

SFI's VISION:

***A world that values and
benefits from sustainably
managed forests***

**Maine SIC Progress Report
2020**

This report was produced by Maine's SFI Implementation Committee (SIC)

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Concerned about a timber harvesting operation in your community?

Call 1-888-734-4625

If you have questions or concerns about any forest practices in Maine or need information about forest tours, please call!

SFI GOAL is a confidential, toll-free hotline established specifically for the purpose of responding to public questions and concerns regarding forestry and timber harvesting practices in Maine. **It's important to understand that this is not an enforcement program.**

Since 1997, SFI has responded to concerns ranging from water quality issues to visual impacts of a harvest by sending forest resource professionals to investigate. Our goal is to improve practices on the ground.

We work effectively with loggers, landowners and foresters by sharing techniques and knowledge to encourage the best possible outcomes, including training programs that can be delivered to our loggers, foresters and landowners.

Many thanks to Sappi for generously donating SFI-certified paper for this report, to Ron Lovaglio, who took the front cover photo, and to Weyerhaeuser, for the back cover photo, shot from a drone.



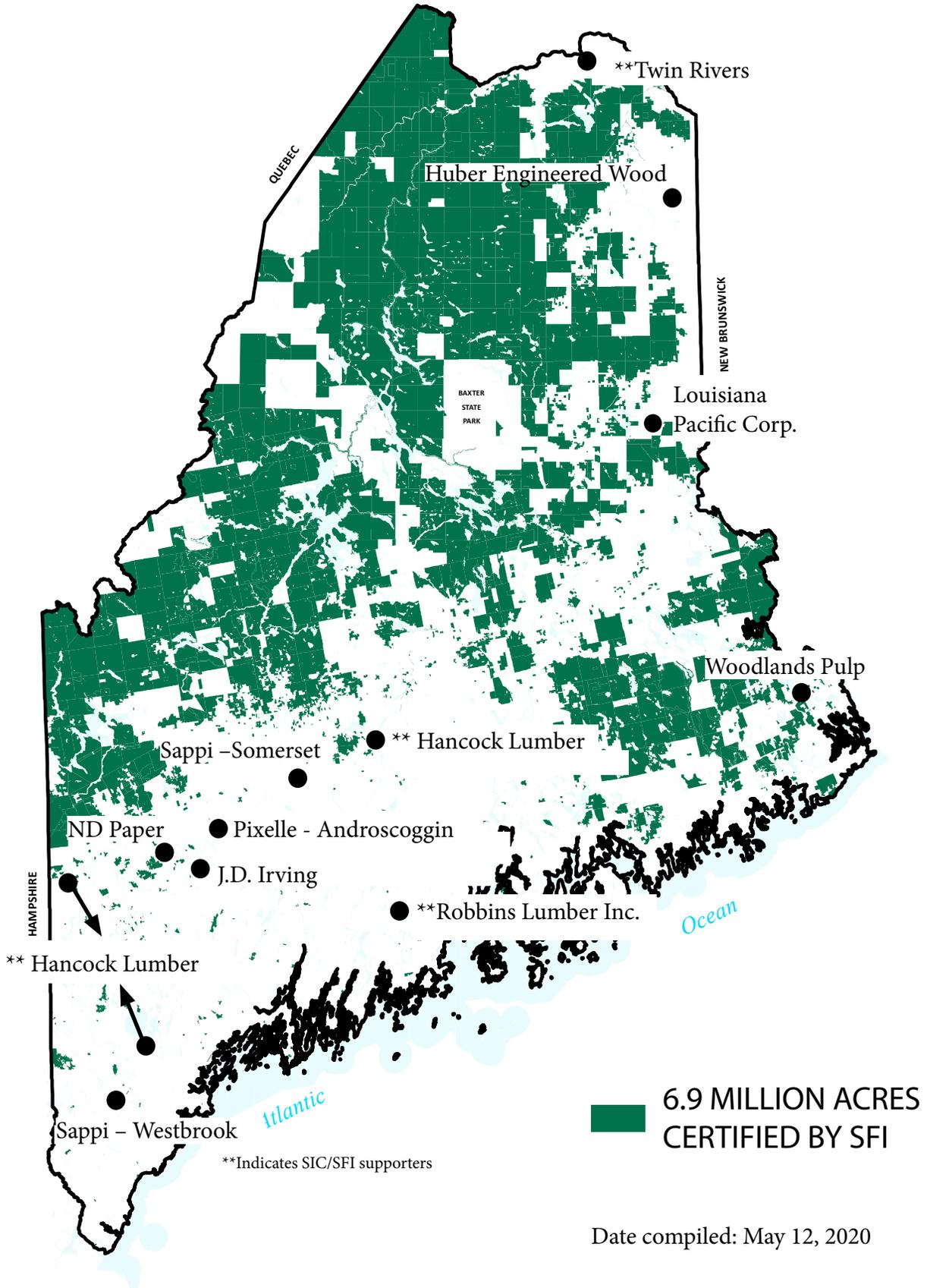
SFI helps communities value and benefit from their forests.

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SFI certified land in the State of Maine



SFI is the largest single certification standard in the world.

Revised SFI standard embraces broad perspectives

The only constant in life is change. Technology has connected our society in ways that were unimaginable only a few years ago. Science is changing people's perspectives and making society a better place to live and work. And science and emerging issues are leading to an enhanced Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) standard.

Since its founding in 1994, SFI has worked with a broad array of stakeholders, including governments, universities, resource professionals, landowners, indigenous peoples, and conservation groups.

SFI's mission is to advance sustainability through forest-focused collaborations and today there are 360 million acres of forestland certified to the SFI Standard, including seven million acres in Maine. When you buy a product with the SFI label, you are showing you care about future forests.

Research is a hallmark of SFI. Since 1995, SFI program participants have contributed more than \$1.7 billion to research, and 75 percent funded conservation-related projects. In Maine, SFI participants have contributed money and time toward the research of iconic wildlife species such as moose, white-tailed deer, and Bicknell's thrush.

Recently, a targeted research focus by Maine SFI participants has addressed forest health issues, such as spruce budworm, and the rise of invasive species within the Maine woods. Commitment to research is a requirement of the SFI standard and the commitment by Maine companies has been unwavering.

