

CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY AT PACK FOREST



Fact Sheet: Pack Forest Green Certification

In November 2004, the University of Washington's Charles Lathrop Pack Forest achieved certification under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, a major forest green certification program developed by the American Forest & Paper Association. This fact sheet summarizes the certification process and costs for Pack Forest and discusses the immediate and expected benefits of certification.

By creating a standard for management, green certification of forestland or forest product manufacturers can provide a tangible demonstration of sustainable forestry practices. Introduced in the 1990s, certification schemes have primarily been targeted at private companies as a means of providing a market solution to the demand for improved forest stewardship. In North America, the two main certification schemes are run by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI).

In recent years, increased attention has been paid to the issue of third-party green certification on state or university owned forestlands. Many states (such as Pennsylvania and Maine) and universities (such as Yale, Duke and North Carolina State) have already undergone certification of their forestlands. Recognizing the role certification can play in demonstrating a commitment to sustainability, the College of Forest Resources at the University of Washington determined it would certify its school forest, Pack Forest. Pack Forest serves as the College's primary demonstration, research and working forest.

In December 2003, Dr. Bruce Bare,

Dean of the College of Forest Resources, determined SFI would be the most appropriate certification system for which to apply at that time. SFI certification is broadly based on the principles of sustainable forestry, responsible practices, forest health and productivity, protecting special sites, legal compliance, and continual improvement in management practices.¹

To prepare for the certification audit, Pack Forest staff spent the first eight months of 2004 developing, implementing, and testing a system to achieve all applicable SFI Objectives. A consultant was also hired during this time to provide expertise on certification. In August 2004, audit firms were solicited with BVQi of North America selected to conduct Pack Forest's certification audit. Pack Forest was recommended for immediate certification by BVQi following audits in October and November 2004.

Pack Forest was successful in achieving certification for a number of reasons. Many SFI certification requirements were addressed through compliance with the Washington State Forest Practices regulations and other existing laws. Potential issues related to forests of

high conservation value and water resources had previously been addressed through the designation of all current stands with complex forest structure into reserves and the establishment of riparian zones. The Washington Natural Heritage Program (www.dnr.wa.gov/nhp) also proved very useful in gathering information on rare ecosystems and species. Pack Forest already maintained organized records on inventory, roads, wetlands, and operations. While some of these records simply needed indexing or reorganizing, the certification process assisted Pack Forest in organizing information into a central source.

Costs to certify Pack Forest included both direct project costs and in-kind support from staff. Costs for achieving certification for Pack Forest can be compared to experiences of other universities, public agencies, and small private landowners. The table below provides initial and annual costs per acre for several landowners. The total per acre cost of \$8.68 is within range of cost estimates for other universities with certified forests.

Audit findings resulted in the adoption of several policy changes related to forest operations. Logging

¹The SFI Standard has 11 *Objectives*, each of which has a *Performance Measure*. For each of the 36 *Performance Measures*, there are several *Core Indicators* and *Other Indicators*. For more information on SFI *Objectives*, *Performance Measures* and *Indicators*, please see www.aboutsfi.org.

Certification Cost Comparison.² *Two costs indicate two certification programs.*

Forest	Size in acres	Initial cost/acre	Annual cost/acre
Tree Farm, Maine.	100	\$27.20	\$7.85
Tree Farm, Maine.	1,000	\$11.66	\$1.82
UW Pack Forest	4,300	\$8.68	\$1.28
North Carolina State University	4,500	\$5.47 \$9.32	Not reported
Duke University	8,000	\$2.92 \$4.18	Not reported
North Carolina State Forest	32,000	\$0.54 \$0.72	Not reported
Southern Industrial Forest	100,000	\$0.16	\$0.06
Collins Pine	100,000	\$0.45	\$0.05
Aitkin County, Minnesota	223,000	\$0.12	\$0.03
Menominee Tribe, Wisconsin	234,000	\$0.21	\$0.09
Minnesota State Forest	291,500	\$0.09	\$0.02
Pennsylvania State Forest	2,100,000	\$0.10	\$0.01

contractors are now required (rather than encouraged) to be certified. All forest staff are required to have training related to threatened and endangered species. Specific guidelines will be developed for measuring soil disturbance resulting from equipment operation. In addition, the Center for Sustainable Forestry at Pack Forest has become an official member of the state SFI

Implementation Committee.

The audit team also identified several notable practices. Pack Forest implemented a Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan (RMAP) that significantly exceeds state requirements. The auditors also gave commendations for Pack’s on- and off-site outreach program, the annual

reporting system, data management activities and the system for root cause review and corrective action to address identified operational problems.

Pack Forest is now one of only a handful of publicly owned or educational institution forests that are green certified. Pack Forest staff will continue to participate in SFI educational events to maintain and develop the staff’s expertise in certification standards. The achievement also demonstrates the College’s leadership in sustainable forestry.

Ultimately, determining costs and benefits for achieving certification will depend on the improvement and maturation of the certification market, activities within the new Center for Sustainable Forestry, and the ability of the University of Washington to take a leading role in the development of certification and sustainability. Additionally, the Center for Sustainable Forestry can now consider services addressing common challenges and disincentives facing certification and, more broadly, sustainable forestry.

² Cabbage, F., S. Moore, J. Cox, L. Jervis, J. Edeburn, D. Richter, W. Boyette, M. Thompson, and M. Chesnutt. 2003. Forest Certification of State and University Lands in North Carolina; a Comparison. *Journal of Forestry*. Vol. 101(8). Hansen, E. 1997. Forest certification and its role in marketing strategy. *Forest Products Journal*. Vol. 47(3). Mater, C., V. A. Sample, J. Grace, and G. Rose. 1999. Third-Party Performance Based Certification. Rebhahn, P. 2004. “Menominee Tribe sees little financial return on forestry certification efforts. *Greenbay Press Gazette*.” http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/news/archive/local_16345036.shtml. Vogt, K., B. Larson, J. Gordon, D. Vogt, and A. Fanzeres. 2000. *Forest Certification: Roots, Issues, Challenges, and Benefits*. CRC Press. Boca Raton, London, New York, WA. D.C. pp.374.

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