

- 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 *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 AND FAMILIES

PART 1: GENERAL

1.1 SCOPE

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

The module offers the managers of small-scale public forests, including those within the jurisdiction of Indigenous governments, and owners of small-scale private forests the opportunity to participate individually or within a *group certification organization*, to benefit from the economies of scale afforded by working with a group of small-scale forest owners and managers of forest licenses.

1.2 ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTIFICATION UNDER THE SFI SMALL-SCALE FOREST MANAGEMENT MODULE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND FAMILIES

Any *small-scale forest property* or *forest license* managed or owned by Indigenous peoples, families, communities, or joint ventures where the total 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 *qualified resource professional* or an individual that meets the legal requirements for planning and supervising forest management practices for the jurisdiction.

Small-scale forest properties and *forest license* include but are not limited to:

- Small forest properties or woodlots;
- British Columbia Woodlot Licences;



- Forestlands owned or managed by First Nations or Métis peoples, families, communities, or joint ventures (e.g., First Nations Woodland Licenses — 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*.

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

1.3 WHAT THE *SFI SMALL-SCALE FOREST MANAGEMENT MODULE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND FAMILIES* DOES

Private forest ownership in Canada consists of more than 450,000 forestland owners. In addition, there are many small-scale forests under the management of communities, *Indigenous Peoples*, or the federal government on behalf of *Indigenous Peoples*. The limited revenues from forest management operations on small-scale forests, their periodic management activities, as well as a limited financial ability to demonstrate their conformity to the requirements of a forest management certification system, may present significant barriers to certification.

The module offers a pathway to certification for individual forests or for a group of forests operating as a *group 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*.

The *certified organization* as defined in this module can also provide the management structure to address the forest management requirements associated with carbon-offset protocols.

1.4 WHAT THE *SFI SMALL-SCALE FOREST MANAGEMENT MODULE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND FAMILIES* COVERS:

- requirements of the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* applicable to small-scale managed forests that seek to enhance forest management *practices* to address the *conservation of biodiversity, protection of water quality and quantity, soil health and productivity, reforestation*, and the use of *qualified resource professionals and qualified logging professionals* where available;
- 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* (see Part 4).

1.5 GEOGRAPHIC APPLICATION OF THE *SFI SMALL-SCALE FOREST MANAGEMENT MODULE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND FAMILIES*

The module applies to individually owned forests or managed public forests and *group certification organizations* in Canada.

PART 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 in 2.1. For dated and undated references, the latest edition of the application applies.

2.1 NORMATIVE REFERENCES

- ISO/IEC 17021-1 — Conformity Assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
- ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 — Standardization and Related Activities – General Vocabulary
- 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*
 - Section 11 — *Communication and Public Reporting*
 - Section 13 — *Optional Modules*
 - Section 14 — *SFI Definitions*
- 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

Definitions: All italicized terms in the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families* are defined in Appendix 1.

PART 3: PRINCIPLES

The *principles* underlying this module are based on a belief that small-scale forest landowners and land managers have an important stewardship responsibility and commitment to society, and that they recognize the importance of managing forests for *conservation* and traditional values, in addition to commercial benefits. *Landowners, managers* and *members of group certification organizations* understand the need to keep forestland as forest and protected from conversion to non-forest use.

Individual forest landowners, land managers and *group certification organizations* certified to the module shall have written procedures to implement and achieve the requirements included in the module, that are consistent with and advance the following principles:

1. Sustainable Forestry

To practice *sustainable forestry* means meeting the needs of the present while promoting the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by practicing a land stewardship ethic that integrates *reforestation* and the managing, growing, nurturing and harvesting of trees for useful products, and for the provision of *ecosystem services* such as the *conservation* of soil, air and water quality and quantity, *climate change adaptation and mitigation*, *biological diversity*, *wildlife* and *aquatic habitats*, recreation and aesthetics.

2. Forest Productivity and Health

To provide for regeneration after harvest, maintain the health and productive capacity of the forest land base, and to *protect* and maintain *long-term forest health* and *productivity*. In addition, to *protect* forests from economically, environmentally or socially undesirable impacts of wildfire, pests, diseases, *invasive species* and other damaging agents and thus maintain and improve *long-term forest health* and *productivity*.

3. Protection of Water Resources

To *protect* and maintain the water quality and quantity of water bodies and *riparian areas*, and to conform with forestry *best management practices* to *protect* water quality, to meet the needs of both human communities and ecological systems.

4. Protection of Biological Diversity

To manage forests in ways that *protect* and promote *biological diversity*, including animal and plant species, *wildlife habitats*, *ecologically and culturally important species*, *threatened and endangered species* (i.e., *Forest with Exceptional Conservation Values*) and native *forest cover types* at multiple scales.

