



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

SFI-00001

SECTION 13: OPTIONAL MODULES

**March 1, 2021
SFI 2022 Standards and Rules**



SECTION 13: OPTIONAL MODULES

March 1, 2021

SECTION 13: OPTIONAL MODULES	2
SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module.....	3
SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities.....	15

Optional Modules

SFI Inc. has developed a process for SFI to address emerging issues and new opportunities through modules. These include opportunities around small land certification, Indigenous land certification, community land certification, urban forestry certification, as well as modules for species at risk. Optional modules are developed by *SFI Inc.* and approved by the *SFI Inc.* Board of Directors. These modules will provide implementation assistance using case studies or optional certification requirements to address specific issues of benefit to SFI. Any modules developed prior to the next standard review process will be added in this section.

SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module

PREAMBLE

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and American Forest Foundation (AFF) collaboratively developed a small lands module that is based on the foundation of the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* and incorporates the AFF Standards of Sustainability for Forest Management under the American Tree Farm System (“AFF Standards”). Lands certified through this module in the United States will be certified under the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) with resultant “certified forest content” under the *SFI 2022 Chain-of-Custody Standard*. Lands certified in Canada to the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* will be “SFI certified” and the resultant fiber also “certified forest content” under the *SFI 2022 Chain-of-Custody Standard*.

Due to the interdependence of the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard*, AFF 2021 Standards, and this *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*, revision to any of these standards will trigger a collaborative review and potential revision to the module as needed to ensure consistency and continual improvement.

1. GENERAL

1.1 Scope

This module applies to *Certified Organizations* certified to the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard*.

1.1.1 Maximum size of ownership eligible for certification under this Module

A non-industrial, small forest ownership, under the scope of this *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*, shall have no more than 20,000 acres or 8,000 hectares in aggregate across their entire ownership, regardless of whether it is managed by the *landowner* or a *landowner* agent. Those *landowners* with more than 20,000 acres or 8,000 hectares in aggregate across their entire ownership shall be certified to the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*. If the small forest or woodlot owner meets eligibility requirements, individual parcels of land that fall within the *wood and fiber supply area* are eligible for inclusion in the *certified area*.

1.1.2 What the SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module Does

The *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* offers certification to a group of small family forest lands, under one certificate, that is managed by a *Certified Organization* that is certified to the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard*. The *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* allows *landowners* to sell and *Certified Organization* to procure fiber as certified forest content. Lands

certified to this module in the United States are certified to ATFS via the AFF Standards. Lands certified to this module in Canada are SFI certified.

1.1.3 What the SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module Covers

The *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* covers:

- requirements of the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* that include measures to broaden the practice of conservation of biodiversity, use of forestry best management practices to protect water quality, provide outreach to *landowners*, and utilize the services of forest management and harvesting professionals and
- forest management requirements consistent with the 2021-2026 AFF Standards to promote the health and sustainability of America’s family forests. These Standards are designed as a tool to help woodland owners be effective stewards of the land as they adaptively manage renewable resources; promote environmental, economic and social benefits; and work to increase public understanding of sustainable forestry.
- additional requirements relating to the management of the *Group Certification Organization*¹ and additional requirements for sustainable forest management.

1.1.4 Geographic Application of the SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module

The *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* applies to organizations (the *Certified Organization*, *landowners* and others involved in the fiber supply chain) in the United States and Canada.

1.1.5 Timing of Applicability

The *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* is dependent on the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* and the AFF 2021-2026 Standards of Sustainability as its foundation. Revision to either of these standards will trigger a collaborative review and potential revision to the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* to ensure consistency and continual improvement. If the module is not reviewed and approved by both the SFI Board of Directors and AFF Board of Trustees, it will expire with the earliest expiry of either the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* or AFF’s 2021-2026 Standards. If either SFI or AFF wish to make changes to the module, both organizations must agree and will work to make changes through a collaborative process.

1.2 References

This *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* incorporates, by dated or undated reference, provisions from other publications. These normative and informative references are cited at the appropriate places in the text and the publications are listed hereafter. For dated and undated references, the latest edition of the application applies.

1.2.1 Normative references

- i. ISO/IEC 17021 — Conformity Assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems,

¹ The requirements for the management of the Group Certification Organization are based on Appendix 2 of Section 10 of the SFI 2022 Standards and Rules and are consistent with AFF’s Independently Managed Group requirements

- ii. ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 — Standardization and Related Activities – General Vocabulary
 - iii. IAF MD 1:2007 - Certification of Multiple Sites Based on Sampling
 - iv. SFI 2022 Standards and Rules:
 - Section 3 — *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard*
 - Section 8 — SFI Policies
 - Section 10 — SFI 2022 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualification and Accreditation
 - Section 11 — Communication and Public Reporting
 - Section 13 — Optional Modules
 - Section 14 — SFI Definitions
 - v. Interpretations for the Requirements for the *SFI 2022 Standards and Rules*
- For the purposes of this Module, the relevant definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 apply together with the definitions in the SFI Definitions (Section 14).

1.2.2 Informative References

- i. 2021-2026 — American Forest Foundation Standards of Sustainability for the American Tree Farm System
- ii. 2021-2026 American Forest Foundation Standards of Sustainability for the American Tree Farm System Guidance
- iii. 2021-2026 American Tree Farm System (ATFS) Independently Managed Group (IMG) Standards
- iv. American Tree Farm System (ATFS) Eligibility Requirements
- v. PEFC ST 1002:2018 — Group Forest Management Certification
- vi. PEFC ST 1003:2018 — Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements
- vii. Section 7 — Guidance to SFI 2022 Standards and Rules
- viii. Section 9 — SFI Standards Development and Interpretations Process
- ix. Section 12 — Public Inquiries and Official Complaints

1.3 Definitions

For the purposes of this module, the relevant definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 apply together with the definitions in the SFI Definitions (Section 14) together with the following definitions.

- **certified area**

The forest area covered by a *group forest certificate* representing the sum of forest areas owned by *landowners* that are *Group Members*. Lands certified to this module in the United States are certified to the American Tree Farm System (ATFS). Lands certified to this module in Canada are SFI certified.

- **group certification organization**
A specific type of multi-site organization where forest owners, forest owners' organizations, forest managers, forest products manufacturers or forest products distributors without a pre-existing legal or contractual link can form a group for the purposes of achieving certification and gaining eligibility for a sampling approach to certification audits against this module (Appendix 1 to Section 10).
- **group forest certificate**
A document confirming that the *group certification organization* complies with the requirements for certification to this module.
- **group manager**
An organization with overall responsibility for ensuring the conformity of forest management in the *certified area* of the *Group Certification Organization* to the certification requirements in this module. The *Group Manager* must be a *Certified Organization, certified to the SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard*, with a fiber sourcing program that acquires roundwood and/or field-manufactured residual chips.
- **group member**
Landowners who own land to be certified by the group forest certification or *landowner agents* covered by the *group forest certificate* who have the legal authority to implement the certification requirements within the *wood and fiber supply area*.
- **landowner**
Non-industrial entity or individual that holds title to the property.
- **landowner agent**
A *qualified resource professional, a qualified logging professional, a certified logging company, wood producer* or other individual or organization that has the legal authority to manage forestland and implement the certification requirements on certified lands at the direction of *landowner* members within the *wood and fiber supply area*.

