

**Forest Management and Stump-to-Forest Gate Chain-of-Custody
Certification Evaluation Report for the:
Massachusetts Woodland Cooperative
Conducted under auspices of the SCS Forest Conservation Program
SCS is an FSC Accredited Certification Body**

**CERTIFICATION REGISTRATION NUMBER
SCS-FM/COC-00107G**

**Submitted to:
Massachusetts Woodland Cooperative LLC
1 Sugarloaf St.
South Deerfield, MA 01373**

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Date of Field Audit: 2/18 – 2/19/2008

**Date of Report: - 4/7/08 Draft
Updated: April, 2010 (See section 6.1)**

Certified: April 14, 2008

By:

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Organization of the Report

This report of the results of our evaluation is divided into two sections. Section A provides the public summary and background information that is required by the Forest Stewardship Council. This section is made available to the general public and is intended to provide an overview of the evaluation process, the management programs and policies applied to the forest, and the results of the evaluation. Section A will be posted on the SCS website (www.scs-certified.com) no less than 30 days after issue of the certificate. Section B contains more detailed results and information for the use of Massachusetts Woodland Cooperative.

FOREWORD

Scientific Certification Systems, a certification body accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), was retained by The Massachusetts Woodland Cooperative to conduct a certification evaluation of its members managed lands in the State of Massachusetts. Under the FSC/SCS certification system, forest management operations meeting international standards of forest stewardship can be certified as “well managed”, thereby enabling use of the FSC endorsement and logo in the marketplace.

In February 2008, Daniel Stepanauskas, Forester was empanelled by SCS to conduct the evaluation. The SCS forester collected and analyzed written materials, conducted interviews and completed a 2 day field and office audit of the subject property as part of the certification evaluation. Upon completion of the fact-finding phase of the evaluation, the empanelled forester determined conformance to the 56 FSC Criteria in order to determine whether award of re-certification was warranted.

This report is issued in support of a recommendation to award FSC-endorsed certification to The Massachusetts Woodland Cooperative LLC for the management of coop enrolled lands in the State of Massachusetts. The MWC meets the FSC criteria as a “Group of SLIMF” (Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests) and was assessed as such in this re-certification report.

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SECTION A- PUBLIC SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 FSC Data Request

Applicant entity	Massachusetts Woodland Cooperative
Contact person	Susan Campbell, Executive Director
Address	1 Sugarloaf St. So. Deerfield, MA 01373
Telephone	413-397-8800
Fax	413-665-7101
E-mail	susan@masswoodlands.coop
Certificate Number	SCS-FM/COC-00107G
Certificate/Expiration Date	4/14/2008 - 4/14/2013
Certificate Type	Group
Group Members	47
Number of FMU's	47
Number of FMUs in scope that are	
less than 100 ac in area	36
100 - 1000 ac in area	34
1000 - 10 000 ac in area	
more than 10 000 ac in area	
Location of certified forest area	West/central Massachusetts
Latitude	
Longitude	
Forest zone	Temperate
Total forest area in scope of certificate which is included in FMUs that:	
are less than 100 ha in area	6,697 ac
are between 100 ha and 1000 ha in area	1,360 ac
Total forest area in scope of certificate which is:	
privately managed ¹	8057 acres
Number of forest workers (including contractors) working in forest within scope of certificate	3 (2 part-time)
Area of forest and non-forest land protected from commercial harvesting of timber and managed primarily for conservation objectives	0
Area of forest protected from commercial harvesting of timber and managed primarily for the production of NTFPs or services	
Area of forest classified as 'high conservation value forest'	ac +riparian areas of various widths
List of high conservation values present ²	HCV 1-6
Chemical pesticides used	Kryolon, Garland 4, Escort, Roundup, Rodeo
Total area of production forest (i.e. forest from which timber may be harvested)	
Area of production forest classified as 'plantation' for the purpose of calculating the Annual Accreditation Fee (AAF)	0

¹ The category of 'private management' includes state owned forests that are leased to private companies for management, e.g. through a concession system.