So if SFI has done so much good, why does the standard need to change? The answer is simple – new issues emerge and research enhances our understanding of how forest resources function and contribute to society. As forest stewards, SFI participants must adapt.

If two words were to capture the standard revision process, those words would be transparency and engagement. SFI launched the two-year revision process with a 30-day public comment period from October 23 – November 22, 2019.

Multiple task groups have reviewed all comments and drafted revised SFI standards. These groups are an essential part of the revision process and include



Ben Dow

*Chair, Maine SFI
Implementation Committee*

people of diverse perspectives, including conservation organizations, academia, logging companies, landowners, manufacturers, governments, and indigenous peoples. Maine is well represented on the task groups with professionals from multiple stakeholders at the table.

In May 2020, SFI released the first draft of the new SFI Standard, which was reviewed by the SFI Resources Committee and SFI Board of Directors. The second comment period ran from May 1 – June 30, 2020. The SFI Board is expected to approve the revised standard in April 2021 and adoption will take place in 2022.

So, what do we expect to change in the new SFI Standard? It is too early to know, but key elements within the standard have generated a lot of public comment and discussion, including forest conversion, landscape scale biodiversity, water quality and quantity, indigenous peoples' rights, and logger training. The current draft includes enhancements to all these elements.

The current working draft also reflects changing perspectives and science on climate change, including a new objective to insure forest management activities address climate adaptation and mitigation measures.

The history of SFI is rich and the standards revision process will ensure an even brighter future. The entire process is transparent and I invite each of you to view the SFI website (www.sfiprogram.org) to better understand the specifics of the new SFI standard. On the SFI website, you can view a working draft of the revised standard and view the key decision makers who are part of the process.

Ben Dow is chair of the Maine SFI State Implementation Committee and a graduate of the University of Maine. He is currently the area manager of Weyerhaeuser's New England Timberlands, which includes 850,000 acres of sustainably managed timberland in central and western Maine.





TNC Stream Crew assesses a potential stream barrier. Since 2007, 25,054 road-stream crossings have been surveyed.

Let's celebrate one of the largest databases of its kind

I'm proud to announce that Maine is the first state in the country to have road-stream crossing surveys of every watershed within our borders.

Thirteen years ago, the Maine Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and Maine Department of Marine Fisheries, Bureau of Sea-Run Fisheries began a project to survey places where roads cross streams in the Penobscot River watershed. The effort quickly expanded to include all road-stream crossings in Maine. Since then dozens of volunteers, organizations and agencies joined the effort.

In 2011, TNC took on full management of the project and doubled up on crews, thanks to a series of matching grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Now the project is completed and we owe a great deal of thanks to many partners for this work, in addition to Maine's forest landowners who provided access to their lands to collect the data, road and gate information.

Many also have participated regularly in the SFI's Fisheries Improvement Network (FIN) over the last half dozen years. Those meetings are a venue for discussing the needs of road owners/managers to gain critical information as well as resource agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) scientists like me.

Joshua Royte
TNC Maine Conservation Scientist



Together we came to an understanding on the ecological and infrastructure problems around culverts and shared innovative fixes. More importantly these candid conversations led to the kind of trust regarding data security that allowed this effort to move across 17 million acres of Maine timberlands, where there is the country's best habitat for trout, salmon, and other wildlife.

Since 2007, survey crews have spent each summer measuring 25,054 road-stream crossings. They've captured measurements of the structures, taking almost 75,000 photographs, and identified stream-bed characteristics.

My friend Alex Abbot, who contracts primarily with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and also TNC, has used this information to build and maintain a robust database. That data feeds a web-based tool that TNC recently developed, led by the work of our special ecologist, Erik Martin. When the tool is released this fall, users can see species habitat, calculate stream miles to upstream headwaters and downstream to the ocean, and identify if a crossing acts as barrier to fish and other aquatic species.



The SFI community donates countless volunteer hours.

We can see, for example, that 22 percent of road-stream crossings on private land are definite barriers and 24 percent are potential barriers, a total of 46 percent potential problems. That sounds like a lot, but it's actually much better than the situation for state crossings (66 percent) and town crossings (76 percent).

We're adding a new feature to the tool based on modeling developed by Ben Matthews, a TNC watershed restoration specialist. His work creates an estimate of how vulnerable a road-stream crossing is to failure, based on its size, the size of the watershed that drains into it, and the projected frequency and severity of rainfall events that could happen in a 20-100-year time frame.

It is a huge benefit to have the data and tools for entire road and stream networks, across town lines and ownership boundaries. This allows road managers to see where the worst problems are for the road network and the stream, which also means the best opportunities for improving fish habitat. Larger stream networks make for bigger fish and bigger fish produce more offspring.

It's important to note that information about road-stream crossings on private lands is not available on the tool for everyone to access. We're working on systems that could provide password protected tools that would allow private landowners to access their own data in addition to the public and habitat data so they can make informed decisions about crossing improvements.

We have to thank all the major landowners who permitted survey crews to access their land and collect these data. We also greatly appreciate our donors who sponsored the crews, including individuals and foundations, and as well as federal funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service. Also, thanks for the thousands of hours donated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the many volunteers who kick-started the groundwork 13 years ago.

But the task is not over yet. In some instances, the crews couldn't reach a site because of locked gates, no-trespassing signs, hornet nests, poison ivy, and, in at least one case, a raised shotgun! These unsurveyed sites amount to about 10 percent of the total in the database. TNC and our partners plan to review these gaps and prioritize future surveys. I hope road managers help us fill in some of these gaps, too.

The data also become less accurate as conditions at

road-stream crossings change over time. The good news is that conditions are not always deteriorating. Culvert upgrades are taking place more frequently around the state. But if our data no longer accurately reflect the connectivity in a stream network, it becomes more difficult to advise landowners, town leaders, and state agencies where to best allocate limited funds for upgrades to help both road safety and fish passage.

The SFI FIN Committee continues to bring together the largest forest landowners in Maine to share efficiencies in construction techniques and materials to improve the high priority road crossings and create a safer and more durable road network in the process. A few of those landowners reported recently nearly 1,000 road stream crossing projects completed in the last five years!

