



RA-Cert Division Headquarters
65 Millet St. Suite 201
Richmond, VT 05477 USA
Tel: 802-434-5491
Fax: 802-434-3116
www.rainforest-alliance.org

Audit Managed by:
Canada Regional Office
P.O. Box 1771
Chelsea, QC, Canada
J9B 1T9
Tel: 613-986-2841
Fax : 866-438-1971
Contact person: Krista West
Email: kwest@ra.org



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Forest Management
2014 Annual audit
Report for:

Nova Scotia Landowners and
Forest Fibre Producers
Association (NSLFFPA)
In
Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia,
Canada

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Audit Team: Will Martin

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Organization Contact: Peter Burchill
Address: 609 Church St
Unit 202
Port Hawkesbury, NS,
B9A 2X4

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Standard Conversions

1 mbf = 5.1 m³
 1 cord = 2.55 m³
 1 gallon (US) = 3.78541 liters

 1 inch = 2.54 cm
 1 foot = 0.3048 m
 1 yard = 0.9144 m
 1 mile = 1.60934 km
 1 acre = 0.404687 hectares

 1 pound = 0.4536 kg
 1 US ton = 907.185 kg
 1 UK ton = 1016.047 kg

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to document annual audit conformance of Nova Scotia Landowners and Forest Fiber Producers, hereafter referred to as NSLFFPA or the Forest Management Enterprise (FME). The report presents the findings of Rainforest Alliance auditors who have evaluated company systems and performance against the Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC®) forest management standards and policies. Section 2 of this report provides the audit conclusions and any necessary follow-up actions by the company through nonconformity reports.

The Rainforest Alliance founded its previous SmartWood program in 1989 to certify responsible forestry practices and has grown to provide a variety of auditing services. Rainforest Alliance certification and auditing services are managed and implemented within its RA-Cert Division. All related personnel responsible for audit design, evaluation, and certification/verification/validation decisions are under the purview of the RA-Cert Division, hereafter referred to as Rainforest Alliance or RA.

This report includes information which will become public information. Sections 1-3 and Appendix I will be posted on the FSC website according to FSC requirements. All other appendices will remain confidential. A copy of the public summary of this report can be obtained on the FSC website at <http://info.fsc.org/>.

Dispute resolution: If Rainforest Alliance clients encounter organizations or individuals having concerns or comments about Rainforest Alliance and our services, these parties are strongly encouraged to contact Rainforest Alliance regional or Headquarters offices directly (see contact information on report cover). Formal complaints or concerns should be sent in writing.

2. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RESULTS

2.1. Audit conclusion

Based on Company's conformance with FSC and Rainforest Alliance requirements, the audit team makes the following recommendation:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Certification requirements <u>met</u>, certificate maintenance recommended One prior NCR raised to Major (NCR 04/13) and 4 new minor NCRs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Certification requirements <u>not met</u>:
Additional comments:	See NCR 04/13, NCR 01/14, NCR 02/14, NCR 03/14, and NCR 04/14
Issues identified as controversial or hard to evaluate.	

2.2. Changes in FMEs' forest management and associated effects on conformance to standard requirements

The Nova Scotia Landowners and Forest Fiber Producers Association (NSLFFPA) is in an exciting period of rapidly growing membership and increased scope of direct forest management services. During this audit there were a total of 231 members with 31 new members in the past year.

In response to the growing scale of the group, the NSLFFPA has implemented significantly more robust monitoring procedures; including internal audit checklists, health and safety monitoring, and more direct supervision of active management operations. The NSLFFPA has also taken on primary responsibility for the development of all new member management plans to ensure the implementation of all group policies and procedures.

In the past year Port Hawkesbury Paper, a significant buyer or group member harvest volumes, has resumed operations. The result has been an increasing level of management activity by group members during the audit period.

2.3 Excision of areas from the scope of certificate

Not applicable. Check this box if the FME has not excised areas from the FMU(s) included in the certificate scope as defined by FSC-POL-20-003. *(delete the rows below if not applicable)*

2.4. Stakeholder issues *(complaints/disputes raised by stakeholders to FME or Rainforest Alliance since previous evaluation):*

No stakeholder complaints or issues have been identified during the past audit period.

2.5. Conformance with applicable nonconformity reports

The section below describes the activities of the certificate holder to address each applicable non-conformity report (NCR) issued during previous evaluations. For each NCR a finding is presented along with a description of its current status using the following categories. Failure to meet NCRs will result in nonconformances being upgraded from minor to major status with conformance required within 3 months with risk of suspension or termination of the Rainforest Alliance certificate if Major NCRs are not met. The following classification is used to indicate the status of the NCR:

Status Categories	Explanation
Closed	Operation has successfully met the NCR.
Open	Operation has either <u>not met</u> or has <u>partially met</u> the NCR.

Check if N/A (there are no open NCRs to review)

NCR#:	04/13	NC Classification:	Major	Minor X
Standard & Requirement:	FM-35, 5.2.2			
Report Section:	Appendix V: Chain of Custody Conformance, Section 5.2.2			
Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence:				
There have been instances in the past year, including an article submitted to a newspaper, of NSLFFPA making claims regarding FSC and RA, and using FSC and RA trademarks, without first submitting them to RA for approval.				
Corrective Action Request:	Organization shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.			
Timeline for Conformance:	By the next annual surveillance audit			
Evidence Provided by Organization:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policies and Procedures document - Staff interviews - Website http://www.nslffpa.org 			
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	<p>An updated statement was added to the Policies and Procedures document stating "All external communications that reference 'FSC' or the 'Rainforest Alliance' will be submitted to Rainforest Alliance in advance for approval."</p> <p>This current statement does not adequately address the trademark requirements of CoC Standard FM-35 and FSC-TMK-50-201 V1-0 or make reference to these standards.</p> <p>No evidence was provided to address the original instance of non-conformance and no corrective actions were taken to correct claims made in the media or prevent inappropriate trademark based claims from reoccurring.</p> <p>Furthermore, the NSLFFPA website found at www.nslffpa.org includes multiple instances of promotional trademark use that has not received RA approval and does not meet the standard requirements.</p> <p>The non-conformance has been raised to a Major</p>			
NCR Status:	OPEN			
Comments (optional):	See MAJOR NCR 04/13			

NCR#:	05/13	NC Classification:	Major	Minor X
Standard & Requirement:	FSC-STD-30-005, Requirement 8.1 and 8.3.			
Report Section:	Appendix VII, Group Management Checklist.			
Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence:				
Since the last annual audit, the amount of activity within the group has been limited because of the closure of the NewPage Port Hawkesbury mill, and the inspections by the foresters and extension staff provide some monitoring of all activities. However, these are visits or inspections. They are not part of an organized,				

structured, annual monitoring program that involves visits to a selected sample of group members to confirm conformance with the FSC Maritime standard, as required by Requirement 8.1 of the FSC 30-005 standard.	
Corrective Action Request:	Organization shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above. Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.
Timeline for Conformance:	By the next annual audit
Evidence Provided by Organization:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal audit procedure document - Internal audit checklist - Documented internal audits - Staff interviews
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	<p>A detailed internal audit procedure has been developed in response to the identified non-conformance. Internal audits are now to be carried out on an annual basis at the following intensity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodlots < 1000 ha: Sample Size = $0.6 * \sqrt{\#}$ of woodlots. • Woodlots \geq 1000 ha: Sample Size = $\sqrt{\#}$ of woodlots <p>For each internal audit there are a set number of criteria to evaluate and an internal audit checklist has been created to maintain audit consistency.</p> <p>The procedures also require members to notify the group manager of planned management activities. This notification will trigger a pre or active work inspection. These inspections review both health and safety requirements, environmental conditions, and management objectives.</p> <p>During the audit an active database for tracking notifications, product tracking, and internal audit tracking were observed. Evidence was also provided that demonstrated examples of corrective action requests issued to group members and follow-up monitoring.</p> <p>The internal monitoring procedure has been significantly updated over the last audit period and detailed evidence was provided of its implementation. The requirements of the standard are now met and this NCR is closed.</p>
NCR Status:	CLOSED
Comments (optional):	

2.6. New nonconformity reports issued as a result of this audit

MAJOR NCR#:	04/13	NC Classification:	Major X	Minor
Standard & Requirement:	FM-35, 5.2.2			
Report Section:	Appendix V: Chain of Custody Conformance, Section 5.2.2			
Description of Nonconformance and Related Evidence:				
<p>2013 Findings: There have been instances in the past year, including an article submitted to a newspaper, of NSLFFPA making claims regarding FSC and RA, and using FSC and RA trademarks, without first submitting them to RA for approval.</p> <p>2014 Findings: An updated statement was added to the policies and procedures document stating “All external communications that reference ‘FSC’ or the ‘Rainforest Alliance’ will be submitted to Rainforest Alliance in advance for approval.”</p> <p>This current statement does not adequately address the trademark requirements of CoC Standard FM-35 and FSC-TMK-50-201 V1-0 or make reference to these standards.</p> <p>No evidence was provided to address the original instance of non-conformance and no corrective actions were taken to correct claims made in the media or prevent inappropriate trademark based claims from reoccurring.</p> <p>Furthermore, the NSLFFPA website found at www.nslffpa.org includes multiple instances of promotional trademark use that has not received RA approval and does not meet the standard requirements.</p> <p>The non-conformance has been raised to a Major</p>				
Corrective Action Request:	<p>Organization shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the nonconformance.</p>			
Timeline for Conformance:	Three months following the finalization of this report, March 13, 2014.			
Evidence Provided by Organization:	PENDING			
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	PENDING			
NCR Status:	OPEN			
Comments (optional):				

