



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

Audit Managed by:  
Canada Regional Office  
P.O. Box 1771  
Chelsea, QC, Canada  
J9B 1T9  
Tel: 613-422-5291  
Fax: 866-438-1971  
Contact person: David Brunelle  
Email: [dbrunelle@ra.org](mailto:dbrunelle@ra.org)



The mark of  
responsible forestry

Rainforest Alliance is an  
FSC® accredited certifier

FM-02 - 24 July 2013



Forest Management  
**Certification Reassessment**  
Report for:

Eastern Ontario Forest Group  
In  
Kemptville, Ontario, Canada

Report Finalized:	January 21, 2018
Audit Dates:	November 27th to December 1st 2017
Audit Team:	David Brunelle
Certificate code:	RA-FM/COC-000232
Certificate issued:	January 28, 2018
Certificate expiration:	Januray 27, 2023
Organization Contact:	Jim Hendry
Address:	10-3 Campus Dr., Kemptville, ON, K0J 1J0, Canada

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	3
1. SCOPE OF THE CERTIFICATE .....	3
1.1. Scope of the certificate .....	3
1.2. Exclusion and/or Excision of areas from the scope of certificate .....	6
2. ASSESSMENT PROCESS .....	7
2.1. Certification Standard Used .....	7
2.2. Assessment team and qualifications .....	7
2.3. Assessment schedule (including pre-assessment and stakeholder consultation) .....	7
2.4. Evaluation strategy .....	8
2.5. Stakeholder consultation process .....	9
3. ASSESSMENT FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS .....	10
3.1. Stakeholder comments received .....	10
3.2. Summary of Evaluation Findings for FSC Forest Criteria .....	10
3.3. Identified nonconformances and Nonconformity Reports (NCRs) .....	23
3.4. Conformance with applicable nonconformity reports (Reassessments Only) .....	24
3.5. Observations .....	25
Certification Recommendation .....	26
4. CLIENT SPECIFIC BACKGROUND INFORMATION .....	27
APPENDIX I: Public summary of the management plan .....	30
APPENDIX II: Certification standard conformance checklist (confidential) .....	32
APPENDIX III: Chain-of-Custody Conformance (confidential) .....	171
APPENDIX IV: Group Certification Conformance FSC-STD-30-005 v1-0 (confidential) .....	177
APPENDIX IV-a: Certified Group Member/FMU List .....	184
APPENDIX V: List of all visited sites (confidential) .....	185
APPENDIX VI: Detailed list of stakeholders consulted (confidential) .....	187
APPENDIX VIII: SLIMF Eligibility Form (confidential) .....	190
APPENDIX IX: FME map (optional) .....	192

## INTRODUCTION

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

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

This report contains four main sections of information and findings and several appendices. Sections 1 through 4 of the report plus appendix I will become public information about the forest management operation and comprise a public summary of the full report that may be distributed by Rainforest Alliance or the FSC to interested parties. The remainder of the appendices are confidential, to be reviewed only by authorized Rainforest Alliance 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/>.

A key purpose of the Rainforest Alliance auditing is to recognize conscientious land stewardship through independent evaluation and certification of forestry practices. Forestry operations that attain FSC certification may use Rainforest Alliance and FSC trademarks for public marketing and advertising.

# 1. SCOPE OF THE CERTIFICATE

## 1.1. Scope of the certificate

<b>Forest management enterprise (FME) information:</b>			
<b>FME legal name:</b>	Eastern Ontario Forest Group		
<b>FME legal jurisdiction:</b>	Ontario		
<b>Type of legal entity</b>	Corporation		
<b>Contact person (public):</b>	Jim Hendry		
<b>Address:</b>	10 Campus Dr. PO Box 2111 Kemptville, ON, Canada		
<b>Tel/FAX/email:</b>	(613)-258-8422		
<b>Website:</b>	www.eomf.on.ca		
<b>Reporting period:</b>	Previous 12 month period	<b>Dates</b>	June 16 <sup>th</sup> to November 27 <sup>st</sup> , 2017

<b>A. Scope of Forest Area</b>			
Type of group - SLIMF and Non-SLIMF FMUS	certificate:	SLIMF Certificate Small SLIMF	
Group or Multiple FMU	Number of group members (if applicable):	132	
	Total number of Forest Management Units FMUs: (if applicable, list each below):	132	
	FMU size classification within the scope:		
		# of FMUs	total forest area of FMU's
	< 100 ha	97	3520.5 ha
	100 – 1000 ha	22	6780.6 ha
	1000 – 10 000 ha	11	50934.9 ha
	> 10 000 ha	2	22310.9 ha
	SLIMF FMUs	119	10301.1 ha
<b>Group Certificate:</b> List of FMUs included in the certificate scope provided in <b>Appendix IV-a:</b>			
<b>Single/Multi-FMU Certificate:</b> List of each FMU included in the certificate scope:			
FMU Name/Description	Area	Forest Type	Location Latitude/Longitude <sup>1</sup>
	ha		
	ha		
	ha		

<b>B. FSC Product categories included in the FM/CoC scope (FSC-STD-40-004a)</b>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Species</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	W1 Rough Wood	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<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"/>	W4 Impregnated/treated wood	W4.1 Impregnated roundwood	
<input type="checkbox"/>	W5 Solid wood (sawn, chipped, sliced or peeled)	W5.1 Fitches and boules	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Non Wood Forest Products	N9.6 (Sap-based food)	Maple Syrup
<input type="checkbox"/>	other		

### C. Species and Sustainable Rate of Harvest (AAC)

Latin name	Common trade name	Annual allowable cut	Actual harvest (2011)	Projected harvest for next year
Varies based on FMU group member		m3	m3	m3
Total AAC		m3	m3	m3
Total annual estimated log production:			37000 m3	
Total annual estimates production of certified NTFP:			7500 L	
N9.6.1 – Maple Syrup			7500 L	

### D. FMU Info

Forest zone	Temperate
Certified Area under Forest Type	
• Natural	83546.9 ha
• Plantation	0 ha
Stream sides and water bodies	140 Linear Kilometers

### E. Forest Area Classification

Total certified area (land base)	83546.9 ha
1. Total forest area	62659 ha
a. Total production forest area	53073 ha
b. Total non-productive forest area (no harvesting)	9586 ha
• Protected forest area (strict reserves)	5464 ha
• Areas protected from timber harvesting and managed only for NTFPs or services	4122 ha
• Remaining non-productive forest	ha
2. Total non-forest area (e.g., water bodies, wetlands, fields, rocky outcrops, etc.)	20888 ha

### F. Ownership/Management Classification

Ownership Tenure	Private and community ownership
Management Tenure (list primary tenure type for group certificates)	Private and community management
Certified area that is:	
Privately managed	10815.5 ha
State/Public managed	ha
Community managed	72731.4 ha

### G. Forest Regeneration

Area or share of the total production forest area regenerated naturally	80 %
Area or share of the total production forest area regenerated by planting or	20 %

seeding	
Area or share of the total production forest are regenerated by other or mixed methods (describe)	ha

### H. High Conservation Values identified via formal HCV assessment by the FME and respective areas

Code	HCV TYPES <sup>2</sup>	Description:	Area
HCV1	Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, endangered species, refugia).	Species at Risk Habitat Conservation areas	25185 ha
HCV2	Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.	Nature Preserves	702 ha
HCV3	Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems.	Bog, Fen, Old Growth	9683 ha
HCV4	Forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control).	ANSI, PSW	5162 ha
HCV5	Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g. subsistence, health).		4831 ha
HCV6	Forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).	Algonquin Land Claim Interest	1122 ha
Number of sites significant to indigenous people and/or local communities			10

### I. Pesticide Use

FME does not use pesticides. (delete rows below)

FME has a valid FSC derogation for use of a highly hazardous pesticide  YES  NO

FSC highly hazardous pesticides used in last calendar year

Name	Quantity	# of Hectares Treated
		ha
		ha
		ha

Non FSC highly hazardous pesticides used in last calendar year

Name	Quantity	# of Hectares Treated
Vision Max (glyphosate)	76.5	34 ha
Garlon – RTU (Triclopyr)	7.5	3.6 ha

<sup>2</sup> The HCV classification and numbering follows the ProForest HCVF toolkit. The toolkit also provides additional explanation regarding the categories. Toolkit is available at <http://hcvnetwork.org/library/global-hcv-toolkits>.

