

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**MENOMINEE  
TRIBAL ENTERPRISES**  
**Maeqtekuahkihkiw Kew Kanāhwihtahquaq**  
“The Forest Keepers”



***The Menominee Forest-Based  
Sustainable Development  
Tradition***

**1997**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*The Forest Keepers* document has been developed to tell the story of the **Menominee Forest-Based Sustainable Development Tradition**. This story could not have been told if it were not for the tremendous wisdom of and commitment to sustainable practices and principles by our Menominee ancestors.

This document was produced cooperatively by:

- The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin (MITOW) - Environmental Services Department, Mr. Gary Schuettpelz, Director
- The College of the Menominee Nation - Sustainable Development Institute - Dr. Verna Fowler, President
- Menominee Tribal Enterprises, Mr. Lawrence Waukau, President

Although many individuals provided extremely important contributions to the development and completion of this project, the following people must receive special acknowledgement:

- Mr. Marshall Pecore, MTE Forest Manager, principal author
- Mr. John Koss and Mr. Doug Cox, MITOW Environmental Services Department for orchestrating inter and intra-governmental working relationships and overall project management
- Ms. Paula Huff and Mr. Keith Milner for authoring several sections of this document
- Mr. Gary Mejchar for final production coordination.

*The Forest Keepers* Project Advisory Group included:

- Mr. David Grignon (Nahwahquaw), MITOW Historic Preservation Department
- Ms. Betty Jo Wozniack, MITOW Program Coordinator
- Mr. Marshall Pecore, MTE Forest Manager
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- Mr. Randy Williams, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Mr. Tom Davis, Dean, College of the Menominee Nation and Director of the Menominee Sustainable Development Institute.

This team worked together to ensure the accuracy of information contained in this document. Finally, the development and printing of *The Forest Keepers* would not have been possible without the funding support of the Environmental Protection Agency-Great Lakes National Programming Office. We would like to specifically acknowledge Ms. Karen Holland for her availability, review, and advice throughout the project.



## ***Pōsōh!*** (Hello!)

It is tradition among the Menominee People to open an event with a message of thanksgiving to the Great Spirit.

Today we ask for a clear understanding and appreciation of the great bounty we have inherited from our ancestors. We ask for the wisdom to recognize our responsibilities as stewards of today's resources and to ensure their safekeeping for future generations.

This bounty cannot be measured in financial terms alone, but must include a balance of environmental, economic, cultural, community and spiritual values. Today celebrate the interconnectedness of the Creator's design so eloquently expressed by Mother Earth on the Menominee Indian Reservation.



*Menominee Tribal School Little Bear Singers offer a song during the dedication of logs which MTE donated as the masts for the Wisconsin Lakes Schooner Education Association Schooner Project.*

## ***A Note to Visitors to the Menominee Reservation:***

Visitors on guided tours to the Reservation are invited to appreciate our forest, quality wood products, traditional values and culture, and community members as much as we appreciate them.



*Wildlife abounds in the Menominee Forest*

Because of the wisdom and commitment of our ancestors used in the practices and principles of sustainable development, while on the Reservation you will be able to travel through a forest where you will find:

- towering white pines, some of which are more than 200 years old and 150 feet tall, left to provide seed stock for the future
- thriving species used as indicators for ecosystem health such as the Eastern Hemlock and Canadian Yew
- eagles soaring over treetops, and cormorants feeding their young in the old mill pond, and
- bobcat, bear and a great host of other wildlife species, both large and small.

***Note that strict tribal environmental protection standards are vigorously enforced so that we can maintain our high quality streams, rivers, lakes, soils and air.***



October 1996 Timber Harvesting Systems for Sustained Forest Management Symposium.

The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin is a federally-recognized sovereign nation, a status which gives us self-governing powers, privileges and responsibilities. We make our own tribal laws and ordinances, and have an established tribal police force and a tribal court system as provided in the *Constitution and Bylaws of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin*.