NCR#:	01/14	NC Classification:	Major	Minor X
Standard & Requirement:	FSC-STD-CAN-Maritimes-SLIMF-2008, indicator 9.1.1 and 9.1.4			
Report Section:	Appendix IV, Section 9.1			
Description of Nonconformance and Related Evidence:				
<p>The scale and scope of this group certificate has changed significantly since the original assessment, going from 5 members to over 200 today. Consequently the level of requirements to meet the intent of principle 9 has changed.</p> <p>The existing strategy for assessing the presence of attributes consistent with high conservation value forests is to carry out the assessment on each individual management plan using a standard data set provided by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This GIS data includes identified SAR habitat, core wildlife habitats, significant old and unique forests, municipal watersheds, and restricted land use mapping. If features that have the potential to be HCVs are identified on GIS mapping overlap with an individual property further investigation would be carried out by the planner through field inspections and direct correspondence with DNR biologists. The results of these assessments tend to result in management strategies of establishing protecting areas or reserves on individual properties to exclude forest management activities.</p> <p>While this strategy may have been effective with fewer group members, it is no longer clear that this approach is appropriate as a coherent strategy for the assessment of the high conservation value forests at the current and expanding scale of the membership. In particular, the GIS mapping datasets provided by DNR as the basis for the identification of HCVs do not include all of the potential attributes covered by the assessment Framework in Appendix F in the Maritime standard. These mapped GIS layers also only capture attributes with distinct geographic boundaries and may miss species and features that are not dependant on a fixed location over time. The current approach also does not address the opportunity to manage for HCVs within operational areas outside of reserves and likely does not capture the full scope of HCV considerations across the landscape.</p> <p>Where HCV assessments are only made for each individual plan and the NSLFFPA Policies and Procedures document does not show a clear evaluation framework for how all the attributes covered in Appendix F have been addressed it is difficult to determine if an HCVF assessment has completed across the full scope of the member landbase. This assessment framework has also not been included in the public summary of management plans or external reporting on the activities of the group certificate.</p>				
Corrective Action Request:	<p>Organization shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the nonconformance.</p>			
Timeline for Conformance:	By the next annual audit			
Evidence Provided by Organization:	PENDING			
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	PENDING			
NCR Status:	OPEN			
Comments (optional):				

NCR#:	02/14	NC Classification:	Major	Minor X
Standard & Requirement:	FSC-STD-CAN-Maritimes-SLIMF-2008, indicator 9.2.1			
Report Section:	Appendix IV, section 9.2			

Description of Nonconformance and Related Evidence:	
NSLFFPA has not clearly included consideration of HCV attributes in the course of meeting the public consultation requirements included under Criterion 4.4.	
Requirements for public consultation have changed in scope from previous audit periods. Some requirements that were previously deemed not applicable for small low intensity forests, are now required under the current membership within the group certificate.	
Corrective Action Request:	Organization shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above. Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the nonconformance.
Timeline for Conformance:	By the next annual audit
Evidence Provided by Organization:	PENDING
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	PENDING
NCR Status:	OPEN
Comments (optional):	See OBS 01/14

NCR#:	03/14	NC Classification:	Major	Minor X
Standard & Requirement:	FSC-STD-CAN-Maritimes-SLIMF-2008, indicator 9.3.2			
Report Section:	Appendix IV, section 9.3			
Description of Nonconformance and Related Evidence:				
The NSLFFPA includes some description of management approaches for HCVF in its annual public summary report. However, the measures described are generic and a rationale is not provided that links management approaches to HCVF attributes that are identified through the HCVF assessment framework in Appendix F of the Maritime Standard.				
While this information may be considered confidential on an individual property or may be seen to pose a risk to the identified features and values, the general approach and management strategies used within the group are not communicated at a sufficient level to meet the intent of public oversight and information sharing in the standard requirements.				
Corrective Action Request:	Organization shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above. Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the nonconformance.			
Timeline for Conformance:	By the next annual audit			
Evidence Provided by Organization:	PENDING			
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	PENDING			
NCR Status:	OPEN			
Comments (optional):	See OBS 03/14			

NCR#:	04/14	NC Classification:	Major	Minor X
Standard & Requirement:	FM-35, 1.3 and 3.1			
Report Section:	Appendix V: Chain of Custody Conformance, Section 1.3 and 3.1			
Description of Nonconformance and Related Evidence:				
<p>The existing tracking procedure for FSC sales by NSLFFPA members relies on reporting from the mill gate at the primary buyer of FSC certified logs from member properties. Port Hawkesbury Paper (PHP) maintains a current list of Property Identification numbers (PIDs) for NSLFFPA group members and when loads arrive at the scale house the source PID is cross referenced with the member list. A regular report is provided by PHP to the NSLFFPA group managers to check and track FSC sales from member properties. Landowners are provided with a scale slip by PHP as requested.</p> <p>While these procedures are detailed in NSLFFPA's Policies and Procedures document Section 5.2, the procedure does not cover all required elements of CoC tracking. In particular requirement (c) for procedures to include the FME's FSC certificate registration code and FSC claim (FSC 100%) on all sales and shipping documentation for sales of FSC certified products.</p> <p>While it is recognized that Nova Scotia does not have a bill of lading system and often sales documentation is managed by the contractor with no formal invoices recorded between the buyer and landowner, the requirements for FSC claim and certification code is not applied adequately to meet the intent of the CoC system.</p> <p>Furthermore, on one site visit with active harvesting the landowner did have scale slips for loads sold to PHP by the contractor and the wood was not identified as FSC material on that record.</p> <p>The PID tracking report provided by PHP also does not include an FSC claim and is using an outdated FSC certification code for member properties.</p>				
Corrective Action Request:	<p>Organization shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the nonconformance.</p>			
Timeline for Conformance:	By the next annual audit			
Evidence Provided by Organization:	PENDING			
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	PENDING			
NCR Status:	OPEN			
Comments (optional):	As membership in the group continues to expand it is likely that FSC sales will occur to more than just PHP. The CoC procedures used by the group manager must include all required elements in the standard and be applicable across all active buyers of the group members' FSC certified material.			

2.7. Audit observations

Observations can be raised when issues or the early stages of a problem are identified which does not of itself constitute a nonconformance, but which the auditor considers may lead to a future nonconformance if not addressed by the client. An observation may be a warning signal on a particular issue that, if not addressed, could turn into a NCR in the future (or a pre-condition or condition during a 5 year re-assessment).

OBS 01/14	Reference Standard & Requirement: FSC-STD-CAN-Maritimes-SLIMF-2008, Indicators 4.4.2, 6.3.7, 6.3.10, 6.4.1, 7.1.12
<p>Description of findings leading to observation: In previous audits the size of the NSLFFPA group was such that some requirements in the standard were deemed to be not applicable according to SLIMF guidelines. While all forest management activities are low intensity within this group and the group is generally made up of small forests, there is now one member who does not qualify as a small forest. The group is also now considered a large group with over 50 members.</p> <p>In the Maritime SLIMF standard the applicability of some requirements varies between individual small forests, small groups, and large groups.</p>	
<p>Observation: Where the NSLFFPA has well over 50 members the group managers should ensure that all requirements of the standard are being met according to the guidelines for different types of SLIMFs. In particular indicators 4.4.2, 6.3.7, 6.3.10, 6.4.1, 7.1.12 may now be required, where they had previously been deemed not applicable at the time of re-assessment.</p>	

OBS 02/14	Reference Standard & Requirement: FSC-STD-CAN-Maritimes-SLIMF-2008, Indicator 6.9.2
<p>Description of findings leading to observation: While current management activities within the group do not use exotic species some member properties have areas of planted Norway spruce that pre-date certification. These areas are now managed with the intent to restore Acadian forest conditions under the full requirements of Criterion 6.3.</p> <p>While initial assessments have been made of these areas at the time of management plan development it is not clear if this represents a sufficient level of monitoring to meet requirements under indicator 6.9.2</p>	
<p>Observation: Group managers should ensure that there is a monitoring program that adequately assesses exotic species for efficacy, invasiveness, unusual mortality, disease or insect outbreak, and adverse ecological impacts.</p>	