5. Aesthetics and Recreation

To manage the visual impacts of forest operations, and to provide recreational opportunities for the public.

6. Protection of Special Sites

To manage lands that are geologically or *culturally important* in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.

7. Legal Compliance

To comply with applicable federal, provincial, state, and *local forestry* and related environmental laws, statutes, and regulations.

8. Research

To support advances in *sustainable forest management* through research, science, and technology.



9. Training and Education

To improve the practice of *sustainable forestry* through training and education *programs*.

10. Community Involvement and Social Responsibility, and Respect for Indigenous Rights

To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* on all lands through community involvement, socially responsible practices, and through recognition and respect of *Indigenous Peoples'* rights and *traditional forest-related knowledge*.

11. Transparency

To broaden the understanding of forest certification to the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families*, by documenting certification audits and making the findings publicly available.

12. Continual Improvement

To continually improve the *practice* of forest management, and to monitor, measure and report performance in achieving the commitment to *sustainable forestry*.

13. Responsible Fiber Sourcing

To use and promote *sustainable forestry* across a diversity of ownership and management types in the United States and Canada that is both scientifically credible and socially, environmentally, and economically responsible and to avoid sourcing from *controversial sources* both domestically and internationally.

PART 4: REQUIREMENTS FOR MANAGEMENT OF A GROUP CERTIFICATION ORGANIZATION

The requirements of Part 4 apply only to the manager and *members* of a *group certification organization*. Part 4 does not apply to individual *land managers* or landowners.

4.1 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE *GROUP CERTIFICATION ORGANIZATION* MANAGER¹¹:

- 4.1.1 Provide a commitment¹² on behalf of the *group certification organization* to establish and maintain *practices* and procedures in accordance with the requirements of this module.
- 4.1.2 Represent the *group 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 certification organization* and comply with the conditions of membership, the requirements of the module and have their lands or tenures included in the *forest certificate*. The written agreement shall:
 - i. cover general information on the size and location of the area covered by the *forest certificate* and the management goals,
 - ii. give the manager access to the *member's* forest 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 *group 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 potential *members*, 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 *group certification organization* and clearly define and assign responsibilities for *sustainable forest management* and conformance with the requirements for certification to the module.

¹¹ The requirements for the management of the group are based on eligibility criteria in Appendix 3 of this Module.

¹² 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 and Families* and the principles of the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*.

- 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* including *best management practices* and *practices* for protection of *wildlife* and *soil health*.
 - ii. information on *threatened and endangered species*, as well as species at risk, found in the region including 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 tenure or 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 of the module and
 - vi. forest management Objectives as defined in Part 5.
- 4.1.9** Maintain an annual monitoring program sufficient to ensure conformance with the requirements of the module by the *group 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, *reforestation*, *silviculture*);
 - b. geographic distribution of *members* within the area covered by the *group certification organization*;
 - c. categories of forestland ownership or tenure 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 5 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 *group 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 *group 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 *group certification organization*.
- 4.1.13** Prepare an annual summary report detailing:
- i. evaluation of achievement of the forest management Objectives as defined in Part 5;
 - ii. the *members* in the *group certification organization*;
 - iii. the total *certified 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, *reforestation 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.



4.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MEMBER:

- 4.2.1 To commit, through a written agreement with the *group certification organization* manager, to implement and maintain the relevant requirements of the module as listed in Part 5.
- 4.2.2 To present a forest management plan that is appropriate to the size of the forest property or tenure, the *member's* management goals, the scale and intensity of management as determined by a *qualified resource professional* or other qualified individual.
- 4.2.3 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 forest management operations, reviews, or other requirements.
- 4.2.4 To implement relevant corrective and preventive actions required by the manager.

PART 5:

REQUIREMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

The individual forest landowner, *land manager* or *group certification organization* manager shall ensure conformance with the requirements in Part 5 for implementing forest management Objectives 1-9 and forest management *practices* on the *certified area*. Where the term *member* is used, the individual forest landowner or land manager shall understand these requirements to apply to him/her.

Examples of forest management goals 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 and quantity;
- viii. promotion of *integrated pest management practices*; and
- ix. promotion of opportunities for recreation.
- x. additional goals as determined by the *landowner* and *land manager*.

(Note: Guidance text appears throughout this section inside boxes. This guidance is meant to inform the forest landowner, land managers and *group certification organization* managers about the intent of the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families* 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, land manager 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 conversion to non-forest use.

(Note: *Members* may consider adopting some of the forest management goals 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, an on-going 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.

