

FSC Assessor Training

**NNRG- Northwest Certified
Forestry**

Michael Sterner

What is certification, in general?

- Set of requirements created by organization using expert opinion, deliberation & member comments
 - Exceed minimum requirements
 - Improve performance/ outcomes
 - Transparency
 - Independent review
- Voluntary acceptance of terms by landowner-member
- Verified by independent third-parties (Certifying Bodies)

Legal basis

- Voluntary contract relationship b/w FSC & landowner. Does not “run” w/ the land.
- Potential Benefits: Recognition for exceeding minimal forest practices laws; Use of FSC brand; Premium prices
- Detriments: Agree to conform to FSC Standard - must perform above and beyond mandated requirements; Cost

FSC Background

- FSC has developed a set of Principles and Criteria for forest management that are applicable to all FSC-certified forests throughout the world.
- 10 Principles and 57 Criteria that address legal issues, indigenous rights, labor rights, multiple benefits, and environmental impacts surrounding forest management.

Document library of www.fscus.org

- FM Standard with Family Forests guidelines
- Chain of Custody standard
- Guidance documents with more detail on pesticides, HCVFs, plantations, etc.

FSC Objectives

- Recognize role of forests in rural communities and economy
- Improve lives of forest-dependent communities
- Promote long-term forest values thru forestry that protects ecosystem structure & function

Who constitutes the FSC system?

- FSC (creates the Standards)
 - Forest products businesses*
 - Environmental groups*
 - Individual landowners/ communities*
- Accredited auditing bodies (independent 3rd parties)
- Assessors/ auditors (contractors or employees of CB)
- * Certified members/ landowners (Listed under "FSC")

Family Forests Background

- Family Forests Indicators apply only to properties:
 - under 2,470 acres,
 - harvest <20% MAI and <5,000m³/yr or 5 yr avg <5,000m³/yr
- Some public lands qualify

What does the assessor do?

- Assessor or Auditor is agent of a Certifying Body, or of a certified group
- Objective is to independently evaluate landowner's compliance w/ Standard
- Tasks:
 - Review documents
 - Request additional information (written & oral)
 - Evaluate conditions in the field
 - Educate landowners
 - Report findings

Audit Steps

- Request FMP, environmental assessment, other docs from landowner. Review these.
- Schedule site visit.
- Go through Criteria & Indicators with landowner in the office.
- Select sites to visit based on recent management activity, sites of special interest, water bodies, roads
- Summarize findings before leaving
- Draft written report with deadlines for CARs, conditions
- Landowner reviews & responds
- Follow up annually

PRINCIPLE #1: COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND FSC PRINCIPLES

Forest management shall respect all applicable laws of the country in which they occur, and international treaties and agreements to which the country is a signatory, and comply with all FSC Principles and Criteria.

Legal compliance

Only brief mention needed in FMP

- State forest practices laws,
- Federal FIFRA (pesticides), ESA, NEPA, NHPA (historic preservation) to the extent these apply to landowner
- Federal and state tax law
- County property tax and zoning laws

Comply with FSC

- Agree to share information w/ public
- Commit in writing to follow FSC Std
- Pay any fees & royalties on property
- Prevent theft or illegal access
- Changes in ownership or land-base must be reported to group manager and certifying body

Members provide the following information -

Any changes in property information, such as:

- **Property name**
- **Forested acreage**
- **Ownership or property manager**
- **Did you sell or buy land?**
 - **Acreage sold or purchased**
 - **Physical address of new property**
- **Management Objectives**
- **Was Management Plan updated to reflect new information?**
- **Names of all contractors**

Questions

- Is there a statement in the FMP here that owner will publicly share information upon request?
- Public entities must give notice and opportunity for public comment on actions and plans. Applicable here?

PRINCIPLE #2: TENURE AND USE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Long-term tenure and use rights to the land and forest resources shall be clearly defined, documented and legally established.

Property interests

- Does the prospective member *own* the land?
 - Other basis for long-term use?
 - Family ownership/ control issues.
- Dispute resolution policy:
 - Owner must disclose disputes to assessor.
 - Parties must make effort to resolve disputes in good faith

Property interests

- Land tenure & use rights must be stated
- Request documents if there is concern over infringing on **non-possessory rights** of others:
 - Access: Easements, Rights of way
 - Hunting / fishing, NTFP harvest rights
 - Mineral rights

- Boundaries are clearly marked and mapped. Keep an eye out in the field tomorrow for this.
- Verify that maps accurately reflect property boundaries

PRINCIPLE #3: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS

The legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples to own, use and manage their lands, territories, and resources shall be recognized and respected.

