

# PROGRESS REPORT

# MAINE SIC



SUSTAINABLE  
FORESTRY  
INITIATIVE  
MAINE

SFI-01125

**December 2022**

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



535 Civic Center Drive, Augusta ME 04330 - (207) 622-9288

[sfimaine.org](http://sfimaine.org) - [psirois@maineforest.org](mailto:psirois@maineforest.org)

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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 for the purpose of responding to public questions and concerns regarding forestry and timber harvesting practices in Maine. **It is 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.





# CONTENTS



CHANGE,  
IMPROVEMENT, AND  
THE NEW 2022 SFI  
STANDARDS - 3



UNDERSTANDING THE  
ROLE OF MAINE'S  
COMMERCIAL FOREST  
TO NATIONAL BIRD  
CONSERVATION- 4-5



USING FORESTS AS A  
WINDOW TO THE  
WORLD- 6-7



MAINE TREE'S  
PROGRAMS EMPHASIZE  
EDUCATION AND  
COMMUNITY- 7-9



CLIMATE CHANGE  
MAKES EXTREME  
WEATHER BMP'S A  
PRIORITY- 10



FIRE RESILIENCY  
THROUGH COLLECTIVE  
EFFORTS- 11-12



CLP ADAPTS TO  
CHALLENGES AND  
MOVES ON - 13-14



LEARNING THE SCIENCE  
OF LOG SCALING - 15



COMMUNITY PARTNERS  
AND COLLABORATIONS  
ARE KEY TO ANYTHING  
WE ACCOMPLISH - 16-17



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# Change, Improvement, and the new 2022 SFI Standards



**Eugene Mahar** is chair of the Maine SFI State Implementation Committee and the Forest Resources Manager for LandVest in Maine.

SFI's stated goal for the SFI standards revision process "was to create standards that are grounded in science, include diverse perspectives, and benefit consumers, communities, and ultimately forests across the U.S. and Canada." After a two-year process that included 2 public comment periods, a dozen webinars over 30 task groups meetings, and participation by nearly 2,300 individuals and organizations through webinars and/or submission of comments, several major enhancements were made and incorporated into the 2022 Standards in which we are working collectively and independently to implement within our individual programs.

As was stated in the previous progress report by past SIC chair Ben Dow, "The only constant in life is change," and this is certainly the case with the 2022 Standards. Some of the changes incorporated into the new standards are "simple" language changes, while others are more complex and include the addition of completely new standards in which Certified Organizations (an example of one of the language changes) need to demonstrate compliance with.

A few of the language changes in the standards, have had phrasing such as "are encouraged to" or "should have" change to "shall have," and the addition of new language such as "water quantity" paired with "water quality" has had some significant implications in how compliance is to be achieved in some cases. The addition of Objective 9. Climate Smart Forestry and Objective 10. Fire Resilience and Awareness to the standards both raised wide ranging concerns on how to meet compliance.

But both new objectives also offered up a powerful opportunity in how certified organizations could meet compliance "through cooperative efforts involving SFI Implementation Committees" and other partners, and that's what the members of the Maine SIC did.

Once the new standards were finalized, the Maine SIC organized a subcommittee to review

the new standards and develop guidance documents to be used by the members. This subcommittee was largely successful in accomplishing this goal through the collective knowledge and experience base of the membership, but felt there were areas within the standards (particularly objectives 9 & 10) that the expertise of local and regional partners would need to be called upon for further direction.

SFI Inc. developed a playbook and hosted a national workshop on March 31 to discuss how Climate Smart Forestry Indicators could be addressed collaboratively. To further this initiative, a regional workshop was held to help the SICs in the Northeast U.S. exchange ideas and provide some regional information for SFI certified organizations. As a result, a regional risk assessment was developed, and potential adaptation actions and mitigation opportunities to address priority climate impacts were identified, in which certified organizations can use as a starting point.

For Fire Resilience and Awareness, the Maine SIC worked with Robby Gross, the Chief Forest Ranger, for the Maine Forest Service in developing a Maine fire resiliency report and recommendations for continued interaction with the SIC and its members for planning, training, and educational outreach opportunities.

At the end of the day, the change to the new standards were necessary to keep pace with enhancements in science and technology, and with societal needs and perspectives. They reflect one of the common themes found within the SFI Program that SICs and Certified Organizations alike are striving to achieve – continuous improvement.

Lastly, I would like to encourage and challenge all SIC members to remain engaged; it is your involvement, support, and input that helps guide the SIC in achieving continuous improvement through the outreach, training, and support to the membership it provides.





# Understanding the Role of Maine's Commercial Forest to National Bird Conservation

**John Hagan** has a Ph.D. from North Carolina State University in Wildlife Ecology. He is President of Our Climate Common,



Thirty years ago, we conducted a massive study of birds and forestry over 1-million acres of commercial timberlands in the Moosehead Lake Region of Maine. We're doing the whole study all over again.

At the time in the early 1990s, there was great concern about continental-scale declines in bird populations, especially forest-breeding birds that overwintered in the tropics but migrated north every year to breed in our northern forests. Commercial timberland owners at the time (Bowater, Scott Paper Company) were key partners in the original study, funded jointly by both the forest industry and environmental foundations.



