

Pro Tips for Members of NNRG's FSC Group Certificate

An Overview of FSC Member Responsibilities, Requirements, & Resources for Observing FSC Guidance - Updated March 2019

Our members are as productive as their forests and often have a lot going on. Northwest Natural Resource Group strives to help keep the management of your Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) group certificate efficient – but comprehensive. While streamlined, we are ready to delve into the details of honoring and adhering to the FSC principles and standards when needed.

These “pro tips” are a reminder of some of the responsibilities for maintaining FSC certification and represent the most frequently asked questions, it goes over:

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If you have questions about the program logistics or stewardship questions, speak with Kirk Hanson (kirk@nnrg.org, 360-316-9317) or Lindsay Malone (lindsay@nnrg.org, 206-971-8966). For a more comprehensive review of the policies, roles, and administration of the FSC group certificate refer to your NNRG FSC Group Membership Manual.

Requirements

Annual reporting

On a yearly basis you need to...

1. **Check-in with Lindsay Malone, Director of Programs (lindsay@nnrg.org, 206-971-8966), for your annual renewal.** The annual renewal covers a range of questions (see last page of this handout). Some renewals can happen by email. Most require a 20-60 minute phone call. If there has been significant management activity on your land (harvest >5,000 board feet, new roads or culverts, etc.) – we'll arrange to do a site visit to verify that practices are consistent with FSC standards.
2. **Report your annual timber harvest volume and herbicide records** - if applicable - to lindsay@nnrg.org at the end of the third financial quarter of the year (Sept. 30). Preferably by October 15 so that this information can be collated into the annual report prepared for the FSC audit that occurs between October and December each year.
3. **Pay your annual membership dues within a month of receiving the invoice.** Doing so in a timely manner helps keep program administration costs down and certification rates at their current level.

Reporting harvest and chemical use in advance of the FSC group audit

Harvest volume and chemical use information is collected annually. NNRG has put together an Excel workbook, *Annual FSC Reporting Workbook* with sheets that may be helpful to you if you are looking for a format to document chemical use and harvest volumes. Please contact Lindsay (lindsay@nnrg.org, 206-971-8966) to get the latest version.

NNRG will happily accept your chemical use report and harvest report in whatever format you provide, so long as we get the information during your annual renewal check-in or in advance of the group certificate audit - preferably by October 15 of each year.

FSC® logo use

If you are planning to use the FSC logo, the FSC acronym, or Forest Stewardship Council® on any marketing materials, brochures, websites, etc. – Please contact Lindsay (lindsay@nnrg.org, 206-971-8966) to request a review of your use of the FSC logo. **NNRG must obtain approval from the Soil Association for all uses of the FSC logo.** Typically, the review and approval process takes just a few days.

Go here to see how to use the FSC logo: [FSC Logo Use Help Sheet](#)

Selling FSC-certified material – maintaining chain of custody (COC)

For those of you who are selling certified forest products please ensure that all load tickets, invoices, bills of lading, etc., contain the following:

- Your FSC Chain of Custody code on each load ticket.
- The FSC Claim: Write **FSC 100%** on each load ticket.
- If the buyer requires verification of your FSC certification NNRG can provide a copy of your FSC COC certificate – your certification can also be verified on FSC's public certificate search page:

<http://info.fsc.org/certificate.php>

Important: Please retain copies of all documentation from any logs sold as FSC-certified. If your property is selected for an FSC audit, you will be asked to provide these materials to the FSC auditor to verify compliance with Chain of Custody requirements. If you have questions, please contact Lindsay (lindsay@nnrg.org, 206-971-8966).

Here's an example of what a FSC-compliant load ticket might look like:

LOAD RECEIPT
No. 503-360

Logger's Logo

DATE: _____ INITIAL: _____

TIMBER OWNER: _____

SALE NAME/
LOCATION: _____

LOGGER: _____

TRUCKER: _____

SPECIES: _____ NO. OF LOGS: _____

DELIVER TO: _____

FSC claim of FSC 100%

FSC 100%

SA-FM/COC-001394XX

The FSC chain of custody number and your 2 or 3 digit code goes here!

Responsibilities

Maintaining your forest management plan

How you steward your land on the ground is of utmost importance. To uphold the FSC standards your forest and your management plan should be a reflection of one another.