Consultation

- Direct consultation w/ Tribal officials is required for owners of larger properties
- Others may rely on gov't agency to carry out Tribal consultation
- Tribal lands have special requirements

Cultural, Historical & Archaeological Resources

- Landowners should determine if sites of cultural interest exist on the property based on info from state or Tribal authority, if available
- If known and indicated in FMP, landowner must consult w/ Tribe or agency to develop means of protecting resource

- Some sites are of historic interest and may be voluntarily maintained, other types of sites must be recorded and maintained
 - Example here of historic land use
- Full public disclosure not required b/c risk of damage and theft

PRINCIPLE #4: COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND WORKER'S RIGHTS

Forest management operations shall maintain or enhance the long-term social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities.

Local opportunities

- Offer employment opportunities for local people, businesses
- Worker rights issues are of limited significance in assessing smaller properties
- Purchase supplies locally and sell logs to local mills, if possible

Social impacts

- FMP must incorporate analysis of impacts on:
 - public goods: water, air, neighbors' quiet enjoyment of their property
 - community's economy
 - aesthetics
 - significant sites

Impact assessment

- Has landowner thought about and communicated impacts on family and neighbors
- Can use state or research org's impact analysis of different forestry activities, scaled to operational size (baseline, action, impact/ perceptions)

Communicate

- *Learning opportunities*– Satsop is excellent example of the potential for this indicator
- Not just formal education: Any landowner can invite visitors to see FSC-certified forest management in action
- Give concerned parties notice and opportunity to be heard (Required for public lands)

PRINCIPLE # 5: BENEFITS FROM THE FOREST

Forest management operations shall encourage the efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and a wide range of environmental and social benefits.

Wide ranging economic issues

- Economic viability
- Diversify products offered– group has potential to make regional difference
- Recognize the value of and protect non-timber resources
 - Water
 - Fisheries
 - Carbon

Sustained Yield of Timber

- Based on
 - age class and spp distribution (forest inventory)
 - stocking rates,
 - known regional growth rates & accepted models of growth (site class),
 - ecology,
 - legal constraints.

Timber harvest

- Must be consistent with mgmt objectives and desired future condition
- Volume removed must not exceed growth from one harvest to next or 10 year period, whichever is longer
- Family Forests:
 - Look at targeted stocking and growth since last harvest
 - Restoration allows greater harvest intensity

- FMP pages 29 to 32.
 - What is the annual allowable cut?

PRINCIPLE #6: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT *

Forest management shall conserve biological diversity and its associated values, water resources, soils, and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes, and, by so doing, maintain the ecological functions and the integrity of the forest.

Assessment

- Collect baseline info: consult public databases
 - Evaluate RTE biological communities
 - RTE species and their habitat
 - Water resources and locations
 - Soil resources
 - Historic conditions
- Assess possible environmental impacts of each activity, eg, timber harvest

Operations

- Landowner must **plan** forestry operations, silviculture, equipment & seasonal timing
 - to avoid or minimize negative impacts,
 - maintain ecological viability of forest.

Rare, Threatened, Endangered Species

- Presence of RTE spp based on database requires survey by professional biologist
 - RTE spp presence req. steps to protect
- Conservation zones needed to protect
- *Control* hunting, trapping

Biodiversity indicators (6.3)

- Landscape level (identify and protect)
 - Successional stage diversity (ages, structure)
 - Initiation, stem exclusion, understory re-initiation, O-G (Oliver & Larson)
 - Rare ecological communities
 - Old growth
 - Wildlife
 - Riparian Mgmt Zones

Silvicultural Guidelines

- Encourages (6.3.d):
 - Natural regeneration
 - Intermediate treatments, diverse cohorts
 - Replant diverse spp.
 - Limit/ eliminate pesticide use. Report use.
- Even-aged harvest permitted but must (6.3.g):
 - Retain habitat structure (live & dead trees, CW debris),
 - Limit opening size

Pacific Coast Timber Harvest Indicators

- Any harvest area >6 ac must retain 10-30% BA
- Even-aged mgmt as needed:
 - Silvics of that spp. or
 - Restoration
- Long rotations preferred (near CMAI)
- Regen harvest openings avg 40 ac; none >60 acres
- Adjacent stands cannot be harvested before 5 yrs or adequate green-up
- Leave ~20 tons CWD/ ac
- Slopes: limit ground-based yarding if >30%

Pacific Coast Streamside Management Zones

Stream type:

- A. Perennial, fish-bearing or public water source; and lakes & wetlands >1ac
- B. Perennial, not fish/ water supply
- C. Intermittent, hosts aquatic spp.; and lakes, wetlands <1ac
- D. Short-term flow

Stream type	Inner buffer (fr highwater mark)	Outer buffer
A	50 ft	150 ft
B	25 ft	75 ft
C	--	75 ft
D	--	*

Pac Coast SMZ Indicators

Inner Buffer

- Single tree selection only
- No road construction
- Equipment entry only at designated crossings
- No mineral soil disturbance
- Recruit mature trees/woody debris

Outer Buffer

- Single tree or group selection harvest
- Canopy cover maintained
- Limit equipment use and roads construction
- Mulch/ seed mineral soil disturbance
- Type D: retain root structure, avoid sediment

- FMP pages 26 and 33.
 - Any mention of stream restoration?
 - Is there a need? – find out tomorrow.

