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Ver 12 September 2019

FSC Forest Management Certification

4th surveillance
Report for:

Eastern Ontario Forest Group (EOFG)

**Certified area: Community Forests, Large
Private Forests and SLIMFs**

in
Kemptville, Ontario, Canada

Report Finalized:	February 10, 2022
Audit Dates:	November 15 - 19, 2021
Audit Team:	James Hallworth; Lead Auditor
Type of certificate:	Group
Certificate code:	NC-FM/CoC- 000232
Certificate issue/expiry:	January 28, 2018 January 27, 2023
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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of an independent certification audit conducted by a team of specialists representing Preferred by Nature. The purpose of the audit was to evaluate the ecological, economic and social performance of **Eastern Ontario Forest Group (EOFG)** forest management as defined by the Principles and Criteria established by the Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC®).

This report contains various sections of information and findings and several annexes. Sections 1-4 of the report will become public information about the forest management operation and may be distributed by Preferred by Nature or the FSC to interested parties. The remainder of the annexes are confidential, to be reviewed only by authorized Preferred by Nature and FSC personnel bound by confidentiality agreements. A copy of the public summary of this report can be obtained on the FSC website at <http://info.fsc.org/>.

Dispute resolution: If Preferred by Nature clients encounter organisations or individuals having concerns or comments about Preferred by Nature and our services, these parties are strongly encouraged to contact relevant Preferred by Nature regional office. Formal complaints and concerns should be sent in writing.

Impartiality commitment: Preferred by Nature commits to using impartial auditors and our clients are encouraged to inform Preferred by Nature management if violations of this are noted. Please see our Impartiality Policy here: http://www.Preferred_by_Nature.org/impartiality-policy

Standard Conversions

1 mbf = 2.4 m³
1 cord = 3.6 m³
100 tons hardwood = 97 m³
100 tons = 101 m³
1 acre = 0.404687 hectares

1. AUDIT CONCLUSIONS

1.1 Audit Recommendation and certification decision

Based on Organisation's conformance with certification requirements, the following recommendation is made:

- Certification approved:
Upon acceptance of NCR(s) issued below
- Certification not approved:

Additional comments, including issues identified as controversial or hard to evaluate and explanation of the conclusion reached:

Note: NCRs describe evidence of Organisation non-conformities identified during audits. NCRs include defined timelines for the Organisation to demonstrate conformity. MAJOR NCRs issued during assessments/reassessments shall be closed prior to issuance of certificate. MAJOR NCRs issued during annual audits shall be closed within timeline or result in suspension.

1.2 New Non-conformity Reports (NCRs)

Check if no NCR(s) have been issued

NCR: 4.12.7/22	NC Classification: Minor
Standard & Requirement:	FSC Pesticide Policy FSC-POL-30-001 v3-0 / Requirement 4.12.7
Report Section:	Annex III
Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence:	
<u>Requirement:</u> Make the ESRAs and incorporation to the operational plans available to affected stakeholders upon request.	
<u>Finding:</u> Through interviews with the Group Coordinator and forest managers, Environmental and Social Risk Assessments (ESRAs) and operational plans/maps may be available upon request, however affected stakeholders are not currently aware of certain components of the ESRAs. An NCR has been issued regarding this lack of public accessibility/knowledge of the ESRAs. This is considered a minor non-conformance as the results of ESRAs have been	

incorporated into operational plans but some aspects (such as the ESRA documents) stakeholders are unaware of. This represents a low risk regarding any social or environmental impact as stakeholders are notified of operations occurring within community forests.

Evidence:

- Interviews with forest managers / group coordinator
- EOFG Policy and Procedures Manual (2014)
- Websites and social media sites of EOFG, Larose Forest, Quinte Conservation, South Nation Conservation and Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.

Corrective action request:	<p>Organisation shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.</p>
Timeline for Conformance:	<p>Within 12 months from report finalization date</p> <p>Due date: 2023-02-10</p>
NCR Evaluation Type	On-site <input type="checkbox"/> Desk Review <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence Provided by Organisation:	PENDING
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	PENDING
NCR Status:	OPEN
Comments (optional):	

NCR: 4.12.12/22	NC Classification: Minor
Standard & Requirement:	FSC Pesticide Policy FSC-POL-30-001 v3-0 / Requirement 4.12.12
Report Section:	Annex III
Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence:	
<p><u>Requirement:</u></p> <p>Inform third-party processing plants located in the spatial area of the MU and third-party nursery suppliers of the list of FSC prohibited chemical pesticides, encouraging them to avoid these pesticides in their processes and in the production of seedlings and other materials entering the management unit.</p> <p><u>Finding:</u></p>	

Third-party nursery suppliers have not currently been informed of the list of FSC prohibited chemical pesticides, nor have they been encouraged to avoid these pesticides in their processes and in the production of seedlings and other materials entering the management units. A minor non-conformance has been issued due to the indirect low environmental impact of this requirement on the certified area, in Canada it is rare that any nursery would be using any chemical on the FSC prohibited list.

