to the SFI program on their compliance with the SFIS.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. Record keeping tracks all the categories of information needed for annual progress reports.
2. Prompt response to the annual SFI survey questionnaire.
3. Copies of past reports maintained to document progress and improvements to demonstrate conformance to the SFIS.

4.3.2. **Objective 10.** Provide opportunities for the public and the *forestry* community to participate in the commitment to *sustainable forestry*.

4.3.2.1 Performance Measures

4.3.2.1.1 *Program Participants* shall support and promote, at the state or other appropriate levels, mechanisms for public outreach, education and involvement related to forest management.

Core SFI Indicator:

1. Support for the SFI Implementation Committee program to address outreach, education and technical assistance (*e.g.*, 800 numbers, environmental education, or private and public sector technical assistance programs).

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Use of focus groups or other means to understand public opinion.
2. Partnerships or consultations with interested external groups concerned about land management.
3. *Forestry* tours conducted for special interest groups or the general public.
4. Specialists on staff or available to conduct public outreach or natural resource education.
5. Teacher training in natural resource fields supported.
6. Participation in or support of Project Learning Tree (PLT), Project Wild or Project Wet.
7. Society of American Foresters education outreach efforts supported.
8. Cooperative education outreach efforts supported.
9. Vocational technical programs directed at resource management supported.
10. Participation in trade shows and conferences.
11. SFI accomplishments publicly reported.
12. Results from public input used to modify practices.
13. Staff assistance provided for classroom presentations.
14. Joint resource management projects conducted with external groups.
15. Demonstration projects used to showcase management techniques and promote sustainable management practices.

4.3.2.1.2 *Program Participants* shall establish, at the state, or other appropriate levels, procedures to address concerns raised by loggers, consulting foresters, employees, the public or

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Program Participants regarding practices that appear to be inconsistent with the SFIS *Principles and Objectives*.

SFI Core Indicator:

1. Support for SFI State Implementation Committee efforts to address concerns raised by loggers, consulting foresters, employees, *Program Participants* and the public.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Support for SFI State Implementation Committee efforts to implement discussion processes with wood producers, consultants and others.
2. Effective communication between the *National Forum* and activities at the state and local level.

4.4. Objectives for Program Participants for Continual Improvement in the Practice of Sustainable Forestry

4.4.1 Objective 11. Promote continual improvement in the practice of *sustainable forestry* and monitor, measure and report performance in achieving the commitment to *sustainable forestry*.

4.4.4.1 Performance Measures

4.4.4.1.1 *Program Participants* shall establish a management review system to examine findings and progress in implementing the SFI program and *policies*, to make appropriate improvements in *policies*, and to inform their employees of changes.

Core SFI Indicators:

1. A system to review commitments, *policies* and procedures to evaluate effectiveness.
2. A system for collecting, reviewing and reporting information to senior management regarding progress in achieving SFI *Objectives* and *Performance Measures*.
3. Senior management annually reviews progress and determines what changes and improvements are necessary to continue achieving SFI conformance.

Other SFI Indicators:

1. Key field personnel review commitments, *policies* and procedures.
2. External communications materials are reviewed to ensure accuracy.
3. *Program Participants* with large industrial operations (multiple mills or forest operations or both) comply with an Environmental Management System (EMS) that is consistent with internationally recognized EMS standards such as ISO 14001.

2002-2004



**Sustainable Forestry Initiative®
Verification/Certification Principles and Procedures
(SFI-V/CPP)**

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE® PROGRAM

2002-2004 Edition
Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Verification/Certification Principles
and Procedures (SFI-V/CPP)

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1. Introduction

The SFI Verification/Certification Principles and Procedures (SFI-V/CPP) provide direction to *Program Participants*, *verifiers* and other interested parties about the *principles* and procedures required for verification. The *SFI Verification Process* includes both *first-* and *second-party verification*, as well as independent *third-party certification* of conformance to the SFI Standard. The term verification will be used generically to refer to the overall auditing process. The term *certification* is used to denote independent *third-party verification* and is, therefore, a functional equivalent.

The *SFI Verification Process* is also consistent with the auditing principles and procedures outlined in various international standards including: the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Plus 1133, Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management Systems – General Audit Principles and Audit Procedures for Auditing Sustainable Forest Management Systems; Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS), the European Union auditing and *certification* procedures (EN 45011 and EN 45012); and the ISO series of standards for environmental auditing (ANSI-ISO 14010-96, ANSI-ISO 14011-96, and ANSI-ISO 14012-96), now adopted as American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Standards for the United States.

