

Sustainable Forestry Practices for Landowners in Oregon



Produced by the Oregon SFI Implementation Committee



This guide is provided by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Implementation Committee of Oregon

The Implementation Committee is a coalition of Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) Program participants, along with representatives of conservation organizations, family forest landowners, loggers, independent forest products businesses, consulting foresters and members of the academic community.

The committee is working to ensure that forestland in Oregon is managed wisely and will be available to supply the needs of future generations.

www.oregonsfi.org

Table of Contents

03 Doing what's right

03 The Sustainable Forestry Initiative®

05 Giving you the support to succeed

05 Some of the basic features of your plan

05 Let the pros do it

06 Some of the expertise you should expect in a qualified or certified logging professional

06 Planning for the future

06 Reforestation and afforestation

07 Some methods to consider for your reforestation goals

08 Oregon Forest Practices Act and Best Management Practices

09 Forest biomass utilization

10 Invasive exotic plants and animals

10 Control measures

11 Enhancing wildlife habitats

12 Maintaining biological diversity

12 Keys to making this happen

13 Assistance you may expect from natural resource professionals

13 Where can you go to find assistance from a natural resource professional?

13 Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value

13 What are Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value (FECV)?

14 How do you know if you have rare species inhabiting your land?

14 What do you have to do if you have rare species inhabiting your land?

15 Definitions

15 Characteristics of special sites

15 Appearance is important

16 Considerations in visual quality management

16 American Tree Farm System®

18 Climate change and carbon sequestration

18 Forests play a role in sequestering carbon

18 Why sustainable forestry?

19 Leading by example

Sustainable Forestry – meeting 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 reforestation and the managing, growing, nurturing and harvesting of trees for useful products and ecosystem services such as the conservation of soil, air and water quality, carbon, biological diversity, wildlife and aquatic habitat, recreation and aesthetics.

Doing what's right

There are over 62 million acres in Oregon. Of that, about 28 million acres are forested. The number of forested acres has remained fairly constant over the centuries, though there has been about an 8 percent decrease caused by human development. About 63 percent of the forested acres is owned by the government: federal, state and local. Over 20 percent is owned by large commercial landowners, and around 1 percent by Native American tribes. The remainder, approximately 16 percent, is owned by private landowners. If you are part of this last group, the following information is written specifically for you.



Your forestland provides you with many benefits. It may supply income for your family today or for your retirement tomorrow. Well-managed forests provide wildlife habitat, clean water, aesthetic benefits and recreation. Your forestland also helps provide your community and our nation with the forest products needed for a growing economy.

Together, these points capture the essence of sustainable forest management – managing and conserving our forest resources to meet the needs of society today without compromising the needs of tomorrow.

As one of 10 million family forest landowners in the United States, who own about 50 percent of the nation's timberland, your management decisions have an important impact on the forests of tomorrow. Putting sustainable forestry into practice on your land will help protect your investment while conserving its valuable resources.

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative®

The **SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE® (SFI®)** program guides the forest management of the majority of industrial forest landowners in the United States. A major goal of SFI subscribing companies is to ensure that future generations enjoy the same opportunities provided by the abundant forests that we enjoy today. These companies demonstrate their SFI commitment by improving forestry practices on industrial forestland and by promoting sustainable forestry practices with private forest landowners, foresters and loggers.

Sustainable forestry is the practice of land stewardship that integrates reforestation, growing, nurturing and harvesting of trees while protecting soil, water quality, wildlife and plant habitat as well as aesthetics for today and the future.

The SFI program was developed in 1994 to safeguard our forests through land stewardship in such a manner that they would meet the needs of our society today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Today, the SFI program is one of the world's most rigorous and widely applied standards of sustainable forestry.