We know there are more unreported on other private lands that we hope to be able to catalogue to update the statewide private lands database. An up-to-date database is critical to guiding limited dollars to the most important places on public and private lands alike. Having up-to-date knowledge for whole stream networks or basins is critical to making the best decisions.

So, let's celebrate one of the largest databases of its kind in the world. Without the help of large private landowners, it would be much harder to ensure that Maine's people and wildlife continue to thrive together.

If you have questions or comments or would like to add information for the land base you manage, please contact jroyte@tnc.org or call (207) 607-4817.



Maine Forest Service intern Matt Bonner conducts a stream barrier survey. *MFS photo by Ann Trapp*



MFS and SIC count on true grassroots networking

The Maine Forest Service (MFS) has a rich history of working with the Maine SIC. Our collaboration has helped us develop and implement a wide array of trainings relevant to the forestry community. This represents true grassroots networking for promoting sustainable forestry and addressing issues.

Under the umbrella of the SIC Education Committee, MFS has hosted such workshops as *Harvesting to Meet Woodland Owner Goals*; *Visual Impacts of Heavy Harvesting on Landscapes*; *Logging Aesthetics*, and *Grader/Best Management Practices (BMPs)*.

A particular area of working interest has revolved around brainstorming on BMPs education and monitoring. In 2017-2019, 48 water quality/BMPs workshops have been presented, many implemented by working with SIC members. Three presentations a year are given to directly to the SIC concerning our BMPs monitoring efforts and results.

MFS has also worked with the Maine SIC for many years now on the formulation and ongoing workings of the Maine Healthy Forests Program, an initiative to engage southern Maine and small family woodland owners in active forest management. The working group has developed a work plan, several brochures for different audiences on how to engage in active management, presentations and more.

Most recently the group received funding from an SFI



Community grant and the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund to develop the *What Will My Woods Look Like?* guide, a visual walk-through of before and after harvesting. The book has been published and presented at numerous programs over the last year.

Building on all this, *Northern Woodlands* magazine has started a regular feature showcasing one of the picture sets from the book in every issue. The magazine and its website offer ways for people to submit before/after shots of timber harvesting and other woods-related management activities.

Also within the Maine Healthy Forests Program, the Maine Timber Harvest Satisfaction Survey was developed and rolled out in partnership with the SIC, and a video about the survey also was created. The SFI Progress Report features a brief article about the latest results (*see Page 8*).

I appreciate the working relationship that the Maine Forest Service has with the Maine SIC. We live in a very complex world with ever-evolving issues that affect the forestry environment in Maine. If we don't all work together to find solutions, we will hardly move the needle.

Maine's forestry community protects water quality, study shows

The Maine Forest Service (MFS) has released the results of a [study](#) on the use and effectiveness of forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) at timber harvests across the state from 2018-2019. Here are the key findings:

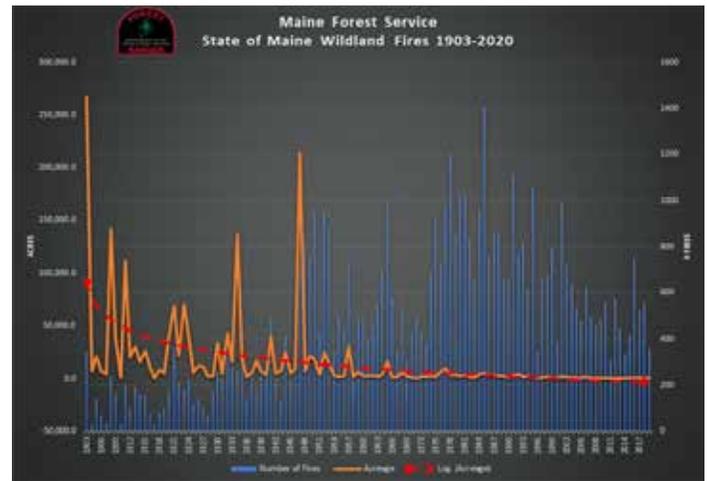
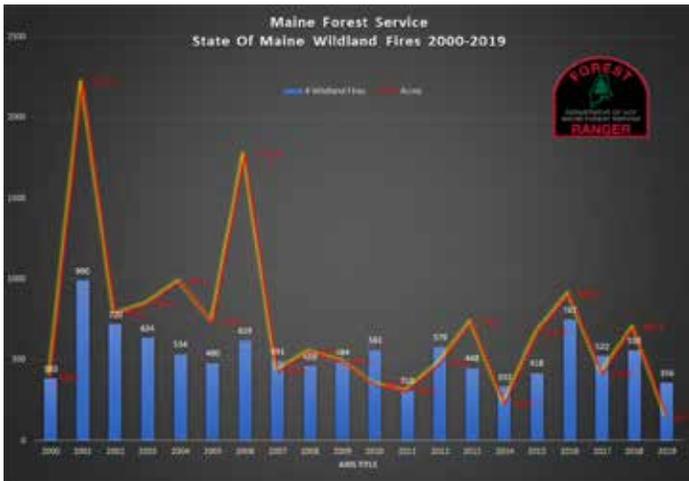
- Seventy-eight percent of sites avoided crossings or had BMPs applied appropriately. MFS BMPs emphasize planning harvests to avoid crossing streams whenever feasible.
- Eighty-eight percent of sites evaluated for sediment input found no sediment entered a water body, which is a significant goal of BMPs.
- Ninety-six percent of sites showed no evidence

of chemical spills. Properly securing and storing these chemicals is a vital BMP.

- When applied appropriately, BMPs were effective at preventing sedimentation from entering water bodies. Sedimentation events were strongly correlated with inadequate application of BMPs, or lack of maintenance of BMPs.
- Ninety-four percent of sample sites had no wetland crossing. Wetlands were either avoided, or effective BMPs were used to cross. The full report is available on the Maine Forest Service website at: http://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/policy_management/water_resources/bmps.html.



96% of SFI certified forests are available for public recreation. 6



Maine’s average wildfire is usually less than an acre

By Bill Hamilton

Chief ranger, Maine Forest Service

Our forests don’t have major wildfires every year. In fact, the average wildfire in Maine is usually less than one acre each year. In 2019, for example, Maine had 355 wildfires, with a total of 142 acres burned. Special Operations Supervisor Joe Mints and Greg Miller, GIS Coordinator, have produced some excellent graphic, including more on the [Maine Forest Products Council website](#), that will tell you a lot about wildfires in Maine.

