

The Sustainable Forestry Program: *Conserving Forests for the Future*

BECAUSE MORE THAN SIX BILLION PEOPLE RELY ON plants and trees to cook food, build houses, make furniture, mix medicines and stay warm, the pressures on the world's forests are staggering. With the global population expected to increase by another 1.5 billion over the next twenty years, the need to conserve our wilderness areas is critical. To reconcile our insatiable demand for trees and other forest resources with ecosystem health, the Rainforest Alliance established its Sustainable Forestry program.

Why Do We Need Forests?

While they cover less than a third of the Earth's total land surface, forests hold the vast majority of its terrestrial biodiversity, the plants, animals and microorganisms that live on land. Forests not only provide timber and fuel wood but also produce food and raw materials such as rubber, rattan, essential oils and latex. They provide shade, prevent flooding, are the primary source of pharmaceuticals and mitigate the effects of human-induced climate change.

Nearly half of the world's forests are found in the tropics, in countries such as Brazil and Peru. Although tropical forests cover only 10% of the earth's surface, scientists believe they may contain as much as 90% of its biodiversity. Not only do tropical forests contain some of the highest levels of biodiversity, they are occupied by some of the world's poorest people.

This poverty is inextricably linked to deforestation — the devastating loss of forests around the globe.

More than 500 million of the world's poorest people live in and around forested areas. Local communities and indigenous people everywhere are beginning to assert control over this land, a trend that is currently accelerating. While these rural

communities are increasingly responsible for forests, they often don't have the technical skills or support necessary to effectively manage them. Sustainable forest management certification can provide local people with an incentive to conserve forest resources and the knowledge and tools to accomplish the task.



The Rainforest Alliance verifies sustainable forestry practices around the globe.

The Rainforest Alliance Sets the Standard

Founded in 1989, the Rainforest Alliance's SmartWood Program was the world's first and now is the most extensive program to certify responsible forestry practices globally. To date, the Rainforest Alliance has certified more than 1400 operations on more than 78 million acres (31 million hectares) worldwide.

The Rainforest Alliance is accredited by and certifies to the standards of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), the

only internationally recognized accreditation organization for forest certification operating on a global scale, and which

A Winning Solution

In order to win FSC/Rainforest Alliance certification, companies are generally required to make substantial changes in their operations — changes that benefit business operations, the environment and the welfare of workers and communities. For example, a study of 80 certified companies in the U.S. determined that:

- 60% were required to make changes to logging access roads
- 35% were required to change their use of chemicals
- 61% were required to address threatened and endangered species
- 48% were required to address soil and erosion
- 35% were required to address special cultural sites
- 95% were required to revise their management plans
- 71% were required to better inventory tree and wildlife species
- 80% were required to improve their monitoring programs

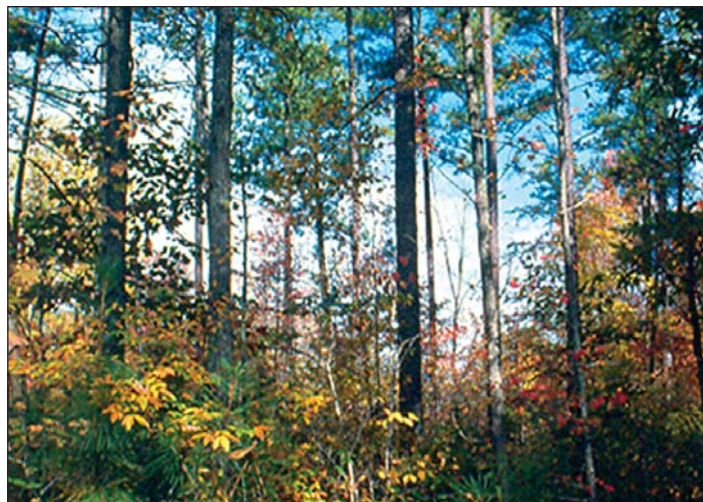
the Rainforest Alliance was instrumental in founding. Though it initially focused on tropical forests, today the Rainforest Alliance's Sustainable Forestry division works in all forest types — tropical, temperate and boreal — and in addition to SmartWood, includes the Training, Research, Extension, Education, and Systems (TREES) program.

Around the world, the Rainforest Alliance sets the standard for environmentally and socially responsible forestry practices. Central to our efforts is certification, a seal of approval that assures customers that the wood products they are purchasing come from forests managed to conserve biodiversity and support local communities. Certification — whether of large forest-management companies, indigenous landholders, community operations or public lands — is carried out by Rainforest Alliance-trained staff and consultants, in collaboration with a network of nonprofit conservation organizations around the world.

Products crafted from certified wood include furniture, musical instruments, framing lumber, plywood, veneer, molding & millwork, flooring and picture and window frames, to name a few.

Certification Offers Consumers Choices

Because consumers have grown wary of “green” product claims, they are increasingly looking to nonprofit groups for credible, third-party verification of responsible corporate conduct. In fact, *The New York Times* recently reported that more than 75% of people surveyed in the U.S. said that a company's commitment to social issues affected the way they shopped. Certification offers consumers the option of becoming proactive in their purchases, enabling them to choose products that are manufactured in accordance with strict environmental guidelines. The Rainforest Alliance's “chain-of-custody” certification process ensures customers that the wood and wood products they are buying come from sustainably harvested forests that have tangible, economic benefits for local communities.



FSC/Rainforest Alliance Certified forests conserve biodiversity and protect local communities.

Certification Rewards Business

Both in the eyes of environmental advocates and consumers, Rainforest Alliance standards lend credibility to our customers' programs. The increasing demand for certified wood and wood products from major retailers such as Home Depot, Lowe's, B&Q (a home improvement retailer in the United Kingdom) and IKEA is an indication of growing consumer preference for products stamped with a seal of approval from a qualified, third-party.

The Rainforest Alliance also seeks to encourage and reward the reuse of wood by awarding the Rediscovered Wood seal of approval to acceptable reclaimed wood products. Pioneered in 1996, the Rainforest Alliance Rediscovered Wood program certifies salvaged and recycled wood.



FSC-ACC-004
FSC Trademark ©1996 Forest Stewardship Council A.C.



www.rainforest-alliance.org

The mission of the Rainforest Alliance is to protect ecosystems and the people and wildlife that depend on them by transforming land-use practices, business practices and consumer behavior. Companies, cooperatives and landowners that participate in our programs meet rigorous standards that conserve biodiversity and provide sustainable livelihoods.

Forest management certification works because it:

- 🌲 Ensures that the management of forests and the harvesting of timber provide environmental, social and economic benefits to local communities;
- 🌲 Creates market incentives for producers to adopt sustainable practices in managing forests and harvesting timber; and
- 🌲 Offers wood products originating from well-managed forests as environmentally responsible alternatives, enabling consumers to help conserve forests and protect biodiversity.

Rainforest Alliance

New York · United States · Mexico · Costa Rica · Guatemala · Indonesia · Spain · Bolivia · The Netherlands
665 Broadway, Suite 500 · New York, NY 10012-2331 · Tel: 212/677-1900 · Fax: 212/677-2187
www.rainforest-alliance.org