*Molly Lynch (foreground) and Josh Kolasch (background) conducting a productivity survey for nesting birds north of the Golden Road. (photo by John Hagan)*

The bottom-line of the original study was that forest practices were supporting a wide diversity of resident and migratory bird species.

Even the 15,000-acre "Great Ragmuff Clearcut" in T4 R14 was providing habitat for many early-successional species of conservation concern. Although such large clearcuts are not allowed today, we learned that clearcuts (even big ones), and the young brushy regeneration that followed, provided important bird habitat. Clearcuts were not "biodiversity deserts."

At the same time, the study region was losing tracts of mature, closed-canopy forest, important habitat for a different suite of forest bird species. The challenge, as we stated in the 1990s, was to maintain the full array of forest types and age classes on the landscape at any given point in time, recognizing that the locations of these forest types would move around over the decades scale. We called the concept a "shifting mosaic."

Why would we do this study all over again?

First, since the early 1990s, forest practices have changed for many landowners in Maine's commercial forest. Clearcutting accounted for nearly 50% of the acres harvested in 1990. Today, clearcuts account for less than 5% of harvested acres. Partial cutting of one form or another is the rule today. What does this widespread change in harvesting practices mean for breeding bird habitat and bird conservation today?

Second, many bird populations have continued to decline at a continental scale since the 1990s. A major scientific paper published in 2019 reported a nearly 30% decline in North American bird populations since the 1970s—some 3 billion birds lost. Because Maine's commercial forest forms the heart of a globally significant "Important Bird Area," as designated by the National Audubon Society, what role might Maine's commercial forest play today in countering these national-scale bird declines, especially given the changes in forest practices since the original study.

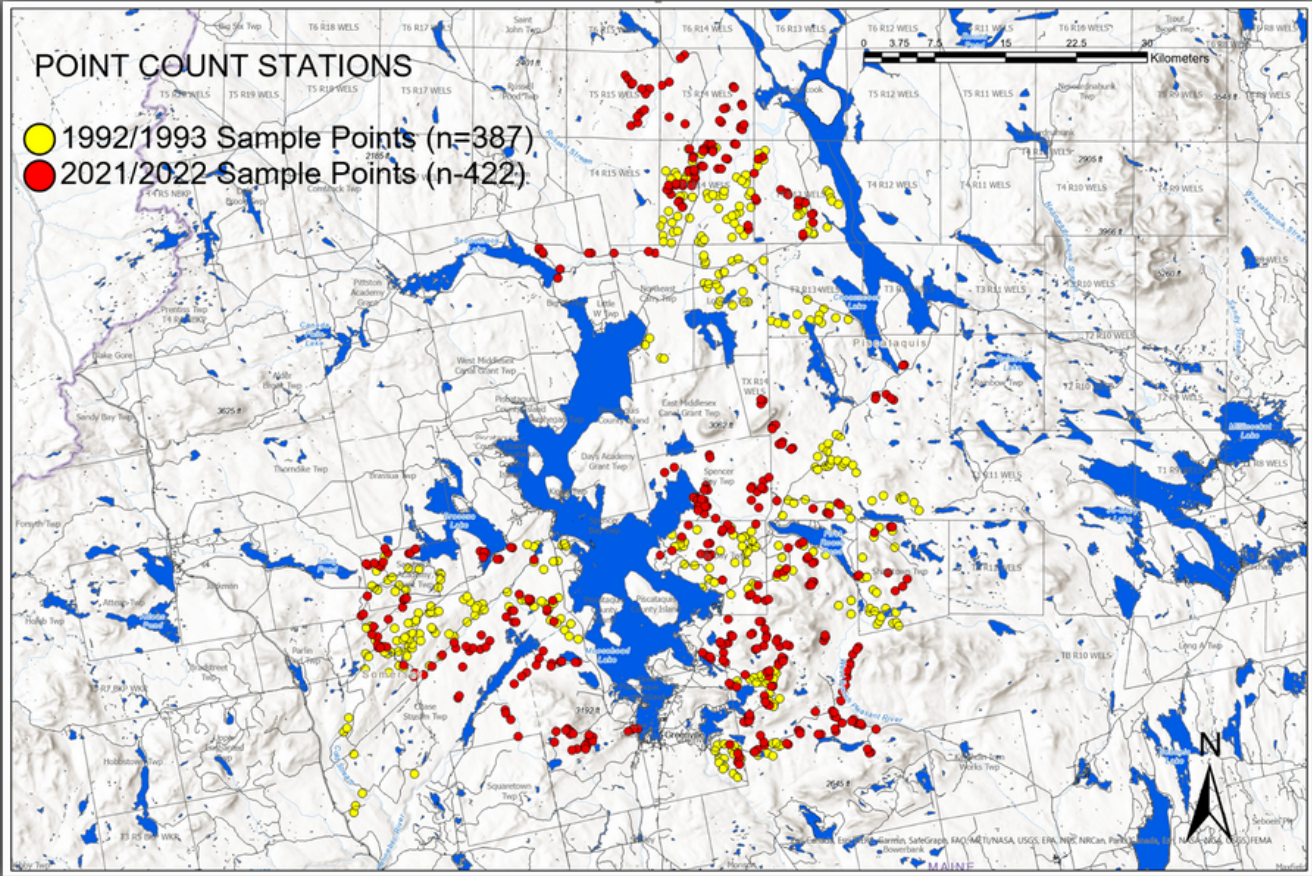
With the help of current-day landowners (Weyerhaeuser, Landvest, Huber, and AMC), last summer (2022) we completed all the field data collection for replicating the 1990s study. We used the exact same methods we used 30 years ago and surveyed the same 1-M-acre study area. Although it's too early to draw definitive conclusions, the density (birds per acre) of the majority of bird species appears to be holding steady, or even higher than the original 1990s study. A few species seem to have declined in density.