2. Scope

The SFI Verification/Certification Principles and Procedures (SFI-V/CPP) outline the requirements for conducting a verification to determine conformity with the SFI Standard. The verification principles and procedures are applicable to all types and sizes of *forestry organizations* operating a SFI program.

A *forestry organization* engaging in verification must establish the scale of its verification effort. An organization may choose to verify the conformance of all of its operations to the SFIS requirements or choose to verify the conformance of discrete operating units. These organizations may be geographically distinct or separate management units with different species, product lines or customers.

3. Definitions

All definitions can be referenced in Section 5 of the 2002-2004 edition of the *Sustainable Forestry Initiative Program Overview (SFI Program Overview)*.

4. Elements of the SFI Verification Principles and Procedures

The SFI Verification shall be guided strictly by the requirements of the SFI Standard.

An SFI Verification can be conducted only if the *lead verifier* is convinced that:

- Material to conduct the SFI verification exists.
- The geographic scope and scale of the SFI verification is understood.
- Sufficient support and resources exist to conduct the verification.
- The *Program Participant* is willing and cooperative.
- Employees and, where appropriate, contract personnel, responsible for the *forestry* operation and its conformance with SFIS requirements are clearly identified.

5. Principles for Verification

Objectives: The basis for SFI verification rests on *objectives* defined by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard and by the *forestry organization* seeking verification.

Scope: The scope of the verification will be established by the *Program Participant* and the *lead verifier*. It will be prescribed by the geographic and operational boundaries of the *forestry organization*.

Objectivity and Independence: The *verification team* must be wholly independent to ensure its objectivity throughout the verification process.

The selection of the *verification team* members is at the discretion of the *lead verifier* in consultation with the *Program Participant*.

First-party verification team members shall not be accountable to those directly responsible for the *forestry* operations or be responsible themselves for the subject matter being verified. *Verifiers* shall be from a different operating unit or division.

A *second-party verifier* will be external to the organization but may have financial or other business ties with it. A forest products trade association, another *Program Participant* or a customer could constitute a *second-party verifier*.

Where the *forestry organization* chooses independent *third-party verification*, the *verifier* shall be totally independent of the organization being verified. A third-party *verifier* shall not be involved in consulting activities that provide services to design, implement or maintain the SFI program being verified.

Verification organizations, their employees, subcontractors and other agents involved in any SFI verification activity (assessment, audit or re-assessment) shall not have been involved in development of a *Program Participant's* SFI program nor shall a *verifier* have direct financial interest in the *Program Participant's* organization.

Approval of Verifiers to Conduct SFI Certifications:

Firms or lead auditors wishing to conduct an SFI *certification* must:

1. Provide written copies of all required accreditation, training credentials and relevant work experience to the SFB Verifiers Accreditation Subcommittee;
2. Gain a positive report from a formal field peer review of at least one SFI audit annually for each approved SFI *verifier/firm*; and
3. Operate in accordance with the ISO series of standards for environmental auditing or their equivalent.

Should any information from the peer review process call into question the credentials or services of any *verifier*, the *verifier* shall take corrective actions to address deficiencies. If these remedies are not sufficient to address identified concerns, the SFB Verifiers Accreditation Task Group may recommend that the *verifier* be suspended from further SFI *certifications*.

SFI Verification Process

Competence: *Verifiers* shall have the education, formal training and experience to conduct a competent SFI Verification. At a minimum, each SFI *verification team* shall include expertise in wildlife ecology, *silviculture*, forest hydrology and operations. One specialist per discipline is not required. At least one member shall have knowledge of or experience in the region of operation undergoing verification.

Confidentiality: Strict confidentiality shall govern the relationship between the *verification team* and the *Program Participant*. Information or documents obtained during the verification or produced in the final report shall remain confidential unless the *Program Participant* indicates otherwise.

All information related to the SFI verification is the sole property of the *Program Participant*.

Verification Procedures: The SFI verification shall be governed by accepted verification practices and procedures. These practices and procedures must be consistent for *first-, second-, and third-party verifications*.

