

SFI URBAN AND COMMUNITY FOREST

SUSTAINABILITY STANDARD



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INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

SFI URBAN AND COMMUNITY FOREST SUSTAINABILITY STANDARD

Trees where we live, work, learn, and play have many benefits. They help us combat *climate change* by capturing greenhouse gases and mitigate the heating of cities while improving public health and wellbeing, providing recreation space, and so much more. Collectively, these trees and their associated environments make up our *urban and community forests*. *Urban and community forestry* is essential to maximizing the benefits provided by forests and trees, while minimizing the risks they can pose in our communities.

Considering the value of the benefits and how many people around the world live in cities and towns, maintaining the vitality of these resources is essential. SFI and its partners see a great opportunity to provide leadership in *urban and community forestry* and raise the profile of *urban and community forests* and trees as *green infrastructure* and *nature-based solutions* to human health, disparity, and environmental sustainability. *Urban and community forests* face significant threats and challenges, such as from *climate change*; *invasive* and *native* insects, animals, plants, and diseases; and water shortages. To counter these threats, raise awareness, and assist communities in managing these resources, *SFI* has worked with the *urban and community forestry* sector to create a standard for sustainable *urban and community forests*.

Standards and their associated certifications are effective at increasing engagement and improving performance. They are sector-developed guidelines for the appropriate planning, management, and care of a resource and their associated benefits and risks. Standards do not merely provide a roadmap to sustainable management; they also allow organizations to prove their efforts through third-party certification.

SCOPE

The SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard promotes sustainable *urban and community forests* based on 16 *objectives*. This standard is appropriate for *organizations* that own, manage, or are responsible for *urban and/or community forests*. These *organizations* can come from all facets of the *urban and community forest* sector, including, but not limited to: governmental *organizations* (i.e., municipalities, counties, states, provinces), non-governmental *organizations*, *Indigenous Peoples*, community groups, healthcare *organizations*, educational *organizations*, and corporate *organizations*.

REFERENCES

This standard incorporates, by dated or undated reference, provisions from other publications. These normative and informative references are cited at the appropriate places in the text and the publications are listed hereafter. For dated and undated references, the latest edition of the publication applies.

Normative References

- i. ISO/IEC 17021:2015 — Conformity Assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
- ii. Section 8 — SFI Policies
- iii. Section 10 — SFI 2022 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation
- iv. Section 11 — Communications and Public Reporting
- v. Interpretations for the Requirements of the SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard

Informative References

- i. Guidance for the SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard
- ii. Section 6 — Rules for Use of SFI On-Product Labels & Off-Product Marks
- iii. Section 9 — SFI Standards Development and Interpretations Process
- iv. Section 12 — Public Inquiries and Official Complaints
- v. PEFC ST 1003:2018 Sustainable Forest Management Requirements, November 28, 2018

This standard is based on 5 guiding **PRINCIPLES**:

- *Urban and community forests* and trees are vital for community well-being, health, *resiliency*, and sustainability.
- *Urban and community forests* and trees and their associated benefits should be accessible and available to everyone.
- *Urban and community forests* and trees depend upon understanding, awareness, appreciation, stewardship, and engagement by communities and people in order to thrive.
- *Urban and community forests* and trees require proper planning, care, and management to optimize benefits and minimize risks.
- *Urban and community forests* and trees are *nature-based solutions* to pressing issues and essential *green infrastructure*.

The SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard strives to address the environmental, social, and governance issues that will help ensure the sustainability of our *urban forests*. We can meet these *principles* by building our capacity, growing our network of support, and continually striving to improve our forests and *programs* through the following *objectives*:

- Objective 1: Community, People, and Indigenous Participation
- Objective 2: Human Health and Well-being
- Objective 3: Conservation and Protection of Biodiversity
- Objective 4: Stewardship of Natural Resources including Air, Water, and Soil
- Objective 5: Forest and Tree Health and Vitality
- Objective 6: Special Sites, including Natural Areas
- Objective 7: Climate-Smart Management
- Objective 8: Urban and Community Forest Planning
- Objective 9: Management and Care of Urban and Community Forests and Trees
- Objective 10: Disaster Readiness, Response, and Recovery
- Objective 11: Capacity-Building
- Objective 12: Urban Wood and Community Forest Utilization
- Objective 13: Communications
- Objective 14: Science, Research, and Technology
- Objective 15: Legal and Regulatory Compliance including Indigenous Rights
- Objective 16: Reporting





OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 1:

COMMUNITY, PEOPLE, AND INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION

To strengthen the community, enhance local economies, broaden public engagement, respect diverse perspectives, facilitate *Indigenous participation*, and ensure equitable access for all to the many benefits of *urban and community forests*.

Performance Measure 1.1: *Organization* actively seeks and promotes public engagement.

- **Indicator 1.1.1:** *Organization* identifies opportunities and events for community members to support and celebrate trees.
- **Indicator 1.1.2:** *Organization* has a body of *interested parties* that actively participates in *managing* community trees.

Performance Measure 1.2: *Organization* respects diverse perspectives.

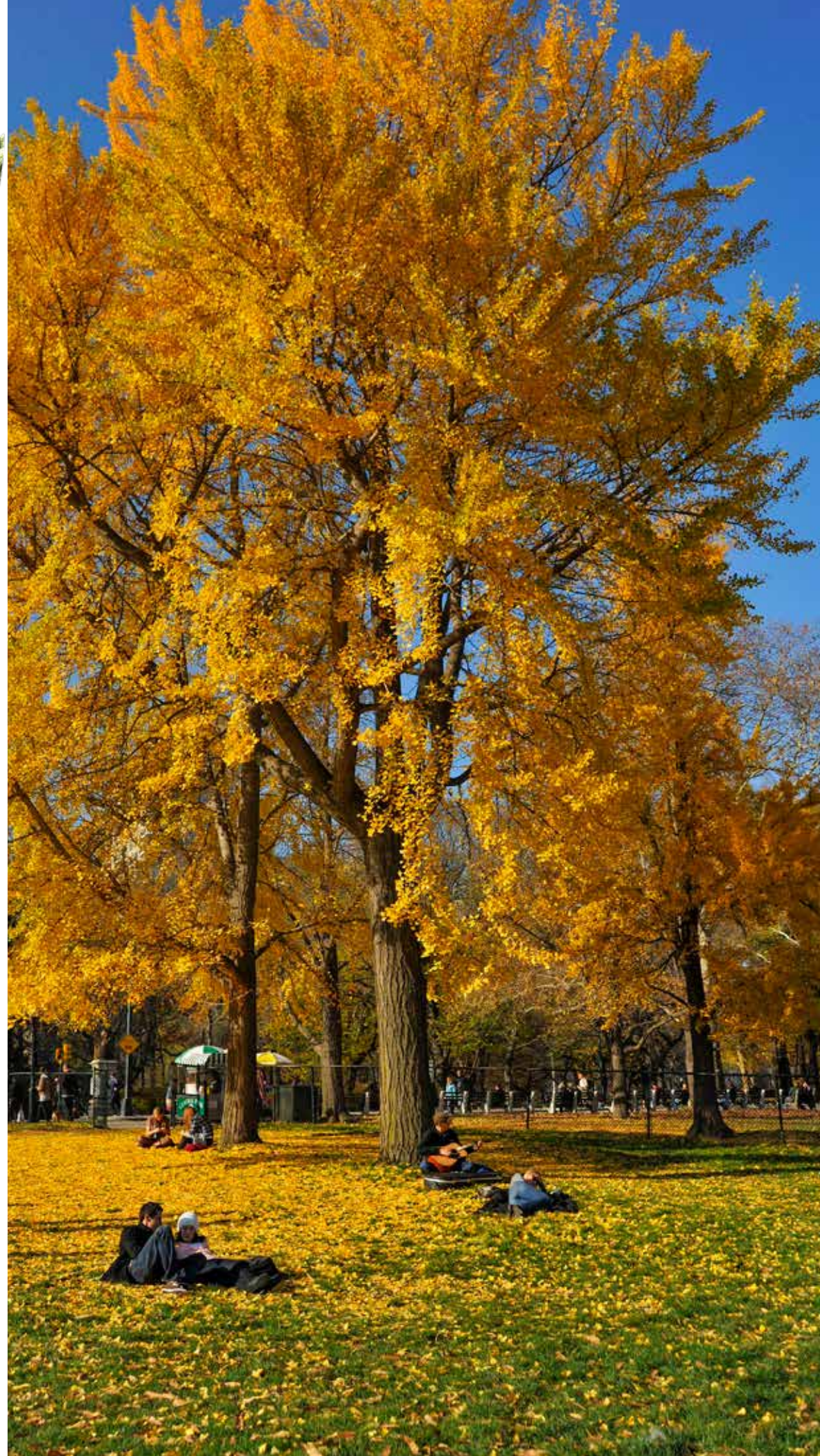
- **Indicator 1.2.1:** *Organization* seeks and engages communities with diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- **Indicator 1.2.2:** *Organization* includes diverse community values, experiences, and perspectives in planning, management, and educational opportunities.
- **Indicator 1.2.3:** *Organization* demonstrates cultural competency with regard to diverse communities.

