MAINE SIC

PROGRESS REPORT

December 2025

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE MAINE

SFI-01125

This report was produced by Maine's SFI State Implementation Committee (SIC) and it's partners

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- Columbia Forest Products

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.

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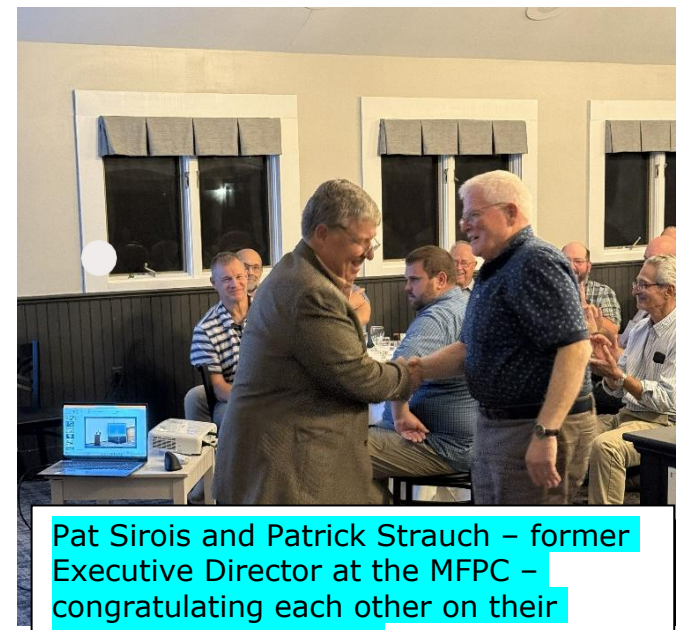
Pat Sirois retirement Party

Pete, Pat, and Gordy Mouw



Pat Sirois and Patrick Strauch – former Executive Director at the MFPC – congratulating each other on their respective retirements

Maine SFI Training by the Numbers

The Maine SFI SIC, with the help of our steering committee, member companies, and partners, invests heavily in training programs that promote safety, strengthen Maine's forest professionals, and protect Maine's natural resources. **Here's a breakdown of our training efforts in 2025.**

35

Forest practitioners with direct responsibilities for harvest operations and road management were given BMP training on water quality protection techniques.

83

Migrant workers trained in CPR and road safety in the North Maine Woods to improve workplace safety.

14

Individuals attended our annual Wood Measurement Training. Many trainees will eventually obtain a Maine Wood Scalers License.

A Stream Smart Phase I workshop was held in Waldoboro. Stream Smart Phase II workshops were held in Montville-Freedom and Bridgeton. "Flume" table demonstrations were held at the Maine Trout Camp, The Children's Water Festival, and the University of Maine. Certified Organizations in conjunction with the MFS held AOP/water crossing workshops.

Maine's SFI training initiatives rely on and are supported by many partners.

- Maine Audubon
- Maine Forest Service
- Piscataquis County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Maine Tree Foundation
- Maine's Certified Logging Professional Program
- The University of Maine

- Independent loggers and consulting foresters
- Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
- Project Share
- MRRN

Maine's SFI SIC 2025 meeting speakers and topics:

- Nicole Rogers – MFS Landowner Outreach Forester – Climate Smart Forestry Grants
- Robby Gross – MFS Chief Ranger - 2024 Wildfire Season After Action Review and Outlook for 2025
- Thomas Gilbert – MFS – Water Resources Specialist – Extreme BMPs
- Rebecca Barnard – Sappi – Forestry Certification Manager – EUDR update
- Gary Fish -MDACF - Maine State Horticulturalist – Plants, worms, and bugs – slowing the spread of invasive species
- Peter B. Johnson – Maine SFI SIC – 1 888 SFIGOAL
- Andy Whittman – MFS -Climate and Forest Carbon Specialist – Climate Smart Forestry Manual
- Ben Naumann -NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships - AOP and Instream Habitat Technical and Financial Assistance through NRCS
- Amanda Cross – USFWS - Maine Ecological Services Field Offices Supervisor - U.S. Fish and Wildlife: Maine Program and Listing Updates
- Alex Ingraham – Maine Budworm Response Coalition – 2025 Activities
- Brady Bekkala – Waldologs – E tickets and the Benefits of a Digital Supply Chain
- Lara Kenefic – USFS – Research Forester – Northern Conifer Silviculture Guide
- Adam Cates – MFS - Transition to Statewide Standards for Timber Harvesting in Shoreland Areas in the Unorganized Territories
- John Hagan – Our Climate Common – President – The LSOG Rapid Assessment Protocol for Maine

Maine SFI Training (cont.)