Weather and fuel types help, but we also have a professional and effective state Forest Protection Division. Wildfires are attacked quickly and kept small, protecting all Maine landowners. Additionally, I think that Maine’s forest rangers do play a role through prevention and suppression. It’s not all about rainfall.

Still, with 17.6 million acres of forestland, we have had and will have major wildfires.

In 1947, Maine suffered its largest forest fire disaster in modern history. The state experienced more than 90 consecutive days of record-breaking high temperatures and drought. By mid-October, many small wildfires started and spread out of control. Statewide, these fires burned more than 220,000 acres and 1,000 homes, left 2,500 people homeless and 16 dead. The damages totaled more than \$11 million at that time.

Depending upon your definition of a major wildfire, we have had several since 1947, including the Baxter Park fire in 1977, which burned nearly 4,000 acres; the Mox-

ie fire, 2,000 acres (1997); Red Brook fire 1,500 acres (1990); Sunken Stream fire 1,600 acres (1985); Allagash fire, 1,200 acres, (1992), and Columbia fire, 800 acres in 2007. I’m sure that I have missed some.

I particularly like the trend graph (above right) State of Maine Wildland Fires 1903-2020, because it illustrates that the number of wildfires have increased since 1903, but the acreage continues to shrink. There is a lot of history in this graph and it tells an interesting story. One example is the spike beginning in the mid 1970s lasting through the early 1990s, which overlays spruce-fir mortality caused by the last budworm outbreak.

Our goal is to prevent wildfires through media, outreach, law enforcement and the Smokey Bear program. When wildfires do happen, we attack from the ground and with aircraft to keep fires small to protect Maine landowners.

Compare the 10-year totals for wildfires over the past two decades and the trend becomes really clear. The 10-year total from 2000 through 2009 was 5,794 fires, but from 2010-2019, there were just 4,833 fires, a decline of 16.6 percent. The decline in the total acres burned was even more striking, from 9,226 acres burned from 2000-2009, to 4,894 burned from 2010-2019, a 47 percent drop.

Many factors are at work in this trend, such as access, communications, industry safe guards, and stand composition. However, it’s clear that the major and consistent difference is our staff and the way they do their jobs.



90% of landowners satisfied with outcome of harvest

By Andy Shultz

Landowner Outreach Forester, Maine Forest Service

Ninety percent of Maine landowners are satisfied with the outcome of their harvest, according to an annual survey conducted over the past several years.

According to the most recently completed survey results, more than 80 percent of landowners indicated they are willing to conduct another harvest “when the time was right.”

The survey, with an average response rate of about 25 percent, grew from a stakeholder discussion in 2012 about how to empower landowners when they work with forestry professionals. These discussions also led to the creation of the Maine Healthy Forest Program (MHFP) by the Maine Forest Service (MFS), Maine’s SFI Implementation Committee (SIC), the Forest Resources Association (FRA) and others.

According to the most recent MFS inventory data, average total growth for all species currently exceeds harvest in Maine’s southern eight counties by more than 1.7:1, ranging from 1.1:1 in York County to 3.5:1 in Knox County.

The MHFP’s primary goal is to increase active management of these woodlands by educating landowners about the potential to improve forest health, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, water quality and

aesthetics, while likely realizing a financial return from harvesting.

Surveys are sent to a statistically valid, random sample of family woodland owners who have completed a timber harvest in the previous year.

Other components of the MHFP’s outreach efforts include workshops on logging aesthetics, communications and planning, and desired outcomes resulting from a harvest.

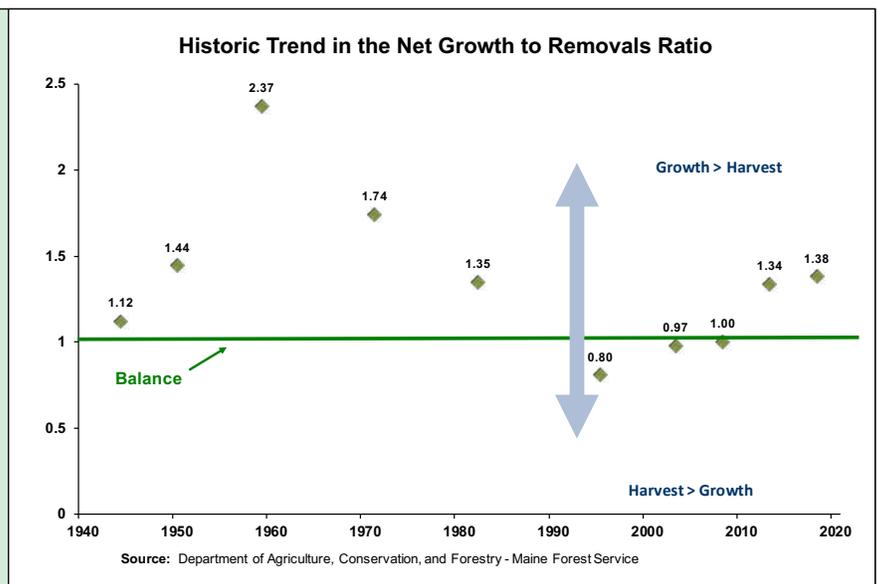
Since 2014, the workshop on *Harvesting to Meet Woodland Owners’ Goals* has been presented at multiple locations around the state to loggers, foresters, landowners and public officials with responsibilities for public land and watersheds.

“Sharing information through education and training with individual loggers on *Harvesting to Meet Landowner’s Objectives* is an effective strategy for continual improvement of harvesting practices,” said Mike St. Peter, director of Maine’s Certified Logging Professional program. “This attention to detail on harvest, produces positive outcomes for both landowners and loggers.”

The intent is to remind forest resource professionals of their unique challenge: Satisfying the many reasons, including far more than timber production, that small woodlot owners have for owning forestland.