Performance Measure 1.3: *Organization* integrates *Indigenous Peoples' knowledges* and perspectives.

- **Indicator 1.3.1:** *Organization* provides meaningful opportunities for *Indigenous Peoples* to participate in decision making, through processes that respect their representative institutions and utilize appropriate protocols.
- **Indicator 1.3.2:** *Organization* communicates with *Indigenous Peoples* in a manner that enables them to:
 - understand and respect traditional forest-related knowledge.
 - identify and protect spiritually, historically, or culturally important sites.
 - address the use of non-timber forest products of value.
 - respond to inquiries and concerns received.

Performance Measure 1.4: *Organization* ensures equitable access to *urban and community forests*, trees, and their associated benefits.

- **Indicator 1.4.1:** Demonstrates that the *program* prioritizes *tree equity* for all *interested parties*.
- **Indicator 1.4.2:** *Organization* uses a metric to quantify equitable access to *urban and community forests*, green spaces, and their associated benefits.



OBJECTIVE 2:

HUMAN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

To promote human and community health and well-being through equitable management and distribution of tree and forest related benefits, fair and safe access to and within green spaces, and nature-based recreational opportunities.

Performance Measure 2.1: *Organization* includes human health and well-being in assessment, planning, and management efforts.

- **Indicator 2.1.1:** *Organization* identifies how human health and well-being are addressed in *urban or community forest*-related resource assessments and *strategies*.
- **Indicator 2.1.2:** *Organization* demonstrates how human health and well-being aspects are integrated in forest- and tree-related management decisions.

Performance Measure 2.2: *Organization* promotes human health benefits of forests, trees, and greenspaces.

- **Indicator 2.2.1:** *Organization* uses multiple approaches to communicate the connection between human health and well-being and forests and trees to public and internal audiences.

Performance Measure 2.3: *Organization* has a system or systems to include the urban or community forest in recreational, commuting, and travel opportunities.

- **Indicator 2.3.1:** *Organization* has accessible and welcoming parks and/or greenspaces.
- **Indicator 2.3.2:** *Organization* has and implements *strategies* to ensure equitable access and utilization of parks and greenspaces.
- **Indicator 2.3.3:** *Organization* includes *urban or community forests* and trees in travel, commuting, and mobility plans and *strategies*.

OBJECTIVE 3:

PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY

To protect, conserve, and improve *biodiversity* through *urban and community forestry*, including *threatened and endangered species*, *wildlife habitat*, trees, forests, and associated ecological systems.

Performance Measure 3.1: Organization incorporates the conservation of *biological diversity* at *urban or community forest*, urban park, and/or street-tree levels.

- **Indicator 3.1.1:** Organization develops criteria and implements *practices*, as guided by regionally based *best scientific information*, to retain urban or community forest level *wildlife habitat* elements.
- **Indicator 3.1.2:** Organization works individually or collaboratively to support a diversity of *native* tree and/or forest types including a diversity of ages and/or sizes that enhance *biological diversity* at the urban and/or community scale.
- **Indicator 3.1.3:** Organization participates in or incorporates the results of state, provincial, territorial, or regional *conservation* planning and priority-setting efforts to conserve *biological diversity* through *urban or community forest* management.
- **Indicator 3.1.4:** Organization participates in *programs* and demonstrates activities to limit the introduction, spread, and impact of *invasive* exotic insects, animals, and plants that directly threaten or are likely to threaten *native* plant and animal communities.

Performance Measure 3.2: Organization protects *threatened and endangered species*, *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Values*, and *old-growth* forests or trees.

- **Indicator 3.2.1:** Organization protects *threatened and endangered species*.
- **Indicator 3.2.2:** Organization locates and protects known sites of flora, fungi, and fauna associated with viable occurrences of *critically imperiled* and *imperiled* species and communities.
- **Indicator 3.2.3:** Organization supports or participates in plans or *programs* for the conservation of *old-growth* forests or trees, if applicable.

Performance Measure 3.3: Organization manages *wildlife habitat* and contributes to the conservation of *biological diversity*.

- **Indicator 3.3.1:** Organization collects information on *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value* and/or other *biodiversity*-related data through *inventory*, mapping, and/or participation in external *programs*.
- **Indicator 3.3.2:** Organization implements *strategies* to incorporate research results and field applications of *biodiversity* and ecosystem research into *urban or community forest* management decisions.



OBJECTIVE 4:

STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL RESOURCES INCLUDING AIR, WATER, AND SOIL

To consider the impact of the *urban and community forest* and organization's program on natural resources including air, water, and soil.

Performance Measure 4.1: Organization meets or exceeds all applicable water and air quality laws, regulations, and meets or exceeds *best management practices* developed under government-approved water and air quality *programs*.

- **Indicator 4.1.1:** Organization implements water- and air-quality *best management practices* during all phases of management activities.
- **Indicator 4.1.2:** Organization monitors implementation of overall *best management practices* to protect air, water, and soil.

Performance Measure 4.2: Organization implements water, wetland, and riparian protection measures during *urban or community forest* management.

- **Indicator 4.2.1:** Organization employs strategies to effectively manage rivers, streams, lakes, *wetlands*, watersheds, other water bodies, and *riparian areas* to protect, preserve, conserve, maintain, restore, and/or enhance their natural functions.
- **Indicator 4.2.2:** Organization documents and implements *strategies* to manage and protect rivers, streams, lakes, *wetlands*, other water bodies, and *riparian areas*, and to manage *stormwater*.