**1.2. Exclusion and/or Excision of areas from the scope of certificate**

<b>X</b>	Applicability of FSC partial certification and excision policy	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All forest land owned or managed by the FME is included in the scope of this evaluation.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	FME owns and/or has management involvement in other forest land/properties (forest management units) not being evaluated. <b>If yes, complete sections A &amp; D below.</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is any portion of the forest management unit (s) under evaluation for certification being excised from the scope of the evaluation? <b>If yes, complete sections B, C &amp; D below. Conformance with FSC-POL-20-003 <i>The Excision of Areas from the Scope of Certification</i> shall be documented below.</b>	
A. Comments / Explanation for exclusion of FMUs from certification:		
Finding:		
B. Rationale for excision of area from FMU(s) included in scope of evaluation: <i>Note: Rationale shall be consistent with one of the permitted conditions specified in FSC-POL-20-003, under which such certifications may be permitted.</i>		
Finding:		
C. Summary of conformance evaluation against requirements of FSC-POL-20-003		
Finding:		
D. Control measures to prevent contamination of certified wood with wood from excluded/excised forest areas.		
Finding:		
<b>Forest Management Units Excluded From Evaluation</b>		
<b>Forest area</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Size (ha)</b>

## 2. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

### 2.1. Certification Standard Used

Forest Stewardship standard Used for assessment:	Rainforest Alliance/Rainforest Alliance Locally adapted Standards for Assessing Forest Management in the Great Lakes/Saint-Lawrence region
Local Adaptation: (if applicable)	N/A

### 2.2. Assessment team and qualifications

Auditor Name	David Brunelle	Auditor role	Lead auditor
Qualifications:	<p>Forest engineer cumulating 10 years of experience in integrated resource management, forest management and in forest and environmental certification. David was first in charge of a forest management project for a consulting firm specialized in technical work. He then worked for a logging company for 3 years as Forestry Department Coordinator. In this position, he was involved in all tasks related to forest management and forestry operations' support. As the head of the integrated resource management projects for the <i>Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec</i>, he worked in harmonizing the uses in Quebec's wildlife reserves for 3 years. During his short stint at the <i>Ministère des Ressources Naturelles du Québec</i> in 2012, he participated in the implementation of forestry and environmental certifications at the provincial level. Finally, he held a management position in a forest management consulting firm. In addition, he holds a Law certificate from the <i>Université de Montréal</i>. David joined the Canada Rainforest Alliance team in January 2016 as a Forest Management Associate and completed the FSC lead auditor training. David took part in 55 FM and COC audits.</p>		

### 2.3. Assessment schedule (including pre-assessment and stakeholder consultation)

Date	Location /main sites	Main activities
Oct. 21, 2017	Rainforest Alliance offices	Public notice distributed
Nov. 24, 2017	Webinar	Opening meeting
Nov. 27 to Dec. 1, 2017	EOFG	Field visits, stakeholder consultation, documentation review
Dec. 1, 2017	Oakville Offices (member of EOFG)	Closing meeting
Jan. 12, 2018	Auditor offices	Draft report delivered to Rainforest Alliance
Jan. 19, 2018	Rainforest Alliance offices	Draft report delivered to EOFG for review
Jan. 21, 2018	Rainforest Alliance offices	Comments received from EOFG
Jan. 21, 2018	Rainforest Alliance offices	Report finalized



## 2.4. Evaluation strategy

### 2.4.1 List of FMUs selected for evaluation

FMU Name	Rationale for Selection
Larose Forest	Pine plantation naturalization, Ongoing harvesting activity, Ongoing hauling, Tree marking, Recreational values management, Disease and pest management.
South Nation Conservation Authority	Pine plantation naturalization, Recent thinning, road construction, Recent harvest.
Richard McMillan (Maple Syrup Production)	Maple Syrup Production, Recreational values management.
Pierre Laprise (private owner)	Natural maple stand, Recreational values management.
Rod Croskery (private owner)	Hardwood plantations, Natural maple stand, Recreational values management.
Andrew Dumbrille (private owner)	Conservation, Natural maple stand, Riparian protection.
Bob Mingie (private owner)	Pine plantation naturalization, Recreational values management.
Ray and Jamie Fortune (private owner)	Conservation, Natural maple stand, Maple Syrup production.
Murray Bros (private owner)	Old intervention in maple stand, prescriptions, Culvert, old roads, Recreational values management (hunting), Planned interventions in maple stand.
Grey Sauble Conservation Authority	Pine plantation naturalization, Recent harvest and marking, Recreational values management, Disease and pest management.
Bruce County Forests	Pine plantation naturalization, Recent thinning in pine plantation, Marking in Maple stand, Riparian protection, Recent harvesting activity in maple stand, Recent tree marking, Recreational values management, Disease and pest management, rutting management, illegal settlement.
Paul Robertson (private owner)	Educational forest, Natural diverse forest, Disease and pest management.

### 2.4.2 List of management aspects reviewed by assessment team:

Type of site	Sites visited	Type of site	Sites visited
Road construction	1	Illegal settlement	1
Soil drainage	0	Bridges/stream crossing	3
Workshop	2	Chemical storage	0
Tree nursery	0	Wetland	3
Planned Harvest site	3	Steep slope/erosion	0
Ongoing Harvest site	1	Riparian zone	4
Completed logging	7	Planting	5
Soil scarification	0	Direct seeding	0
Planting site	5	Weed control	1
Felling by harvester	1	Natural regeneration	8
Felling by forest worker	0	Endangered species	1
Skidding/Forwarding	0	Wildlife management	3
Clearfelling/Clearcut	0	Nature Reserve	0
Shelterwood management	8	Key Biotope	1
Selective felling	8	Special management area	0
Sanitation cutting	3	Historical site	1

Pre-commercial thinning	1	Recreational site	4
Commercial thinning	4	Buffer zone	1
Logging camp	0	Local community	0

## 2.5. Stakeholder consultation process

The purpose of the stakeholder consultation strategy for this assessment was threefold:

- 1) To ensure that the public is aware of and informed about the assessment process and its objectives;
- 2) To assist the field assessment team in identifying potential issues; and,
- 3) To provide diverse opportunities for the public to discuss and act upon the findings of the assessment.

This process is not just stakeholder notification, but wherever possible, detailed and meaningful stakeholder interaction. The process of stakeholder interaction does not stop after the field visits, or for that matter, after even a certification decision is made. Rainforest Alliance welcomes, at any time, comments on certified operations and such comments often provide a basis for field assessment.

In the case of EOFG prior to the actual assessment process, a public consultation stakeholder document was developed and distributed by email on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017. Another more specific email was sent on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017. This list also provided a basis for the re-assessment team to select people for interviews in person, by telephone or through email.

<b>Stakeholder Type (NGO, government bodies, local inhabitant, contractor etc.)</b>	<b>Stakeholders Notified (#)</b>	<b>Stakeholders consulted directly or provided input (#)</b>
Local/National/International ENGOs	30	0
First Nations	21	0
Forest users	9	2
Govt Agency	2	0
Industry	4	0
Labor Union	3	0
Worker	0	1
Academic	2	0
Other	11	0

### 3. ASSESSMENT FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

#### 3.1. Stakeholder comments received

The stakeholder consultation activities were organized to give participants the opportunity to provide comments according to general categories of interest based upon the assessment criteria. The table below summarizes the issues identified by the assessment team with a brief discussion of each based upon specific interview and/or public meeting comments.