In 2018, timber growth exceeded harvest by 38%

One measure of sustainable forest management is the relationship between how much timber is grown and how much is harvested. In the long run, the desirable net growth to harvest ratio is 1:1, meaning annual growth and harvest are balanced. A value greater than one indicates growth is greater than harvest. Since 2008, Maine growth has exceeded harvest by 38 percent.



Where Maine's wood goes

In 2018, Maine's landowners harvested 12.1 million green ton equivalents of wood. It was converted into:



**Firewood and pellets
to heat homes 2%**



Sawlogs for lumber 35%



Biomass for electricity 18%



**Pulpwood for
paper, packaging
and tissue 45%**

Source: Maine Forest Service, 2018 Wood Processor Report, published December 2, 2019

CFRU research is driven by stakeholders interests

By Meg Fergusson

*Communications and Outreach Specialist
Center for Research on Sustainable Forests*

The Cooperative Forestry Research Unit (CFRU) is a core part of the applied research program in the Center for Research on Sustainable Forests (CRSF) at the University of Maine. CFRU membership represents 8.15 million acres of Maine's forestlands, with about half of CFRU members certified or supportive of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI).

CFRU research projects are critical to informing industry members about the most pressing challenges they face in sustainably managing Maine's working forestlands. Research scientists seek new technologies and applications to address long-standing problems encountered by land managers. Specifically, they are using:

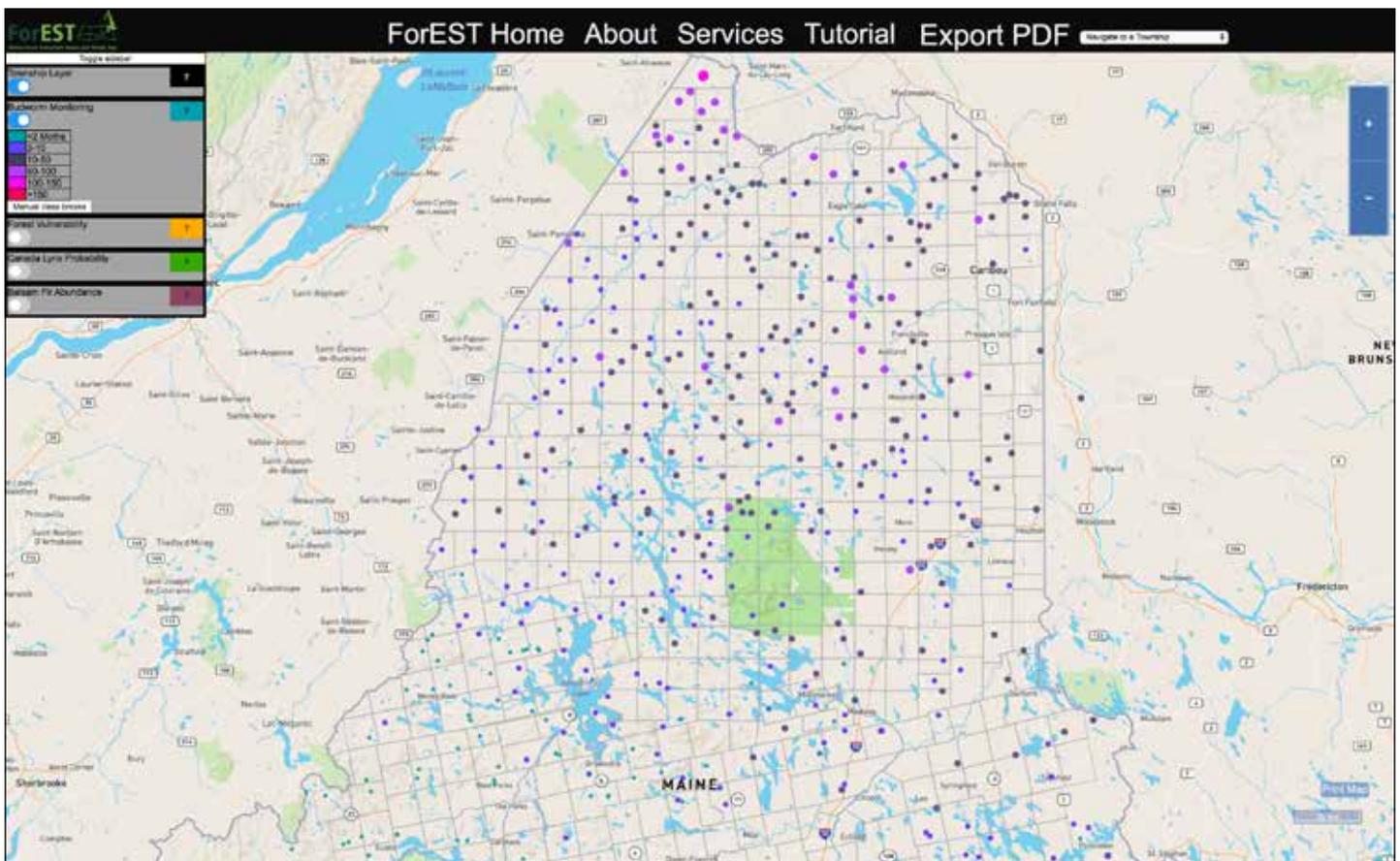
- LiDAR, which stands for Light Detection and Ranging, to map streams and wet areas, update de-

cadec-old soil surveys, and quantify timber inventories.

- High-resolution imagery to identify tree species biomass, forest types, disturbance history, and foliage losses due to insects and other damaging agents.
- Machine learning algorithms combined with super computers to produce statewide high-resolution maps to provide landowners and managers with the data they need to visualize and quantify problems and opportunities for the resources they manage.

A key aspect of CFRU research is to inform sustainable forest management and policy decisions. The CRSF helps translate research into readily accessible information for a broad array of stakeholders and policymakers through:

- Social media.
- Meeting outreach (e.g., Forest Science and Practice Forum).



