

Comparison of Forest Certification Schemes of Interest to USA Forest Owners

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General Features	American Tree Farm System	Forest Stewardship Council		Green Tag Forestry	Int'l Org for Standard-ization (ISO)	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
Sponsor	American Forest Foundation	Scientific Certification Systems	SmartWood	National Forestry Association	ISO	American Paper & Forest Association
Scope	national	international	international	national	international	national
Direct costs	minimal	mod. - exp.	mod. - exp.	moderate	mod. - exp.	mod.- exp.
Forester inspections (group certification)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Inspection team		✓	✓		✓	✓
Third-party verification	unclear	✓	✓	unclear	✓	optional
Region-specific rules	in some areas	In some areas*		proposed	no	no
Status	established	established	established	in development	established	established
Current rules & programs specific to family forests	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Chain of custody		✓	✓	✓		
Eco-label		✓	✓	✓		
General performance measures						
Compliance with existing laws	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Requires written forest management plan	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Public availability of certification summary		✓	✓			
Criteria focus (in addition to applicable laws)						
<i>Management & Ecology</i>	Biodiversity (includes endangered species)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Chemical, pesticide & herbicide use		✓	✓		
	Forest aesthetics	✓				✓
	Forest health	✓	✓			✓
	Landscape		✓	✓		
	Non-timber products (includes recreation)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Protect & enhance fish & wildlife habitat	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Protection of 'special' sites	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Reforestation	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Silvicultural treatments		✓	✓		
	Stream protection and water quality		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Sustained yield		✓	✓		✓
	<i>Operations</i>	Road design, construction, & maintenance		✓	✓	✓
Skidding and yarding			✓	✓		
Slash disposal & product utilization		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tree felling			✓	✓		
<i>Social & Economic</i>	Community relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Documentation and monitoring (beyond plan)		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Forestry contractor relations	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Indigenous rights		✓	✓		
	Landowner tenure, rights, & responsibilities		✓	✓	✓	✓
Long-term economic viability		✓	✓	✓	✓	

✓'s indicate specific reference to a particular criterion. It does not evaluate the cumulative effects of several criteria together.

*Regional guidelines may be available through either the Forest Stewardship Council or SmartWood and may be different from that presented here.

Sources: American Tree Farm System Standards & Guidelines, Mar. 1999; The Forest Conservation Program, Oct. 1995; SmartWood Certification Guidelines, Apr. 1998; Green Tag Forestry Document, Sep. 1999; SFI Voluntary Verification Indicators, 1999 Edition (AF&PA 2003).



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The Sustainable Forestry Partnership is a growing network of universities and other organizations who wish to document innovations in sustainable forestry and see them integrated broadly into practice.