FSC Principle	Stakeholder comment	Rainforest Alliance response
<b>P1: FSC Commitment and Legal Compliance</b>	No comments received	No answer needed
<b>P2: Tenure &amp; Use Rights &amp; Responsibilities</b>	No comments received	No answer needed
<b>P3 – Indigenous Peoples’ Rights</b>	No comments received	No answer needed
<b>P4: Community Relations &amp; Workers’ Rights</b>	Stakeholders from different regions of Ontario commented on the good relationship they maintain with the forest managers of the member concerned.  Employees interviewed all had good comments on their work conditions.	No answer needed
<b>P5: Benefits from the Forest</b>	Stakeholders commented on the attention some forest managers to ecosystem services and other users.	No answer needed.
<b>P6: Environmental Impact</b>	No comments received	No answer needed
<b>P7: Management Plan</b>	No comments received	No answer needed
<b>P8: Monitoring &amp; Assessment</b>	No comments received	No answer needed
<b>P9: Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forest</b>	No comments received	No answer needed
<b>P10 - Plantations</b>	No comments received	No answer needed

#### 3.2. Summary of Evaluation Findings for FSC Forest Criteria

<b>PRINCIPLE 1: Compliance with law and FSC Principles</b>					
<b>Criterion 1.1 Respect for national and local laws and administrative requirements</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	EOFG and its members understand their legal obligations and there have not been any instances of non-compliance during the last audit period. A list of applicable laws was provided to the auditor prior to the audit.				

	Satisfactory records of compliance were shown to the auditor and the managers interviewed were knowledgeable on the laws applicable to their forest management practices. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion.			
<b>Criterion 1.2 Payment of legally prescribed fees, royalties, taxes and other charges</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	There are no legally prescribed fees, royalties or taxes that are required to be paid by EOFG as it is a not-for-profit. The same applies for county forest members. Woodlot members are required to pay property taxes and the province has a good system of ensuring they are paid. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion.			
<b>Criterion 1.3 Respect for provisions of international agreements</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	Commitments by the federal government have ensured that local and provincial laws are consistent with this requirement. The Organization, by being in compliance with provincial laws, meets this criterion. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion.			
<b>Criterion 1.4 Conflicts between laws and regulations, and the FSC P&amp;C</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	There were no outstanding issues regarding conflicts between laws and FSC standards during this audit. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion.			
<b>Criterion 1.5 Protection of forests from illegal activities</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	The audit team did not find any instances of illegal/unauthorized activities. Registries of illegal activities were provided to the audit team prior to the audit. Forest managers are aware of this requirement and are declaring any illegal activities happening on their territories. The managers visited during the audit did their best to prevent illegal use of their forests by using signs and trying to close the roads when possible. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion.			
<b>Criterion 1.6 Demonstration of a long-term commitment to the FSC P&amp;C</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	EOFG has a long history of commitment to FSC and to protecting and maintaining the integrity of the forest in the long-term. Moreover, the organization is still putting a lot of efforts in recruiting new members for the group. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion.			
<b>PRINCIPLE 2: Tenure and use rights and responsibilities</b>				
<b>Criterion 2.1 Demonstration of land tenure and forest use rights</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	There are 2 main types of landowners in the EOFG group: 1) Private landowners 2) Community forests (county forests, conservation areas).  For private landowners, as described in the 2013 FSC re-assessment report, the assessment roll number for the property must be provided on the MFTIP application form. The roll number can be linked to the property tax statement, which includes information about the property title. For the purpose of ownership, Conservation Authorities and County Forest are considered private lands, since all properties are owned fee simple. The FMPs for the group members evaluated list all the properties that are owned by these			

	<p>entities, including relevant purchase date and property location/boundary information. Maps of the properties are also included in the FMPs or associated operating plans.</p> <p>In the case of Conservation authorities, most properties were acquired with grants provided by the Provincial Government, through the Agreement Forest Program, and/or from donations from private individuals or non-Government organizations. In the case of GCF and HRF, properties were acquired through the Agreement Forest Program.</p> <p>Legal deed and title documents were reviewed for a sample of SVCA properties. EOFG's MOU with each member includes details about the property boundaries, size and location, as well as a clause requiring that the applicant be the registered owner of the property.</p> <p>The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion.</p>			
<b>Criterion 2.2 Local communities' legal or customary tenure or use rights</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	<p>All lands included in the scope of this certificate are privately owned. There were no examples of tenure or use rights held by communities that apply to these lands. All activities permitted by the community forests on their lands (camping, hunting, trapping, motorized vehicle access) require either a permit issued by the community forest, or some other form or agreement. These examples are not considered customary or resource use rights.</p> <p>This Criterion is N/A.</p>			
<b>Criterion 2.3 Disputes over tenure claims and use rights</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	<p>Per the 2013 reassessment, and as above, there are no customary tenure or resource rights that have been identified on member properties, thus this criterion is not applicable.</p> <p>Should customary rights and tenure claims be identified, EOFG's Policy and Procedure Handbook (Policy 3.2 – Dispute resolute Policy) – covers grievances with any stakeholder, including those related to customary rights &amp; tenure claims.</p> <p>The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion.</p>			
<b>PRINCIPLE 3: Indigenous peoples' rights</b>				
<b>Criterion 3.1 Indigenous peoples' control of forest management</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	<p>The group manager and all members met displayed an adequate knowledge of Aboriginal communities with traditional rights in their region.</p> <p>No conflict over tenure rights was raised by aboriginal communities to the certificate holder nor to the audit team.</p> <p>The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion.</p>			
<b>Criterion 3.2 Maintenance of indigenous peoples' resources or tenure rights</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	<p>There is no public (Crown) land in the certificate and thus this criterion is not applicable.</p>			
<b>Criterion 3.3 Protection of sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance to indigenous peoples</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	<p>The group manager gathered information about Cultural values with Aboriginal communities.</p> <p>Some members had interactions about those values with aboriginal communities in the past. They provided big white birch (ex: for traditional canoes making) or ceremonial trees to communities.</p> <p>The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion.</p>			

<b>Criterion 3.4 Compensation of indigenous peoples for the application of their traditional knowledge</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	There is no evidence of use of traditional knowledge in forest management by the group members. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion.				
<b>PRINCIPLE 4: Community relations and workers rights</b>					
<b>Criterion 4.1 Employment, training, and other services for local communities</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	EOFG and its members have demonstrated a commitment to local community through procurement policies, support of local events, local capacity building and fair remuneration. The audit team noted that the contractors operating on the FMUs are mostly local at the regional scale. By holding workshop on First Nations values the organization is contributing to local communities' stability. Stakeholders commended the Organization on the substantial efforts they make to include them in forest management planning. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion				
<b>Criterion 4.2 Compliance with health and safety regulations</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	EOFG has policies and procedures in place to require members to review health and safety requirements with the on-site forest worker, and the audit team found that all forest workers were required to comply with relevant provincial health and safety requirements. Detailed Health and Safety records (registries, meeting minutes, etc) were provided to the audit team prior to the audit. Interviews with forest managers of the group members visited during the audit confirmed that there is a good health and safety culture in the Organization. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion				
<b>Criterion 4.3 Workers' rights to organize and negotiate with employers</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	The audit team did not identify any issues with regard to workers' rights to organize. Employees of the members interviewed during the audit were happy to work for their employers. Some were members of unions. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion				
<b>Criterion 4.4 Social impact evaluations and consultation</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	The audit team examined the public consultation process of the county forests sampled during this audit and found that through open houses and public outreach during the development of the management plan, there were multiple opportunities for meaningful opportunities to participate in forest management planning. Additionally, the audit team confirmed with county forest members that notification of neighbors was appropriate and adequate. Moreover, all of the stakeholders consulted during the audit were satisfied with their level of involvement in the forest management planning process. Some stakeholders also confirmed that they felt they could have more opportunities to take part in forest management planning if they express the need to the forest manager of the group members involved. Detailed records of complaints, requests and consultations and their follow ups were provided to the audit team prior to the audit. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion				
<b>Criterion 4.5 Resolution of grievances and settlement of compensation claims</b>					

Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	<p>There are measures in place in member organizations to minimize loss or damage to property through the establishment of legal lines and a thorough notification of neighboring properties prior to harvest. There have been no known instances of EOFG members damaging property, rights, resources or livelihoods during the audit period.</p> <p>The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion</p>				
<b>PRINCIPLE 5: Benefits from the forest</b>					
<b>Criterion 5.1 Economic viability taking full environmental, social, and operational costs into account</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	<p>Through its financial policy (Policy 1.2), EOFG provides objectives and a costing matrix as to having the resources for implementing its activities related to the management and monitoring of its group members. Members showed ability to implement their forest management plans and other forest management related activities.</p> <p>The forest management and strategies put in place by community forests and private group members focuses on the ecological productivity of the forest and its on-going wellness.</p> <p>The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion</p>				
<b>Criterion 5.2 Optimal use and local processing of forest products</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	<p>EOFG has defined objectives and procedures so its group members and forest managers seek the highest and best value possible for their forest products (Policy 2.0 – Processing, Manufacturing and Purchasing). Substantial efforts are made by EOFG and its group members as to favor local processing and being open to new local opportunities, despite the limited number of mills in the periphery of the land covered by the scope. The Group is also providing assistance and information to its members wanting CoC certification.</p> <p>Sites that were recently harvested proved that the management strategies are aiming at obtaining highest and best value for forest products while maintaining ecological productivity. In most situations, the members use a bidding process or shop for the best price with the goal of obtaining the highest and best value for their products.</p> <p>The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion</p>				
<b>Criterion 5.3 Waste minimization and avoidance of damage to forest resources</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	<p>EOFG and group members have management strategies that focus on minimizing waste and damage to other forest resources. Extensive knowledge of the forests by the forest managers helps in the application of operations to reach these objectives.</p> <p>No on-site processing was observed. All processing is done at an appropriate site in the forest or on the roadside.</p> <p>The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion</p>				
<b>Criterion 5.4 Forest management and the local economy</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	<p>EOFG Policy 2.0 clearly stipulates objectives and procedures so the group can deliver its best at using the full range of timber products present within its certificate, while being open to new opportunities. For example, this past year's harvests include poles from red pine plantations, sawlogs from hardwoods (most members).</p> <p>Locals and people from the city benefit from the Community Forests for outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing and hunting. These forests are implementing clear</p>				

		objectives of diversifying forest use and when possible, forest products. Private woodlots are mostly for private use, but some of them compliment timber harvesting with operations such as production of maple syrup. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion
<b>Criterion 5.5 Maintenance of the value of forest services and resources</b>		
Conformance	X	Nonconformance
Finding (strength/weakness)		EOFG has defined through its SOP 1.5 – Protection of Forest Values procedures as to identify AOC and develop prescriptions “in order to prevent, minimize or mitigate any potentially adverse effects of forest management activities on identified forest values”. Community Forests and private woodlots represent for forest managers great value for the services and resources they offer. Watershed protection is the main goal of conservation authorities included in the membership of this certificate. All water systems present on the certified land base are documented and their protection taken into account in the forest management plans and activities. Forest managers demonstrated adequate knowledge of procedures to be taken by tree markers and forest operators. One wetland was located near forest operations and a buffer zone had been defined. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion
<b>Criterion 5.6 Harvest levels</b>		
Conformance	X	Nonconformance
Finding (strength/weakness)		Selection harvests and thinning are the prevalent type of harvesting done by the group members under the certificate scope. Even though Community Forests have long-term conservation goals within a landscape of ever-increasing development pressure, they have a calculation or rationale similar to the AAC for their annual harvest rate. They are reviewed each 5 years with a new operating plan and the volumes harvested in the past 5 years. Properties on small woodlots do not have AAC calculations. Determination of harvest is based on cruise data and stand structure targets identified in provincial silvicultural guidelines. Considering operations on these small woodlots are all selection harvests and thinning, they allow for a sustainable long-term rate of harvesting. This was verified by field visits by the audit team. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion
<b>PRINCIPLE 6: Environmental impact</b>		
<b>Criterion 6.1 Environmental impacts evaluation</b>		
Conformance	X	Nonconformance
Finding (strength/weakness)		The EOFG continues to use a system for assessing environmental impacts appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations under the scope of this certificate. As in previous findings for the EOFG, environmental assessments are generally carried out at the site level using established frameworks from management guides provided by the Ministry of Natural Resources. This guidance includes the ‘Ontario Tree Markers Guide, A Silviculture Guide to Managing Southern Ontario Forests, Forest Management Guide for Conserving Biodiversity at the Stand and Site Scale’. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion
<b>Criterion 6.2 Protection of rare, threatened and endangered species</b>		
Conformance	X	Nonconformance
Finding (strength/weakness)		There were no changes since the last annual audit. The following findings were updated with minor changes reflecting the current audit's evaluation and confirming conformance of the certificate holder. The latest list of SAR species is accessible by EOFG in its Program Data Management Tool, which contains the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources &



Forests' SAR link by county. As defined in SOP 1.5.1, this list covers the geographical scope of the certification group. This list is accessible to forest managers and members and is updated as soon as new information becomes available.

SOP 1.5.1 also contains measures to be taken for maintaining SAR listings on all forest management areas and a precautionary approach to ensure that any planned forest management activity that may affect SAR follows appropriate prescriptions. The measures were found to be implemented by forest managers and members visited as a part of this evaluation.

These measures include:

- An operational SAR screening to be implemented before and during forest operations (identification with SAR list, consultation with government bodies and local ENGO, field assessment during operational activities);
- For areas where a recovery plan exists or is under development, the forest management must implement all measures relevant to their activities and to control illegal activities (hunting, trapping, etc.);
- Taking a precautionary approach while developing SAR management plans and prescriptions when no plan exists or field inventories indicate potential presence, which need to be vetted through the Certification Working Group.

Prescriptions for Community Forests included measures in case protected and uncommon species were observed. Since the last annual audit, the group manager suggested to its members that were not including SAR species on their prescriptions to include them. The auditors were able to confirm that for prescriptions completed since last annual audit, such species were included. Directional targets to improve the future distribution and abundance of rare tree species listed in 6.2.1 are set through the objectives of the forest management plans and prescriptions. These species are, for example, butternut and black cherry. The use of certified tree markers and precautionary measures implemented by forest managers for operations allow for the respect of these targets. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion

**Criterion 6.3 Maintenance of ecological functions and values**

Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
-------------	---	----------------	--	----------	--

**Finding (strength/weakness)**

There were no changes since the last annual audit. The following findings were updated with minor changes reflecting the current audit's evaluation and confirming conformance of the certificate holder.

The forest management of group members aims at maintaining, enhancing or restoring natural conditions in natural forests.