OBS 03/14	Reference Standard & Requirement: FSC-STD-CAN-Maritimes-SLIMF-2008, Indicator 9.1.3
<p>Description of findings leading to observation: External expert advice on the assessment of HCVF has been focused on direct correspondence with regional biologists at DNR and through GIS mapping data provided by DNR. This strategy may have been effective in the past as these were the two primary sources of information for the assessment of HCV attributes. However, any expanded scope of HCVF assessment may require consultation with a broader group of experts.</p>	
<p>Observation: As NSLFFPA addresses NCR 01/14 on the assessment of HCV attributes they should ensure that appropriate advice is sought from experts on the full scope of considerations under the assessment framework in Appendix F of the Maritime Standard.</p>	

OBS 04/14	Reference Standard & Requirement: FSC-STD-CAN-Maritimes-SLIMF-2008, Indicator 9.4.1
<p>Description of findings leading to observation: Existing management strategies related to the maintenance and enhancement of HCV attributes has tended to focus on the use of protected areas and reserves where no management activities will be scheduled. Because this approach was based on no activities the monitoring requirements were limited and covered adequately by the management planning process and internal monitoring protocols.</p> <p>As a response to the non-conformance in 9.1.1 (NCR 01/14) is developed a larger range of management approaches may now be required.</p>	
<p>Observation: The group managers should ensure that in the resolution of NCR 01/14, and the potential for implementing a wider range of management strategies to maintain or enhance HCV attributes, that monitoring requirements under indicator 9.4.1 continue to be met. These requirements include both implementation and effectiveness monitoring for HCV management prescriptions.</p>	

2.8. Notes from previous audit teams

Notes are recorded for the benefit of future audit teams. They are items that were not fully addressed in an audit or assessment but that do not constitute non-conformance. They were recorded for monitoring by future audit teams.

Note 01/13	Reference Standard and Requirement: Criteria 9.1 and 9.3	
Note for Future Annual Audits: The 2014 annual audit should review conformity with Principle 9.		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed	<input type="checkbox"/> Followed-up but still open	<input type="checkbox"/> Not followed-up this year
<p>2014 Comments: A full review of requirements under Principle 9 was included in the scope of this annual audit. Where the size of this group certificate has increased significantly the original approach to the assessment of HCV attributes is no longer sufficient. There was also inadequate information sharing on HCV identification and management strategies in both public consultation efforts and public summaries of the management plans. NCR 01/14, 02/14, and 03/14 have been issued accordingly.</p>		

2.9. Notes for future audit teams

There were no new Notes issued during this annual audit.

AUDIT PROCESS

2.10. Auditors and qualifications

Auditor Name	Will Martin	Auditor role	Lead Auditor
Qualifications:	With over twelve years of experience in forest management and environmental planning, Will Martin offers a unique background that combines forestry expertise, landscape ecology, and community planning. Will graduated from the Maritime Forest Ranger School in 2001 and spent the next four years running his own consulting company, helping build Atlantic Canada's first FSC Certified woodlot group. Following this work Will completed a degree in Environmental Planning at Dalhousie University, specializing in the areas of conservation planning and community based resource development. Since that time Will has worked as protected areas planner with the Province of Nova Scotia, as provincial stewardship program manager with the Ontario Forestry Association, and currently works as the Director of Forestry and Forest Products for an FSC Certified sustainable forestry demonstration project in Nova Scotia. Will has also been actively involved in the development and review of FSC Standards for both the Maritime Forest Region and Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest Region.		

2.11. Audit schedule

Date	Location /Main sites	Principal Activities
Oct. 17	Various	Audit pre-planning call
Oct. 28	NSLFFPA office	Opening meeting
Oct. 29 – 31	Various	Field site visits
Oct. 31	NSLFFPA office	Closing meeting
Nov. 19	RA offices	Draft report sent to RA
Dec. 3	NSLFFPA office	Draft report sent to NSLFFPA
Dec. 4	RA office	Client comments sent to RA
Dec. 13	RA offices	Report finalization
Total number of person days used for the audit: 9 = number of auditors participating 1 X average number of days spent in preparation, on site and post site visit follow-up including stakeholder consultation 9		

2.12. Sampling methodology

At the time of this audit (October 2013) NSLFFPA had 231 active members. The total area certified is 26,075 ha. In previous audits it was determined that each woodlot owner with multiple parcels is a Resource Manager as each manages the operations on their personal woodlots. The sample was not stratified for parcels greater or less than 100 ha as the SLIMF Maritime Standard applies to parcels less than 1000 ha.

Of the 231 FMUs, 200 were part of the group prior to the 2013 annual audit (November 2012) and 31 are new members since the end of November 2012. Thus, the group was stratified into two subsets, “existing” members ($x = 200$) and “new” ($y = 31$).

The formula for small forests less than 1000 ha (sample size = $0.3 * \text{square root [FMU]}$, rounded to the next highest whole number), was applied to existing members. The formula for small forests less than 1000 ha (sample size = $0.6 * \text{square root [FMU]}$, rounded to the next highest whole number) was applied to new members.

Existing: sample size = $0.3 * \text{square root [200]} = 4.24$ rounded up = 5
New: sample size = $0.6 * \text{square root [31]} = 3.3$ rounded up = 4

The auditor worked with forest managers to identify sites with active or recent operations and those with management considerations for HCVF (Principle 9 was in scope for this annual audit). Although only 9 sites were required, travel routes and areas of interest for this audit resulted in a total of 12 properties being selected for the field portion of the audit. 4 new member properties were selected and 8 existing member properties were selected. 5 of these sites had active harvesting operations and 2 had active pre-commercial thinning. Other management considerations observed through this site selection included, adjacent landowner notification and addressed concerns, recent harvest CAR issued by group manager, mature tolerant hardwood HCVF, and a new plan tolerant hardwood management area.

3.3.1 List of FMUs selected for evaluation

FMU/Group Member Name	Rationale for Selection
Crown Jewel	Existing member and active harvest
Deborah MacNeil	Existing member and active harvest
Jim Sullivan	Existing member with recent harvest
John Archie	Existing member and active PCT
Ron Smith	New member and active harvest
Chris McInnis	New member with HCVF area
Bill Bell	Existing member with resolved adjacent landowner concern
Paul MacDonald	Existing member with active and recent harvests
Liam Lancaster	Existing member with recent harvest and current CAR
Archie Boyd	Existing member with active harvest
Ray Dowling	New member with active PCT
Rachel McGillivray	New member

2.13. Stakeholder consultation process

Stakeholder type (i.e. NGO, government, local inhabitant etc.)	Stakeholders notified (#)	Stakeholders consulted or providing input (#)
Forest workers	4	4
Landowners/members	11	5

2.14. Changes to Certification Standards

Forest stewardship standard used in audit:	
Revisions to the standard since the last audit:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No changes to standard. <input type="checkbox"/> Standard was changed (detail changes below)
Changes in standard:	
Implications for FME:	Not applicable - no new requirements

2.15. Review of FME Documentation and required records

a) All certificate types

Required Records	Reviewed
Complaints received by FME from stakeholders, actions taken, follow up communication	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Comments: No complaints received during the audit period	
Accident records	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Comments: No accidents recorded during the audit period	
Training records	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Group managers and field staff training in hardwood management and ecosystem classification.	
Operational plan(s) for next twelve months	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Notification tracking lists all pending harvest operations and other planned silvicultural activities in the near term. Individual management plans list recommended activities for a 5 year period.	
Inventory records	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Inventory records are maintained in individual management plans and through the group manager GIS database.	
Harvesting records	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: The 'product tracker' lists all reported harvest activities and timber sales over the audit period.	

b) Group Certificates

Required Group Records	Reviewed
Group management system	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Member databases, the 'notification tracker', the 'product tracker', GIS mapping, and internal audit records were reviewed.	
Rate of membership change within the group	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: The group has grown by 31 new members in the past year and there were no members lost or removed from the group.	
Formal communication/written documentation sent to members by	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>

the group entity during the audit period	
Comments: Correspondence to members is managed through the NSLFFPA website, on the 'Woodbox' page. Members are notified by email when new content is added to the 'Woodbox' page. A health and safety update was also mailed to members on December 12, 2012.	
Records of monitoring carried out by the group entity	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: All internal monitoring records were reviewed.	
Records of any corrective actions issued by the group entity	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: There were a total of 14 CARs issued by the group managers in the past year. Most of these issues were corrected immediately and related to missing elements on the health and safety checklist. One issue on repairing ruts is pending resolution. One issue on a lack of notification prior to the commencement of harvesting activities was resolved during the field audit.	
Updated list of group members	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: A full updated list of all 231 group members was provided.	

