

# INTRODUCING THE FSC US FOREST STEWARDSHIP STANDARD V2 → GENERAL OVERVIEW WEBINAR

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*Forest Stewardship Council U.S. Webinar*  
*November 5, 2025*



# Join Us at Upcoming Events!!

## Southeast Stakeholder Events

Augusta, Georgia  
Dinner, stakeholder mtg & field tour

**November 11-13, 2025**

## SAF Community of Interest Webinar

Virtual  
FSC US FSS focus

**December 17, 2025**

## 2026 Stakeholder Events

Knoxville, TN / Madison, WI  
FSS workshop & stakeholder meeting

**March / April 2026**

## Stewardship in Action 2026

Seattle, Washington  
FSC US annual conference

**October 2026**

# AGENDA → FSS GENERAL OVERVIEW WEBINAR

	Topic	Time
1	Welcome & Background	10 min.
2	Transitioning to Version 2	10 min.
3	Significant Changes from Version 1	25 min.
4	Questions	15 min.

**Together we keep forests forever**



## GLOBAL MISSION



To promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.

## FSC US MISSION



To provide pathways for people to support and recognize responsible forest management.

# The role of FSC Principles and Criteria and International Generic Indicators



# FSS Revision Process

## 2018-2023

- FSC US Board serving as national-level decision-makers (i.e., SDG)
- 2 Public Consultations / ~4000 Comments
- 3<sup>rd</sup> draft submitted for FSC International approval process in December 2023

## 2024

- FSC International review & further changes requested
- 4<sup>th</sup> Draft completed & submitted for October 2024 review by FSC International committee with approval-authority → Review Not Possible

## 2025

- 5<sup>th</sup> Draft received conditional approval from International committee in May
- **Confirmation of conditions closure and full approval received in July**





# TRANSITIONING TO VERSION 2

# Implementation Timeline

Milestones	Estimated 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
- Still being clarified:
  - Whether major nonconformances assessed during the transition period must be closed prior to the end of the transition period
  - Whether all new/revised indicators must be audited prior to the end of the transition period

# FSS Transition Resources

( <https://us.fsc.org/en-us/certification/forest-management-certification/revised-fsc-us-forest-stewardship-standard-v2-coming-soon> )

- Unofficial version of standard
- High-level & detailed comparisons of old and revised standards
- Coming soon (before end of 2025):
  - Schedule of 2026 engagement events
  - Topic-specific “explainers” for high-interest issues
  - Versions of standard customized for different users, different interests
  - Frequently asked questions
- Next Year: Certificate holder-prioritized tools & resources

# SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

# Overall Structure

## Version 1.0/1.1

- All management units conform with **Principle 1 through Principle 9**
- Management units with FSC plantations also conform with Principle 10
- **Community relations and workers' rights are combined** in a single Principle
- **Low risk, alternate & inapplicable indicators** for family forests/SLIMF

## Version 2.0

- All management units conform with **Principle 1 through Principle 10**
- Management units with FSC plantations conform with alternate and additional indicators in Principles 6 & 10
- **Workers' rights and community relations are addressed in separate Principles**
- **Alternate & inapplicable indicators** for family forests / SLIMF

# Dispute Resolution

## Version 1.0/1.1

Certificate holders **expected to resolve disputes** regarding:

- tenure claims & use rights
- conflicts between workers & management
- stakeholder grievances and/or provision of fair compensation

## Version 2.0

Certificate holders **expected to have a dispute resolution process** (developed through engagement) & attempt to resolve disputes out of court, regarding:

- applicable laws
- grievances from employees and independent contractors
- violations of rights held by Native American Indigenous Peoples
- impacts of mgmt activities on affected local communities & other affected stakeholders

## Version 1.0/1.1

- Worker-oriented indicators **limited in number**, with **some topics applicable only to employees**, and others to all workers
- “Workers” defined to include employees of contractors, overlapping or third-party licensees, as well as employees of the applicant firm and subcontractors

## Version 2.0

- **Number of worker-oriented indicators is greatly increased**, including gender equity
- Indicators **applicable to all workers**, but the way conformance is demonstrated may be different for different types of workers
- “Workers” defined to include all persons who are implementing management activities under the scope of the Standard, regardless of by whom they are employed

# Indigenous Peoples' Rights & Resources

## Version 1.0/1.1

- Mgmt. activities in tribal forests must be implemented by authorized tribal representatives, & not implemented without written consent from the tribe
- Expectation to **consult with IP that hold rights** within or binding agreements regarding the mgmt. unit, identify significant sites & avoid harming both
- Actions are taken to avoid adversely affecting tribal resources