ForEST dashboard home page. The app is accessible at <https://forestapp.acg.maine.edu/>



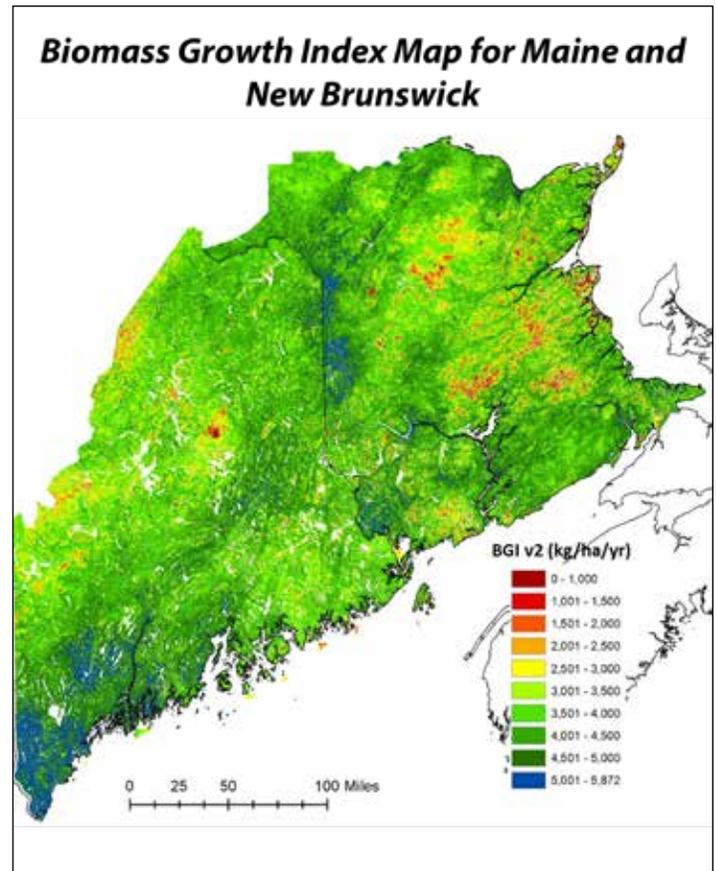
SFI participants have invested \$1.7 billion in forest research.

- Websites: crsf.umaine.edu
sprucebudwormmaine.org
nefismembers.org (Northeast Forest Information Source).

Research areas are broadly categorized as climate change impacts on forest, wildlife, and biological diversity.

Recent highlights include:

- In the first year of a three-year project on soil productivity, carbon storage, and conservation in the Acadian Forest Region, 550 soil samples from 52 quantitative soil pits and 150 organic horizons were collected over two field seasons. These samples will be analyzed to determine mineral soil bulk density for evaluating soil compaction after harvesting. This research is supported by an SFI Conservation Grant and CFRU member contributions.
- Completion of the Weymouth Point Study on the long-term impacts of whole-tree harvesting. Results may help inform the development of sustainable forest management standards in northern New England.
- LiDAR remote sensing analysis is being used to enhance the design and operation of inventory programs for Maine’s forest industry stakeholders. Wall-to-wall enhanced forest inventory maps of percent softwood, stem density, quadratic mean diameter, basal area and volume have been generated for the entire Ashland West study area, and researchers hope to expand coverage.
- Trail cameras (31 study areas to date) have been deployed to survey carnivore species in areas across the state to assess the variation in occupancy probabilities between different forest stand types and ages, harvest histories, landscape configuration, latitudes, and other anthropogenic influences to investigate how timber harvesting may influence carnivore distributions of management and conservation interest (e.g., American marten, fisher, lynx, coyote and black bear).
- Widely attended webinars showcased the spruce budworm outbreak, mixed wood products following biomass harvesting and prescribed burning, and the value of long-term forest research in Maine.



From the CFRU research project “Developing a Refined Forest Site Productivity Map for Maine and New Brunswick by Linking Biomass Growth Index to Remotely Sensed Variables,” lead scientists P. Rahimzadeh-Bajgiran, A. Weiskittel, and C. Hennigar.

In spring 2020, the Intelligent GeoSolutions (IGS) team at the CRSF released the first version of its free interactive mapping tool, the Forest Ecosystem Status and Trends (ForEST) app. Developed as a decision support tool for private and public forest managers, natural resource agencies, conservation organizations and other stakeholders, ForEST provides near real-time information about changing forest landscape conditions resulting from the spruce budworm outbreak and ongoing management.

The CFRU continues to be a national model of stakeholder-driven research that provides long-term critical information to improve forest management and policy across the state and region. Support from SFI members is critical for meeting the CFRU mission and it also positions us to deal with challenges we might face for the sustainable management of our future forests.



LEA makes a lot of progress with a \$10,000 SFI grant

The Lakes Environmental Association (LEA) used a \$10,000 SFI grant awarded in 2018 to create many integrated learning opportunities about the importance of sustainable forestry. Based in Bridgton, LEA is a non-profit organization focused on protecting lakes and water quality in western Maine.

Maine's SIC partnered with LEA on the grant, along with Project Learning Tree (PLT), the Maine Forest Service (MFS), the Maine Forest Products Council (MFPC) and the Portland Water District (PWD).

Throughout the course of the grant, LEA held numerous workshops, classes and events for landowners, foresters and loggers on various aspects of forest management. These events were held at the Highland Research Forest, the Maine Lake Science Center, and at local pubs (to encourage people to come!). Events and classes were well attended and more will be scheduled.

"We feel the project was very successful and we were pleased with the outcomes," said Colin Holme, LEA executive director. "Receiving funding from SFI was instrumental in helping us focus on long-term forest management as a means to maintain high water quality."

Here are some of the ways the grant was used.



Trail infrastructure at Highland Research Forest

Last summer, LEA worked with volunteers to build natural bog bridges through a wet portion of one of the trails; installed SFI interpretive signage, and cleared and blazed the upper portion of the loop trail. A privy was also constructed on top of the septic tank, which was installed last fall. A trail counter and kiosk also were installed. This work included the creation of a small parking lot, and multiple boardwalks.