Performance Measure 4.3: Organization implements a *strategy* to protect soil quantity, quality, and health during *urban or community forest* management.

- **Indicator 4.3.1:** Organization specifies appropriate soil volumes and quality for *sites* and species during *planting* and development.
- **Indicator 4.3.2:** Organization implements *best management practices* to protect soils from degradation and/or rehabilitate damaged soils.



OBJECTIVE 5:

URBAN AND COMMUNITY FOREST AND TREE HEALTH AND VITALITY

To ensure the long-term viability of *urban and community forests* by maximizing their health, longevity/age, *diversity*, *resilience*, and size to optimize benefits and resource availability and use.

Performance Measure 5.1: *Organization uses integrated plant management or plant health care procedures during operations.*

- **Indicator 5.1.1:** *Organization implements holistic strategies that consider tree and plant needs, including spacing, water requirements, pest associations, and proper fertility.*
- **Indicator 5.1.2:** *Organization utilizes integrated management options where appropriate, such as prescribed fire, rotational grazing, and natural regeneration to increase forest health and vitality.*

Performance Measure 5.2: *Organization has developed strategies to guide planting and establishment to enhance urban or community forest health and vitality.*

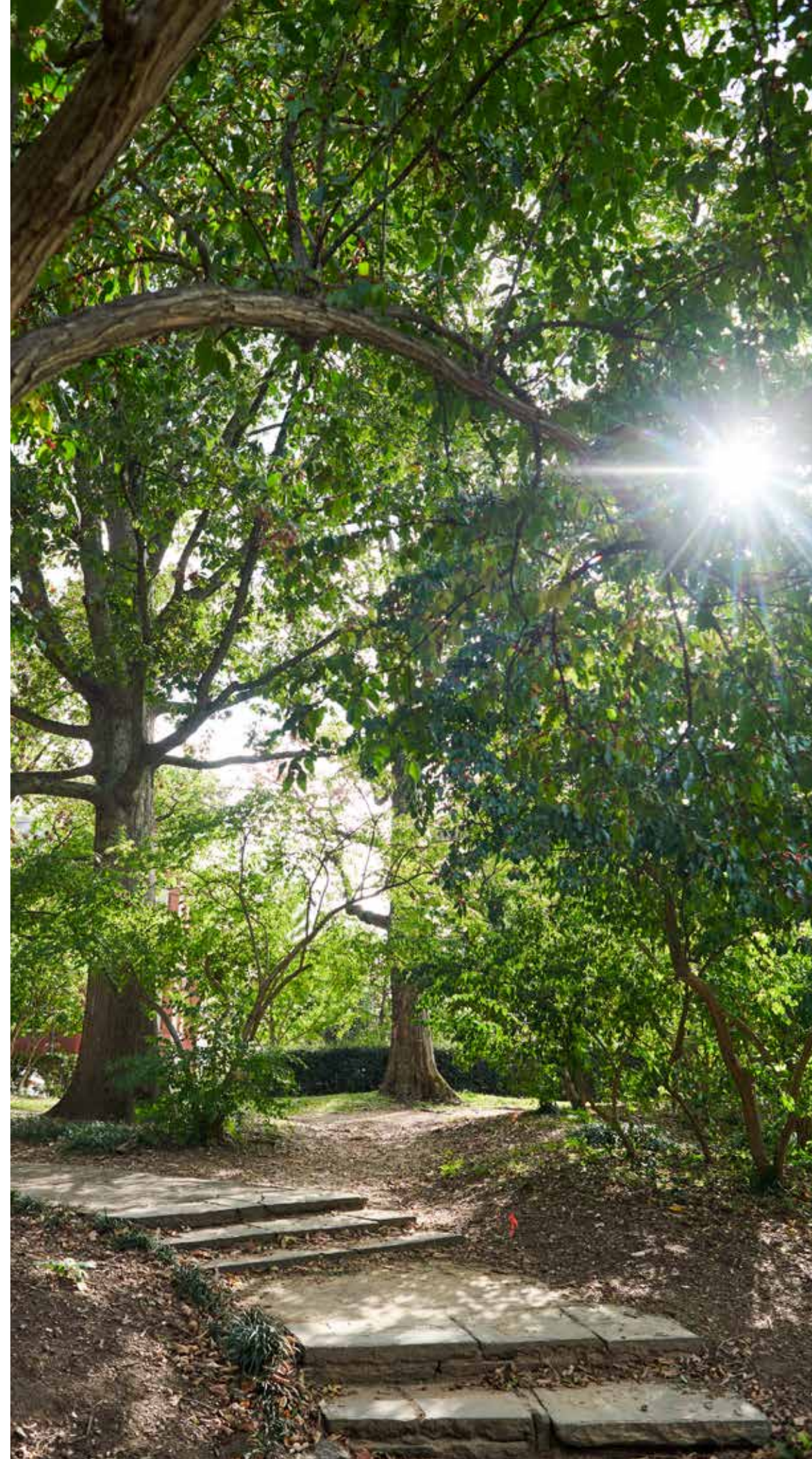
- **Indicator 5.2.1:** *Organization ensures that tree species and specimens are well-suited to local growing conditions, are climate-adapted, represent diverse species, and are not invasive or otherwise destructive.*
- **Indicator 5.2.2:** *Organization selects tree planting sites that support tree growth and performance.*
- **Indicator 5.2.3:** *Organization utilizes a regular, proactive tree health monitoring program to assess tree stress and survival.*

Performance Measure 5.3: *Organization facilitates the coexistence of trees and the built environment.*

- **Indicator 5.3.1:** *Organization ensures that the built environment and trees needs are considered in urban or community forest planning and maintenance operations.*
- **Indicator 5.3.2:** *Organization modifies or removes the built environment, when feasible, to reduce conflicts and improve forest and tree health.*

Performance Measure 5.4: *Organization protects urban and community forests and trees from damaging agents.*

- **Indicator 5.4.1:** *Organization implements a strategy to monitor for damaging agents and invasive species, prevent damage, and properly mitigate such damage.*
- **Indicator 5.4.2:** *Organization establishes policies or procedures to mitigate damage from human activities.*



OBJECTIVE 6:

SPECIAL SITES, INCLUDING NATURAL AREAS

To manage lands that are geologically, culturally, economically, or *ecologically important* in a manner that considers their unique qualities.

Performance Measure 6.1: *Organization establishes appropriate guidelines for the protection and conservation of special sites and natural areas.*

- **Indicator 6.1.1:** *Organization establishes and maintains conservation and management objectives based on land and/or site evaluation.*

Performance Measure 6.2: *Organization identifies, evaluates, and maps special sites, natural areas, and/or natural area features within the urban or community forest.*

- **Indicator 6.2.1:** *Organization uses a data-management system to identify, map, plan for, and manage natural areas and special sites.*

Performance Measure 6.3: *Organization employs strategies to effectively manage natural areas and special sites to protect, preserve, conserve, maintain, restore and/or enhance their natural function.*

- **Indicator 6.3.1:** *Organization manages special sites and/or natural areas based on existing scientific research and best management practices to help promote a circular economy.*





OBJECTIVE 7:

CLIMATE-SMART MANAGEMENT

To promote *climate change resilience* and address pressing environmental, social, and economic concerns using tree-related *adaptation* and *mitigation strategies*.

Performance Measure 7.1: *Organization* monitors and strives to maximize the *ecosystem services* provided by the *urban or community forest*, such as carbon sequestration, and storage, stormwater reduction, air quality, urban heat island, temperature, and others as appropriate.

- **Indicator 7.1.1:** *Organization* quantifies and tracks *ecosystem services*, economic, and/or aesthetic benefits.
- **Indicator 7.1.2:** *Organization* utilizes tree planning and management efforts to maximize *ecosystem services*.
- **Indicator 7.1.3:** *Organization* incentivizes the use of trees and *green infrastructure* to *minimize* greenhouse gas emissions and stormwater runoff and flooding, while maximizing carbon sequestration.

Performance Measure 7.2: *Organization* monitors and takes steps to *minimize* the carbon footprint of their *urban or community forestry* operations.

- **Indicator 7.2.1:** *Organization* demonstrates that *strategies* are utilized to minimize carbon footprints and maximize *urban wood* utilization to minimize the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, and to help promote a circular economy.

Performance Measure 7.3: *Organization* regularly assesses and works to address vulnerabilities within their jurisdictions related to *climate change* and extreme weather.

- **Indicator 7.3.1:** *Organization* implements strategies to mitigate the effects of urban heat islands, ecological disruption, and social/economic disruption due to *climate change*.
- **Indicator 7.3.2:** *Organization* promotes tree preservation and *planting* to maximize the provision of various *ecosystem services*, prioritizing areas with historically disadvantaged and vulnerable populations and low *tree equity*.

OBJECTIVE 8:

URBAN AND COMMUNITY FOREST PLANNING

To ensure the long-term sustainability of the urban and community forest resource and management *program* through comprehensive planning and strategic goal setting.

Performance Measure 8.1: *Organization* engages in comprehensive and regular *urban or community forestry* system assessments and monitoring sufficient to allow it to generate informed *management plans* and management *strategies* based on current conditions of the forest.

- **Indicator 8.1.1:** *Organization* has an urban or community forest resource assessment underway or has a current urban or community forest resource assessment.
- **Indicator 8.1.2:** *Organization* documents administrative and operational performance monitoring related to tree canopy extent, condition, and distribution; *ecosystem services*; operational costs and measurable results; and *urban or community forest* system vulnerabilities.

Performance Measure 8.2: *Organization* supports and elevates planning efforts by consulting relevant and interested community *interested parties*.

- **Indicator 8.2.1:** *Organization* seeks input from advisory groups, professional consultants, intra-agency departments, and other community *interested parties* to advise on the establishment, *conservation*, *protection*, and maintenance of urban and community trees and forests, to ensure inclusivity and collaboration.

Performance Measure 8.3: *Organization* has comprehensive interdisciplinary planning *strategies* that are integrated with other departments and internal administrative groups and align with *interested parties'* interests and goals.

- **Indicator 8.3.1:** *Organization* has a clearly defined vision that, at the highest level, guides planning and management decisions.
- **Indicator 8.3.2:** *Organization* has documented, publicly available *strategies* that support current goals and operational targets.



OBJECTIVE 9:

MANAGEMENT AND CARE OF URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTS AND TREES

To ensure that best *practices* are followed in the establishment, maintenance, and management of forests and trees.

Performance Measure 9.1: *Organization* has management authority and one or more *qualified resource professionals* directing *urban or community forest* management and maintenance activities.

- **Indicator 9.1.1:** *Organization* employs or has an agreement with a professional that has the education and expertise required to effectively lead and manage the *urban or community forestry program*.
- **Indicator 9.1.2:** *Organization* has formally adopted responsibility and authority for the *planning, management, protection, preservation, and care* of urban or community trees, forests, and the landscapes they populate through ordinances, charter, or other guiding *policies* or agreements.

Performance Measure 9.2: *Organization* adopts and implements *urban or community forest* policies, procedures, and standards.

- **Indicator 9.2.1:** *Organization* has adopted *policies, planning strategies, ordinances, and/or best management practices* that govern the *planting, establishment, maintenance, protection, risk management, and removal* of trees.
- **Indicator 9.2.2:** *Organization* regularly assesses and utilizes current and scalable urban or community tree health, canopy distribution, social and ecological vulnerability, and *ecosystem services* data to inform, formulate, and adopt *urban or community forest* policies, planning goals, management *strategies*, maintenance standards, and *program* goals.

Performance Measure 9.3: *Organization* coordinates tree *planting* and establishment.

- **Indicator 9.3.1:** *Organization* has an established program for *planting* and establishing site-appropriate trees on managed *public and/or private property*, including green stormwater infrastructure, in accordance with nationally or regionally adopted *best management practices*.

- **Indicator 9.3.2:** *Organization* demonstrates appropriate post-planting follow-up care for all trees based on species, size, and type of stock, *site* characteristics, local climate, and maintenance needs.
- **Indicator 9.3.3:** *Organization* actively supports initiatives, policies, outreach, or public assistance strategies that encourage private landowners to replace trees that have died or been removed.
- **Indicator 9.3.4:** *Organization* demonstrates that the five-year rolling average of trees planted within managed areas is equal to or greater than the number of trees removed, for all reasons, in the absence of a catastrophic disaster.

Performance Measure 9.4: *Organization* maintains managed forests and trees under its jurisdiction.

- **Indicator 9.4.1:** *Organization* has an established *program* of care for young trees that is aligned with nationally or regionally adopted *best management practices*.
- **Indicator 9.4.2:** *Organization* implements proactive resource management, monitoring, and maintenance *strategies* for established trees that optimize tree health and longevity, public safety, and resource allocations.
- **Indicator 9.4.3:** *Organization* annually conducts systematic visual assessments of 15% or more of the managed tree population for *forest health*, structural defects, and risk management, and prescribes and performs proactive pruning and restorative maintenance as needed to sustain a safe and healthy *urban or community forest* that coexists with the built environment.

Performance Measure 9.5: *Organization* preserves and protects forests and trees.

- **Indicator 9.5.1:** *Organization* exercises the authority and has the capacity to implement and enforce tree *protection* codes, policies, standards, and/or construction specifications.
- **Indicator 9.5.2:** *Organization* demonstrates inclusive community engagement, equitable protocols, and targeted programming to ensure that forests and trees are preserved and protected in all neighborhoods regardless of social, ethnic, or economic demographics.

OBJECTIVE 10:

DISASTER READINESS, RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY

To limit undesirable effects and aid in the recovery of communities and forest resources from disasters through strategic planning, preparation, effective response, restoration, and improved *resilience*.

Performance Measure 10.1: *Organization* proactively plans and prepares for catastrophic natural events and disasters that can reasonably be anticipated.

- **Indicator 10.1.1:** *Organization* assesses risks and develops and documents equitable disaster response *strategies*, including debris management, appropriate for events in its region.
- **Indicator 10.1.2:** *Organization* implements appropriate prevention and *mitigation programs* and *strategies* to reduce risks prior to an event.

Performance Measure 10.2: *Organization* implements adopted disaster-response *strategies* in response to events.

- **Indicator 10.2.1:** *Organization* activates appropriate response teams, integrates with other emergency management operations, and follows governmental emergency-management guidelines or *programs* where appropriate.
- **Indicator 10.2.2:** *Organization* maximizes opportunities to preserve damaged trees and divert woody debris for highest and best uses.