The following implementation of measures to obtain natural conditions in natural forests were observed during the field audit:

- a. Diversity of the forest - stand prescriptions and tree marking (red pine plantations on old farmland restored to tolerant hardwood)
- b. Successional stages - thinning and selection harvest to create un-even aged forest, tree marking in accordance to appropriate age class distributions
- c. Distribution of age classes - tree marking according to age class targets
- d. Diversity of forest structures - protection of wildlife trees and snag trees, along with tree marking balanced to full of age distributions
- e. Connectivity - buffers and conservation zones
- f. Appropriate disturbance patters - selection harvests averaging 30% removal on all sites visited.

FMPs contain quantitative short to mid-term objectives for maintaining or restoring natural conditions in natural forests. For example, gradual removal of red pine plantations through thinning and selective harvest to restore the forest to its natural condition was observed on many managed lots during this audit. The implementation of the FMP has been verified through the prescriptions and field visits.

SOP 1.5 provides the framework of Area of Concern (AOC) prescriptions for multiple habitat values. The implementation of these procedures or additional procedures by forest managers and members through prescriptions was observed in the field. These measures include the implementation of buffer zones and restrictions to harvest, like it was observed during this audit with protection around identified habitat during pre-harvest inventories or beginning of operations (buffer around fox den and hawk's nest). Species that benefit from these measures include ginseng, fern plots and white-tailed deer.

SOP 2.0 is used by EOFG as its strategic management plan and includes measures to minimize soil erosion and loss of productive area. Most woodlots under this certificate exist in rural and semi-urban areas, there is a long established public road network. Hence, forest managers have a very limited influence on most of the aspects of this indicator. For roads developed for the forest management activities of this certificate, EOFG oversees the planning, development and maintenance of these roads. Roads that were visited during this audit were part of an existing network of utility roads or trails and did not show any sign of erosion or damage to the forest (soil, trees and watercourses). Forest managers from the County Forests demonstrated taking good measures to prevent the illegal use of the trail system by ATV and other motorized vehicles.

SOP 1.5 provides directives for AOC prescriptions for riparian and wetland buffer zones, protection of seasonal watercourses and sensitive sites. Planning low-intensity harvesting minimizes impacts to seasonal watercourses and soil, harvesting that occurs mostly during the winter. Prescriptions reviewed and field observations confirmed that forest managers were implementing best management practices pertaining to the protection of soils, water quality and sensitive sites. No issues were observed during this audit.

The post-inspection harvest forms used by the forest managers and the do-forms used by the group manager allow for monitoring of forest operations for the respect of best management practices.

Partial cuts and clearcut requirements for residual structure are described in SOP 1.5. Though, most of the cuts done on the lots included in the certificate are selection harvests and commercial thinning with removal rates of 35% of the prescribed area or less. The analysis of FMP and prescriptions of sites visited confirmed that sufficient residual structures were left to serve their ecological functions.

SOP 2.0 is used by EOFG as its strategic management plan and includes measures to minimize soil erosion and loss of productive area. Measures are taken by forest managers to prioritize the use of already unproductive areas. This was directly observed on lots managed by County Forests and private woodlots.

SOP 3.0 includes minimum operational standards for rutting and damage to residual trees. Implementation of SOP 2.0 procedures in regards to limiting impacts on soil damage, productive forest areas, aquatic habitats and sensitive sites such as HCVF, AOC and water crossings was observed on site. The field audit of harvested sites showed that forest managers are implementing measures to minimize rutting to more-than-acceptable standards. Operations are also planned during periods (ex. winter, summer) where damage to the soils by machinery are minimal. Harvesting inspections allow for the monitoring of potential damage, which is documented in post-harvest inspections forms if it ever occurs.

The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion

<b>Criterion 6.4 Protection of representative samples of existing ecosystems</b>					
Conformance		Nonconformance	X	NCR #(s)	<b>NCR 01/18</b>
Finding (strength/weakness)	The context of protection area requirements on the EOFG FMUs with a majority of small privately-owned lands and community forests presents a limited scope for addressing the requirements of this criterion. Indicators 6.4.1 – 6.4.4 do not apply				

	<p>to SLIMF properties. Past audits have found conformance through the protection of special sites and designated protection zones on community forests to meet the intent of the standard. (6.4.1, 6.4.2, 6.4.3, 6.4.4).</p> <p>However, the community forests (not qualified as SLIMF) have not properly documented gaps in the representative completeness of protected areas in the appropriate ecological unit(s) contained on the community forests. Hence, it is not clear to the auditor if there are gaps or not in the appropriate ecological units (6.4.1).</p> <p>Moreover, since the identification of gaps is not clearly documented, the auditor was not able to determine the need for candidate protected areas (6.4.2). Finally, no evidence was provided to demonstrate that there was cooperation of interested parties and qualified experts in carrying out a gap analysis or identification of candidate protected areas (6.4.3).</p> <p><u>Evidence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interviews</li> <li>- Forest Management Plans</li> </ul> <p>The <b>NCR 01/18</b> is issued.</p>				
<b>Criterion 6.5 Protection against damage to soils, residual forest and water resources during operations</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/ weakness)	<p>The EOFG continues to use well established SOPs that address environmental impact at a level at or beyond Provincial guidelines. SOP 1.5 and its AOC prescription table, SOP 2.0 on Access, and SOP 3.0 on Harvesting Guidelines directly address the requirements of Criterion 6.1.</p> <p>Start-up checklists and harvest inspection reports were reviewed for each of the active harvests observed during this audit. In all cases the contractor signatures were present to verify the communication of all relevant SOPs and harvest requirements.</p> <p>The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion</p>				
<b>Criterion 6.6 Chemical pest management</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	<p>SOP 4.0 clearly describes a forest management approach that avoids the use of pesticides. Highly hazardous pesticides are not used.</p> <p>Chemical pesticide use is generally limited to spot or localized applications for the control of invasive species in a manner that meets the intent of indicator 6.6.3.</p> <p>The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion</p>				
<b>Criterion 6.7 Use and disposal of chemicals, containers, liquid and solid non-organic wastes</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	<p>SOP 6.0 addresses the safe handling, storage, and disposal of chemicals, liquid and solid non-organic wastes including fuel and oil. (6.7.1)</p> <p>Provincially mandated recycling programs are in place for used oil and plastic containers. (6.7.2)</p> <p>Requirements for addressing leaking equipment and spills are outlined clearly in SOP 6.0. (6.7.3, 6.7.4)</p> <p>The auditor did not witness spills or observe machinery spilling during the audit.</p> <p>The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion</p>				
<b>Criterion 6.8 Use of biological control agents and genetically modified organisms</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding	<p>No use of biological control agents has occurred during the audit period. (6.8.1)</p> <p>There was some discussion of potential trials planned in the near future on the use</p>				

