

# WELCOME!!

## FSC US FSS V2 TOPICS: HCV & CLIMATE CHANGE

Amy Clark Eagle, Director of Science & Certification  
Carly Evans, Forest Management Specialist

*Forest Stewardship Council U.S. Webinar  
February 10, 2026*



# Join Us at Upcoming Events!!

## Appalachian Stakeholder Events

**Knoxville, TN** (*FSS Workshop,  
stakeholder mtg & field tour*)

**March 11-12, 2026**

## Great Lakes Stakeholder Events

**Milwaukee, WI** (*FSS Workshop,  
stakeholder mtg & field tour*)

**April 29-30, 2026**

## FSS Virtual Workshops

Western US Focus – June 4  
Eastern US Focus – June 17

**June 2026**

## Stewardship in Action 2026

Seattle, Washington  
FSC US annual conference

**Week of Oct. 12, 2026**

# AGENDA

	Topic	Time
1	Welcome	5 min.
2	Transitioning to Version 2	10 min.
3	High Conservation Values	45 min.
4	Climate Change Requirements	25 min.
5	Polls & Wrap-up	5 min.

# FSC US Antitrust Statement

As participants in this meeting, we need to be mindful of the constraints of antitrust laws. There shall be no discussions of agreements or concerted actions that may restrain competition. This prohibition includes the exchange of information concerning individual prices, rates, market practices, or any other competitive aspect of an individual company's operation. Each participant is obligated to speak up immediately for the purpose of preventing any discussion falling outside these bounds.

# ANNOUNCING:

**The Version 2 FSC US Forest Stewardship Standard was published on January 1, 2026!**



**It is available from both the FSC International (Documents Centre) and FSC US (FSS V2.0) web sites**



# TRANSITIONING TO VERSION 2

# Implementation Timeline

Milestones	Date(s)
Publication Date	January 1, 2026
Effective Date (beginning of transition period)	April 1, 2026
End of Transition Period	September 30, 2027 (18-month duration)



# What Happens During the Transition Period?

- Certificate holders continue their normal audit cycle & schedule
- Both standards are valid for audits
- Certificate holders must have their first V2 audit
- Certificate holders must conform with new/revised indicators
- If the first V2 audit is a surveillance audit, not all new/changed indicators may be audited – CBs have some flexibility to decide to audit lower risk indicators after the transition period ends
- Major nonconformances must be closed by end of transition period
- CB calibration process

# FSS Transition Resources – Currently Available

- Official V2.0 FSS
- High-level summary of significant differences
- Crosswalks of V1 & V2
- Tracked changes Draft 3 to Draft 6
- Topic-specific “explainers” for high-interest issues
- Versions of standard customized for different users, different interests
- Frequently asked questions
- Schedule of 2026 engagement events

An aerial photograph of a forest landscape. The foreground and middle ground are dominated by dense green trees. In the center, there is a large, irregularly shaped area where the trees have been cleared, revealing brown soil and some remaining tree stumps. The cleared area is surrounded by a ring of trees. In the far distance, a range of low mountains is visible under a clear blue sky. A bright sun is positioned in the upper right corner, creating a lens flare effect with several rays extending across the sky. The overall scene suggests a natural resource management or reforestation project.

**Questions?**



# HIGH CONSERVATION VALUES

# High Conservation Values

**HCV 1** – Species diversity. **Concentrations of biological diversity** including endemic species, and rare, threatened or endangered species, that are significant at global, regional or national levels.

**HCV 2** – **Landscape-level ecosystems and mosaics**. Intact Forest Landscapes and large landscape-level ecosystems and ecosystem mosaics that are significant at global, regional or national levels, and that contain viable populations of the great majority of the naturally occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.

**HCV 3** – Ecosystems and habitats. **Rare, threatened, or endangered ecosystems, habitats or refugia**.

**HCV 4** – **Critical ecosystem services**. Basic ecosystem services in critical situations, including protection of water catchments and control of erosion of vulnerable soils and slopes.

**HCV 5** – Community needs. **Sites and resources fundamental for satisfying the basic necessities** of local communities or Indigenous Peoples (for livelihoods, health, nutrition, water, etc.), identified through engagement with these communities or Indigenous Peoples.

**HCV 6** – Cultural values. **Sites, resources, habitats and landscapes of global or national cultural, archaeological or historical significance, and/or of critical cultural, ecological, economic or religious/sacred importance** for the traditional cultures of local communities or Indigenous Peoples, identified through engagement with these local communities or Indigenous Peoples.

