



**SFI Implementation Committee Meeting – US South Region
October 29, 2024
University of Georgia**

Overview

SFI hosted a Southern SIC Regional meeting on October 29, 2024, at the University of Georgia, Warnell School of Forestry. The purpose of this meeting was to provide SICs with an update on current projects and an opportunity for SIC members to collaborate with SICs and share items of regional importance. This meeting was attended by 27 people from across 10 US Southern SICs. See Appendix A for the meeting attendees.

Welcome and Introductions

David James, Georgia SIC Coordinator, and Gordy Mouw, SFI Director of Network Relations, welcomed the group and led introductions.

Coordination of SIC Best Practices: Climate Smart Forestry

Greg Cooper, SFI Director of Conservation Implementation, highlighted climate-related data from the recent annual survey of SFI certified organizations and presented a report SFI has developed in collaboration with Michigan State University, which builds on the regional climate workshops held with SICs in 2022 and 2023. The report features a decision support tool, which identifies climate risks across regions and forest cover types and presents adaptation and mitigation practices backed by scientific literature. The report will be available soon to SFI certified organizations. Participants felt the report would be valuable to support regional analysis and practices. It was suggested that future training and outreach on climate smart forestry, including regionally focused, would be helpful.

Actions and Next Steps:

- SFI staff will share aggregate data from the SFI annual survey.
- SFI staff will share the CSF report when final and explore further training and outreach.

Coordination of SIC Best Practices: Biodiversity

David James reviewed the Georgia SIC's process for coordinating on the SFI standard requirements related to biodiversity, which was supported in part by an SFI Community Grant and included coordination with the Georgia DNR. The steps included defining Georgia's forests with exceptional conservation values (FECVs), filtering DNR data on G1 and G2 species, and developing a common threats matrix by forest type and a recommendations matrix. The SIC produced fact sheets co-branded with the Georgia DNR, including a section on "Importance to Forestry Operations". The SIC is planning online story boards with geolocation enabled identification and links to additional information.

Alabama SIC representatives shared their approach, which included producing fact sheets as well as building the key information into their logger training workshops. Other SICs have addressed the new standard requirements in their logger training and have worked with their state Natural

Heritage agencies. Participants discussed the use of fact sheets by loggers crossing state boundaries.

Logger Training

Gordy Mouw showed portions of a new video SFI is developing, in coordination with Michigan State University, for use with logger training. Specifically, the video is designed to address the first indicator (awareness of SFI's work) in the list of topics that the SFI standards require to be covered in logger training. It can be used by SICs when presenting in logger training workshops. Participants suggested incorporating more southern regional content (photos and b-roll). The video will be available online once it is complete. Participants discussed other logger training needs, including hands-on activities and content on climate smart forestry.

Actions and Next Steps:

- SFI staff will refine the video with regional content and distribute to SICs

Tribal Engagement

Tim Beyer, US Tribal Lands Consultant to SFI, highlighted several opportunities for engagement with tribes and offered himself as a resource to SICs. He pointed to field guides produced by the Central Canada SIC that served as a training resource for forest practitioners, and participants felt field bulletins tailored to the US South would be a good resource. Participants spoke about current training on cultural resources. SFI will also explore producing a "playbook" for SIC coordination (similar to what was produced on the standard requirements for climate smart forestry, fire resilience and awareness, and biodiversity in fiber sourcing), with regional considerations.

Open Regional Discussion

SFI provided an update on the EU Deforestation Regulation and highlighted plans for the PLT Conference in March 2025 at Clemson University (which SIC members are encouraged to attend). SFI invited input on the SIC regional session at the May 2025 in Minneapolis; suggested topics include EUDR, conversion and expectations in the standard, and a standards update by SFI staff.

The Mississippi SIC highlighted a video they are producing to support landowner outreach about SFI. They expressed interest in collaborating with other SICs to share costs; SICs requested additional information, which MS SIC will provide. SFI offered to provide SFI pictures and video clips for the landowner outreach video, if helpful.

Appendix A – Participant List

First Name	Last Name	Company
John	Auel	Mississippi SIC
Dennis	Austin	Georgia Pacific
Nadine	Block	SFI
Leslie	Boby	Southern Region Extension Forestry
Aprille	Cook	The Westervelt Company
Greg	Cooper	SFI
Puneet	Dwivedi	Clemson University
Russell	Hatcher	Boise Cascade
David	James	GA-SIC
John	Lange	TTG Forestry Services, LLC
Matt	Matwijec	Boise Cascade
Gordy	Mouw	SFI
Brad	Murfee	Green Diamond
Bretta	Palmer	Drax
Aubrey	Pawlikowski	UGA Warnell School of Forestry & Natural Resources
Veronica	Pettit	American Kraft Paper Industries, LLC
Jamie	Pitts	Packaging Corporation of America
Phillip	Rapillard	DS Smith
Joe	Roberson	Smurfit Westrock
Guy	Sabin	Forestry Association of SC
Andie	Stanovich	Canfor Southern Pine
Dominic	Stelzer	Independent Stave Company
Brady	Strader	Independent Stave Company
Xandra	Sullivan-Bush	Drax
Scott	Thackston	GA Forestry Commission
James	Thompson	Charles Ingram Lumber Company
Mark	Waterman	Green Diamond Resource Company