

# Forest Certification



# Sustainable Forestry

- Those forestry practices that meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

## Virginia Cooperative Extension

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### A Guide for Virginia Forest Landowners

Jennifer L. Gagnon, Coordinator, Virginia Forest Landowner Education Program,  
Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation, Virginia Tech

#### Introduction

As a private woodland owner, you are a vital link in the sustainability of Virginia's forest resources. Your land provides many benefits to all Virginians, including wood products, wildlife habitat, clean air and water, and recreational opportunities. Because woodland owners like you own and manage two-thirds of the state's forestland, the decisions you make regarding your woods today will impact the quality of Virginia's forests for many years. The purpose of this publication is to provide you with a set of suggestions for starting or continuing to actively manage your land. In addition, this guide will help you understand the importance of timber harvest planning and how to work with professional foresters and natural resource management agencies.

The information contained in this publication regarding taxation and environmental regulations is accurate but should not be construed as official government interpretation. Regulations and laws are constantly evolving, so you are encouraged to obtain professional forestry assistance before making your final management decisions. Resources for learning more about any of the topics covered are available at [www.virginiasfl.org](http://www.virginiasfl.org), or contact the agencies listed at the end of this brochure for further assistance.

#### What Is Sustainable Forestry?

Virginia's forests make a vital contribution to our state and beyond by providing economic, consumer,



environmental, recreational and aesthetic benefits essential to our quality of life. While sustainability is a dynamic concept, some basic principles are clear: sustainable forestry consists of those management practices that meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Specifically, sustainable forestry integrates reforestation, and the managing, growing, nurturing and harvesting of trees for useful products and ecosystem benefits such as conserving soil, air and water quality, sequestering carbon, perpetuating biological diversity, conserving wildlife and aquatic habitats,

improving recreational opportunities and protecting aesthetics.

Examples of sustainable forestry practices include:

- Regenerating forests as soon as possible following a timber harvest
- Minimizing the impact of forest management activities on water quality
- Maintaining important habitat elements for wildlife and plant species
- Managing for populations of imperiled and critically imperiled species
- Protecting forests with exceptional conservation value
- Managing biological diversity
- Limiting the spread of exotic (non-native) plant species and pests

 Virginia Tech  
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 VSU  
VIRGINIA STATE

# Sustainable Forestry



- Specifically, integrates the regeneration, growing, nurturing, and harvesting of trees for useful products while conserving soil, air, water quality, wildlife, plants, aquatic habitat, and landscape aesthetic quality.

# Certification



# Certification

- 3<sup>rd</sup> party voluntary process to recognize sustainably-managed forests
- Tool to foster forest stewardship
- The Pinchot Institute for Conservation



# Certification



- American Tree Farm System (ATFS)

[www.treefarmssystem.org](http://www.treefarmssystem.org)

- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

[www.fscus.org](http://www.fscus.org)

- Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)

[www.sfiprogram.org](http://www.sfiprogram.org)



# Certification

- Minimizing impacts of forest management activities on water quality
- Reforestation following a timber harvest
- Ensuring a non-declining forest base
- Maintaining wildlife habitat
- Reducing exotics
- Protecting special areas and rare habitats



# American Tree Farm System

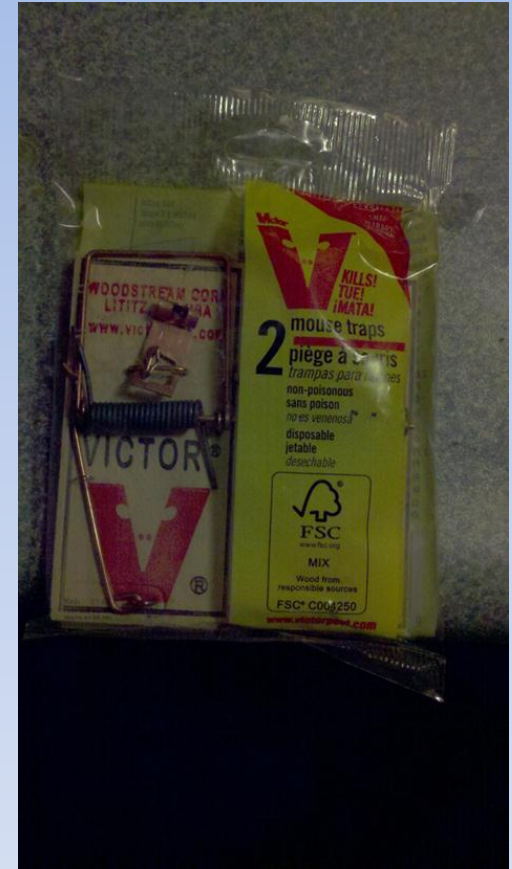
- ATFS
  - Virginia Tree Farm Committee
    - US Program
    - Internationally recognized
    - For private forest landowners
    - 1500 Tree Farms in VA  
(804,000 acres)
    - 5 year inspections
    - Current plan
    - Free (currently)
    - Strong emphasis on education





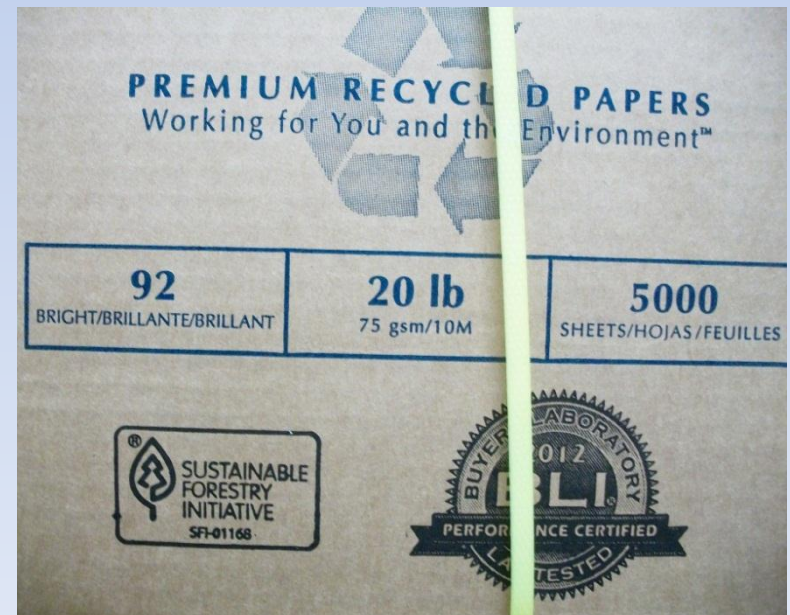
# Forest Stewardship Council

- FSC
  - Regional coordinator
  - International program
  - For public, private (large and small) and industry owned lands
  - 209,000 acres in VA
  - Annual inspection\*
  - Current plan
  - Fees vary depending on acreage and type of certification



# Sustainable Forestry Initiative

- SFI
  - Virginia SFI State Implementation Committee
  - North American Program
  - Internationally recognized
  - Developed for industry owned lands
  - 406,000 acres
  - Annual inspections
  - Current plan
  - Price varies by acreage/  
certification type



# Resources

- *To certify or not? A question for Virginia's private forest owners.*  
<http://forestupdate.frec.vt.edu>
- VFLEP classes 2013-2014
- *Guidebook: Forest Management Certification on Private Forestlands in the U.S.*  
[www.Pichot.org](http://www.Pichot.org)
- Dovetail Partners Inc.  
<http://www.dovetailinc.org/>

