
SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE (SFI)

American Forest & Paper Association's "Sustainable Forestry Initiative"

As a condition of membership in the American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA), the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) requires member companies to pursue prescribed objectives in the management of their own forest lands and to promote practices that contribute to those objectives on other forest lands from which they harvest timber. Among those objectives are to broaden the practice of sustainable forestry, ensure prompt reforestation, protect water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, protect special sites, and contribute to biodiversity.

The Pennsylvania Council of Professional Foresters (PCPF) takes SFI seriously, and we believe that SFI represents a sincere commitment to good forestry practice by participating companies. We support SFI and want it to succeed.

Implementation of SFI in Pennsylvania and other states has emphasized logger training as the principal means of achieving sustainable forestry objectives. Training loggers in proper harvesting techniques and familiarizing them with silvicultural systems and best management practices can indeed improve harvesting methods and contribute to sustaining the forest resource. However, professional foresters are also essential to achieving sustainable forestry objectives because they have the education and training to formulate management plans consistent with owner objectives, determine ecologically and economically sustainable harvest levels, recommend harvest prescriptions that maintain resource quality and achieve maximum long-term returns, prescribe effective regeneration treatments, and employ practices that protect soil, water, and wildlife resources. In short, professionally trained foresters, working with well-trained loggers and acting in the interests of landowners and the forest resource, are absolutely essential to the development and implementation of sustainable forestry practices. Although AF&PA specifically acknowledges the roles of forest owners and loggers, they fail to acknowledge the importance of professional forestry expertise in achieving the goal of sustainable forestry.

PCPF calls upon the SFI leadership in Pennsylvania to acknowledge in their training and education programs that sustainable management of our forests requires the involvement of professional foresters. We further call upon the SFI leadership to require that participating companies encourage landowners to employ the services of professional foresters in managing their forest lands and particularly in managing timber harvests.