Performance Measure 10.3: *Organization* implements recovery *strategies* after an event.

- **Indicator 10.3.1:** *Organization* has and implements a risk *mitigation program* to reduce residual risk following events.
- **Indicator 10.3.2:** *Organization* implements effective restoration, maintenance, and replanting *strategies* following events.
- **Indicator 10.3.3:** *Organization* assesses the impact of events and evaluates the effectiveness of their readiness, response, and recovery efforts.



OBJECTIVE 11:

CAPACITY-BUILDING

To promote continued improvement in the *practice* of sustainable management through education, outreach, sufficient resourcing and funding, professional development, engagement, stewardship, and performance review.

Performance Measure 11.1: *Organization ensures budgets are in place for urban or community forestry operations.*

- **Indicator 11.1.1:** *Organization has a dedicated budget for urban or community forestry related activities.*
- **Indicator 11.1.2:** *Organization assesses current and future budgeting needs based on strategies, plans, and desired future conditions and/or goals.*

Performance Measure 11.2: *Organization actively engages interested parties.*

- **Indicator 11.2.1:** *Organization produces an annual report of engagement with decision makers, leaders, citizens, and other interdepartmental staff based on outreach and engagement plans.*
- **Indicator 11.2.2:** *Organization works with volunteers and tracks the number of hours worked, if applicable.*

Performance Measure 11.3: *Organization utilizes performance reviews to improve its program.*

- **Indicator 11.3.1:** *Organization employs a regular review process to assess the implementation of relevant strategies, with action steps identified to achieve desired future conditions and/or goals.*
- **Indicator 11.3.2:** *Organization identifies staff and/or organizations for various ancillary functions such as: outreach, volunteer management, planting, tree care management, inter-department communication, etc.*

Performance Measure 11.4: *Organization supports professional development and improvement.*

- **Indicator 11.4.1:** *Organization has trained and credentialed managers, crews, or contractors.*
- **Indicator 11.4.2:** *Organization provides opportunities for continuing educational development.*



OBJECTIVE 12:

URBAN WOOD AND COMMUNITY FOREST UTILIZATION

To ensure the highest and best use of *urban and community forest wood* resources and *minimize* waste from our urban and *community forests*.

Performance Measure 12.1: *Organization has a strategy stating that living trees are the highest and best use until the risk exceeds tolerance or the tree has reached the end of its useful living, standing life, and then defines what to do when trees or parts of trees are removed and supports their best utilization in compliance with controlling regulations.*

- **Indicator 12.1.1:** *Organization includes urban wood or community forest utilization targets including criteria used to determine the best use for various wood products based upon size, quality, circumstances, and available local resources.*

Performance Measure 12.2: *Organization values and manages trees as full-cycle resources that are utilized even after removal to support environmental, economic, and social values, while understanding that the highest and best use will vary due to region and circumstance.*

- **Indicator 12.2.1:** *Organization supports local utilization of wood through investments, purchases, or supplying materials.*
- **Indicator 12.2.2:** *Organization facilitates ongoing training and employs practices that ensure trees are removed in a manner that supports the highest use and value.*

Performance Measure 12.3: *Organization engages interested parties and urban wood or community forest professionals in support of a self-sustaining network to build long-term capacity.*

- **Indicator 12.3.1:** *Organization participates in urban wood or community forest utilization arrangements and/or membership or participation in urban wood-use or community forest organizations.*
- **Indicator 12.3.2:** *Organization supports industry approved standards and/or chain-of-custody procedures or policies.*

OBJECTIVE 13:

COMMUNICATIONS

To invest in and utilize effective communications both internally and externally to support and promote all aspects of the *urban and community forest* and urban and community forestry program.

Performance Measure 13.1: *Organization* has a communication strategy that includes outreach, engagement, and education about *urban or community forests* and trees, the associated values and benefits, and the need for management and care.

- **Indicator 13.1.1:** *Organization* prioritizes two-way and diverse communication.
- **Indicator 13.1.2:** *Organization* utilizes multiple methods of shareable and accessible information about the *urban or community forest*, communicating about policies and who is responsible for them, with contact information.
- **Indicator 13.1.3:** *Organization* annually evaluates the effectiveness of communication efforts and adjusts as needed.

Performance Measure 13.2: *Organization* invests in *urban or community forest* and tree-related communication efforts.

- **Indicator 13.2.1:** *Organization* implements a communication strategy and shares its accomplishments internally and externally.



OBJECTIVE 14:

RESEARCH, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY

To invest in, utilize, and promote research, science, and technology that supports sustainable resource management.

Performance Measure 14.1: *Organization* has a strategy for staying informed about new research.

- **Indicator 14.1.1:** *Organization* makes support available for *urban and community forestry* and *urban and community wood* practitioners to sustain membership in or receive training from professional *organizations*.
- **Indicator 14.1.2:** *Organization* participates in groups or *organizations* that increase access to research.

Performance Measure 14.2: *Organization* participates and/or invests in research that advances *urban and community forestry practices* locally and/or at a larger scale.

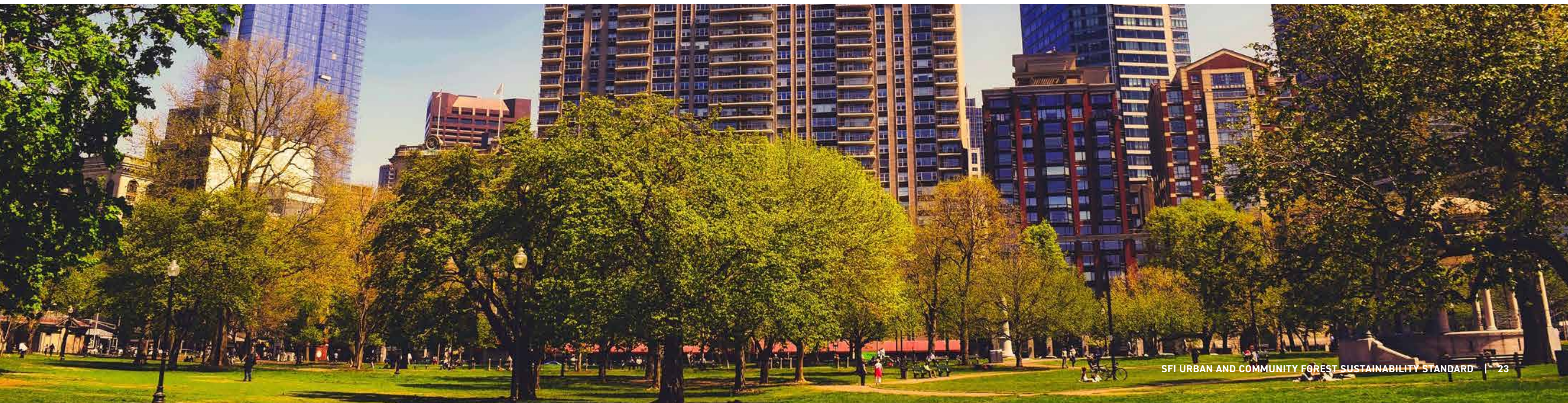
- **Indicator 14.2.1:** *Organization* commits resources to collaborate with *interested parties* and partners to advance social science or applied *urban and community forestry* research when opportunities arise.
- **Indicator 14.2.2:** *Organization* demonstrates willingness to participate in research that advances knowledge of *urban and community forestry* when opportunities arise, including contributing to projects and/or sharing findings within peer networks.