² High conservation values should be classified following the numbering system given in the ProForest High Conservation Value Forest Toolkit (2003) available at www.ProForest.net

Area of production forest regenerated primarily by replanting ³	0
Area of production forest regenerated primarily by natural regeneration	100%
List of main commercial timber and non-timber species included in scope of certificate (botanical name and common trade name)	<p><u>Major:</u> White Pine – <i>Pinus strobus</i> Eastern Hemlock – <i>Tsuga canadensis</i> Red Pine – <i>Pinus resinosa</i> Sugar Maple – <i>Acer saccharum</i> Yellow Birch – <i>Betula alleghaniensis</i> American Beech – <i>Fagus grandifolia</i> Red Maple – <i>Acer rubrum</i> White Ash – <i>Fraxinus americana</i> White (Paper) Birch – <i>Betula papyrifera</i> Quaking Aspen (Poplar) – <i>Populus tremuloides</i> Northern Red Oak – <i>Quercus rubra</i> Black Cherry – <i>Prunus serotina</i> Black Birch- <i>Betula lenta</i></p> <p><u>Minor:</u> Shagbark & Pignut Hickory .- <i>Hickoria ovata</i> & <i>glabra</i> American Basswood – <i>Tilia americana</i> Bigtooth Aspen – <i>Populus grandidentata</i> Black Locust- <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> Butternut- <i>Juglans cineria</i></p>
Approximate annual allowable cut (AAC) of commercial timber	2,861,000 bd ft This figures includes both sawlog and pulp volumes
Approximate annual commercial production of non-timber forest products included in the scope of the certificate, by product type	n/a
List of product categories included in scope of joint FM/COC certificate and therefore available for sale as FSC-certified products (include basic description of product - e.g. round wood, pulp wood, sawn timber, kiln-dried sawn timber, chips, resin, non-timber forest products, etc.)	Sawlogs Veneer logs Pulp wood/fuelwood

Conversion Table English Units to Metric Units

Length Conversion Factors

To convert from	to	multiply by
mile (US Statute)	kilometer (km)	1.609347
foot (ft)	meter (m)	0.3048
yard (yd)	meter (m)	0.9144

Area Conversion Factors

To convert from	to	multiply by
square foot (sq ft)	square meter (sq m)	0.09290304
acre (ac)	hectare (ha)	0.4047

Volume Conversion Factors

Volume

³ The area is the *total* area being regenerated primarily by planting, *not* the area which is replanted annually. NB this area may be different to the area defined as a 'plantation' for the purpose of calculating the Annual Accreditation Fee (AAF) or for other purposes.

To convert from	to	multiply by
cubic foot (cu ft)	cubic meter (cu m)	0.02831685
gallon (gal)	liter	4.546

1 acre	= 0.404686 hectares
1,000 acres	= 404.686 hectares
1 board foot	= 0.00348 cubic meters
1,000 board feet	= 3.48 cubic meters
1 cubic foot	= 0.028317 cubic meters
1,000 cubic feet	= 28.317 cubic meters

Breast height = 1.4 meters, or 4 1/2 feet, above ground level

Although 1,000 board feet is theoretically equivalent to 2.36 cubic meters, this is true only when a board foot is actually a piece of wood with a volume 1/12 of cubic foot. The conversion given here, 3.48 cubic meters, is based on the cubic volume of a log 16 feet long and 15 inches in diameter inside bark at the small end.