As Menominee people we are proud of our

achievements in forest-based sustainable development. Join us by celebrating what we have inherited and learn how we are managing our resources and economy for future generations. Also, you are asked to reflect upon the fragile nature of our environment as well as our individual and collective responsibilities to act as stewards for a sustainable future and join in those efforts.

*Visitors interested in obtaining information about guided tours of the forest or wood processing facility must contact either the Menominee Tribal Enterprises offices or the College of the Menominee Nation Sustainable Development Institute office in advance. You will be provided with a Menominee Visitor's Guidelines pamphlet which outlines the rules and regulations that non-Menominee visitors are obliged to follow. Please be advised that if you leave the main roads and are not part of a sanctioned tour group, you are trespassing and will be prosecuted.*

**Menominee Tribal Enterprises: (715) 756-2311**

**Menominee Forestry Center: (715) 799-3896**

# THE MENOMINEE CERTIFIED “WELL MANAGED” FOREST AND WOOD PRODUCTS MANUFACTUR- ING OPERATIONS:

## MENOMINEE TRIBAL ENTERPRISES



### *The Menominee Tradition of Producing Environmentally Responsible Forest Products*

The MTE logo above reflects the balance between the environment (represented by the circle of trees), the community (represented by the Menominee Indian head) and the economy (represented by the saw mill image). This balance is now central to the emerging global literature and program development associated with the term “Sustainable Development.”

Examples of evolving sustainable development thought are drawn from the January 1996 *Northwest Report*:

“The fortunes of local economies, communities and ecosystems go hand in hand.”

“Sustainability means thinking in terms of whole systems, with all their interconnections, consequences, and feedback loops. This way of thinking avoids artificial and often misleading categories, such as humanity versus nature or jobs versus the environment.”

**“Sustainable development of human culture means improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems.”**

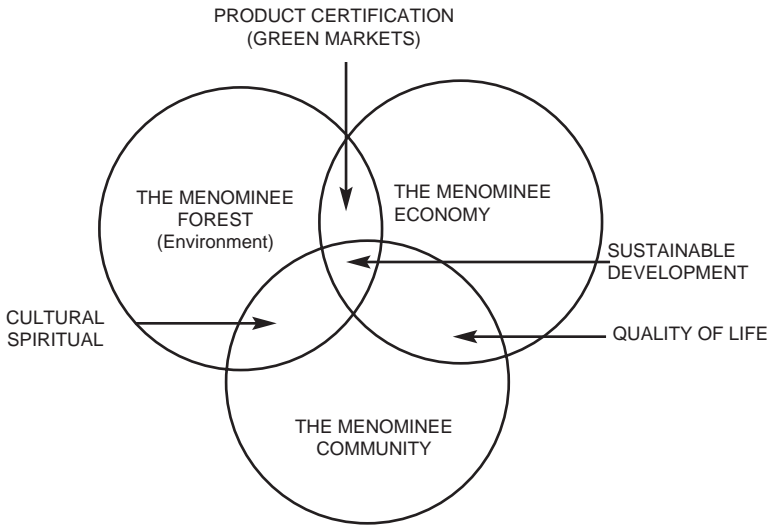
**“Sustainability means living on interest, not drawing down capital. The idea of sustained yield of natural resources is far from new; it means, for example, harvesting trees at a rate within the forest’s capacity to regrow.”**

The Menominee People have long recognized the need for balance between environment, community and economy both in the short term and for future generations. Menominee culture and tradition teaches us never to take more resources than are produced within natural cycles so that all life can be sustained. Chief Oshkosh, an early Tribal Chief, proposed the idea after Tribal veterans returning from the Civil War presented to him the idea of cutting across the reservation at such a rate that there would always be timber ready to cut.

These traditional beliefs are the foundation of the management practices and principles of today’s Menominee Tribal Enterprises (MTE) operations. This concept of sustainability in the management of our forest allows us to experience a traditional quality of life from an intact, diverse, productive and healthy forest ecosystem on the Reservation.

We are now in the process of expanding upon the accomplishments related to sustainable forestry through the establishment of an integrated Menominee Forest-Based Community Sustainable Development Initiative. This initiative is represented visually by the figure of three inter-lined circles representing the Menominee environment, community and economy.