Verification Indicators: Indicators should be identified early in all SFI verifications. Both the *lead verifier* and the *Program Participant* shall agree upon any additional indicators.

Sufficient *verification evidence* must be available to ensure that *verifiers* working independently would reach substantially the same findings.

Third-party verifiers shall gather and analyze their own evidence and arrive at their own independent conclusions. Any assessments or analyses from other sources shall be independently confirmed for accuracy and consistency.

Verification Findings and Conclusions: The *Program Participant* should be confident that the *SFI Verification Process* produces reliable findings and conclusions.

The SFI *verifier* shall obtain sufficient evidence from individual and collective findings in order to develop defensible conclusions.

Verification Report: The *verifiers* shall provide a written report, including findings, conclusions or summaries to the *Program Participant*.

The *lead verifier* and the *Program Participant* shall determine together what will be included in the report. Following is a list of information that may be included:

- *Forestry organization* and operational units being verified, and names and titles of all parties involved;
- *Objectives* and scope of the SFI verification;
- Indicators, in addition to the SFIS requirements, used to conduct the verification;
- When the verification was conducted and completed;
- The proprietary nature of the information employed and intended circulation of the verification report; and
- Conclusions, findings and any agreed upon recommendations.

SFI Verification Process

It is the responsibility of the *Program Participant* to identify any corrective action that will be taken to respond to the *verification findings*.

In addition, for those *Program Participants* who wish to proclaim their independent third-party *certification*, the *Program Participant* shall work with the verifying organization to prepare an audit summary for public disclosure.

6. SFI Verification Procedures

Verification Objectives: An SFI verification shall establish:

- Conformance of a *Program Participant's* SFI program against the SFIS and any additional indicators; and
- Whether the *Program Participant's* SFI program management system and on-the-ground activities conform or comply with the SFIS.

Responsibilities and Activities of Lead Verifier: The *lead verifier* is responsible for the professional conduct of the *SFI Verification Process*.

The various responsibilities and activities of the *lead verifier* include:

- Working with the *Program Participant* to determine the scope of the SFI verification and the makeup and structure of the *verification team*;
- Working with the *Program Participant* and *verification team* members to prepare the verification plan;
- Obtaining information about the *Program Participant's* management activities and any previous verifications;
- Representing the *verification team* throughout the verification process;
- Directing the *verification team* to accomplish the objectives of the SFI verification;
- Anticipating and resolving problems that arise during the *SFI verification process*;
- Determining whether the SFIS requirements have been achieved and reporting those findings to the *Program Participant* within the time-frame agreed to; and
- Alerting the *Program Participant* about non-conformances with the SFIS.

Verifiers: *Verifiers* participating in an *SFI Verification Process* will:

- Cooperate with the *lead verifier* and conduct assigned responsibilities professionally and objectively;
- Gather appropriate information to allow for analysis that will result in objective findings and conclusions; and
- Draft required documents verifying findings and prepare the final verification report.

Qualifications for Verification Teams:

The *verification team* shall be selected to include those with:

- Qualifications as outlined in the SFI Qualification Criteria for Verifiers (SFI-QCV);
- Abilities to work with the type of *forestry organization* being verified;
- Appropriate expertise, communication and language skills;
- No potential conflicts of interest with the *Program Participant*; and
- Qualifications that meet standards established by national accreditation bodies (*e.g.*, American National Standards Institute/Registrar Accreditation Board (ANSI/RAB) in the U.S.).

SFI Verification Process

For *third-party verification*, at least one member of the *verification team* shall be a professional forester as defined by the Society of American Foresters (SAF) or licensed by the state(s) in which the verification is conducted.

Program Participant: The *Program Participant* shall:

- Work closely with the *verification team* to ensure the verification objectives are achieved;
- Inform all appropriate personnel about the verification;
- Provide the necessary resources and assistance to enable the *verification team* to conduct the SFI verification, including designating responsible personnel to assist members of the *verification team*; and
- Provide access to information and records as well as to the field operations, organization staff, contractors and loggers.

7. SFI Verification

Initiating the Verification: The *Program Participant* and *lead verifier* decide on the scope and extent of a SFI verification. The location and activities of a *forestry organization* frame the physical scope of the verification. The *Program Participant* and the *lead verifier* must agree in writing to any deviation from this direction.