SFI participants must subscribe to and report annually on their performance regarding the following 20 objectives:

- Forest Management Planning
- Forest Productivity
- Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources
- Conservation of Biological Diversity including Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value
- Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits
- Protection of Special Sites
- Efficient Use of Forest Resources
- Landowner Outreach
- Use of Qualified Resource and Qualified Logging Professionals
- Adherence to Best Management Practices
- Promote Conservation of Biological Diversity, Biodiversity Hotspots and High-Biodiversity Wilderness Areas
- Avoidance of Controversial Sources including Illegal Logging
- Avoidance of Controversial Sources including Fiber Sourced from Areas without Effective Social Laws
- Legal and Regulatory Compliance
- Forestry Research, Science and Technology
- Training and Education
- Community Involvement in the Practice of Sustainable Forestry
- Public Land Management Responsibilities
- Communications and Public Reporting
- Management Review and Continual Improvement

Giving you the support to succeed

State forestry and wildlife agencies, programs like the American Tree Farm System® and Forestry and Natural Resources Extension and private forestry consultants will assist you in getting professional assistance for developing an effective forest management plan. To realize your land stewardship goals, your plan should be based on sustainable forestry principles.

Some of the basic features of your plan:

- *Identify your specific goals and objectives.* Do you want to manage your forestland primarily for timber? Wildlife? Recreation? There are many more possibilities. Once you decide what is most important to you, it is then possible to develop a plan targeting your personal goals for your land.
- *Take an inventory of your forest resources and property.* Determine exactly what you have to manage by identifying your land's features: trees, wildlife habitat, streams and special sites.
- *Evaluate your objectives and decide on alternatives.* Begin by listing your objectives along with their benefits, the cost to implement them and how they will affect future decisions. This is an important step in preparing your final forest management plan.
- *Make your plan.* Put it in writing: what your goals are for the land, the timetable to meet those goals, and a list of forest management activities and their itemized expenses. Input and advice from a professional forester at this stage in the development of your plan will help assure that your goals are successfully achieved.
- *Implement your plan.* Now is when you put theory into action. Most plans will need some modification when implemented. Using a forestry professional or state forestry representative to assist you with implementation may be beneficial in helping you meet your objectives effectively and efficiently.

Let the pros do it

Professional foresters and logging contractors are able to manage a complex and wide range of situations safely, economically and conscientiously. When it comes time to harvest, using the services of professional foresters and qualified logging professionals will go a long way to successfully applying the principles of sustainable forest management to your lands.



Some of the expertise you should expect in a qualified or certified logging professional:

- Knowledge and compliance with federal, state and local laws regarding timber harvesting, environmental protection, safety, transportation and business.
- Knowledge and experience in meeting the legal requirements of the Oregon Forest Practices Act (FPA) and Administrative Rules including forest fire prevention.

In addition, loggers must be up-to-date on technology and understand and implement the variety of regulations designed to protect natural resources and be able to manage people effectively. In short, a professional logger needs to be a good business-person and a good steward of the land.



The Oregon Professional Loggers (OPL) program is administered by the Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc. The OPL program is a voluntary standard that accredits logging contractors for their continuing education in sustainable forestry, forest regulations, safety and business. This program meets the SFI standard requirements in Oregon. To initially

obtain OPL status, a company must accumulate 32 continuing education credit hours. Completion of the Basic Forest Practices Workshop is required as part of the initial 32 hours. Once accredited, a minimum of 10 credit hours per year with at least four of these being in Forest Practices training is required to maintain OPL status. A directory of OPL accredited logging contract companies in Oregon, and additional information about the OPL, is available online at www.oregonloggers.org.



Planning for the future

Reforestation and afforestation

In planning for the future, you should consider both reforestation and afforestation as ways to enhance the productivity of your land. Reforestation is the restocking of a forest after removal of trees through harvesting, wildfire or other means by planting or natural regeneration. Afforestation is the establishment of a forest or



stand in an area where the preceding vegetation or land use was not forest (e.g., pasture, crop land, etc.). Over the years, if your objectives for your land change from agriculture or other activities, think about planting these lands to improve your future income, decrease the potential for erosion and improve wildlife habitat and biodiversity.

Planning your reforestation method is best done before you harvest. Reforestation promptly is key to providing a sustainable supply of forest products, maximizing future income from the land, and guaranteeing our beautiful forests for all the generations who come after us.

Landowners should make a plan with their professional forester or logger, addressing harvesting techniques and expected products before a harvest is begun. This will ensure that the appropriate forest harvesting technology and other best practices are used to minimize waste and prepare the site for efficient reforestation.

State and federal cost-share programs can help off-set the costs associated with site preparation and replanting. Check with your professional forester or the Oregon Department of Forestry to learn what cost-share incentives may be available. The Oregon Department of Forestry also explains financial incentives for private forestland owners at www.oregon.gov/ODF/privateforests.