2. SFI SMALL LANDS GROUP CERTIFICATION MODULE PRINCIPLES

Certified Organizations believe that non-industrial forest *landowners* have an important stewardship responsibility and a commitment to society, and they recognize the importance of maintaining viable commercial, family forest and conservation forest land bases.

Certified Organizations are aware that family forest ownership is made up of large numbers of small forest holdings. The limited revenues from forest management operations on the small properties of these *landowners*; periodicity of their management activities and revenues; as well as a limited financial ability to demonstrate their conformity with forest management certification system requirements, represent significant barriers to forest certification.

Certified Organizations shall have a written policy (or policies) to implement and achieve the principles defined in *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* together with the following principles in this module:

2.1 Voluntary Participation

The *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* is based on a respect for property rights and on the voluntary commitment and participation of both *landowners* and *landowner agents*. Participation in

the *Group Certification Organization* shall not require or bind *landowners* to harvest and sell timber or to supply the *Certified Organization*; participation also shall not prohibit *landowners* from participating in another *Group Certification Organization* outside ATFS or supplying another customer. Any supply commitments shall be stated in separately negotiated contracts between *landowners* and customers, and not as part of the written agreement(s) required by the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*. SFI and *Certified Organizations* are committed to compliance with the competition laws of the United States and Canada, and the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* shall not be construed to conflict with those laws.

2.2 Shared Responsibility

The *Certified Organization*, as the *Group Manager* and the *Group Member* have shared responsibility for and commitment to sustainable forestry practices on the land they own, manage or from which they procure raw material.

2.3 Efficiency

The *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* uses a *wood and fiber supply area* (“supply area”) approach to achieving sustainable forest management (e.g., planning or monitoring of forest resources) where the supply area approach is more suitable and efficient due to the limited size and resources of individual *landowners*. The results of the *wood and fiber* supply area approach must be consistent with and inclusive of the forest management practices implemented by individual *landowners* and/or resource/logging professionals. Lands certified to this module in the United States are certified to ATFS. Lands certified to this module in Canada are SFI certified.

3. REQUIREMENTS FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE GROUP

3.1 Responsibilities of the *Group Manager*²:

- 3.1.1** To ensure a commitment on behalf of the whole *Group Certification Organization* to establish and maintain practices and procedures in accordance with the requirements of this SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module.
- 3.1.2** To represent the whole *Group Certification Organization* in the certification process, including communications and relationships with the certification body, submission of an application for certification under this module and contractual relationship with the certification body.
- 3.1.3** To form a formal relationship with all *Group Members* based on a written agreement established directly between the *Group Manager* and each *Group Member* (every *landowner* and every *landowner agent*). The written agreement shall include³:
 - The *Group Manager's* enumeration of the conditions of participation in the group and *group forest certificate*, including disclosure of *Group Members ineligibility to participate in an ATFS State program or IMG*;
 - The *Group Manager's* right and responsibility to implement and enforce any

² The requirements for the management of the group are based on eligibility criteria of chapter 4.1.1-4.1.4 of Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to Section 10. In cases where the requirements of this document differ from Appendix 1 to Section 10, the requirements of this document are definitive.

³ While the written agreement is established directly between the *Group Manager* and each *Group Member*, trained *landowner agents* may facilitate and transmit written agreements between *Group Manager* and *landowner* members.

corrective or preventive measures, and to initiate the suspension of any *Group Member* from the scope of certification in the event of nonconformity with the requirements of the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*.

- The *Group Member's* commitment to comply with the requirements of the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*;
- The *Group Member's* agreement to participate and comply with the conditions of membership and forest management operations as recommended in the *wood and fiber supply area plan* (or their own conforming forest management, where applicable);
- The *Group Member's* agreement to be included under the scope of the Group Manager's *group forest certificate*.

- 3.1.4** To establish procedures for inclusion of new *Group Members* within the *Group Certification Organization* including an internal assessment of conformity with the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*, implementation of corrective and relevant preventive measures.
- 3.1.5** To establish procedures for expulsion of *Group Members* from the *Group Forest Certificate*, in cases of unresolved nonconformity, ownership transition or other circumstances, as appropriate, including documentation and timely reporting of decertification.
- 3.1.6** To maintain and achieve compliance with all requirements of the *SFI 2022 SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard* that outline relationship between the *Certified Organization*, *landowners*, and resource/logging professionals; and management review and continuous improvement (Objectives 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 10 and 11).
- 3.1.7** To establish written procedures for the management of the *Group Certification Organization* and clearly define and assign responsibilities for sustainable forest management and compliance with the certification requirements of this module.
- 3.1.8** To provide all *Group Members* with information and guidance needed for effective implementation and maintenance of practices and procedures in accordance with the requirements of this *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*⁴.
- 3.1.9** To ensure all *Group Managers* and *Landowner Agents* have been trained to implement the requirements of the module specific to section 4.3 Forest Management Practices⁵.
- 3.1.10** To keep records on:
- A. the *Certified Organizations'* and the *Group Members'* conformity with the relevant certification requirements as spelled out by this Small Lands Module.

⁴ The *Group Manager* should within the framework of Objective 3 (Use of Qualified Resource Professionals, Qualified Logging Professional and Certified Logging Companies), Objective 6 (Training and Education) and Objective 7 (Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach) of the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* provide *Group Members* with information and guidance on the requirements of the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* that are relevant to them and management operations on their land.

⁵ This may be accomplished via ATFS inspector trainings, trainings conducted by *SFI Implementation Committees*, or other means.

- B. all *Group Members*, including their contact details and, for *landowner* members, identification of their property and its/their sizes.
- C. the *certified area*.
- D. a record of operations carried out on the forest lands owned by the *Group Members* to support the internal monitoring program.
- E. the implementation of an internal monitoring program, its review and any preventive and/or corrective measures.
- F. the *wood and fiber supply area* plan as defined in 4.1, and the individualized goals and strategies for *landowners*, and/or the individual landowner management plan as defined in 4.2, as applicable.
- G. In the US, *Group Managers* share records of items A, B, C and E at least annually with AFF for documentation in the ATFS database to enable verification of the certified status of the *certified area*. In Canada, *Group Managers* share records of items A, B, C and E at least annually with SFI.