The Maine SFI SIC Transitions to a 501c3 Under New Leadership

Steve Pollis is the Chair of the Maine SFI Implementation Committee and is a graduate of the University of Maine and Thomas College. He is currently the Manager of Tree-Star Timberland in northern Somerset County with a range of management responsibilities across 92,000 acres of SFI certified timberlands.

During the fourth quarter of 2024, the Maine SIC, then operating as a long-standing subcommittee of the Maine Forest Products Council, underwent a strategic planning exercise that would result in the organization transitioning to a standalone non-profit.

The strategic planning sessions were conducted under Pat Sirios' leadership (past ME SIC Executive Director) and were driven by his passion for the SIC and his commitment to the future succession of the organization. The strategic overview process resulted in a respectful transition from the MFPC to a standalone 501c3. The Maine SIC and MFPC have a symbiotic relationship that enables both organizations to support one another and leverage the unique qualities and resources each possess to benefit the broader industry.

The decision for the SIC to transition to a standalone nonprofit was driven by future growth opportunities and long-term sustainability considerations that are more effectively achieved operating as its own entity.

With Pat's departure to retirement pending, the Maine SIC also hired a new Executive Director to drive the final transition to a 501c3 and to navigate the organization through new initiatives. Peter B. Johnson of Rangeley was hired to facilitate the implementation of SFI's standards through projects and programs administered through the Maine SIC.

Since January, Pete has made considerable progress establishing himself as the new Executive Director by perusing new needle-moving initiatives.

Specifically, Pete evaluated and executed the '*Partners with the Forest'* program which is a creative new way to enhance the SIC's sustainability. The program provides an opportunity for non-traditional organizations to become a supporting member of the Maine SFI-SIC by offering promotional licensing use of the Maine SIC logo on their off-products or services. The '*Partners with the Forest*' Program will result in a much broader audience exposed to the principles of sustainably managed forests, enabling businesses not directly connected to the forest products industry to show their support of SFI, and lastly will serve as a mechanism to control membership costs for certified organizations by providing an alternative revenue stream.

Engaging in initiatives like this and thinking outside the box ensues a sense of confidence and excitement about the future of the Maine SIC. I am encouraged by Pete's leadership and know that his perspectives and commitment will drive the future growth of the SIC and add value to the certified organizations and others that do business with the SIC.

With a successful 2025 in the rear-view mirror, I'm encouraged with what the future holds for our industry here in Maine! As technologies emerge, markets change, forest products develop, sciences evolve, and people grow, we can hang our hat on our principles and morals knowing that sustainably managed forests shape society and we are proud to be part of that.

Maine Forest Service Releases Forestry Best Management Practices Manual for Extreme Weather

Tom Gilbert is a Water Resource specialist with the MFS. He leads the BMP monitoring program and authors the biennial BMP monitoring report.

The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's Maine Forest Service (MFS) has released ***Best Management Practices for Forestry: Adapting to Extreme Weather in Maine***, a new addendum to the agency's core Forestry Best Management Practices (BMP) manual. The new resource provides practical guidance to help landowners, foresters, and loggers plan for, mitigate, and adapt to extreme weather events while protecting water quality.

The new addendum addresses this with common principles of climate adaptation such as:

- **Plan** for extreme weather events, whether it be extreme rain or unseasonable thaws;
- **Adapt** by adopting nontraditional or seldom used techniques to respond to extreme weather quickly and effectively;
- **Mitigate** the impacts of extreme weather events by using more of what we already do, such as brushing up trails more heavily and more often; and
- **Protect infrastructure**, specifically stream crossings and associated roadways from high flows associated with extreme storm events.

As extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and more severe, forestry BMPs must adapt to the changing climate to effectively protect water quality. Many of the same core principles of water quality protection from the original Maine Forest Service BMP manual, such as pre-harvest planning, controlling water flow, and minimizing and stabilizing exposed soil, are considered in this manual and addressed with enhanced practices and techniques to protect Maine's water resources from sedimentation during extreme weather events.

"Our Forests are the best water filter system we have," ***said Maine Forest Service Director Patty Cormier****. "As extreme weather events become more frequent, the Maine Forest Service's new BMP addendum is essential, guiding us to adapt and work with the natural systems by adopting techniques to respond to extreme weather quickly and effectively to protect water resources."*

Best Management Practices for Forestry: Adapting to Extreme Weather in Maine is available on the Maine Forest Service website at: https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/policy_management/water_resources/bmps.html

For more information, please contact Maine Forest Service Water Resources Specialist, Tom Gilbert at 441-5282 or thomas.gilbert@maine.gov

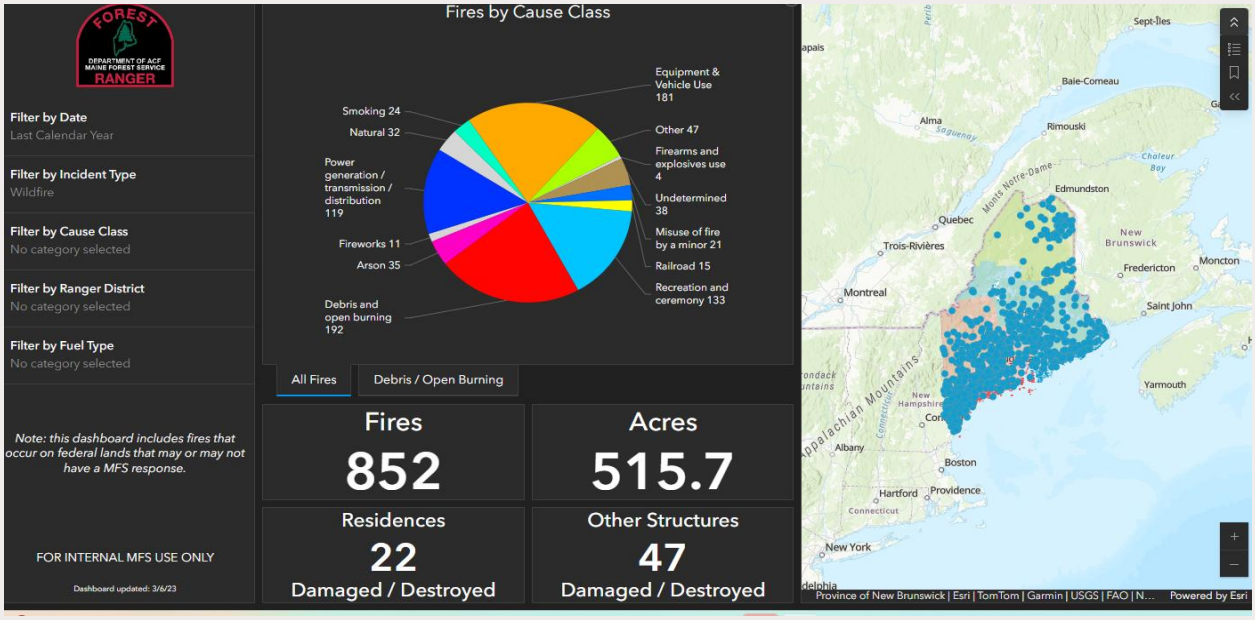
Photo description: An early thaw leaves standing water across a timber harvest landing, where stacked logs wait for conditions to refreeze or dry. For loggers, foresters, and landowners, warm and wet winter weather can delay access for weeks or months, creating costly challenges for moving wood and maintaining safe operations that protect water quality from sedimentation.

