



ANNOUNCEMENT

(February 9, 2015)

Tropical Forest Foundation Announces Headquarters Closing *Celebrates 25 Years and a Legacy of Stewardship in the Tropics*

After a quarter-century since its founding, the Tropical Forest Foundation (TFF) headquarters will cease operations on March 31, 2015. Major demonstration, training, research, and outreach centers established by TFF in Brazil, Guyana and Indonesia will continue to operate independently.

TFF was founded in 1990 by the International Wood Products Association. At the time, many were frustrated with a lack of progress in slowing tropical deforestation, and tropical timber boycotts and bans were a common response. The situation created conflict between environmental groups, industry, and community leaders within some tropical countries, with no obvious solution.

Thomas Lovejoy, then Assistant Secretary for Environmental and External Affairs for the Smithsonian Institution, had a few months earlier convened a group of environmental, industry, government, and academic leaders to discuss the issue. They quickly concluded that boycotts and bans would only serve to decrease the economic value of forests and thereby increase the likelihood of forest conversion, legally or illegally, to other land uses such as agriculture. Rather than boycott, it was recognized that better management systems were needed for tropical forests that would provide income to local people while fostering conservation. TFF was created to pursue that goal.

TFF was an unprecedented partnership formed between the conservation community, government, and industry. Together, programs and projects were developed in cooperation with those in tropical countries that sought to build upon local knowledge and existing models of responsible forest management. Initial work led to identification of the potential of reduced impact logging (RIL) techniques and practices in reducing impacts linked to harvest activity.

The first step was to investigate the costs and benefits of RIL, an investigation that yielded positive results. That, in turn, resulted in demonstration, training, research, and outreach centers focused on forest management and reduced impact logging, first in Brazil, then Indonesia, Guyana, and Gabon. Extensive on-the-ground training was provided to those working in industry and in government oversight agencies, students, and community enterprises. Programs introduced new concepts and practices designed to minimize forest

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impacts while emphasizing protection of non-timber forest values. As these centers developed they provided training and outreach services to surrounding countries, greatly expanding their influence.

Over the years TFF has developed and maintained a Reduced Impact Logging Standard as well as a transparent system for verifying compliance and system integrity through the supply chain. It also put in place a Forest-Market Linking Program connecting producers and consumers of sustainably harvested tropical wood products. Moreover, TFF often served as a key player in bringing industrial operations into compliance with requirements of forest certification programs such as the Forest Stewardship Council. At least 20 forest concessions achieved FSC certification as a result of TFF-led education and training.

More than 10,000 individuals have received TFF RIL training in the tropics since such training began in 1996. In 2013 alone, TFF's affiliated training centers in South American, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific region impacted over 2.4 million hectares – nearly 3.5 million acres – of forest across three continents. A great many have applied what they learned, with tangible results, and RIL has subsequently become a permanent part of a number of industry, trade school, and university training and educational programs. In addition, TFF's collaboration with a number of tropical forest researchers resulted in numerous scientific papers and several books that have increased understanding of tropical forest dynamics and management potential. It is clear that TFF has literally changed the face of logging in those countries in which it has operated. And, it has provided a template for sustainable management far into the future.

For all who worked so hard to bring about change, it is uplifting to look back on all that has been accomplished, with TFF achieving its' primary goals and to consider the continuing legacy of ongoing efforts to improve tropical forest management around the world.

The closure of the Tropical Forest Foundation headquarters offices and preparation of this announcement have been the responsibility of the following ad-hoc committee authorized by the TFF Board of Directors:

Thomas Lovejoy, TFF Founding Chairman
Keister Evans, TFF Founding Executive Director
Peter Schlobach, Past President (Representative of Industry)
Jim Bowyer, Past Chairman (Representative of the Academic Community)
Bruce Cabarle, Long Standing Member of the TFF Board (Representative of the NGO Community)

Steve Tourek, TFF President (2010-2015)
Wendy Baer, Founding Member of the Board