While ten years is not very long in the life of most trees, a lot can happen in 10 years! Thus, FSC requires that forest management plans be updated every 10 years – at a minimum. Update your plan on a more frequent basis if there are significant changes to the forest or your plans for the land.

Sometimes updating a management plan will require hiring a forester, but you can also update your plan yourself. There are a number of management plan resources available to guide you through the process – a starting point is the [NNRG's Resources](#) page on our website.

A few other reminders about management plans:

- FSC considers your forest management plan to be the nerve center of an FSC-certified operation. Whether 5 acres or 100,000 acres, all members must have a forest management plan that is appropriate to the scale and intensity of their forest management.
- Members are required to abide by the actions recorded in the management plan. If circumstances change, adapt the plan to the management activities (so long as they are consistent with FSC standards). FSC certification requires that the *conditions of the forest* and the *descriptions in the management plan* be a reflection of one another.
- Members should update management plans following major natural disturbances or changes to management objectives and provide an up-to-date copy to NNRG.
- Public lands resource managers are required to make their management plans and information publicly available.

Monitoring your forest

Monitoring is a critical component of good forest stewardship and is a means to evaluate the ecosystem services that a forest produces. The extent of your monitoring system will depend on the scale and intensity of your forest management.

Monitoring as an opportunity to practice observing your forest carefully, to help you better know your land, to inform management decisions. It can also be a lot of fun! The benefits of monitoring include helping you remember which year the storm hit, how often you see sign of a bobcat, how long a habitat pile lasts, recall when you planted those trees, when you harvested, and to understand if your investment of time and resources contributed to changes in the forest.

For family forest owners, the monitoring format does not need to be complicated. Pick a system that is easy for you to use and that works for your family or community. This could be a spiral notebook, a spreadsheet, a file of photos with some annotations, an annual summary or report that you share with your community. What's a medium that is most likely to be useful to you? Use it!

At a minimum, FSC requires that land managers maintain a basic monitoring program to document the following forest management attributes:

1. Yield of all forest products harvested.
2. Growth rates, regeneration and condition of the forest.
3. Harvested volume of non-timber forest products and condition of harvested areas.
3. Composition and observed changes in the flora and fauna.
4. Environmental impacts of harvesting and other operations.
5. Costs, productivity, and efficiency of forest management.

Additional qualitative forest monitoring should be conducted during regular walks through the forest, and the resulting field notes periodically added to an appendix of the forest management plan. Management plans should then be periodically updated based on the results of monitoring.

The following attributes should be monitored, at a minimum, via written observations:

1. Growth of newly planted seedlings.
2. Location, presence, and abundance of invasive species.
3. Fish and wildlife presence.
4. Snags and downed logs.
5. Forest roads and drainage systems.
6. Chemical use (chemical type, application date, amount, method, effectiveness).

Remember: Photo points count as monitoring too! They are a helpful addition to your records and show changes over time.

Note: NNRG has published a comprehensive guide to conducting a forest inventory and monitoring that contains step-by-step instructions on how to set up permanent plots and collect field data. You can find materials on the NNRG website at: <http://nnrg.org/resources/monitoring-and-inventory-tools/>, or contact Lindsay (lindsay@nnrg.org, 206-971-8966).

Chemical use under FSC

In October 2017, FSC updated the list of highly hazardous pesticides. Please consult the [FSC Pesticides website](#) and [list of FSC Highly Hazardous Pesticides](#) before you use chemicals on your property.

A reminder when it comes to chemicals:

FSC encourages forest management that employs the use of silvicultural systems, integrated pest management, and strategies for controlling pests or invasive species that minimize the need for the use of chemicals. It's important to keep in mind:

- Chemicals should only be used where less environmentally hazardous techniques have been shown through research or empirical experience to be ineffective.
- Chemicals can be used when it has been deemed necessary to control invasive weed species that have the potential to alter forest habitat function and in some cases where invasive or native species are aggressively encroaching on active forest roads.
- When chemicals are applied, the least environmentally hazardous option will be used to minimize effects on non-target organisms or ecological systems.
- The applicator applying the chemicals is trained and will follow all applicable safety precautions.
- Chemicals will be stored and disposed of in a safe and environmentally appropriate manner.
- The forest manager actively monitors chemical application sites not only to determine effectiveness but also to check for residue damage or unintended consequences.
- If you do use chemicals, keep a record of the chemical, volume used (concentrate and diluted), dates of application, target species, application method, and monitor effectiveness.

