SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

SFI-00001

LESSON SUMMARY

Students will learn about forest certification programs and how they are administered.

FORESTS ONTARIO

Focus on Forests

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE
SFI-00001

Activity Information

Grade Level: Senior

Estimated Duration: Two class periods

Materials: Chart paper, Markers/Pencils, Copies of SFI Principles Summary

Setting: Indoors

Key Vocabulary: Certification, Chain of Custody, Sustainable, Forest Management Certification, Implementation Committee

Learning Goals:

- Students will become familiar with forest certification in Canada and be able to identify the three third party organizations which administer certification programs
- Students will become familiar with sustainable forest management principals

Curriculum Links:

Environmental Science

Grade 11 – Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry

D3.1 explain the basic principles of various agricultural and forestry practices (e.g., Integrated Pest Management), and identify regulations and regulatory bodies associated with these practices (e.g., Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency [PMRA], the Pest Control Products Act)

D3.5 explain agricultural techniques and forestry practices that aim to maintain both biodiversity and long-term productivity (e.g., growing a variety of species, inter-planting crops, planting native and heritage varietals instead of hybrids or transgenic species, saving seeds, maintaining some older trees and snags for animal habitat)

Lesson plan created by Madelaine Kennedy and Weyerhaeuser

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Teacher Background

Forest management certification is a voluntary accreditation available to forest managers which demonstrates responsible resource management and sustainability in the forestry industry. Think of certification as a stamp of approval - ensuring that products coming from that forest are sustainable. In order to be certified, companies must apply specific standards to their operations in addition to the comprehensive federal and provincial laws that govern forest management, and undergo an audit conducted by independent, third-party auditors. Once certified, companies are required to go through periodic audits to ensure they remain in compliance with certification standards. Achieving certification advises customers and the general public that they are purchasing from an environmentally ethical resource manager.

Benefits of Certification

- Consumers know that the wood product they are buying comes from a sustainably managed forest.

- Forestry companies can demonstrate that they are responsible forest managers.

- Forests are managed in a sustainable way ensuring ecological, economic and social needs are included in the planning and operations

Forest Certification in Canada

Forest certification emerged in the 1990s and Canada was an early adopter. Since then, Canada has worked in conjunction with forest managers to increase the area of certified forests. As of 2016, there is over 168 million hectares of independently certified forest, making Canada the country with the largest area of certified forest – more than 48% of the country's forests are certified!

There are three independent certification programs used in Canada; the **Canadian Standards Association (CSA)**, the **Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)**, and the **Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)**. All of these programs share many common elements, such as the conservation of biological diversity, Aboriginal rights and involvement, and ensuring a sustainable harvest level.

> *Did you know? Canada's certified lands would cover an area the size of Germany, Spain, and Sweden combined!*

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Inc. promotes sustainable forest management in Canada and the United States. There are three separate standards under SFI:

- **Forest Management Standard:** Promotes responsible forestry practices

- **Fiber Sourcing Standard:** Promotes the responsible sourcing of wood fiber

- **Chain of Custody Standard:** An accounting system that tracks wood fiber through production and manufacturing to the end product

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Certification standards use a set of Principles to help them determine the sustainability of a resource. Principles are requirements a company must demonstrate to receive certification. For more information on SFI Principals, see page 6.

All SFI standards promote key values, such as maintaining biological diversity, ongoing scientific research, the protection of water resources, aesthetics and recreation, training and education for those working in forestry and much more. The SFI standards are used across North America, and the program is driven by **Implementation Committees**. Implementation Committees are local groups made up of forestry professionals, independent loggers, government agencies, academics, scientists, and private landowners. They engage with their communities through landowner outreach, deliver training to loggers and wood producers, participate in community outreach projects like Habitat for Humanity builds, and help each other with their certification efforts.

Look for the SFI logo on the forest products you buy, such as paper and lumber!

The SFI standards are reviewed every five years and updated to incorporate the latest scientific information and respond to emerging issues

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ACTIVITY

Step 1: As a class discuss the following:

- What do you think is important to consider when managing a forest?

- What does it mean to certify something?

- What do you think forest certification is?

- What are the benefits of forest certification?

- Why is it important that a third party (i.e. not the forest management company or the certification program) conducts the company audits?

- Do you look for certification symbols when you buy forest products?

- Think of other types of products that you buy where you look for specific logos or markings (i.e. organic). How is SFI certification similar to those programs?

Step 2: Have students break into groups, and make a list of principals that they think should be considered when forest management is carried out. Have each group record their thoughts on chart paper.

Step 3: Each group should present their principals to the class and post their chart paper. Did any of the principals students identified appear on multiple lists? Were there any surprises from the groups?

Step 4: While still in small groups hand out the summary list of the SFI Principles, and have the students compare their list of principals to the SFI Principles.

Step 5: Have a discussion about whether or not they think the SFI list is missing any key principals.

Step 6: Compare SFI standards to either of the other two third party organizations. How are they similar and how are they different?

> *For more information about forest management in Ontario see the*
> *Ontario Envirothon Forestry Module.*

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SFI Principles – Summary

1. **Sustainable Forestry:** To practice sustainable forestry to meet 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 habitats, recreation and aesthetics.

2. **Forest Productivity and Health:** To provide for regeneration after harvest and maintain the productive capacity of the forest land base, and to protect and maintain long-term forest and soil productivity. In addition, to protect forests from economically or environmentally undesirable levels of wildfire, pests, diseases, invasive exotic plants and animals, and other damaging agents and thus maintain and improve long-term forest health and productivity.

3. **Protection of Water Resources:** To protect water bodies and riparian areas, and to conform with forestry best management practices to protect water quality.

4. **Protection of Biological Diversity:** To manage forests in ways that protect and promote biological diversity, including animal and plant species, wildlife habitats, and ecological or natural community types.

5. **Aesthetics and Recreation:** To manage the visual impacts of forest operations, and to provide recreational opportunities for the public.

6. **Protection of Special Sites:** To manage lands that are ecologically, geologically or culturally important in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.

7. **Responsible Fiber Sourcing Practices in North America:** To use and promote among other forest landowners sustainable forestry practices that are both scientifically credible and economically, environmentally and socially responsible.

8. **Legal Compliance:** To comply with applicable federal, provincial, state, and local forestry and related environmental laws, statutes, and regulations.

9. **Research:** To support advances in sustainable forest management through forestry research, science and technology.

10 **Training and Education:** To improve the practice of sustainable forestry through training and education programs.

11. **Community Involvement and Social Responsibility:** To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry on all lands through community involvement, socially responsible practices, and through recognition and respect of Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional forest-related knowledge.

12. **Transparency:** To broaden the understanding of forest certification to the SFI Standards by documenting certification audits and making the findings publicly available.

13. **Continual Improvement:** To continually improve the practice of forest management, and to monitor, measure, and report performance in achieving the commitment to sustainable forestry.

14. **Avoidance of Controversial Sources including Illegal Logging in Offshore Fiber Sourcing*:** *Applies only to the SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard. To avoid wood fiber from illegally logged forests when procuring fiber outside of North America, and to avoid sourcing fiber from countries without effective social laws.

**For a more detailed breakdown of SFI Principles visit www.sfiprogram.org

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