The challenge for the research team over the coming winter is to analyze any changes and try to understand the mechanisms that are causing them, both increases or decreases. We will dig into the life histories of each species individually to unravel the patterns we observe. Some species migrate to the Southeast U.S. and some migrate to Central or South America. Understanding what these species experience on their wintering grounds is just as important as what happens in the Maine woods.

What we do know already is that the commercial forests of Maine remain what I call “10 million acres of bird habitat.” Compared to anywhere else east of the Mississippi, this is an extraordinarily undeveloped part of the U.S. In 2021, the Appalachian Mountain Club won the designation of “International Dark Skies Park” for their ownership east of Greenville. Dark skies are important for birds because many species use the stars to navigate during migration. (Most migrate at night.) The commercial forests of Maine also comprise the biggest, darkest sky east of the Mississippi.

We know we will find ways that timber harvesting could be modified to better support bird conservation at a national scale while maintaining harvest. This study is a perfect demonstration of all of us bringing our knowledge and skills to the table to make the world a better place. Maine’s commercial forests provide multiple values—some economic, some environmental. It takes work, and respect for one another, to keep those values coming in an ever-changing changing world.

Contact John Hagan for more information ([jhagan@ourclimatecommon.org](mailto:jhagan@ourclimatecommon.org)), or visit [ourclimatecommon.org/project-30yr-bird-project](https://ourclimatecommon.org/project-30yr-bird-project). Funding for the current study has been provided by: Cooperative Forest Research Unit, NCASI, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund, Maine Timberlands Charitable Trust, Horizon Foundation, The Betterment Fund, Seth Sprague Educational and Charitable Foundation, Weyerhaeuser, The Wilderness Society, and the University of New Hampshire Ag Experiment Station.



Bird point count stations in the 1990s (yellow dots) and 2020s (red dots) studies. The distribution of points in the 2020s study nicely overlaps the area sampled in the 1990s.



# Using Forests as a Window to the World



**Lena Ives** serves as the Director of Education and Project Learning Tree Coordinator at the Maine TREE Foundation.

## Maine Timber Research and Environmental

Education Foundation's (Maine TREE's) mission is to educate and advocate for the sustainable use of the forest and the ecological, economic, and social health of Maine's forest community. One of Maine TREE's education programs is Maine Project Learning Tree (PLT). PLT is an initiative of the Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI), consisting of a variety of standards-aligned curricula used by formal classroom educators and non-formal educators to foster forest-literate citizens. As the most forested state in the nation, our forestlands and all the products and careers they provide rely heavily on our local communities for sustainable forest management.



*2022 Bethel-region Teachers' Tour participants learn about conservation and forest management planning at Chadbourne Tree Farm in Bethel from LandVest forester David Degruittola.*

## Teachers' Tours

One of Maine TREE's most popular programs, Forests of Maine Teachers' Tours, celebrated its 25th year in 2022. Each year, the four-day tours focus on the growth, harvest, and processing of wood products in Maine. Over the past two decades, the program has served over 1,000 teachers of all ages, Girl and Boy Scout leaders, adult educators, and conservation organization staff. In 2022, we hosted two tours, one in the Carrabassett Valley region and the other in the Bethel region, engaging 34 educators in this experience.

The tours prepare participants to return to the classroom with stimulating approaches to share knowledge about the forest with students, colleagues, and communities. Throughout the four-day tour, participants engage in PLT activities, meet professionals who work in the Maine woods, and develop ideas on how to bring the forest to the classroom or the classroom to the forest.



*Maine PLT Facilitator and Sanford High School Teacher, Lindsay Strout (standing), leads a career-focused breakout group of middle and high school teachers during the 2022 Forest of Maine Teachers' Tours based in Carrabassett Valley*

## Maine's Forests Are Full Of Career Opportunities

Maine's forest products industry **needs over 5,000 new hires** to keep up with growing global demand, capitalize on advanced innovations, and replace a retiring workforce over the next 15 years.

**13,718 Jobs**

The number of full and part-time forestry-related jobs here in Maine

**5,000 Openings**

The anticipated number of new hires needed in Maine's forest products industry by 2037

**\$8.1 Billion**

The current annual economic output of Maine's forest products industry

*Source: FOR/Maine*

### Workforce Development

One of the goals of Maine TREE's environmental education efforts is to reach more educators and classrooms to provide Maine's students with the opportunity to learn outdoors, interact with forests, and experience the possibilities of green jobs and careers in environmental and forest sectors. This aspect of our work is realized through direct classroom engagement, connecting classrooms with natural resource professionals, and providing professional development for educators and professionals to teach and incorporate career opportunities in their work with youth. We hope to bring more prominence to natural resource and forestry careers for middle school and high school students in Maine and connect these classrooms with professionals who can show them what careers in the environmental sector look like.