**The Menominee Forest-Based Community Sustainable Development Initiative has been developed in cooperation with the following partners:**

- The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin: the departments of Environmental Services, Community Development, Economic Development, and Historic Preservation, among others
- College of the Menominee Nation: Menominee Sustainable Development Institute
- Menominee Nation/County Cooperative Extension Service
- Menominee Tribal Enterprises
- Area financial institutions
- University of Wisconsin System: professors, researchers and students
- University of Wisconsin Extension Specialists Network
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Wisconsin Energy Bureau
- United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs
- United States Environmental Protection Agency
- United States Forest Service
- Foundation Partners: The Ford Foundation, First Nations Development Institute Eagle Staff Fund
- An array of private sector business and project consultants.

In a dynamic cooperative effort, these partners have launched a variety of initiatives such as:

- The Menominee Advisory Council on Sustainable Development
- Sustainable Development strategic/action planning processes
- A variety of primary research projects
- A Forest-Based Sustainable Development Demonstration Project
- Video productions
- A series of print projects
- Conferences and workshops
- Internet initiatives
- Visitor tour development
- Renewable Energy Initiative
- Industrial Safety Initiatives

As we further refine and advance our knowledge, skills and technology, we are realizing the dividends from our commitment to Forest-Based Sustainable Development. This is illustrated by the following examples:

- Environmentally:** Advances in science and timber harvesting systems are increasing the efficiency, forest vigor and quality of the forest experience
- Communally:** An ever-increasingly educated Menominee and evolving pool of professionals who enjoy a traditional quality of life on the Menominee Reservation
- Economically:** Accelerated MTE market share/price premiums in national and international niche markets for quality certified primary and secondary (value-added) wood products.

Forest management and timber harvesting operations began shortly after the Menominee Indian Reservation was created by treaty in 1854. The first sawmill on the Reservation was established that same year at Keshena

Falls. Later that same site was the location of the Reservation's first hydroelectric facility. The present mill at Neopit was built in the 1906-1908 period and continues today.



*Aerial view of the Menominee Tribal Enterprises sawmill at Neopit.*

For more than 140 years, sustainable (sustained yield) forestry has been practiced on the Reservation. Wood processing operations have run continuously for that same period of time.

As a result, the elements of sustainability are interwoven into the fabric of Menominee history, culture, spirituality, ethics, government, business and resource management, and our way of life. The Tribe and MTE have formalized this commitment in legal documents such as: The Menominee Tribal Enterprises Management Plan; The Forest Management Plan; the Trust and Management Agreement; and the Menominee Constitution.

For example, the 1983-1997 Forest Management Plan states that “The management goal of the Menominee Tribe is to maximize the quantity and quality of sawtimber grown under sustained-yield management principles, while maintaining the diversity of native species.” Further, the Tribe

guaranteed that the forest would continue to operate on a sustained-yield basis by incorporating the sustained-yield provision of the Trust and Management Agreement into Article XII of the Constitution.

Menominee Tribal Enterprises has been charged with the responsibility of managing the forest, which is held in trust by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior for the benefit of the Menominee People. The Secretary of the Interior and the Menominee Tribe have a legal responsibility to manage the forest under sustained-yield principles.

The 140 year history of forest resource use and management of the Menominee forest stands as a practical example of sustainable forestry -- forestry that is ecologically viable, economically feasible, and socially desirable. This refers not only to forest products and social benefits, but also to wildlife, site productivity, and other ecosystem functions.

The Tribe has learned from previous generations how a forest ecosystem interacts. We understand that the whole resource is needed to protect any part.

The Menominee Forest stands as a monument to the foresight of our ancestors who recognized the bounty they inherited. Today, because they acted as responsible stewards of these resources for future generations we enjoy, cherish, and are sustained by the resources so wisely planned for and managed by them. Knowing that short term sacrifices must be endured at times to ensure the long term sustainability and quality of life, we strive to emulate our ancestors' discipline.

