

Green Comparison: SFI &

Sustainable Forestry Initiative

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (www.aboutsfi.org) is one of the world's largest sustainable forestry programs with over 136 million acres of registered forestland. Originally developed by the American Forest & Paper Association (www.afandpa.org) in 1994, the SFI program is now maintained by a separate 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, the Sustainable Forestry Board (www.aboutsfb.org). The 15-member board is comprised of 10 individuals from non-industry interests, including The Nature Conservancy, the American Bird Conservancy, and Duke University School of the Environment. The remaining five members of the board are industry representatives. Compliance with the SFI program is a requirement of membership in the AF&PA, however third-party certification is voluntary.

According to SFI, the program's goals include protecting forestlands through responsible harvesting of forests, reforestation, soil conservation, water and wildlife protection, and efficient use of forest products. SFI offers a set of four branded labels that satisfy specific program requirements and may be attached to products. The first label may be used by primary producers, or those companies that procure raw material from managed forests, and the other three labels are intended for companies that procure processed materials. To use any of the labels, a company must have the entire supply chain certified by a third party as compliant with the SFI standards.

Woodwork Institute member Weyerhaeuser (www.weyerhaeuser.com) has SFI-certified 100% of their U.S. forests and 85% of their Canadian forests.



**SUSTAINABLE
FORESTRY
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Some of the main differences between the SFI and FSC programs include:

- **SFI's focus is on North American forests; FSC certifies forests worldwide**
- **SFI-certified forestland in North America is far more abundant**
- **FSC standards are referenced in the LEED program**
- **SFI allows genetic engineering in its certified forests, FSC does not**
- **FSC prevents the conversion of natural forests to plantations, SFI does not**
- **FSC addresses indigenous labor issues, SFI does not**

& FSC

Forest Stewardship Council

The Forest Stewardship Council (www.fscus.org) was founded in the early 1990s by a World Wildlife Fund coalition with the goal of certifying responsible forest management and products derived from those forests.

FSC has a network of national initiatives and regional offices that promote FSC's programs in 33 countries. The organization is governed by three decision-making bodies: The General Assembly, which is comprised of three large membership "chambers" that cover environmental, social, and economic interests; a nine-member elected board of directors representing both industry interests and environmental groups; and the executive director that operates the main administrative office in Germany.

Currently, approximately 12.6 million acres of forestland in the U.S. is certified by FSC. Companies may also seek FSC certification in order to sell FSC-branded products.

More information about FSC's Chain of Custody Certification and a listing of Woodwork Institute members that offer FSC-certified products may be found on p. 16 of this issue.

The U.S. Green Building Council chose FSC standards for inclusion in their LEED "green" building program. Read more about LEED on p. 12 of this issue.



FSC is favored by environmental groups such as the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, and the World Wildlife Fund. However the FSC standards for certified wood in chip and fiber products has fluctuated over the years, which, according to environmental interests, has diluted the meaning of the FSC label. There are still issues, such as clearcutting and herbicide use, that some environmental groups claim are not effectively specified by either FSC or SFI.

More information and comparisons of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and the Forest Stewardship Council can be found on the web at www.eco-labels.org, www.certifiedwood.org, and www.yale.edu/forestcertification/.