3.1.11 To maintain an annual internal audit or monitoring program sufficient to ensure conformance with the requirements of the SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module⁶ by the organization and individual *Group Members*. The internal audit or monitoring program can be based on a sampling of *Group Members'* properties and forest management activities provided that:

- it is based on an appropriate risk management methodology considering the scale and type of *Group Members'* activities; geographical distribution of *Group Members*; previous non- conformities; information from external parties, etc. and it provides overall confidence in the conformity of the *Group Certification Organization* and *Group Members* with the certification requirements;
- the sample is representative considering the number of each type of *Group Member (landowner and landowner agents)* and their geographical distribution;
- the sample covers all the participating *group members* and the number of samples equals at least the square root of the total number of participating *landowners*.

3.1.12 To operate a review of the conformity of *Group Members* based on results of internal audit and/or monitoring data sufficient to assess performance of the *Group Certification Organization* as a whole rather than at the individual *Group Member's* level⁷.

3.1.13 To establish corrective and preventive measures if required and evaluate the effectiveness of corrective actions taken.

3.1.14 To communicate to the relevant *Certification Body* those *Group Members* with

⁶ The internal audit/monitoring program should accommodate various verification and monitoring mechanisms required by the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard*.

⁷ The review of the conformity and the corrective and preventive measures should be performed within the framework of Objective 10 of the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* (Management Review and Continuous Improvement).

serious and continuing non-conformities that have not been resolved and that resulted in the *Group Member's* expulsion from the *group certification organization* based on the results of internal audits and/or the monitoring program.

3.1.15 To consider within its internal audit/monitoring program information from the *Group Member* on continuing non-conformities that have been found if the *Group Member* is part of another *group certification organization*.

3.1.16 For landowners in the United States, to maintain and update the members of the group organization and report to AFF or update the ATFS database to reflect entries and departures of *Group Members* from the *Group Organization*.

3.2 Responsibilities of the *Group Members*:

3.2.1 To commit through a written agreement with the *Group Manager* to implement and maintain the relevant requirements⁸ of the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*;

3.2.2 To respond effectively to all requests from the *Group Manager* or a certification body for relevant data, documentation or other information whether in connection with formal audits or reviews or other requirements;

3.2.3 To provide full co-operation and assistance in respect of the satisfactory completion of audits, reviews, monitoring, relevant routine inquiries or corrective actions;

3.2.4 To implement relevant corrective and preventive actions required by the *Group Manager*; and

3.2.5 To inform the *Group Manager* of any continuing non-conformities if the *Group Member* is part of another *group certification organization*.

4. REQUIREMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

The *Group Manager* shall ensure compliance of the *Group Certification Organization* with the requirements outlined in *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard*⁹ and the following additional requirements outlined in 4.1 the *Wood and Fiber Supply Area Plan* and 4.3 Forest Management Practices on *Certified Area*.

4.1 Wood and Fiber Supply Area Plan

The *Group Manager* shall develop and update a *wood and fiber supply area plan* that adequately covers the fiber procurement area by the *Group Certification Organization*. The plan shall:

4.1.1 Be based on a long-term resource analysis including periodic or ongoing forest inventory, mapping and monitoring of forest resources; and include or be based on analysis of social, environmental and economic impacts of forest operations on forest resources;

⁸ The *Group Manager* should within the framework of Objective 3 (Use of Qualified Resource Professionals, Qualified Logging Professional and Certified Logging Companies), Objective 6 (Training and Education) and Objective 7 (Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach) of the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* provide *Group Members* with a specific list and guidance on the requirements of the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* that are relevant to them and management operations on their land.

⁹ This list and guidance also includes Interpretations for the Requirements for the *SFI 2022 Standards and Rules* relevant to the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* or to the additional requirements.

- 4.1.2** Promote the maintenance and enhancement of the quantity of forest resources. Promote afforestation of agricultural and treeless land into forests. Identify risks of conversion of forests to non-forest uses and measures to mitigate this risk.
- 4.1.3** Be consistent with applicable legislation and land-use plans;
- 4.1.4** Include a description of forest resources, their different uses and functions, and objectives for their management;
- 4.1.5** Include analysis and determination of long-term sustainable harvest levels by monitoring *growth and drain* trends across the *wood and fiber supply area*. The monitoring system shall identify trends and develop forest management activities, on the *certified area*, to promote sustainable harvesting levels on the *wood and fiber supply area*.
- 4.1.6** Include a review of non-timber activities and opportunities (e.g., conservation of soil, air and water quality, carbon, biological diversity, wildlife and aquatic habitats, recreation and aesthetics); and sustainable management and use of those non-timber forest products that are affected by forest management practices;
- 4.1.7** Review results of monitoring of harmful agents, such as environmentally or economically undesirable wildfire, pests, diseases, invasive exotic plants and animals and list or provide information on measures to protect forests from those agents to maintain and improve long-term forest health, productivity and economic viability;
- 4.1.8** Include identification and mapping of sensitive sites and areas with high biodiversity values on the *certified area* and the *wood and fiber supply area*;
- 4.1.9** Include identification and mapping of areas with specific water and soil protection functions, including steps to ensure their protection, maintenance and enhancement of their protective functions;
- 4.1.10** Include description of appropriate silviculture and regeneration methods to achieve forest management objectives identified in 4.1 and 4.3;
- 4.1.11** Be made available to the relevant *landowners* and/or *landowner agents* and provide the basis for the *Certified Organization's* verification, internal audit or monitoring program¹⁰;
- 4.1.12** Be made publicly available, except confidential business and personal information and other information made confidential by legislation or for the protection of cultural sites or sensitive natural resources; and
- 4.1.13** Identify *landowner* goals and strategies and silviculture for achieving those goals to be applied to each individual *landowner* appropriate to the size, scale and intensity of small lands certified via the module.

¹⁰ The Objective 3 (Use of Qualified Resource Professionals, Qualified Logging Professional and Certified Logging Companies), Objective 6 (Training and Education) and Objective 7 (Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach) of the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* provides a framework for communicating the content of the forest management plan or its relevant parts to *landowners*, resource and logging professionals and for its on-the ground implementation.

4.2. Group Member's Management Plan

In the event that a landowner, or landowner agent, opts to have and implement a written forest management plan for an individual group member, it shall be consistent with the size of the ownership and the scale and intensity of the forest activities.

4.2.1 Management plan shall be active, adaptive and embody the *landowner's* current objectives, remain appropriate for the land certified and reflect the current state of knowledge about natural resources and sustainable forest management.

4.2.2 Management plan shall:

- a. Describe current forest conditions, *landowner's* objectives, management activities aimed at achieving *landowner's* objectives, document a feasible strategy for activity implementation and include a map accurately depicting significant forest-related resources.
- b. Demonstrate consideration of the following resource elements: forest health, soil, water, wood, and fiber production, threatened or endangered species, special sites, invasive species, and Forests of Recognized Importance¹¹ (in the United States) or *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value* (in Canada). Where present and relevant to the property, the plan shall describe management activities related to these resource elements.
- c. Where present, relevant to the property and consistent with *landowner's* objectives, the plan preparer should consider, describe, and evaluate the following resource elements: fire, wetlands, desired species, recreation, forest aesthetics, biomass, and carbon.

