

INVASIVE SPECIES



WHY IT MATTERS

Invasive species pose a significant threat to North America's forests. These plants, animals, fungi, and microorganisms disrupt ecosystems by outcompeting native species, altering habitat structure, and/or degrading biodiversity.

Addressing the spread of invasive species is vital to the SFI mission of promoting sustainable forestry practices that protect biodiversity and support global climate goals. Effective management of invasive species is key to preserving native ecosystems, safeguarding ecological resilience, and protecting the cultural heritage of Indigenous communities.

HOW SFI STANDARDS PREVENT THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES

The SFI Forest Management Standard requires certified organizations to manage invasive species to protect forest health, biodiversity, and productivity. This includes minimizing impact (Objective 2. Forest Health and Productivity), limiting spread (Objective 4. Conservation of Biological Diversity), and ensuring forestry professionals are trained and aware (Objective 13. Training and Education). The standard also promotes outreach to support landowners in managing invasive species (Objective 14. Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach).

Invasive species education is a requirement for landowner outreach under the SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard, reaching thousands of landowners across millions of acres/hectares.

The SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard addresses invasive species by requiring monitoring and strategies to mitigate their impact (Performance Measure 5.4).

The SFI Forest Management, Fiber Sourcing, and Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standards all include research requirements, encouraging certified organizations to invest in research that enhances invasive species management practices and strategies.

INVASIVE SPECIES ARE PLANTS, ANIMALS, FUNGI, OR MICROORGANISMS THAT, WHEN INTRODUCED TO A NEW ECOSYSTEM, CAUSE DISRUPTION BY OUTCOMPETING NATIVE SPECIES, INFESTING AND/OR KILLING TREES, ALTERING HABITAT STRUCTURES, AND CAUSING NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACTS.



ADDRESSING INVASIVE SPECIES WITH SFI

Beyond the requirements of the SFI standards, our network continues to invest in training, practices, research, and education on controlling and reducing the harms of invasive species to forests that are SFI certified. Some examples include:

- SFI Implementation Committees collaborate with partners to provide training to loggers on invasive species, equipping thousands of loggers with the knowledge to manage invasive species effectively.
- SFI provided a Conservation Grant to The Nature Trust of British Columbia to combat invasive plants in the southern interior, protecting vital wildlife habitats and watersheds.
- SFI provided a Community Grant to the Invasive Species Council of British Columbia to create an online training course to help forest professionals prevent the spread of invasive species and protect forest ecosystems.
- The Central Canada SFI Implementation Committee and the Invasive Species Centre have an MOU to collaborate on training, awareness, and continuing education to promote sustainable forest management and prevent the spread of invasive species.

ADDRESSING INVASIVE SPECIES WITH SFI EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTS

Project Learning Tree (PLT) and PLT Canada activities, available in both the United States and Canada, help students understand the impact of invasive species and how to minimize their impact and spread. For high school students, check out the “Forest Invaders” activity from PLT’s *Exploring Environmental Issues: Focus on Forests*. The “Invasive Species / Especies Invasoras” activity from PLT’s *Explore Your Environment: K-8 Activity Guide / Explora tu Ambiente: Guía de Actividades K-8* is well-suited for learners in grades 3-8.

ADDRESSING INVASIVE SPECIES THROUGH THE SFI STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The SFI 2025-2030 Strategic Direction focuses on promoting responsible forestry and wood product sourcing while providing nature-based solutions. This includes addressing invasive species through forest management practices that sustain biodiversity and forest resilience.

By engaging in strategic partnerships and supporting research and education, SFI is committed to reducing the impact of invasive species and improving forest health. Over the next five years, SFI will continue to expand its efforts, using its footprint to drive sustainable forest management practices that contribute to a healthier, more resilient environment, supporting long-term ecological and community benefits.

INVASIVE SPECIES THREATENING SFI-CERTIFIED FOREST

EMERALD ASH BORER – Native to Asia, this beetle has devastated ash tree populations across North America, leading to widespread tree mortality.

HEMLOCK WOOLLY ADELGID – Native to Asia, this insect infests Eastern and Carolina hemlock trees, weakening and often killing them.

ASIAN LONG-HORNED BEETLE – This beetle primarily targets maple, poplar, willow, and elm trees, causing significant damage.

SPONGY MOTH – This defoliating insect, native to Europe and Asia, prefers oak but feeds on hundreds of tree species, weakening forests over time.

MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE – Native to western North America, this beetle’s population has exploded over the last few decades, resulting in an expansion beyond its historic range, causing harm by killing pine trees on a massive scale. Large infestations increase wildfire risk by creating dry, dead fuel sources.

ORIENTAL BITTERSWEET – This fast-growing invasive vine, native to East Asia, poses a significant threat to forest health by climbing and girdling trees, blocking sunlight, and outcompeting native plants.

ACCORDING TO THE NICHOLAS INSTITUTE FOR ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY,
INVASIVE INSECTS COST AN ESTIMATED \$27.3 BILLION ANNUALLY ACROSS NORTH AMERICA IN LOST GOODS AND SERVICES.

