



# Forest Policy Bulletin

Guideline #5

December, 2001

***“Maine policy should promote a sustainable flow of goods and services over the lifecycle of the forest.”***

*From the Maine Forest Products Council’s Forest Policy Guidelines*



Ever since early humans moved from the hunter/gatherer stage to more permanent forms of settlement, society has been faced with the challenge of maintaining a steady supply of wood while sustaining a renewable forest resource. Unlike the earliest humans, who could simply clear a landscape then move on when the surrounding countryside was exhausted, more established societies have long needed to keep a supply of wood within convenient reach of permanent towns and cities.

## **The Changing Face of Silviculture**

The response to this need has been the development of the science of silviculture, which, simply put, is the study of how trees grow. By studying how trees grow, scientists have been able to develop techniques that lead to improved regeneration and growth of harvested forests. These techniques, which are the tools of foresters, have been developed and improved upon over many years. While the basics are well-established, it is safe to say that more silvicultural research is ongoing now than at any time in history.

For years, forestry has been concerned primarily with timber supply, and the assumption has been that forests are a renewable resource that can be managed to meet the needs of society indefinitely. In recent

years, however, society has come to expect more from forests than simply wood and paper, and foresters increasingly are expected to manage more explicitly for a broader array of forest uses, products, and services.

With demand increasing for forest products at the same time as the public is asking for assurances that, among other things, forests are being harvested sustainably, that water and soil quality are being protected, and that appropriate levels of biodiversity are being maintained, strategies for managing forests sustainably must both maintain the structural and functional integrity of the forest as an ecosystem and meet the diverse needs of the human community.

## **Sustaining the Maine Woods**

In Maine, there has been no shortage of initiatives to ensure that Maine’s forests are being managed sustainably. Within the forest products industry, at the state’s universities, by the Department of Conservation’s Maine Forest Service, and among a broad range of conservation groups, research is being conducted to improve our understanding of forest ecosystems, and management practices are being implemented so that the full range of values are being protected for the present and sustained for future generations.

## **The Maine Forest Service and Sustainability**

To emphasize the importance of the goals of sustainable forestry to the people of Maine, the 118<sup>th</sup> Maine Legislature identified seven criteria of forest sustainability and directed the Maine Forest Service to develop standards, or benchmarks, for each criterion by 2003.

The seven criteria, and the schedule for developing the standards, are:

- ◆ Criterion 1: Soil productivity (2001)
- ◆ Criterion 2: Water quality, wetlands and riparian zones (1999)
- ◆ Criterion 3: Timber supply and quality (1999)
- ◆ Criterion 4: Aesthetic impacts of timber harvesting (2003)
- ◆ Criterion 5: Biological diversity (2002)
- ◆ Criterion 6: Public accountability of forest owners and managers (1999)
- ◆ Criterion 7: Traditional recreation (2003)

According to the Maine Forest Service, “the criteria of sustainable forest management should be viewed as a large scale reflection of public values – the big picture that Maine citizens want to see on Maine’s

forests.”

The Maine Forest Service includes a Progress Report on Forest Sustainability Standards in its Biennial Report on the State of the Forest. The 2001 Report can be found at [www.state.me.us/doc/mfs/mfshome.htm](http://www.state.me.us/doc/mfs/mfshome.htm).

### Forest Certification Systems

Arguably the most comprehensive approach to sustainable forestry has been the development over the last ten years of a number of so-called “forest certification” systems. The goal of forest certification systems is to develop standards that ensure that forests are being managed with an eye toward protecting all the values that forests provide to society. Concerns such as sustainable harvest rates, the protection of water quality, and the continuation of appropriate levels of biodiversity, among others, are all factors in forest certification systems.

In this country, the two most prevalent certification systems were created by the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Members of the Maine forest products community have participated in both programs, as well as in other programs such as the American Tree Farm System.

### Forest Stewardship Council

The Forest Stewardship Council is an independent, non-profit membership organization with currently more than 300 members from over 40 countries. FSC does not certify forests itself. Instead, the organization sets a threshold for certification programs to meet. Those programs are reviewed and accredited by FSC. Currently, FSC has accredited two certification bodies in North America: the SmartWood Program of the Rainforest Alliance and Scientific Certification Systems’ Forest Conservation Program. There are three types of certification available: Individual Landowner Certification, Resource Manager Certification, and Group Certification.