In keeping with the idea that the forest and Menominee Tribal Enterprises are community-based, the MTE Board of Directors is elected at-large from the Tribal membership for policy, decision making and oversight.

## THE MENOMINEE ENVIRONMENT:



### *The Reservation*

The ancestral lands of the Menominee stretched from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, south to what is now the city of Milwaukee and west to Chippewa Falls, some 14-1/2 million acres. (See maps 1 - 3.)

A series of treaties and federal policies reduced the

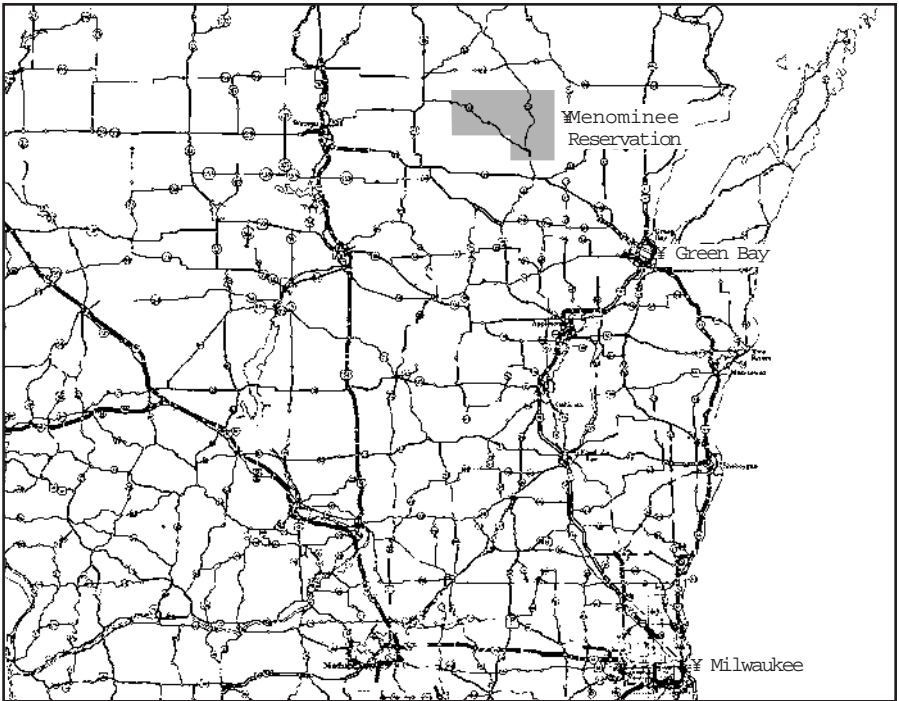
Menominee land to its present size of more than 235,000 acres, which is held in federal trust. Approximately 95% of this land is forested. An additional 7,145 acres is non-federal trust land used mainly for private recreational and residential purposes. More than 400 miles of rivers and streams move through the reservation. One hundred and twenty three lakes cover about 4,000 acres.



*This map, by Menominee Tribal member James Frechette, Jr., shows the historic land holdings of the Tribe. Reprinted with permission of the Menominee Clan Project, UW-Stevens Point.*



*This map, also by Menominee Tribal member James Frechette, Jr., shows the present Reservation boundaries. Reprinted with permission of the Menominee Clan Project, UW-Stevens Point.*



*The Menominee Reservation is located approximately seven miles north of Shawano, 45 miles northwest of Green Bay and 120 miles northwest of Milwaukee.*

## ***Collective Land Ownership***

Our Menominee ancestors possessed the wisdom and political skills necessary to retain much of our reservation land base. They successfully battled the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887. That act allotted reservation land in parcels to individual Tribal members, sold the surplus and made it possible for outside parties to acquire the allotments. On other reservations, it led to the loss of more than 75 million acres of land. The Menominee resistance to the Allotment Act (and dozens of other related federal initiatives to obtain control of the forest) is responsible for today's mostly community ownership of the Menominee Reservation. The courage, ability and cultural strength demonstrated by our ancestors kept most of the Tribal forest intact.