Those conducting the SFI verification must have the proper personnel and resources to complete the task. To facilitate this, the *lead verifier* shall, at the outset of the investigation, take inventory of all available materials such as records, data and any other documentation required to conduct a proper verification. If the material is deemed insufficient or inadequate, the *Program Participant* must be informed. The issue of adequate documentation must be addressed before the verification can proceed.

Preparing the Verification: A verification plan guides the conduct of the verification process. The plan shall allow for the efficient use of available resources and permit adjustments as information is generated during the course of the verification.

The *lead verifier*, in consultation with the *Program Participant*, shall develop the verification plan. If the *Program Participant* has any objections to the plan, such objections must be resolved before the verification commences. All parties shall agree to any revisions to the verification plan.

The plan shall identify:

- SFI verification *objectives*, scope, and appropriate *verification criteria* and indicators;
- The organization to be verified and those aspects of the *Program Participant's* SFI Program that are of highest priority for verification;
- Individuals having direct responsibilities for the SFI Program and those constituting the *verification team*;
- Appropriate procedures for verifying the SFI Program against the SFIS;
- The duration of the verification process, including dates and locations of meetings;
- Anticipated date of the publication and distribution of the internal verification report;
- Any confidentiality agreements; and
- For *third-party certifications*, anticipated date of the publication and distribution of an audit summary for public disclosure.

SFI Verification Process

Verification Plan Assignments: The *lead verifier* shall consult with the *verification team* to make specific assignments. The *lead verifier* can make changes to the work assignments when the team agrees that such changes will ensure that the verification *objectives* can be met.

Verification Plan Documents: The documents that can expedite the *verifier's* assignments include:

- Standardized recording forms;
- Evaluation forms for SFIS requirements; and
- Records or minutes of meetings.

These documents (and others used during the investigation) should be retained until the verification is completed. The *verification team* must hold and protect all confidential or proprietary information during the verification, then return the information to the *Program Participant* or destroy it upon completion of the verification report.

Conducting the Verification: Before the commencement of the verification, the *verification team* and the *Program Participant* should hold a meeting to:

- Acquaint all parties involved in the SFI verification with one another;
- Ensure that agreement exists between the parties involved on the scope, *objectives*, verification plan and the verification timetable;
- Ensure that the *Program Participant* and management understand the methods and procedures to be used as part of the verification and what documents the *verification team* needs;
- Coordinate schedules for all necessary meetings; and
- Ensure that the parties are familiar with all procedures related to health, safety and emergencies.

Collection of Verification Evidence: A full and factual determination of findings is possible only when an adequate amount of evidence has been gathered.

Evidence shall be compiled by examination of operating procedures, study of materials relating to *forestry* practices, and on-the-ground examination of field performance, and through meetings with employees, contractors and other third parties (*e.g.*, government agencies, community groups, *conservation* organizations), as appropriate, to determine conformance to the Standard.

The *verification team* must ensure that all sampling and measurement procedures are of high quality.

Verification Findings: The *verification team* shall carefully review the evidence to determine whether the organization's performance conforms to the SFIS. They shall determine conformance to the SFIS based upon both a review of documentation and field-level assessments of representative sites.

The *verification team* shall grant *certification* when 1) there are no non-conformances; 2) minor non-conformances have been resolved or addressed via a written plan for timely corrective action approved by the *verifier*; and 3) all *major non-conformances* have been eliminated.

SFI Verification Process

Findings of conformance and non-conformance shall be appropriately documented and fully supported by the evidence.

Findings shall be discussed with the *Program Participant* to reach consensus and an understanding of the basis for such findings. Before any declarations of conformance can be issued, the *Program Participant* shall resolve any *major non-conformances* and include a schedule for resolution of any *minor non-conformances*. Findings of a *major non-conformance* can result in a failure to be successfully verified. The *verification team* shall also communicate findings of conformance above and beyond the basic requirements of the SFIS to the *Program Participant*.

Verification Meeting: After the collection of evidence, the *verifiers*, the management of the *Program Participant*, and any other relevant parties shall hold a closing session. *Verification findings* will be presented and discussed to ensure an understanding of the findings.

Any disputes or disagreements should be resolved before the report is issued. The *lead verifier* exercises the final word on *verification findings*.

Verification Report and Document Distribution and Retention: The *lead verifier* has final responsibility for the verification report.