Evidence:

- Interviews with forest managers / group coordinator

Corrective action request:	<p>Organisation shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.</p>
Timeline for Conformance:	<p>Within 12 months from report finalization date</p> <p>Due date: 2023-02-10</p>
NCR Evaluation Type	On-site <input type="checkbox"/> Desk Review <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence Provided by Organisation:	PENDING
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	PENDING
NCR Status:	OPEN
Comments (optional):	

NCR: 7.1.1a/22	NC Classification: Minor
Standard & Requirement:	NEPCon Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in the Great Lakes/Saint-Lawrence region (Canada) / Indicator 7.1.1a
Report Section:	Annex I
Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence:	
<p><u>Requirement:</u></p> <p>7.1.1a Applicable to SLIMF FMEs only: A written management plan exists that includes at least the following:</p> <p>f) Conservation of rare species and any high conservation values</p> <p><u>Finding:</u></p>	

EOFG requires members to follow SOP 1.1 – The Forest Management Plan Standard Operating Procedure for planning, which covers the requirements under the FSC standard. While reviewing the Murray 2020 FMPs the auditor noted that there was no mention of Species at Risk or rare species. The peer review noted this in 2018 regarding the old FMPs. A minor non-conformance has been issued regarding lack of rare species information in the three newly approved 2020 FMPs. It is considered minor as Murray properties have had no active operations for a number of years therefore impacts have been minimal, and all other group members sampled were in conformance with this requirement.

Evidence:

- EOFG Forest certification Policies and Procedures Manual
- FMPs for all sampled FMUs
- High conservation value forest reports for all sampled community FMUs and Murray properties
- Peer review of High conservation value forest reports
- Forest manager and group coordinator interviews

Corrective action request:	<p>Organisation shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.</p>
Timeline for Conformance:	<p>Within 12 months from report finalization date</p> <p>Due date: 2023-02-10</p>
NCR Evaluation Type	On-site <input type="checkbox"/> Desk Review <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence Provided by Organisation:	PENDING
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	PENDING
NCR Status:	OPEN
Comments (optional):	

NCR: 7.4.2/22	NC Classification: Minor
Standard & Requirement:	NEPCon Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in the Great Lakes/Saint-Lawrence region (Canada) / Indicator 7.4.2
Report Section:	Annex I
Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence:	
<u>Requirement:</u>	

Applicable for SLIMF FME-s only: Upon request, FME shall make available relevant parts of the management plan to stakeholders who are directly affected by the forest management activities of FME (e.g. neighboring landowners).

Finding:

Through an online Database, all plans are on file with the Group manager. Obviously for private lands, confidentiality concerns restrict the distribution of information, it was confirmed through interview with the Group Coordinator that upon request, relevant parts of the SLIMF management plan would be made available to stakeholders who are directly affected by the forest management activities of the FME, however there is no mention of this on the group's website which is publicly accessible. A minor non-conformance has been issued due to stakeholders potentially not being aware of who to contact to request this information. It is considered minor as impacts would be very limited due to the nature of the SLIMFS within the group certificate.

Evidence:

- Interviews with forest managers / group coordinator
- EOFG Policy and Procedures Manual (2014)
- Website of EOFG

Corrective action request:	<p>Organisation shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.</p>
Timeline for Conformance:	Within 12 months from report finalization date Due date: 2023-02-10
NCR Evaluation Type	On-site <input type="checkbox"/> Desk Review <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence Provided by Organisation:	PENDING
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	PENDING
NCR Status:	OPEN
Comments (optional):	

NCR: 9.1.3/22	NC Classification: Minor
Standard & Requirement:	NEPCon Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in the Great Lakes/Saint-Lawrence region (Canada) / Indicator 9.1.3
Report Section:	Annex I

Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence:

Requirement:

The HCVF assessment shall be made publicly available, including associated maps (subject to confidentiality considerations) as well as a summary of how concerns raised during the consultation and review process have been addressed.

Finding:

EOFG has several procedures that outline their approach to HCV assessment within the PPM: HCV Policy 1.7, SOP 1.7, and SOP 5.0. For SLIMF members in the EOFG, assessment of such values occurs through management planning and review of available data through the Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC). This approach continues to be an effective means of consulting with relevant sources to identify the presence of HCV or HCVF and to ensure that management protects such values. EOFG also uses their online data management tool to provide for an effective mechanism to report such values when they are present on an individual property. A peer review of the HCV assessment had been completed for all group members sampled.

A minor non-conformance has been issued regarding HCV assessments being unavailable / unknown to the public, the auditor noting that for confidentiality considerations some values etc. cannot be disclosed, however presently there is no notification to the public that this information can be requested. It is considered minor as the environmental and social impacts are limited, as HCVF assessments have been completed, peer-reviewed and are updated as required.