4.2.3 The *Landowner* or *landowner agent* should monitor for changes that could interfere with the management objectives as stated in management plan. When problems are found, reasonable actions are taken.

4.3 Forest Management Practices on *Certified Area*

The *Group Manager* shall ensure through a *verifiable monitoring system* that:

4.3.1 *Landowner* shall comply with all relevant federal, state, provincial, county, and municipal laws, regulations and ordinances governing forest management activities.

4.3.1.1 *Landowner* shall comply with all relevant laws, regulations and ordinances and will correct conditions that led to adverse regulatory actions, if any.

4.3.1.2 *Landowner* should obtain advice from appropriate qualified natural resource professionals or qualified contractors who are trained in, and familiar with, relevant laws, regulations, and ordinances.

4.3.2 Reforestation or afforestation shall be achieved by a suitable process that ensures adequate stocking levels.

4.3.2.1 Reforestation or afforestation shall achieve adequate stocking of desired

¹¹ Globally, regionally and nationally significant large forest landscape areas of exceptional ecological, social, cultural or biological values. These forests are evaluated at the landscape level, rather than the stand level, and are recognized for a combination of unique values, rather than a single attribute.

species reflecting the landowner's objectives, within five years after regeneration harvest, or an appropriate time frame for local conditions, or within a time interval as specified by applicable regulation.

- 4.3.3** *Landowner* shall meet or exceed practices prescribed by state or provincial forestry best management practices that are applicable to the property.
 - 4.3.3.1 *Landowner* shall implement specific state or provincial forestry best management practices that are applicable to the property.
 - 4.3.3.2 *Landowner* shall minimize road construction and other disturbances within riparian zones and wetlands.
- 4.3.4** *Landowner* shall consider a range of forest management activities to control pests, pathogens, and unwanted vegetation.
 - 4.3.4.1 *Landowner* should evaluate alternatives to pesticides for the prevention or control of pests, pathogens, and unwanted vegetation to achieve specific management objectives.
 - 4.3.4.2 Pesticides used shall be approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the United States or the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) of Health Canada, and applied, stored, and disposed of in accordance with EPA or PMRA approved labels and by persons appropriately trained, licensed, and supervised.
- 4.3.5** When used, prescribed fire shall conform with *landowner's* objectives and all applicable rules, laws, and regulations.
- 4.3.6** Prescribed burns shall conform with the landowner's objectives and state and local laws and regulations. Forest management activities shall protect habitats and communities occupied by threatened or endangered species as required by law.
 - 4.3.6.1 *Landowner* shall confer with natural resource agencies, state or provincial natural resource heritage programs (i.e., NatureServe databases), qualified natural resource professionals or other current sources of information to determine occurrences of threatened or endangered species on the property and their habitat requirements.
 - 4.3.6.2 Forest management activities shall incorporate measures to protect identified threatened or endangered species on the property.
- 4.3.7** *Landowner* should address the desired species and/or desired forest communities when conducting forest management activities, if consistent with *landowner's* objectives.
 - 4.3.7.1 *Landowner* should consult available and accessible information on management of the forest for desired species and/or forest communities and integrate it into forest management.
- 4.3.8** *Landowner* should make practical efforts to promote forest health.
 - 4.3.8.1 *Landowner* should make practical efforts to promote forest health, including prevention, control or response to disturbances such as wildland fire, invasive species and other pests, pathogens or unwanted vegetation, to achieve specific management objectives.

- 4.3.9** Where present, forest management activities should maintain or enhance Forests of Recognized Importance (in the United States) or *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value* (in Canada).
- 4.3.9.1 Appropriate to the scale and intensity of the situation, forest management activities should incorporate measures to contribute to the conservation of identified Forests of Recognized Importance (in the United States) or *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value* (in Canada).
- 4.3.10** *Landowner* should manage the visual impacts of forest management activities consistent with the size of the forest, the scale and intensity of forest management activities and the location of the property.
- 4.3.10.1 Forest management activities should apply visual quality measures compatible with appropriate silvicultural practices.
- 4.3.11** Forest management activities shall consider and maintain any special sites relevant on the property.
- 4.3.11.1 *Landowner* shall make a reasonable effort to locate and protect special sites appropriate for the size of the forest and the scale and intensity of forest management activities.
- 4.3.12** *Landowner* should use qualified natural resource professionals and qualified contractors when contracting for services.
- 4.3.12.1 *Landowner* should seek qualified natural resource professionals and qualified contractors.
- 4.3.12.2 *Landowner* should engage qualified contractors who carry appropriate insurance and comply with appropriate federal, state, provincial and local safety and fair labor rules, regulations, and standard practices.
- 4.3.12.3 *Landowners* should retain appropriate contracts or records for forest product harvests and other management activities to demonstrate conformance to the standards.
- 4.3.12.4 4.3.12.4 *Landowner* or designated representative shall monitor forest product harvests and other management activities to ensure they conform to their objectives. Harvest, utilization, removal, and other management activities shall be conducted in compliance with the *landowner's* objectives and to maintain the potential of the property to produce forest products and other benefits sustainably.

SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities

1. GENERAL

1.1 Scope

The *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities* (the module) applies to individual small-scale forests and to groups of small-scale forests co-operating for the purposes of obtaining sustainable forest management certification.

The module offers the owners and managers of these forests the opportunity to participate in a group *certification organization* and benefit from the economies of scale afforded by working with a group of forest owners and managers of forest licenses.

Forestland converted to other land uses shall not be certified to this *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities*. This does not apply to forestlands used for forest management infrastructure such as forest roads, log processing areas, recreation trails or hunting. Land used for purposes other than forest management are not within the scope of this module.

1.2 Eligibility for certification under the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities*

Any small-scale forest owned or managed by Indigenous peoples, families, or communities where the area in timber production does not exceed 20,000 hectares is eligible for certification to the module. The total area certified to the module may exceed 20,000 hectares when the non-timber producing areas and areas managed for conservation or recreation purposes are included.

Small-scale forest properties and forest licenses between 5,000 and 20,000 hectares must be under the management of a forestry professional.

Small-scale forests include but are not limited to:

- Small forest properties or woodlots;
- British Columbia Woodlot Licences;
- Forestlands owned or managed by municipalities/counties or First Nations or Metis communities (e.g., First Nations Woodland Licences — British Columbia; County Forests — Ontario); and
- Crown forest licensed to communities (e.g., Community Forest Agreement — British Columbia; Lots Intramunicipaux — Quebec; Community Forests - Nova Scotia).