## **The Menominee Forest**

### ***Ecology***

Ecologists group plants and trees usually found together into communities. These plant communities are the different kinds of "forest" on the Reservation. These forests differ from site to site because of variations in sunlight, moisture, soil type and climate. Plants with similar site requirements usually live together. Animals that find the food and shelter they like will make use of the community in order to live.

Several different kinds of "forest" exist on the Reservation. These forest types vary from site to site, but the trees and plants you can expect to find on any one site are predictable.

Due to its location at the northern cusp of the transitional "tension zone" which divides the state's central hardwood forest from the northern hardwood forest, the Menominee Forest contains a higher diversity of tree species than

forests found either to its north or south. The diversity is demonstrated by the fact that twelve forest habitat types and two phases have been identified in the range of upland sites on this relatively small patch of forest. The dominant forest cover types include northern hardwoods, hemlock hardwoods, mid-tolerant hardwoods, pine stands (jack, white, red) aspen, scrub oak, and swamp forest.

### ***Forest Management of the Menominee Forest***

The Menominee Reservation attracts thousands of visitors for guided tours yearly who want to learn more about our forest management, wood products manufacturing, and the marketing of high quality hardwood and softwood merchandise. To many, our forest may seem pristine and untouched. In reality, it is one of the most intensively managed tracts of forest in the Lake States.

During the last 140 years we have harvested more than two and one-half billion board foot of lumber from our land. That is the equivalent of cutting all the standing timber on the reservation almost twice over. Yet, the sawtimber volume now standing is greater than that which was here in 1854 when the Wolf River Treaty defined the Reservation.

### ***Sustained Yield***

The sustained yield (or sustainable) forestry concept is the cornerstone of our Forest Management system. Sustained yield means that forest growth should balance all removals over time. Removals are caused by both harvesting and natural losses due to wind, fire, insects or disease.

### ***Continuous Forest Inventory***

Trained foresters monitor the forest through the Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI.) This inventory measures change in the forest and provides up-to-date informa-



tion on timber volume and growth. It provides data that helps shape management decisions to execute our sustained yield philosophy.

## Harvesting Methods

### ***Selection***

Foresters evaluate each individual tree for removal. Trees past maturity, of poor quality or that are not likely to survive until the next cutting are harvested. Selection cutting works best for species that can regenerate in full shade like sugar maple, beech, hemlock, and basswood. The selection method results in a forest with all classes of trees.



*Harvesting White Pine logs for the masts of the Milwaukee Schooner Project.*

### ***Shelterwood***

The shelterwood harvesting method removes a forest stand gradually over time. As the name implies, the trees not cut serve as a shelter and seed source for the next generations. We use this method when we are managing species like the white pine.

The shelterwood method has two stages. The first stage is the seed cut. About 50 to 60 percent of the mature trees are

removed. This removes selected trees and opens the forest canopy enough to allow sunlight through so that new seedlings can sprout. After the new seedlings have established themselves, a second cut removes most of the remaining mature trees. A few are left behind for insurance against a natural disaster and for wildlife habitat.

### ***Clear Cutting***

Clear cutting is when all of the trees in a particular area are removed. Used wisely, clear cutting is a legitimate and useful harvesting method. Tree species that need full sunlight to regenerate like red pine, jack pine and aspen respond especially well to this technique. The use of this technique also contributes to wildlife habitat.

## **THE MENOMINEE COMMUNITY:**



### ***The Menominee People***

We Menominee are Woodlands People, and the longest continuous residents of the geographic area now called the state of Wisconsin. For nearly 10,000 years, our way of life has been derived from the natural environment through hunting, gathering and fishing. Our ancestors' understanding of the sacred oneness of life and our reverence of Mother Earth forms the essence of our culture and spiritual foundation. We call ourselves Kāēyas-Machatiwduk which means "ancient ones."

We speak a dialect of the Algonquin language. "Menominee" comes from the Algonquin word "Omāēqnomenēwak" which means "people of the wild rice." The name was given to us

by other tribes who observed our extensive use of the plentiful wild rice in this area. Menominee legends say that when the tribe moved from an area, the wild rice would leave with them.