Evidence:

- EOFG Forest certification Policies and Procedures Manual
- FMPs for all sampled FMUs
- Websites and social media sites of EOFG, Larose Forest, Quinte Conservation, South Nation Conservation and Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.
- High conservation value forest reports for all sampled community FMUs and Murray properties
- Peer review of High conservation value forest reports
- Forest manager and group coordinator interviews

Corrective action request:	Organisation shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above. Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.
Timeline for Conformance:	Within 12 months from report finalization date Due date: 2023-02-10
NCR Evaluation Type	On-site <input type="checkbox"/> Desk Review <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence Provided by Organisation:	PENDING
Findings for Evaluation of	PENDING

Evidence:	
NCR Status:	OPEN
Comments (optional):	

NCR: 11.2/22	NC Classification: Minor
Standard & Requirement:	FSC standard for group entities in forest management groups FSC-STD-30-005 V2-0 / Requirement 11.2
Report Section:	Annex VII
Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence:	
<p><u>Requirement:</u></p> <p>The Group Entity shall select the requirements from the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard to be monitored at each internal evaluation according to the scale, intensity, and risk.</p> <p><u>Finding:</u></p> <p>The Group Entity has not updated their procedures regarding the selection of specific requirements from the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard. A minor non-conformance has been issued and is considered minor as the groups internal monitoring procedure considers scale, intensity, and risk presently.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group coordinator interview • EOFG Forest certification Policies and Procedures Manual • Inspection reports 	
Corrective action request:	<p>Organisation shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.</p>
Timeline for Conformance:	Within 12 months from report finalization date Due date: - 2023-02-10
NCR Evaluation Type	On-site <input type="checkbox"/> Desk Review <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence Provided by Organisation:	PENDING
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	PENDING

NCR Status:	OPEN
Comments (optional):	

NCR: 11.3/22	NC Classification: Minor
Standard & Requirement:	FSC standard for group entities in forest management groups FSC-STD-30-005 V2-0 / Requirement 11.3
Report Section:	Annex VII
Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence:	
<p><u>Requirement:</u> The Group Entity shall specify what constitutes an active management unit for the group and justify the classification of activities as active or inactive management.</p> <p><u>Finding:</u> The Group Entity has not defined what is an active or inactive management unit for the group. A minor non-conformance has been issued and is considered minor as the groups internal monitoring sampling procedure considers all FMUs as active management presently, thereby allocating a greater number for internal sampling inspections.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group coordinator interview • EOFG Forest certification Policies and Procedures Manual 	
Corrective action request:	<p>Organisation shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.</p>
Timeline for Conformance:	Within 12 months from report finalization date Due date: 2023-02-10
NCR Evaluation Type	On-site <input type="checkbox"/> Desk Review <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence Provided by Organisation:	PENDING
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	PENDING
NCR Status:	OPEN
Comments (optional):	

1.3 Observations

Note: Observations are issued for the early stages of a problem which does not of itself constitute a non-conformance, but which the auditor considers may lead to a future non-conformance if not addressed by the organization; observations may lead to direct non-conformances if not addressed.

No observations

OBS: 6.3.10/22	Standard & Requirement:	NEPCon Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in the Great Lakes/Saint-Lawrence region (Canada) / Indicator 6.3.10
	Report Section	Annex I
Description of findings leading to observation:	<p>Requirement: Forest roads, skid trails and landings are well planned and designed to minimise soil erosion and loss of productive area. Forest roads, landings and skid trails are designed to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. reduce soil and road embankment erosion, soil compaction and rutting, b. minimise water crossings and loss of productive area; c. minimize loss of site productivity; and d. ensure the protection of aquatic habitat quality during construction and use. <p>Finding: The forest managers take a great deal of care with respect to preventing damage or disruption of wetlands and aquatic systems. EOFG requires members to follow its PPM, which contains a suite of standard operating procedures (ex. SOP 2.0 – Access Standard Operating Procedure) that cover aspects including water crossings, road layout, soil compaction and erosion, and protection of values (6.3.7, 6.3.10, 6.3.11). Members are required to follow provincial policy. An observation has been issued as one group member had an instance of rutting at one recent harvest site visited. As the rutting area was relatively small with low impact (e.g. no wetland or AOC disturbance), there has been no previous history of rutting by the experienced harvest contractor, and there are procedures for remediation, this is deemed an observation rather than a non-conformance.</p>	
Observation:	FME should ensure continued conformance with Indicator	

	6.3.10.
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OBS: 9.1/22	Standard & Requirement:	FSC standard for group entities in forest management groups FSC-STD-30-005 V2-0 / Requirement 9.1
	Report Section	Annex VII
Description of findings leading to observation:	<p>Requirement: 9.1 The Group shall develop, implement and keep updated written rules to manage the group covering all applicable requirements of this standard, according to the scale and complexity of the group</p> <p>Finding: An observation has been issued regarding outdated text references to Rainforest Alliance (RA) within the EOFG PPM, these references have currently not affected any policy implementation or affected conformance with FSC requirements therefore is issued as an observation only at this stage.</p>	
Observation:	FME should ensure continued conformance with Indicator 9.1.	