## Maine TREE's Programs Emphasize Education and Community

**Logan Johnson** is the Executive Director of the Maine TREE Foundation.



Maine Timber Research and Environmental Education Foundation (Maine TREE) is the state's premiere organization advancing forest-based education and outreach efforts to Maine students and communities. Our mission is to educate and advocate for the sustainable use of the forest and the ecological, economic, and social health of Maine's forest community. We envision a future where the general public values and supports healthy forest ecosystems, forest professionals, and scientific sustainable forest management.

To advance our mission, we support forest-based education, outreach, and research programs that engage students, teachers, non-formal educators, and natural resource professionals, including foresters and loggers, forest landowners, and the general public.





*Students at Edna Drinkwater School collect tree data to study the climate change effects on trees around their school as part of Maine TREE's Forest Ecology Research Network program.*

### **Forest-based Education**

Our forest-based education programs include Maine Project Learning Tree (PLT), Forests of Maine Teachers' Tours, and the Forest Ecology Research Network (FERN). These programs focus on professional development opportunities for teachers and non-formal educators and direct engagement with students. Utilizing these programs fosters student appreciation for the forest and introduces them to forest-based career opportunities.

Learn more about our Forest-based Education programs in the previous section.



*Steve Laweryson, providing conventional loggers information for recertification session held at the University of Maine Forest in May.*

### **Certified Logging Professionals (CLP)**

Since 1991, CLP has provided safety training and education for individual loggers. As a result, CLP participants receive a discounted workers' compensation rate (47% less for mechanical loggers; 57% less for conventional loggers compared to 1993). In addition, we recognize loggers for their outstanding work and dedication to the profession by awarding three loggers annually with the Certified Logging Professional Logger of the Year Awards, which features a winner in the conventional, mechanical, and supervisor/contractor categories. There are currently more than 1,000 individual loggers participating in the CLP program.



*Holt Research Forest 2022 Summer Technicians Jack McCann (left) and Marin Harnett (center) describe their process for collecting regeneration data to Downeast Magazine reporter Peter Smith (right).*

### **Holt Research Forest**

For 40 years, Holt Research Forest has served as a long-term ecological monitoring site, focusing on forest development and wildlife habitat. The 300 acres of forestland on the island town of Arrowsic features a 100-acre, extensively studied research grid. In the winter of 2020/21, a harvest in the research area created opportunities to monitor how the forest responds to disturbance. The property features an outdoor classroom, and we have hosted dozens of summer interns and research technicians. The property provides a unique opportunity to answer questions that will benefit Maine landowners and develop connections between Maine TREE's research, education, and outreach programs.





*Oxford County Soil and Water Conservation District Tenmil River Demonstration Forest Tree Farm hosted a Forestry for the Birds Workshop in May 2022.*

### **Maine Tree Farm**

Maine Tree Farm is a program of the American Tree Farm System and administered by the Maine Tree Farm Committee, which is in the process of forming its own 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. It is an exciting time for the Committee, as becoming an independent nonprofit organization is a momentous milestone for the group, which is currently celebrating its 70th anniversary. While the Tree Farm Committee is poised to become an independent organization, Maine TREE will continue to support the program. By staffing the Maine Tree Farm Coordinator, the two groups will enhance education and outreach opportunities to Maine's family forest owners and increase the number of Maine landowners engaged in sustainable woodland stewardship. We are also pleased to join the Tree Farm Committee in annually recognizing Maine's Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year. Currently, there are more than 1,400 landowners enrolled in the program representing 400,000 acres of Maine's forest.

### **Community**

At the core of Maine TREE's programs is a community committed to providing opportunities for people to learn about the forest and the benefits they provide for our state. As our forests grow and their importance is recognized, our community must grow with them to expand opportunities to participate in these essential programs. If you are interested in learning more about Maine TREE or becoming involved in one of our programs, you can contact me via email at [logan@mainetree.org](mailto:logan@mainetree.org) or by calling (207) 621-9872.



# Climate Change Makes Extreme Weather BMP's a Priority



**Patty Cormier** is the Director of the Maine Forest Service.

Climate change is on most people's minds these days, particularly in the forestry community. It's become increasingly challenging to steward Maine's woodlands, given shorter operating seasons, less or non-existent frozen ground, torrential downpours, severe windstorms, drought, and other challenges.

While it's clear that conventional BMP's work well to protect water quality when applied effectively, weather and ground conditions over the last several years have combined to create several problems, such as culvert blowouts, sedimentation (often when a torrential rainstorm follows a period of drought), and severe rutting. These conditions are likely to persist as Maine's climate warms and erratic precipitation patterns become the norm.

So, what are land managers to do? The wood still needs to be cut, yarded, and hauled to the mill. The key, as always, is planning. But planning is not just about hanging ribbon and identifying stream crossings. Adapting forest management operations to the realities of climate change requires more advance work before the machines arrive.

includes considerations like:

- What do I need to do to button down trails if a big rainstorm is forecast? And what materials will work best given specific site conditions?

- How long can I wait to move my equipment during an extended thaw or wet period? Or should I keep it on site and wait for the next dry period?
- Do I have more solid lots that I can work on when bad weather shuts down operations on wetter sites?
- How do I manage piling down wood and trucking it when we're having multiple mud seasons in one winter?
- Building in flexibility and adaptability, how can you allow for adjustments in BMP implementation to consider a wider range of potential uncertainties and a richer set of response options?