Reforestation costs (site preparation, seedling costs, planting costs, etc.) up to \$10,000 per year may be deducted from income in the year incurred for federal tax purposes. Additionally, reforestation costs in excess of the \$10,000 may be deducted from annual income over an 84 month period. Special rules may apply to lands held in trusts and estates. Check with your forestry professional or tax advisor to learn more about this and other tax incentives for growing timber.

Some methods to consider for your reforestation goals

The landowner is responsible for successful reforestation after harvesting. Oregon's Forest Practices Act requires strict tree planting standards, timetables and established trees "free-to-grow" within six years after logging completion.

- Tree planting: planting of tree seedlings, either by hand or machine, ensures sufficient tree establishment as required by Oregon law. Planting gives you more control of forest composition and stocking.
- Advanced natural regeneration: in some areas, harvesting practices may retain enough tree stocking that planting is not necessary. Planning for the protection of existing trees and seedlings in the forest understory during and after the harvest is critical when using this method.
- Natural regeneration: when approved by the State Forester, natural methods may be used. Successful natural reforestation requires careful, site-specific pre-harvest planning and post-harvest monitoring.

If you want to pass on your land to the next generation with a healthy growing forest, while meeting any financial goals you may have, implementing a reforestation plan is a must.

Oregon Forest Practices Act and Best Management Practices

The Clean Water Act, originally enacted in 1972 and amended in 1977 and 1987, requires forestry operations to be conducted in a manner that does not impact water quality. Following all requirements in the Forest Practices Act (FPA) and Administrative Rules assures compliance with the Clean Water Act, as well as other Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Forestry. The Forest Practices Act and Administrative Rules can be found on the Oregon Department of Forestry website at www.oregon.gov/ODF/privateforests/fpaBMP.shtml. A wealth of other information and assistance can also be found there. Other sources of information include:

- The professional forester who assisted you with your management plan and/or is buying your timber
- The logging professional who will be harvesting your timber
- The Oregon Forest Industries Council at www.ofic.com
- The person or organization which gave you this brochure



Forestry BMPs in Oregon cover a range of forest management activities including planning, roads, water quality protection, harvesting, reforestation, pesticide use and other silvicultural management activities. The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)

monitors implementation of the Best Management Practices required by the Forest Practices Act and has compiled compliance data on this over time. SFI member companies have verifiable BMP monitoring systems using ODF and other sources of information to measure the effectiveness of BMP implementation and to identify steps to take for the improvement. Key areas for potential BMP implementation improvement have been identified in these programs to include the following:

- Identification and protection of riparian management areas along streams
- Removal and stabilization of stream crossings following use
- Limiting harvest and hauling activities during extreme weather events
- Restoring natural drainage patterns after harvest

As a landowner, you should carefully monitor the activities of any contractor performing forestry activities on your property, as well as your own activities, to stay within compliance of the Forest Practices Act.

Forest biomass utilization



As the demand for renewable energy sources continues to grow, landowners should weigh the benefits and costs of biomass utilization from their forestland. One such consideration is residue harvesting following a conventional sawtimber harvest. With careful planning and by following Oregon's forestry BMPs, this can be accomplished using

the same landing and road systems with very little impact to the site. Additionally, residue harvesting should have little impact on site productivity since the high-nutrient portions of the trees (stumps, leaves, roots and limbs) will remain, and such harvests are spread over time.

Benefits of biomass utilization following harvests or through other operations include:

- Reduction in dependency on fossil fuels while satisfying growing energy needs
- Creation of jobs and business opportunities
- Income for landowners from biomass sales
- Decreased site preparation costs, as harvested sites are left cleaner
- Opportunities for low to no cost timber stand improvement
- Increased forest health by reducing threats and/or restoration costs from fire, disease/pest infestations, invasive species and storm damage

Landowners should work closely with their resource professionals to ensure that this type of harvest is right for their property and that the activities follow the state's BMPs.

Invasive exotic plants and animals



Invasive exotic plants and animals are those that are found outside their native range; they can potentially have negative ecological, financial and social impacts. Invasive species pose a threat to the survival and reproduction of native species and can decrease forest productivity, complicate forest management and

degrade biodiversity, wildlife habitat and the visual value of your forest.