Today, there are about 8,000 people who qualify as Tribal members. More than half of them live on the Reservation. As compared to the state of Wisconsin and the nation as a whole, the Menominee are a young people since our median age is 24.5 years. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, our population grew by 15% between 1980 and 1990.

Five primary communities are located on the Reservation: Keshena, Neopit, Zoar, South Branch and Middle Village, as well as several other residential areas. We have two grade schools and a high school. The desire for educational advancement among Tribal members led to the establishment of the College of the Menominee Nation in 1992.



*The College of the Menominee Nation is located at the south end of the Reservation at Keshena.*

### ***Termination***

The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin was one of several tribes in the United States to suffer under the failed federal policy called Termination. This policy was designed

to end the sovereign nation status of selected tribes, thus eliminating all treaty agreements the federal government had signed with them. In place of tribal governments, town and county governments were formed to administer tax collection and services on terminated reservations.

Our tribe was selected for termination in part because of the success we had achieved with the profitable forest management and wood products manufacturing enterprise we had run since 1908. Menominee termination became effective in 1961 and the Reservation became Wisconsin's 72nd county. Termination threw the Menominee people into despair and disarray and the traditional Menominee quality of life and sense of community began to erode. Cash reserves built from our forest-based industry were wiped out. A sufficient tax base to provide essential services did not exist since most of our reservation was forest land. In an attempt to remain solvent, land was put into the development of Legend Lake and sold to non-Indians.

Restoration of Menominee status as an Indian Reservation and sovereign nation in 1973 was a momentous event. We still feel the negative effects of termination. However, today, the Menominee people are moving forward with efforts to counter losses incurred during the termination period.

## ***The Menominee Economy***



With the formation of the current Reservation in 1854, we added the management, harvesting and processing of timber to our traditional hunting and gathering economic base. The Menominee live in harmony with the land. Our quality

of life, cultural, spiritual and economic survival depends upon the environment and the forest in which we live.

We have a strong and diverse reservation economic base of tribal and private sector businesses. In addition to Menominee Tribal Enterprises (MTE), we own and operate a successful gaming business. Attached to the casino is a 100 room hotel/conference center, a restaurant that serves traditional Menominee food, and a gift shop. The Menominee Indian Tribe also runs a supermarket, a vehicle repair center, a business incubator and the Menominee Logging Camp Museum, which boasts the largest collection of logging artifacts in the Midwest.

In addition, some 50 private sector businesses operate on the reservation. They range from convenience stores to building and logging contractors, campgrounds and white-water rafting ventures on the Wolf River. Approximately 25% of the work force is directly involved in forest-based industries.

## **The Menominee Wood Products Manufacturing and Marketing Operations**



### ***Integrated Forest and Mill Operation***

Menominee Tribal Enterprises (MTE) is the business arm of the Tribe. Its primary purpose is to “log, manage, and reforest the tribal forest land, and to manufacture, market, sell and distribute timber, forest products and related products.” From its beginnings in the 1880s, forestry has been the Tribe’s economic backbone.

The economic stability and longevity of this enterprise is attributable in part to the sustainable practices central to

MTE's operations. Given advanced sustainable forest management techniques, MTE foresters each year provide a detailed listing of the type and amount of timber that will be delivered to production and marketing staffs.

The "Annual Allowable Cut" forecast is developed in 15 year cycles, with the overall planning horizon being 150 years. This forecast cut is determined through scientific processes used to ascertain harvesting schedules and provide optimum conditions for forest health, diversity, productivity and quality.

MTE's marketing people then develop a strategy to bring forest products from the annual harvest to national and international markets. After that, the MTE manufacturing division develops plans and schedules to efficiently process species and product mix called for in the marketing plan.

One can see that the needs of the forest drive the production and marketing processes at MTE. Manufacturing and marketing do not drive the forest harvest. Producing quality sawtimber while preserving the long term health, productivity and diversity of the forest are the goals of forest management on the Reservation.

