

GREEN BUILDING FACT SHEET

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CERTIFIED WOOD PRODUCTS

BACKGROUND

Sustainable building design is linked to sustainable forest management practices. Wood is the major structural material used in over 90% of North American housing. That is one reason why it is imperative to ensure that the source of our wood — our forests — will be there for future generations.

The American forest products industry is a leader in sustainable forest management practices. Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) certification programs have grown dramatically in the United States in the last decade.

ISSUE

Green building rating systems and guidelines strengthen the interest in forest certification by recognizing and giving credit for certified wood used in construction. Forest products are the only building materials to broadly adopt independent, voluntary certification. Many in the forest products industry are now implementing forest certification programs on a voluntary basis to demonstrate responsible forest management practices, and to demonstrate to customers that their products originate from sustainable sources.

There are three national sustainable forestry management (SFM) certification programs in use in the United States: The Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Program (SFI), the American Tree Farm System (ATF) and the Forest Stewardship Council

(FSC). While these standards have their differences, they all provide assurance that their implementation promotes sustainable forest management.

Certified wood products that originate from these programs should be recognized by all green building rating systems in use today. With less than 10% of the world's commercial forests certified, it is critically important to recognize ATFS, SFI and FSC for their leadership and positive impact on sustainable forestry.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The links between sustainable building approaches and forest certification are evolving and the availability of certified wood is growing in the marketplace.

The three forest certification standards in use in the U.S. are:

- **Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI)** program is based on the premise that responsible environmental behavior and sound business decisions can co-exist. SFI Inc is a fully independent, registered non-profit, with a governance structure with equal representation across three chambers: social, economic and environmental. There are over 150 million acres third party certified to the SFI Standard in the US and Canada. In addition, the SFI Chain of Custody program includes over 750 sites in North America.
- **The American Tree Farm System (ATFS)** is the oldest voluntary, third party certification program in the world. It was formed in 1941 by landowners. Its mission is primarily to educate and support small non-industrial forest landowners. There are over 91,000 individual certified Tree Farms in the United States, encompassing over 23 million acres. www.treefarmssystem.org
- **The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)** is an independent, international not-for-profit, and non-government organization based in Bonn, Germany. The many regional FSC forest management standards, while based on FSC's 10 principles and Criteria of responsible forest management, vary as to their specific requirements. Currently there are over 26 million acres of FSC certified land in the United States. www.fsc.org



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