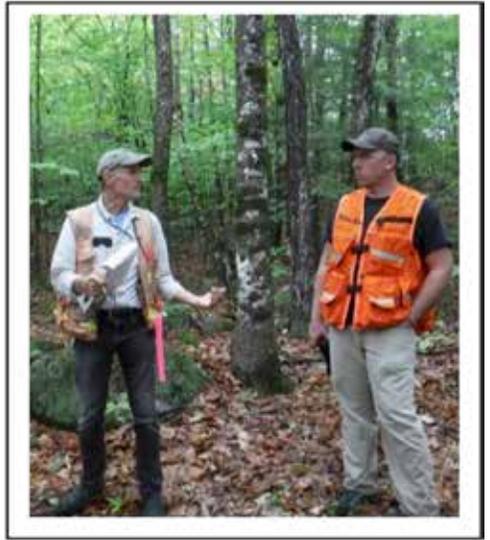
Several trail days during the grant period included both staff and volunteers working together, and an intern (hired with other grants) who regularly maintained trails at the Holt Pond Preserve and Highland Research Forest.

LEA has been receiving excellent feedback from users.



Left: Interpretive signage approved by SFI out on the trail. Center: Volunteers building bog bridges on a wet section of trail. Right: The completed privy at the Highland Research Forest.





Left: A young hiker checks out the animal track casts on the Pinehaven Trail. **Center:** The low-elements challenge course on the Pinehaven Trail has been a hit with all ages. **Right:** Ecologist Rick Van de Poll and forester Paul Larrivee discuss strategies to deal with a proliferation of beech infected with beech bark canker.

Education outreach regarding Sustainable Forestry

LEA also celebrated “Woodland Owner Appreciation Day,” along with the Portland Water District, MFS, Loon Echo Land Trust, Maine Audubon, private foresters, and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. The event was held Sept. 28, 2019 – a beautiful day – and more than 40 landowners attended.

Walks were offered that focused on managing woodlands for sustainable income, legacy planning, and managing woodlands to attract wildlife. Post-event reviews from landowners were overwhelmingly positive and all partners were extremely pleased with the event.

LEA also worked with the Portland Water District to develop a seventh-grade “Forest Ways” curriculum that focuses on the ecological benefits of forested ecosystems. Last fall, three classes of seventh-grade students enjoyed a field trip to the Highland Research Forest, where they collected data with the MFS district forester.

Established education outreach and demonstration sites at Highland Research Forest, Holt Pond and the Maine Lake Science Center

Additional interpretive signage was installed last summer at both the Highland Research Forest and the Maine Lake Science Center, where the loop trail attracted more than 3,000 visitors annually. An ecological study was completed last summer and LEA forester Paul Larrivee helped develop a forest management plan, which

“Receiving funding from SFI was instrumental in helping us focus on long-term forest management as a means to maintain high water quality.”

– Colin Holme, LEA executive director

includes a timber inventory of the 420-acre Highland Research Forest.

A brochure for the Highland Research Forest was also developed, which was printed last fall.

Sustainable Forestry Workshops

After holding a successful accredited course for foresters and loggers last spring with our district forester, LEA is planning more courses this fall. A Project Learning Tree workshop also was held for teachers at the Science Center. Last fall LEA visited the Holt Research Forest in Arrowsic and the Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest to see what types of forestry and research they are conducting.

SFI Community Grants are awarded for collaborative community-based projects, activities or events that support SFI’s core mission to connect communities to forests. Since the SFI Grants started in 2010, SFI has awarded 64 Community Grants totaling more than \$650,000 to foster community-building projects. When leveraged with project partner contributions, that total investment is close to \$5 million.



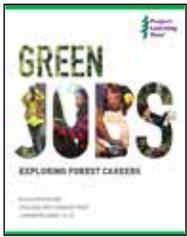
SFI Grants plus partner contributions total \$5 million since 2010 . 13

Maine PLT lives up to our state's motto: 'Dirigo: I Lead!'

As the educational branch of the Maine TREE Foundation (pun intended), Maine Project Learning Tree (PLT) has consistently served the mission to “educate and advocate for the sustainable use of the forest and the ecological, economic, and social health of Maine's forest community.” Over the past few months, we've also experienced change, including additions to programming and adjustments to the way we do business.

National PLT began in the 1970s as a school-based curriculum and professional development resource. Our Maine PLT program has expanded over the past year with new audiences and new materials while still maintaining our core school audience.

Workforce development in Maine



A timely new SFI resource, *Green Jobs: Exploring Forest Careers*, is hot off the presses in 2020. Maine PLT received an SFI grant to spread the word about forest-based careers and the educational pathways to prepare for those jobs.

PLT is working with partners from the forestry community (professionals from logging, natural resources and mill-based sectors) as well as educational program leaders (career and technical education, logger training programs, community colleges, and universities). We will design and host professional development sessions for guidance counselors and others who support youth in exploring their futures.

Activities from the book have been pilot-tested this spring with middle and high school teachers and their enthusiasm and expressed need for the materials has been heartening.

Planning a woodlot tour

Maine PLT partnered with the Maine Tree Farm Program last winter to design and facilitate a series of workshops to support woodlot owners who want to plan tours of their forests or visits to schools or community groups. The materials we developed are now ready for the next landowner group interested in partnering with us.

Background resources include the Society of American Foresters' *Walk Through the Forest* tour planning

**Christine Anderson-
Morehouse**

Project Learning Tree Coordinator



guide and the Project Learning Tree activity guide of learning activities, plus our own newly-developed landowner story-telling survey and tour planning tool. We designed our Summer Forestry Teachers Tours using these resources and remain eager to support other audiences that share our mission of educating Maine's communities about sustainable forestry.

Environmental education organizations (Non-formal education)

We continue to use PLT materials and new presentation designs to support educators beyond the schools. We shared our work during a “Pecha Kucha” presentation – 20 images for 20 seconds – to the Maine Environmental Education Association (MEEA) community. We also worked with university classes of forest interpretation majors and future teachers.

New for K-12 school workshops: Next generation science teaching standards

Maine PLT was engaged to design a one-day event for



Christine Morehouse-Anderson displays PLT materials to support educators beyond school walls.



Project Learning Tree promotes environmental stewardship.

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Maine PLT partnered with the Maine Tree Farm Program last winter to design and facilitate a series of workshops to help woodlot owners plan tours of their forests or visits to schools or community groups.

all of the K-5 elementary teachers in a school district (55 teachers) to introduce them to the new Next Generation Science Standards. We enjoy sharing PLT activities and demonstrating how students can use the “practices” of science to learn important concepts in biology and ecology while out in the forest.

