



FSC-US Revised Forest management Standard Overview

FSC-US is proud to announce that on July 8 FSC's International office approved the FSC-US Forest Management Standard (v 1.0; 2010). This standard is the result of extensive collaboration among the multiple member, partner, and stakeholder organizations representing the environmental, social, and economic chambers that comprise the Forest Stewardship Council. The standard has been developed to capture on-the-ground conditions that represent true forest stewardship and to promote consistency and clarity in application. The standard incorporates multiple complex components of sustainability that include but go beyond timber productivity to comprise the myriad environmental, social, and economic values of forests.

Every FSC standard worldwide must address the FSC's central tenets of forest stewardship known as the FSC Principles and Criteria. There are 10 Principles and 56 Criteria that constitute the foundation of every FSC standard globally, covering environmental, social and economic issues that range from habitat protection, harvest rates, community benefit and indigenous rights. The FSC-US Forest Management Standard contains the on-the-ground details that define the intent and application of FSC's Principles and Criteria for the forest types, ecosystems, conservation tools, worker conditions, indigenous rights issues, markets, and economic models that exist and operate in the United States.

What's new in the revised FSC-US Forest Management Standard?

The revised FSC-US Forest Management (FM) standard is a single standard that is applicable to the contiguous U.S. The new, single FSC-US standard replaces the former nine regional standards and harmonizes the requirements while maintaining regional variation where appropriate. The new FM standard also increases consistency in interpretation and application through guidance and intent statements, and the standard more thoroughly considers the particular issues confronting family forest owners seeking FSC certification.

The revised FSC-US Forest Management Standard provides:

1. **Consistency of a single national standard.** The new US National Standard harmonizes the expiring nine regional standards into one national standard, while still maintaining some regional variation in key areas of forest management and conservation. In our 2007 standards review, environmental, social, and economic chamber stakeholders, as well as the Certifying Bodies, all agreed that one national standard would eliminate unnecessary complexity and improve efficiencies in the auditing process. The new FSC-US FM standard retains regional variation where necessary to maintain regional requirements that incorporate local environmental and social conditions.
2. **Assurance of on-the-ground results.** The new standard comes with guidance statements that clarify goals of the requirements and suggested tools for achieving them. Ultimately, these guidance statements will encourage a clear and consistent application

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of the standard. FSC-US is committed to further developing tools and providing guidance on existing tools to help land managers understand and implement requirements in the standard.

- 3. Accessibility for Family Forests.** FSC-US has developed a modified set of requirements that addresses challenges faced by small and low Intensity managed forests (referred to as SLIMF by FSC). This allows for Family Forests (and other ownerships qualifying as small or low intensity) to be evaluated for FSC certification using a standard that takes into account scale and intensity of small forest management operations.

The Family Forest Indicators are designed to reflect that some FSC criteria (such as the capacity for forest management to affect local economies, larger social conditions, and large scale ecological processes) may not apply to family forests individually. Additionally, the certification procedures take into account the potential cumulative impacts of multiple family forests in close proximity on these same issues. In some cases new Indicators have been developed to address conditions unique to small ownerships.

What does NOT change in the new standard?

The FSC-US Forest Management Standard captures the same key environmental, social, and economic concepts that the regional standards previously captured:

- Exceptionally high restrictions on conversion of natural forests to non-forest uses or plantations;
- Strict limitations on clearcuts for forest types that do not experience similar, natural disturbance regimes;
- Old growth protection;
- Restrictions on the use of highly toxic pesticides;
- Requirements to protect rare species in addition to those that are state or federally listed as threatened or endangered;
- Evaluating and managing for social impacts, and providing for local community benefit;
- Consultation with indigenous and community groups prior to any management that might affect their rights and resources.

Timing for implementation of the revised standard

The revised standard is available for use immediately and all forests seeking FSC-certification but not currently FSC-certified will be evaluated to this standard. Those forests that are currently FSC-certified will have until October 8, 2011 to be in conformance to this standard, and we highly encourage certificate holders to adopt it as soon as possible.

Any questions or comments regarding this standard or any other standards or policies issued by FSC should be addressed to FSC-US. Please see our website (www.fscus.org) for contact details.

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