(strength/weakness)	of parasitic wasps to control the Emerald Ash Borer. Such use is not likely to pose a concern with the requirements of this Criterion. (6.8.1) Genetically modified organisms are not used in areas under the EOFG certificate. (6.8.2) The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion			
<b>Criterion 6.9 The use of exotic species</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	EOFG group members do not use invasive species. SOP 1.6 describes procedures to limit their invasion in case such species are observed on the members' sites. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion.			
<b>Criterion 6.10 Forest conversion to plantations or non-forest land uses</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	There are no conversions to plantation in any of the forests under the scope of the EOFG certificate. During the field audit multiple sites were observed with a deliberate management approach based on restoring planted areas to natural forest conditions. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion			
<b>PRINCIPLE 7: Management plan</b>				
<b>Criterion 7.1 Management plan requirements</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	SOP 1.1 – The Forest Management Plan Standard Operating Procedure for planning was written using the latest FSC Standard. EOFG requires from Community Forests to provide a forest management plan and documents relevant to elements listed in Annex D of the FSC Standard. Requirements are also described for SLIMF in regards to the Standard. EOFG or a qualified professional identified by EOFG reviews each FMP for approval. EOFG keeps each FMP on file and online in its database. All EOFG plans for private woodlots comply with Ontario Managed Forest Tax Incentive Plan requirements. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion			
<b>Criterion 7.2 Management plan revision</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	SOP 1.1 stipulates that FMP must be kept current in order to incorporate results of monitoring or new scientific and technical information. For private lands, all FMP are MFTIP compliant, which requires a ten-year renewal period. For the Community Forests, the FMP have a 20-year renewal period, with 5-year operational plans incorporating most recent information in regards to the requirements of the criterion. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion			
<b>Criterion 7.3 Training and supervision of forest workers</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	Tracking of training is the responsibility of the Forest Managers and is audited by the Group Manager. EOFG ensures that forest workers receive adequate training and supervision with signed agreements with all of its group members. These agreements are based on the requirements of Policy 1.3 – Minimum Requirements Policy. These requirements for training and supervision of forest workers are listed in different documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Landowner Requirements</li> <li>- Landowner Group Coordinator (LGC) Requirements</li> <li>- Landowner Group Administrator (LGA) Requirements</li> <li>- Forest Manager Requirements</li> </ul>			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Forest Management Plan Author Requirements</li> <li>- Forest Operations Prescription (FOP) Writer Requirements</li> <li>- Tree Marker Requirements</li> <li>- Professional Logger and/or Skidder Operator Requirements</li> <li>- Pesticide Applicator and/or Operator Requirements</li> <li>- Community Forest Manager Requirements</li> <li>- Group Chain of Custody Participant Requirements</li> </ul> <p>Although no operations were undergoing during this year's field visits, field observations of recent harvests showed that the contractors operate as to minimize damage to the environment, are able to adequately assess the log quality/destination, are implementing the FMP, are implementing an ecosystem-based management and respect the identification of SAR by the forest managers. An interview with the contractor of Moggie Valley proved sufficient knowledge of operating procedures from forest managers in regards to these elements.</p> <p>EOFG field auditing records did not identify any issues for the elements cited above, for health &amp; safety requirements and the use &amp; handling of pesticides. Since the last audit, EOFG performed training for the forest managers of new members (GSCA, Halton, SVCA) to ensure adequate understanding and implementing requirements understanding of the FSC standard. Meeting records from the Certification Working Groups indicate that training matters (ex. tree marking courses) for forest owners and members were discussed and planned.</p> <p>There was no indication of retribution for disagreements about the plan implementation by forest workers.</p> <p>The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion</p>			
<b>Criterion 7.4 Public availability of the management plan elements</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	All plans are available through the Group Manager. Some Community Forests also offer a summary of their FMP on their website. For private lands, confidentiality concerns restrict the distribution of information. The discretion of the Group Manager is key to fair application of this indicator. EOFG provides a summary of non-confidential information for the members in their group. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion			
<b>PRINCIPLE 8: Monitoring and evaluation</b>				
<b>Criterion 8.1 Frequency, intensity and consistency of monitoring</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)
Finding (strength/weakness)	The group is composed of County Forests of more than 1000 ha and private woodlots of less than 1000 ha managed by their owners. Considering the scale and intensity of each type of forest, each document must monitor the elements indicated in indicator 8.1.1 at an appropriate degree. The MFTIP program for private woodlot owners requires annual monitoring of operations, if they occur. For each County Forests, forest managers provide annual reports of activities to the group manager, which include information such as volumes harvested, operations in HCV, complaints, changes to staff, if pesticides were used, etc. As stated in the group's Procedures and Policies Manual, adaptation to monitoring results is required from forest managers. The County Forests participate to the MNRF Growth and Yield Program, for which the results are available to group for monitoring and improvement purposes. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion			
<b>Criterion 8.2 Research and data collection for monitoring</b>				
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)

Finding (strength/weakness)	The group manager and its members collect data to monitor the yield of forests products harvested annually, again depending on the scale and intensity of the operations (MFTIP vs County Forests). County Forests provide annual reports to the group manager about volumes harvested by species and product. Such reports were reviewed by the auditors and met the requirements of the indicator. The FM database is used during the group manager's field visits to document important changes to the certified area and operations completed. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion				
<b>Criterion 8.3 Chain of custody</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	The P&P manual documents the procedure to identify FSC-certified products leaving the management unit so that the forest of origin can be identified. The COC appendix describes this in detail. Bills of lading completed since the last audit were reviewed by the audit team and found to be in conformance. The chain of custody system and procedures are evaluated annually by the auditors (Appendix V). The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion				
<b>Criterion 8.4 Incorporation of monitoring results into the management plan</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	This is a requirement of the P&P Manual (Planning SOP). Forest managements plans are reviewed each 10 years, for private woodlots (MFTIP) and County Forests. Discussions with EOFG forest managers and members indicated that they actively were looking for means of improving their forestry. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion				
<b>Criterion 8.5 Publicly available summary of monitoring</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	EOFG publishes an annual report on a wide range of subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>total forested area for those seeking FSC certification</li> <li>revenue generated from timber sales (Forest Manager)</li> <li>annual harvested area</li> <li>annual harvested volume</li> </ul> For public lands (County Forests), summary reports are available online or on request. The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion				
<b>PRINCIPLE 9: High Conservation Value Forests</b>					
<b>Criterion 9.1 Evaluation to determine high conservation value attributes</b>					
Conformance		Nonconformance	X	NCR #(s)	<b>NCR 02/18</b>
Finding (strength/weakness)	EOFG is the leader in HCV reporting for private land organizations. Their database now provides an online means for managers to report to the Group manager. The checklist provides a solid and usable format for addressing HCVs by local managers. However, the new community forest added to the group in 2017 did not have a credible independent review of its HCVF assessment. Also, the new community forest member did not render the information publicly on how the stakeholder comments were addressed. <b>NCR 02/18</b> is issued.				
<b>Criterion 9.2 Consultation process</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	EOFG has a wide range of advisory groups in their structure, including those for the Counties. Access to expert opinion is available through OMNR, and other experts affiliated with EOFG.				
<b>Criterion 9.3 Measures to maintain and enhance high conservation value attributes</b>					

Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	Prescriptions for HCV management are vetted by the Group Manager, and EOFG staff, as well as by the Certification Working Group. Expert opinion is sought through the MNR, and other EOFG associates.				
<b>Criterion 9.4 Monitoring to assess effectiveness</b>					
Conformance	X	Nonconformance		NCR #(s)	
Finding (strength/weakness)	<p>EOFG has several procedures that generally outline their approach to HCV monitoring (P&amp;P Manual: HCV Policy 1.7, SOP 1.7, SOP 5.0). The emphasis of HCV monitoring includes assessing impacts of harvesting in or near HCV areas. Thus, implementation of monitoring is focused on site visits pre and/or post-harvest.</p> <p>County Forest managers report annually to the group manager on changes or impacts on HCVF: details regarding new HCV areas, as well as detailing any harvest activity that had taken place in HCV areas. This is meant to alert the Group Manager to follow up on the areas where new HCVs have been identified or where planned activities may have an impact on HCVs.</p> <p>Note that the monitoring measure does not specifically need to be conducted every year, but rather that the monitoring program (however defined) is reviewed by group members annually and the required monitoring measures (however defined) are implemented as described.</p> <p>The organization has demonstrated continued conformance with this criterion</p>				
<b>PRINCIPLE 10:Plantations</b>					
<b>Principle Applicability Notes:</b>					
<p>The auditors reviewed all of the FMPs in the group to consider whether any had objectives that were consistent with plantation economics. All members are required to have a balanced set of objectives.</p> <p>There are no “fibre only” objectives in the EOFG group.</p> <p>Two situations could lead to the requirement to evaluate P10:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Red pine plantations where there are repeated planting of red pine for fibre purposes. Although red pine occurs, it is used as a nurse crop to reintroduce natural forest cover on sensitive sites. Repeated plantings of red pine to the exclusion of more natural vegetation would require application of P10.</li> <li>2) Tolerant hardwood clear-cuts which are solely for fibre production, and are above the natural disturbance level which does create some even aged stands as part of the normal mix across the landscape.</li> </ol> <p>Neither of these situations have occurred to date.</p> <p>On this basis the forestry activities in the EOFG is not considered plantation management in the FSC sense of the word. Principle 10 is therefore not applicable.</p>					

### 3.3. Identified nonconformances and Nonconformity Reports (NCRs)

A nonconformance is a discrepancy or gap identified during the assessment between some aspect of the FME's management system and one or more of the requirements of the forest stewardship standard. Depending on the severity of the nonconformance the assessment team differentiates between major and minor nonconformances.