1.4 Conformance with Applicable Non-conformity Reports (NCRs)

Note: this section indicates the Organisation's actions to comply with NCRs that have been issued during or since the last audit. Failure to comply with a minor NCR results in the NCR being upgraded to major; the specified follow-up action is required by the Organization or involuntary suspension will take place.

Status Categories	Explanation
CLOSED	Operation has successfully met the NCR
OPEN	Operation has either not met or has partially met the NCR

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

NCR: Group 8.3/21	NC Classification: Minor
Standard & Requirement:	FSC standard for group entities in forest management groups FSC-STD-30-005 V1-1, Requirement 8.3

Report Section:	Annex V
Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence:	
<p><u>Requirement:</u> The minimum sample to be visited annually for internal monitoring shall be determined as follows:</p> <p>a) Type I Groups with mixed responsibilities (see section D Terms and definitions) Groups or sub-groups with mixed responsibilities shall apply a <i>minimum</i> sampling of $X = \sqrt{y}$ for 'normal' FMUs and $X = 0.6 * \sqrt{y}$ for FMUs < 1,000 ha. Sampling shall be increased if HCVs are threatened or land tenure or use right disputes are pending within the group.</p> <p><u>Finding:</u> The group manager's 2020 internal monitoring calculation of 8 sites to sample, and site assessment reports documentation did not meet minimum annual sampling requirements for internal monitoring of members. 7 sites should have been sampled for FMUs under <1000 ha.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> 2020 Internal Monitoring Forest Operations Activity Assessment Reports</p>	
Corrective action request:	<p>Organisation shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.</p>
Timeline for Conformance:	<p>Within 12 months from report draft date</p> <p>Due date: 2022-01-05</p>
NCR Evaluation Type	On-site <input type="checkbox"/> Desk Review <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evidence Provided by Organisation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8.3-21 2020 Internal Monitoring • 11 inspection reports for 11 separate FMUs • Interview with Group Coordinator
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	<p>Root cause was identified as an oversight by the previous Group Coordinator. The internal monitoring sampling methodology has been updated and an additional 3 internal inspections were conducted. The auditor interviewed the recently appointed Group Coordinator who demonstrated sufficient knowledge of the internal monitoring procedures. The auditor recommends this NCR be closed.</p>
NCR Status:	CLOSED
Comments (optional):	The auditor notes that internal monitoring of sites can be conducted via desk audit because of COVID-19, refer to

Interpretations of the Normative Framework FM for exact requirements. (<https://fsc.org/en/document-centre/documents/resource/381>)

1.5 Stakeholder and indigenous communities/peoples consultation

1.5.1 Stakeholder and indigenous communities/peoples consultation process

A formal stakeholder notification was sent out to different stakeholders for this audit on October 5, 2021. The audit included inspections of 9 group member properties, and for all properties either the owner and /or forest manager attended the site visit, which provided a good opportunity to interview a sample of group members. Consultation with other stakeholders was undertaken by reviewing the extensive list of stakeholders consulted during the previous annual audit and sampling from stakeholder lists provided for Larose Forest, SD&G County Forest, South Nation Conservation Forest and Quinte Conservation Forest. A variety of classes of stakeholders were notified by e-mail however there was very limited response.

There were no outstanding stakeholder issues or complaints that needed to be evaluated by the auditors. No issues were reported by the FME or discovered by the auditor.

Stakeholder Type (NGO, government bodies, local inhabitant, contractor etc.)	Stakeholder and indigenous communities/peoples Notified (X)	Stakeholder and indigenous communities/peoples consulted directly or provided input (#)
National/Regional ENGOS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
National/Regional Forest NGOs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Academic	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Government Agencies/Regulators	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Forest Industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
National/Regional Recreation Organizations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Labor Unions/Worker Association	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Indigenous Peoples	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1
Local NGOs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Local Communities/Representatives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Local resource users (trappers, hunt & fish clubs, etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Local recreationalists (tourism, hiking, etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Local businesses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Forest Owner or Manager	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11
Buyers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Contractors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Workers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3
Other (describe):	<input type="checkbox"/>	

1.5.2 Stakeholder and indigenous communities/peoples comments

No outstanding stakeholder and indigenous communities/peoples issues or complaints that needed to be evaluated by the auditors were reported by FME or discovered by the auditors. Findings regarding stakeholder and indigenous communities/peoples interactions as part of regular forest management are included under specific Criterion in Annex I.”