Photo courtesy Maine Forest Service, Forest Policy and Management.
Photo credit: Steven Bick of Northeast Forests, LLC

Wildfire Resiliency

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

The 2025 wildfire season was a busy one, culminating in 852 wildfires occurring, burning a total of 516 acres. In particular, mid to late summer resulted in droughty conditions and higher temperatures, keeping Forest Rangers and Maine's fire service busy. 97 percent of wildfire starts had a human element involved, although for the second year in a row, the State of Maine recorded the fewest acres per wildfire start in the country. I want to focus on that statistic as it points to effective preparedness with wildfire programming across Maine's landscape.



Early season fire planning with landowners and managers has been an effective tool. Regional based landowner meetings, along with district-based preplanning efforts, have improved continuity of operations and readiness across the State of Maine. With fuel conditions being variable, the ability to highlight wildfire-prone areas and high-value stands is critical to quick strategic responses. Additionally, foresters and land managers were invited to daily and weekly fire preparedness calls during our most critical periods last year.

The training of foresters, land managers, and contractors all impacts safe and effective responses. The Maine Forest Service has worked with various landowners, Certified Logging Professionals (CLP), and Professional Logging Contractors (PLC) to deliver wildfire-specific training this past year, focusing on containment line location, equipment response, safety, initial attack priorities, PPE requirements, and establishing staging areas.

Maine's open burn permit system is a reliable one and was used to prohibit burning activities last season. Through the outreach of land ownership and the partnership with the Maine Forest Service, a comprehensive

approach was utilized based on wildfire danger and risk to discontinue burn permits in the unorganized territories. As wildfire danger decreased, this stance was relaxed, but most importantly, the public information flow and education that resulted allowed for meaningful understanding and implementation of actions that kept wildfire starts to a minimum.

Lastly, implementation of and planning for regional Community Wildfire Protection Plans continues to bring positive energy to reducing wildfire risk. There is active engagement with plans in the Fish River Chain of Lakes area and in the Rangeley Lakes area. Two other areas, one in Northern Penobscot County and one in Southeast Washington County, are soon to be active. The Maine Forest Service will continue to work with landowners and industry personnel to develop meaningful goals and actionable recommendations to improve upon wildfire resiliency.

There has been a great deal of work completed to improve our resiliency, with much more to do. I am proud of our collaborative efforts and look forward to continuing to make a difference in Maine. With drought conditions still relevant in discussions for 2026, much of the work that is being done will be necessary to continue our success moving forward.

Regards,

Robby Gross, Chief Forest Ranger

Maine TREE Advances Forest-based Education, Research & Workforce Development Initiatives

Logan Johnson is the Executive Director at the Maine Tree Foundation

Timber Research & Environmental Education Foundation (Maine TREE) promotes forest-based education and workforce development to improve the health of Maine's forest communities. We engage students through the Forest Ecology Research Network, a community science program where they collect data from local forests, as well as through green job fairs. We offer educators custom professional development workshops and host our annual Forests of Maine Teachers' Tour. Additionally, we collaborate with various organizations to provide education and outreach events for family forest landowners and professional development opportunities for natural resource professionals.

2025 was Maine TREE's most successful programming year to date. Our team hosted, spoke at, or attended 90 events this year. We provided forest-based educational experiences to 1,022 students and reached roughly 200 educators through more than a dozen professional development trainings. We also collaborated to hold 18 continuing forestry education events, engaging over 310 loggers and foresters. Additionally, 11 students and recent graduates gained early-career opportunities through internship and fellowship programs. Furthermore, by supporting and coordinating 3 Affiliate Programs, we connected with more than 2,000 landowners and 103 natural resource professionals.

From Kittery to Fort Kent, and Calais to Rangeley, last year our forest-based education program reached educators from every corner of Maine. In the first half of the year, we collaborated with Westbrook and Calais school districts, providing customized forest-based education workshops throughout the 2024-2025 school year. Over the summer, the Forests of Maine Teachers' Tours provided an immersive professional development experience in the Rangeley Lakes and Downeast Lakes Regions. While in the Rangeley region, we made an impromptu stop at SFI Maine SIC Executive Director Peter B. Johnson's Tree Farm, during which he shared his passion for his woodlot and sustainable forestry in Maine.