APPENDIX I: FSC Annual Audit Reporting Form

(NOTE: form to be prepared by the client prior to audit, information verified by audit team)

Forest management enterprise information:			
FME legal name:	Nova Scotia Landowners and Forest Fibre Producers Association		
FME Certificate Code:	SW-FM/CoC – 001753		
Reporting period	Previous 12 month period	Dates	November 1, 2013 - October 28, 2013

1. Scope Of Certificate			
Type of certificate: single FMU	SLIMF Certificate: Small SLIMF		
New FMUs added since previous evaluation	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Group Certificate: Updated of FMU and group member list provided in Appendix VII-a:			
Multi-FMU Certificate: List of new FMUs added to the certificate scope:			
FMU Name/Description	Area	Forest Type	Location Latitude/Longitude ¹
	ha		
	ha		
	ha		

2. FME Information	
<input type="checkbox"/> No changes since previous report (if no changes since previous report leave section blank)	
Forest zone	Temperate
Certified Area under Forest Type	
- Natural	26,040 hectares
- Plantation	35 hectares
Stream sides and water bodies	Linear Kilometers

3. Forest Area Classification	
<input type="checkbox"/> No changes since previous report (if no changes since previous report leave section blank)	
Total certified area (land base)	26,075 ha
1. Total forest area	26,075 ha
a. Total production forest area	25,646 ha
b. Total non-productive forest area (no harvesting)	429 ha
- Protected forest area (strict reserves)	429 ha
- Areas protected from timber harvesting and managed only for NTFPs or services	0 ha
- Remaining non-productive forest	ha
2. Total non-forest area (e.g., water bodies, wetlands, fields, rocky outcrops, etc.)	ha

4. High Conservation Values identified via formal HCV assessment by the FME and respective areas			
<input type="checkbox"/> No changes since previous report (if no changes since previous report leave section blank)			
Code	HCV TYPES ²	Description:	Area

¹ The center point of a contiguous FMU or group of dispersed properties that together comprise a FMU in latitude and longitude decimal degrees with a maximum of 5 decimals.

² The HCV classification and numbering follows the ProForest HCVF toolkit. The toolkit also provides additional explanation

HCV1	Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, endangered species, refugia).	Wildlife Species at Risk Habitat	60.8 ha
HCV2	Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.		ha
HCV3	Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems.	Old or Unique Forests	153.2 ha
HCV4	Forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control).		ha
HCV5	Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g. subsistence, health).		ha
HCV6	Forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).		ha
Number of sites significant to indigenous people and local communities			

5. Workers

Number of workers including employees, part-time and seasonal workers:		
Total number of workers	5 workers	
- Of total workers listed above	4 Male	1 Female
Number of serious accidents		
Number of fatalities		

6. Pesticide Use

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FME does not use pesticides.
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regarding the categories. Toolkit is available at <http://hcvnetwork.org/library/global-hcv-toolkits>.

APPENDIX II: List of visited sites (confidential)

FMU or other Location	Compartment/ Area	Site description / Audit Focus and Rationale for selection
Victoria County	Crown Jewel	Existing member with active clearcut/partial cut harvest
Inverness County	Deborah MacNeil	Existing member with active clear cut harvest of old field white spruce
Inverness County	Jim Sullivan	Existing member with recent clearcut harvest
Inverness County	John Archie	Existing member and active PCT in mixed softwood stand.
Antigonish County	Ron Smith	New member and active salvage harvest in old field white spruce being completed by the landowner.
Antigonish County	Chris McInnis	New member with mature tolerant hardwood HCVF area.
Antigonish County	Bill Bell	Existing member with adjacent landowner concern regarding proximity of well head to hauling road. Issue resolved with DoE guidance.
Antigonish County	Paul MacDonald	Existing member with active crop tree release harvest being completed by the landowner.
Antigonish County	Liam Lancaster	Existing member with recent clearcut harvest and current CAR for failure to notify the group manager prior to commencement of activities.
Antigonish County	Archie Boyd	Existing member with active clearcut harvest in old field area.
Richmond County	Ray Dowling	New member with active PCT in lowland spruce area.
Richmond County	Rachel McGillivray	New member with significant tolerant hardwood management area.

APPENDIX III: List of stakeholders consulted (confidential)

List of FME Staff Consulted

Name	Title	Contact	Type of Participation
Easthouse, Kari	Program Manager	Kari@nslffpa.org	Interview
Brown, Kingsley	Program Coordinator	brownkingsley5@gmail.com	Interview
Burchill, Peter	Program Forester	Pete@nslffpa.org	Interview
Hill, Bill	Area Supervisor	Bill@nslffpa.org	Interview
Stub, Wilma	Executive Director	nslffpa@ns.sympatico.ca	Interview

List of other Stakeholders Consulted

Name	Organization	Contact	Type of Participation	Follow up req ³
Garlon, Charles	Roy Garlon Contracting		Interview	none
Korem, Nahman	Landowner		Interview	none
MacLeod, Bobby	Margaree Excavating		Interview	none
Sangster, Cliff	North Inverness Forest Management Ltd.	(902) 258-2622	Interview	none
Smith, Ron	Landowner		Interview	none
Boyd, Archie	Landowner		Interview	none
Fakkeldy, Dan	PCT operator		Interview	none
Dowling, Ray	Landowner		Interview	none
Dowling, John	Landowner		Interview	none

³ To indicate if the stakeholder has requested documented follow up on how their comments were addressed during the evaluation. TM shall provide public summary to stakeholders that request documented follow-up within 3 months of the closing meeting..

APPENDIX IV: Forest management standard conformance (confidential)

The table below demonstrates conformance or nonconformance with the Forest Stewardship Standard used for evaluation as required by FSC. The Rainforest Alliance Task Manager should provide guidance on which sections of the standard should be evaluated in a particular audit. Rainforest Alliance may evaluate only a subset of the criteria or principles of the standard in any one particular audit provided that the FME is evaluated against the entire standard by the end of the certificate duration. Findings of conformance or nonconformance at the criterion level will be documented in the following table with a reference to an applicable NCR or OBS. The nonconformance and NCR is also summarized in a NCR table in Section 2.4. All nonconformances identified are described on the level of criterion though reference to the specific indicator shall be noted. Criteria not evaluated are identified with a NE.

P & C	Conformance: Yes/No/ NE	Findings	NCR OBS (#)
Principle 1: COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND FSC PRINCIPLES			
Principle 8. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT			
8.1	YES	<p>In response to a prior NCR in the group manager requirements NSLFFPA has significantly improved their overall strategy related to monitoring. A formalized procedure with checklists and a set sample size have been implemented for internal monitoring (See Policies & Procedures Manual, section 3.7.3).</p> <p>In addition, notifications for any planned management activities also now triggers a site visit and review of planning documents. Site visits are also typically scheduled during active operations where health and safety requirements are reviewed as well as the implementation of management prescriptions.</p> <p>Core staff is in place for field monitoring activities and a procedure for corrective action requests and follow-up is also listed.</p> <p>Based on the above evidence there is continued conformance with the requirements of the Criterion.</p>	
8.2	YES	<p>Forest inventory data continues to be collected at the time of forest management planning. Data collection also includes a review of landscape level features mapping to identify wildlife habitats and other potential HCVs. (8.2.1)</p> <p>Permanent Sample Plot (PSP) data from member woodlots (PSPs are managed by DNR) is also used and compared to provincial averages. Changes in the inventory over time are captured during the 5 year review process for management plans. All stand data and inventory information is also recorded and tracked through the group manager's GIS. (8.2.1)</p> <p>The group managers maintain regular correspondence with regional biologists at the DNR to monitor for changes in habitat mapping or management guidelines. Provincial GIS layers for significant habitat</p>	

		<p>are updated annually and if any SAR are identified there is direct correspondence with the regional biologist. (8.2.2)</p> <p>Based on the above evidence there is continued conformance with the requirements of the Criterion.</p>	
8.3	YES	<p>The group manager continues to use both a 'notification tracker' to record all notifications of pending forest management activity and a system of Property Identification Numbers (PIDs) to track certified wood sales with buyers.</p> <p>The group manager provides an updated list of all PIDs in the group membership to potential buyers and when shipments are received by mills shipment PIDs are cross references with the group list. The mills also provide records of all shipments with group member PIDs to the group manager.</p> <p>Nova Scotia does not have a bill of lading system and often wood sales are managed informally between landowners, contractors, and mills with no sales invoices issued. A scale slip is often the only record of transactions. In this context the PID tracking system does provide a reasonable avenue for monitoring the flow of certified wood from member properties.</p> <p>Based on the above evidence there is continued conformance with the requirements of the Criterion.</p> <p>An NCR has been issued in the CoC procedure for a lack of proper claim and code listing on these FSC sales. See NCR 04/14 issued in Appendix V.</p>	
8.4	YES	<p>Requirements for notification of pending management activities and CAR review procedures provide an important monitoring pathway for the group managers. Information collected through these monitoring efforts has been used in the past year alone to improve management guidance in health and safety, as well as standards for site damage. This information is now incorporated into all new plans, was sent as an update to all members, and will be added to all plan renewals.</p> <p>Based on the above evidence there is continued conformance with the requirements of the Criterion.</p>	
8.5	YES	<p>A monitoring public summary is posted annually on the NSLFFPA website. Members are notified at the time of posting and the report is available for download by the general public.</p> <p>The report provides summary details of group membership, landbase, management objectives, silvicultural activities, rate of harvest, monitoring activities, corrective action requests, and HCVFs.</p> <p>Based on the above evidence there is continued conformance with the requirements of the Criterion.</p>	