Landowners and mills will also need to be more flexible to accommodate the necessary adjustments in harvesting operations.

Building on our past efforts, MFS looks forward to working with the SIC and other partners to develop a practical set of guidelines for land managers to use during timber harvesting operations.



# Fire Resiliency Through Collective Efforts



**Robby Gross** is the Chief Forest Ranger for the Maine Forest Service.

As the conversation about the wildfire threat to forests across our nation increases, the Maine Forest Service, Division of Forest Protection, continues to put itself in a position to lead the way in protecting Maine from wildfire risk and potential. According to the 2020 Maine Forest Action Plan (FAP), controlling wildfire is listed as a priority for MFS. As outlined in the FAP, “Protecting this natural resource and the values at risk within forested areas is MFS’s primary mission. Indicators point to an increasing threat from human caused fires and weather conditions consistent with high fire danger resulting from climate change.”

Through partnerships and key cooperative efforts with stakeholders, wildfire spread and intensity have been controlled across the landscape with few exceptions. Inevitably, large fire growth can and will occur in Maine with severe weather and the right fuel conditions, but the Maine Forest Service’s goal of keeping each wildfire less than an acre in size is obtainable using aggressive initial attack responses and strategic preparedness activities.



Preseason wildfire planning and training with landowners to share response information is critical to the backbone of preparedness. This past season, forest rangers have reemphasized the importance of meeting with local land ownership and management staff to ensure full response capabilities. These meetings share critical information about access, high-value property and critical areas, equipment availability, and staged readiness levels based on fire danger indices.



By developing a new “Maine Basic Wildfire Training Course,” forest rangers are delivering local suppression tactics and fire behavior principles to landowners, foresters, contractors, and firefighters to enhance current response capacity. In addition, there have been other local trainings that have focused on the use of Maine Forest Service equipment like grapple tanks or the basics of fireline construction. Some landowners and contractors are now developing their own equipment to be used on-site for quick response needs.

Looking at opportunities to reduce wildfire risk and fuel loads in key areas is instrumental for keeping wildfires small. Large or small wildland-urban interface areas, where residential or camp communities are intermixed throughout the forest, are key locations to focus on and provide critical feedback. You will find that forest rangers are making concerted efforts to talk with stakeholders about ways to improve wildfire safety on their properties. Whether it be through establishing fuel breaks in transition zones, factoring slash management in harvest plans, or interacting with camp associations about defensible space, there are many ways for our cumulative actions to be successful.

The Maine Forest Service continues to update and enhance its equipment capabilities to ensure quick, efficient wildfire responses.





With fewer people in the workforce and fire service able to assist with suppression activities, ready and capable equipment is a necessity. By developing federal excess property for water handling, acquiring crew cab chassis for fast action engines and firefighting crew, or being able to secure newer Bell 407 helicopters to replace our Vietnam era hueys, we are committed to being in every part of the State when wildfires occur. We have many to thank for the support of funding to keep our response force viable.

It is our goal to ensure that all stakeholders are familiar with our operation, but as important, comfortable with working side-by-side to reach our collective goals and objectives. The Maine Forest Service has a great group of resource professionals that care deeply about our mission, I would encourage you to reach out to any forest ranger to see what he/she can do for you or your property to improve Maine's fire resiliency status.



# CLP Adapts to Challenges and Moves On



**Mike St. Peter** is CLP's Associate Program Director

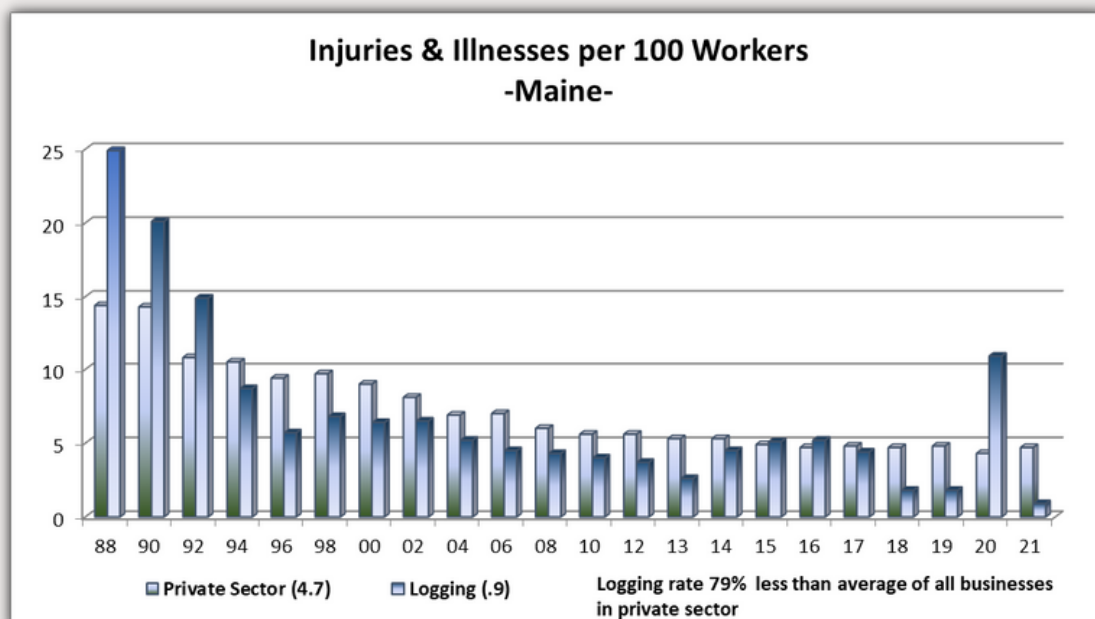
As we look back at the last three years, we are pleased to report that despite the disruptions of the pandemic, that the CLP program has endured and, in many ways, gained insights on effective and efficient delivery of training hundreds of loggers and stakeholders participated in the virtual online experience. For many, this provided effective training options they would have never otherwise considered. Based on participant comments, it provided a convenient and cost-effective method, for both the loggers and the program administration.