These common products are NOT prohibited and may be used on FSC-certified forests according to the above guidelines:

- Accord (active ingredient: glyphosate) – more info on the [Material Safety Data Sheet \(MSDS\)](#)
- Arsenal (active ingredient: imazapyr) – more info on the [Material Safety Data Sheet \(MSDS\)](#)
- Garlon (active ingredient: triclopyr) – more info on the [Material Safety Data Sheet \(MSDS\)](#)
- Roundup (active ingredient: glyphosate) – [go here for specific Roundup formulation MSDS's](#)

Here are a few well-known chemicals and brand names that ARE PROHIBITED. FSC's concern about these chemicals is that they do not breakdown quickly and therefore can infiltrate groundwater or are toxic to wildlife, fish, and insects:

- Atrazine (active ingredient: atrazine) – [Material Safety Data Sheet \(MSDS\)](#)
- Warrior (active ingredient: lambda-cyhalothrin) – [MSDS](#)

Need help figuring out if your herbicide contains a banned chemical?

Please contact Lindsay (lindsay@nncrg.org, 206-971-8966).

FSC minimum riparian buffer standards

This is a summary of *minimum riparian buffer standards* to be applied per the Forest Stewardship Council's U.S. Forest Management Standards for the Pacific Coast region. FSC requirements are superseded when and where state or federal laws, regulations, or other contractual requirements are more stringent.

Wetlands are identified as per the local regulatory agencies (WA DNR, ODF, County, etc.). If the local agency identifies a wetland on the ground, then the forest manager should apply the appropriate FSC buffer requirements to the wetland area.

Water type	Management standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish bearing stream – Type F or S Shorelines Lakes & wetlands > 1 acre 	Minimum riparian management zone width: 150 foot 50 foot inner zone 100 foot outer zone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-tree selection in inner zone No equipment in inner zone Single & group tree selection in outer zone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-fish bearing stream, perennial 	Minimum riparian management zone width: 100 foot 25 foot inner zone 75 foot outer zone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single tree selection in inner zone Single & group tree selection in outer zone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-fish bearing stream, seasonal. Supports aquatic species. Lakes & wetlands < 1 acre 	Minimum riparian management zone width: 75 foot <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-tree or group selection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-fish bearing stream, seasonal. Does not support aquatic species 	No prescribed buffer width Management must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains root strength and stream bank and channel stability Recruit coarse wood to the stream system

FSC Pacific Coast Region Stream definitions:

Category A stream: A stream that supports or can support populations of native fish and/or provides a domestic water supply.

Category B stream: Perennial streams that do not support native fish and are not used as a domestic water supply.

Category C stream: An intermittent stream that never the less has sufficient water to host populations of non-fish aquatic species.

Intermittent streams are mapped or unmapped stream that typically flows for less than twelve months of the year and/or that flows below ground for portions of its length.

Category D stream: A stream that flows only after rainstorms or melting snow and does not support populations of aquatic species.

FSC minimum retention requirements

Retention is required when a regeneration harvest exceeds 6 acres in size. Such harvests must retain 10-30 percent of pre-harvest basal area. Retained trees must reflect the diversity of species and size classes, including large and old trees, represented within the management unit. Retention can be distributed in clumps or dispersed as individual trees as appropriate for site conditions.

The volume of green-tree retention (10-30 percent of pre-harvest basal area) depends on:

- size of regeneration harvest
- presence of legacy trees
- adjacent riparian zones
- slope stability
- upslope management
- presence of critical refugia
- extent and intensity of harvesting across the forest management unit

The maximum clearcut (regeneration harvest) under FSC is 60 acres. Thus, factoring in the 10-30 percent retention requirement, the harvest area is 42-54 acres in size.

The average size of an even-aged harvest should be no larger than 40 acres across the ownership.

Recommendations for meeting FSC retention requirements

- Regulatory required retention (e.g. riparian and wetland buffers, steep slopes) can count towards the 10-30 percent retention.
- Scattered and/or clumped retention should also be included in the upland portion of the harvest unit, and not entirely concentrated in a single block of retention.
- Retain trees across all species and age classes. Retention does not have to be exclusively mature or dominant trees. Conversely, retention should not be exclusively young, suppressed or defective trees.
- Low value, defective, or pulp grade trees are good candidates for retention, and often times provide higher habitat values.
- Similarly, low value log segments (e.g. pistol butts, freeze crack) can be retained within the harvest unit vs. exported as pulp.
- Grouping retention around existing legacy structures (e.g. old-growth stumps, snags, large downed logs, etc.) enhances the conservation benefits of the retention practice.
- Retain trees that show obvious signs of wildlife use (e.g. nesting cavities, woodpecker foraging, roosting platforms, owl pellets, etc.).

