

An Introduction and Perspectives on Forest Certification

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Abstract

Leadership forest certification systems can provide valuable independent measures of more ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable forest management, thereby empowering businesses and other consumers wishing to make informed purchasing decisions for forest products, supporting resource managers who use and adopt leadership forest and ecosystem management practices, and contributing to broader discussions over resource management and conservation. However, questions remain over which forest certification systems merit recognition as leadership systems, the limits of any certification systems' abilities to (by themselves) halt global deforestation and achieve other outcomes, and how certification systems will respond to climate change and other priority and emerging challenges. This article introduces the concepts and basic components of forest certification, outlines considerations for researchers wishing to compare certification systems, and highlights other topics of interest for the evolution of certification and its role in responsible forest management, forest conservation, and sustainable business practices.