For CLP loggers, professional development training remains important. The program remains responsive to changes and additions resulting from revisions to the industry's forest certification standards. A vast amount of wood products is required for the paper, sawmill, pellet, and co-generation facilities. CLP loggers and their goal of continuous improvement contribute to safer, more productive, and environmentally sound workplaces.

Over 6,800 loggers and stakeholders have participated in the CLP program since 1991, and this number continues to grow.

CLP loggers agree that “professional development” through continuing education and training is important to maintain safety and sustainability. CLP has integrated a more comprehensive information for forest fire protection in the initial training and plans to include it in the future recertification. Although the program faces challenges, the newly established Advisory Committee is developing strategies to maintain the program for the long term. We are happy to share a list of some positive outcomes that all CLPs can be proud to have accomplished in 2022.

- For the 18th straight year, the CLP mechanical category will pay less for workers' compensation rates. The CLP mechanical rate for new and renewal policies through April 2023 will be 47% less than non-certified workers. Maine's certified mechanical rate of \$4.74 per hundred is one of the lowest in the country. In addition, the conventional logger workers' compensation rate has continued to drop overall since 2008. It is currently 57% less than the rate was in 1993. Again, one of the lowest in the country.

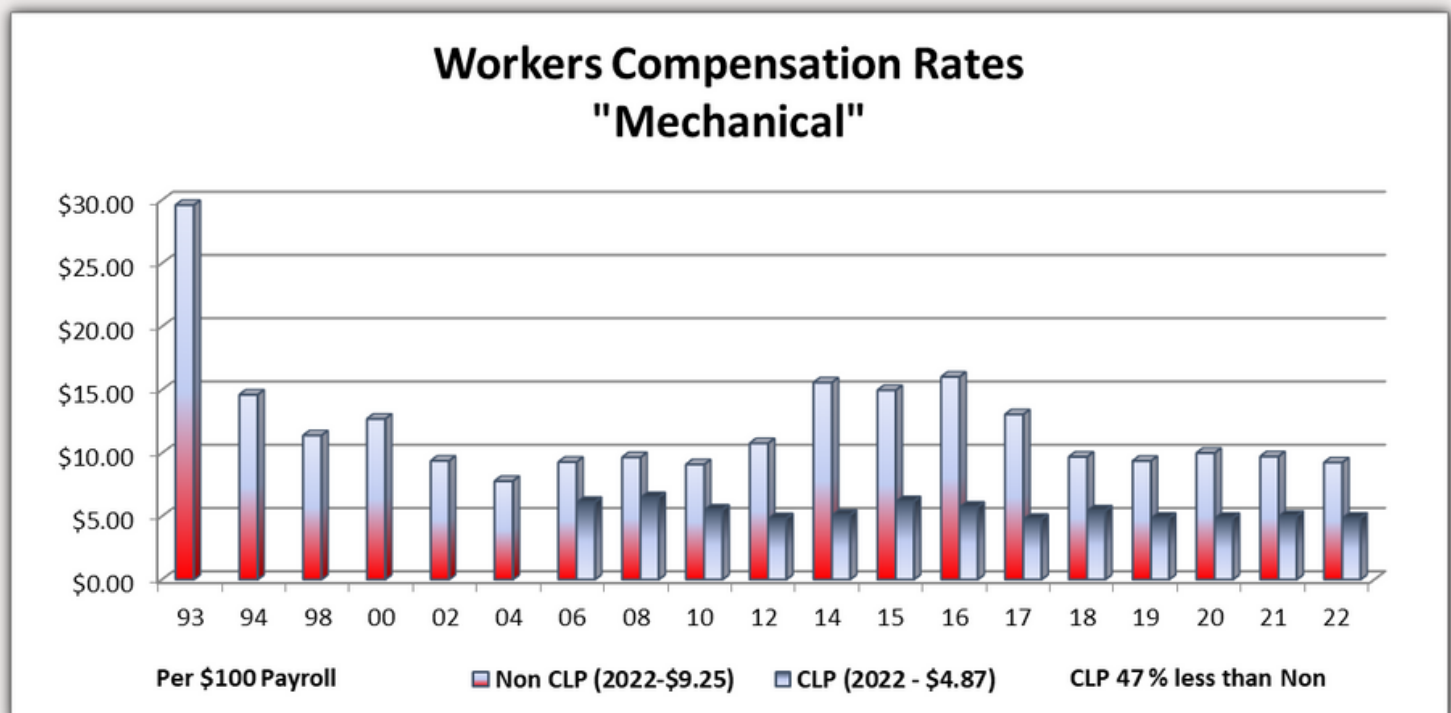




- CLP program participants continue to benefit from best management practice (BMP) training to meet the Maine Department of Environmental Protection exemption working as “excavation contractors” in shoreland zones.
- The most recent Maine Department of Labor Statistics for 2021 reports that the Injuries and Incidence rate of 0.9 per one hundred workers for Maine logging is substantially lower than the 3.7 national logging rate.
- CLP loggers also qualify for the Maine Forest Service “Direct Link Loan” program, which saves thousands of dollars in interest payments for participants that qualify.
- In calendar year 2022, 33 new individuals have participated in certification, and 314 loggers in recertification. In addition, we continue to complete performance-based worksite reviews, which provides participants with one-on-one evaluation and coaching.
- In 2022, the newly defined CLP Advisory Committee, along with Logan Johnson, the new Executive Director of Maine TREE foundation, adopted a new organization charter to redefine roles and responsibilities. In 2023, there are plans to review the curriculum and look at options to make the program more efficient to grow the training network.

The CLP program is committed to logger education and to the promotion and recognition of those who meet and exceed the CLP standard. The past 32 years has had a positive effect. We can be assured maintaining consistency with safety, quality, and efficiency is changing our logging legacy for the better!

There is still work to do, although we can say our CLP system is effective at producing positive outcomes. It recognizes individual logger certification at the stump, which promotes improved forest practices statewide. Loggers, landowners, and mills have all assumed benefits for these efforts.



# Learning the Science of Log Scaling



**Keith Kanoti** is the Forest Manager for the University of Maine.



*Stephen Tudor, Columbia Forest Products leads discussion on scaling veneer logs.*

Two days of wood measurement training were held in August by the University of Maine School of Forest Resources and the University Forest Office.

The scaling workshop was co-sponsored by Maine SFI, the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF), the Maine Forest Service and the Bureau of Weights and Measures.

This class, in its fourth year of operations, prepares students to take the tests to be licensed wood scalers in the state of Maine. Taking this class also shortens the apprenticeship time required for becoming a licensed scaler from two years down to six months.

