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SFI[®] Partners with Heiltsuk Nation and Interfor to Protect Heritage Features on BC Coast

Vancouver, BC – The Heiltsuk Nation and Interfor are working together, with support from the Sustainable Forestry Initiative[®] Inc. (SFI[®]) on a project that will improve the understanding and management of culturally modified trees (CMTs), an important pre- and post contact heritage feature on British Columbia’s Pacific Coast.

The project, funded with a conservation grant from SFI, will record, track, manage and interpret, culturally modified trees through spatial analysis in geographic information systems (GIS). Culturally modified trees have been altered by First Nations people as part of their traditional reliance on forest resources. They may have a wide variety of features including scars where planks or bark have been removed. Trees altered before 1846 are protected under the *BC Heritage Conservation Act*.

“This project helps preserve historically important features,” says Kathy Abusow, President and CEO of SFI Inc. “We are honoured to be able to help the Heiltsuk people document their history and support the advancement of learning for forest companies in the area.”

“Culturally modified trees preserve a partial, but compelling record of Heiltsuk presence on the land and utilization of forest resources, and are an integral part of our culture and heritage,” says Jennifer Carpenter, Culture & Heritage Manager for the Heiltsuk Nation. “Detailed analysis of CMT types and locations helps us track and monitor these and other archeological features so they can be protected.”

“We recognize the unique ties that the Heiltsuk have to their lands and this project will help us to better identify, respect and manage this unique heritage resource,” says Rhiannon Poupard, Manager, First Nations & Forestry Partnerships for Interfor. “The database will help us fill in any gaps, and through spatial analysis in GIS we can produce maps and reports that improve our forest management.”

The work will take place in the traditional territory of the Heiltsuk Nation, which includes much of the area known as the Great Bear Rainforest.

Many forest operations in the region are certified to the SFI standard, and information gained through the database research will be shared with local First Nations and forest professionals. The two-year project received \$66,000 from the 2014 SFI Conservation and Community Partnerships Grant Program.

Since 2010, SFI has awarded more than 50 conservation partnership grants totaling more than \$1.9 million to support projects that promote sustainable forestry practices and engage communities. When leveraged with project partner contributions, that total investment exceeds \$7.1 million.

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For more information about The SFI Conservation Grant Program, visit sfiprogram.org/community-conservation/conservation-community-partnerships-grant-program/.

About SFI Inc.

SFI Inc. is an independent, nonprofit organization that is solely responsible for maintaining, overseeing and improving the internationally recognized Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) program. Across the United States and Canada, more than 100 million hectares are certified to the SFI forest management standard. In addition, the SFI program's unique fiber sourcing requirements promote responsible forest management on all suppliers' lands. SFI chain-of-custody (COC) certification tracks the percentage of fiber from certified forests, certified sourcing and post-consumer recycled content. SFI on-product labels identify both certified sourcing and COC claims to help consumers make responsible purchasing decisions. SFI Inc. is governed by a three-chamber board of directors representing environmental, social and economic sectors equally. Learn more at sfiprogram.org and sfiprogram.org/Buy-SFI/.

About The Heiltsuk Nation

The Heiltsuk Nation is centred in the community of Bella Bella. Descendants of its first generations have lived in what is now British Columbia's Central Coast region for over 10,000 years. To learn more about the Heiltsuk culture and history, visit www.hcec.ca/main.html

About Interfor

Interfor is a growth-oriented lumber company with operations in Canada and the United States. The Company has annual production capacity of 2.6 billion board feet and offers one of the most diverse lines of lumber products to customers around the world. For more information about Interfor, visit www.interfor.com.

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