### FSC Principles and Criteria

FSC certification requires that a landowner’s management practices comply with the FSC Principles and Criteria (P&C). These standards are universal and apply to all landowners worldwide. The 10 Principles identify ten areas of social, ecological and economic concern with which a landowner must comply. These Principles are further supported by Criteria that specify performance levels a landowner must meet to demonstrate compliance with the Principle. Indicators, usually specific to a region

or country, are used to assess compliance of a landowner with the P&C at the regional level.

- ◆ **Principle #1: Compliance with Laws and FSC Principles**
- ◆ **Principle #2: Tenure and Use Rights and Responsibilities**
- ◆ **Principle #3: Indigenous Peoples’ Rights**
- ◆ **Principle #4: Community Relations and Worker’s Rights**
- ◆ **Principle #5: Benefits from the Forest**
- ◆ **Principle #6: Environmental Impact**
- ◆ **Principle #7: Management Plan**
- ◆ **Principle #8: Monitoring and Assessment**
- ◆ **Principle #9: Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forests**
- ◆ **Principle #10: Plantations**

More information on FSC can be found at [www.fscus.org](http://www.fscus.org).

### Maine’s Sustainable Forestry Initiative®

Since 1994, Maine’s SFI<sup>sm</sup> program has been promoting good management of Maine’s forestland. At the heart of the SFI Program is a set of principles initiated by the American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA). These principles call upon SFI participants to supply needed forest products while using environmentally responsible practices that promote the protection of wildlife, plants, soil, air and water quality to ensure the future of our nation’s forests. The SFI principles are translated into action by providing forest managers with a specific roadmap to expand the practice of sustainable forestry and to improve performance visibly. The following objectives form the substance of the program:

- Objective #1-** Broaden the practice of sustainable forestry.
- Objective #2** –Ensure prompt reforestation and forest productivity.
- Objective #3** - Protect water quality.
- Objective #4** - Conserve biodiversity and enhance wildlife habitat.
- Objective #5** - Minimize the visual impact of harvesting.

- Objective #6** - Protect special sites.
- Objective #7**- Continually improve wood utilization.
- Objective #8** - Manage wood procurement programs to encourage sustainable forestry.
- Objective #9** - Publicly Report progress in implementation of sustainable forestry.
- Objective #10** - Provide Opportunities for public participation.
- Objective #11** - Promote Continual Improvement in the practices of sustainable forestry.

### The Role of the State Implementation Committee

The heart of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative lies in the State Implementation Committees, or SICs, that have been established to guide SFI participants toward better forest management practices. SICs are so critical to the success of SFI that roughly 10% of the SFI core indicators that a company must pass relate to how consistently it supports the SIC.

The SICs serve several purposes. First, they provide a forum in which member companies and other members of the forest community can discuss the specific steps needed to implement the SFI program. Second, they provide an opportunity for collaborative efforts when it comes to education and training efforts.

Finally, it is important to note that SICs have the flexibility to adapt their goals and efforts to meet regional needs and expectations. For example, in 1999, Maine's SIC created a Verification Oversight Panel (VOP) in response to a request from the Maine Legislature for a better way of guaranteeing to the public that Maine's forests are indeed being sustainably managed.

### Forestry Hotline

Maine SFI also offers a toll-free number, 1-888-SFI-GOAL (734-4625), to give the public an easy way to voice questions about on-the-ground forestry practices in Maine. The state SFI Coordinator handles these confidential calls, investigating the caller's concern and consulting with the company in question, then provides feedback to the caller on the results.

### SFI: Training and Education in Maine

Maine's SFI Program has helped establish and improve criteria for logger-training programs in order to further the professionalism of loggers and to help build a foundation for a comprehensive approach to sustainable

timber harvesting. In Maine, over 4000 loggers have undergone training for these standards thus far. The criteria include, among other things, knowledge of Best Management Practices, awareness of responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act, an understanding of both forest regeneration techniques and measures to protect and enhance wildlife habitat.

In addition to baseline training efforts, 40 specifically focused workshops have been conducted statewide over the last three years for over eight hundred loggers, landowners and foresters. Topics have included water quality, multiple-level BMPs, and aesthetics.

More information on SFI in Maine can be found at [www.mainesfi.org](http://www.mainesfi.org).



### MFPC Annual Sustainability Report

The Maine Forest Products Council provides an annual report to the Legislature on the progress of the forest management certifications in Maine. This reporting process was developed in response to the 1998 Legislative Joint Resolution challenging Maine's larger landowners to develop a private, voluntary certification program that will assure the public that Maine's forests are being managed sustainably.