Experts from UMaine, DACF, Lumbra Hardwoods and Columbia Forest Products trained 25 attendees in wood measurement law, log scaling, pine and hardwood log and veneer grading at the university's forest sawmill in Old Town, and at Lumbra Hardwoods in Milo. Attendees also received a tour of Lumbra's hardwood mill in operation to witness how merchandising to the highest value is achieved in real time during the production phase.

A priority goal of this program is to teach how to determine the gross and net volume (generally log truck loads) of logs.

The Maine SFI Implementation Committee, in partnership with the University Forest Office, will again offer this program in the spring and fall of 2023, and indefinitely as interest persists.



*Scott Pease, retired Hancock Lumber wood buyer offer insight into pine log values.*

**"The Maine SFI Implementation Committee, in partnership with the University Forest Office, will again offer this program in the spring and fall of 2023, and indefinitely as interest persists."**



# Community Partners and Collaborations are Key to Anything we Accomplish



**Pat Sirois** is the Executive Director of Maine's Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Implementation Committee

On page two of this publication, you get a sense of the breadth of this program as showcased by the list of participants and diversity of the membership. What may be even more impressive is the broad spectrum of participation in the working subcommittees focused on wildlife, water quality, public accountability, fire resilience, climate change, logger safety and research related to many of these topics. To the extent ME's SFI Committee experiences any successes is due to individual's commitment to principles of sustainability and their willingness to work together towards those goals.

Start with ME's award-winning Certified Logging Professional (CLP) program. When COVID hit in 2020 and many programs across the country ceased to offer any educational programs for loggers, ME's CLP program's Steering Committee pivoted to offer online training modules that proved to be effective and popular in the logging community. When reviewing the CLP stats for worker compensation rates since the program's inception, it's clear to see CLPs impact. Looking to 2023, this sort of innovation will continue as the CLP program contemplates additional online programming to be implemented in 2024.

As previously mentioned by our

chairman, Eugene Mahar, task groups have worked on the topics of fire resilience, forest of exceptional conservation value (FECVs) and climate smart forestry. In addition to the significant contribution the Maine Forest Service provides through its training efforts on a variety of forestry related topics, the specific efforts of Robbie Gross have helped us develop a program to assess and adapt to the risk of fires in Maine. This program will be reviewed annually so that necessary adaptations can be identified and implemented as needed.

For SFI certified mills whose commitment to certification includes looking out for globally impaired species and natural communities, there needed to be a process to identify these features on the landscape within their wood supply baskets. Spearheaded by Don Cameron, Botanist/Ecologist with Maine's Natural Area's Program (MNAP), and working closely with ME Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's Ryan Robicheau, they created a process by which landowners, foresters and loggers can determine whether any of these rare features might be affected by planned forestry operations. The process they developed has served as a model for similar programs throughout north America.

One of this year's truly exciting

discoveries comes from the bird research conducted in Maine's commercial forest over 30 years by John Hagan. What we've learned is that over 10 million acres of undeveloped commercial forestland continues to serve as quality bird habitat for a variety of species. We've also learned that despite the forest structure changing significantly over 30 years, many of the bird species present in the 1990s are still present today, and in some cases increasing in numbers. We are anxious to learn more about the outcomes of this project as the data gathered this year is processed. Research funding is a standard requirement for SFI certified companies. This research was funded in part by SFI companies through the Cooperative Forest Research Unit (CFRU) at the University of Maine.

