



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Canada's small forests take the lead in responsible forestry

Toronto, Ontario (February 22 2006) - Three community-based forests across Canada have received Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification from the SmartWood program of the Rainforest Alliance. With this certification, Canada's small forest owners demonstrate their commitment to, and leadership in responsible forestry.

The FSC is a global, non-profit organization that promotes environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests through the process of forest certification. Forest certification is a voluntary process whereby forest management areas are independently evaluated against rigorous standards to determine whether responsible harvesting is practiced. Under the FSC system, all producers and manufacturers along the supply chain must also undergo a chain-of-custody certification to ensure that the final forest product originated from an FSC certified forest. To ensure the integrity of the process independent bodies, such as SmartWood, conduct certification audits. Canada has almost a quarter of the world's certified forests (16.6 million ha; 41 million acres). Although the majority of these are large industrial operations, small operators are rising to the challenge.

Ecotrust Canada is the proud owner of the first FSC forest certification in British Columbia under that province's recently approved "small forest" standard. This group certification covers two operations and 757 hectares of evergreen forest on coastal British Columbia.

According to Doug Hopwood of Ecotrust Canada, "Many small-scale forest managers on Vancouver Island have been practicing sustainable forestry, but haven't been able to financially justify the extra step of getting FSC certified. Through an FSC Group Certificate, the Vancouver Island Ecoforestry Group has been able to cut the costs and boost the economic benefits of FSC certification. We are now working to market this certified wood to local manufacturers and the green building industry."

On the other coast, the Nova Scotia Landowners and Forest Fibre Producers Association has put in place a group forest management certification that meets the rigorous FSC Maritime standard. According to Kingsley Brown, "We believe that our work on the ground, as part of the FSC system, is providing a guiding light for sustainable forestry and communities in our region. Our Association initiated silvicultural practices that ensure the productivity of our forests for future generations and have paved the way for other small landowners to achieve the world's highest forest certification standard."

The third significant certification is Silv-Econ Ltd. in central Canada, just north of Toronto. Silv-Econ Ltd. is the first forestry-consultant firm in Canada to receive an FSC Resource Manager Certification. Responsible for initially putting 3 landowners and 220 hectares under FSC forest management, Silv-Econ has also worked closely with the York Regional Forest, the only FSC-certified municipal forest in Canada.

"Our goal at Silv-Econ Ltd. is to demonstrate leadership in sustainable forest management", said David Puttock of Silv-Econ. "Our Resource Manager Certification provides assurances to woodlot owners that their forests are being managed to the highest standards of sustainable forestry. Certification also provides important standards for conserving and protecting the ecology of sensitive woodlands, such as those found on the Oak Ridges Moraine, while managing them for multiple benefits".

"Silv-Econ Ltd. has provided guidance and support to many small forest operators. This certification shows their continuing commitment to our forests and our communities," said Alexandre Boursier, Canadian coordinator for certification, SmartWood Program.

Martin von Mirbach, Vice President of FSC Canada said, “These small scale certifications are the new wave – they show that certification is both accessible to, and beneficial for, forests of all sizes.”

These certification announcements come as domestic market demand for FSC wood and paper products is experiencing rapid growth, within Canada and globally. The exploding demand for FSC-certified wood products is fuelled by LEED™ green building projects and strong commitments by the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, the City of Vancouver, Municipality of Waterloo, Public Works and Government Services Canada and others. These commitments mark an opportunity for small forest operators to respond to the markets demand for demonstrably sustainable forest products.

- 30 -

Contact:

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Canada
Maia Becker, Manager of Communications & Client Services
T: 416-778-5568 x25, mbecker@fscscanada.org

Rainforest Alliance
Jennifer Vogel, Communications Coordinator
T: 646-452-1972, jvogel@ra.org

SmartWood Program (Rainforest Alliance)
Alexandre Boursier, Forest management certification
T: 514-768-0257, aboursier@smartwood.org

Backgrounders

The **Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)** is an international non-profit organization founded in 1993 to promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests. It supports the development of national and regional standards to evaluate whether a forest is being well-managed. FSC's membership consists of a diverse group of representatives from environmental and social organizations, forest and derivative industries, Indigenous People's organizations, community forestry groups and certification bodies from around the world. For more information on FSC International visit www.fsc.org, or for FSC Canada visit www.fscscanada.org.

- 16.6 million ha of Canada's forests are FSC-certified.
- Globally 69 million ha of temperate, tropical and boreal forest are FSC-certified.
- 10% of Canada's managed forests are FSC-certified.
- Since April 2005, FSC-certified forest area in Canada has tripled.

The mission of the **Rainforest Alliance** is to protect ecosystems and the people and wildlife that depend on them by transforming land-use practices, business practices and consumer behavior. Companies, cooperatives and landowners that participate in our programs meet rigorous standards that conserve biodiversity and provide sustainable livelihoods. In more than 50 countries around the world, we are helping businesses, governments and communities change their land-use practices and set standards for the long-term use of resources and the conservation of the planet's great wealth of biodiversity. The Rainforest Alliance's SmartWood program was founded in 1989 to certify responsible forestry practices and to date has certified more than 69 million acres worldwide. SmartWood is the world's leading Forest Stewardship Council forest certifier. To learn more, visit www.rainforest-alliance.org.