The 2000 Annual Verification Report can be found at the Maine Forest Products Council's website at [www.maineforest.org](http://www.maineforest.org).

### Expanding and Improving Sustainable Forestry

While certification programs are an increasingly popular method for landowners and others to demonstrate their commitment to sustaining the Maine woods, the practices of sustainable forestry are also being implemented by landowners who choose not to become formally certified. After all, certification costs money, and it is clear that these costs of certification --both the implementation of management techniques and the subsequent audits-- are often too steep for smaller landowners to bear.

Part of the problem stems from the fact that there is still little in the way of premiums to be earned in the marketplace to offset the costs associated with certification. Still, efforts are on-going to find ways of helping landowners defray the cost of certification, and as that happens the number of landowners pursuing certification will surely rise.

## Cooperative Forestry Research Unit

In the meantime, there are a number of organizations dedicated to researching and improving sustainable forestry techniques. One of the most comprehensive research programs in the state is the Cooperative Forestry Research Unit (CFRU), which is centered at the University of Maine. The mission of the CFRU, which is a partnership between the University and forest landowners and managers in the state of Maine, is to conduct applied scientific research that contributes to the sustainable management of Maine's forests for desired products, services, and conditions.

With a program that encompasses several research projects, including projects exploring the effects of silviculture on Maine's wood supply, water quality and riparian zone management, marten habitat supply, and patch retention methods for biodiversity, the CFRU attempts to advance forest management practices in the state of Maine through scientific research and education. Member organizations contribute annual dues to support research projects that are guided by an Advisory Committee. The CFRU currently has 26 members, including private industrial, private non-industrial, and public forest landowners, as well as other private contributors.

For more information on CFRU, go to [www.umaine.edu/cfru/#](http://www.umaine.edu/cfru/#).

## Holt Research Forest

Another ongoing project is the Holt Research Forest, which is also associated with the University of Maine. The Holt Research Forest is a 120 hectare (300 acre) forest located in Arrowsic, Maine.

In 1981, the Holt Research Forest Team developed two complimentary plans for forest management and research. The project has an emphasis on non-industrial forestlands, and the management goals reflect those of many non-industrial forestland owners in southern Maine:

- ◆ Maximize the production of high-quality timber.
- ◆ Enhance wildlife diversity and abundance.
- ◆ Maintain the forest's aesthetic qualities.

The Holt project also includes an outreach and education program, the purpose of which is to teach principles of forest ecology, and to share research results with people making management decisions on Maine's non-industrial forests in an attempt to bridge the gap between the knowledge gained through research and real-world practice.

More information on the Holt Research Forest can be found at [www.umaine.edu/holtforest/](http://www.umaine.edu/holtforest/)

## Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences

It is possible that no organization works harder to combine real-world practice and objective research than the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, based in Brunswick. Manomet's research efforts are designed with an eye toward resolving the conflicts between the different values society places on natural resources. According to the Center's guiding philosophy, "while different values are, and always will be, a feature of human society, there is a way to help reduce this conflict such that mutually agreeable solutions can be discovered".

For example, the Manomet Center's Shifting Mosaic project directly addresses the sources of conflict inherent in society's goals for its forests. First, the model sets specific economic and ecological goals for private industrial timberlands. Second, the project requisitions a multi-disciplinary scientific team to meet these goals. And third, the project establishes new and efficient mechanisms designed to get scientific information to the public so that policy makers and others can better understand the science involved in industrial forestry as they attempt to establish balanced policies for the Maine Woods.

For more information on Manomet's Shifting Mosaic project, as well as its other research efforts, go to [www.manometmaine.com](http://www.manometmaine.com).

## Sustaining the Maine Woods

While the Maine Woods can only benefit from continued research into the tenets and techniques of sustainable forestry, there are a number of elements of sustainable principles that can be incorporated into Maine forest policy right now.

Maine forest policy should support landowners and managers who use evolving, science-based, silvicultural knowledge to uphold a land stewardship ethic which integrates the management, growth, nurturing, harvesting and reforestation of trees while conserving soil, air and water quality, wildlife and fish habitat, and recognizing public resources. They can also maintain a long-term balance between harvest and growth over the lifecycle of the forest.

Moreover, as Maine moves forward, the majority of public and private timberlands should become voluntarily enrolled under forest management/certification programs. And small woodlot owners should be adequately educated and receive adequate technical support in sustainable forest management.

Finally, it should be a clear goal of Maine forest policy that all the values of the Maine Woods should be sustained for both the present and the future.

