

## FSC US Forest Stewardship Standard: Version 1.1 to Version 2.0 Comparison

*Below are significant changes from the current FSC US Forest Management Standard (Version 1.1) to the approved revised FSC US Forest Stewardship Standard (FSS; Version 2).*

Driver for Change	Alignment with FSC Principles & Criteria Version 5 or with the International Generic Indicators
	Combination of above and below
	Standard Development Group (i.e., FSC US Board of Directors) response to stakeholder input

	Version 1.1	Version 2.0
OVERALL STRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All management units conform with Principle 1 through Principle 9</li> <li>Management units with FSC plantations also conform with Principle 10</li> <li>Community relations and workers' rights are combined in a single Principle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All management units conform with Principle 1 through Principle 10</li> <li>Management units with FSC plantations conform with alternate and additional indicators in Principles 6 &amp; 10</li> <li>Workers' rights and community relations are addressed in separate Principles</li> </ul>
DISPUTE RESOLUTION	<p>Certificate holders are expected to resolve disputes regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tenure claims &amp; use rights</li> <li>conflicts between workers &amp; management</li> <li>stakeholder grievances and/or provision of fair compensation</li> </ul>	<p>Certificate holders are expected to have a dispute resolution process developed through engagement with potential stakeholder users and attempt to resolve disputes out of court, regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>applicable laws</li> <li>grievances from employees and independent contractors</li> <li>violations of rights held by Native American Indigenous Peoples</li> <li>impacts of management activities on affected local communities and other affected stakeholders.</li> </ul>
WORKERS & CONTRACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worker-oriented indicators are limited in number, with some topics applicable only to employees, and others applicable to all workers.</li> <li>“Workers” is defined to include employees of contractors, overlapping or third-party licensees, as well as employees of the applicant firm and subcontractors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of worker-oriented indicators is greatly increased, and gender equity is explicitly addressed</li> <li>Indicators are applicable to all workers (i.e., employees and others) but the way that conformance is demonstrated may be different for different types of workers.</li> <li>“Workers” is defined to include all persons who are implementing management activities under the scope of the Standard, regardless of by whom they are employed.</li> </ul>

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INDIGENOUS RIGHTS & RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management activities in tribal forests must be implemented by authorized tribal representatives and may not be implemented without written consent from the tribe.</li> <li>Certificate holders are expected to consult with Indigenous Peoples that hold rights within or binding agreements regarding the certified management unit, identify sites important to them, and also avoid harming both of these.</li> <li>Actions are taken to avoid adversely affecting tribal resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certificate holders are expected to identify and engage with Indigenous Peoples that hold rights within the management unit and/or that have resources that may be affected by management activities. Consideration is expected to include tribes that no longer live on their ancestral lands.</li> <li>Engagement is expected to be fair, lucid, and inclusive of the right to withhold approval for management activities to proceed, if those activities may have an impact on the rights that are held (i.e., following the concept of "Free, Prior and Informed Consent" or FPIC).</li> <li>Expectation similar to Version 1.1 for protection of sites and resources important to identified tribes.</li> </ul>
INDIGENOUS FOREST MANAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In different indicators, certificate holders are expected to use "best available information" or consult scientific literature, research and experts.</li> <li>Traditional knowledge and experience are not recognized as sources of best available information, nor as providing qualifications for experts.</li> <li>The entirety of a tribal forest may be considered a High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) due to its importance to the tribe. Associated indicators are interpreted to have an expectation that management activities (and particularly harvests) will be severely limited within HCVF.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently throughout the standard, certificate holders are expected to use "best available information". References to scientific literature and research are not included in indicators, but are part of the definition of "best available information."</li> <li>Traditional knowledge is explicitly recognized in definitions for both "best available information" and "expert."</li> <li>Indicators are explicit that management activities may occur within HCVF, if they prevent damage and avoid risks to high conservation value (HCV).</li> <li>The entirety of a tribal forest may be considered a High Conservation Value (HCV) due to its importance to the tribe.</li> <li>Collection of rare species is allowed by Indigenous Peoples for ceremonial purposes, when risks to populations and ecological communities are avoided and all applicable laws and regulations are followed.</li> </ul>
CUSTOMARY RIGHTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customary uses and use rights held by others are identified in the management plan.</li> <li>The management plan incorporates results of the evaluation of potential conflicts with customary uses and use rights.</li> <li>Sustained yield harvest levels for non-timber forest products are calculated if customary use rights may be affected by their harvest.</li> <li>Maintenance of the transportation system allows for customary uses and use rights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and customary rights are identified and respected in a similar manner when held by Indigenous Peoples, local communities or Traditional Peoples.</li> <li>A free, prior and informed consent process is required if management activities may affect legal and/or customary rights held by Indigenous Peoples or Traditional Peoples.</li> <li>The FSS notes that no customary rights have been established for non-Indigenous local communities in the United States and therefore FSS elements related to customary rights are not currently applicable.</li> </ul>

