

CASE STUDY

# Improving forest management in Appalachia



To help conserve Appalachian forests, we're working with Rainforest Alliance and other companies to bring more acres of woodlands under management practices certified by the Forest Stewardship Council®.

## The story

Much of the woodlands of south and central Appalachia in the southeastern United States is owned by thousands of smallholders on tracts that average a few dozen acres in size. And unlike timber companies, most owners of Appalachian woodlands don't view their forests primarily as a cash crop. They see them first as a place for recreation and as a signature feature of the landscape.

Until recently, landowners in the region didn't typically harvest timber more than once or twice in their lifetimes. But increasingly, owners are being enticed to sell their lands to developers, who cut down large swaths of trees for housing or retail stores. When the woods go, much that's irreplaceable—environmentally, economically and culturally—goes with them.

In 2015, Avery Dennison joined the Appalachian Woodlands Alliance, a partnership that also includes Rainforest Alliance, Staples, Inc., Columbia Forest Products and paper maker Domtar. The goal of the partnership: to encourage more woodland owners in south and central Appalachia to manage their land according to Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) practices.

FSC is an independent nonprofit that seeks to protect working forests for future generations by setting standards for, and certifying, responsible forest management. Certification confirms that a specific area of forest is being managed according to FSC principles and criteria, which address environmental impact, workers' rights, the rights of indigenous people and more. By convincing more forest owners to get FSC certification, the Appalachian Woodlands Alliance hopes to preserve the environmental and economic value for generations to come.

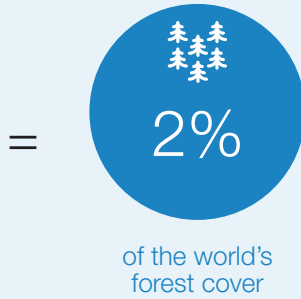
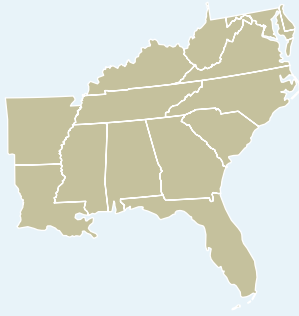


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## The southern U.S. accounts for:



## Making the case, one owner at a time

The greatest challenge in converting more Appalachian woodlands to FSC management is making contact with so many individual landowners, says Richard Donovan, senior vice president and vice president of forestry for Rainforest Alliance. It requires reaching out, owner by owner, and showing how managing and harvesting their woodlands sustainably can pay dividends as good, if not better, than conventional logging.

“The point isn’t to say, ‘Hey, if you want companies to buy your wood, you need to adopt certain environmental standards,’” says Donovan. “The point is to show owners how sustainable forest management and FSC are in their best interest so that they say, ‘Why wouldn’t I do this?’”

The project is in its early stages, but initial plans call for leveraging several resources already in place—like local foresters who can make the case for sustainable forestry and existing FSC certification programs. The project will also engage “ambassadors” from within the local forest industry to help spread the word. And the focus won’t just be on economics.

“The wildlife in these woods is really important to the local culture,” says Andrew Goldberg, a Rainforest Alliance project manager. “Deer hunting is huge. So is birding. So we’re also going to speak to that—that if you love the animals of this place, we need your help in preserving their habitat.”

## Partners in sustainability

Avery Dennison has worked with Rainforest Alliance for a number of years. The respected NGO helped us develop our Responsible Paper Policy, which, among other things, calls for us to identify and disclose the sources of pulp, wood fiber and paper in our products and to maximize the use of recycled content and fiber sourced from FSC-certified operations. Our goal is to source at least 70 percent of our paper from FSC-certified sources by 2025. Additionally, we’re supporting Rainforest Alliance efforts to promote sustainable forestry in Honduras through the Avery Dennison Foundation.

“The future of our business depends on a sustainable paper supply,” says Roland Simon, vice president for global procurement and global sustainability leader. “More important, the future of the planet depends on healthy forests. Most of the woodlands the Alliance is focusing on contain hardwoods, which we don’t even use in our supply chain. But we understand the importance of conserving them as an environmental and economic resource.”

According to Avery Dennison Director of Sustainability Renae Kulis, the Appalachian Woodlands Alliance is an example of how Avery Dennison is reaching beyond its own operations and using its influence to create sustainable systems throughout its value chain.

“We’re not just expecting our suppliers to figure this out alone,” says Kulis. “We’re digging deeper, looking at ways we can work with the industry to ensure responsible harvesting and ultimately longevity of supply.” ■



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**North Asia**  
5th Floor, Hongye Park  
1801 Hongmei Road,  
Xuhui District 200233,  
Shanghai, China  
+86 21 33951888

**South Asia Pacific and Sub-Saharan Africa**  
460 Alexandra Road,  
PSA Building  
#28-02/03, Singapore 119963  
+65.6349.0333

**Europe**  
Willem Einthovenstraat 11  
2342 BH Oegstgeest  
The Netherlands  
+31 85 000 2000

**Latin America**  
Rodovia Vinhedo-  
Viracopos, KM 77  
CEP 13280-000  
Vinhedo - SP, Brazil  
+55 19 3876-7600

**North America**  
8080 Norton Pkwy  
Mentor, OH 44060  
800.944.8511