Principle 9. MAINTENANCE OF HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE FORESTS			
9.1	NO	<p>The scale and scope of this group certificate has changed significantly since the original assessment, going from 5 members to over 200 today. Consequently the level of requirements to meet the intent of principle 9 has changed.</p> <p>The existing strategy for assessing the presence of attributes consistent with high conservation value forests is to carry out an assessment in each individual management plan using a standard data set provided by DNR. This GIS data includes identified SAR habitat, core wildlife habitats, significant old and unique forests, municipal watersheds, and restricted land use mapping. If features that have the potential to be HCVs are identified on maps that overlap with an individual property further investigation would be carried out by the planner through field inspections and direct correspondence with DNR biologists. The results of these assessments tend to focus on identified protected areas and reserves on individual properties that exclude forest management activities.</p> <p>While this strategy may have been effective with fewer group members, it is no longer clear that this approach is appropriate as a coherent strategy for the assessment of high conservation value forests at the current and expanding scale of the membership. In particular, the GIS mapping datasets provided by DNR as the basis for the identification of HCVs do not include all of the potential attributes covered by the assessment Framework in Appendix F in the Maritime standard. These mapped GIS layers also only capture attributes with distinct geographic boundaries and may miss species and features that are not dependant on a fixed location over time. The current approach also does not address the opportunity to manage for HCVs within operational areas outside of reserves and likely does not capture the full scope of HCV considerations across the landscape. The current strategy for HCVF assessment is no longer in conformance with the requirements of indicator 9.1.1. See NCR 01/14.</p> <p>For spatially distinct HCV attributes such as those characterized by primordial forests, the existing GIS database mapping strategy does function effectively to meet the intent of HCVF assessment. The Significant Old and Unique Forest GIS layer produced by DNR provides an initial flag of potential primordial forest areas. Site assessments using the DNR 'old-growth' score sheet are then used to determine if the areas are actual primordial forests. If field visits confirm a primordial forest area these are listed as HCVF and listed as protected area on management plans. (9.1.2)</p> <p>External advice for all HCVF assessments is focused regular communication with DNR regional biologists and through data sharing in GIS mapping layers produced by DNR. While this procedure may have been appropriate under the current strategy for HCVF assessment, the resolution of NCR 01/14 may require an expended external review process. (9.1.3) See OBS 03/14</p> <p>Although HCVF reporting information is provided on the NSLFFPA</p>	<p>NCR 01/14 OBS 03/14</p>

		<p>annual summary report, details of the assessment and external review have not been provided publically. While some information may be confidential to individual owners the standard requires some public information sharing on how the assessment framework in Appendix F is applied and how expert advice is used. This is a non-conformance with the standard. (9.1.4) See NCR 01/14</p> <p>NCR 01/14 Where HCV assessments are only made for each individual plan and the NSLFFPA Policies and Procedures document does not show a clear evaluation framework for how all the attributes covered in Appendix F have been addressed it is difficult to determine if an HCVF assessment has completed across the full scope of the member landbase. This assessment framework has also not been included in the public summary of management plans or external reporting on the activities of the group certificate. This is a non-conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> <p>OBS 03/14 As NSLFFPA addresses NCR 01/14 on the assessment of HCV attributes they should ensure that appropriate advice is sought from experts on the full scope of considerations under the assessment framework in Appendix F of the Maritime Standard.</p>	
9.2	NO	<p>The NSPFFPA's public engagement efforts tend to focus on member outreach and public presentations on private woodlot management. HCVF assessment information is generally not the focus of these efforts and would not alone account for adequate public consultation efforts on the assessment of HCVF.</p> <p>Adjacent landowners are notified as part of the management planning process but again HCVF are not addressed directly through this process.</p> <p>This Criterion makes direct reference to public consultation requirements under Criterion 4.4 and the consideration of HCVF is applicable to each indicator in that Criterion. It should be noted that where some indicators under Criterion 4.4 were found to be not applicable according to SLIMF guidelines at the time of the reassessment, the current membership of the NSLFFPA is such that all indicators in 4.4 are now required.</p> <p>The lack of direct consultation efforts related to HCVF is a non-conformance with the requirements of the standard. See NCR 02/14.</p> <p>NCR 02/14 The NSLFFPA has not clearly included consideration of HCV attributes in the course of meeting the public consultation requirements included under Criterion 4.4.</p>	NCR 02/14

9.3	NO	<p>The identified HCVF areas on individual management plans are mapped and specific measures for the protection of HCV attributes are described. Management strategies to date focus on a management approach of either establishing a protected area or a reserve area where no management activities will be scheduled.</p> <p>In the resolution of NCR 01/14 it is likely that an expanded scope of management measures will need to be developed for the effective management of HCV attributes. (9.3.1)</p> <p>The annual summary report for the NSLFFPA includes some description of management approaches but does not include an adequate level of detail on the rationale or implementation of such strategies across the member landbase. The described management approaches are limited to a generic description of either protected area designation for HCVF or for a reserve designation of areas that will not be scheduled for management activities. No rationale is provided to indicate how these management strategies adequately provide for the maintenance or enhancement of HCV attributes for all potential features covered by the evaluation framework in Appendix F of the Maritime Standard.</p> <p>While specific information may be considered confidential on an individual property or may be seen to pose a risk to the identified features and values, the general approach and management strategies used within the group are not communicated at a sufficient level to meet the intent of public oversight and information sharing in the standard requirements. This is a non-conformance with the requirements of the standard. (9.3.2) See NCR 03/14.</p> <p>The existing strategies for HCVF of establishing protected areas and reserve areas were observed to be implemented on member properties and in management plans. (9.3.3)</p> <p>Conservation zones were established for all primordial forests. All primordial forest areas are identified as protected areas on member management plans, and no harvesting activities are permitted. (9.3.4)</p> <p>NCR 03/14 The NSLFFPA includes some description of management approaches for HCVF in its annual public summary report. However, the measures described are generic and a rationale is not provided that links management approaches to HCVF attributes that are identified through the HCVF assessment framework in Appendix F of the Maritime Standard.</p>	NCR 03/14
9.4	YES	<p>The existing strategies used by the NSLFFPA group managers for the maintenance or enhancement of HCV attributes are implemented and monitored. Where the existing strategies focus on protected areas or reserves that limit management activities the primary monitoring approach is the 'notification tracker' and site visits for active operations. The effectiveness of these strategies is assessed by the continued presence of the attributes in the protected or reserved area. (9.4.1)</p>	OBS 04/14

		<p>As a response to the non-conformance in 9.1.1 (NCR 01/14) is developed a larger range of management approaches may be required. See OBS 04/14</p> <p>OBS 04/14</p> <p>The group managers should ensure that in the resolution of NCR 01/14, and the potential for implementing a wider range of management strategies to maintain or enhance HCV attributes, that monitoring requirements under indicator 9.4.1 continue to be met. These requirements include both implementation and effectiveness monitoring for HCV management prescriptions.</p>	
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APPENDIX V: Chain-of-Custody Conformance (confidential)

Note: This CoC Appendix is used for FMEs only selling standing timber, stumpage, logs, chips and/or non-timber forest products (NTFPs) produced within a FMU covered by the scope of the certificate. FME certificate scopes that include primary or secondary processing facilities shall include an evaluation against the full FSC CoC standard: FSC-STD-40-004 v2. Refer to that separate report Appendix.

Definition of Forest Gate: (check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Standing Tree/Stump: FME sells standing timber via stumpage sales.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Log Landing: FME sells wood from the landing/yarding area.
<input type="checkbox"/>	On-site Concentration Yard: Transfer of ownership occurs at a concentration yard under the control of the FME.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Off-site Mill/Log Yard: Transfer of ownership occurs when offloaded at purchaser's facility.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: <i>explanation</i>
Comments:	

Scope Definition of CoC Certificate:

Does the FME further process material before transfer at forest gate? <i>(If yes then processing must be evaluated to full CoC checklist for CoC standard FSC-STD-40-004 v2.)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Note: This does not apply to on-site production of chips/biomass from wood harvested from the evaluated forest area or onsite processing of NTFPs.	
Comments: No secondary processing is carried out prior to the forest gate. One member does carry out firewood processing and sawmilling of wood from their property but maintains an independent CoC certificate for these purposes (Nahman, Crown Jewel property).	
Is the FME a large scale operation (>10,000 hectares) or a Group Certificate? <i>(If yes then CoC procedures for all relevant CoC criteria shall be documented.)</i>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: As a group certificate a CoC procedure has been documented (Policies and Procedures, Section 5.2).	
Does non-FSC certified material enter the scope of this certificate prior to the forest gate, resulting in a risk of contamination with wood/NTFPs from the evaluated forest area (e.g. FME owns/manages both FSC certified and non-FSC certified FMUs)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Comments: It is possible that some sections of a property may not be included in the scope of the certificate. The landowner is required to keep the wood separate under procedures listed in 5.2.	
Does FME outsource handling or processing of FSC certified material to subcontractors (i.e. milling or concentration yards) prior to transfer of ownership at the forest gate? <i>(If yes a finding is required for criterion CoC 4.1 below.)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Comments: There is no outsourcing in the scope of this certificate.	
Does FME purchase certified wood/NTFPs from other FSC certificate holders and plan to sell that material as FSC certified? <i>(If yes then a separate CoC certificate is required that includes a full evaluation of the operation against FSC-STD-40-004 v2.)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Comments:	
Does FME use FSC and/or Rainforest Alliance trademarks for promotion or product labeling? <i>(If FME does not nor has no plans to use FSC/RA trademarks delete trademark criteria checklist below.)</i>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: There is no on product labeling. Trademarks may be used for promotional purposes on signage, brochures, and the NSLFFPA website. Not all promotional use of trademarks has been approved and does not all comply with requirements of the standard. See MAJOR NCR 04/13.	