Forests with more than 20,000 hectares of land managed for timber production shall certify to the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*.

1.3 What the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities* does

The module offers a pathway to certification for individual forests or for a group of forests operating as a *certification organization* under a single certificate. The module allows *members* to sell fiber as *certified forest content* and satisfies the requirements for the use of *SFI 2022 Chain-of-Custody Standard* labels.

The *certification organization* as defined in this module can provide the management structure to implement a carbon-offset protocol.

1.4 What the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities* covers:

- requirements of the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* applicable to small-scale managed forests and includes measures to broaden *practices* to address the conservation of *biodiversity*, the use of forestry *best management practices* to protect water quality and quantity, *soil health* and productivity, reforestation and the use of forest management and harvesting professionals;
- additional requirements for sustainable forest management that are applicable to small-scale managed forests; and
- requirements relating to the management of the *group certification organization*¹².

1.5 Geographic Application of the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities*

The module applies to individual managed forests and *certification organizations* in Canada.

2. References

This module incorporates, by dated or undated reference, provisions from other publications. These normative and informative references are cited at the appropriate places in the text and the publications are listed hereafter. For dated and undated references, the latest edition of the application applies.

2.1 Normative references

- i. ISO/IEC 17021-1 — Conformity Assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
- ii. ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 — Standardization and Related Activities – General Vocabulary
- iii. *SFI 2022 Standards and Rules*:
 - Section 2 — *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*
 - Section 8 — SFI Policies
 - Section 10 — SFI 2022 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualification and Accreditation

¹² The requirements for the management of the group certification organization are based on Appendix 2 of Section 10 of the SFI 2022 Standards and Rules.

- Section 11 — Communication and Public Reporting
 - Section 13 — Optional Modules
 - Section 14 — SFI Definitions
- iv. Interpretations for the Requirements for the *SFI 2022 Standards and Rules*
For the purposes of this module, the relevant definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 apply together with the definitions in the SFI Definitions (Section 14).

2.2 Informative References

- i. PEFC ST 1002:2018 — Group Forest Management Certification
- ii. PEFC ST 1003:2018 — Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements
- iii. Section 4 — *SFI 2022 Chain-of-Custody Standard*
- iv. Section 6 — Rules for Use of *SFI On-Product Labels and Off-Product Marks*
- v. Section 7 — Guidance to SFI 2022 Standards and Rules
- vi. Section 9 — SFI Standards Development and Interpretations Process
- vii. Section 12 — Public Inquiries and Official Complaints

2.3 Definitions

For the purposes of this *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities*, the relevant definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 apply together with the definitions in the SFI Section 14 — Definitions, together with the following definitions.

- **certified area**
The area covered by a valid *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities* certificate.
- **commercial harvesting operations**
Wood harvested for sale or trade.
- **certification organization**
An organization established to coordinate and manage a certification program for a group of small-scale forests in order to obtain economies of scale and efficiency and gaining eligibility for a sampling approach to certification audits (see Appendix 1 to Section 10 —Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation).
- **forest certificate**
A document confirming that an individual small-scale forest or *members* of a *certification organization* conform to the requirements for certification to the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities*.
- **manager**
The *manager* may be a forest owners' association, a forest management consultant or an individual who undertakes the organization and management of the *certification organization*.

- **member**
A landowner, or a *land manager* duly authorized by the *member*, who has agreed to join the *certification organization* and conform with the requirements of the SFI *Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities*.
- **land manager**
An individual or organization authorized by the *member*/license holder to manage their forestland within the *certified area* and has the ability and management authority to implement the certification requirements of the SFI *Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities*.
- **personal use**
Firewood or logs cut for personal use, not for sale or trade, limited to 50 cubic metres per year.
- **special sites**
Sites that include geologically unique or culturally important features.
- **species at risk**
Threatened and Endangered Species as identified by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada or by a provincial committee on Species at Risk or are listed in provincial endangered species or species at risk legislation.
- **sustainable forest management**
The management of forests and forestland in a way and at a rate that maintains their *biodiversity*, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality, and potential to fulfil ecological, economic, and social functions.
- **Small-scale forest property or forest license**
A forest on fee-simple, private land, owned by an individual, group of investors or a municipality or county. British Columbia Woodlot Licensees and public forests licensed to Indigenous peoples and Metis communities and Community Forests (public forestland licensed to a community) that meet the size requirements in clause 1.2 are eligible to participate in an *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities* certification program.

3. PRINCIPLES

The SFI principles for this module are based on a belief that forest landowners and *managers* have an important stewardship responsibility and a commitment to society, and that they recognize the importance of maintaining viable commercial, family and community forest and conservation forestlands.

Private forest ownership in Canada consists of more than 450,000 forestland owners. In addition, there are many parcels of land under forest management, held by communities and Indigenous peoples. The limited revenues from forest management operations on these properties, their periodic management activities, and revenues, as well as a limited financial ability to demonstrate their conformity to the requirements of a forest management certification system, present significant barriers to certification.

Group certification is designed to capture economies of scale and management efficiency by grouping numbers of forest properties together under one group *certification organization* to improve management and facilitate auditing and certification to the requirements of the module.

Certification organizations certified to the module shall have written procedures to implement and achieve the requirements included in the module together with the following principles:

3.1 Voluntary Participation

The module is based on a respect for property rights and on the voluntary commitment and participation of *members* and *land managers*. Participation in the *certification organization* shall not require or bind *members* to harvest and sell timber. SFI and *Certified Organizations* are committed to compliance with the competition laws of Canada, and the module shall not be used to conflict with those laws.

3.2 Shared Responsibility

The *manager* and the *member* have shared responsibility for and commitment to *sustainable forestry practices* on the land they own and /or manage. The *manager* has additional responsibility for setting up the policies, and procedures that ensure conformance with the requirements detailed in section 4.1.

3.3 Efficiency

The module uses a group certification approach to *sustainable forest management* (e.g., planning or monitoring of forest resource management) where this approach is more suitable and efficient due to the limited property size and resources of individual forest *members* or *managers*.

3.4 *Certified Forest Content*

The module uses a combination of i) one or more forest management objectives covering the health and productivity of the *certified area* and ii) management plans for individual forestlands consistent with the size of the forest, the management objectives of the forest landowners, *members* and/or *land managers* and the scale of management activities.

3.5 Continual improvement

The module fosters a continual improvement approach where individual forest landowners certified to the module or *members* of the group certification improve their overall performance to meet the requirements of the module over the life of the certification.

The *manager* is required under 4.1 to monitor *members'* conformance to the forest management *practices* listed under part 6 of the module. The agreement between the *manager* and *members* shall define the conditions under which fiber from the *certified area* shall be sold as SFI *certified forest content*.

