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## Why Aren't All U.S. Forests Green Certified?

June 24th, 2010



It may come as a surprise to you, but only 10% of American forests have been third-party certified to the standards of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI).

But this doesn't mean the vast majority of American forests are managed irresponsibly. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth.

Forest owners are required to abide by forest management laws and regulations on the local, state and federal levels — and my experience has been that most people go above and beyond what's required by law.

So, why haven't more of the forests been third-party certified? It's simply reflective of the fact that more than half of the forest owners in the U. S. are private individuals or families — and many simply can't afford the costs of the third-party certification process. The FSC and SFI programs address this lack of economy of scale in their own ways.

FSC requires its certificate holders like Finch Paper to document that wood from these family-owned forests did not come from old growth forests, endangered forests or other forests with great environmental sensitivities. FSC refers to these well-managed, but non-certified, forests as "controlled wood sources."

SFI also allows the use of this family forest wood, but requires its certificate holders to provide family forest owners with education and outreach programs to help them manage their lands in the most responsible way.

I'm pleased to say that Finch foresters have been engaged in landowner outreach such as this for far longer than we've had SFI certification. I'm even more pleased to tell you that many family forest owners meet and even exceed the standards that would be required of them under a third-party certification audit. They may not have the certificate, but in most cases they're doing a responsible job nonetheless.

By allowing certified forest products companies like Finch Paper to utilize wood harvested from well-managed, but non-certified, family forests, FSC and SFI help provide family forest owners with a market for their wood,

### About This Blog

Beyond labels. Beyond slogans. This is where we live; with our feet in the forest. Very few paper mills still manage forests today, and we're one of them. In this engaging forum, we will help reduce the complexity surrounding "green" paper choices. Welcome to the Finch blogosphere.

### About Roger

Roger Dziengeleski is a Vice President and Senior Forester for Finch Paper LLC, the Glens Falls, NY-based uncoated paper manufacturer. ... more

### Recent Posts

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encouraging their continued adherence to responsible forestry practices, and helping keep our nation's forests as forests.

If you have questions about the FSC or SFI certification processes, please feel free to contact the [Finch forestry team](#).

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Finch Paper LLC  
One Glen Street  
Glens Falls, NY 12801  
1-800-833-9983  
[info@finchpaper.com](mailto:info@finchpaper.com)



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