Annual Sales Information

Total Sales/ Turnover	US\$
Volume of certified product sold as FSC certified (i.e. FSC claim on sales documentation) (previous calendar year)	4406.80 m3
Total volume of forest products harvested from certified forest area.during reporting period defined in Appendix I above.	22583.00 m3

Chain-of-Custody Criteria [FM-35 Rainforest Alliance Chain-of-Custody Standard for Forest Management Enterprises (FMEs)]

1. Quality Management

COC 1.1: FME shall define the personnel/position(s) responsible for implementing the CoC control system. Yes No

Findings: The primary staff person responsible for CoC is Kari Easthouse.

COC 1.2: All relevant staff shall demonstrate awareness of the FME's procedures and competence in implementing the FME's CoC control system. Yes No

Findings: All field staff interviewed demonstrated awareness of NSLFFPA CoC procedures within the scope of their responsibilities.

COC 1.3: FME procedures/work instructions shall provide effective control of FSC certified forest products (including NTFPs)from standing timber until ownership is transferred at the forest gate. *Note: For large scale operations (>10,000ha) and Group Entities, CoC procedures covering all relevant CoC criteria shall be documented.* Including:

- a) Procedures for physical segregation and identification of FSC certified from non-FSC certified material. **(If applicable)**
- b) Procedures to ensure that non-FSC certified material is not represented as FSC certified on sales and shipping documentation. **(If applicable)**
- c) Procedures to include the FME's FSC certificate registration code and FSC claim (FSC 100%) on all sales and shipping documentation for sales of FSC certified products.
- d) Recordkeeping procedures to ensure that all applicable records related to the production and sales of FSC certified products (e.g. harvest summaries, sales summaries, invoices, bills of lading) are maintained for a minimum of 5 years.
- e) Procedures to ensure compliance with all applicable FSC/Rainforest Alliance trademark use requirements.

Yes No

Note 1: In the case of group certificates, the Group Manager must ensure Group Members implement CoC control system as defined in documents procedures/work instruction.

Note 2: In cases where it is not possible or practical to include the FME's certificate registration code on shipping documents, the FMEs procedures shall provide for a clear, auditable link between the material included in the shipment, a FMU included in the scope of the certificate and the applicable sales documentation (i.e. harvest or procurement contract) that includes the required information detailed in c) above.

Findings: NSLFFPA's Policies and Procedures document details CoC procedures in Section 5.2. Existing procedures do not however cover all required elements of CoC tracking. In particular requirement (c) for procedures to include the FME's FSC certificate registration code and FSC claim (FSC 100%) on all sales and shipping documentation for sales of FSC certified products is not described.

Field evidence also showed that CoC tracking was not implemented consistently to ensure that FSC claims and codes were recorded on current sales sufficiently to ensure effective product tracking. See NCR 04/14.

2. Certified Material Handling and Segregation

COC 2.1: FME shall have a CoC control system in place to prevent the mixing of non-FSC certified materials with FSC certified forest products from the evaluated forest area, including: Yes No
N/A

<p>a) Physical segregation and identification of FSC certified from non-FSC certified material.</p> <p>b) A system to ensure that non-FSC certified material is not represented as FSC certified on sales and shipping documentation.</p> <p>Note: If no outside wood/NTFP is handled by FME within scope of certificate, mark as N/A.</p>	
<p>Findings: There is no mixing of certified and non-certified material on member properties. It is possible that wood from an uncertified area of the same property would be harvested concurrent with harvests from certified areas. In such cases the Policies and Procedures document describes a requirement for review of material segregation strategies with the group manager.</p>	
<p>COC 2.2: FME shall identify the sales system(s) or “Forest Gate”, for each FSC certified product covered by the Chain of Custody control system: i.e. standing stock; sale from log yard in the forest; sale at the buyer’s gate; sale from a log concentration yard, etc.</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Findings: The forest gate is defined as the log landing for all FSC timber sales.</p>	
<p>COC 2.3: FME shall have a system that ensures that FME products are reliably identified as FSC certified (e.g. through documentation or marking system) at the forest gate.</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Findings: Primary buyers are given a list of PIDs that are certified under the scope of this certificate. Mills receiving supply from member properties cross reference the PID list with shipping records. Mills send a regular report to the group manager for all incoming FSC supply from member properties. Some landowners also receive a copy of the scale slip from the mill. Scale slips reviewed during the field audit had a section for the identification of the material as FSC certified. See related NCR 04/14.</p>	
<p>COC 2.4: FME shall ensure that certified material is not mixed with non-FSC certified material at any stage, up to and including the sale of the material.</p> <p>Note: If no outside wood is handled by FME within scope of certificate, mark as N/A.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Findings: n/a</p>	

3. Certified Sales and Recordkeeping

<p>COC 3.1: For material sold with FSC claim the FME shall include the following information on sales and shipping documentation:</p> <p>a) FME FSC certificate registration code, and</p> <p>b) FSC certified claim: FSC 100%</p> <p>Note: In cases where it is not possible or practical to include the FME’s certificate registration code on shipping documents, the FMEs shall ensure there is a clear, auditable link between the material included in the shipment, a FMU included in the scope of the certificate and the applicable sales documentation (i.e. harvest or procurement contract) that includes the required information detailed above.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Findings: Management plans are provided to harvest contractors, and they are notified of certification status and requirements. PID numbers are used as the primary tracking mechanism. A PID listing of member properties is provided to buyers. The Claim and code is not recorded consistently on sales documentation and supply reports from buyers. See NCR 04/14.</p>	
<p>COC 3.2: FME shall maintain certification production and sales related documents (e.g. harvest summaries, invoices, bills of lading) for a minimum of 5 years. Documents shall be kept in a central location and/or are easily available for inspection during audits.</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Findings: Regular reports of incoming volumes are provided by buyers of certified supply from member properties</p>	
<p>COC 3.3: FME shall compile an annual report on FSC certified sales containing monthly sales in terms of volume of each FSC certified product sold to each customer. This report shall be made available to Rainforest Alliance staff and auditors during regular audits and upon request.</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Findings: Annual summary provided.</p>	

4. Outsourcing

<p>COC 4.1: FME shall obtain approval from Rainforest Alliance prior to initiating outsourcing of handling (e.g. storage concentration yards) or processing of FSC certified material to</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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subcontractors.	N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CoC 4.2: FME control system shall ensure that CoC procedures are followed at subcontracted facilities for outsourcing and FME shall collect signed outsourcing agreements covering all applicable FSC outsourcing requirements per FSC-STD-40-004 v2 <i>FSC Standard for Chain of Custody Certification</i> . Note 1: If FME outsources processing or handling of FSC certified material the outsourcing report appendix is required. Note 2: Check N/A If FME does not outsource processing or handling of FSC material.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Findings: There is no outsourcing in the scope of this certificate	

5. FSC/Rainforest Alliance Trademark (TMK) Use Criteria

Standard Requirement: The following section summarizes the FME's compliance with FSC and Rainforest Alliance trademark requirements. Trademarks include the Forest Stewardship Council and Rainforest Alliance names, acronyms (FSC), logos, labels, and seals. This checklist is directly based on the FSC standard. FSC-STD-50-001 <i>FSC Requirements for use of the FSC trademarks by Certificate Holders</i> . References to the specific FSC document and requirement numbers are included in parenthesis at the end of each requirement. (Rainforest Alliance Certified Seal = RAC seal).	
General	
COC 5.1: FME shall have procedures in place that ensure all on-product and promotional FSC/Rainforest Alliance trademark use follows the applicable policies:	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Findings: Section 5.2 of the NSLFFPA Policies and Procedures states a requirement for trademark approval prior to use.	
COC 5.2: FME shall have procedures in place and demonstrate submission of all FSC/Rainforest Alliance claims to Rainforest Alliance for review and approval prior to use, including” a) On-product use of the FSC label/RAC seal; b) Promotional (off-product) claims that include the FSC trademarks (“Forest Stewardship Council”, “FSC”, checkmark tree logo) and/or the Rainforest Alliance trademarks (names and seal)(50-001, 1.1.6).	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Findings: Procedures state requirements but approval has not been given for all current promotional uses of the trademarks. See MAJOR NCR 04/13.	
COC 5.3: FME shall have procedures in place and demonstrates that all trademark review and approval correspondence with Rainforest Alliance is kept on file for a minimum of 5 years:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Findings: Existing procedures do not specify that approvals will be kept on file for 5 years. See MAJOR NCR 04/13.	