So much of the work described in this report is critical to communicate to our youth. The young people of today will be the decision makers on environmental issues and policies in the years to come. We hope some will see career opportunities within this industry. We believe it's important for everyone, particularly our youth, to understand the

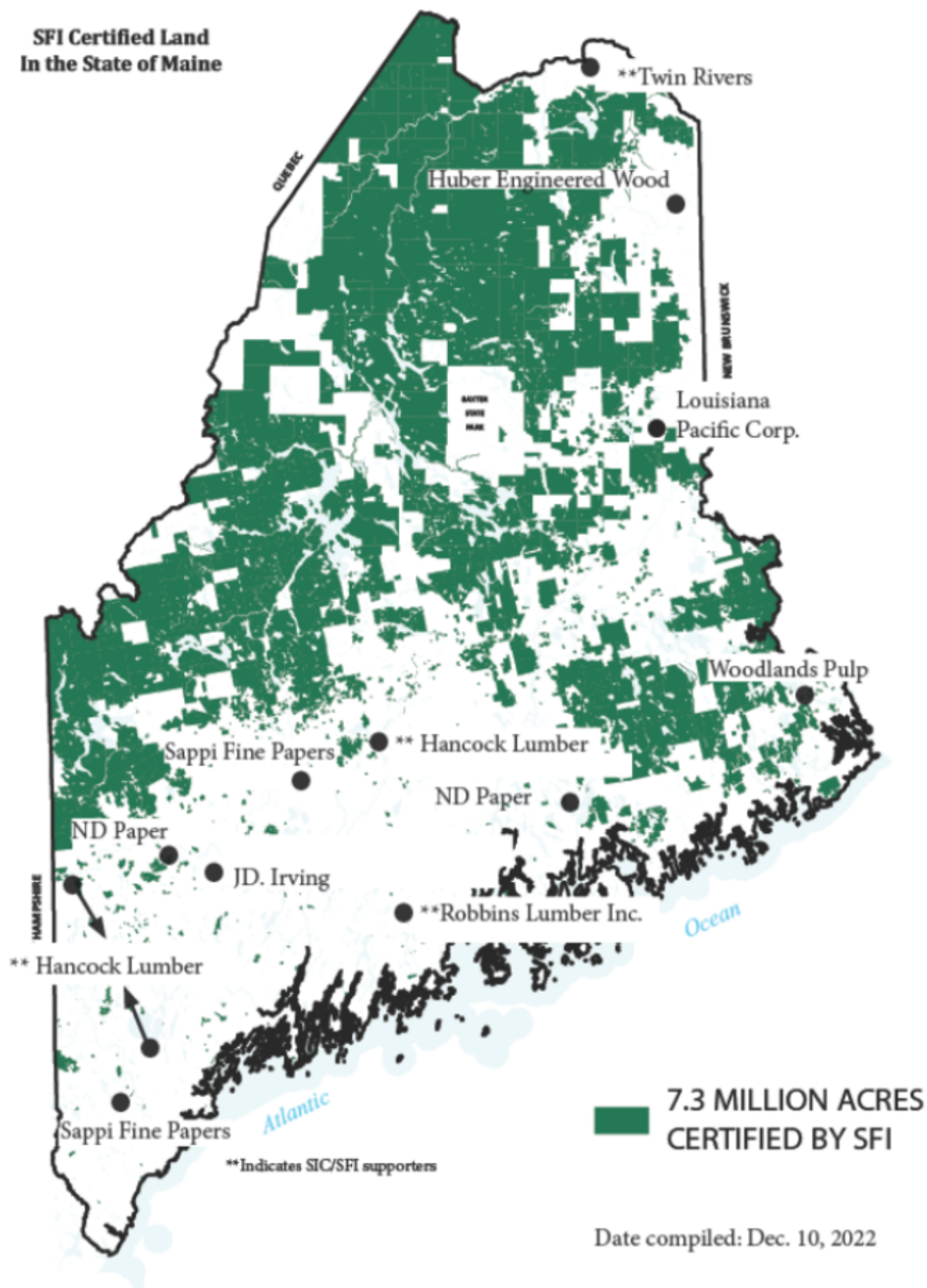
role of forests in providing ecosystem services, recreational opportunities and a wide variety of sustainable forest products that are consumed and use daily.

That's where the Maine Tree Foundation and Project Learning Tree (PLT) come in. PLT's teachers' tours have reached over 1,000 teachers in the past 25 years, introducing them to the growth, harvesting and processing of forest products in Maine. PLT has also worked with Girl Scout and Boy Scout leaders, adult educators and conservation organization staff in introducing curricula that fosters forest-literate citizens. It is imperative that we reintroduce our children to the outdoors, and in particular, to the all-important role of our forest.

There is so much being accomplished and so much to do. In the spirit of continuous improvement, we know we will undoubtedly find ourselves adapting to future challenges. ME's SFI Implementation Committee is committed to taking these challenges on, as we have since 1995. We hope you will agree that our story is a good one, for our industry and the citizens of Maine, present and future. Please join in helping to communicate this message whenever possible.



**SFI Certified Land  
In the State of Maine**





# SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE MAINE

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