- **Major nonconformance** results where there is a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the relevant FSC criterion. A number of minor nonconformances against one requirement may be considered to have a cumulative effect, and therefore be considered a major nonconformance.
- **Minor nonconformance** is a temporary, unusual or non-systematic nonconformance, for which the effects are limited.

Major nonconformances must be corrected **before** the certificate can be issued. While minor nonconformances do not prohibit issuing the certificate, they must be addressed within the given timeframe to maintain the certificate.

Each nonconformance is addressed by the audit team by issuing a nonconformity report (NCR). NCRs are requirements that candidate operations must agree to, and which must be addressed, within the given timeframe of a maximum of one year period.

<b>NCR#:</b>	01/18	<b>NC Classification:</b>	Major	Minor X
Standard & Requirement:	Rainforest Alliance/SmartWood Locally adapted Standards for Assessing Forest Management in the Great Lakes/Saint-Lawrence region, Indicator 6.4.1, 6.4.2 and 6.4.3			
Report Section:	Appendix II, section 6.4			
<b>Description of Nonconformance and Related Evidence:</b>				
<p>This NCR applies to all the non-SLIMF group members:</p> <p>The context of protection area requirements on the EOFG FMUs with a majority of small privately-owned lands and community forests presents a limited scope for addressing the requirements of this criterion. Indicators 6.4.1 – 6.4.4 do not apply to SLIMF properties. Past audits have found conformance through the protection of special sites and designated protection zones on community forests to meet the intent of the standard. (6.4.1, 6.4.2, 6.4.3, 6.4.4).</p> <p>However, the community forests (not qualified as SLIMF) have not properly documented gaps in the representative completeness of protected areas in the appropriate ecological unit(s) contained on the community forests. Hence, it is not clear to the auditor if there are gaps or not in the appropriate ecological units (6.4.1).</p> <p>Moreover, since the identification of gaps is not clearly documented, the auditor was not able to determine the need for candidate protected areas (6.4.2).</p> <p>Finally, no evidence was provided to demonstrate that there was cooperation of interested parties and qualified experts in carrying out a gap analysis or identification of candidate protected areas (6.4.3).</p> <p><u>Evidence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interviews</li> <li>- Forest Management Plans</li> </ul>				
Corrective Action Request:	<p>Organization shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the nonconformance.</p>			



<b>Timeline for Conformance:</b>	12 months following the report finalization date
Evidence Provided by Organization:	PENDING
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	PENDING
<b>NCR Status:</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
Comments (optional):	

<b>NCR#:</b>	02/18	<b>NC Classification:</b>	Major	Minor X
Standard & Requirement:	Rainforest Alliance/SmartWood Locally adapted Standards for Assessing Forest Management in the Great Lakes/Saint-Lawrence region, Indicator 9.1.2 and 9.1.3			
Report Section:	Appendix II, section 9.1			
<b>Description of Nonconformance and Related Evidence:</b>				
This NCR applies to all the non-SLIMF group members:  The non-SLIMF group members were not able to provide evidence of a credible external review of their HCVF assessments (9.1.2). Hence, the members were not able to demonstrate that a summary of how the concerns raised during the review process were addressed (9.1.3).				
Corrective Action Request:	Organization shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above. Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the nonconformance.			
<b>Timeline for Conformance:</b>	12 months following the report finalization date			
Evidence Provided by Organization:	-Bruce County HCV report review -Link to the summary of the review			
Findings for Evaluation of Evidence:	The review and link to public documents are considered conformant by the auditor. However, no other review was provided for the other non-SLIMF members. The NCR is still open.			
<b>NCR Status:</b>	<b>OPEN</b>			
Comments (optional):				

### 3.4. Conformance with applicable nonconformity reports (Reassessments Only)

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

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

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

### 3.5. Observations

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

None issued

## Certification Recommendation

Based on a thorough review of FME performance in the field, consultation with stakeholders, analysis of management documentation or other audit evidence the Rainforest Alliance assessment team recommends the following:

<b>Certification requirements met;</b> Upon acceptance of NCR(s) issued above	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Certification requirements not met</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subject to conformance with minor NCRs (if applicable), the FME has demonstrated that their described system of management is being implemented consistently over the whole forest areas covered by the scope of the evaluation	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:	
FME's management system, if implemented as described and subject to conformance with minor NCRs (if applicable), is capable of ensuring that all the requirements of the certification standards are met across the scope of the certificate	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:	
Issues identified as controversial or hard to evaluate.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Comments:	
Description of activities taken by the FME prior to the certification decision to correct major or minor nonconformity(s) identified during the assessment.	
The manager provided an external review of Bruce County's HCVF Report for <b>NCR 02/18</b> . He also provided a link to Bruce County's HCVF report and how the review comments were addressed.	
Certificate type recommended:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forest management and Chain of custody <input type="checkbox"/> Forest management only (no CoC)

Once certified, the FME will be audited annually on-site and required to remain in conformance with the FSC principles and criteria as further defined by regional guidelines developed by Rainforest Alliance or the FSC in order to maintain certification. The FME will also be required to fulfill the corrective actions as described below. Experts from Rainforest Alliance will review continued forest management performance and conformance with the corrective action requests described in this report, annually during scheduled and/or random audits.

## 4. CLIENT SPECIFIC BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 4.1 Ownership and land tenure description (legal and customary)

EOMF (commonly known as EOMF – Eastern Ontario Model Forest) operates in a largely privately owned forest area where the properties have become seriously fragmented over time. Within the larger context of eastern Ontario, about 12% of forested lands are Crown (public) lands and about 88% are private lands (opposite of Ontario tenure in total). Owners have freehold property, and are expected to pay property tax.

EOMF has a number of community forests included in their FSC certificate. EOMF has contract arrangement with the several municipal governments to follow the FSC standard. This is the part of Ontario which has been settled for the longest period by European immigrants; consequently property boundaries have been established for a long time.

### 4.2 Legislative and government regulatory context

Natural resources are the mandate of the Provincial governments in Canada, however on private lands there is very little regulatory control that relates specifically to trees or forest. Owners have the right to do as they see fit in most areas, with the exception of some municipalities which have local “tree bylaws”. As long as owners and managers do not impact fisheries, and general laws related to environmental controls, there is little that applies directly to forestry. Illegal activities related to resources in Ontario are generally monitored by Conservation Officers employed by the Ministry of Natural Resources. Enforcement activities mostly relate to wildlife issues. In some cases where theft occurs of trees, private property laws come into effect and the Provincial Police can become involved. Although theft is not unusual, it is not so widespread as to be regarded as a big problem. In this context, EOMF provides an independent manager and has made a good headway in the last 15 years as the FSC manager in the area.

