THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES is currently positioned as the wood basket for the world. Across the region, more than five million acres, an area larger than the great state of Delaware, are logged every year to produce forest products including pulp and paper. How those forests are logged and where that logging occurs is absolutely critical to the future of our region. In the largest wood, pulp and paper producing region in the world, the forest products industry is one of the key drivers in the future of our Southern Forests. Dogwood Alliance’s 2015 Green Grades Paper Industry Progress Report evaluates the performance of five leading pulp and paper companies in the paper and packaging sectors making a broad range of products coming out of the Southern US. This report offers important information to the large customer companies that have come to rely on Dogwood Alliance as a watchdog and trusted stakeholder on forest sustainability procurement issues.
**DOGWOOD ALLIANCE** is proud of our role as a catalyst in the greening of the forest products industry. We’ve earned this position through our hard-hitting public campaigns and a clear understanding of the on-the-ground impacts of industrial forest management. Our success is attributable to our grassroots investigations and many years of successful collaboration on supply chain improvements with the largest players in the industry in the South.

Companies still need to compete for business on price and quality, but now to be successful, forest products companies are, for the first time, required by the marketplace to compete on environmental performance in the woods where the companies source wood and fiber for their products. This report analyzes the performance of five large pulp, paper and forest products companies in the region: **Domtar, International Paper, Georgia-Pacific, Packaging Corporation of America - Boise and MeadWestvaco**. These companies produce everything from office paper and corrugate for boxes and paper packaging to fluff pulp and lumber. The report focuses on five key metrics that hone in on these companies’ impacts in the forest. These metrics make up an important roadmap necessary for progress on sustainability issues in the woods and give clear guidance on a proven way forward to address these vital issues. Many of the largest companies across the sector are, in one way or another, already deeply involved in the work of the indicators and metrics set out in this survey, while others have yet to make significant strides forward.

Our new Paper Industry Progress Report streamlines sustainability data to focus on five key indicators directly connected to industry leaders’ performance in the forests. By establishing indicators and criteria and assessing progress, this report provides transparency in assessing how these new corporate policies are actually working on the ground. This report also inspires a competitive race to the top and to create the space for deeper engagement between the public, large purchasers of forest products and pulp and paper industry actors operating in the woods of the Southern US.
KEY CONCLUSIONS FROM THE 2015 GREEN GRADES REPORT INCLUDE:

01 Protecting Endangered Forests, the last, best places on the landscape: Georgia-Pacific stands out as the leader in committing to protect these forests. They have committed to protect these forests, invest the time and money to identify these special places on the landscape and build the internal systems to keep that wood out of their supply chain.

02 Buying wood from well-managed forests certified to the Forest Stewardship Council gold standard in forest management certification: Domtar has jumped ahead as the leader in bringing FSC certification to the South.

03 Working to maintain natural forests instead of monoculture industrial tree plantations: Georgia-Pacific is the leader in committing to protect these forests and investing the time and money to identify them on the landscape and use their market pull to support the maintenance of natural hardwood forests in their supply chain.
Leading on forest conservation initiatives around its facilities and the region: **International Paper** has stepped up and committed to integrate conservation into their wood and fiber procurement while investing in land conservation and restoration.

Recognizing the importance of forests as carbon sinks to protect us from climate change: only **Domtar** has done significant work to integrate managing forest carbon into its procurement practices. The rest of the industry is lagging behind and we need to step up advocacy efforts to ensure forests are recognized for their carbon benefits.

Dogwood Alliance’s 2015 Green Grades report details strong environmental progress from an industry at the very heart of the future of Southern Forests. Just a decade ago, there would have been only red marks across all the indicators, and today the forest products industry is in the beginnings of a green transformation. Unfortunately, the report also clearly recognizes the long road ahead. Now is the time for companies to shift from the old way of thinking to 21st Century Forest Management that places more value on the services that our forests provide when left standing, services like clean drinking water, carbon storage, wildlife habitat and flood protection, rather than simply the forest products they produce.