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LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certificate holders are expected to understand the likely social impacts of management activities and incorporate this understanding into management planning and operations, with specific consideration of certain potential impacts.</li> <li>Certificate holders are expected to avoid engaging in negligent activities that cause damage to other people.</li> </ul>	<p>Certificate holders are expected to engage with local communities to identify significant negative social, environmental, and economic community-level impacts likely to result from management activities, and then develop strategies to avoid or mitigate the identified potential impacts.</p>
EXTERNALITIES	<p>Certificate holders are expected to be financially able to implement the management activities required to conform with the standard, and also as needed for investment and reinvestment in forest management.</p>	<p>Certificate holders are expected to consider the long-term positive and negative environmental and social impacts of management activities as part of their management planning.</p>
ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple indicators address the expectation that certificate holders will avoid or minimize the negative impacts of management activities on environmental and social values.</li> <li>Multiple indicators address the expectation that certificate holders will maintain, enhance or restore specific environmental values.</li> <li>Temporary stream and wetland crossings are expected to be restored to original hydrological conditions.</li> <li>Chemical spills are expected to be remediated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expectations similar to Version 1.1 are included, but certificate holders are also explicitly expected to consider potential negative impacts outside of the management unit.</li> <li>Broadly, when negative impacts to environmental values occur as a result of management activities, certificate holders are expected to prevent further damage, and mitigate or repair the negative impacts (some sideboards are placed on “repair”).</li> <li>For water and riparian resources, certificate holders are also expected to implement protective and remedy measures to address potential or realized impacts from activities over which the Organization does not have direct control and to address ineffective protection measures implemented by previous owners</li> </ul>
REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE AREAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certificate holders are expected to document the ecosystems that would naturally exist within the management unit, and then assess the adequacy of their representation and protection in the landscape.</li> <li>If areas within the landscape but outside the management unit are not adequate for representation and protection, areas are also identified if possible within the management unit.</li> <li>All identified areas, both outside and within the management unit, are designated as representative sample areas (RSA).</li> <li>RSA of with multiple purposes are expected for large management units, and large contiguous public forests are expected to establish RSA sufficient in size to maintain interior core forest species.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certificate holders are expected to identify native ecosystems that would typically occur within the management unit, given climate and soil conditions, and then assess the adequacy of their representation and protection in the landscape.</li> <li>For ecosystems that are not adequately represented and protected, certificate holders are expected to designate viable examples or restorable examples within the management unit as representative sample areas (RSA). If no RSA are designated within the management unit, a portion of the management unit is managed to promote more natural conditions. <i>The elements of this bullet are not applicable if identified ecosystems are adequately represented and protected in the landscape.</i></li> <li>The extent of areas designated/identified for the elements of the above bullet is expected to increase with management unit size and intensity of management and with lower levels of representation and protection in the landscape.</li> </ul>