We provided a customized Teachers Tours experience specifically for Career and Technical Educators as part of our ongoing initiative to develop the Forest Technician Curriculum. Additionally, we strengthened community relationships by hosting forest-based education workshops that united natural resource professionals and educators. These workshops aimed to foster a deeper understanding of forests and how to engage students in multidisciplinary learning within forested landscapes.

Throughout the year, our staff engaged with students via the Forest Ecology Research Network (FERN) and Green Jobs Fairs. We established new research plots and involved students in the FERN program, with students from Greenville Middle School shining in a WABI video segment about the initiative. The 3rd Annual Piscataquis County Green Jobs Fair, held in October, provided students with opportunities to learn about the various outdoor green-economy jobs available in Maine. They also had the chance to participate in hands-on activities that professionals engage in daily. Over 27 businesses and organizations from Maine volunteered their time to guide 150 students through a series of demonstrations and activities that showcased their roles in the Natural Resources sector.

In the Fall, our 3rd Annual Forest Awards Night brought together an inspiring mix of students, researchers, natural resource professionals, advocates, and educators to celebrate the achievements of the awardees and the collective efforts of those who play a role in stewarding Maine’s forests for the future.

2025 wasn’t entirely about action; our staff also found time to reflect on our organization's long history, what we’ve accomplished in nearly four decades of service to Maine’s forests and the community that depends on them, and to envision the continued role we will play. We were able to beautifully capture our commitment to education, community, and the forest in our new impact statement:

“Building community to promote the long-term stewardship of Maine's forests.”

2025, CLP Program Update

Brain Barrett is CLP's Associate Program Director

Since 1991, the Certified Logging Professional (CLP) program has been providing training and educational opportunities to loggers in Maine. Our mission is to offer comprehensive training programs that enhance logging professionals' skills and knowledge. We are dedicated to ensuring the highest standards of safety, sustainability, and efficiency in the logging industry.

The CLP program reached a major operational milestone in 2025 by welcoming a full-time Program Manager. To match this internal growth, we officially unveiled a fresh look for the program. Our new website and updated branding at www.CLPloggers.org provide a modern, user-friendly hub for members to access resources, track certifications, and stay informed on industry standards.

Our certification metrics continue to demonstrate the industry's dedication to high standards. This year, we saw a balanced focus on both bringing in new talent and maintaining the excellence of our veteran loggers, with 54 loggers becoming CLPs and 172 recertified.

CLP certification offers the most comprehensive training available for logging professionals in Maine. The program continues to build new relationships with organizations such as Safetyworks, Logability, LifeFlight of Maine, and various Maine electric companies, ensuring we deliver training that meets the needs of modern loggers.

Beyond the woods, we've been active in Maine's Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, conducting hands-on chainsaw safety awareness demonstrations. The program is showing young Mainers that logging is not just a job but a rewarding, viable outdoor career path. These efforts are vital to ensuring the long-term sustainability of our workforce.

In December, the CLP community gathered for its 35th Annual Banquet, during which we welcomed new CLPs who completed the program and joined our community in 2025, and recognized the outstanding achievements of the 2025 Certified Logging Professionals of the Year.

Maine Forest Products Council 2025 report

Krysta West is the Executive Director at the Maine Forest Products Council

This is the first report to the Maine SFI SIC since its official separation from the Maine Forest Products Council. Although we are now two distinct organizations, we remain working in close collaboration with the SIC and we share many mutual members. Our two organizations are deeply linked in both mission and outcomes, and we are happy to provide some information and perspectives on the work that we do to further the goals of healthy working forests in Maine.

2025 saw the return of outbreak levels of the Spruce Budworm in Maine with 307,051 acres impacted with elevated L2 counts. While we have faced devastating outbreaks in the past, this time around we have had the benefit of learning from our neighbors to the north that have been battling this outbreak for decades. New Brunswick has spent the last decade developing the new Early Intervention Strategy program, which has effectively changed the outbreak dynamic across their landscape, allowing them to maintain a healthy forest. Last year a significant collaborative effort involving MFPC, the Spruce Budworm Taskforce, Maine Forest Service, Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, UMaine, CFRU, and a coalition of landowners called the Maine Budworm Response Coalition and others successfully implemented EIS in Maine, treating 240,000 acres. This effort was made possible due to natural disaster relief funding secured by Senator Susan Collins at the federal level with matching State and private funds.