Resources

The 10 FSC principles

These are the ten rules for responsible forest management and the basis for the indicators and guidance set forth in the FSC standards. During the annual FSC audit, NNRG and its FSC group certificate members are evaluated as to how we all uphold these principles pertaining to forest management.

Principle #1: Compliance with Laws and FSC Principles - Forest management shall respect all applicable laws of the country in which they occur, and international treaties and agreements to which the country is signatory, and comply with all FSC Principles and Criteria.

Principle #2: Tenure and Use Rights and Responsibilities - Long-term tenure and use rights to the land and forest resources shall be clearly defined, documented and legally established.

Principle #3: Indigenous Peoples' Rights - The legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples to own, use and manage their lands, territories, and resources shall be recognized and respected.

Principle #4: Community Relations, Workers' Rights, Social Impact - Forest management operations shall maintain or enhance the long-term social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities.

Principle #5: Benefits from the Forest - Forest management operations shall encourage the efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and a wide range of environmental and social benefits.

Principle #6: Environmental Impact - Forest management shall conserve biological diversity and its associated values, water resources, soils, and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes, and, by so doing, maintain the ecological functions and the integrity of the forest.

Principle #7: Management Plan - A management plan – appropriate to the scale and intensity of the operations – shall be written, implemented, and kept up to date. The long-term objectives of management, and the means of achieving them, shall be clearly stated.

Principle #8: Monitoring and Assessment - Monitoring shall be conducted – appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management – to assess the condition of the forest, yields of forest products, chain of custody, management activities and their social and environmental impacts.

Principle #9: Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forests - Management activities in high conservation value forests shall maintain or enhance the attributes which define such forests. Decisions regarding high conservation value forests shall always be considered in the context of a precautionary approach.

Principle #10: Plantations - Plantations shall be planned and managed in accordance with Principles and Criteria 1-9, and Principle 10 and its Criteria. While plantations can provide an array of social and economic benefits, and can contribute to satisfying the world's need for forest products, they should complement the management of, reduce pressures on, and promote the restoration and conservation of natural forests.

FSC standards for family forests and owners harvesting >2,000 mbf/year

The detailed FSC standards and indicators are available on the FSC US website or follow this link: [US Standard v1.0](#). The FSC standards were last updated in July 2010.

There is some regional variation within the national standard and some indicators contain specific guidance for the Pacific Coast Region (Washington, Oregon, and California). Furthermore, this US Standard v1.0 has [specific indicators for Family Forests](#). The members of NNRG's FSC group certificate are evaluated annually as to their adherence with these indicators.

You can find these standards online at:

<http://nnrg.org/our-services/get-certified/fsc/>

<https://us.fsc.org/preview.fsc-us-forest-management-standard-with-family-forest-indicators.a-196.pdf>

Local FSC-certified wood products businesses

If you are preparing for a timber sale or are looking to market specific materials, consider collaborating with local FSC-certified manufacturers and other wood products businesses. Our partner organization, [Sustainable Northwest](#), manages a group certificate for mills, woodworkers, manufacturers, and other businesses that incorporate FSC-certified wood into their products. Some of our NNRG members have collaborated with these businesses to create and sell beautiful products.

Here is a link to a list of [local and regional businesses that are FSC-certified through Sustainable Northwest \(last updated May 2018\)](#).

When NNRG receives inquiries from wood products buyers about available FSC materials. We immediately notify our FSC-certified members that can supply requested materials about these inquiries. Make sure we have your most current contact information on record, inquire with Lindsay (lindsay@nnrg.org, 206-971-8966).

How to tell if a chemical is on FSC's highly hazardous list

Step 1: Read the chemical label

For example:

Simply Dead Herbicide
For control of woody species and to prevent resprouting.
ACTIVE INGREDIENTS:
Picloram 5.5%
Dimethylamine salt of 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid 20.5%
OTHER INGREDIENTS 74.0%
TOTAL 100.0%

Figure 1: This sample herbicide label ingredient list contains both picloram and 2,4-D.