Off-product / Promotional	
<input type="checkbox"/> Check if section not applicable (FME does not, and does not plan to use the FSC trademarks off-product or in promotional pieces)	
Note: promotional use items include advertisements, brochures, web pages, catalogues, press releases, tradeshow booths, stationary templates, corporate promotional items (e.g., t-shirts, cups, hats, gifts).	
When applicable to the FME's promotional/off-product use of the trademarks, the criteria below shall be met:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Findings: Approval has been given for promotional use of the trademark for a sign, but trademarks used on the NSLFFPA website have not been approved and do not meet the requirements of the standard. See MAJOR NCR 04/13.	
COC 5.4: If the FSC trademarks are used for promotion of FMUs, FME shall limit promotion to FMUs covered by the scope of the certificate.	

<p>COC 5.5: In cases that the Rainforest Alliance trademarks are used (50-001, 6.2):</p> <p>a) The FSC trademarks shall not be at a disadvantage (e.g., smaller size);</p> <p>b) The FSC checkmark tree logo shall be included when the RAC seal is in place.</p>
<p>COC 5.6: If the FSC “promotional panel” is used, the following elements shall be included: FSC checkmark logo, FSC trademark license code, FSC promotional statement, FSC web site address (50-001, 5.1).</p> <p>Note: the promotional panel is a prescribed layout with a border available to certificate holders on the FSC label generator site.</p>
<p>COC 5.7: In cases that the FSC trademarks are used with the trademarks (logos, names, and identifying marks) of other forestry verification schemes (SFI, PEFC, etc.), Rainforest Alliance approval shall be in place (50-001, 7.2).</p>
<p>COC 5.8: Use of the FSC trademarks in promotion of the FME’s FSC certification shall not imply certain aspects are included which are outside the scope of the certificate (50-001, 1.9).</p>
<p>COC 5.9: Use of the FSC trademarks on stationery templates (including letterhead, business cards, envelopes, invoices, paper pads) shall be approved by Rainforest Alliance to ensure correct usage (50-001, 7.3, 7.4 & 7.5).</p>
<p>COC 5.10: In cases that the FSC trademarks are used as part of a product name, domain name, and/or FME name, R approval shall be in place (50-001, 1.13).</p>

<p>On-product</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check if section not applicable (FME does not, and does not plan to apply FSC labels on product)</p>	
<p>COC 5.11: FME shall have a secure system in place for labeling products that ensures the following (50-00,1 1.19):</p> <p>a) Only those products originating from forests covered by the scope of a valid FSC certificate are FSC-labeled;</p> <p>b) Only those products that meet the eligibility requirements per CoC standard requirements for FSC-labeling are FSC-labeled;</p> <p>c) Only the FSC 100% label is used.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Findings:</p> <p>When applicable to the FME’s on-product labeling, the criteria below shall be met:</p>	
<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Findings:</p> <p>COC 5.12: The FSC trademark license code assigned by FSC shall be used in the FSC label (50-001, 1.5).</p> <p>COC 5.13: FME shall not use the FSC labels together with the logos or names of other forestry verification schemes (50-001, 2.6).</p> <p>COC 5.14: The FSC label shall be applied to products in such a way that it is clearly visible (50-001, 2.3).</p>	

APPENDIX VI: Rainforest Alliance Database Update Form

Instructions: For each FSC certificate, Rainforest Alliance is required to upload important summary information about each certificate to the FSC database (FSC-Info). During each annual audit RA auditors should work with the certificate holder to verify that the information posted on FSC-Info is up to date as follows:

1. Print out current Fact Sheet prior to audit from FSC-Info website or direct link to fact sheets (<http://www.fsc-info.org>)
2. Review information with the FME to verify all fields are accurate.
3. If changes are required (corrections, additions or deletions), **note only the changes** to the database information in the section below.
4. The changes identified to this form will be used by the RA office to update the FSC database.

Is the FSC database accurate and up-to-date? YES NO
 (if yes, leave section below blank)

Client Information (contact info for FSC website listings)

Organization name			
Primary Contact		Title	
Primary Address		Telephone	
Address		Fax	
Email		Webpage	

Forests

Change to Group Certificate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Change in # of parcels in group	231 total members
Total certified area		29,981 Hectares (or)	Acres

Species (note if item to be added or deleted)

Scientific name	Common name	Add/Delete

Products

FSC Product categories added to the FM/CoC scope (FSC-STD-40-004a)		
Level 1	Level 2	Species

APPENDIX VII: Group management conformance checklist *FSC-STD-30-005 v1-0 (confidential)*

Group Certification Division of Responsibilities

Type of Forest Management Group:	Type I group	
	Group Entity	Group Member
Forest management planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FMU monitoring activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forest and resource inventory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Harvest planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Harvesting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Training of forest workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Legal compliance (taxes, permitting, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Timber Sales	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FSC/RA trademark use (if applicable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Summary of division of responsibilities:		

Quality System Requirements

1.0 General Requirements	
1.1 The Group entity shall be an independent legal entity or an individual acting as a legal entity.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Findings required if No: The NSLFFPA is a registered not for profit society under the NS Societies Act.	
1.2 The Group entity shall comply with relevant legal obligations, as registration and payment of applicable fees and taxes.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Findings required if No: No taxes or fees are generally due by the association. Payroll source deductions are remitted regularly to the Canada Revenue Agency and HST claims can be made on an annual basis.	
1.3 The Group entity shall have a written public policy of commitment to the FSC Principles and Criteria.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Findings required if No: A statement of commitment to FSC Principles and Criteria at the beginning of each management plan and in the Policy and Procedures document (Section 2.3).	
1.4 The Group entity shall define training needs and implement training activities and/or communication strategies relevant to the implementation of the applicable FSC standards.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Findings: Training records from the past year were provided and reviewed during the audit.	
2.0 Responsibilities	
2.1 The Group entity shall clearly define and document the division of responsibilities between the Group entity and the Group members in relation to forest management activities (for example with respect to management planning, monitoring, harvesting, quality control, marketing, timber sale, etc).	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