Invasive species are typically able to thrive due to geographic and climatic conditions being similar to those of their native range and to the lack of natural predators and diseases. Effective control can only be accomplished when you know what species to be on the lookout for and how to identify the species or their impacts. There are numerous invasive species in Oregon – plants, animals, insects and diseases. Examples of some of the more common ones found in Oregon are Scotch broom, knapweed and thistle.

Control measures

An integrated pest management program is the best approach for control, and may involve the following:

- Prevent introduction
- Early detection and rapid response
- Surveillance, control and management
- For plants – rehabilitation and restoration
- Maintain forest health and vigor
- Using resource professionals

Preventing the introduction of non-native species is by far the most effective and economical control measure, therefore you should have an effective, ongoing surveillance program in place. If an invasive species should get established, the second most important control measure is a rapid response to prevent its spread



and eradicate the unwelcome competitor. Depending on the invasive species and particular circumstances, control measures can involve one or a combination of methods – mechanical (e.g., hand-picking, traps, tillage), biological (e.g., promoting beneficial predators), chemical (e.g., pesticides). Following this, it may be beneficial to establish

and/or release fast-growing native plants that can out-compete any surviving invasive plants while preventing soil erosion. Maintaining a healthy forest through sound forest management practices will increase your forest’s ability to combat invasive species.

Contact a resource professional to assist you in learning more about invasive species, their identification and control. Listed below are some resources:

- The Oregon Department of Forestry at www.oregon.gov/ODF/privateforests
- Your local office of the Cooperative Extension Service
- Oregon Invasive Species Council at www.oregon.gov/OISC and www.oregoninvasiveshotline.org
- Pacific Northwest Invasive Plant Council at www.pnw-ipc.org
- Publication – *Meeting the Challenge: Invasive Plants in Pacific Northwest Ecosystems* – www.fs.fed.us/pnw/pubs/pnw_gtr694.pdf

Enhancing wildlife habitats

Many landowners are committed to growing forests to ensure that future generations of Americans may experience the same abundant forests and wildlife we enjoy today.

Because forestry practices can be tailored to improve a wide variety of wildlife habitats while providing a continuous source of revenue, including timber production, many forest owners have successfully integrated mutually beneficial timber and wildlife habitat management on their lands.



Maintaining biological diversity



Among other benefits, maintaining biological diversity is another means of enhancing wildlife habitats on your land. The SFI standard defines biodiversity as: “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.”

While many believe that biodiversity is most effectively addressed at the watershed or larger level, there are opportunities to manage and contribute to biodiversity at all levels – stand, forest, watershed, landscape and global. Landowners can influence compositional and structural diversity at the stand and forest levels through management choices. Techniques landowners can use to ensure biodiversity involve maintaining:

- A mix of habitat and cover types – both terrestrial and aquatic
- A mix of species – both flora and fauna
- A distribution of age classes within and between stands
- Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value (FECV)
- Unique stand features such as snags, mast trees, etc.

Keys to making this happen:

- Understanding the habitat(s) needed by the species you are interested in attracting to, or protecting on, your land
- Providing these habitats through forest management practices



Who is there to help you? With careful planning and the assistance of natural resource professionals, management practices can be implemented to meet production, biodiversity and wildlife enhancement objectives.

Assistance you may expect from natural resource professionals:

- Help determine, refine or modify your forest management plan to include objectives for wildlife and timber
- Supply you with technical guidance to provide or protect habitat for the wildlife you are interested in attracting to your land
- Tailor forest management activities to meet your wildlife habitat goals
- Provide access to cost-sharing programs that enhance wildlife

Where can you go to find assistance from a natural resource professional?

- Private natural resource consultants
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife at www.dfw.state.or.us
- Oregon Department of Forestry at www.oregon.gov/ODF/privateforests
- Your local office of the Cooperative Extension Service

Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value

What are Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value (FECV)?



Certain places in the 28 million acres of Oregon forestland are valuable for reasons other than their potential to give us paper, packaging, lumber and other wood products. These forests might be home to a globally rare plant, animal or community. If a plant, animal or community is found to be very rare in the world and especially vulnerable to extinction, then it may be classified as imperiled or critically imperiled. These designations are similar to the threatened and endangered designations afforded to species protected

under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). It is not unusual for imperiled or critically imperiled species and communities with no protection under the ESA to be rarer than some of the species that are protected under the ESA. For example, the wayside aster is listed as a federally threatened species protected under the ESA, but is not classified as globally imperiled or critically imperiled. On the other hand, the Pacific walker mussel is globally critically imperiled, but is not protected under the ESA.

