

Sappi Shares the Papermaker's Perspective on Sustainable Forestry

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As an industry leader with decades of field experience and technical knowledge, we are compelled to show how sustainable forestry results in healthier forests and abundant wildlife.

There is not a single matter related to papermaking that touches each of us as personally and emotionally as forestry. Simply put - people love trees. It is troubling that some people envision responsible paper manufacturer as engaging in deforestation when in fact, our suppliers are harvesting sustainably with a keen vigilance about promoting the regeneration that keeps forests thriving. Forest management not only helps create habitats for animals that call woodlands home, but also ensures clean air, protected soil, better water quality and the promotion of biodiversity.

Explaining the benefits and values of a working forest is often a conversation that pits emotion against science. While many people assume the best thing for a forest is to leave it in its natural state, few understand that variations in age class within a forest helps to promote biodiversity of both plant and animal species.

Management practices cover aspects from harvest planning and tree selection (or exemption) to road building and water protection. Harvesting equipment has evolved to lessen residual damage from felling trees. And depending on the type of environment where bunchers and other vehicles are used, there are lots of wheel options available that are light on the ground while providing just the right amount of soil disturbance to promote regrowth. Roads are constructed with crowns, culverts and ditches to ensure proper drainage. Stabilization and erosion protection are also added to skid trails. Tree tops are also used on the trails which get turned into mulch ultimately decomposing so the nutrients remain on site.

Of course, paper companies didn't invent the concept of forest management. As noted by Ross Korpela, Sappi's senior wood procurement manager in Cloquet, MN, "Mother Nature has been managing forests forever". Natural occurrences such as fire, disease, insect infestations and high winds create landscape level events that lead to regeneration of younger forests. But of course these events can also be highly destructive and costly to taxpayers. In fact the USDA budgeted* over \$2 billion in 2012 for wildland fire management within the Forest Service budget. Korpella adds, "Modern forest techniques mimic the gentler aspects of Mother Nature while providing the fiber to meet society's needs. That means we are cutting trees in the manner nature intended. The result is we are creating better forests while also providing economic and environmental benefits to the entire population.

To learn more about sustainable forestry, aspects of ecology in managed forests, Sappi's best practices and how the industry optimizes the use of the whole tree - visit Sappi's [website](#) to download or request a copy of our eQ Journal Issue 4: [Taking the Guilt Out of Paper](#).

This blog was originally posted April 2012 on [The Environmental Quotient](#).

*View current [data](#).

Laura M. Thompson, PhD, Director of Technical Marketing and Sustainable Development, chairs Sappi's Sustainability Council comprising representatives from all of Sappi North America's business segments, manufacturing facilities and corporate functions. Dr. Thompson also represents the North American region on Sappi's Global Sustainability Council, which meets regularly to share best practices and maintain the global charter.