The management plan shall:

- i. be appropriate to the size of the managed forest, the *member's* or land manager's forest management goals, and 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 forest management goals;
- 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 *threatened and endangered* species including 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 goals, 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.

Small-scale forest properties and forest licenses between 5,000 and 20,000 hectares must be under the management of a *qualified resource professional* or an individual that meets the legal requirements for conducting forest management for the jurisdiction.

The forest management plan is based on sound forest management science and embodies the *members* or *land manager's* current management goals. It describes the present forest conditions and provides a practical schedule of *silvicultural* treatments to achieve the management goals. 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 *threatened and endangered* species including species at risk; and *special sites*, *traditional forest-related knowledge*, and *ecologically important* sites. 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*. See Appendix 2 for additional information regarding forest management plans.

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* or direct seeding 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 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*, enhancement of *wildlife* forage, 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 forest management goals. 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 pesticides¹³, 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, when it is utilized, complies with all *local* and provincial regulations.

Afforestation, where it is practiced, should consider potential ecological impacts of the selection and *planting* of tree species in non-forested landscapes avoiding conversion of native grasslands and *wetlands* to forests. *Afforestation* should be considered for 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 can be an effective *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*.

¹³Exemptions are allowed where no other viable alternative exists.



- 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*.
- 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* 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 areas* 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 maintain or advance *conservation of biological diversity* at the *stand-* and *landscape-level* and across a diversity of *forest cover types*, vegetation cover types and successional stages, including 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*, or *traditional forest-related knowledge* 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* that are *ecologically* important.
- iii. Maintain *habitat* for *threatened and endangered* species including species at risk by providing age class diversity wherever feasible and appropriately considering other *conservation* and ecological factors or *culturally important* species.
- iv. The *member* shall have access to information on the occurrence, *habitat*, and requirements for *protection of threatened and endangered* species including species at risk found in the *certified area* covered by the *forest certificate*.

The *member* is aware of the presence and location of *ecologically important sites* such as *vernal pools*, *riparian areas*, *wetlands*, stick nests and den trees. The *member* has received and has used information on *local* occurrence of *threatened and endangered* species including 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. relevant regulations applicable to tree harvesting;
 - b. management plan goals 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 positive ecological outcomes 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 intent of the Objective are utilized by the *member*.
- iv. On public forests, provide recreational opportunities for the public, where consistent with forest management goals.

The *member* applies the appropriate management *practices* to determine the cut block size and shape in order to mitigate impacts on aesthetics.

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, *traditional forest-related knowledge*, or expert advice, *members* shall be aware of heritage and cultural sites on their properties or tenures 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*, including sites of cultural importance for *Indigenous Peoples*, 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 public 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 *members* have management responsibilities on public lands; and
 - d. respond to *Indigenous Peoples'* inquiries and concerns received.
- ii. Where Crown government agencies responsible for consultation with affected *Indigenous Peoples* regarding forest management operations on forestland exist, these agencies shall be the primary means of communicating with *Indigenous Peoples* whose rights may be affected by the *member's* management *practices*, unless explicitly delegated to the member by said agency through written direction or regulation.

Consultation is required only when the forestland under management is wholly or partially on public land. In all cases *Certified Organizations* shall respect the processes, laws, and direction received from relevant government agencies derived through nation-to-nation relationships where the certification takes place. Where appropriate, *Certified Organizations* should consider consultation regarding *traditional forest-related knowledge*.

Objective 8 — Legal and Regulatory Compliance:

To comply with applicable federal, provincial, and *local* laws and regulations.

- i. The *member* shall either a) hold legal title to the property and shall ensure that property boundaries are clearly defined, or b) demonstrate legal tenure for public forestlands and ensure that tenure 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, including those specific to *sustainable forest management* and the recognition of *Indigenous Peoples'* rights;
 - b. have a system to achieve compliance with applicable federal, provincial, or *local* laws and regulations; and
 - c. have access to information on *threatened and endangered* species including species at risk in the *certified area*.

The manager of a *group certification organization* should provide all *members* a copy of all applicable laws and regulations. These regulations can be provided in digital format. *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 Outreach:

To broaden the *practice* of *sustainable forestry* through public outreach, education, and involvement and to support the efforts of *SFI Implementation Committees*.

- i. *Members* and managers of *group certification organizations* shall engage with their provincial or regional *SFI Implementation Committee*.
- ii. *Members* and managers of *group certified organizations* promote certification among the forest owners and managers community.
- iii. When requested by the *members*, the manager of the *group certification organization* shall organize an annual meeting to review the activities, accomplishments and problems encountered during the year, as well as future plans for the *group certification organization*.

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

Annual meetings of the *group 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 forest tenures.