The subject matter covered in the verification report is delineated in the verification plan. The parties involved shall agree to any changes to the plan.

The report shall contain findings and relevant supporting materials and, with agreement between the *lead verifier* and the *Program Participant*, it may also include identification of:

- The organization verified;
- *Objectives*, scope, time period and plan of the verification;
- Indicators against which the verification was performed;
- Parties involved in the SFI verification;
- Proprietary or confidential information contained in the report;
- Outside parties to receive copies of the final report; and
- Declarations including conformance with the SFIS.

The final verification report should be delivered to the *Program Participant* by the date identified in the verification plan. The *Program Participant* shall be notified of any delays in the delivery of the report and, if a delay occurs, a mutually acceptable new date should be established.

In accordance with the verification plan, the *Program Participant* will determine the distribution of the verification report or summary. Distribution outside the *Program Participant's* organization requires its written permission.

In the case of independent *third-party certification*, the verifying organization shall issue a formal certificate of conformance with the SFIS. The declaration of conformance shall include the *Program Participant's* name, statement of scope, date of certificate, verifier's name, logo and signature(s).

SFI Verification Process

Verification reports and certificates are the sole property of the *Program Participant* and confidentiality must be safeguarded.

Working documents, drafts and final verification reports shall be retained only if the *Program Participant* and the *lead verifier* agree to do so in writing.

Verification Completion: The verification is considered complete when all activities outlined in the verification plan have been attended to and the verification report, or summary, is submitted to the *Program Participant*.

Reverification: To maintain a current SFI Verification, *Program Participants* shall periodically reverify their SFI Program to ensure that it continues to be in conformance with the SFIS.

The *Program Participant* and the *lead verifier* shall agree upon a schedule for maintaining a current SFI Verification. The initial reverification shall occur within three years of the date of the verification and shall not exceed every five years thereafter. Periodic surveillance audits are required for all SFI Certifications where a Program Participant wishes to use an SFI on-product label. Surveillance audits are not intended to substitute for a complete verification and, therefore, would not require a full *verification team*. Rather, they provide information regarding the *Program Participant's* on-going commitment to the Standard. These audits focus on: action plans to address non-conformances, formal reports of inconsistent practices, changes in condition or operations and changes in the Standard. Any non-conformances identified would be addressed in the same manner as in the initial verification.

8. Public Communication and Claims

It is anticipated that *Program Participants* will want to communicate their commitment and conformance to the SFIS. This communication shall be accurate and consistent with applicable marketing guidelines and requirements.

Any organization seeking independent *third-party certification or* recertification in accordance with the SFI Standard shall, if it plans to publicly state its intentions, notify the *Sustainable Forestry Board (SFB)* prior to undertaking the audit and shall, upon successful completion of the audit, provide a copy of the audit summary as prescribed above to both AF&PA and the SFB not less than two weeks before making any public claims or statements about its *certification or* recertification.

In addition, for those *Program Participants* who wish to proclaim their independent *third-party certification*, the *Program Participant* shall work with the verifying organization to prepare an audit summary for public disclosure. The summary shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Audit scope and process;
2. Names and backgrounds of auditors;
3. Indicators used; and
4. A summary of findings.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which has published helpful guidelines on product

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advertising and communication, governs public communication and claims. National accreditation bodies and national consumer protection laws and regulations provide additional information and direction. Consistent with applicable requirements, *Program Participants* shall be careful not to make inappropriate or unsupported claims based upon verification of their SFI Program.

9. Interpretation, Feedback, and Disputes/Appeals

The *SFI verification process* relies on consensus between the *verifier* and *Program Participant* to reach conclusions on scope of verification audits, interpretation of evidence and materiality to the standard, as well as the significance of findings.

From time to time, formal assistance may be needed in the areas of interpretation, materiality, significance and other situational uncertainties that may arise through the verification process. As part of the SFIS commitment to continual improvement of both the *SFI verification process* and the SFIS, such concerns shall be promptly submitted to the SFB Interpretations Sub-group.

Questions or issues needing interpretation shall be directed to the SFB at their website at: **contact@aboutsfb.org** . The request will be provided to the SFB Interpretations Sub-group, which shall respond to all inquires within 45 days of receipt.