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CONSERVATION AREA NETWORK	<p>With the exception of management units that include lands where natural ecosystems were previously converted to FSC plantations, there are no specific area-based thresholds for designation of conservation areas. Conservation areas are only expected to be designated if they are needed for conservation of a specific value (e.g., for protection of rare species or cultural sites, representative sample areas, high conservation value forests).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All certificate holders are expected to designate at least 10% of the management unit as some kind of conservation area (i.e., where the primary purpose is to conserve a particular environmental or cultural value). If this threshold cannot be achieved with existing conservation areas, new conservation areas must be established.</li> <li>• For family forests within a certified group, the conservation area responsibility may be shared by other group members.</li> </ul>
CERTIFYING CONVERTED LANDS	<p>Plantations on lands that were converted from natural/semi-natural forest after 1994 are not certified unless the certificate holder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• was not directly or indirectly responsible for the conversion, AND</li> <li>• develops and implements a plan to restore the plantation stands to conditions characteristic of natural forests and manages them in conformance with the Indicators of Principles 1-9</li> </ul>	<p>Plantations on lands that were converted from natural/semi-natural forest between 1994 and 2020 are not certified, except where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a very limited portion of the mgmt. unit was affected, and it is providing secure long-term conservation benefits, OR</li> <li>• the certificate holder has implemented restitution of social harms and remedy of environmental harms, with levels of restitution/remedy required dependent on the certificate holder's involvement in the conversion</li> </ul> <p>Plantations on lands that were converted from natural/semi-natural forest after 2020 are not certified, except where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a very limited portion of the mgmt. unit was affected, and it is providing secure long-term conservation and social benefits, AND</li> <li>• no HCVs were threatened</li> </ul>
PLANTATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the management unit includes lands where natural ecosystems were previously converted to FSC plantations, a percentage of the total area of the management unit is expected to be maintained as, or restored to, a natural or semi-natural state. The percentage of the management unit ranges from 10% to 25% and is scaled based on the overall size of the management unit.</li> <li>• Certificate holders are expected to maintain, conserve and/or restore forest health and diversity across the plantation stands, with an intent to create and maintain structural and species diversity that results in high quality early- and mid-successional wildlife habitat.</li> <li>• If any of the plantations result from conversion of natural or semi-natural forest after 1994, the certificate holder is expected to demonstrate that they were not directly or indirectly responsible for the conversion and also work to restore the stands to conditions characteristic of natural forests.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If more than 5% of the management unit includes lands where natural ecosystems were converted to FSC plantations, 15% of the management unit is expected to be maintained in or restored to a natural or semi-natural state. These areas “count” towards the Conservation Areas Network expectation.</li> <li>• Certificate holders are expected to maintain or restore a diversity of native species, forest types, wildlife habitats and ecological functions, but the emphasis for conformance may be within the above designated 15% of the management unit.</li> <li>• See above for plantations that are the result of conversion of natural/semi-natural forest after 1994.</li> <li>• No expectation to restore post-1994 plantation stands unless part of required restitution/remedy.</li> </ul>

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OLD GROWTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old Growth definition includes two potential types: 1) the oldest seral stage in which a plant community is capable of existing; and 2) a very old example of a stand dominated by long-lived early- or mid-seral species. It also recognizes two classes of Old Growth: Type 1 (no human disturbance) and Type 2 (limited disturbance).</li> <li>• Type 1 on all lands (tribal land exception below) &amp; also Type 2 on public lands is protected from harvesting and other threats, and is protected from timber management except as needed to maintain its ecological values</li> <li>• Type 2 on non-public lands (tribal land exception below) is protected from harvesting to the extent necessary to maintain the area, structures, functions and components.</li> <li>• On tribal lands, timber harvest within Type 1 and Type 2 is permitted when certain criteria are met.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old Growth definition is limited to one type: the oldest seral stage in which a plant community is capable of existing, but it also recognizes that this may include very old examples of long-lived early- or mid-seral species. The two classes (Type 1 &amp; Type 2) remain the same as Version 1.1.</li> <li>• Protections and allowances for timber harvest and management within Type 1 and Type 2 remain the same with one new exception.</li> <li>• A new indicator specific to the northern white cedar and black spruce forests of the upper Midwest allows harvest within Type 1 and Type 2 if the certificate holder's management decisions are expanding old growth in these types and it is now widely represented within the landscape. Additional safeguards include ensuring the extent and integrity of the old growth at or above historic levels, formation of conservation zones where harvest does not occur, and protection of associated rare species.</li> </ul>
REGIONAL REQUIREMENT EXCEPTIONS	<p>Exceptions to the regional requirements for opening sizes and SMZs/RMZs are possible when developed with extensive expert engagement and scientific literature review and demonstration that the proposed alternative will result in equal or greater benefits than the associated regional requirement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exceptions to the regional requirements for opening sizes and SMZs/RMZs are possible in limited circumstances, but with somewhat less rigorous inputs than Version 1.1 and demonstration that the proposed alternative will result in equal or greater benefits than the associated main indicator (less prescriptive than the regional requirements).</li> </ul>
MANAGEMENT PLANNING	<p>Certificate holders are expected to describe desired future conditions and develop management objectives that will move the management unit toward the desired future conditions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate holders are expected to have policies that support the management plan.</li> <li>• Certificate holders are expected to describe desired future conditions and develop management objectives that will move the management unit toward the desired future conditions (same as Version 1.1).</li> <li>• The management plan is expected to include verifiable targets by which progress toward management objectives can be assessed.</li> </ul>