1.2 Management Context

As a private forest enterprise located in Massachusetts, USA, management of the Massachusetts Woodlands Cooperative lands are subject to a host of local, state and federal regulations. The principal regulations of greatest relevance to forest managers are associated with the following statutes:

Pertinent Regulations at the Federal Level:

Endangered Species Act
 Clean Water Act (Section 404 wetland protection)
 Occupational Safety and Health Act
 National Historic Preservation Act
 Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act
 Americans with Disabilities Act
 U.S. ratified treaties, including CITES

Pertinent Regulations at State and Local Level:

Forestland Tax Law Ch. 61
 Wetlands and Rivers Protection Acts
 Forest Cutting Practices Act
 The Slash Law
 Massachusetts Endangered Species Act

1.2.1 Environmental Context

Mass Woodlands Cooperative managed forests are located in west central Massachusetts, USA. Overall, this region can be described primarily as **oak/white pine** and northern hardwood forests. These forests are heterogeneous and shaped by soils, aspect, drainage, past management history, and natural disturbances. Glaciers have shaped the topography of the region and also determined the mosaic of soil and forest types.

Forest types range from stands containing attributes of the oak/pine type dominated here by red oak, white pine, and the northern hardwood forest type which is predominantly beech, birch, and maple. The landscape is generally composed of sloping hillsides with relatively narrow stream valleys, as well as broad rich bottomlands in the major river valleys, such as the Connecticut and the Deerfield. Characteristic mammals include white-tailed deer, black bear, red and grey fox, coyote, cottontail rabbit, porcupine, fisher, beaver, bobcat, raccoon, grey and red squirrels. Moose are becoming established in the region as they move south into western Massachusetts.

Once covered in primeval forests, the region was extensively cleared for agriculture during the 18th century. Many farmers abandoned these lands, moved west to more fertile areas, and the forests were allowed to naturally regenerate. There are remnants of old growth forests in western Massachusetts, but nearly all are on large public ownerships.

1.2.2 Socioeconomic Context

Lands enrolled in the Massachusetts Woodlands Cooperative are all located in Western Massachusetts. The region is not dependent upon a resource based economy, although there is a strong and growing interest in the use of locally grown and produced materials.

Populations within the region are generally well-educated with a number of notable colleges and universities within commuting distance of South Deerfield. There remains a population of long-term residents having a family history of working with the land, as well as recent arrivals who provide an available labor force to perform forestry related operations.

Non-industrial private forest lands dominate the landscape. Ownership patterns are a mix of long-term family ownerships, as well as, new arrivals. Both groups are generally in favor of good forest management practices such as those espoused by the Massachusetts Woodland Cooperative.

1.3 Forest Management Enterprise

1.3.1 Land Use

The cooperative is a limited liability corporation which provides oversight, organization, advice, and economic benefits to its members. All members must have forest stewardship plans which adhere to the requirements of the FSC. The cooperative seeks to assist members with the protection and enhancement of their land resources and to achieve careful economic development of their forests. MWC purchases appropriate timber sales from its members and either re-sells the logs or has them sawn into lumber which is then sold to both wholesale and retail customers.

1.3.2 Land Outside Scope of Certification

All member forestlands are required to be enrolled in the FSC certified land base of the Massachusetts Woodlands Coop.

1.4 Management Plan

1.4.1 Management Objectives

The objectives of the coop are to ensure that member lands are sustainably managed within the auspices of the FSC and to provide members with the highest rate of return, including income and the maintenance or augmentation of the asset's value, while protecting the long-term viability of timber and non-timber resources. The coop seeks to enhance the return to members from their timber resources by selling products to the most lucrative markets. This return is improved by processing and selling finished lumber products to end users. The coop allows members to choose their own foresters from a pool of Massachusetts Licensed Professional Foresters to complete their management plans.

1.4.2 Forest Composition

Forest types within the membership acreage of the MWC include the northeastern oak/pine type (dominated here by red oak, white pine and hemlock), and on the richer sites, deciduous northern hardwood types, (dominated by beech, birch, maple, oak, black cherry, with inclusions of white ash, basswood, aspen, hemlock and white pine). High elevation sites are often dominated by red spruce and balsam fir with inclusions of hemlock, white pine, and northern hardwoods.