# HCV Approach & Framework – Principle 9

## Version 1.0/1.1

- Expectation to **identify HCVF & ensure the maintenance or enhancement of the HCV attributes within them**
- No explicit requirement to periodically review/revise the HCVF assessment
- Regional **examples of HCVF** provided in an annex
- A **draft (never formally approved) HCV Framework** provides high-level considerations for identification of HCVF

## Version 2.0

- Expectation to **identify HCV and the HCVA on which each one relies & ensure the HCV are maintained or enhanced**
- Explicit requirement to review/update the HCV assessment (with the mgmt. plan)
- **Detailed HCV Framework** to support identification, management and monitoring of HCV - provides few examples but includes significant identification guidance
- Explicit recognition that other management activities may occur in HCVA provided they prevent damage and avoid risks to HCV

# Principle 9 – Summary of Indicators



- **C9.1: Assess and record the presence and status of HCV within the management unit**
  - Engage with stakeholders in this assessment process
  - Review as part of the management plan review and update as needed
- **C9.2/C9.3: Develop and implement strategies to maintain or enhance these values**
  - Complete development prior to implementing potentially harmful management activities
  - Engage with stakeholders and experts in development process
  - Coordinate implementation with adjacent landowners as applicable
  - Prevent damage & avoid risks to HCV and follow the precautionary approach during implementation of any management activities
  - Cease harmful activities immediately and mitigate any negative impacts
- **C9.4: Implement a monitoring program to evaluate HCV status and effectiveness of mgmt strategies**
  - Include engagement with stakeholders and experts in the monitoring program
  - Adapt management strategies when indicated by monitoring or new information

# HCV Approach & Framework – Annex K



1. Introduction
2. Confusing & Interrelated Concepts (e.g., FSC US regions vs. regionally significant)
3. Information & Data Sources
4. HCV Identification & Assessments
  - a. National HCV (i.e., an HCV no matter where it occurs)
  - b. HCVs in the National Risk Assessment
  - c. Additional considerations, including what might not be an HCV
  - d. Identification, assessment, management & monitoring guidance by HCV type
5. HCV Checklist for Family Forest Management Units

# Annex K – Introduction



- Recognition that **some values are addressed in both P6 & P9**
- Primary goal of annex to help determine **which values rise to level of HCV** & support additional assessment, management & monitoring requirements
- **Not every management unit has HCV** (if none present, most of P9 not applicable)
- Indicator 9.1.1 requires HCV identification and assessment **consistent with annex**
- Indicators 9.2.1 / 9.4.1 require **consultation of annex** (re: HCV mgmt. & monitoring)
- But **conformance with every element of annex not required**

# Annex K – Confusing & Interrelated Concepts



- V1 “HCV attributes” & “HCVF” equivalent to V2 “HCV” & “HCVA”
- By definition, HCVA expected to be **conservation areas** (i.e., part of the CAN)
- **Landscape**: No set scale like RSA – consider which surrounding areas could be affected by management unit activities & which could affect the management unit
- **Contiguous Lands**: Start by looking beyond the management unit to identify & then consider any portion that falls within the management unit
- **Regional Significance**: Ecological Provinces (Cleland 2007) recommended for HCV1 & HCV2 assessments (i.e., significant at global, national or regional levels)
- **Management within HCVA**: Requirement to maintain or enhance HCVs does not necessarily prohibit other uses or activities

# Annex K – Information & Data Sources



- **Requirements regarding information sources may overlap** – requirements for both use of best available information & for engagement with experts, rights holders and/or other stakeholders
- Lists of **potential best available information sources provided** for all HCV identification & assessment, for developing management strategies & for monitoring methodologies
- **Guidance for HCV assessment documentation** – different documentation approaches & which assessment elements to document
- Engagement with experts could be **primary and/or secondary consultation**
- **Assessment update needed if new information** suggests presence of HCV not previously identified, or HCV status change (& possibly also mgmt./monitoring changes)

# Annex K – National-Level HCV



- Any portion of an **Intact Forest Landscape (IFL)** that occurs within the mgmt. unit is HCV2
- **Old growth forest** (Type 1 or Type 2) & **primary forest** are always HCV3
- Congressionally-designated **Wilderness Areas** are HCV6, and may also be HCV2
- **Designated drinking water supply management zones** are almost always HCV4
- Sites on the **National Register of Historic Places** & **UNESCO World Heritage Sites** are always HCV6
- Federal Lands Only:
  - **Undeveloped areas >1000 acres** that meet minimum criteria for Wilderness Areas & areas that meet the **Roadless Rule's definition of "roadless"** are HCV3
  - **High carbon forests** are HCV4

# Annex K – Additional Considerations for HCV Identification



- Scale of assessment for the Controlled Wood NRA much coarser than needed for P9
- Non-native ecosystems will never be HCV1, HCV2 or HCV3
- Not all wetlands and/or riparian areas and/or fish-bearing streams are HCV
- Not all rare species and/or listed species are HCV
- No HCV is defined only by the presence of big trees

# Annex K – Specific Guidance by HCV Type



For each of the six HCV, Annex K provides:

- Additional guidance for understanding the intent of the HCV
- Sources of information/data that may help with identification of the HCV
- Sources of information that may provide strategies for managing the HCV & some suggested management strategies that might be applicable
- Sources of information that may provide strategies and/or data for monitoring the HCV

NOTE: With limited exceptions, Annex K does not provide examples of HCV

# HCVs & Family Forests

- Annex K provides a **Family Forest HCV checklist** as initial screening tool for likelihood of HCV presence within Family Forest management units
- Checklist items identify specific information sources and/or categories of information sources that need to be considered
- If no presence or potential presence indicated by checklist, no further investigation needed
- If potential presence indicated, further evaluation using Annex K's main body guidance needed to determine HCV presence
- If presence indicated, Annex K's main body guidance will support assessment of status, development of management strategies & monitoring methodologies



Questions?

A photograph of a forest path in autumn. The path is covered in fallen leaves and leads through a dense forest of trees with vibrant yellow and orange foliage. The sky is overcast and grey. The text "CLIMATE CHANGE REQUIREMENTS" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

# CLIMATE CHANGE REQUIREMENTS

# Climate Change Considerations – P6, P7, P8 & P10

## Version 1.0/1.1

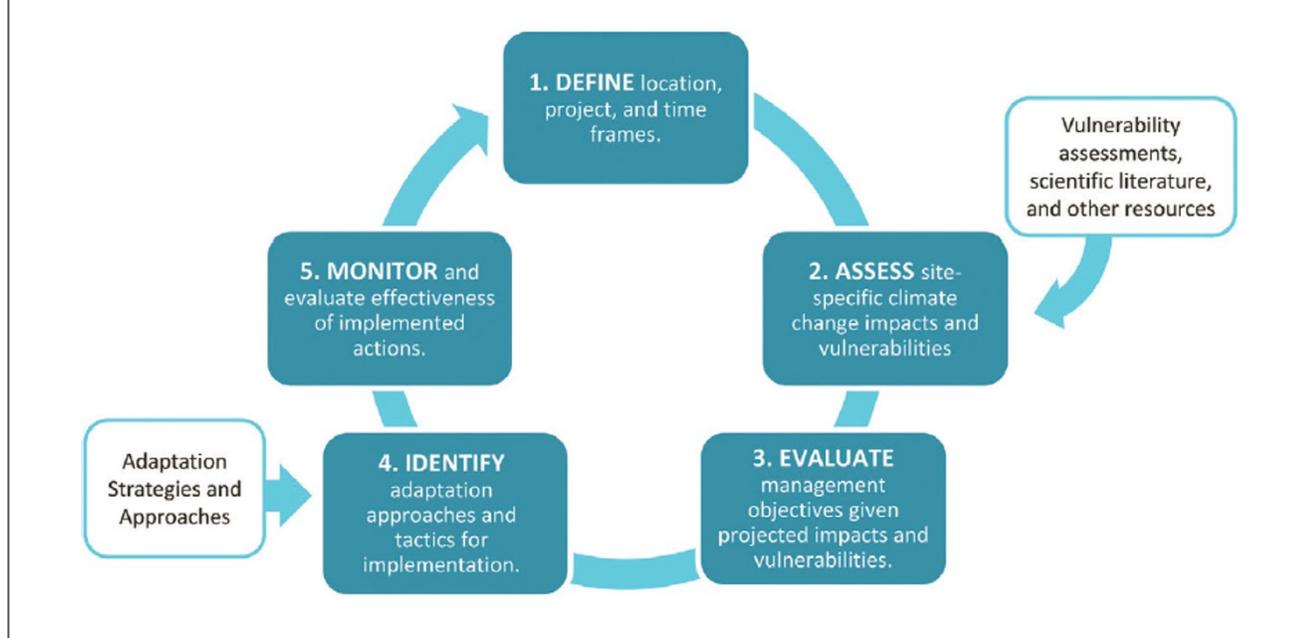
**Climate change only mentioned as an example** for when non-local sources of trees may be used for planting, and for two considerations within the supplementary requirements for US Forest Service lands

## Version 2.0

**Explicit climate change expectations** for certificate holders to:

- assess the potential future impacts on environmental values
- consider impacts on achievement of mgmt. objectives & desired future conditions
- provide information on any adaptation strategies being implemented
- monitor for changes in potential impacts & for effectiveness of adaptation strategies

# Climate Change Considerations – Annex L



**Figure 1.** Adaptation Workbook Process. Source: Forest Adaptation Resources: Climate Change Tools and Approaches for Land Managers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Swanston et al. Ch. 5, page 75, 2016).

Below, FSS *Indicators*\* are cross-walked to the steps in the Adaptation Workbook process.