How do you know if you have rare species inhabiting your land?

There are more than 40 plants and animals that are federally listed as threatened or endangered in Oregon. Threatened and endangered species can thrive in managed forests. In fact, active management is necessary for the survival of some species. It is up to landowners to take the steps necessary to identify and conserve the habitat that these species need.

Being able to recognize habitat characteristics can be as important as or even more important than being able to identify the threatened or endangered plant or animal. On-line resources to help you find out which rare, threatened, endangered or imperiled species may be found on your land are listed below:

- Oregon Biodiversity Information Center at www.orbic.pdx.edu
- NatureServe at www.natureserve.org
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife at www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/diversity

What do you have to do if you have rare species inhabiting your land?



You are not required by law to do anything for imperiled or critically imperiled species and communities unless that species is listed under the Endangered Species Act, and/or listed under applicable state laws requiring protection. Many of these rare species and communities can thrive in managed forests with no special considerations. Others however may require specific management actions. At a minimum, when planning a harvest or other forest management activity where imperiled or critically imperiled species and communities occur, you should communicate the location and protection

measures associated with these sites to your logger or contractor.

To learn more about threatened/endangered species and what you may be required to do, and imperiled/critically imperiled species and communities that may occur on your land, contact the Oregon Department of Forestry, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, NatureServe or the Oregon Biodiversity Information Center.

Definitions

Conservation – 1. Protection of plant and animal habitat; 2. The management of a renewable natural resource with the objective of sustaining its long-term productivity in perpetuity while providing for human use compatible with sustainability of the resource.

Critically Imperiled – A plant or animal or community that is globally extremely rare or, because of some factor, especially vulnerable to extinction or elimination.

Imperiled – A plant or animal or community that is globally rare or, because of some factor, very vulnerable to extinction or elimination.

Threatened and Endangered – Listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, and/or listed under applicable state laws requiring protection.

Characteristics of special sites

Your land may hold sites that have ecological, geological, cultural or historical significance and which should be protected for future generations. Such sites may include cemeteries, waterfalls, Indian mounds and unusual plant communities or habitats. By preserving these special sites you can enhance the biodiversity of your property for all who enjoy it, including humans, plants and animals, while ensuring these sites will not disappear from the landscape. Your resource professionals can assist you in identifying and protecting these special sites.

Some examples of non-forested sites that you may want to consider protecting as special sites are caves, seepage slopes, rock outcrops, riparian areas, water bodies (creeks, rivers, pools and ponds) and natural openings in the forest such as prairies, glades and dry sandhills. These sensitive sites harbor many of the critically imperiled and imperiled aquatic and terrestrial species. Temporary pools that fill up with water in the spring are especially important features that may contain rare, threatened and endangered species. All of these areas are important and are often very easy to work around.

Appearance is important

The aesthetic appeal of your management activities can make an impact on the perception of forest management in your community and across the state.

Managing aesthetically can also be integrated with your plans for wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered species, biological diversity, FECV and special sites.

Considerations in visual quality management



Forestry operations are highly visible and subject to the perceptions and opinions of an environmentally aware public. Careful planning is recommended as a proactive approach to improving forest aesthetics. Conducting forestry operations of all types in an aesthetically acceptable manner is important to the future of forestry. Though it is impossible to list everything a landowner might do to manage the visual quality of management activities, here are some of the more significant potential actions for consideration:

- Do not allow trash to accumulate around the site
- During a harvest, use all fiber designated for removal that is economically and operationally feasible
- Do not allow excessive amounts of mud on public paved roads
- Keep logging slash at least 50 feet away from lakes, recreational waterways and public roads
- In aesthetically sensitive locations, minimize rutting or churning of the soil even if there are no water quality concerns
- A modified harvest plan may be required in sensitive high-visibility areas such as along designated scenic highways
- Locate loading decks out of public view
- Configure harvests with irregular shapes to break up the impact and match existing terrain
- Consider alternative harvesting systems and vegetative screens in highly sensitive areas

American Tree Farm System®

An organization that can aid you in succeeding as a responsible landowner is the American Tree Farm System® (ATFS). ATFS was created to promote the growing of renewable forest resources on private lands, while protecting environmental benefits and increasing public understanding of the benefits of productive forestry.