4. REQUIREMENTS FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE GROUP

4.1 Responsibilities of the group *manager*¹³:

- 4.1.1 Provide a commitment¹⁴ on behalf of the *certification organization* to establish and maintain *practices* and procedures in accordance with the requirements of this module.
- 4.1.2 Represent the *certification organization* in the certification process, including communications and relationships with the certification body, submission of an application for a certification audit and the contractual relationship with the certification body.
- 4.1.3 Establish a formal relationship with each *member* based on a written agreement that shall include the *member's* commitment to participate in the group and comply with the conditions of membership, the requirements of the module and have their lands included in the *forest certificate*. The written agreement shall:
 - i. cover general information on the size and location of the property, the owner's management objectives,
 - ii. give the *manager* access to the *member's* management plan and
 - iii. give the *manager* the authority to identify and require any corrective or preventive measures and to initiate the suspension of any *member* from the *forest certificate* in the event of continuing nonconformity with the requirements of the module.
- 4.1.4 Establish procedures for inclusion of new *members* within the *certification organization* including an internal assessment of conformity with the module as well as identification and implementation of corrective and preventive measures. The procedures will include receiving and reviewing applications from new participants, management plans and a field inspection of the managed forest to identify conditions that may require corrective action.
- 4.1.5 Maintain and achieve conformance with all requirements of the module.
- 4.1.6 Establish written procedures for the management of the *certification organization* and clearly define and assign responsibilities for sustainable forest management and conformance with the requirements for certification.
- 4.1.7 Provide all *members* with information and guidance needed for effective implementation and maintenance of *practices* and procedures in accordance with the requirements of this module. This includes:
 - i. information sessions on various aspects of *sustainable forest management* and *best management practices*.

¹³ The requirements for the management of the group are based on eligibility criteria in Appendix 2 to Section 10. In cases where the requirements of this document differ from Appendix 2 to Section 10, the requirements of this document are definitive.

¹⁴ The requirement for *member* commitment is consistent with a requirement for a policy (or policies) to maintain and achieve principles of the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities* and the principles of the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*.

- ii. information on *Species at Risk* found in the region - their habitat and requirements for protection.
 - iii. information on provincial and local regulations applicable to forest management.
- 4.1.8 Keep records on:
- i. all *members*, including their contact details, identification of their property and the *certified area*;
 - ii. the total area covered by the group *forest certificate*;
 - iii. *commercial harvesting operations* carried out on the forests owned/managed by the group *members*;
 - iv. the internal monitoring program and audits;
 - v. the *members'* conformity with the certification requirements and
 - vi. forest management objectives as defined in part 6.
- 4.1.9 Maintain an annual monitoring program sufficient to ensure conformance with the requirements of the module by the *certification organization* and individual *members*. The monitoring program shall be based on *members'* reports of commercial harvesting operations and a sampling of *members'* properties provided:
- i. it is based on an appropriate risk management methodology considering:
 - a. the scale and type of *members'* activities (*commercial harvesting operations*, road/trail construction, pesticide use or reforestation);
 - b. geographic distribution of *members* within the area covered by the *certification organization*;
 - c. categories of forestland ownership and size and
 - d. previous non-conformities;
 - ii. the number of sites sampled equals at least the square root of the total number of participating *members* who have reported management activities in accordance with Part 6 during the interval between the annual monitoring programs.
- 4.1.10 Establish and maintain a system to monitor the conformity of *members* based on results of the monitoring data sufficient to assess performance of the *certification organization*. This shall include a system for collecting, reviewing, and reporting information to the *manager* regarding progress in achieving conformity with the module.
- 4.1.11 Establish corrective and preventive measures as required and evaluate the effectiveness of corrective actions taken by *members* of the *certification organization*.
- 4.1.12 Based on the results of the monitoring program communicate to the relevant *certification body* those *members* with serious and continuing non-conformities that

have not been resolved and that resulted in the *member's* removal from the *certification organization*.

4.1.13 Prepare an annual summary report detailing:

- i. evaluation of achievement of the forest management objectives as defined in part 6;
- ii. the *members* in the *certification organization*;
- iii. the total *certified forest area*;
- iv. the area covered by forest management activities;
- v. the types of forest management activities used by *members* (*commercial harvesting operations*, road/trail construction and maintenance, *silviculture*);
- vi. a list of known *special sites* ;
- vii. the volumes of products harvested; and
- viii. the progress of conformance with the module including the implementation of an internal monitoring program and measures to address preventative and/or corrective actions.

4.1.14 Establish a *program(s)* to:

- i. support and promote mechanisms for public outreach, including other forest owners and managers and
- ii. engage at the local or provincial level on issues related to sustainable forest management.

4.1.15 Establish a program to respond annually to the SFI annual progress report surveys.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE *MEMBERS*

- 5.1 To commit, through a written agreement with the *manager*, to implement and maintain the relevant requirements of the module as listed in part 6.
- 5.2 To present a management plan appropriate to the size of the forest property or license, the *member's* management objectives, the scale and intensity of management that conforms to the forest size and management plan structure, components and detail.
- 5.3 To respond effectively to all requests from the *manager* or a *certification body* for relevant data, documentation, or other information whether in connection with third-party audits, internal monitoring, annual reports on management operations, reviews, or other requirements.
- 5.4 To implement relevant corrective and preventive actions required by the *manager*.

6. REQUIREMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

The *Manager* shall ensure conformance of the *certification organization* with the requirements outlined in the module¹⁵ and the following additional requirements outlined in forest management objectives and forest management *practices* on the *certified area*. Individual forest landowners seeking certification to the module must conform to all the requirements of Objectives 1 to 9 applicable to *members*. Where the term *member* is used, the individual forest landowner shall understand these requirements to apply to him/her.

Examples of forest management objectives are:

- i. improve age class distribution;
- ii. promote long-term sustainable harvest levels;
- iii. increase hardwood component;
- iv. increase amount of saw-timber;
- v. promotion of non-timber forest products (e.g., maple syrup);
- vi. encourage afforestation of marginal/sub-marginal lands no longer suitable for agriculture;
- vii. support of programs for conservation of *old growth forests*, *biological diversity* and water quality;
- viii. promotion of *integrated pest management practices*; and
- ix. promotion of opportunities for recreation.

(Note: Guidance text appears throughout this section inside boxes. This guidance is meant to inform the forest landowner, *member*, and the *manager* about the intent of the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities* and how it may be applied on-the-ground. Guidance text is not considered normative language. Where the term *member* is used, the individual forest landowner may consider this guidance as being appropriate to him/her.)

Objective 1 — Forest Management Planning: To ensure forest management plans include *long-term* sustainable harvest levels and measures to avoid forest conversion.

(Note: *Members* may consider adopting some of the forest management objectives in the Guidance box above to improve forest health and productivity, promote *biodiversity* and protect water quality and quantity on the *certified area*.)