It is neither the intention nor the responsibility of the SFI program to resolve disputes arising through verification; nevertheless, the SFB Interpretations Sub-group will provide timely opinions and direction to assist parties in answering interpretive questions. Through this process, the SFI program shall maintain a record of opinions and concerns available to both *Program Participants* and *verifiers* to assist with verification planning. The *Sustainable Forestry Board* shall periodically review this record and, where appropriate, recommend changes for inclusion in the SFIS, V/PPP or QCV.

Disputes/Appeals Between a Verifier and a Program Participant:

Each accredited *verifier* conducting certifications must have in place an internal disputes resolution process in keeping with ANSI/RAB or equivalent guidance. Resolution of all disputes between a *verifier* and a *Program Participant* shall be addressed via these mechanisms.

Disputes/Appeals Regarding A Single Instance or Claim of Non-conformance:

Any person with information or claims about individual practices of any *Program Participant* that the other person believes to be in non-conformance may seek to have those claims investigated.

Resolution of Disputes/Appeals must follow the following protocol:

1. The person with the complaint shall present specific claims of non-conformance in writing and in sufficient detail to the *Program Participant*. The *Program Participant* shall respond to such claims within 45 days of receipt of the complaint. In the case of certified *Program Participants*, the *Program Participant* shall also provide a copy of the allegation and any response to the *Program Participant's verifier* for future review via periodic surveillance or *certification* audits.
2. If the resolution or response does not fully resolve the issue, the other party shall provide its original documentation and any response from the *Program Participant* to the appropriate State Implementation Committee Inconsistent Practices Program. The State

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Inconsistent Practices Program shall have 45 days from receipt of documentation to investigate and respond to the allegations. Where a State Inconsistent Practices program does not exist, claims may be forwarded to the SFI National Inconsistent Practices office via the External Review Panel Secretariat. The State or National Inconsistent Practices Program shall provide a copy of its findings and any recommended actions to the *Program Participant* along with a copy to the party submitting the complaint.

Disputes/Appeals Questioning the Validity of a Certification:

Any person with information or claims that question the validity of an entire *certification* may seek to have those claims investigated.

Resolutions of Disputes/Appeals must follow the following protocol:

1. The party with the complaint shall document the specific claims of non-conformance in writing and in sufficient detail to allow the *Program Participant* to investigate and respond in writing to the allegations. *Program Participants* shall respond to any such claims within 45 days of receipt of notice of an issue. The *Program Participant* shall also provide a copy of the original allegation and the *Program Participant* response to the *Program Participant's verifier* for future review via periodic surveillance or *certification* audits.
2. If the response does not fully resolve the issue, the person making the claim may then provide its original documentation and any *Program Participant* response to the SFB Executive Director for review and consideration by the SFB Certification Appeals Subcommittee. Upon reviewing the information, the SFB Certification Appeals Subcommittee may either:
 - a. declare the claim invalid, thus closing the review;
 - b. seek more information from the person submitting the complaint or the *Program Participant*; or
 - c. if, in the view of the SFB Certification Appeals Subcommittee, there is sufficient evidence that if confirmed would threaten the validity of the *certification*, refer the case to the *SFB* for possible resolution by an Ad-hoc Certification Review Task Force. Such a Task Force would be created only on an as-needed basis for the purpose of reviewing the case in question. That Task Force would comprise, at a minimum:
 - i. one representative from the audit/certification profession;
 - ii. one representative from the professional *forestry* community; and
 - iii. one representative from the environmental non-governmental organization community.

Representatives for the specialized interests may, where it is appropriate, be drawn from the External Review Panel and the *SFB* with such representation limited to a single individual from each body. The Ad-hoc Certification Review Task Force will review all relevant information, and if necessary conduct a field visit, and may find that:

- 1) The case is without merit and no further action is required;
- 2) Corrective actions are necessary; or
- 3) Where the *Program Participant* fails to take appropriate corrective measures or where any action would be insufficient to remedy the situation, on consensus of the review team, the *certification* may be suspended.



2002-2004

Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Qualification Criteria for Verifiers (SFI-QCV)

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE® PROGRAM

2002-2004 Edition

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SFI Qualification Criteria for Verifiers

1. Introduction

This document outlines the qualification criteria for *verifiers* to the *SFI Verification Process*. *Program Participants* may decide to seek *first-party verification* or self-verify, seek *second-party verification*, or seek independent *third-party verification* of conformance with the SFIS requirements.