Performance Measure 14.3: *Organization* demonstrates commitment to applying findings from relevant research to the professional, sustainable management of their *urban or community forest*.

- **Indicator 14.3.1:** *Organization* applies relevant current research in management strategies.

Performance Measure 14.4: *Organization* acquires and utilizes technology that supports sustainable resource management.

- **Indicator 14.4.1:** *Organization* invests in staff training for applications of technology used in sustainable resource management.
- **Indicator 14.4.2:** *Organization* is transparent regarding data collected via technology.
- **Indicator 14.4.3:** *Organization* utilizes technology and related data to promote equitable access to *urban and community forests* within jurisdiction of *organization*.



OBJECTIVE 15:

LEGAL AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INCLUDING INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

To comply with applicable laws and regulations and recognize Indigenous Peoples' Rights.

Performance Measure 15.1: *Organization* complies with applicable *urban or community forestry* and related social and environmental laws and regulations.

- **Indicator 15.1.1:** *Organization* has access to relevant laws and regulations in appropriate locations.
- **Indicator 15.1.2:** *Organization* has a system for achieving compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- **Indicator 15.1.3:** *Organization* demonstrates a commitment to legal compliance through *available regulatory action information*.

Performance Measure 15.2: *Organization* complies with all applicable social laws in the country in which the *organization* operates.

- **Indicator 15.2.1:** *Organization* has written *policy* demonstrating commitment to comply with social laws, such as those covering civil rights, equal employment opportunities, gender equality, *diversity*, inclusion, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment measures, workers' compensation, *indigenous rights*, workers' and communities' right to know, prevailing wages, workers' right to organize, and occupational health and safety.
- **Indicator 15.2.2:** *Organization* respects the rights of workers and labor representatives in a manner that encompasses the intent of the International Labor Organization fundamental conventions.

Performance Measure 15.3: *Organization* recognizes and respects *Indigenous Peoples' rights*.

- **Indicator 15.3.1:** *Organization* shall develop and implement a written policy acknowledging a commitment to recognize and respect the rights of *Indigenous Peoples*. This policy shall provide reference to a program that includes:

- use of available resources and information to identify the *Indigenous Peoples* whose rights may be affected by the *Organization's* urban or community forest management activities.
 - recognition of the established framework of legal, customary, and traditional rights such as outlined in:
 - i. the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
 - ii. federal, provincial, and state laws and regulations;
 - iii. treaties, agreements or other constructive arrangements among governments and Indigenous Peoples.
 - appropriate training of personnel and contractors so that the *Organization* is competent to fulfill their responsibilities under Objective 15 of the SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard.
- **Indicator 15.3.2:** The written policy is publicly available.



OBJECTIVE 16:

REPORTING

To annually report progress on conformance with the *SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard* to increase transparency.

Performance Measure 16.1: *Organization* reports annually to *SFI* on its conformance with the *SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard*.

- **Indicator 16.1.1:** *Organization* provides prompt responses to the *SFI* annual progress report survey.
- **Indicator 16.1.2:** *Organization* keeps records for all the categories of information needed for *SFI* annual progress report surveys.
- **Indicator 16.1.3:** *Organization* maintains copies of past survey reports to document progress and improvements that demonstrate conformance to the *SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard*.

Performance Measure 16.2: *Organization* provides a summary audit report, prepared by the *certification body*, to *SFI* after the successful completion of a certification, recertification, or surveillance audit to the *SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard*.

- **Indicator 16.2.1:** The summary audit report submitted by the *organization* (one copy must be in English), shall include, at a minimum:
 - The name of the *Organization* that was audited, including its *SFI* representative.
 - A general description of the *Organization's* urban forest included in the audit.
 - The name of the *certification body* and *lead auditor* (names of the *audit team* members, including *technical experts*, may be included at the discretion of the *audit team* and *organization*).
 - A description of the audit process, *objectives*, and scope.
 - The dates the audit was conducted and completed.
 - A description of substitute *indicators*, if any, used in the audit and a rationale for each.
 - A summary of the findings, including general descriptions of evidence of conformity and any nonconformities and corrective action plans to address them, opportunities for improvement, and exceptional *practices*.
 - The certification decision.

The summary audit report will be posted on the SFI website (forests.org) for public review.





DEFINITIONS

adaptation: Climate change adaptation refers to actions that reduce the negative impact of climate change, while taking advantage of potential new opportunities. It involves adjusting policies and actions because of observed or expected changes in climate.

aquatic habitat: An area where water is the principal medium that provides the resources and environmental conditions to support occupancy, survival, and reproduction by individuals of a given species

aquatic species: Animals that live on or within water during some stage of their development.

audit team: One or more auditors conducting an audit, supported if needed by technical experts (ISO 19011:2018).

auditor: A person with the competence needed to conduct an audit (ISO 19011:2018).

available regulatory action information: Statistics or regulatory compliance data collected by a federal, state, provincial, or local government agency. Note: Although conformance with laws is the intent, certification bodies are directed to look for a spirit and general record of compliance rather than isolated or unusual instances of deviation.

best management practices (BMPs): A practice or combination of practices for protection of water quality that is determined by a federal, provincial, state, or local government or other responsible entity, after problem assessment, examination of alternative practices, and appropriate public participation, to be the most effective and practicable means (including technological, economic, and institutional considerations) of conducting a forest management operation while addressing any environmental considerations.

best scientific information: Available factual information that is generally accepted by the broad scientific community. It includes but is not limited to peer-reviewed scientific information obtainable from any source, including government and non-governmental sources, that have been verified by field testing to the maximum extent feasible.

biodiversity: The variety and abundance of life forms, processes, functions, and structures of plants, animals, and other living organisms, including the relative complexity of species, communities, gene pools, and ecosystems at spatial scales that range from local to regional to global.

biological diversity: The variety and abundance of life forms, processes, functions, and structures of plants, animals, and other living organisms, including the relative complexity of species, communities, gene pools, and ecosystems at spatial scales that range from local to regional to global.

built environment: Human-made structures, features, and facilities viewed collectively as an environment in which people live and work.

certification body: An independent third party that is accredited by:

- ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB) as being competent to conduct certifications to the SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard
- Standards Council of Canada (SCC) as being competent to conduct certifications to the SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard

climate change: A change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Climate change may be due to natural internal processes or external forcings, or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land use. Note: Taken from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPPC).

community forest: Term used in the USA for smaller communities that don't consider themselves 'Urban'; see urban forest. Note that "community forest" is often used in connection with community-based forestry, which is described as a participatory approach to forest management in which people in cities and towns manage areas of forest for a range of ecological, social, and economic values. For more information, see the Trust for Public Lands' report, "Community Forests: A Path to prosperity and connection," and the US Forest Service's Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program.