Using *members* and/or *land managers* information sessions, a *verifiable monitoring system*, and individual outreach to *members*, the *manager* shall ensure that the following aspects of forest management are implemented in conformance with the requirements of the module.

¹⁵ This list and guidance also includes Interpretations for the Requirements for the *SFI 2022 Standards and Rules* relevant to the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* or to additional requirements as specified by SFI Inc.

The management plan shall:

- i. be appropriate to the size of the managed forest, the *member's* or *land manager's* management objectives, the scale and intensity of management.
- ii. describe present forest conditions and forest conditions to be achieved;
- iii. make all practical efforts to promote forest health, including prevention, control or response to disturbances such as wildfire, *invasive species* and other pests, pathogens or unwanted vegetation, to achieve specific management objectives;
- iv. address species at risk and their habitat requirements as well as measures to conserve these species and their habitats within the area of management;
- v. include measures to address known *special sites* and
- vi. provide information on other local, provincial, and federal regulations applicable to forest management and species at risk.

Forests from 10 hectares to 20,000 hectares in area are eligible for certification under the Module. The management plans will reflect the management objectives, size of the forest and the scale of management operations. Larger forests will require an inventory upon which to base an assessment of the long-term sustainable harvest level and to permit planning and scheduling of harvest operations. Smaller forests require a simpler management plan.

The management plan is based on sound forest management science and embodies the *members* or *manager's* current management objectives. It describes the present forest conditions and provides a practical schedule of silvicultural treatments to achieve the management objectives. It includes a map showing significant features of the forest and includes considerations of *forest health*, conservation of soil productivity and water quality, timber production, protection of *species at risk* and sites, *special sites* and sites of special ecological significance. Forest management operations such as road construction, *commercial harvesting operations* and reforestation should be covered by an operating plan or comply with *best management practices*.

Objective 2 — Forest Health and Productivity: To ensure *long-term* forest *productivity*, carbon storage and *conservation* of forest resources through prompt *reforestation*, *afforestation*, *minimized* chemical use, soil *conservation*, and protecting forests from damaging agents.

- i. An operating plan shall be prepared for each harvest activity (other than cutting volumes for *personal use or cultural use*) to document appropriate *silviculture* and regeneration methods and other forest management *practices*;
- ii. All harvested areas shall be promptly regenerated through planting within two years or two planting seasons, or by planned natural regeneration methods within five years. Desirable advanced natural regeneration shall be protected during harvest;

- iii. Plantings of native or non-*invasive* naturalized tree species are preferred. In exceptional circumstances where *exotic tree species* are planted, they should not increase the risk to *native* ecosystems;
- iv. The use of fire is only allowed as a silvicultural or forest management technique for achievement of defined forest management goals (e.g., enhancing the growth of *non-timber forest products*, hazard abatement near communities, etc.);
- v. The use of *integrated pest management* is preferred. When pesticides are used, they shall be the least-toxic and narrowest-spectrum pesticides necessary to achieve management objectives. The use of pesticides shall be controlled and minimized with preference for the use of *integrated pest management* methods;
- vi. Use of pesticides registered for the intended use and applied in accordance with label requirements; and
- vii. The use of WHO Type 1A and 1B pesticides¹⁶, chlorinated hydrocarbons and any pesticides banned by the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants is prohibited.

The *member* ensures adequate stocking with desirable and site-adapted species throughout the harvested area by prompt tree planting or natural regeneration within five years of harvesting. Tending of young trees may be required to achieve free-to-grow status. Use of prescribed burning complies with all local regulations.

Afforestation, where it is practiced, should consider potential ecological impacts of the selection and planting of tree species in non-forested landscapes. It is best suited to soils that are marginal or sub-marginal for agricultural use (stony soils, steep topography, etc.). Afforestation can increase habitat for forest-dependent wildlife, moderate stream flow and contribute to the rural economy.

Although pesticides are a valuable silvicultural tool, *members* should first consider *integrated pest management* techniques. Pesticides are to be used by trained and licensed applicators.

Objective 3 — Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources: To protect the water quality and quantity of rivers, streams, lakes, *wetlands*, and other water bodies through meeting or exceeding *best management practices*.

- i. *Members* shall implement federal and provincial water quality *best management practices* and *practices* to protect water quantity during all phases of management activities.
- ii. Contract provisions shall specify conformance to *best management practices*.

¹⁶ Exemptions are allowed where no other viable alternative exists.

- iii. Harvest and road building activities shall be conducted during weather conditions that *minimize* impacts on residual trees, *biodiversity*, water quality and quantity and soil resources.
- iv. *Member* or *land manager* shall have measures for the protection of rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, other water bodies and *riparian areas* during all phases of management, including the layout and construction of roads and skid trails to maintain water quality and quantity.
- v. Use *qualified logging or qualified resource professionals* where they are available if the *member* is not conducting the work him/herself.
- vi. Harvesting and log transportation operations shall be conducted in conformity with the requirements of this module.

Carry out forest management and road construction operations during weather conditions that minimize site disturbance. The *member* applies provincial regulations and *best management practices* to mitigate impacts of forestry operations on water resources. *Members* should have written agreements with contractors that have completed training *programs* and are recognized as *qualified logging or resource professionals* where they are available. *Members* should keep records of harvests and ensure the efficient utilization of all felled trees.

Road construction and other operations likely to cause soil disturbance are *minimized* in riparian zones and near *wetlands*. Drainage structures of sufficient size are installed to maintain natural drainage patterns and do not impede the passage of fish.

Objective 4 — Conservation of *Biological Diversity*: To manage the quality and distribution of *wildlife habitats* and contribute to the *conservation of biological diversity* by developing and implementing *stand-* and *landscape-level* measures that promote a diversity of types of *habitat* and successional stages, and the *conservation* of forest plants and animals, including *aquatic species, as well as threatened and endangered species, Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value, old-growth forests* and *ecologically important* sites.

- i. Implementation of *practices*, as guided by regionally based *best scientific information*, to retain *stand-level wildlife habitat* elements such as snags (where safe to do so), stumps, mast trees, down woody debris, den trees and nest trees.
- ii. Identification and *protection* of *non-forested wetlands*, including bogs, fens and marshes, and *vernal pools* of ecological significance.
- iii. Maintain *habitat* for *species at risk* by providing age class diversity wherever feasible and appropriate considering other *conservation* and ecological factors.
- iv. The *manager* shall provide information on the occurrence, *habitat* and requirements for *protection of species at risk* found in the area covered by the *forest certificate*.

The *member* is aware of the presence and location of sites of ecological significance such as *vernal pools, riparian areas, wetlands, stick nests and den trees*. The *member* or *land manager* has received and has used information on local occurrence of *Species at Risk* and requirements for habitat protection. Use of *qualified logging or resource professionals* where available should be considered for planning and conducting forest management activities.

Objective 5 — Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits: To manage the visual impact of forest operations and provide recreational opportunities for the public.

