

# CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS – WHAT TO LOOK FOR

## **Strong Environmental Standards**

*For example:* Old growth, endangered species' habitats, and other endangered forests are consistently protected. Forests are protected from conversion to plantations and nonforest land uses. Water quality is consistently protected. Use of clearcuts and toxic chemicals is restricted. Old growth and endangered species' habitats are restored on portions of larger properties. Significant portions of existing plantations are restored to managed natural forest conditions. Erosion, soil productivity, maintenance of ecological components in logging units, management for a natural diversity of tree species, and other technical considerations are addressed.

## **Strong Economic Standards**

*For example:* Timber harvest levels are limited to timber growth levels. Companies reinvest in local communities. Opportunities to market a diversity of forest products are explored.

## **Strong Social Standards**

*For example:* Workers are paid competitive wages and allowed to organize. Indigenous peoples' rights are respected. All international, national, and local treaties and laws are followed.

## **Independence and Credible Claims**

*For example:* The system is independently funded, and governed at all levels by a stakeholder body that is inclusive and balances environmental, economic, and social stakeholders. Certifiers have no conflicts of interest. Chain-of-custody monitoring ensures products actually come from certified forests. Labels accurately describe product content. Non-certified product content may not originate from controversial sources.

## **Strong Certification Procedures**

*For example:* Certifiers consistently evaluate environmental results of forest management "on the ground." Certifiers required to consult stakeholders during certification assessments. Certifiers are consistently accredited by the certification system.

**Sources/For More Information:** Contact American Lands' Forest Biodiversity Program.