Invasive species

- Monitor
- Assess risk
- Minimize establishment
- Eradicate/ control w/ least collateral damage
- Conform to Pesticide Restrictions & reporting requirements

Representative Sample Areas (6.4)

- Establish/ maintain
 - Ecological reference point for certain conditions;
 - Underrepresented conditions
 - Refugia
- Again, landowners must Identify natural condition of forest, & Protect areas
- Not same as HCVF (below)

- FMP page 30. What type of RSA is proposed?

PRINCIPLE #7: MANAGEMENT PLAN

A management plan — appropriate to the scale and intensity of the operations — shall be written, implemented, and kept up to date. The long-term objectives of management, and the means of achieving them, shall be clearly stated.

Required Content of *Written* Forest Management Plan, 1

- a) Management objectives.
- b) Description of the forest resources to be managed, environmental limitations, land use and ownership status, socio-economic conditions, and a profile of adjacent lands.

FMP content, 2

- c) Description of silvicultural and/or other management system, based on the ecology of the forest in question and information gathered through resource inventories.
- d) Rationale for rate of annual harvest and species selection.

FMP content, 3

- e) Provisions for monitoring of forest growth and dynamics.
- f) Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments.
- g) Plans for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species.

FMP content, 4

- h) Maps describing the forest resource base including protected areas, planned management activities and land ownership.
- i) Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used.

- Level of detail can be scaled to size of forest
- Recent inventory required.
 - Was inventory info & date incl in **this FMP?**
- Public forests must make draft plans publicly available
 - What was the process **here?**

PRINCIPLE #8: MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

Monitoring shall be conducted — appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management — to assess the condition of the forest, yields of forest products, chain of custody, management activities and their social and environmental impacts.

Why monitor?

- Monitoring is important to track what is happening in the forest
- Not passive– use monitoring information/ data to make improvements, reduce risks
- “Adaptive Management”

Quantitative & Qualitative

- Must have a defined Monitoring method
 - Yield of harvested goods
 - Growth rates, regen, forest condition
 - Composition & changes in biota
 - Env'l impacts
 - Financial info on operations
- Harvest volume, stand stocking must be quantitative
- Other variables can be described qualitatively

- **Harvest** recorded in MBF or m³
- **Stocking** as standing volume (MBF), trees per acre, BA (ft²), dbh distribution, spp.
- Stand-level detail needed
 - Does the owner's stand delineation make sense?

- Many landowners hire consulting forester for inventory, harvest planning
- Small landowners tend to know what is happening on their forest, at least qualitatively
- **Here**, a professional forester monitors forest condition, etc. with students

- FMP page 42.
 - Are harvest volumes recorded and reported to NNRG?
 - Are growth rates, yield, etc. recorded here?
 - Need additional documentation?

Environmental assessment

Can rely on agency-developed regional environmental assessments and strategies for:

- pest and weed management,
- fire management,
- protection of rare, threatened, and endangered species and plant community types,
- protection of riparian management zones, and
- protecting sample ecosystems and High Conservation Value Forests.

Site specific plans for family forests should be consistent with such guidance and may reference those works for clarity.

PRINCIPLE # 9: MAINTENANCE OF HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE FORESTS

Management activities in high conservation value forests shall maintain or enhance the attributes which define such forests. Decisions regarding high conservation value forests shall always be considered in the context of a precautionary approach.

Definition

1. Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g., endemism, endangered species, refugia).
2. Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.

Definitions

3. Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems.
4. Forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g., watershed protection, erosion control)

Definitions

5. Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g., subsistence, health).
6. Forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).

Elements

- Rare, threatened or endangered
- Ecologically important structure or function
- Biologically rare or unique
- Socially or economically important for non-timber resources

Examples, Ecological HCVF

- Habitat for endangered spp, e.g.
 - HM stands for marbled murrelet;
 - mixed DF for spotted owl
- “Old growth” forest
 - Late seral stage forest, never logged, in area of at least 3 acres
- Native grasslands
- Wetlands
- Oak savannas

Social HCVF

- Subsistence uses by community
- Sacred/ special Tribal lands
- Watersheds for population centers

- Consult databases: Nature Serve, FWS, state agencies
- Assess presence and risk posed by forest mgmt on the HCV forest
- Intensity of assessment depends extent of HCV presence
- Plan must say how to protect HCVFs
- Monitor impacts

- Look back at FMP page 30. Should the mature stands be considered HCVF?