1.4.3 Silvicultural Systems

The silvicultural systems employed on Mass Woodlands Cooperative (hereafter referred to as MWC) membership lands is dictated by the foresters who are chosen by the members to write their forest management plans, and to continue in the management of their timber lands. In a landscape dominated by pole-sized to mature forests the predominant silvicultural systems in use on MWC forests are single tree, group selection, or shelterwood system harvests. The MWC encourages their membership to select high quality trees of preferred species for retention to maturity in well-stocked stands.

1.4.4 Management Systems

The MWC was founded in 2001, and was awarded FSC resource manager certification in 2003. The organization was formed to coalesce private landowners in western Massachusetts into a group better able to meet the needs of a market niche for locally produced wood products resulting from sustainable forest management practices. MWC seeks to achieve a local value added component to the wood products economy. Landowner members are able to choose their own foresters who agree to conduct sustainable, environmentally sensitive forestry in adherence with the FSC Principles and Criteria on their lands. MWC purchases logs to process from their member's lands, and subcontracts the processing of the logs into flooring or lumber, which they will then sell either to an end user, or upon the open market. MWC maintains a purchasing right of first refusal for any logs cut on membership lands. MWC requires each member to have a forest management plan and to agree to be enrolled in the FSC land pool. MWC provides advice, forestry oversight, wood marketing services, FSC group certification, and a list of contractors who provide services in keeping with MWC's management principles. MWC maintains a list of preferred foresters whom they recommend to their membership for management practices.

1.4.4 Monitoring System

MWC inspects each member's land at the time of joining the Coop and plan revision, as well as pre- and post-harvest visits. All member lands are reviewed on a 10 year basis for renewal of the land's State of Massachusetts Current Use tax category.

1.4.5 Estimate of Maximum Sustainable Yield

MWC has employed the growth models for timber yields developed for the Quabbin MDC Reservoir lands to estimate their AAC. This volume calculation model is conservative as the site index in the western portion of Massachusetts is on average higher than that in the Quabbin region.

1.4.7 Estimated, Current and Projected Production

Yearly growth: 2,232,709 board feet. Harvest rate: 119,000bd ft 2006
267,000bd ft 2007

The harvest level is not scheduled to exceed 15 % of net growth during the next year.

1.4.8 Chemical Pesticide Use

Chemical pesticides are rarely used and are primarily utilized for the control of invasive plants and in the management of Christmas tree plantations which exist on a small scale in former pastures

2.0 GUIDELINES/STANDARDS EMPLOYED

As the applicant forest property is located in the Northeastern United States, the certification evaluation that is the subject of this report was conducted against the duly-endorsed FSC

Northeast Region Standard (v9.0, 2/10/05). The standard is available at the FSC-US web site (www.fscus.org) or is available, upon request, from Scientific Certification Systems (www.scscertified.com).

3.0 THE CERTIFICATION ASSESSMENT PROCESS

3.1 Assessment Dates

The main certification evaluation began with stakeholder notification in January 2008. The field visit portion of the assessment occurred February 19 – 20, 2008.

3.2 Assessment Team

Daniel Stepanauskas was the sole assessor for this assessment. Mr. Stepanauskas is the Northeast Representative for Scientific Certification Systems Forest Management Program. Mr. Stepanauskas has been a practicing forester for twenty-seven years, and is a consultant with over seven years of extensive experience in forest certification and chain-of-custody auditing in the United States and Canada. He earned his B.S. (Bachelor of Science in Forestry) from the University of New Hampshire in 1978.

3.3 Assessment Process

3.3.1 Itinerary

The field visit portion of the re-certification began on February 19 with an opening meeting at the MWC office in South Deerfield, MA. Daniel Stepanauskas met MWC's Executive Director, Susan Campbell, and Forestry Associate Emily Boss, and proceeded to review the FSC Principles and Criteria, the audit schedule, MWC's management oversight systems, and the Cooperative's structure. The auditor and MWC staff then traveled to the first three site visits to review timber harvest plans and implementation along with specific evaluation of harvesting activities that had occurred on-site.