The American Tree Farm System has over 95,000 family forest owners totaling more than 25 million acres of non-industrial private forestland certified in the program in 46 states. There are approximately 750 Certified Tree Farms in Oregon. Since 1941, the ATFS has recognized landowners for their commitment to sustainable forest management.



One of the program's main features is providing information, education and assistance to family forest landowners regarding forest management practices that will sustain or enhance forest productivity, wildlife habitat, water quality and outdoor recreation. Participating landowners, foresters and government representatives can

help you find the assistance you need to accomplish your land management goals, develop and implement a land management plan and certify your land as a Tree Farm.

When becoming a member of the ATFS, you must show that you follow the BMPs required by the Forest Practices Act when performing forest management activities, and take measures to provide wildlife habitat and protect biodiversity whenever possible. You reap not only the rewards of good management, but also the benefits of belonging to a strong and knowledgeable group that's committed to protecting the environment. Another consideration is a growing preference among forest product customers for certified wood.

In August 2008, the ATFS gained the endorsement of the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). PEFC is an international organization that evaluates and recognizes national forest certification systems. The SFI program has also been endorsed by PEFC.

As part of the PEFC endorsement, the ATFS has a mutual recognition agreement with the SFI program, which will promote and expand the practice of sustainable forest management on small and large ownerships. Under this agreement, as an ATFS member, you will have the potential for greater access to certified wood markets both in the United States and abroad.

For more information on the American Tree Farm System, call 1-888-889-4466 or log on to www.treefarmssystem.org.

Climate change and carbon sequestration

Climate change is a topic of much discussion these days. Greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide (CO₂), are thought to be a significant cause. Climate change may be caused by natural factors or processes, such as changes in the sun's intensity, changes in ocean circulation, or by human activities that affect the composition of the earth's atmosphere (burning fossil fuels which release greenhouse gases, etc.).

Your carbon footprint, put simply, is the amount of CO₂ your activities generate. To reduce your carbon footprint you must reduce emissions both direct and indirect, promote storage or sequestration and when possible, avoid emissions altogether.

Forests play a role in sequestering carbon

Forests and forest products are a store of carbon, as trees absorb CO₂ through photosynthesis as they grow. Since the amount of carbon in the world is a constant, when there is more carbon sequestered in long-term sinks such as trees and forest products, there is less carbon going into the atmosphere.

When wood is burned for energy, or when trees die and decay, or when wood products reach the end of their useful life and are disposed of, stored carbon is recycled to the environment. Since these products are not adding new carbon to the atmosphere, they are considered carbon-neutral compared to burning fossil fuel which adds new carbon to the atmosphere.

Landowners are encouraged to check with the Department of Forestry or County Extension Service to learn more about the developing carbon trading markets that support sustainable forest management and recognize the role forests can play in mitigating climate change.

Why sustainable forestry?

You can have a positive impact on the forests of the future. Development and other pressures threaten the nation's forests. Implementing sustainable forest management practices on your land is a potential solution to combating this threat. Sustainable forest management can also protect and enhance the water quality, aesthetics, special sites and wildlife habitat on your land. Reforestation, one of the main objectives of sustainable forest management, ensures that

your investment in forestland will create a valuable return in the future for you, your children and generations to come. Following laws, regulations and your state’s BMPs for forestry is a critical component of implementing sustainable forestry practices. Using professional foresters, trained professional loggers or becoming a Certified Tree Farmer can help you implement BMPs and reach your management objectives.

Sustainable forest management ensures forests for the future. It also helps to protect our forests, and in turn, our livelihood, wildlife, water quality and recreation. Managing your land for timber production and sustainable forestry go hand in hand. It is a business practice that is at the absolute core of managing for today and the future. Sustainable forestry management is the foundation and road map for a profitable forestry business.

Leading by example

Perhaps most importantly, your dedication to sustainable forest management on your land promotes responsible forestry to others. With the world population expected to approach 10 billion by 2050, sustainable forestry is not just an ideal. It’s a business, social and global obligation. And it’s one more thing – It’s the right thing to do.





SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

Good for you. Good for our forests.®

www.sfiprogram.org

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