



**Press Release**  
For Immediate Release

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## **State of Minnesota Achieves Milestone in North American Forest Management**

Scientific Certification Systems issues “well-managed” forest certification to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for 4.8 million acres of state forest lands

St. Paul, MN -- January 5, 2006 -- Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) announces certification of 4.8 million acres of Minnesota state forest lands in accordance with the Forest Stewardship Council's (FSC) international standards for responsible forest management. FSC-endorsed certification of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administered forest lands confirms that the forests are being well-managed and establishes a tool for facilitating continued progress in forest management practices.

“As the largest state forest certification in the U.S. to date, this FSC certification is a milestone for Minnesota, forest management and the United States,” says Dr. Robert Hrubes, SCS senior vice-president. “We congratulate Governor Pawlenty, the Department of Natural Resources and the people of Minnesota on this achievement.”

The Forest Stewardship Council is an internationally recognized certification program for forest stewardship that promotes environmentally responsible, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests. Because the FSC system is built on stakeholder involvement, it promotes cooperation among various groups interested in responsible forest management. Scientific Certification Systems is an FSC-accredited certification body.

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During the FSC certification process, SCS empanelled a multidisciplinary team of specialists to audit forest management practices against FSC principles and criteria, a set of international certification standards unparalleled in rigor. In the course of some 80 auditor-days of effort, the team collected and analyzed written materials, conducted interviews with regional and local stakeholders, and completed an extensive field audit of DNR managed forestlands around the state – before evaluating results and then making a decision to award certification.

Like other multi-use forest lands, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources balances the sometimes conflicting goals of protecting forest land while supporting economic and recreational opportunities. Certification is a voluntary process and by engaging in the FSC certification process, Minnesota DNR submitted to third-party examination of its forest management practices and the manner in which it endeavors to strike a balance in the management of the state forests.

“We are committed to managing the state forest lands in a responsible manner that maintains the integrity of the forest while meeting the desires of our citizens,” says David Epperly, Division of Forestry director at the Department of Natural Resources. “Certification validates what we are doing right and offers us a tool for making further progress.”

Awards of certification typically include specific management tasks that must be completed within an agreed upon time to demonstrate ongoing progress in forest management practices. For instance, Minnesota DNR has agreed to develop and pursue solutions that are responsive to legitimate demands for recreational use opportunities in the state forests while minimizing adverse resource impacts. Additionally, DNR will further identify and manage areas of high conservation value, as well as enhance biodiversity retention within harvest areas.

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FSC certification includes annual audits against FSC standards and the monitoring of progress in agreed upon subject areas. “Minnesota has a demonstrated track record of active and responsible management of its natural resources,” says Dr. Hrubes,” “and FSC certification both validates and strengthens the state’s stewardship efforts.”

### **About Scientific Certification Systems**

SCS is an independent certifier of environmental, food quality and food purity claims. Over two decades, SCS has developed internationally recognized standards and certification programs aimed at spurring the highest level of environmental and quality performance. Its programs span a wide cross-section of the economy, recognizing accomplishments in the fields of agricultural production, food processing and handling, forestry, fisheries, energy, green building, consumer and business product manufacturing, and retail. As an accredited certification body of the FSC operating globally, SCS has certified 20-million acres of natural forests and plantations. For more information about SCS, visit [www.scscertified.com](http://www.scscertified.com) or call 510-452-8000.

### **About the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources works with citizens to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life. For more information, visit [www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us)

### **About FSC**

FSC is a nonprofit organization devoted to encouraging the responsible management of the world’s forests. FSC sets high standards that ensure forestry is practiced in an environmentally responsible, socially beneficial, and economically viable way. Landowners and companies that sell timber or forest products seek certification as a way to verify to consumers that they have practiced forestry consistent with FSC standards. Independent certification organizations are accredited by FSC to carry out assessments of forest management to determine if standards have been met. There are currently 21-million acres of FSC-certified forestland in North America and 100-million acres globally. For more information, please visit [www.fscus.org](http://www.fscus.org).

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