NOTE: The actual division of responsibilities may differ greatly between different group certification schemes. Responsibilities regarding compliance to the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard may be divided between the Group entity and Group members in order to take into account of a landscape approach.	
Findings: The Policies and Procedures document lists management responsibilities and is posted on the NSLFFPA website. The front page of each management plan also describes roles and responsibilities between members and the group manager. Initial group entry meeting also include a checklist that summarizes the standard requirements and group member responsibilities.	
2.2 The Group entity shall appoint a management representative as having overall responsibility and authority for the Group entity's compliance with all applicable requirements of this standard.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Findings: Peter Burchill is the representative for all FSC requirements.	
2.3 Group entity staff and Group members shall demonstrate knowledge of the Group's procedures and the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Findings: All staff and members interviewed demonstrated awareness of relevant polices and procedures, as well as the FSC standard requirements.	
3.0 Group Entity Procedures	
3.1 The Group entity shall establish, implement and maintain written procedures for Group membership covering all applicable requirements of this standard, according to scale and complexity of the group including: I. Organizational structure; II. Responsibilities of the Group entity and the Group members including main activities to fulfill such responsibilities (i.e. Development of management plans, sales and marketing of FSC products, harvesting, planting, monitoring, etc); III. Rules regarding eligibility for membership to the Group; IV. Rules regarding withdrawal/ suspension of members from the Group; V. Clear description of the process to fulfill any corrective action requests issued internally and by the certification body including timelines and implications if any of the corrective actions are not complied with; VI. Documented procedures for the inclusion of new Group members; VII. Complaints procedure for Group members.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Findings: The NSLFFPA policies and procedures document provides all required elements as follows: I. Section 1.0 II. Section 2.0 III. Section 3.2 IV. Section 4.6 V. Section 4.5 VI. Section 3.2 VII. Section 4.7.1	
3.2 The Group entity's procedures shall be sufficient to establish an efficient internal control system ensuring that all members are fulfilling applicable requirements.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Findings: The NSLFFPA maintains a robust Policies and Procedures framework. The internal monitoring protocol and active harvest monitoring further ensures compliance with relevant policies and procedures.	
3.3 The Group entity shall define the personnel responsible for each procedure together with the qualifications or training measures required for its implementation.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Findings: Peter Burchill has overall responsibility for the procedures and is qualified to ensure their implementation.	
3.4 The Group entity or the certification body (upon request of Group entity and at the Group entities expense) shall evaluate every applicant for membership of the Group and	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<p>ensure that there are no major nonconformances with applicable requirements of the Forest Stewardship Standard, and with any additional requirements for membership of the Group, prior to being granted membership of the Group.</p> <p>NOTE: for applicants complying with SLIMF eligibility criteria for size, the initial evaluation may be done through a desk audit.</p>	
<p>Findings: Pre-membership meetings are carried out in addition to verification of ownership, woodlot size, outstanding disputes, and existing environmental concerns. A standard checklist of membership requirements is used for all initial meetings. All new members sign a formal agreement prior to initiation of the management plan (D006). NSLFFPA writes all management plans for group members which provides for a primary control mechanism for group membership.</p>	
<p>4.0 Group Member Informed Consent</p>	
<p>4.1 The Group entity shall provide each Group member with documentation, or access to documentation, specifying the relevant terms and conditions of Group membership. The documentation shall include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Access to a copy of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard; II. Explanation of the certification body's process; III. Explanation of the certification body's, and FSC's rights to access the Group members' forests and documentation for the purposes of evaluation and monitoring; IV. Explanation of the certification body's, and FSC's requirements with respect to publication of information; V. Explanation of any obligations with respect to Group membership, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. maintenance of information for monitoring purposes; b. use of systems for tracking and tracing of forest products; c. requirement to conform with conditions or corrective action requests issued by the certification body and the group entity d. any special requirements for Group members related to marketing or sales of products within and outside of the certificate; e. other obligations of Group membership; and f. explanation of any costs associated with Group membership. 	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Findings: Pre-membership meetings and the signed agreement review all the required elements. A meeting checklist is used to ensure consistency.</p>	
<p>4.2 A consent declaration or equivalent shall be available between the Group Entity and each Group member or the member's representative who voluntarily wishes to participate in the Group. The consent declaration shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. include a commitment to comply with all applicable certification requirements; II. acknowledge and agree to the obligations and responsibilities of the Group entity; III. acknowledge and agree to the obligations and responsibilities of Group membership; IV. agree to membership of the scheme, <i>and</i> V. authorize the Group entity to be the primary contact for certification and to apply for certification on the member's behalf. <p>NOTE: A consent declaration does not have to be an individual document. It can be part of a contract or any other document (e.g. meeting minutes) that specifies the agreed relationship between the Group member and the Group entity.</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Findings: Covered by the signed agreement for group membership.</p>	
<p>5.0 Group Records</p>	
<p>5.1 The group entity shall maintain complete and up-to-date records covering all applicable requirements of this standard. These shall include:</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. List of names and contact details of Group members, together with dates of entering and leaving the Group scheme, reason for leaving, and the type of forest ownership per member; II. Any records of training provided to staff or Group members, relevant to the implementation of this standard or the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard; III. A map or supporting documentation describing or showing the location of the member's forest properties; IV. Evidence of consent of all Group members; V. Documentation and records regarding recommended practices for forest management (i.e. silvicultural systems); VI. Records demonstrating the implementation of any internal control or monitoring systems. Such records shall include records of internal inspections, non-compliances identified in such inspections, actions taken to correct any such non-compliance; VII. Records of the estimated annual overall FSC production and annual FSC sales of the Group. 	
<p>NOTE: The amount of data that is maintained centrally by the Group entity may vary from case to case. In order to reduce costs of evaluation by the certification body, and subsequent monitoring by FSC, data should be stored centrally wherever possible.</p>	
<p>Findings: NSLFFPA manages a shared database for woodlot management details amongst all field staff. Training records are maintained in the database. A shared GIS database is used for all property mapping and mapping of features. Consent agreement files are kept on site and recorded digitally in each landowner file connected to the database. Management prescriptions are included in the management plan – including amendments (noted in database). A silviculture guidebook has been developed and provided on the website 'Woodbox' page. Monitoring records are stored in the shared database and monitoring tracker and monitoring records folder. Volumes and sales are recorded in the 'product tracker' on the shared database.</p>	
<p>5.2 Group records shall be retained for at least five (5) years.</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Findings: Where all files are stored digitally they generally kept indefinitely.</p>	
<p>5.3 Group entities shall not issue any kind of certificates or declarations to their group members that could be confused with FSC certificates.</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>NOTE: Group member certificates may however be requested from Rainforest Alliance.</p>	
<p>Findings: No certificates are issued</p>	

Group Features

<p>6.0 Group Size</p>	
<p>6.1 The Group entity shall have sufficient human and technical resources to manage and control the Group in line with the requirements of this standard.</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>NOTE: The number of Group members, their individual size and the total area will influence the evaluation intensity applied by the certification body in their annual audits.</p>	
<p>Findings: The existing staff capacity (3 full time employees) is aligned with the requirements of managing the group. Capacity forecast have also been carried out for the projected growth in group membership.</p>	
<p>6.2 The Group entity shall specify in their procedures the maximum number of members that can be supported by the management system and the human and technical capacities of the Group entity.</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Findings: A forecast was provided for a sustainable rate of growth in group membership based on existing staff capacity and management requirements. The forecast sets the maximum number of new members over a period of 10 years.

7.0 Multinational Groups

7.1 Group schemes shall only be applied to national groups which are covered by the same Forest Stewardship Standard. Yes No
NA

Findings required if No: n/a

7.2 The Group entity shall request formal approval by FSC IC through their accredited Certification Body to allow certification of such a group scheme. Yes No
NA

Findings required if No: n/a

Internal Monitoring

8.0 Monitoring Requirements

8.1 The Group entity shall implement a documented monitoring and control system that includes at least the following:

I. Written description of the monitoring and control system;

II. Regular (at least annual) monitoring visits to a sample of Group members to confirm continued compliance with all the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard, and with any additional requirements for membership of the Group.

Yes No

Findings: In response the prior NCR 05/13 a substantially improved internal monitoring system has been implemented. Core elements of the system include a fixed annual sample size, checklists for monitoring requirements, notification requirements, pre-harvest site visits, active operation site visits, corrective action requests, and follow-up. The new procedures are now in conformance with the requirements of the standard. See resolution of NCR 05/13.

8.2 The Group entity shall define criteria to be monitored at each internal audit and according to the group characteristics, risk factors and local circumstances. Yes No

Findings: An internal audit checklist is used for each monitoring visit. General areas will be examined for each woodlot during the internal audit as listed in the procedure are:

- Is all documentation complete and available
- Is the landowner aware of FSC and program requirements
- Has there been any un-documented activity on the property
- Have there been any activities not recommended in the forest management plan
- Do all activities meet program requirements
- If there are HCVF values present is the management prescription for them effective
- What is the landowners level of satisfaction with the program
- How, from the landowners point of view, could the program be improved

8.3. The minimum sample to be visited annually for internal monitoring shall be determined as follows:

a) Type I Groups with mixed responsibilities (see FSC-STD-30-005 v-1 section D Terms and definitions)
Groups or sub-groups with mixed responsibilities shall apply a *minimum* sampling of $X = \sqrt{y}$ for 'normal' FMUs and $X = 0.6 * \sqrt{y}$ for FMUs < 1,000 ha. Sampling shall be increased if HCVs are threatened or land tenure or use right disputes are pending within the group.

b) Type II Resource Manager Groups (see FSC-STD-30-005 v-1 section D Terms

Yes No

and definitions)	
Group entities who also operate as resource managers may define the required internal sampling intensity at their own discretion for the forest properties they are managing, independent of their size and ownership (the minimum numbers as defined above do not apply here).	
NOTE: for the purpose of sampling, FMUs < 1,000 ha and managed by the same managerial body may be combined into a 'resource management unit' (RMU) according to the proposal made in FSC-STD-20-007 Annex 1.	
Findings: As a type one group manager the internal monitoring sample will be calculated as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodlots < 1000 ha: Sample Size = 0.6 * √# of woodlots. • Woodlots >= 1000 ha: Sample Size = √# of woodlots 	
FSC-STD-30-005 recommendations for internal monitoring.	
8.4 For monitoring purposes the Group entity should use the same stratification into sets of 'like' FMUs as defined by the certification body in their evaluation.	
8.5 The Group entity should visit different members in their annual monitoring than the ones selected for evaluation by the certification body, unless pending corrective actions, complaints or risk factors are requiring a revisit of the same units.	
8.6 In the selection process of members to be visited, the Group entity should include random selection techniques.	
Comments: Woodlots are selected randomly. The only time a random selection may be altered is if the property had already been visited in the previous year's certification audit. Woodlots with active operations will be monitored independently of this internal monitoring protocol.	
8.7 The Group entity shall issue corrective action requests to address non-compliances identified during their visits and monitor their implementation.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Findings: Corrective action requests are issued to group members and follow-up on directly by NSLFFPA staff. In the past year a total of 14 CARs were issued. Most were addressed immediately, one is still pending, and one was closed during this year's certification audit.	
8.8 Additional monitoring visits shall be scheduled when potential problems arise or the Group entity receives information from stakeholders about alleged violations of the FSC requirements by Group members.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA <input type="checkbox"/>
Findings: Evidence of additional site visits was provided in cases of ongoing CARs and identified issues.	

Group Assessment Requirements: (Completed by RA Task Manager/Lead Auditor)	
Group member size restriction:	None – NSLFFPA has a demonstrated ability to expand their staffing to meet the demands of a growing group.
RA Certificate auditing strategy:	As the scope and scale of the NSLFFPA is increasing rapidly some requirements in the SLIMF standard now apply where previously they did not. Future audits should verify conformance in indicators 4.4.2, 6.3.7, 6.3.10, 6.4.1, and 7.1.12.

APPENDIX VII-a: Certified Group Member/FMU List

See attached document for full member listing.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/fiu6o3eu6jvkne8/Appendix7%20member%20list.pdf>