We will soon enter into year two of the EIS program, which will be significantly smaller at roughly 70,000 acres thanks to last year's efforts and success. We are optimistic that with continued partnership, Maine's forests will remain healthy in the face of the return of the Spruce Budworm.

This year, we published our regular Economic Impact Report to assess the health of our industry. From 2019 to 2024 Maine's forest economy has been tumultuous. With a global pandemic, unpredictable weather, the unexpected loss of a century's old papermill in Jay, and global markets suffering from artificially high inflation and interest rates, every sector has been depressed, and harvests are down accordingly. More recently, back-and-forth discussions on duties and tariffs levied against some of our traditionally strongest trading partners have introduced even more unpredictability, making it exceedingly difficult to predict market trends. There are also

policies well beyond our border, such as the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), that will greatly impact global markets for forest products.

The uses and need for wood-based products are expanding, and fortunately, Maine has plenty of trees and we are well positioned to serve as the wood basket for the northeastern United States. While our numbers have slid since 2019, we remain an **$8.3 billion economic powerhouse** in Maine, and our contributions will continue to be vital to the very fabric of our state.

As our report highlights, our industry has seen at least $1.5 billion of direct investment over the last few years to modernize and make operations more efficient. These investments are critical to the future of our industry, and from the stump to the mill, they must continue. We have been working diligently to open new markets for wood in Maine. In the Legislature, we have lobbied for tax incentives for logging equipment and biofuel facilities for a bond to help bring cross laminated timber manufacturing to Maine. We also worked to make significant and important changes to the Extended Producer Responsibility Program for manufacturers and the paper industry.

At Sappi, the completion of the $500 million PM2 rebuild sent a strong signal that the largest wood consuming facility in the Northeast is here to stay. Unfortunately, the certainty provided by this substantial investment has since been clouded with the announcement that four dams on the lower Kennebec River owned by Brookfield are to be sold to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) as part of a river restoration plan. To their credit, TNC has consistently indicated its plan to work collaboratively over the coming years with Sappi and industry stakeholders to implement a plan that achieves their goals without harming Sappi's operations. The Council appreciates TNC's direct engagement since the announcement and will work diligently to hold them to the standard that this challenge requires.

While nothing will change overnight and this project will take upwards of a decade to carry out, our immediate concern is with the impact that the unknown will have on investment decisions, not just at Sappi, but throughout the entire supply chain. Uncertainty at the scale this project creates could have profound impacts on investments at all levels. The Council will remain highly engaged as this project develops to support Sappi and make sure that our collective voices are heard.

Even with all these factors at play – many of which are out of our control – we remain optimistic with the direction our industry is headed for a number of reasons. All signs point to this being a time of transition. Maine's wood manufacturers agree and are riding out this transition in anticipation of recovering and increasing demand, especially for wood from sustainably managed forests.

As with all Maine heritage industries, we represent the opportunities and livelihoods of rural Maine people. Through encouraging capital investments, continuing to practice sustainable forest management, and recognizing our role in the greater northeast regional economy, Maine's forest economy will recover and continue to provide the resources that society needs long into the future.

2025, a year of transition and change

Peter B. Johnson is the Executive Director at the Maine Sustainable Forestry Initiative Inc.

2025 was certainly a year of transition and change. After 35 years of working in various capacities for the Maine Forest Products Council (MFPC) and the Maine Sustainable Forestry Initiative (Maine SFI-SIC), Pat Sirios retired. Pat's many career achievements include receiving the 2024 Albert B. Nutting award from the MFPC. This prestigious award recognizes his service to Maine's forest products industry through his leadership role with the Maine SFI-SIC, his skills as a teacher of environmental sustainability, and his integrity and professionalism among his peers. Because of Pat's leadership, Maine SFI SIC received the SFI Implementation Committee Achievement Award on three separate occasions. This award recognizes our state chapter for outstanding work in fostering community engagement by strengthening the connections between sustainable forests, thriving communities, and responsible purchasing.