2. AUDIT PROCESS

2.1 Certification Standard Used

Standards Used:	<p>FSC Forest Management Standard – Great Lakes St. Lawrence (2010) https://www.Preferred by Nature.org/library/standard/Preferred by Nature-interim-fsc-standard-great-lakes-saint-lawrence-region-canada</p> <p>FSC FM Group Standard (FSC-STD-30-005 v2) https://ic.fsc.org/en/document-center/id/317</p> <p>Chain of Custody Standard for FM https://www.Preferred by Nature.org/library/standard/Preferred by Nature-chain-custody-standard-forest-management-enterprises</p> <p>Trademarks use https://fsc.org/en/document-centre/documents/resource/225</p> <p>NEPCon Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in US & Canada – Maple Sugar NTFP Addendum https://preferredbynature.org/library/standard/nepcon-non-timber-forest-product-certification-addendum-nepcon-interim-standard</p>
Local Adaptation: (if applicable)	Not applicable

2.2 Audit Team and accompanying persons

Name	Role and qualifications
James Hallworth, R.P.F.	Lead Auditor James is a Forestry Specialist for Preferred by Nature with over 7 years of experience in forest and resource management. After his Master's degree in Environmental Assessment, James has worked in a variety of positions within the forestry and environmental sectors. Past work experiences include the development and implementation of forest management plans as a district forester for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry in Northern Ontario, integrated pest management plan implementation, compliance inspections, forest

	resource inventory and timber cruising, in addition to assisting with several conservation projects worldwide including within the UK, China, India and the USA.
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Note: The table below provides an overview of the audit scope and auditors. See standard checklist annex for specific details on people interviewed and audit findings per site audited.

2.3 Audit Overview

Date(s)	Site(s)	Main activities	Auditor/Org
13 September	Remotely	Stakeholder/Indigenous communities/peoples' notification	James Hallworth
Week of 18 th October	Remotely	Preparatory call	James Hallworth
Week of 1 st November	Remotely	Targeted stakeholder notification	James Hallworth
12 November	On-site	Opening meeting and start of on-site audit	James Hallworth
15 – 19 November	On-site	On-site audit (field visits, interviews, stakeholders, etc.)	James Hallworth
19 November	On-site	Closing meeting and end of on-site audit	James Hallworth
Total LOE for audit: 7 = days for preparation, on-site audit, site visits, stakeholder consultation and follow-up			

2.4 Audit Background

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

Has the management system changed since the previous evaluation?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, briefly review the changes: Change in certification coordinator. No discernable impact on conformance with the standards.	
Have there been any complaints, disputes, or allegations of non-conformity with the standards raised against the Organisation during the audit period:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, reference standard and criteria where corresponding findings are found in report:	

2.5 Description of Overall Audit Process

This was the 4th annual surveillance audit, undertaken as an on-site audit with consideration of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic and its associated travel restrictions. See the derogations issued by FSC International in 2021 including FSC-DER-2020-001: <https://fsc.org/en/newsfeed/updated-covid-19-derogation-for-certification-bodies>.

The evaluation began with a review of previous audit reports – One NCR and one observation was identified in the previous annual audit, suggesting a low level of risk and that meeting the minimum field site sampling requirements was appropriate. Forest owners or managers and workers (in the case of county and conservation authority forests) were interviewed by the auditor during the audit.

2.5.1 Changes to the certificate scope

There have been no changes in the forest management approach followed by the group as a whole. Most of the harvesting on the county and community forests is thinning of conifer plantations, with some shelterwood harvesting occurring in older pine stands. These harvest systems are typical of the approaches used in the forests within the group.

The following is a summary of changes in area and organization for the Eastern Ontario Forest Group over the past audit period:

Number of hectares added:	196.9
Number of hectares removed:	305.8
Number of FMUs (properties) added (if applicable):	1
Number of FMUs (properties) removed (if applicable):	3
Total hectares in the certificate:	74,670.4
Number of FMUs (properties) in the certificate:	117

2.5.2 Sampling and FMUs selected for evaluation

FSC sampling rules were used to select the forest management units (FMUs) to be visited this audit. If applicable, FMUs are divided into subsets based on property size and whether they are new to the group. Small properties are less than 1,000 ha, medium properties are 1,000-10,000 ha, and large properties are >10,000 ha.

Sampling is summarized in the table here:

FMU Subset Category	# FMU in Subset	Minimum # to visit per FSC-STD-20-007	Actual # FMUs visited	Notes/Comments
Community Forests above 10,000 ha	2	2	2	Quinte Conservation and Larose Forests
Community Forests 1,000 - 10,000 ha	8	2	2	SD&G County and South Nation Conservation Forests
Private Forest 1,000 - 10,000 ha	1	1	1	Only one in subset
Forests below 1,000 ha	106	4	4	Includes 1 maple syrup producer

Note: FSC sampling formulas from FSC-STD-20-007 v3.0 (Forest management evaluations) were used to determine minimum FMUs to visit.¹

Sample FMU selection was based on extent of recent activity, type of activity and also sought to include a diversity of forest managers and at least one FMU that had never been audited (see table below).