### 4.3 Environmental Context

The immediate EOMF area covers much of eastern Ontario and includes the Counties of Lanark, Leeds, Grenville, Dundas, Stormont, Bruce, Glengarry, Prescott and Russell, the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton and the lands of the Mohawk community of Akwesasne. In addition, the EOMF management system has appealed to a wider area and they have included the City of Oakville (near Toronto), Grey County Forest & Forest Managers from central Ontario. EOMF began building a certified land base starting with a pilot project in Lanark County. The program has developed significantly that now includes multiple private owners, community forests and a conservation organization

Most of the EOMF area, especially along the St. Lawrence River, was inhabited by what is known as the Eastern Woodlands Farmers who were the only native people in Canada to live primarily by farming. Areas in the northwest portion of the EOMF were inhabited by the Eastern Woodlands Algonquins. Cornwall and the surrounding area along the southern reaches of the EOMF are one of the oldest settled areas in English Canada, founded by loyalist soldiers in 1784.

Forestry had its beginning with the square timber trade in the early 1800's and later the timber industry replaced the fur trade and altered the forested landscape; today most of the original forests are gone due to past logging and agricultural practices. EOMF Information Report # 42 describes the reduction in the forest cover due to human settlement by the 1880's. The forest cover within the EOMF has increased slightly and at present is about 34%. Within the area there are about 20 species found that have been classes as vulnerable, threatened or endangered.

Of the forested area in the EOMF, about 12% is Crown lands and about 88% private lands. About 2% of the landbase is currently protected. Additional areas have been identified for protection as ANSI's (these are areas that have a natural value of significance recognized on the site). According to Chapman and Putnam (1984) the physiography of the area includes precambrian shield overlain with shallow till, precambrian shield with clay deposits (Leeds Knobs and Flats). These represent the areas underlain by the Canadian Shield. The interface between the shield and the St. Lawrence River are underlain by paleozoic bedrock and are characterized by limestone plains, till plains, clay plains, till and clay plains

(Lancaster flats), sand plains, and clay and sand plains with drumlins.

The forest region falls completely within the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Forest Region. The forests are dominated by sugar maple and beech, red maple, yellow birch, basswood, white ash, large tooth aspen, red and bur oak with some scattered white oak, red ash. Rock elm, blue beech and bitternut hickory. Poorly drained soils will support Black ash, black spruce and some eastern white cedar. On the acidic soils or shallower soils eastern hemlock, eastern white pine and white spruce are common. The drier soils will support white and red pine and red oak.

There are two major types of natural disturbance that have occurred in this forest type and they are attributed to weather – ice storm damage or wind damage and less common but more intense disturbances of crown fires. The uneven aged – tolerant hardwoods of the area adapt quickly to the weather type disturbances and quickly grow to replace the damaged area. Where there has been greater disturbance due to fire and /or clearing of the forest, even aged stands of poplar and white birch now occur.

#### 4.4 Socioeconomic Context

In 1999, the EOMF created a Certification Working Group (CWG) to investigate the certification of private land in the Eastern Ontario Model Forest area. This was a direct response to stagnating economic conditions for forest management in the region. Membership in this working group included EOMF staff and board members, representatives for private landowners, Domtar Cornwall, the Ontario Woodlot Association, The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Canadian Forest Service. The Domtar Cornwall pulp mill closed in 2005 thus creating a space on the CWG for local forest industry representatives. At the time when the working group was established only 25% of wood processed by pulp and sawmills in eastern Ontario came from local, small woodlots, the rest is imported from outside the region. At the same time, total employment in forestry related sectors declined by 18% from 1991 to 1996 according to a study (Johnson et al., 1999) and has continued to decline since then. The EOMF CWG has created important opportunities for partnerships in the region. Woodlot owners can work with fellow certified woodlot owners to share knowledge and resources, manufacturers and retailers to create market and cost-sharing opportunities that can increase their revenues from the sale of certified forest products. The pilot project has grown substantially since its inception and is now a primary focus program of the EOMF.

An important document was created in 2007, EOMF Forest Certification Policies and Procedures Manual. This document will lead the expansion of the program and also serve as a vital resource for other groups interested in FSC Certification. Unlike private sector entities, the EOMF has a mandate to share its resources and experiences with the broader community. This is a unique position that will aid others in Ontario, Canada and around the world. The EOMF is keeping this document updated as needed.

This model has raised the profile of small scale forest management in the region, led to new market opportunities, supported partners and developed new and lasting partnerships with community forests and Aboriginal groups. The support provided by the EOMF has assisted landowners take part in FSC Certification, a process too costly for any one landowner. It has enhanced the profile of sustainable forest management on private lands in the region and help support local primary and secondary forest industries. The EOMF holds numerous workshops on topics ranging from tree identification to native values. The EOMF is also dedicated to exploring new ideas and opportunities with current and potential partners.

#### 4.5 Workers

##### Number of workers including employees, part-time and seasonal workers:

Total workers	2 workers (provide detail below)	
• Local Full time employees (a:b)	1 Male	1 Female
• Non - Local Full time employees (c:d)	Male	Female
• Local Part time workers (e:f)	Male	Female
• Non- local part time workers (g:h)	Male	Female
Worker access to potable water on the work site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Full time employees making more than \$2 a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

day		
Number of serious accidents (past 12 month period)	None	
Number of fatalities (past 12 month period)	None	

## APPENDIX I: Public summary of the management plan

(NOTE: To be prepared by the client prior to assessment, Information verified by assessment team)

<b>1. Main objectives of the forest management are:</b>	
Primary priority:	Maintain the integrity of the forest ecosystem by active management and gain multiple values from the forest including environmental, social and economic value.
Secondary priority:	Education and information sharing.
Other priorities:	; ;
Forest composition:	
Tolerant hardwood, white and red pine typical of the GLSL forest region	
Description of Silvicultural system(s) used:	
Tolerant hardwood, white and red pine typical of the GLSL forest region	
<b>2. Silvicultural system</b>	<b>% of forest under this management</b>
Even aged management	20 %
Clearcut (clearcut size range )	1 %
Shelterwood	19 %
Uneven aged management	80 %
Individual tree selection	72 %
Group selection (group harvested of less than 1 ha in size)	8 %
Other types of management (explain)	ha
<b>3. Forest Operations</b>	
3.1 Harvest methods and equipment used:	Primarily mechanical
3.2 Estimate of maximum sustainable yield for main commercial species:	Vaires based on group members
3.3 Explanation of the assumptions (e.g. silvicultural) upon which estimates are based and reference to the source of data (e.g. inventory data, permanent sample plots, yield tables) upon which estimates are based upon.	
All forests in the Program have a FMP and when active harvests take place, relevant inventory information is gathered.	
3.4 FME organizational structure and management responsibilities from senior management to operational level (how is management organized, who controls and takes decisions, use of contractors, provisions for training, etc.).	
See EOMF Organizational Chart.	
3.5 Structure of forest management units (division of forest area into manageable units etc.).	
Community and private forest units.	
3.6 Monitoring procedures (including yield of all forest products harvested, growth rates, regeneration, and forest condition, composition/changes in flora and fauna, environmental and social impacts of forest management, costs, productivity and efficiency of forest management).	
Regular monitoring of active and inactive properties – Excel spread sheet provided to the audit team	
3.7 Management strategies for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species.	
In accordance with provincial law.	
3.8 Environmental safeguards implemented, e.g. buffer zones for streams, riparian areas, seasonal operation, chemical storage, etc.	

Use appropriate guidebooks and BMP to manage the value.

Other Sections may be added by the FME



## **APPENDIX IV-a: Certified Group Member/FMU List**

(Insert additional rows as necessary for groups with more than 15 members).

- 1. Total # members in the certified pool: 132**
- 2. Total area in Current Pool (ha. or acres): 83546.9 ha**

Full and updated list of members on file at RA.

# APPENDIX IX: FME map (optional)

