



FSC-US Forest Management Standard (Draft 8.1) Summary of Key Revisions

Introduction

This document provides a summary of key issues raised by stakeholders during the July-September 2009 comment period and how they were addressed in the final version (draft 8.1) of the FSC-US Forest Management Standard that was recommended to FSC-International for approval.

All stakeholder comments regarding Draft 7 were carefully considered by FSC-US staff, the Standards Committee, and the FSC-US Board during this revision process. In crafting the final Draft of the Standard, FSC-US employed a consensus-based approach that sought balance and agreement among environmental, economic and social interests. We addressed stakeholder comments in a manner consistent with the goal of this revision process: *to ensure that the FSC-US Standard effectively implements on the ground the intent of the FSC's global Principles and Criteria*. Please contact FSC-US staff directly if you would like to discuss why certain revisions were made and how specific stakeholder comments were addressed.

Revisions addressing General Issues

- ***The level of specificity*** of certain Indicators is essential to ensure that a clear minimum threshold of compliance is met in FSC-certified forest management. Specific and numerical thresholds of compliance in Indicators have been retained from regional standards and drafted in certain other areas in response to deliberations by Standards Working Group and Committee members and other stakeholders.
- ***The FSC Standards revision process has exclusively focused on Indicators and Guidance and not on the FSC Principles and Criteria (P&C)***, which must be globally consistent. According to FSC policy, FSC-US cannot modify the Principles and Criteria in any way and, as noted above, must have Indicators that correspond with all requirements of each Criterion. While some Criteria include requirements that might be covered by US law, related Indicators are necessary to verify compliance with US law.
- ***Areas designated for special management***, such as HCVF (High Conservation Value Forests), representative sample areas, streamside management zones, and conservation zones for rare, threatened and endangered species, may overlap. These designations, although designed to capture differing values are by no means mutually exclusive and in many cases, one would expect some areas to serve multiple purposes. For example, an old growth stand on an FMU would most likely be designated HCVF due to its ecological values. It may also be considered a conservation zone for rare species, and could serve as a representative sample of an ecological reference condition or an under-represented ecological condition.

Principle 1: Compliance with Laws and FSC Principles

- *Partial certification (C1.6)*: Additional clarification was provided on the requirements concerning partial certification and how it applies to qualification for FSC membership.
- *FSC-US Land Sales Policy (C1.6)*: Distinct from land conversion (which focuses on actions within a certified FMU and covered in C6.10), FSC-US's Land Sales Policy provides parameters for the sale of FSC-certified lands. This policy is referenced in C1.6. Given that this is a separate policy from the Standard, it is undergoing a distinct and concurrent development process.

Principle 2: Tenure and Use Rights and Responsibilities

- *Subsurface mineral rights (C2.1)*: This Indicator was deleted, and its requirements were integrated into C6.10 to address conversion of forest to non-forest use associated with rights owned by other parties.

Principle 4: Community Relations and Worker's Rights

- *Clarification of requirements for 'social impacts' (C4.4)*: Respect for the human dimensions of forest management is a core value of FSC. Additional guidance regarding social impacts was added to promote consistent interpretation and evaluation.

Principle 5: Benefits from the Forest

- *Economic viability (C5.1)*: Stakeholders commented on making economic profitability a requirement (as a case of economic viability), even if it meant having to scale down other resource requirements. This revision could not be made due to FSC policy that requires compliance with all indicators in the Standard.
- *Clarification of requirements related to Carbon (Indicator 5.5.a)*: Reference to carbon was retained in the Standard, but clarification was provided on its intent.
- *Calculations for Sustained Yield Harvest Levels (SYHL, C5.6)* were revised to include the ability to use both volume and area control in the calculations.

Principle 6: Environmental Impact

Criterion 6.1:

- Minor revisions were made to streamline the requirements under C6.1, and guidance was provided for intent of including historic conditions in the assessment.
- "Maintaining and/or enhancing" replaced "restoring".

Criterion 6.2:

- The requirement for a secondary review was deleted from the indicator and guidance addressing secondary review was added.

Criterion 6.3:

- Indicator 6.3.a, requiring written guidelines to ensure conformance with C6.3 was deleted.
- Old Growth: Various revisions were made, including:
 - Reference to individual legacy trees was removed from old growth requirements and placed in Indicator 6.3.f.
 - Size limits were included in the definitions of Type 1 and Type 2 old growth; reference to age was deleted.
 - Reference to late successional forests was removed.
- Opening Sizes: The definition of “even aged” was modified and reference to “two age” was removed. The requirement for a proportional increase in the amount of retention based on opening size was removed, as it is adequately covered in other requirements.
- Green up requirements from the current Pacific Coast regional standard was added as a Pacific Coast region-specific requirement (Indicator 6.3.g.1.f), with a revision made to the size of trees prior to harvest.

Criterion 6.5:

- Streamlined requirements regarding site preparation and soils protection, integrating similar requirements from C6.3 in Draft 7 to C6.5.
- Guidance was provided on managing for upstream and downstream passage

Criterion 6.6:

- Clarification was provided that the requirements of this Criterion apply only to the FMU and not to the nursery.

Criterion 6.10:

- “Publicly accepted plans” was removed as an exemption in the calculation of conversion
- The annual cap on conversion was removed; the 5-year cap was retained. All requirements and guidance ensuring that all conversion resulted in conservation benefit were retained.

Principle 7: Management Plan

- Minor revisions were made to correspond with other revisions in the Standard.
- Requirements in C7.1.q specific to public lands were moved to guidance.

Principle 8: Monitoring and Assessment

- Minor revisions were made to correspond with other revisions in the Standard

Principle 9: Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forests

- No significant changes from earlier draft

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