FMU Name	Rationale for Selection
Quinte Conservation	Existing Community Forest above 10,000 ha – there are only two forests in this category and both need to be inspected to meet FSC sampling criteria. Recent harvest
Larose Forest	Existing Community Forest above 10,000 ha there are only two forests in this category and both need to be inspected to meet FSC sampling criteria. Active harvest operations
SD&G County	Existing Community Forest 1,000 - 10,000 ha Forest - recent harvest operations
South Nation Conservation	Existing Community Forest 1,000 - 10,000 ha Forest – recent harvest operations

¹ Sampling formulas (y is #FMUs; x is minimum FMUs to sample)
 FMUs >10,000 hectares: new FMUs ($x=y$); existing FMUs ($x=0.8*y$)
 FMUs >1,001-10,000 hectares: new FMUs ($x=0.3*y$); existing FMUs ($x=0.2*y$)
 FMUs <1,000 hectares: new FMUs ($x=0.6*\sqrt{y}$); existing FMUs ($x=0.3*\sqrt{y}$)
 Multiple FMU: new FMUs ($x=0.8*\sqrt{y}$); existing FMUs ($x=(0.8*\sqrt{y})/2$)

Private commercial forest owner	SLIMF Existing Private Forest 1,000 - 10,000 ha this is the only forest in this category and it needs to be inspected to meet FSC sampling criteria
Independent private forest owner	SLIMF Existing woodlot below 1,000 ha and maple syrup producer. Has not been previously audited.
Lower Ottawa Valley OWA private forest owner	SLIMF Existing woodlot below 1,000 ha. New FMP.
Lower Ottawa Valley OWA private forest owner	SLIMF Existing woodlot below 1,000 ha. New FMP.
Lanark OWA private forest owner	Existing woodlot below 1,000 ha. Has not been previously audited. Recent harvest operation

2.5.3 List of management aspects reviewed by audit team

Type of site	Sites visited	Type of site	Sites visited
Road construction		Illegal settlement	
Soil drainage	x	Bridges/stream crossing	x
Planned Harvest site	x	Riparian zone	x
Ongoing Harvest site	x	Wetland	x
Completed logging	x	Steep slope/erosion	x
Soil scarification	x	Natural regeneration	x
Felling by harvester		Reforestation	
Felling by forest worker		Plantation	
Skidding/Forwarding		Direct seeding	
Clearfelling/Clearcut	x	Weed control	
Shelterwood management	x	Endangered species	x
Selective felling	x	Wildlife management	x
Sanitation cutting	x	Buffer zone	x
Pre-commercial thinning		Special management area	
Commercial thinning	x	Protected area	x
Logging camp		Other areas excluded from harvesting	
Chemical products storage		Historical site	x
Workshop		Recreational site	x
Nursery		Local/indigenous community	x

2.5.4 Review of FME Documentation and required records

a) All certificate types

Required Records	Reviewed
Complaints received by FME from stakeholder and indigenous communities/peoples, actions taken, follow up communication	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: The Company informed the auditor that there had been no complaints received from stakeholders regarding the certified properties during the past year, and group members and workers who were interviewed informed the auditor that they were not aware of any complaints.	
Accident records	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: The Company informed the auditor that there had been no accidents involving group members on the certified properties during the past year, and that the Company had not been informed of any accidents to any contractor staff during the same period.	
Training records	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Training records are provided by the county and community forests, and the conservations authorities, in their annual reports.	
Operational plan(s) for next twelve months	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Planned operations are usually not set on a specific time or date. Harvest is planned based on multiple factors, such as the owner's interest, the contractors' availability, and the forest inventory. Harvest timing restrictions apply to ensure protection for wildlife (ex. birds breeding period). The auditor reviewed the operational plans and prescriptions for upcoming operations.	
Inventory records	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Inventory records were reviewed in the FMPs and are updated to reflect the post-harvest condition based on post-harvest assessments that are undertaken by the forest managers.	
Harvesting records	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Harvest volumes are reported in the county and community forests annual reports.	
Sales and shipping records	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Harvesting contracts and bills of lading were available and provided to the auditor.	

b) FSC Group Certificates

Required Group Records	Reviewed
Group management system	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Policies and Procedures manual was reviewed. No major changes since previous audit.	
Members list and rate of membership change within the group	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Membership additions and reductions are tracked and readily available.	
Formal communication/written documentation sent to members by the group entity during the audit period	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: There is little formal documentation provided to group members – minutes from meetings of the eastern and southern working groups are provided to relevant group members, newsletters are sent out periodically and information is posted on EOFG’s website.	
Records of monitoring carried out by the group entity	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Internal monitoring is undertaken using the sampling methodology described in FSC-STD_30-005 (V2).	
Records of any corrective actions issued by the group entity	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: No corrective actions were issued by the group entity.	
Updated list of group members	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Readily available.	

