



FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL™
UNITED STATES

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Forest Stewardship Council U.S. Members
FR: Mike Jani and Fran Price, Co-Chairs, FSC-US Board of Directors
DT: December 19, 2012
RE: Change in the FSC Federal Lands Policy

We are writing to inform you about an important change in FSC policy in the U.S.

Since 2003, FSC has effectively had a moratorium on exploring certification on US Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) forestlands.

On November 29, 2012, the FSC-US Board of Directors approved by consensus a change to this longstanding policy.

While the policy change is significant, we are still a long way from seeing any impacts on the ground. But because this is a sensitive issue, we wanted to communicate directly with our members.

At the board level, we followed an extensive process of research and outreach lasting more than a year before deciding to change the policy. Ultimately, the change we supported allows groups to explore what FSC certification might look like on federal lands, addressing important equity concerns that have been raised by some of our members for years.

This does not mean any USFS or BLM forests will be certified anytime soon. Instead, it allows an inclusive and demanding standards development process to move forward if there is a willing landowner. The revised policy maintains a high standard for consultation, but does not require consensus by all stakeholders on specific harvest levels for federal lands, as the original policy did.

Stakeholder participation and consultation remains at the core of the FSC system, which is why the board also committed to raise funds necessary to make a future federal lands standards development process as inclusive and participatory as possible.

The Forest Stewardship Council, with our three chambers of governance, is designed to be the “table” where difficult issues can be discussed and negotiated. This belief guided our decision to revise the federal lands policy.

We see this as an important step forward for FSC, addressing an issue of longstanding tension and perceived inequity due to the categorical exclusion of one landowner class.

If you have questions, we are happy to address them. We have included below links to key documents related to our decision.

Thank you.

Review the approved policy here: <http://us.fsc.org/download.fsc-us-federal-lands-policy.179.htm>

Review the Federal Lands Exploratory Committee Report here:
<http://us.fsc.org/download.fsc-us-federal-lands-exploratory-committee-report.178.htm>