



***K'ómoks and Qualicum First Nations will pilot SFI Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families, and Communities***

**September 17, 2018** – Comox, BC: K'ómoks First Nation, in partnership with Qualicum First Nation, welcomed TimberWest, the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB), and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Inc. (SFI) to the K'ómoks First Nation Band Office to announce that they will pilot the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families, and Communities*. This is to be implemented on Rosewall Forest Tenure Holdings Ltd, the jointly managed working forest of K'ómoks First Nation and Qualicum First Nation.

“K'ómoks has been actively managing its forests for a number of years, and we have recently started working with TimberWest on market access and other sustainability initiatives through our Memorandum of Understanding,” said Nicole Rempel, Chief of the K'ómoks First Nation. “When SFI approached us to consider this small-scale forest management certification, we knew it was something we wanted to implement, and we knew TimberWest could lend their expertise. Obtaining SFI certification is a good long-term decision for the benefit of our community and the future generations that will be managing the forests in the years to come.”

The SFI module is designed to reach smaller communities and elevate the benefits of well-managed forests through collaboration and conservation. The module includes measures to broaden practices to address the conservation of biodiversity, the use of forestry best management practices to protect water quality, soil productivity and reforestation, and the use of forest management and harvesting professionals. SFI is actively looking to engage with First Nations, woodlot owners or community forests interested in learning more about this innovative approach to third-party certification of small-scale forests.

“We have worked in close collaboration with the K'ómoks and Qualicum First Nations on business and educational opportunities for many years,” said Jeff Zweig, President and CEO of TimberWest. “The SFI pilot project is an important step forward in further improving outcomes on the forest land base and opening up greater market opportunities for their wood. We are pleased to share our expertise on forest certification, and provide support on the required auditing processes applicable to the environmental, social and economic values underlying SFI certification.”

“The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business believes in strengthening aboriginal communities and promoting prosperous relationships based on mutual respect.” said JP Gladu, President and CEO of the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. “We are so happy to see TimberWest, a PAR certified company, come together with another one of our partners, SFI, and K'ómoks First Nation and Qualicum First Nation to add all of our strengths, and see the benefits not only for the community's socio-economics but also for the environment.”

“I would like to thank K'ómoks First Nation and Qualicum First Nation for their leadership and commitment to managing forests sustainably,” said Kathy Abusow, President and CEO of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. “SFI is committed to building relationships with Indigenous communities. We are so pleased to have signed an MOU with the CCAB to promote the Progressive Aboriginal Relations program (PAR) to SFI Program Participants. We are therefore thrilled that TimberWest, the first company to achieve certification on private lands in Canada, and also the first SFI Program Participant to achieve bronze certification with PAR, is supporting the first pilot effort on Indigenous Lands for the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module*.”

The SFI Forest Partners Program® provides financial support to grow certification across the supply chain. The partners include Meredith, the National Geographic Society, Macmillan Publishers, Pearson, and Hearst Enterprises.



#### **About K'ómoks First Nation:**

For thousands of years indigenous people occupied the shoreline of eastern Vancouver Island in a place referred to as, “the land of plenty”. This Land of Plenty stretched from what is known today as Kelsey Bay south to Hornby and Denman Island and included the watershed and estuary of the Puntledge River. Please visit <http://www.komoks.ca>

#### **About Qualicum First Nation:**

The Qualicum First Nation is a First Nations band government located in Qualicum Bay at the mouth of the Big Qualicum River, 15 minutes north of Qualicum Beach on Vancouver Island, BC. Please visit <https://qualicumfirstnation.com>

#### **About SFI:**

(SFI) SFI® Inc. is a sustainability leader that stands for future forests. We are an independent, non-profit organization that provides supply chain assurances, delivers conservation leadership, and supports environmental education and community engagement. SFI works with the forest sector, brand owners, conservation groups, resource professionals, landowners, educators, local communities, Indigenous peoples, governments, and universities. SFI standards and on-product labels help consumers make responsible purchasing decisions. Additionally, we oversee the SFI Forest Partners® Program, which aims to increase supply of certified forest products, the SFI Conservation and Community Partnerships Grant Program, which funds research and community building, and Project Learning Tree®, which educates teachers and youth about forests and the environment. SFI Inc. is governed by an independent three chamber board of directors representing environmental, social, and economic sectors equally. SFI believes caring for forests improves everyone’s quality of life. Learn more: [sfiprogram.org](http://sfiprogram.org).

#### **About TimberWest:**

TimberWest is the first BC forest company certified to the Progressive Aboriginal Relations program under the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. The company is third-party certified under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, and has been operating on the BC Coast for over 100 years. TimberWest is a Canadian company owned by two major Canadian public service pension fund.

#### **About CCAB:**

CCAB builds bridges between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, businesses, and communities through diverse programming, providing tools, training, network building, major business awards, and national events. **Please visit:** <https://www.ccab.com>

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