Recently, MTE launched a revitalization project designed to improve efficiency throughout the integrated forestry, manufacturing and administrative divisions and to expand manufacturing operations by adding value to MTE's current product mix. Soon we will be offering semi-finished and finished products to customers.

In addition to our traditional board product lines, wood siding, paneling, moldings and millwork are among our first value-added products, followed by dimension stock, window, door and furniture parts and flooring blanks.

Eventually MTE will be in a position to provide customers with entire design solutions of wood products for both the home and business environments. The value-added process is creating further diversification and vertical integration of the Menominee economic base, more skilled employment opportunities, more efficiency of operations and more environmentally responsible utilization of Menominee wood resources.

### ***Menominee's Commitment To Forest-Based Sustainable Development***



The world community has recognized and made a commitment to the critical need for sustainable development practices. The sustainable development movement has created strategic plans, action agendas, indicator and evaluation measures to test and monitor sustainability. Most recently, organizations have formed policies and procedures which guarantee the authenticity of sustainability claims.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international body that gives accreditation to forest management practices, forest products, timber sources and companies, enabling the public to identify products and practices that do not destroy forests.

Agencies established to certify companies that practice good stewardship must follow rigorous standards developed by the FSC when evaluating the sustainability of forest management operations. "Chain of Custody" procedures have also been developed to track certified wood products from the source, through manufacturing, to consumers.



Menominee Tribal Enterprises has received certifications from two prestigious groups located in the United States and accredited by the FSC, Scientific Certification Systems (The Forest Conservation Program) and the Rainforest Alliance (SmartWood.) In addition, MTE is a member of the Forest Stewardship Council's Economic Council.

In 1995, MTE was recognized by the United Nations for its accomplishments in Sustainable Forest Management at the U.N.'s annual Earth Day celebration.

In 1996, President Bill Clinton honored Menominee Tribal Enterprises for "...achievements in forest stewardship and contributions to a sustainable future," with the President's Award for Sustainable Development. This honor was given under the auspices of the President's Council on Sustainable Development.



*Vice President Al Gore presents the Presidential Award to MTE President Larry Waukau (2nd from right) as MTE Board Chairperson Shirley Daly (2nd from left) looks on.*



## Conclusion

The Menominee Tribe's sustainable forest management practices produce consistently high quality timber while protecting the Reservation's ecosystem and biodiversity. Timber harvested according to MTE's annual allowable cut is shipped to our wood manufacturing facility at Neopit, for both primary and secondary processing. MTE's high quality products are further processed downstream into a wide variety of products including flooring, paneling, cabinets, furniture, crafts and musical instruments.

Our SmartWood and Scientific Certification System's certifications provide assurances to our customers that the wood products they are purchasing from MTE meets or exceeds the strict worldwide standards of Principles of Forest Management established by the Forest Stewardship Council.

A growing number of people from all corners of the world are making a commitment to environmentally responsible buying and are making a conscious contribution to act as stewards for a sustainable future. The manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers and consumers of Menominee and other certified wood products are joining the Menominee People in acting as "*The Forest Keepers*" to uphold the Forest-Based Sustainable Development Tradition. Our collective efforts to act as responsible stewards will enable all of our children and childrens' children to do the same.

For more information, please contact the following:

<b>Menominee Tribal Enterprises-Main Office</b>	<b>(715) 756-2311</b>
<b>Menominee Tribal Enterprises - Forestry</b>	<b>(715) 799-3896</b>
<b>Menominee Tribal Enterprises - Marketing</b>	<b>(715) 756-2287</b>
<b>College of the Menominee Nation</b>	<b>(715) 799-5209</b>
<b>Menominee Co. Extension Office</b>	<b>(715) 799-4654</b>
<b>Menominee Public Relations Office</b>	<b>(715) 799-5218</b>
<b>Menominee Logging Camp Museum</b>	<b>(715) 799-3757</b>
<b>Menominee Historic Preservation Office</b>	<b>(715) 799-5258</b>



*The Menominee Reservation as seen from a NASA satellite. The dark outline shows the heavy timber cover of the land compared to the farm fields of the surrounding counties.*