Living in a virtual world

Within the nationwide PLT network, Maine PLT once again lived up to our state’s motto: “*Dirigo: I Lead!*”

Nature at home: Resources for families and teachers

When the COVID 19 emergency struck in March, Maine PLT was invited by the Maine Department of Education to host (virtually) an overview of our nature-based resources that teachers could share with their students and families. An on-the-ball team of dedicated PLT facilitators immediately took to the forest to create short, clear demonstration videos showing parents and children how to do individual PLT activities.

PLT organizations in five other states volunteered to join our effort and the result is a YouTube library that will serve our audiences now and long into the future.

Additionally, the Maine PLT website (meplt.org) was updated so the landing page now houses a wealth of free, online PLT educational resources for all K-12 students and their families. Finally, our social media posts have migrated toward more “Nature at Home” resources

posted new almost daily. In terms of data, some of these posts have had thousands of hits!

Virtual professional development: PLT facilitator training

The original plan was for our exceptional cadre of experienced volunteer PLT facilitators to gather this spring at a farm-based conference center to network, learn, and share new ideas together. Thanks to the new normal, our setting changed, but the enthusiasm of these environmental leaders still shined and even thrived.

Meeting weekly in two-hour chunks over Zoom, we’ve designed and pilot-tested virtual icebreakers and PLT activities (some using the new Green Jobs booklet), virtual concurrent sessions, and other virtual PLT teaching and learning strategies, including a new follow-up opportunity that supports PLT participants to plan and use PLT in their teaching practice.

The camaraderie of this strong network of educators and natural resource professionals is solidified, both virtually and in the real world. Training for new PLT facilitators will happen this fall and we’re eager to incorporate our new virtual tools whether or not our venue is live or online.

In summary, you can expect to see great things from Maine PLT in the coming year!



What Maine's SFI Implementation Committee does



Wildlife Committee

Promoting forest management to enhance habitat and address issues of concern.



Education Committee

Establishing criteria for logging training programs and evaluating them to insure they're effective.



Outreach Committee

Raising awareness of sustainable practices for landowners, industry leaders and the public.



Honor/Integrity Committee

Managing Maine's SFI hotline for questions and concerns about harvesting practices.



Partner organizations

SFI participants; Certified Logging Professional; Maine Forest Service; Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife; Maine Audubon; Maine Snowmobile Association; University of Maine; MFS Foresters Institute; Maine Woodland Owners; Maine Tree Foundation; Project Learning Tree; ATV Maine; NELA; NOAA; NRCS and USFWS.



Partial list of projects/programs

Education Committee: *Harvesting to meet landowners objectives; bridge mat construction; Stream Smart road crossings; BMPs for water quality; aesthetics for commercial harvests; balancing wildlife considerations with forest productivity; beaver management; climate change and forest management roads; temporary plastic roads.*

Wildlife Committee: *Works with state and federal agencies to identify best practices for wildlife and habitat; FIN.*

Outreach Committee: *Presentations include the Maine Snowmobile Association show, Maine Science Festival, Children's Water Festivals; Harvest Satisfaction Survey promotion; SIC report sent to Maine legislators and municipalities.*

Thanks for helping the SIC adapt to many changes

It is an interesting exercise to reflect on the past year's work of Maine's SFI Implementation Committee (SIC) in the context of change that we had planned for and changes none of us expected, which forced us to adapt seemingly overnight.

The predominant change we expected and had been experiencing was the change in representation on the SIC, due mostly to retirements. The change we had not expected was, of course, COVID 19.

Like most industries, our workforce is heavily weighted towards baby boomers. As they retire, we're seeing a rapid transition to the next generation in our logging and trucking workforces; land management services; forest products manufacturing, and even among our partners at state and federal agencies, and NGOs. In the past two years, nearly 70 percent of the individuals who participate on the SIC have changed, including those holding key leadership positions.

So with so much change, how has the SIC continued developing, teaching and promoting sustainable forest practices? Fortunately, new individuals stepped up for the SIC and some who had retired did not entirely leave.

Without exception the new SIC members are excited about SFI and the work occurring here at the state level. Their defining qualities have been openness and a desire to encourage outgoing members, if willing, to continue to participate on the SIC, so we don't lose their valued contributions and institutional knowledge.

As for the retirees, you might expect they'd ride off into the sunset. On the contrary, they have made significant investments of time and effort on projects and programs under development. Here are the retirees (in alphabetical order): Barry Burgason, Huber Resources; Mike Dann, Seven Islands; Doug Denico, Plum Creek; Kevin Doran, Maine Forest Service, Dave Griswold, Verso; Kevin McCarthy, Sappi; Sarah Medina, Seven Islands; Scott Pease, Hancock Lumber, Roger Ryder, Maine Forest Service, and John Starrett, Sappi.

Examples of their work include:

- Participating in SIC policy decision discussions.
- Volunteering to construct Make-A-Wish tiny homes and playsets three years running.



- Active in education and outreach subcommittees.
- Investing countless hours in the development of educational programs on BMPs, road construction and maintenance, grader operators training and,
- Participating in the actual delivery of these educational programs.

We would have struggled to accomplish these efforts without the combined contributions of current SIC representatives and the retirees who wanted to give back. On behalf of the SIC, we say, **"Thank you!"**

Most recently our challenges have been overhauling all SIC-sponsored events and educational programs to conform with the constraints of COVID 19. These efforts have been undertaken by all SIC partners.

The Education Committee, working directly with the Maine Forest Service, converted BMPs face-to-face training to an online format. This will enable BMPs related information to be shared even when face-to-face meetings are not advised or permitted.

The Fisheries Improvement Network (FIN), referenced in Josh Royte's article on the stream connectivity database (see Page 4), is retooling a conference and field tour on wood turtles and fisheries habitat to a virtual event occurring this fall with drone video in lieu of field tours.

Finally, our SIC-approved logger education program, the "Certified Logging Professional" (CLP) program, has also moved to an online format as an interim solution that permits loggers to remain engaged and current in their certifications. The effort necessary to make these conversions has been significant and the broader SIC community deserves the credit. The energy they put into it also makes it abundantly clear how much they value the SIC's work and its goals.

We look forward to a time when we can gather as we have in the past to celebrate our successes, deliberate our challenges and express in person our appreciation for everyone's contributions.





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