3. COMPANY DETAILS

3.1 Certificate Scope

3.1.1 Description

Reporting period:	Previous 12 month period	Dates	December 1, 2020 to November 15, 2021.
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A. Scope of Forest Area			
Type of certificate: Group FM		SLIMF Certificate: Low intensity Small SLIMF	
New FMUs added since previous evaluation	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

If Multi-FMU Certificate: List of new FMUs added to the certificate scope:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A (do not complete sections below)

If Group Certificate: Updated of FMU and group member list provided in ANNEX VI
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A: Updated FMU database provided in excel format

B. FSC Product categories included in the FM/CoC scope			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No changes since previous report (do not complete sections below)			
	Level 1	Level 2	Species
<input type="checkbox"/>	W1 Rough wood	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	W2 Wood charcoal		
<input type="checkbox"/>	W3 Wood in chips or particles	W3.1 Wood chips	
<input type="checkbox"/>	W5 Solid wood (sawn, chipped, sliced or peeled)	W5.1 Fitches and boules	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non Wood Forest Products N1 Barks		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other		

C. Species and Sustainable Rate of Harvest (AAC)				
Latin name	Common trade name	Annual allowable cut (m3)	Actual harvest (m3) year	Projected harvest for next year (m3)
Total AAC				
Total annual estimated log production (m3):				

Total annual estimates of production of certified NTFP:	----
Annual allowable harvest (AHA) is 1165 ha.	----
AHA is determined on a stand by stand basis, based on silvicultural principles. Quinte Conservation and Bruce County do not report AHA. They determine sustainable harvest levels on a stand by stand basis	----

D. Forest Area Classification			
<input type="checkbox"/> No changes since previous report (do not complete sections below)			
1. Total certified area (land base)			74,670.4ha
2. Total forested area			55,972ha
3. Total production forest area (where harvesting occurs)		47,117ha	
4. Total non-productive forest area (no harvesting)		8975.5ha	
4.a Protected forest area (strict reserves)	5108ha		
4.b Areas protected from timber harvesting and managed only for NTFPs or services	3867.5ha		
4.c Remaining non-productive forest (other uses)	0ha		
5. Total non-forested area (<i>e.g., water bodies, wetlands, fields, rocky outcrops, etc.</i>)			18,698.4ha
Forest zone		Temperate - Great Lakes-St. Lawrence	
Certified Area (ha) under Forest Type		74,670.4 ha	
Natural		74,670.4 ha	
Semi-Natural			
Plantation			
Stream sides and water bodies (Linear Kilometers)		120 ha	

E. High Conservation Values identified via formal HCV assessment by the FME and respective areas			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No changes since previous report (do not complete section below)			
Code	HCV TYPES	Description:	Area (ha)
HCV1	Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, endangered species, refugia).		
HCV2	Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where		

	viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.		
HCV3	Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems.		
HCV4	Forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control).		
HCV5	Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g. subsistence, health).		
HCV6	Forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).		
Number of sites significant to indigenous people and communities			

F. Pesticide Use			
<input type="checkbox"/> FME does not use pesticides			
FSC Prohibited, Highly Restricted and Restricted pesticides used in last calendar year			
Name	Quantity	Reason for use	# of ha treated
Glyphosate	174.84 litres	Site preparation and invasive species control	84.68
Other pesticides used in last calendar year			
Name	Quantity (Litres)	Reason for use	# of ha treated
<i>Please mention name of active ingredient, not just commercial name. Add rows as needed</i>			
Triclopyr	871.5	Site preparation and invasive species control	62.11
Clopyralid	1.37	Canada thistle control	5.21
Dichlorprop-P	3	Invasive species control	17.19
Azadirachtin	10	EAB control	1

G. List of overlapping forest tenure holders
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FME has no overlapping forest tenure holders in scope or no changes since previous audit

3.1.2 Excision of areas from the scope of certificate

A. Applicability of FSC partial certification	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All forest land owned or managed by the FME is included in the scope of the certificate.
B. Applicability of FSC excision policy (FSC-POL-20-003)	
<p>Important: Excisions and removals from the certified area must be documented below during each audit.</p> <p><u>What are area excisions from the certified area?</u></p> <p>Requirements of FSC Excision Policy (FSC-POL-20-003) Sections 1.2, 2.2, 3.2 are applicable.</p> <p>Applicable when the certificate holder decides to isolate/separate an area from the certified area because this area cannot meet the FSC requirements for reasons either within or beyond its control. Possible examples of excisions: nurseries, areas within the FMU that are influenced / affected by activities from other users that result in non-compliance with FSC requirements (ex. Oil and gas, powerline ROWs, commercial gravel, etc.).</p> <p><u>What area removals from the certified area?</u></p> <p>Requirements of FSC Excision Policy (FSC-POL-20-003) Sections 1.1, 2.1, 3.1 are applicable.</p> <p>Applicable generally when an area of the certified area is changing tenure type or property. This is considered a removal from the certified area. Possible examples of removals from the certified area: sale of area; conversion of forest to a non-forest area, in cases such as governmental disposition of lands to be converted for development of an infrastructure.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><u>Past</u> excisions or removals from the certified area</p> <p>Check this box and complete sections 2 and 3 below and document conformance to FSC-POL-20-003 if in the past years, any area of the certified area has been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excised and its excision proposal evaluated during an audit; AND/OR • Removed by another entity (ex. government)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p><u>New or potential</u> excisions and removals from the certified area</p> <p>Check this box and complete sections 1,2 and 3 of below and document conformance to FSC-POL-20-003 if any area of the certified area under evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is proposed to be excised from the certified area; AND/OR • Is being removed from the certified area.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Not applicable</p> <p>The organization has not excised or removed areas from the certified area or does not plan to do so before their next audit.</p>
1. Rationale for new excision of area from the certified area	

Finding:

Land given to Saugeen First Nation from Grey County (total 120 ha), documented in excision form and email. This was outside the Forest Management Enterprise's (FME) control and relates to the settlement of a land claim with the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (Treaty 72 area).