NOTE: Although internal and external verifiers employ similar skills, the qualifications outlined in this document may not apply in their entirety to internal verifiers. The training and experience required of internal *verifiers* should be guided by the:

- geographic extent and impact of the *forestry organization's* operations;
- complexity of the operations and number of employees engaged in resource management; and
- level of knowledge and expertise of internal personnel.

2. Scope

This document outlines qualification criteria applicable to *first-*, *second-* and *third-party SFI verifiers* and *lead verifiers*. Criteria for the selection and composition of *verification teams* is provided in SFI Verification/Certification Principles and Procedures (SFI V/CPP).

3. Definitions

All definitions can be referenced in Section 5 of the 2002-2004 edition of the *Sustainable Forestry Initiative Program Overview (SFI Program Overview)*.

4. Education, Formal Training and Experience

Qualifications of Verifiers:

Verifiers shall have the education, formal training and experience that promotes competency in and comprehension of:

- *Forestry* operations as they relate to natural resource management, including wildlife, fisheries, recreation, etc.;
- Environmental regulation and related disciplines;
- International and domestic sustainable *forestry* management systems and performance standards; and
- Verification requirements related to the SFI.

At a minimum, *verifiers* shall have completed a *secondary education* or equivalent. *Verifiers* who do not have a professional *degree* shall have a minimum of five years' work experience. Pursuit of a professional *degree*, or equivalent, can be credited against work experience; however, the total reduction in work experience shall not exceed two years.

Two years' relevant work experience is required for *verifiers* who have obtained a professional *degree* (e.g., bachelors).

Verifiers shall have sufficient on-the-job training in conducting SFI verifications, which can be provided internally or by a qualified consultant.

If the *verifier* has developed the proper skills to conduct SFI verifications through other means – competency or certification tests– that training will be credited to the *verifier*.

Qualifications of Lead Verifiers:

In addition to the above-specified *verifier* qualifications, *lead verifiers* will need to meet the additional requirements outlined below. To qualify to conduct *first-* and *second-party* declarations of conformance to the SFIS, *lead verifiers* shall complete an internal auditing course offered by national standards organizations or qualified firms that provide instruction in the principles and procedures of auditing. *Lead verifiers* shall also have the training and demonstrate the ability to conduct verifications in conformance with the SFIS.

To qualify to conduct *third-party verifications*, the *lead verifier* shall, at a minimum, be certified as an Environmental Management Systems Lead Auditor, or equivalent, by a national accreditation body, such as the Registrar Accreditation Board (RAB), the Canadian Environmental Auditing Association (CEAA), or equivalent. (*The EMS Lead Auditor requirement shall take effect one year after the acceptance by the appropriate accreditation body of SFI audit experience as acceptable for meeting experience requirements*). The *lead verifier's* organization or firm may also be appropriately accredited to conduct ISO 14001 certifications/registrations by the American National Standards Institute/Registrar Accreditation Board (ANSI/RAB), or equivalent. This requirement will ensure that *third-party lead verifiers* to the SFIS have obtained appropriate training in accepted verification principles, procedures and practices.

5. Personal Competencies and Skills

To be fully successful, all *verifiers* shall also possess:

- The ability to explain – orally and in writing – complex concepts and ideas;
- Appropriate communication and language skills;
- The ability to work tactfully while remaining objective;
- Sensitivity to regional and cultural norms; and
- Organizational skills that facilitate analyzing large quantities of data to arrive at sound decisions on the most important information.

6. Continuing Professional Development

All *verifiers* shall pursue ongoing personal and professional development in:

- New developments in forest management science and technology;
- Sustainable forest management systems and verification/*certification* programs and standards;
- Understanding and interpreting federal and state *forestry* and environmental laws and codes-of-practice; and
- Verification procedures, processes and techniques, especially as these pertain to SFIS.

7. Objective Evidence of Education, Experience and Training

Individuals shall maintain records documenting their education, experience and training. For experience and training, records of the number of days involved in each activity will suffice.

8. Confidentiality

All information and documents, including working drafts and any reports, shall be considered confidential. *Verifiers* shall not release any information or documents without the written permission of the *Program Participant*. *Verifiers* shall always conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner.