

Forest Certification in the Redwood Region¹

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Two major forest certification schemes have emerged in the Redwood region of California: the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) program and the Forest Stewardship Council. Both of these certification systems are influenced by the California Forest Practice Rules. This paper provides an overview of the extent certification systems are being utilized within the Redwood Region. It discusses the interaction of these programs with the California Forest Practice Rules. Following a format similar to the Meridian Report on SFI and FSC certification systems, it reviews actual forest practices and policies followed by companies using different systems of certification. Inventory planning, harvest rate, herbicide use and long term applicability, suitability of silvicultural techniques and road construction/rehabilitation and abandonment best management practices are reviewed. The management of unique, rare and old growth forest communities identified under the different systems as forests of exceptional conservation value or forests of high conservation value is discussed. The paper goes on to discuss how scientific research activities interact with the certification programs within Redwood Region and the research needs being driven by certification standards. The perceived benefits and costs of forest certification programs for forest products companies and the public are addressed as well as how each company addresses the social interactions within the communities in which they operate. Finally, current and future issues for these certification programs in the Redwood Region are identified and discussed.

The authors of this paper are uniquely qualified to present a paper on certification programs in the Redwood Region. Mr. Jani has participated both with the FSC standard setting for the Redwood region and the Pacific Coast and also was a panel member during the development of the Meridian Report in 2001 which compared the SFI and FSC programs as they existed then. He manages the largest FSC certified redwood company in the Redwood Region and was the first forest manager to be FSC certified within the redwood region. Dr. Helgath manages the SFI certification program and the development of an ISO 14001 registration program for one of the major SFI certified forest companies in the Redwood Region. She has also worked with FSC certification programs in South America.

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