## Version 2.0

- Expectation to **identify & engage with IP that hold rights** within the mgmt. unit and/or **have resources** that may be affected by mgmt. activities.
- Consideration to include tribes that no longer live on their ancestral lands
- **Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) required** for legal or customary rights
- Protect significant sites and promote protection of important resources

## Version 1.0/1.1

- **No explicit threshold** for designation of conservation areas, except for mgmt. units that include lands where natural ecosystems were previously converted to FSC plantations
- Conservation areas expected to be designated if needed for conservation of a specific value (e.g., species, sites, RSA, HCV)

## Version 2.0

- Expectation to **designate at least 10% of the management unit** as a conservation area
- If not achieved via existing requirements, additional areas need to be established
- For family forests within a certified group, this responsibility may be shared by other group members

# Climate Change Considerations

## 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

# Mitigation & Repair of Environmental Damage

## Version 1.0/1.1

- Multiple indicators with expectations to **avoid/minimize negative impacts of mgmt. activities** on environmental & social values
- Multiple indicators with expectation that certificate holders will maintain, enhance or restore specific environmental values
- Temporary stream and wetland crossings are expected to be restored to original hydrological conditions
- Chemical spills are expected to be remediated

## Version 2.0

- Expectations similar to V1.1 included, with addition of explicit expectation to **consider potential negative impacts outside of the management unit**
- Broadly, when negative impacts to environmental values occur as a result of mgmt. activities, expectation to **prevent further damage, & mitigate/repair impacts**
- Expectation to address impacts to water/riparian resources even if no direct control over activities or due to ineffective protection measures by previous owners

# Monitoring & Verifiable Targets

## Version 1.0/1.1

- Certificate holders are expected to **develop and implement a monitoring protocol**
- Operational, environmental, social, and cultural **elements that are required to be monitored are specified in the standard**

## Version 2.0

Certificate holders are expected to:

- **Establish verifiable targets** for evaluating achievement of management objectives
- **Develop and implement a protocol** to monitor: policies, management objectives, achievement of verifiable targets, environmental & social impacts of mgmt., changes in environmental conditions

**Certificate holders identify specific elements to be monitored** with consideration of potential elements listed in an annex

# Certification of Lands Converted 1994-2020

## Version 1.0/1.1

Plantations on **lands converted after 1994** are **not certified** unless the certificate holder:

- was not directly or indirectly responsible for the conversion, AND
- develops and implements a plan to restore the plantation stands to conditions characteristic of natural forests & in conformance with Principles 1-9

## Version 2.0

Plantations on **lands converted 1994 to 2020** **may be certified**, if:

- a very limited portion of the mgmt. unit was affected & is providing conservation benefits, or
- the certificate holder has implemented restitution of social harms and remedy of environmental harms as required by the FSC Remedy Framework (whether or not involved in the conversion)

# HCV Approach & Framework

## 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

# Certification of Non-Timber Forest Products

## Version 1.0/1.1

- Certification of NTFP is not addressed within the scope of the standard. If certification of NTFP is desired, **conformance is required with both the national standard and a separate NTFP-specific standard** developed by a CB
- If NTFP are sold commercially (whether or not certified), **calculation of quantitative sustained yield harvest levels** is expected.

## Version 2.0

- An extensive list of NTFP are included within the scope of the FSS for certification
- **Conformance with separate standards is no longer necessary**
- If NTFP are sold commercially (whether or not certified), expectation to **abide by a sustained yield harvest level or by harvest guidelines** that maintain the NTFP species and other environmental values

# Indigenous Forest Management

## Version 1.0/1.1

- An emphasis on **scientific literature, research and experts**
- **Traditional knowledge/experience not recognized** as “best available information” nor as providing qualifications for experts
- Entirety of tribal forest could be a High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) and interpreted to **severely limit management activities within the HCVF**

## Version 2.0

- Consistent references to “**best available information,**” defined to include scientific literature, research & traditional knowledge
- **Traditional knowledge/experience explicitly recognized** in “expert” definition
- Indicators explicit that **management activities may occur within HCVA**, if they prevent damage and avoid risks to HCV
- Collection of rare species allowed by Indigenous Peoples for ceremonial purposes, when population risks are avoided and laws/regulations are followed

# Extensive New/Expanded Guidance



Section	# Pages
Preamble	21
Main Body	92 (>50% is guidance)
Glossary	30
Guidance Annexes	83
Federal Land Supplementary Requirements	9



**QUESTIONS?**

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# Thank you



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