

FACTSHEET:

The Meridian Institute Comparison of FSC and SFI

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Prepared by
AMERICAN LANDS

Forest certification programs are intended to help consumers identify wood products from ecologically, socially, and economically well-managed forests. The Meridian Institute's October, 2001, report compares the leading third-party certification program, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), with the "Sustainable Forestry Initiative" (SFI) of the wood products industry's American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA).

The Meridian Report explicitly indicates that the Forest Stewardship Council and AF&PA SFI differ substantially in virtually all areas.

We also found that the report demonstrates that only FSC has many important attributes:

	<u>FSC</u>	<u>SFI</u>
➤ Largely independent of wood products industry?	y	n
➤ Governed by a balance of environmental, social, and economic interests?	y	n
➤ Standards explicitly address a broad range of environmental and social concerns?	y	n
➤ Designed to recognize exemplary forest management?	y	n
➤ Explicitly requires verification of compliance with all relevant laws and public policies?	y	n
➤ Addresses the rights of workers and indigenous peoples, and community relations?	y	n
➤ Prohibits logging levels that exceed timber growth levels?	y	n
➤ Prohibits conversion of natural forests to ecologically-impooverished plantations?	y	n
➤ Requires protection of old growth and high conservation value forests?	y	n
➤ Explicitly requires protection of rare, threatened, and endangered species?	y	n
➤ Requires landowners to minimize their use of herbicides and other toxic chemicals?	y	n
➤ Prohibits use of genetically modified species and restricts use of invasive exotic species?	y	n
➤ Requires landowners to assess their environmental and social impacts?	y	n
➤ Consistently requires third-party audits, including annual audits of landowners?	y	n
➤ Has a mandatory, formal system to accredit certifiers' forest assessment qualifications?	y	n
➤ Consistently requires public consultation for program development and certification audits?	y	n
➤ Requires peer review of certification decisions?	y	n
➤ Consistently requires publication of a public summary of certification decisions?	y	n
➤ Uses consistent system to ensure all labeled products come from certified forests?	y	n
➤ Precludes use of labels and logos where forests are <i>not</i> third-party certified?	y	n

The report did not attempt to evaluate how the systems' standards are interpreted during assessments, nor did it examine the forest management practices actually used by certified companies. **For a discussion of what some key SFI standards mean in practice, see "The AF&PA SFI -- Looking Beneath the Hype" and "Perspectives on AF&PA's Sustainable Forestry Initiative" at www.americanlands.org.**

BACKGROUND ON THE REPORT:

The Meridian Institute is a Washington, DC, based dispute resolution organization. The Institute's report is entitled a "Comparative Analysis of the Forest Stewardship Council and Sustainable Forestry Initiative Certification Programs," and was released in October, 2001. The report was based on the official documentation and requirements of the FSC and AF&PA SFI as they existed in June, 2001. The FSC and the AF&PA SFI selected an equal number of experts to contribute to the report.

The Meridian Institute report is available at: www.fscus.org and <http://www2.merid.org/comparison/pressrelease.html>.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

AMERICAN LANDS

202.547.9400

726 SE 7th Street, Washington, DC, 20003

www.americanlands.org

Forest advocates familiar with different AF&PA companies can also be reached via American Lands.