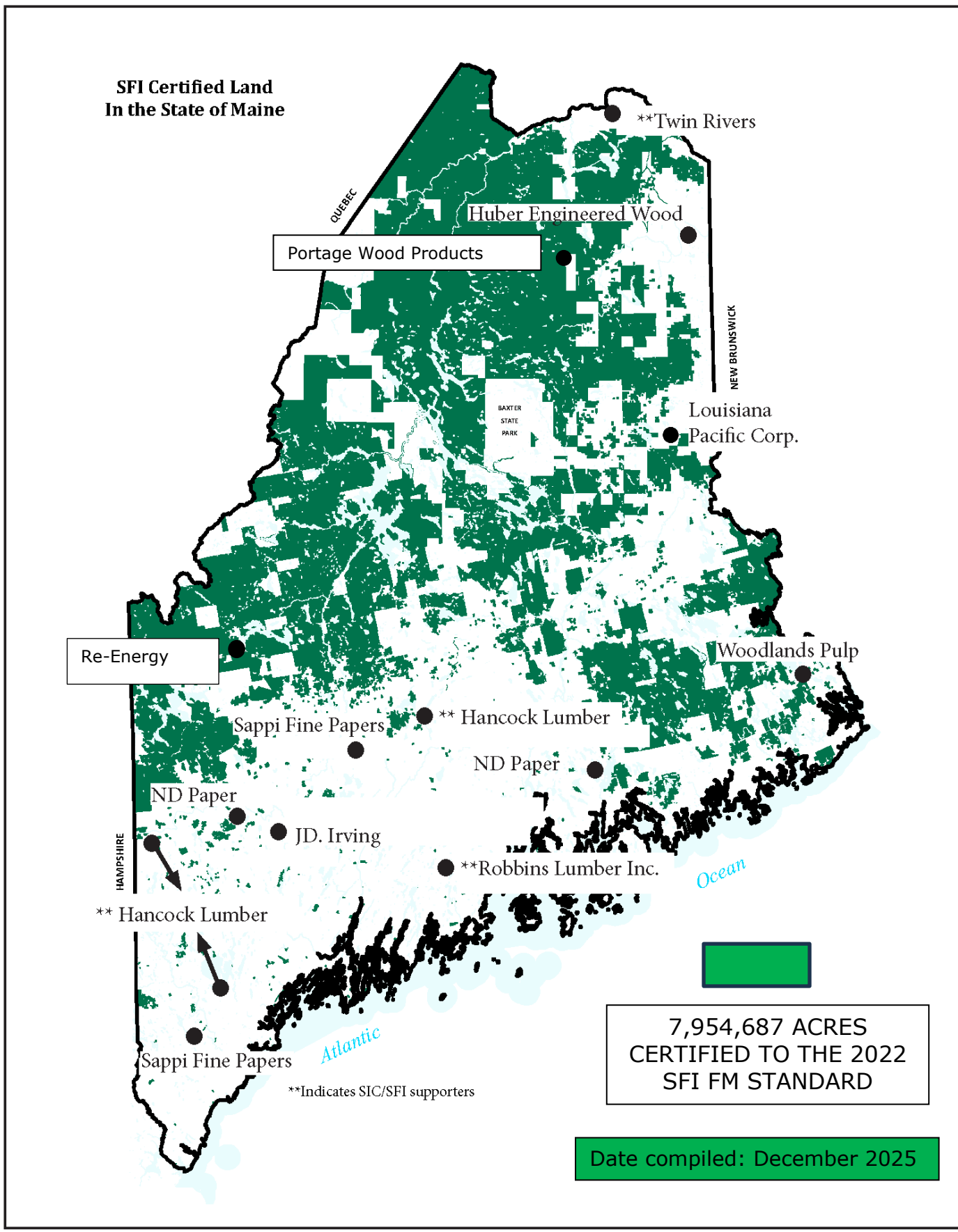
2025 was the first year where the Maine SFI SIC operated as an independent 501c3 organization. We will still maintain a close relationship with the MFPC, now led by their new Executive Director - Krysta West, following the retirement of Patrick Strauch. Our new 501c3 status opens the door for new possibilities including assisting Certified Organizations in applying for funding for Aquatic Organism passages (AOPs) and in stream wood additions, grant funding for training and outreach efforts, and continued support of the MFPC on certification, forestry, and other environmentally related topics.