PRINCIPLE # 10: PLANTATIONS

Plantations shall be planned and managed in accordance with Principles and Criteria 1-9, and Principle 10 and its Criteria. While plantations can provide an array of social and economic benefits, and can contribute to satisfying the world's needs for forest products, they should complement the management of, reduce pressures on, and promote the restoration and conservation of natural forests.

Plantations

- What is a plantation? For FSC, essentially a stand that lacks attributes of a natural forest (maturity, diversity of age & spp.)
- Plantations can play a role in concentrating forest management, thereby protecting other forested areas
- Clearly state goals in FMP

Plantations

- No land use conversions since 1994
- New plantations can only be established on former plantation sites, agricultural lands, grasslands, or degraded, semi-natural forest

Pac Coast Indicators for Plantations

- Harvest units limited to 100 acres, not avg >80 acres (**cf.** 60 ac limit supra).
- Retain or Enhance:
 - Habitat structure— refugia as clumps, strips
 - Thin to promote under- and mid-stories (incr. sunlight)
 - Soil fertility— retain woody debris
 - Diversity-- individuals of multiple spp

Indicators for Plantations

- Seek to restore or manage **natural forest** on 10% (<100 ac) or 15% (101-1,000 ac), up to 25% on larger properties
 - Can credit areas in streamside conservation programs (CREPS etc)

Plantation Silviculture

- Native spp. only; ideally of local nursery source
- No GMO stock
- Minimize soil disturbance

END Day 1

- Questions?
- Meet outside at 8:45 tomorrow

Chain of Custody

- For forest owners, Chain of custody requires tracking logs from stump to gate
 - Retain mill info
 - Manufacturers have greater burden
 - NNRG collects info annually
- Manufacturers have many more requirements

Written Procedures

- Define responsible personnel & tasks
- Accounting, record-keeping, inventory management procedures
- Invoices & other transfer documents need specific language
- Label use restrictions

Divide materials into Product Groups

- FSC Pure, Mixed, Recycled, Controlled Wood
- Material category: virgin or reclaimed (post consumer or fr manufacturing process)
- Product type: per FSC classification
- Species

Determine which **control system** to use to make FSC claims for outputs of each product group

- Transfer
- Percentage
- Credit

Transfer

- Available for finished products & FSC Pure
- When mixing, use Claim from input w/ lowest FSC content
 - Pure + Mixed 70% = Mixed 70%
- No non-FSC material may enter

Percentage

- Available for Mixed & Recycled only (Not finished products)
- $\text{FSC Input} / \text{Total Inputs} = \text{Max. \% claim}$ (minimum 70% FSC)
- Non-FSC “controlled wood” may be utilized in mix
- Controlled Wood sources requires special verification and certificate

Credit

- Must maintain a record, which is the Credit account (< 3 mo. period)
- Add volume of FSC input received to the account
- W/D credit only up to credit amount available
- Permits selling & labeling any FSC or controlled wood product as FSC up to amount of credit available (FSC & Controlled Wood need not be segregated if no other material is present)

Job or Claim Period

- Computation for each claim is limited to a Job Order or Claim Period (min. period is the time to run a batch of a product)

Accounting for material

- Invoice references
- Volumes/ weights received
- Check material category + percentage or credit claim
- Info to identify product on invoices
- FSC claim (pure, mixed, recycled)
- *Job order or Claim Period*

Inventory management

- Input supply
 - Keep list of suppliers, by product type
 - Check SCOPE of suppliers' certificates
- Material receipt
 - Verify documentation
 - Segregate from non-FSC material
 - Remove labels if re-manuf. or if also labeled w another certif. scheme

Annual summary

- Annually, summarize inputs received, used in production, in stock, outputs in stock, outputs sold
- Output of FSC material must not exceed input of FSC material

Volume control

- Record conversion factors (by volume or weight):
 - Output / Input for each component of product group
 - E.g., Raw log volume (MBF) to lumber volume (MBF)
 - E.g., Pulp weight (lbs) into paper weight (lbs)

Invoices and transport documents

- Name & contact for seller
- Seller's FSC CoC number
- Customer name, address
- Date
- Product description
- Quantity
- FSC claim, eg, "FSC Mixed Credit"

Labeling

- Labels must match claims on invoice
- Products in compliance with FSC STD 40-004 v2 may be labeled only w/ conforming labels:
 - 100%
 - Mixed Sources
 - Recycled

For most NNRG members:

- Have you sold any logs in the past year?
- At what physical point did you transfer ownership of the timber?
- Method of marking timber/ product prior to sale
- Who is responsible for each task?
- Did NNRG approve all FSC claims and logo usage?
- List dates and topic of any annual training

NNRG collects Individual information, then reports in aggregate

- Did you receive log load tickets, mill receipts, or other scaling information?
- Name of purchaser 1
 - Species
 - Grade
 - Volume