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CLIMATE CHANGE	<p>Climate change is only mentioned as an example for when non-local sources of trees may be used for planting, and for two particular considerations within the supplementary requirements for US Forest Service lands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate holders are expected to assess the potential future impacts of climate change on environmental values.</li> <li>• Certificate holders are expected to consider the potential impact of climate change in their management plan, including potential impacts on achievement of management objectives and desired future conditions. The management plan is also expected to provide information on any climate change adaptation strategies being implemented to address the identified impacts.</li> <li>• Certificate holders are expected to have a monitoring protocol that evaluates how changes in the potential climate change impacts may affect achievement of management objectives and desired future conditions, and also evaluates the effectiveness of implemented climate change adaptation strategies.</li> <li>• An extended timeline is provided for conformance with the above new expectations (3 years for most certificate holders, 5 years for family forests)</li> </ul>
MONITORING	<p>Certificate holders are expected to develop and implement a monitoring protocol. The standard includes a large number of specific operational, environmental, social, and cultural elements that are required to be monitored as part of the protocol.</p>	<p>Certificate holders are expected to develop and implement a monitoring protocol to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitor policies, management objectives, and achievement of verifiable targets; and</li> <li>• evaluate the environmental and social impacts of management activities and changes in environmental conditions – specific elements to be monitored identified by the certificate holder with consideration of elements listed in an annex</li> </ul>
HIGH CONSERVATION VALUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate holders are expected to identify High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) that occur within the management unit.</li> <li>• They are also expected to develop and implement specific measures to ensure the maintenance or enhancement of the high conservation value attributes within the HCVF.</li> <li>• No explicit requirement to periodically review/revise the HCVF assessment</li> <li>• An annex provides regional examples of HCVF.</li> <li>• A draft (never formally approved) High Conservation Value Framework provides high-level considerations for identification of HCVF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate holders are expected to identify High Conservation Values (HCV) that occur within the management unit and identify the High Conservation Value Area (HCVA) on which each HCV relies.</li> <li>• They are also expected to develop and implement conservation strategies to maintain or enhance the HCV.</li> <li>• Explicit requirement to review/update the HCV assessment as part of the mgmt. plan review.</li> <li>• An annex provides a detailed High Conservation Value Framework to assist with and increase consistency of identification, management and monitoring of HCV. The framework provides few examples but significant identification guidance.</li> <li>• Explicit recognition that other management activities may occur in HCVA as long as they prevent damage and avoid risks to HCV.</li> </ul>