The Maine SFI SIC has been in existence since 1995. SFI's third-party certification began in 1998, and Maine still leads the nation with over 7.9 million acres certified. Over the years the SIC focused on establishing training programs, building mechanisms for transparency into forest practices for the public, and raising awareness of SFI for consumers at all levels. The training programs for forest practitioners have included: Logging safety, best management practices to protect water quality, grader operator training, climate change adaptation, fire resiliency and awareness, biodiversity, harvest planning, mapping and GPS technology. The result has been establishing a culture of continuous improvement throughout the industry. As a result of training

and improved practices, calls to our 1-888-SFIGOAL (confidential toll-free hotline) are now almost non-existent. Many of these calls were opportunities to educate the public on forest practices, but on occasion would provide an opportunity to mitigate pending environmental risks. The system worked and is still in place.

Over the years much has changed in our industry including technologies, harvesting equipment, markets, land ownership and people that do the work on the ground, to mention a few. Certification is now a mature system. The Maine SFI SIC's mission and programs must continue to align with the realities of modern-day forestry and be relevant. We will continue to focus on research to continually improve our practices, consider new training on immerging/relevant topics for forestry practitioners, and continue our history of transparency to the public on forest management practices throughout the state.

The Maine SFI SIC and our extensive community of partners should feel optimistic about our ability to address sustainable forestry challenges in Maine far into the future. as we have for the past 30 years.

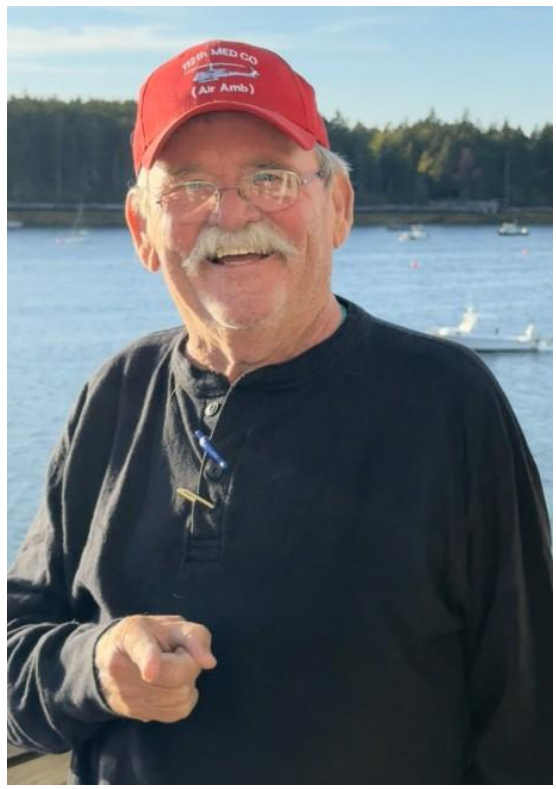

SFI Certified Land
In the State of Maine
**Twin Rivers
QUEBEC
Huber Engineered Wood
Portage Wood Products
NEW BRUNSWICK
BAXTER
STATE
PARK
Louisiana
Pacific Corp.
Re-Energy
Woodlands Pulp
Sappi Fine Papers
** Hancock Lumber
ND Paper
ND Paper
JD. Irving
HAMPSHIRE
**Robbins Lumber Inc.
Ocean
** Hancock Lumber
Sappi Fine Papers
Atlantic
**Indicates SIC/SFI supporters
7,954,687 ACRES
CERTIFIED TO THE 2022
SFI FM STANDARD
Date compiled: December 2025

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE MAINE

SFI-01125

This report was produced by Maine's SFI State Implementation Committee – The Maine Sustainable Forestry Initiative Inc.

DECEMBER 2025



In Memory of John Henry Cashwell III

10/25/1947 – 11/24/2025