

RESOLUTION
Missouri Forest Resources Advisory Committee
Support for Forest Certification

- Forest Certification is a system whereby participants commit to improving forest management practices through independent third-party verification that they have adhered to specific standards.
 - o Standards promote practices that are environmentally, socially and economically appropriate
 - o Participants develop policies, procedures and practices that are documented and align with the standard.
 - o Qualified auditors certify that the participant has met the standard
- Systems employed in the US include the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Inc (SFI) and the American Tree Farm System (ATFS)
- Certification systems have been in place since the early 1990's
 - o To date there are over 500 million acres certified in North America
 - o Over 25% of the world's roundwood supply comes from certified sources
- Whereas surrounding states Tennessee, Kentucky and Arkansas are very active in certification, Missouri has very limited activity with only the members of the Tree Farm System being recognized as meeting a forest certification standard.
- Peer reviewed research has documented that where forest certification is active there is clear improvement in forest management practices
 - o Compliance with water quality protection "Best Management Practices" increase
 - o More attention is paid to sustainable harvest levels
 - o There is greater awareness and activity focused on unique and at risk ecosystems
- At the same time, certified wood products manufacturers feel they have gained a competitive differentiation in their market place
- With funding from major paper users such as Time, Inc., National Geographic and Pearson and MacMillan Book Publishing the SFI program is seeking to expand certification in Missouri by offering expertise and assistance to interested landowners and wood industries
- In the specific case of SFI, sawmills who obtain a "Certified Sourcing" label develop systems that ensure best management practices are followed in the harvest of the logs they purchase, regardless of whether the lands are certified or not.

GIVEN THE ABOVE FINDINGS, the Missouri Forest Resources Advisory Committee encourages the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), who has constitutional responsibility to protect and manage the forest resources of the state, to support and promote voluntary forest certification opportunities on both public and private land including the SFI's initiative and participation in the Tree Farm Program to increase the level of certification activity in Missouri. Through their leadership in this effort MDC can address multiple goals established in the "*Missouri Forest Action Plan*" - improving forest management in the state, protecting important resources and aiding forest industry.