- i. When considering harvest opening size the *member* shall take into account:
 - a. municipal regulations applicable to tree harvesting;
 - b. management plan objectives and current stand conditions;
 - c. topography and viewpoints; and
 - d. local values and *practices* regarding harvest opening size.
- ii. Average size of clearcut harvest areas does not exceed 50 hectares (120 acres), except when necessary to meet regulatory requirements, achieve ecological objectives or to respond to forest health emergencies or other natural catastrophes.
- iii. Trees in clearcut harvest areas are at least 3 years old or 1.5 meters high at the desired level of stocking before adjacent areas are clearcut, or as appropriate to address operational and economic considerations, alternative methods to reach the performance measure are utilized by the *member*.
- iv. On public forests, provide recreational opportunities for the public, where consistent with forest management objectives.

The *member* or *manager* applies the appropriate management *practices* to determine the cut block size and shape in order to mitigate impacts on aesthetics. *Note that "asset liquidation" is not in keeping with the Principles of this Module.*

Objective 6 — Protection of Special Sites To manage lands that are geologically or *culturally important* in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.

- i. Using information such as existing natural heritage data or expert advice, *members* shall be aware of heritage and cultural sites on their properties and will consider local values when conducting operations to *minimize* impacts on these sites.

Heritage sites such as stone walls, old foundations, or other sites of geological or *cultural importance* are identified before a forest management operation takes place. The *member* or *land manager* uses good judgement based on local values to decide on protection.

Objective 7 — Recognize and Respect *Indigenous Peoples' Rights*: To recognize and respect *Indigenous Peoples'* rights and traditional knowledge.

- i. *Members* managing forestland that is wholly or partially on Crown lands shall recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples rights. This requires a program for conferring with affected Indigenous Peoples to enable *members* to:
 - a. understand and respect *traditional forest-related knowledge*;
 - b. identify and protect spiritually, historically, or *culturally important* sites;
 - c. address the use of *non-timber forest products* of value to *Indigenous Peoples* in areas where *Certified Organizations* have management responsibilities on public lands; and
 - d. respond to *Indigenous Peoples'* inquiries and concerns received.
- ii. Where there are government agencies responsible for consultation with affected *Indigenous Peoples* regarding forest management operations on forestland that is wholly or partially on Crown lands, this government agency shall be the primary means of communicating with *Indigenous Peoples* whose rights may be affected by the member's management *practices*.

Consultation is required only when the forestland under management is Crown Land.

Objective 8 — Legal and Regulatory Compliance: To comply with applicable federal, provincial and *local* laws and regulations.

- i. The *member* shall hold legal title to the property and shall ensure that property boundaries are clearly defined. Entities managing small-scale publicly owned forests will demonstrate legal tenure and that property boundaries are clearly defined;
- ii. There is a program to ensure legal and regulatory compliance. The program shall ensure that *members*:
 - a. are aware of applicable federal, provincial and *local* environmental laws and regulations;
 - b. have a system to achieve compliance with applicable federal, provincial or *local* laws and regulations; and
 - c. have access to information on *Species at Risk* in the *certified area*.

The *manager* should provide the *member* a copy of all applicable environmental and water quality and quantity regulations. *Members* should use this information to ensure compliance. Use of *qualified logging* or *resource professionals* where available should be considered for conducting forest-management activities.

Objective 9 — Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach: To broaden the *practice of sustainable forestry* through public outreach, education, and involvement and to support the efforts of *SFI Implementation Committees*.

- i. *Managers* shall engage with their provincial or regional *SFI Implementation Committee*.

- ii. *Managers* and *members* promote certification among the forest owner's community.
- iii. When requested by the *members* the *manager* shall organize an annual meeting to review the activities, accomplishments and problems encountered during the year, as well as future plans for the *certification organization*.

Having the *manager* represent their *members* on the *SFI Implementation Committee* will assist with representing *members* within the provincial or regional SFI community. This will allow *managers* and *members* to stay informed about developments at SFI.

Annual meetings of the *certification organization* are an effective means of sharing group accomplishments, discussing developments in forest management and learning of updates to provincial programs supporting small-scale private forest *members* or small-scale public tenures.

APPENDIX 1. FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN (INFORMATIVE)

The forest management plan should document the following information:

- a. names and contact information of the registered landowners or tenure holders (the *members*)
- b. forest location (e.g., lot, concession, township, county) or tenure document
- c. the size of the managed forest
- d. a map (or aerial photo) showing:
 - i. property boundaries
 - ii. existing infrastructure (roads, trails, etc.)
 - iii. location of watercourses and wetlands
 - iv. area under management for timber production
 - v. area managed for conservation/recreation purposes
 - vi. known forest values (e.g., *special sites*), etc.
- e. description of forest *stands*
- f. prioritization of the management objectives for the next 10-year period (e.g., timber production, recreation, conservation, maple syrup production, etc.)
- g. professional recommendations to achieve the management objectives
- h. schedule of management operations including the timing of the next harvest, *silvicultural* activity or construction of access roads/trails
- i. a brief history of the property (length of ownership, past management activities, etc.)
- j. a basic inventory of the forest under the plan. At a minimum, this inventory should consist of the species composition, basal area and level of stocking

Where the *manager* or *member* has access to some or all of the above information in digital format, it may be possible to represent the location and schedule of forest management operations using GIS or similar tools.

A list of legislation and policies (federal, provincial, *local*) that may affect forest management activities on the forest will be available to all *certification organization members*.

A forest operations prescription/operating plan should be required for all road construction, silvicultural treatments and commercial harvest operations. A municipal permit may also be required.

Example Table of Contents for a Forest Management Plan

1: Property Owner Information	
1.1 Registered Property Owner(s)	
1.2 Plan Author Information	
2: Property Location Information	
2.1 Property Location.....	
2.2 Federal, Provincial and Local Policies and Regulations	
3: Property History	
3.1 Past History.....	
3.2 Species at Risk	
3.3 Local Natural Heritage Features	
4: Property Map & Surrounding Area	
5: Member Objectives	
5.1 General Objectives.....	
5.2 Detailed Property Objectives	
5.3 Strategies to Meet Property Objectives	
6: Detailed Property Map	
7: Managed Forest Compartment Descriptions	
7.1 Forest Inventory Techniques.....	
7.2 Forest Compartment Summary by Land Parcel	
7.3 General Forest Soil & Drainage Description	
7.4 Wildlife Habitat Inventory	
8: Ten-Year Activity Summary 202X–202X.....	
9: Report of Activities 202X–202X	
10: Access Trails	
10.1 Access Trail Objectives	
10.2 Basic Trail Design Concepts	
10.3 Trail Construction Best Management Practices.....	
11: Wildlife & Cavity Trees.....	
12: Coarse Woody Debris & Fine Woody Debris	
13: Buffer Zones Around Water & Open Wetlands.....	