**Table 1.** FSC US FSS and Adaptation Planning Steps Crosswalk

Step	Indicator
<b>Step 1:</b> Define area of interest, goals, and objectives	Indicator 7.1.2
<b>Step 2:</b> Assess climate change impacts and vulnerabilities	Indicator 6.1.1 Indicator 7.2.4
<b>Step 2:</b> Evaluate <i>management objectives</i> * given impacts and vulnerabilities	Indicator 7.2.4
<b>Step 3:</b> Identify adaptation approaches and tactics for implementation	Indicator 7.2.4/FF Indicator 7.2.1 Indicator 10.2.2 Indicator 10.9.2
<b>Step 4:</b> Monitor and evaluate effectiveness	Indicator 8.1.2

# Step 1: Define area of interest, goals and objectives



*7.1.2: The management plan describes:*

- a) current conditions of the timber and non-timber forest resources being managed;*
- b) historic conditions;*
- c) desired future conditions; and*
- d) applicable management objectives to move the management unit toward desired future conditions, including those to achieve conformance with the Standard.*

Indicator 7.1.2 Guidance:

- “Management objectives” are typically time specific, measurable results that correspond to organizational goals
- The organization may also have objectives that are not directly related to conformance with the FSS
- Forest resources are not limited to forest products

## Step 2: Assess climate change impacts & vulnerabilities

## Step 3: Evaluate management objectives given impacts & vulnerabilities

6.1.1 [Excerpt]: Identify and assess the condition of environmental values that may be affected by management activities, including the potential future impacts of climate change and catastrophic natural disturbances on these values.

- Annex L guidance provides a basic framework for evaluating potential future climate change impacts & provides links to resources that support this assessment

7.2.4 [Summary]: In the management plan, describe climate change-related risks and vulnerabilities that may affect achievement of management objectives and desired future conditions, and describe any climate change adaptation strategies being implemented.

- Annex L guidance provides examples of potential climate change impacts that could affect achievement of management objectives and links to resources that support vulnerability assessments

# Step 4: Identify adaptation approaches and tactics for implementation



**7.2.4 [Summary]:** In the management plan, describe climate change-related risks and vulnerabilities that may affect achievement of management objectives and desired future conditions, and describe any climate change adaptation strategies being implemented.

- Annex L guidance provides examples of potential adaptation strategies in three categories (resistance, resilience, transition) and links to resources that support development of adaptation strategies

Additional indicators related to climate change adaptation:

- 10.2.2 allows use of non-native species for stand regeneration when essential for maintaining or enhancing local diversity as part of climate change adaptation strategies
- 10.9.2 requires implementation of management activities to increase resilience of ecosystems to catastrophic natural disturbances

# Step 5: Monitor and evaluate effectiveness



8.1.2 [Summary]: The monitoring protocol includes specific procedures to evaluate:

- a) how changes in the assessed potential impact of climate change related risks and vulnerabilities might potentially affect achievement of management objectives and desired future conditions, and
  - b) the effectiveness of climate change adaptation strategies implemented
- Annex L guidance provides important considerations for the monitoring program, best practices for monitoring and examples of how those best practices can be implemented, in addition to links to resources that support development of monitoring methodologies

NOTE: Not applicable for family forest management units

# Additional Resources in Annex L



- **Examples of best available information to support conformance**
  - Climate change projections
  - Vulnerability assessments
  - Climate-related risks and associated adaptation options
  - Best practices for assisted migration
  - Support for integrating adaptation planning into management planning
  - Real-world adaptation examples
- **Managing for forest carbon**
  - Identification of indicators that already support this
  - Examples of tools & resources to support carbon-focused management objectives

# Climate Change & Family Forests



- FF 7.1.2: A management plan exists for the management unit and includes management objectives to achieve conformance with the standard
- FF 6.1.1 [Excerpt]: At minimum, an evaluation of environmental values in the management unit is conducted that includes consideration of potential impacts of catastrophic natural disturbances
- FF 7.2.1 [Excerpt]: The management plan describes potential climate change impacts on achievement of management objectives and desired future conditions; and climate change adaptation strategies, if any, that are being implemented
- FF 8.1.2 is not applicable for family forests (FF 8.1.1 requires monitoring achievement of management objectives, but does not require any specific climate change-related procedures)
- 10.2.2 (using non-native species for regeneration) is the same as for non-FF mgmt. units
- 10.9.2 (increasing resilience to catastrophic natural disturbances) is not applicable for FF



QUESTIONS?

# Please participate in our polls!

**Feedback for  
FSC US**

**SAF CFE  
Credit Hours  
Request**

# Thank you



Forest Stewardship Council®  
FSC® United States



1441 Woodmont Lane NW, Ste 539, Atlanta, GA  
T +1 612.353.4511  
info@us.fsc.org

FSC United States © All rights reserved  
FSC® C125520

[us.fsc.org](http://us.fsc.org)