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Bi-National Effort Initiated to Establish Accredited Standards for North American Forest Carbon Accounting

[Washington, DC] —A broad range of forestry stakeholders, including industry and environmental groups in both the U.S. and Canada, have come together to help address climate change. Together they will develop bi-national consensus standards for determining how carbon absorbed in North American forests will be measured and counted. “Forestry across North America is a very important component of both Canadian and U.S. economies, and provides an important solution in helping to address climate change,” said Michael Goergen, Executive Vice-President and CEO of the Society of American Foresters (SAF), and Chair of the Forest Carbon Standards Committee that will develop the standards. “Organizations in both countries have similar goals for reducing greenhouse gases and this bi-national effort recognizes the contributions of forests in helping combat global warming.”

Being developed under procedures accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) (<http://www.ansi.org>), the forest carbon measurement and accounting standards will incorporate the technical knowledge of the forestry, carbon trading, and environmental communities into approaches that are scientifically sound, economically feasible, and environmentally positive. Having consistent, transparent standards will be valuable to the forestry community, climate change program administrators, and the public.

“There is widespread interest in defining forest carbon credit accounting rules in state, provincial, regional, and national climate programs. The diversity of forest carbon accounting rules and a desire for standardization across jurisdictions and trading regimes have given rise to this important effort,” noted John Pineau, Executive Director, Canadian Institute of Forestry – Institut forestier du Canada (CIF/IFC). “The new consensus standards will bring together existing and emerging efforts, seek consensus on the resolution of differences, and provide a broadly-supported basis for forest carbon protocols in both countries.”

Organized by the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) (<http://www.afandpa.org>), Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC) (<http://www.fpac.ca>), SAF (<http://www.safnet.org>), and (CIF/IFC) (<http://www.cif-ifc.org>), the standards development process will be carried out by a Forest Carbon Standards Committee of approximately 40 individuals representing a broad range of forest landowners, environmental organizations, forest products industry, federal, state, and provincial government agencies, universities, carbon traders, and others.

The ANSI-accredited committee process will involve all interests affected by the proposed standards. The Committee will also conform to the processes established by the Standards Council of Canada, with the intent of achieving recognized status for the standards in both countries. The proposed standards must be agreed to by a “consensus body,” representative of the affected parties, followed by a public comment period.

For more information about this effort please visit www.forestcarbonstandards.org or contact Neil Sampson, Coordinator for the Secretariat, at 703-924-0773, neilsampson@cs.com.

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