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PESTICIDES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate holder expectations are aligned with the FSC Pesticides Policy (Version 2).</li> <li>• FSC Highly Hazardous Pesticides are not used unless a derogation is granted by FSC International.</li> <li>• Intent language indicates that certificate holders are expected to reduce their use of pesticides over time.</li> <li>• Chemical pesticides are only used when non-chemical options are not available or are prohibitively expensive (with consideration of environmental and social risks), or if the chemical pesticide is the only effective means available for controlling invasives, or will result in less environmental damage than non-chemical options.</li> <li>• Chemicals and application methods are selected to minimize risk to non-target species and sites.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate holder expectations are aligned with the FSC Pesticides Policy (Version 3).</li> <li>• The most hazardous category of FSC Highly Hazardous Pesticides are not used except in very limited and specific circumstances.</li> <li>• The other categories of FSC Highly Hazardous Pesticides, and all other chemical pesticides may be used when the certificate holder's Integrated Pest Management system and their chemical-specific Environmental and Social Risk Assessment (ESRA) indicate that the chemical and the specific formulation and application will result in the lowest risk to environmental and social values while achieving necessary effectiveness when compared to non-chemical pesticides and non-pesticide options.</li> <li>• Assessments and implementation plans are revised when need to avoid damage to human health or the environment.</li> </ul>
NATURAL HAZARDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate holders are expected to monitor and record any disturbance events that result in significant, unanticipated removal or loss or increased vulnerability of forest resources.</li> <li>• Certificate holders are expected to identify and apply site-specific fuels management practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate holders are expected to consider the potential future impacts of catastrophic natural disturbances on environmental values.</li> <li>• Certificate holders are expected to implement management activities that: a) mitigate potential negative impacts of natural hazards; and b) increase the resilience of ecosystems to catastrophic natural disturbances.</li> <li>• A new regional requirement for the Pacific Coast addresses expectations for salvage harvests following catastrophic natural disturbances.</li> </ul>
NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certification of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) is not addressed within the scope of the standard. If certificate holders wish to certify NTFP, they must conform with both the national standard and a separate standard specific to that NTFP which has been developed by a Certification Body.</li> <li>• If NTFP are sold commercially (whether or not certified), calculation of quantitative sustained yield harvest levels is expected.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate holders may choose to certify any of an extensive list of NTFP that are included within the scope of the FSS.</li> <li>• If certified NTFP are to be consumed by humans or animals, compliance with hygiene and food safety laws is expected.</li> <li>• If NTFP are sold commercially (whether or not certified), certificate holders are expected to abide by a sustained yield harvest level or by harvest guidelines that maintain the NTFP species and other environmental values.</li> <li>• Conformance with separate standards is no longer necessary.</li> </ul>

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<b>FAMILY FORESTS</b>	<p>53 main indicators (32.5%) are adapted in some way for family forests (both small and low-intensity managed forests, including federal lands). Adaptations included are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designation of “low risk of negative social or environmental impact”</li> <li>• Designation of “Inapplicable”</li> <li>• Provision of an alternate indicator specifically for family forests</li> </ul> <p>Guidance specifically for family forests is included with 17 additional indicators.</p>	<p>81 main indicators (39.3%) are adapted in some way for family forests (both small and low-intensity managed forests, excluding federal lands). Adaptations included are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion of applicability for family forests (i.e., the indicator is written to only apply to “non-family forest management units”)</li> <li>• Provision of an alternate indicator specifically for family forests</li> </ul> <p>Guidance specifically for family forests is included with 10 additional indicators.</p>
<b>FEDERAL LANDS CERTIFICATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The FSC US Board’s Federal Lands Policy (revised November 2012) has two conditions for Federal Lands administered by a particular agency to become certified: 1) the agency demonstrates that it is willing to participate in certification through a commitment at the national level; and 2) national-level indicators exist that address the special resource management, legal, technical, procedural, and governance issues associated with federal ownership.</li> <li>• Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park was grandfathered in by the FSC US Board.</li> <li>• Supplementary requirements for Department of Defense and Department of Energy lands were developed in the mid-2000s.</li> <li>• Supplementary requirements for Forest Service lands were approved in 2019, with the condition that they would be completely re-evaluated and aligned with Principles &amp; Criteria V5 and the International Generic Indicators during the FSS revision process.</li> <li>• Any Department of Defense, Department of Energy or Forest Service lands that wish to become certified must conform with the indicators of the standard and also with the applicable supplementary requirements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplementary requirements are included that are applicable to federal lands managed by agencies that are eligible for FSC certification (i.e. managed by the Department of Defense, Department of Energy or USDA Forest Service), plus any federal lands that are FSC certified on the effective date of the revised standard (i.e., Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park)</li> <li>• 17 new supplementary requirements are included that do not reflect any of the previously developed supplementary requirements.</li> <li>• 3 previously developed supplementary requirements were dropped for various reasons</li> <li>• The intent of numerous previously developed supplementary requirements were incorporated into main indicators and are now applicable to all types of management units, not just federal lands.</li> <li>• Eligible federal management units must conform with the main indicators of the standard and also with the federal land supplementary requirements.</li> <li>• Other federal lands will not be eligible for FSC certification until additional supplementary requirements are developed that address any issues more specifically related them.</li> </ul>