From the Canadian perspective, a community forest is "a tree-dominated ecosystem managed for multiple community values and benefits by the community. While this includes urban situations, most conceptions of community forests in Canada involve smaller rural communities and their forest hinterlands" (Duinker et. al. 1995)

conservation: 1. Protection of plant and animal habitat. 2. The management of a renewable natural resource with the objective of sustaining its productivity in perpetuity while providing for human use compatible with sustainability of the resource.

critically imperiled: A plant or animal or community, often referred to as G1, that is globally extremely rare or, because of some factor(s), especially vulnerable to extinction. Typically, five or fewer occurrences or populations remain, or very few individuals (<1,000), acres (<2,000 acres or 809 hectares), or linear miles (<10 miles or 16 kilometers) exist. (Further information can be found under Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value in Section 7 — Guidance to SFI 2022 Standards and Rules.)

culturally important: Having significance for or being representative of human activities or beliefs (e.g., documented areas such as cemeteries, sacred sites).

damaging agent: Any factor that negatively affects tree vitality and environmental and economic tree value is known as a damaging agent (Wulff, 2011)

degree: A professional academic degree (e.g., bachelor's) or equivalent.

diversity: 1. Diversity refers to individual and group/social differences. These include, but are not limited to, psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among any and all individuals, such as race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, economic class, age, gender, sexual orientation, and mental and physical ability. 2. The variety and abundance of life forms, processes, functions, and structures of plants, animals, and other living organisms, including the relative complexity of species, communities, gene pools, and ecosystems at spatial scales that range from local to regional to global.

diverse communities: A diverse group, community, or organization is one in which a variety of social and cultural characteristics exist.



ecologically important: Ecologically important can be defined as applying to natural communities, biological, ecological, or physical features which, either by themselves or in a network, contribute significantly to an ecosystem's productivity, biodiversity, and resilience. Ecologically important areas may be so identified by the inclusion viable occurrences of species or natural communities that are integral to the identity or function of an ecosystem, but which may be relatively uncommon, including species or ecological communities with a high "S-Rank" or "G-Rank" from NatureServe, subject to the discretion of the Certified Organization.

ecosystem services: Components of nature, directly enjoyed, consumed, or used to yield human well-being.

endemic: Native or indigenous to a region.

exotic tree species: A tree species introduced from outside its natural range. This does not include species that have become naturalized in an area and have a naturally reproducing population. Note: Hybrids of native species or native plants that have been derived from genetic tree improvement and biotechnology programs are not considered exotic species.

forest health: The perceived condition of a forest derived from concerns about such factors as its age, structure, composition, function, vigor, presence of unusual levels of insects or disease, and resilience to disturbance.

forest inventory: 1. A set of objective sampling methods that quantify the spatial distribution, composition, and rates of change of forest parameters within specified levels of precision for management purposes. 2. The listing of data from such a survey.

forestry: The profession encompassing the science, art, and practice of creating, managing, using, and conserving forests and associated resources for human benefit and in a sustainable manner to meet desired goals, needs, and values.

Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value: Critically imperiled (G1) and imperiled (G2) species and ecological communities.

geographic information system (GIS): An organized collection of computer systems, personnel, knowledge, and procedures designed to capture, store, update, manipulate, analyze, report, and display forms of geographically referenced information and descriptive information.

green infrastructure: Living plants and natural materials within developed areas. Can be incorporated with gray infrastructure (utilities, paved surfaces, and buildings) to perform stormwater management, erosion control, temperature buffering, and other important ecological functions.

habitat: 1. A unit area of environment. 2. The place, natural or otherwise (including climate, food, cover and water), where an individual or population of animals or plants naturally or normally lives and develops.

human damage: Injuries to trees and forests caused by human activity such as soil compaction, lawn mower or string trimmer impact to trunks, or improper pruning.

imperiled: A plant or animal or community, often referred to as G2, that is globally rare or, because of some factor(s), is very vulnerable to extinction or elimination. Typically, six to 20 occurrences, or few remaining individuals (1,000 to 3,000), or acres (2,000 to 10,000 acres or 809 to 4,047 hectares), or linear miles (10 to 50 miles or 16 to 80.5 kilometers) exist. Additional information can be found under Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value in Section 7 of the SFI 2022 Standards and Rules.

indicator: A specific metric that provides information about an organization's forestry and environmental performance, and that is integral to assessing conformance to the SFI 2022 Standards' objectives and performance measures.

Indigenous Peoples: Inclusive of all Indigenous Peoples residing in Canada and the United States. More specifically, Indigenous Peoples are defined in the United States as members of federally recognized tribes and in Canada as those peoples that are recognized by section 35(2) of the Constitution Act, 1982. In the United States, the US Department of Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs publishes a list of each of the 573 federally recognized tribes. In Canada, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada provides a list of the 619 recognized First Nations by province. Rights-holding Métis communities in Canada, as per S. 35(2) of the Constitution Act, 1982, include but are not limited to governing members of the Métis National Council as well as the Métis Settlements General Council.

Indigenous Peoples' rights: Indigenous rights (sometimes referred to as Aboriginal rights) refer to practices, traditions, and customs that distinguish the unique culture of each First Nation and were practiced prior to European contact. These are rights that some Indigenous peoples of Canada hold as a result of their ancestors' longstanding use and occupancy of the land. The rights of certain peoples to hunt, trap, and fish on ancestral lands are examples of Indigenous rights. Indigenous rights vary from group to group, depending on the customs, practices, and traditions that have formed part of their distinctive cultures. Indigenous rights are protected under s.35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

integrated pest management: The careful consideration of all available pest control techniques and subsequent integration of appropriate measures that discourage the development of pest populations and keep pesticides and other interventions to levels that are economically justified and reduce or minimize risks to human health and the environment (source: FAO 2018).

integrated plant management: A comprehensive program to manage the health, structure, and appearance of plants in the landscape, similar to integrated pest management. See also plant health care.

Interested parties: A person, group, community, or organization with a vested interest in the subject of the standard. alternative term for stakeholders.

invasive: Species introduced from another country or geographic region outside its natural range that may have fewer natural population controls in the new environment, becoming a pest or nuisance species.

invasive species: Species introduced from another country or geographic region outside its natural range that may have fewer natural population controls in the new environment, becoming a pest or nuisance species.

land classification: The process of designating areas of land into classes or strata that are sufficiently homogeneous in their physical, vegetative, and development attributes.

landscape: 1. A spatial mosaic of multiple ecosystems, landforms, and plant communities across a defined area, irrespective of ownership or other artificial boundaries and repeated in similar form throughout. 2. An area of land characterized by: a) similar biogeoclimatic conditions that influence site potential; b) similar historical disturbance regimes that influence vegetation structure and species composition; and c) sufficient size to provide the range of habitat conditions for naturally occurring communities (except for a few megafauna with large spatial needs, e.g., wolves).

lead auditor: An auditor appointed to lead an audit team. Also referred to as an audit team leader (ISO 19011:2018, 3.14, note 1).





least-toxic and narrowest-spectrum pesticide: A chemical preparation used to control site-specific pests that minimizes impact to non-target organisms while meeting management objectives. The management objectives should consider the target pest, the degree of control needed, and other issues, such as season and timing of application, rates and methods; and terrain, forest conditions, and the presence or absence of water bodies that may be impacted.

maintenance plan: Short term (generally one to two years) implementation, work, or action plan for the maintenance of an organization's urban forest and trees.

master plan: An Urban Forest Master Plan (UFMP) is a road map providing detailed information, recommendations, and resources needed to effectively and proactively manage and grow a community's tree canopy. More important, it provides a shared vision for the future of the urban forest to inspire and engage interested parties in the care and protection of trees.