2. Findings explaining conformance against requirements of FSC-POL-20-003

Finding:

The Auditor determined by inspection of the forest management plan, land excision map and correspondence with the FSC Coordinator and FME manager that management of the excised areas is accomplished in a manner which does not prevent compliance with FSC standards in the remaining FMU.

Excised areas are mapped and tracked in the FME's Geographic Information System (GIS).

The excised areas constitute a small percentage of the total FME landbase.

The excised areas are clearly demarcated and are excluded from AAC calculations. The FME has no further responsibility for the land, it is under ownership and stewardship of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation. FME is in conformance with all relevant sections of the FSC Policy of Excision (FSC-POL-20-003).

3. Details of control measures implemented to prevent contamination of FSC certified wood from the certified area with the wood that cannot be certified from the excised/removed forest areas.

Finding:

N/A – no volumes harvested.

Annex VIII: List of FMU/members for group certificate

1. Total # members in the certified pool: 117
2. Total area in Current Pool (ha): 74,670.4

CERTIFIED POOL MEMBERSHIP TABLE²

Name of Member/ Contact Details	Assigned Sub Code	Management Tenure	Property Location (e.g. town, county)	Latitude/ Longitude ³	Total area (ha)	Main Products
Bruce County	NA	Community Managed	Walkerton	44.1313° N, 81.1507° W	4,883	W1 Rough wood W1.1 Roundwood (logs)
Grey County Forest	NA	Community Managed	Owen Sound	44.4660° N, 80.6327° W	3,198.1	W1 Rough wood W1.1 Roundwood (logs)
Halton Region Forest	NA	Community Managed	Milton	44.4660° N, 80.6327° W 43.5130 ° N 79.9233 ° W	665	W1 Rough wood W1.1 Roundwood (logs)
Lanark County Forest	NA	Community Managed	Perth	45.0084° N, 76.3589° W	4,621	W1 Rough wood W1.1

² Forest certification public summary reports for group certificates shall include an up-to-date list of all group members with name, contact details and the geographical location of their FMUs in the scope of the certificate, unless national legal restrictions do not allow publication of this kind of information (this needs to be specified in the public summary report).

³ The center point of a contiguous FMU or group of dispersed properties that together comprise a FMU in latitude and longitude decimal degrees with a maximum of 5 decimals.

						Roundwood (logs)
Larose Forest	NA	Community Managed	L'Orignal	45°22'31"N 75°09'54"W	11,092.1	W1 Rough wood W1.1 Roundwood (logs)
Limerick Forest	NA	Community Managed	Brockville	44.9127° N, 77.6647° W	6,033.3	W1 Rough wood W1.1 Roundwood (logs)
Long Point Region Conservation Authority	NA	Community Managed	Tillsonburg	42.5792° N, 80.4309° W	4,511.7	W1 Rough wood W1.1 Roundwood (logs)
Northumberland County Forest	NA	Community Managed	Cobourg	43.9292° N, 78.1108° W	2,225	W1 Rough wood W1.1 Roundwood (logs)
Quinte Conservation	NA	Community Managed	Belleville	44.1666° N, 77.3833° W	12,225	W1 Rough wood W1.1 Roundwood (logs)
Renfrew County Forest	NA	Community Managed	Pembroke	45.6383° N, 77.1674° W	6,527	W1 Rough wood W1.1 Roundwood (logs)
Stormont Dundas & Glengarry (SD&G) Forest	NA	Community Managed	Cornwall	45.1228° N, 74.8733° W	3,973	W1 Rough wood W1.1 Roundwood (logs)

South Nation Conservation	NA	Community Managed	Finch	45.1430° N, 75.0854° W	4,371.9	W1 Rough wood W1.1 Roundwood (logs)
Town of Oakville	NA	Community Managed	Oakville	43.4260° N, 79.7298° W	842	W1 Rough wood W1.1 Roundwood (logs)
Private commercial forest owner (TM)	NA	Privately Managed	Madawaska	45.2618° N, 76.8896° W	1,518.4	W1 Rough wood W1.1 Roundwood (logs)
Sub-group of small private woodlots owners (less than 1000 ha)	NA	Privately Managed	Across eastern and southern Ontario	-	9,561.20	W1 Rough wood W1.1 Roundwood (logs)
Total area in certified pool.					74,670.4	