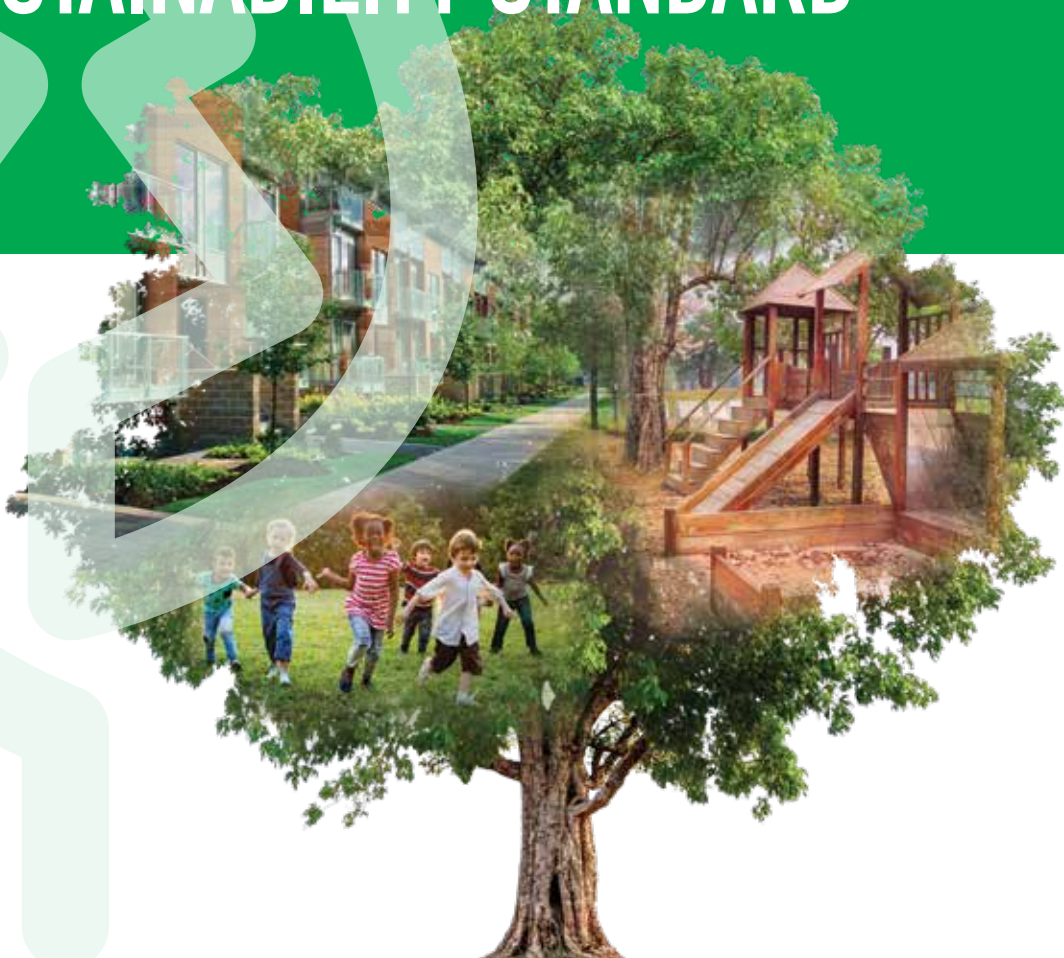# FACTS AND INFORMATION

SFI URBAN AND COMMUNITY FOREST

SUSTAINABILITY STANDARD

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

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 well-being, 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.
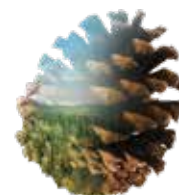
OBJECTIVE 3: PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

OBJECTIVE 14: RESEARCH, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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

OBJECTIVE 15: LEGAL AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INCLUDING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS

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

OBJECTIVE 16: REPORTING

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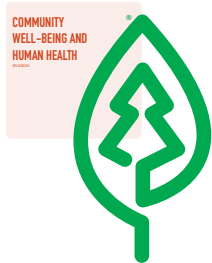
CERTIFICATION THEMES

Certification to the entire Standard will enable an organization to claim their urban or community forest is fully Certified to the SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard. Alternatively, organizations can choose to be certified to one or more of the following four themes:

• Community Well-Being and Human Health
• Environmental and Conservation Leadership
• Climate and Disaster Resilience
• Urban Forest Improvement

Thematic certifications allow organizations to focus on what is important for them and their community. At the same time, thematic certifications will increase the accessibility of urban and community forest certification by reducing the requirements compared to certification to the entire SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard, and can offer a measured path to full certification.

Organizations that achieve certification to the SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard will be able to showcase this achievement through the following logo.

COMMUNITY WELL-BEING AND HUMAN HEALTH
SFI-XXXXX

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP
SFI-XXXXX

URBAN FOREST IMPROVEMENT
SFI-XXXXX

CLIMATE AND DISASTER RESILIENCE
SFI-XXXXX

COMMUNITY WELL-BEING AND HUMAN HEALTH

This theme is appropriate for organizations that focus on people and community in the urban or community forest. Organizations that are SFI Certified for Community and Well-being Champions have engaged, included, and communicated with people equitably in the management and care of their urban or community forest with a focus on human health and well-being.

Certified Organizations have met Objectives:

- 1. Community, People, and Indigenous Participation
- 2. Human Health and Well-Being
- 13. Communications,
- 15. Legal and Regulatory Compliance including Indigenous Rights, and
- 16. Reporting (30 indicators)

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP

This theme is appropriate for organizations that focus on biodiversity and natural resources in urban and community forests. Organizations that are SFI Certified for Environmental Leadership and Conservation are managing urban and community forest and tree health across the community including special sites and natural areas.

Certified Organizations have met Objectives:

- 3. Conservation and Protection of Biodiversity
- 4. Stewardship of Natural Resources including Air, Water, and Soil
- 5. Urban and Community Forest and Tree Health and Vitality
- 6. Special Sites including Natural Areas
- 15. Legal and Regulatory Compliance including Indigenous Rights, and
- 16. Reporting (38 indicators)

URBAN FOREST IMPROVEMENT

This theme is appropriate for organizations that are focused on managing their urban or community forest resources. Organizations that are Certified for Outstanding Urban Forest Management properly build operational capacity, assess, plan for, and implement the management and care of their urban or community forest including recovery from disasters.

Certified Organizations have met Objectives

- 8. Urban and Community Forest Planning
- 9. Management and Care of Urban and Community Forests and Trees
- 10. Disaster Readiness, Response, and Recovery,
- 11. Capacity Building
- 15. Legal and Regulatory Compliance including Indigenous Rights
- 16. Reporting (44 indicators).

CLIMATE AND DISASTER RESILIENCE

This theme is appropriate for organizations that focus on addressing climate change and associated challenges. Organizations that are Certified for Climate Resilience are preparing for and mitigating the negative impacts of climate change using proper science and technology. These organizations are utilizing their urban or community forest resources to minimize waste and maximize use while preparing for and managing disasters.

Certified Organizations have met Objectives;

- 7. Climate Smart Management
- 10. Disaster Readiness, Response, and Recovery,
- 12. Urban Wood and Community Forest Utilization
- 14. Research, Science, and Technology
- 15. Legal and Regulatory Compliance including Indigenous Rights, and
- 16. Reporting (37 indicators)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHY SHOULD WE CERTIFY OUR URBAN OR COMMUNITY FOREST?

There are many reasons an organization may want to certify their forest. Addressing pressing issues such as climate change, extreme heat, or wildfire risk are just a few. Proper management and care of the urban or community forest will maximize benefits and minimize risks. This will contribute to building capacity and increasing awareness of different career pathways in urban forests. Third-Party Certification takes it one step further and proves that the organization is meeting the sector-developed standard.