minimize: To do only that which is necessary and appropriate to accomplish the task or objective described or to reduce an action's impacts.

mitigation: 1. Climate change mitigation consists of actions to limit the magnitude or rate of global warming and its related effects. This generally involves reductions in human emissions of greenhouse gases. 2. Reduce effect or impact (i.e. from tree removal).

native: Species or ecological communities occurring naturally in an ecological region, as neither a direct nor indirect consequence of recent human activity. (Ecological Regions of North America: Levels I-II)

natural community: Natural communities are combinations of native plants and animals that are regularly found together in particular settings. Human-caused disturbances have been minimal or are consistent with historical disturbance regimes (e.g., prescribed fire); the natural community has recovered from that disturbance; or the human-caused disturbance falls within the range of natural variation. (Adapted from NatureServe).

natural regeneration: Establishment of a plant or a plant age class from natural seeding, sprouting, suckering, or layering.

nature-based solutions: Sustainable planning, design, environmental management, and engineering practices that weave natural features or processes into the built environment to promote adaptation and resilience.

objective: In the SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard, a fundamental goal of sustainable forest management.

old-growth forests: A forested ecosystem distinguished by old trees and related structural attributes, such as tree size, down woody debris, canopy levels, and species composition. Organizations should utilize a definition specific to their region and particular forest types.

organization: Person or group of people that has its own functions with responsibilities, authorities, and relationships to achieve its objectives.

performance measure: A means of judging whether an objective has been fulfilled.

plant health care: Comprehensive program to manage the health, structure, and appearance of plants in the landscape.

planting: The establishment of a group or stand of young trees created by direct seeding or by planting seedlings or plantlets.

policy: A written statement of commitment to meet an objective or to implement a defined program or plan to achieve an objective or outcome.

practice(s): The actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method, as opposed to theories relating to it.

principle: The vision and direction for sustainable urban forest management as embodied in the principles of the SFI Standards.

program: An organized system, process, or set of activities to achieve an objective or performance measure.

protection (or protect): Maintenance of the status or integrity, over the long term, of identified attributes or values including management where appropriate and considering historical disturbance patterns, fire risk, and forest health when determining appropriate conservation strategies.

public land: Land that is owned or administratively managed by a government entity (federal, state, provincial, county, or local), excluding easements or other encumbrances held by a government entity on private land.

qualified resource professional: A person who by training and experience can make urban forest management recommendations. Examples include arborists, foresters, soil scientists, hydrologists, forest engineers, forest ecologists, and fishery and wildlife biologists, or technically trained specialists in such fields.

reforestation: The reestablishment of forest cover either naturally or by seeding or planting of seedlings.

resilience or resiliency: The overall capacity to recover from anthropogenic and natural disturbances.

riparian area: Transition zone characterized by vegetation or geomorphology adjacent to rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, and other water bodies.

SFI 2022 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation: The principles and guidelines that detail specific requirements to Certified Organizations and certification bodies for conducting audits to the SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard.

SFI certification: A systematic and documented verification process to obtain and evaluate evidence objectively to determine whether a Certified Organization conforms to the requirements of SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard.

SFI Implementation Committee: A state, provincial, or regional committee organized by Certified Organizations to facilitate or manage the programs and alliances that support the growth of SFI certification, including sustainable forest management.

site: 1. A permanent location where an organization carries out work or a service. 2. An area in which a plant or forest stand grows, considered in terms of its environment, particularly as this determines the type and quality of the vegetation in the area can carry (Dictionary of Forestry, Society of American Foresters).

soil health: The continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans. (USDA)

special sites: Sites that include geologically unique or culturally important features.

strategy: Organized system, process, plans, or set of activities to achieve a goal or objective.

Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI): SFI is a 501c(3) non-profit charitable organization, and is solely responsible for maintaining, overseeing, and improving the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. SFI directs all elements of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and the SFI Standard(s), including forest management, fiber sourcing, and chain-of-custody certifications, and labeling and marketing. SFI is overseen by a three-chamber board of directors representing social, environmental, and economic sectors.

sustainable forestry: To meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, by practicing a land stewardship ethic that integrates reforestation and the managing, growing, nurturing, and harvesting of trees for useful products and ecosystem services such as the conservation of soil, air and water quality, carbon, biological diversity, wildlife and aquatic habitats, recreation, and aesthetics.

technical expert: A person who provides specific knowledge or expertise to the audit team (ISO 19011 2018, 3.16).

third-party verification and certification: An assessment of conformance to the SFI 2022 Standards and Rules conducted according to the requirements of SFI Section 10 SFI 2022 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation, and ISO 19011, by a qualified certification body.

threatened and endangered: Listed under The U.S. Endangered Species Act or the Canadian Species at Risk Act and/or listed under applicable state or provincial laws requiring protection.

traditional forest-related knowledge: Forest-related knowledge owned and maintained by Indigenous Peoples as a result of their traditional use of or tenure on forestland.

tree equity: Tree equity is achieved when a community has enough canopy cover for residents to reap the health, economic, and other benefits that trees provide.

urban forest management plan: A document that describes how urban forestry goals are to be accomplished within a defined time frame; includes tasks, priorities, best management practices, standards, specifications, budgets, and staffing analyses.

urban forest: Trees, forests, greenspace, and related abiotic, biotic, and cultural components in areas extending from an urban core to the urban-rural fringe. Urban forests may include parks, street trees, landscaped boulevards, gardens, river and coastal promenades, greenways, river corridors, wetlands, nature preserves, shelter belts of trees, and working trees at former industrial sites. Urban forests, through planned connections of green spaces, form the green infrastructure on which communities depend (U.S. Forest Service).

urban forester: An individual trained in or practicing urban forestry.

urban forestry: Management of naturally occurring and planted trees and associated plants in urban areas or communities.

urban wood: Woody biomass reclaimed from urban areas for other purposes, often at their highest and best use. Urban wood is a plentiful, local, and renewable resource with unique design characteristics.

verifiable monitoring system: A system capable of being audited by a third party that includes: 1. A means to characterize the Certified Organization's wood and fiber supply area, which may include sources certified to a standard that requires conformance with best management practices, including those sources from certified logging professionals; 2. A process to identify and use sources of available data (e.g., state or provincial monitoring programs, certification status of suppliers) in the use of best management practices; and 3. A method to assess supplier performance, if needed, to supplement available data.

vernal pool: A seasonal wetland with sufficient water present during amphibian breeding season, an absence of fish, and the presence of wetland obligate fauna.

wetland: 1. Seasonally or permanently water-logged areas characterized by vegetation adapted for life in saturated /flooded conditions; 2. Wetlands can be forested, shrubby, grassy, or open and may include bogs, fens, swamps, marshes, and shallow open water areas; 3. wetlands may be stagnant systems (e.g., bogs, vernal pools), slow flowing (e.g., fens, swamps), or have fluctuating water levels (e.g., marshes, shallow open water).

wildlife: Aquatic (marine and freshwater) and terrestrial fauna

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SFI URBAN AND COMMUNITY FOREST SUSTAINABILITY STANDARD

MAY 16, 2023



**SUSTAINABLE
FORESTRY
INITIATIVE**

SFI-0001