Step 2: Check the CAS (Chemical Abstracts Service) number on the herbicide's Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)

You can find MSDS online by searching the herbicide name and including "MSDS" in the search. In the Composition/Information on Ingredients section of the MSDS, it will list the chemicals and CAS number

Step 3: Refer to the FSC List of Highly Hazardous Chemicals list

Compare the CAS number of the chemical to the CAS number listed on the FSC highly hazardous list.

[Go here to the FSC list of highly hazardous chemicals to review the list of chemicals:](https://ic.fsc.org/en/document-center/id/74)
<https://ic.fsc.org/en/document-center/id/74>

The CAS numbers you are looking for are 2,4-D (CAS# 94-75-7) and picloram (CAS# 1918-02-1).

If the CAS numbers match, don't use the herbicide. It's banned.

For example:

Simply Dead Herbicide
PRODUCT AND COMPANY IDENTIFICATION
Product: Simply Dead Herbicide
Company Identification: Stump Chemical, LLC 123 Dead Tree Lane Nowhere, IN 47654
COMPOSITION:
Picloram CAS# 006753-47-5 5.5%
Dimethylamine salt CAS# 000094-75-7 20.5%
of 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid Balance, Total including:
74.0%
Ethylene glycol

Figure 2: Should you use this chemical? No. The CAS# for this variation of 2,4-D matches the banned 2,4-D formulation.

Note: This "Simply Dead Herbicide" example is gleaned from Indiana's Green Certification Program.

Forest Stewardship Council® Certification Annual Renewal Questions

The following questions are addressed during the annual FSC check-in with NNRG:

Forest: _____ Date: _____

The following questions are addressed during the annual FSC check-in with NNRG:

1. Have there been any changes in property information? (e.g. ownership, easements, current use taxation)
2. Have there been any major changes in management objectives?
3. When did you last update your forest management plan?
4. Have you conducted a commercial harvest project since the last check-in?
 - a. Please describe timber harvest activity: volume, species, grade, purchaser
 - b. Please describe the harvest methods, acres treated, stand prescription, and post-harvest activities

Harvest state date: _____ Harvest end date: _____

Harvest prescription:

Acres treated:

Sort	Species	Volume (tons)	Volume (MBF)	Mill	Gross Revenue (optional)	Sold FSC?

5. Have you conducted a pre-commercial thinning?
 - a. If so, please describe the stand, change in trees per acre, acres, how work was done.

6. Do you have plans for an upcoming harvest?
 - a. If so, when? Methods? Acres? Treatment goals?

7. Have you done any value-added manufacturing since the last check-in?
 - a. If so, please describe:

8. Has there been any commercial harvest of non-timber forest products?
 - a. Please describe the species, volume, area harvested, how you monitor the site

9. Have you used any pesticides or other chemicals in your forest?
 - a. If so, please provide the following information:

	Chemical 1	Chemical 2	Chemical 3
Herbicide name			
Quantity used (chemical concentration- include units & application volume)			
Date range of application			
Area treated (estimate of acres, square feet, spot treatment)			
Location			
Method of application			
Target species			
Observations of effectiveness (post-herbicide monitoring)			

10. Have you used any biological control agents, genetically modified organisms, or exotic species in your forest management?
 - a. If so, please describe:

11. Has there been any new road construction?
 - a. If so, please describe:

12. Describe any road maintenance and monitoring.

13. Have you had to do any bridge installation/removal?
 - a. If so, please describe:

14. Have you had to do any culvert installation/removal?
 - a. If so, please describe:

15. Have you had any erosion problems?
 - a. If so, please describe:

16. Have you conducted any management activities next to a waterbody?
 - a. If so, please describe:

17. Do you have problems with invasive species?
 - a. Which species?
 - b. How are you treating them?

18. Do you have old-growth on your forest?
 - a. Please describe any old-growth or changes to old-growth.

19. Describe how you have monitored your forest in the past year and how you are updating your management records.

20. Any sightings of rare, threatened, or endangered species?
 - a. Any work to enhance habitat?
 - b. Is your forest enrolled in any habitat programs with ODFW, WDFW, USFWS?

21. Are you currently enrolled in cost-share programs (NRCS EQIP or CSP, local Conservation District programs)?
 - a. If so, please describe:

22. Do you need a site visit?