WHO SHOULD CERTIFY?

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.

HOW MUCH DOES UCFSS CERTIFICATION COST?

There are three categories of costs to consider: Preparing your organization for an audit, the audit, and the SFI Trademark License fee.

DO YOU HAVE ANY HELP OR GUIDANCE ON HOW WE CAN MEET THE STANDARD?

Yes, we have a guidance document that includes the language from the standard, but also includes recommendations, suggestions, examples, and tools to help you manage your forest and meet the standard. Contact SFI's Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Team to learn about guidance, tools, and resources to support your implementation For more information, visit forests.org/sfi-urban-forestry-standard/

Paul Johnson, *VP, Urban and Community Forestry*
202-719-1389, paul.johnson@forests.org.
Meagan "Meg" Hanna, *Director, Urban and Community Forestry Canada*
613-800-3074, meagan.hanna@forests.org
Michael "Mike" Martini, *Director, Urban and Community Forestry, U.S.*
202-918-4701, michael.martini@forests.org.
Alix Olson, *SFI Coordinator, Urban and Community Forestry*
403-917-9434, alix.olson@forests.org.

WHO CONDUCTS THE AUDITS?

All audits must be conducted by independent, accredited certification bodies. A list of accredited certification bodies is available at forests.org/third-party-audits/.

HOW TO CERTIFY

Getting certified to SFI is one of the best things that organizations can do to support the long term sustainability of forests and ensure the multitude of benefits that forests provide for future generations.

All SFI Standards require third-party independent certification audits by competent and accredited certification bodies. All certification bodies must be accredited by a member of the International Accreditation Forum — ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB) or the Standards Council of Canada (SCC).

STEP 1: Decide to implement the SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard.

STEP 2: Complete and submit the SFI PARTICIPATION APPLICATION FORM to SFI. Contact SFI's Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Team to learn about guidance, tools, and resources to support your implementation.

STEP 3: Prepare for an Audit — Ensure your operations meets SFI Standard requirements and contact a third-party accredited certification body to schedule an audit.

STEP 4: Get Audited — The certification body you select will visit your operations and determine if you meet the SFI standard requirements. Your auditor will register your new certificate with SFI.

STEP 5:: Sign a SFI Trademark License Agreement.

STEP 6: Use SFI Trademarks — SFI will provide the necessary artwork to use the SFI promotional and on-product labels and any certification statements to support your certification and trademark use. Contact us to work on promotion and showcase of your certification online or with physical structures within your communities.

A SPECIAL THANKS

In appreciation of the SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard Development Task Group for their service in the development of the SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard.

- *Jennifer Alger, Urban Wood Network*
- *Scott Altenhoff, Urban and Community Forestry Society*
- *Adrina Bardekjian (Michael Petryk alternate), Tree Canada*
- *Josh Behounek (Lee Mueller alternate), International Society of Arboriculture*
- *Patricia Billette, Wildlife Habitat Council*
- *Owen Croy Formerly City of Surrey, Canada*
- *Asia Dowtin, Michigan State University*
- *Rachel Holmes, The Nature Conservancy*
- *Sharon Jean-Philippe, University of Tennessee/TreeFund*
- *Ian Leahy, American Forests*
- *Rachel Miletti, National Association of Friendship Centers*
- *Geoff Kempter (Kieran Hunt alternate), Utility Arborist Association*
- *Cecil Konijnendijk, European Forum on Urban Forestry*
- *Jacques Larouche, Canadian Forest Service*
- *Mike Marshall, Marshall Tree Farm*
- *Margo Morrison, Nature Conservancy Canada*
- *Benjamin Osborne (Jessica Einhorn alternate), New York City*
- *David Sivyer, USDA Forest Service*
- *Kim Statham, City of Toronto*
- *Alana Tucker, Arbor Day Foundation*
- *Danielle Watson, Society of American Foresters*
- *Keith Wood, National Association of State Foresters*

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