

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT SFF'S FOREST CERTIFICATION PROGRAM 2002

Background on SFF Certification

The Silva Forest Foundation has been involved with forest certification since the early 1990's. In October 1993, SFF was a founding member of the Forest Stewardship Council at its initial meeting in Toronto. In 1994, SFF published its first set of standards for ecologically responsible forest use and timber management. These were the standards used to guide our first certification in Vernon, B.C. in 1995.

Since that time, the SFF has spent considerable time incorporating reviews and revising our standards. In 1998, the SFF applied for accreditation with the Forest Stewardship Council as an FSC certifier. On March 29th, 2000, we announced that our accreditation as an FSC certifier was finalized. The SFF is now accredited to conduct timber management and chain-of-custody certifications throughout Canada.

What is Certification?

Certification is a consumer-driven initiative to identify and label wood products originating in ecologically and socially responsible timber management operations. Certification allows environmentally conscious consumers to choose wood products displaying a certified logo. This logo guarantees that the wood was logged from a forest with a high standard of timber management and that the logs have been tracked through the manufacturing process to ensure that there has been no contamination with uncertified wood.



What is the FSC?

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) has emerged in Canada, and around the world, as the most credible and recognizable certification scheme. The FSC is a broadly supported international body that accredits and monitors certifiers. The FSC does not conduct certifications, but rather grants certifying bodies (like the SFF) the right to certify under the FSC logo. The FSC has achieved worldwide recognition and support through its strong ties to environmental and social activist organizations. These organizations support the FSC because its standards address "on-the-ground" performance of timber management operations and because it endorses independent certifications.



Two types of certification are granted under the FSC system. Forest Management Certification evaluates and certifies that timber managers are adhering to a rigorous set of ecological and social standards.



Chain-of-Custody Certification ensures that manufacturers handling and processing certified timber account for the flow of certified wood, such that the certified status of a final product is accurately represented.

The Silva Forest Foundation (SFF) is a FSC accredited certifier. We are the first Canadian-based FSC certifier and one of the world's ten accredited timber management and chain-of-custody certifiers.

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What is the SFF Certification Program?

Born of the need to encourage alternatives to clearcut logging and plantation forestry, SFF eco-certification identifies timber management operations carrying out ecoforestry. Eco-certification verifies that these operations are working to protect and maintain ecosystems, provide a broad range of economic benefits, and foster strong human communities. The SFF has developed standards for timber management operations which fulfill FSC requirements, as well as our own high standards for ecological and social responsibility. The SFF also performs chain-of-custody certifications for value-added manufacturers. In order to promote eco-certified wood, the SFF is working to connect eco-certified timber management operations with buyers and manufacturers who want certified inputs. This type of facilitation is very important to certified timber management operations as they search out new markets for their wood.

What does SFF eco-certification entail?

Eco-certification is a process by which the SFF evaluates ecoforestry operations against regionally-adapted *SFF Standards for Ecologically Responsible Timber Management*. The process is flexible in that the standards act as a vision which applicants work towards over time. Each ecoforestry operation is evaluated within the unique context of its constraints and limitations. Applicants must meet entry-level criteria before certification can be granted, and then are required to show continual improvement and achieve specific goals over time. These achievements are designed to move the timber management operation closer to the vision outlined in the standards.

For instance, a reduction in the allowable annual cut (AAC) is often necessary, however, it is generally not required immediately. In most cases, SFF will allow certified operations two to five years after initial certification to initiate a recalculation of the AAC. By a similar token, compiling the large amount of information about forest character (how



the forest functioned prior to European contact) and condition (how the forest looks today) needed to form the foundation of plans may not be immediately achievable by many operations. Once again, immediate compliance is not required with all standards, but there must be a commitment to fulfillment of the requirements and demonstrated progress toward eventual compliance.

For more detail about SFF's certification standards, please see Summary of Silva Forest Foundation Standards For Ecologically Responsible Timber Management [\[link to .pdf Archives Eco Cert Summary\]](#) and Standards Checklist for Ecologically Responsible Timber Management [\[link to .pdf Archives Eco Cert Checklist\]](#)