



Highlights of

The Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestland's Group Forest Management Certification Manual

The Group Certification Manual provides the forest management philosophy and guidelines that form the basis for the Trust's management of their FSC® certificate. These philosophies and guidelines are consistent with the Trust's vision of *enhancing the working forest ecosystem through exceptional accountability*.

To ensure compliance with FSC® Principles and provide a consistency of practices across all properties, a basic requirement of group membership is that all commercial harvests employ loggers certified through an internationally-recognized third-party system (at this writing, either Master Logger or SmartLogging certification).

The guidelines are based upon Forest Stewardship Council-US Principles and Guidelines (see the document, Synopsis of FSC® Principles and Criteria found in this packet).

The guidelines are not strictly interpreted rules, however, each guideline must be addressed and the spirit of the guidelines must be met. Many guidelines are addressed by the Trust in the oversight of the FSC® Group. Landowners are responsible for the parcel-level requirements.

Planning is an essential tool for meeting the spirit of the guidelines, and must be used to address the protection of soils and water resources, silvicultural practices, engineering practices, and the protection of biological resources.

The use of pesticides is restricted and must comply with FSC® policy.

Each member landowner must have a current forest management plan that includes all the elements listed in the Forest Management Plan Template.

The Trust is responsible for the monitoring and assessment of group activities, but member landowners are expected to assist this effort through annual reporting and notification of harvesting activity.

To provide a chain of custody for products harvested from member properties timber sale agreements or other contracts to sell standing timber will include the TCNF FSC® Certificate Code and the following language:

“The area encompassed by this timber sale is certified to the standards of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The landowner is a member in good standing of a Group Forest Management)6& § Certificate (1& FM/COC-1881) administered by the Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands. Forest products from this sale may be delivered to the mill as “FSC certified” as long as the contractor hauling the forest products is FSC® Chain-of-Custody (COC) certified. The purchaser is responsible for maintaining COC after leaving the sale area.”

A description of the known threatened or endangered plant and animal species, and rare and exemplary natural communities, is required of every member management plan. Landowners will consider “Reserve Designation” of rare or exemplary natural communities when management is incompatible with the important natural characteristics.

Landowners must use a written timber sale contract and harvest plan for all commercial harvests. The landowner must notify the Trust prior to all commercial harvests.

The Trust will conduct a monitoring visit at least once every five years, ideally during or following a harvest.

The manual contains the Trust's policy for the resolution disputes.

Copies of the Group Certification Manual are available upon request.



THE TRUST TO CONSERVE NORTHEAST FORESTLANDS Forest

Stewardship Council (FSC®) Forest Management Group Certificate

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TRUST'S FSC® GROUP FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE

Is there a fee for certifying my land?

Yes. However as a non-profit organization our goal is to provide access to forest certification at a minimal cost.

Is there a size limit for properties?

We have not set a limit on the size of member properties. Our staff capacity to monitor will be the determining factor.

Do I have to certify all the forestland I own?

No. You can decide which parcels to include.

How long does the certification process take?

Time varies dependent upon preparation. If you have a current management plan that complies with our management plan template the entire process can be completed in one to two months.

What if I don't have a management plan?

We will direct you to sources of assistance in your state.

If I certify my land will I receive higher prices for my trees?

In general, no, but we do believe that in the long run certified landowners will have access to a wider variety of markets, and the Trust, through its group certifications, will be growing the number of certified landowners, loggers, and processors throughout the region.

If I am certified will I have to open my land to the public?

No. The landowner retains control of the use of their property.

Where can I find more information about FSC® certification?

The FSC® International web site is at: <http://www.FSC.org/>, and the FSC®- US web site is: <http://www.fscus.org/>. The FSC® Standards for the northeastern US can be found at: http://www.fscus.org/standards_criteria/regional_standards.php. Yale University maintains a very informative web site on forest certification at: <http://www.yale.edu/forestcertification/faq.html>.