

## FOREST CERTIFICATION

Certification is a voluntary process that recognizes well-managed forests. The management practices of a certified forest are evaluated by independent third party auditors based on standards of a certification system.

The benefits of having your land certified include recognition of your efforts to practice forestry in an environmentally responsible manner and access to markets that seek wood from certified forests.

The American Tree Farm System (ATFS) is the oldest and largest certification system in the United States for small family forests. As a recognized program under the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), lands certified by ATFS are a principal source of fiber for SFI chain of custody programs. The Pennsylvania SFI Implementation Committee encourages family forest owners to enroll in the ATFS program. Participating in ATFS is a good way to obtain information, education, and networking opportunities on good forest management.

To learn more about the ATFS, visit: [www.treefarmssystem.org](http://www.treefarmssystem.org).

## INCONSISTENT PRACTICES

The Pennsylvania SFI Implementation Committee responds to allegations of practices that appear inconsistent with the SFI Standards and Rules.

Inconsistent practices either cause, or have the potential to cause, problems associated with a timber harvest. Likely issues are soil erosion, stream sedimentation, failed regeneration, and/or poor residual stand conditions. The Inconsistent Practices Program provides a venue for reporting and addressing these concerns. The inconsistent practices reporting form can be downloaded from the PA SFI website.

[www.sfiopa.org/InconsistentPractices](http://www.sfiopa.org/InconsistentPractices)



# SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY:

## A GUIDE FOR PENNSYLVANIA FOREST LANDOWNERS

At the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, we believe that sustainable forests are critical to our collective future. SFI is a sustainability leader through our work in standards, conservation, community, and education. As an independent, non-profit organization, we collaborate with our diverse network to help address local and global sustainability challenges.

At the heart of the SFI Community are SFI Implementation Committees. The Pennsylvania SFI Implementation Committee works across the state to support business operations by training and developing the logger workforce, educating the public about the value of working forests, promoting SFI certification, and assisting with regulatory issues.



### Pennsylvania SFI® Implementation Committee

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**Did you know that 70% of Pennsylvania's 16.6 million acres of forestland are owned by private forest landowners? They are a vital link in the sustainability of Pennsylvania's valuable forest resources.**

This brochure is designed to summarize and guide forest landowners to information that can help them make informed, knowledgeable decisions about managing their forests in a way that meets their ownership goals, while also sustaining the many values of their forest for the good of generations yet to come.

## SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY

Sustainable forest management is a process. Think of it as the development and execution of a plan integrating all the principles, practices and techniques necessary to properly care for the forest.

Properly managing a forest ensures that it remains healthy and vigorous and provides the values that landowners desire.

## FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

Forest management starts with developing a long-term plan that organizes what a landowner values about their forest into a comprehensive strategy for maintaining or improving those values. Planning allows the landowner to sort out what they really want from their forest and helps them successfully reach those goals. When developing a written management plan:

- Consider what you value about your forest
- Get help from resource professionals
- Develop management recommendations
- Implement specific practices

More information: [www.sfiopa.org/planning](http://www.sfiopa.org/planning)

**A forest management plan needs to consider several key elements including important forest values and the responsible implementation of forest operations.**

## FOREST VALUES

There is more to a forest than just trees. Forests should be managed with careful consideration of habitat and biodiversity, forests with exceptional conservation value, and special sites..

- **Wildlife Habitat/Biodiversity** — Your forest management decisions will influence the type of wildlife habitat and landscape biodiversity your forest provides. In managing your forest, think about how your activities can improve diversity and important habitat features.
- **Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value** — Are those that support species at significant risk of being lost. As a good steward of the land, it is important to protect plant and animal species and ecological communities of concern by being aware of how your forest management activities might affect these species.
- **Special Sites** — Be sure to locate and consider protection of unique or special site on your forest land. These may include culturally or historically significant sites and areas with rare or unique ecological or geological features.

More information: [www.sfiopa.org/values](http://www.sfiopa.org/values)



## FOREST OPERATIONS

Forest operations are the activities implemented to achieve your management goals. Before conducting any operation consider:

- **Getting Help From Professionals** — Landowners should work with a reputable forester and require that their logger be an SFI Qualified Logging Professional. SFI Qualified Loggers have received training in safety, regulatory compliance, and forest stewardship. Landowners can verify that their timber harvester is an SFI Qualified Logging Professional through the Pennsylvania SFI website.
- **Best Management Practices (BMPs)** — BMPs are science-based conservation practices that help protect soil and water resources during earth disturbance activities such as timber harvesting. Properly implementing them is required by state and federal law.
- **Residual Stand Protection** — Focus on protecting the trees left uncut and ensure the residual stand is compatible with your management objectives.
- **Regeneration/Afforestation** — Concern for the regeneration of new trees is the most significant difference between sustainable forestry and exploitative logging. Ensure that natural regeneration is adequate, and that competing vegetation and deer browse are not inhibiting factors. You might also consider expanding your forest by adding non-forested acres on your property into your regeneration plan.
- **Insects, Disease, Invasives & Fire** — Be sure your plan addresses early detection and control of any significant insects, diseases, and invasive or exotic plants and animals. Take adequate precautions against wildfire.
- **Utilization** — The residues from timber operations (tops, branches, small stems) can be utilized where markets exist; however, this material also serves important environmental functions. Consult a professional resource manager to determine how and when biomass utilization is appropriate.
- **Aesthetic Considerations** — Forest operations are highly visible and can be subject to the perceptions and opinions of the public. Planning and conducting aesthetically acceptable forestry operations is important to the future of forestry. Practices that can improve visual quality include removing trash, minimizing mud on paved roads, minimizing soil disturbance, and locating log landings from public view.

More information: [www.sfiopa.org/operations](http://www.sfiopa.org/operations)