On February 20th the auditor and staff visited two additional tracts of MWC membership lands which had been recently harvested. We then worked on the COC audit for MWC, visiting both sawmills that subcontract sawmilling activities for MWC. A closing meeting was held in the afternoon of February 20th to review concerns, and to list the data needed by the auditor to complete the re-certification process.

3.3.2 Evaluation of Management System

The process by which Scientific Certification Systems evaluated the systems employed by MWC entailed the following components:

- Empanelment of an auditor with demonstrated credentials and expertise in forest certification, auditing protocols, forest management, and wildlife management as well as a working knowledge of the forest types found in the north eastern U.S.
- Review of documents pertinent to MWC membership oversight provided to the auditor
- Consultations with key stakeholders during the assessment (subcontractors and member landowners).
- Interviews with MWC personnel
- Field reconnaissance of an array of membership forest tracts with a focus upon recent management activities

3.3.3 Selection of FMU's to Evaluate

Forest Management Units (FMUs) selected by the auditor prior to the field sessions were chosen to assess the implementation of management systems applied during recent timber harvests. The auditor reviewed a list of harvested sites, and chose visits to provide a view of recent harvest activities, along with some sites demonstrating harvests from earlier in the history of the MWC.

The selection protocol included field sites based on the need to assess certain key issues, including:

- Silvicultural systems
- Recently harvested sites
- Use of Best Management Practices
- Watercourse protection
- Wildlife management

3.3.4 Sites Visited

February 19 & 20, 2008

Opening Field Session:

- Susan Campbell, Executive Director, Emily Boss, Forestry Associate
- Discussion of MWC's business plan and their purchase of stumpage from member lands. Each member's forest management is prepared by a MA Licensed Forester and the plan is reviewed by MWC for adherence to FSC Principles and Criteria. MWC reviews harvest plans for membership lands to ensure that both MWC and FSC principles are upheld. Deficient plans are brought up to FSC's P & C Standards prior to any harvest approvals being issued by MWC.
- Discussion of wildlife management. All harvest plans are submitted to the MA Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program, which reviews harvest maps for rare, threatened, or endangered species occurrence and impact potential.
- Management plans are re-written within a 10-year period. Allowable cut is determined for all Coop properties as a whole.

Site Visits

Mark White harvest site:

This harvest encompasses an area of 10 acres, and is the final stage of a harvest which covered 56.9 acres last year. This was a closed canopy heavily stocked hemlock, white pine, mixed hardwood stand undergoing a light thinning. The harvest was marked by the forester and the trees harvested were selected from both the overstory and understory. The harvest will result in softwood regeneration in the higher basal area locations and black birch regeneration in the occasional larger openings. The landing was at the bottom of a field which was crossed by the skidder. The harvest was conducted by the Clark brothers with a cable skidder. The work was excellent with very little rutting or barking of residual trees. The harvest level was conservative, leaving stands with their composition and structure but minimally altered.

David and Gail Kielson lot.:

This harvest was conducted during the winter of 2003, and was MWC's first commercial timber sale and sawlog purchase. The sale was a white pine shelterwood harvest combined with a hardwood thinning. MWC purchased the red maple sawlogs for flooring production. The 73 acre lot has a poor site index, and a high water table. The white pine regeneration has not been as successful as planned. The harvest was conducted with a cable skidder. The harvest area was 14 acres with a relatively high volume of timber harvested, 57M bd ft of sawlogs and 111 cords. The harvest level was too high with inadequate consideration of site regeneration. [NOTE: the plan states that WP seed years are infrequent in this area and that WP regen is not a high priority since this site is better suited to grade hardwood production. Stump sprouting will likely be prolific.]

Hilltown Land Trust:

This 112 acre lot had a 16 acre timber sale conducted in 2007. The harvest was primarily a group selection, with areas of patch cuts to encourage black cherry and red oak regeneration. There were also areas of single tree selection zones in the sugar maple stands.

Two acres of beech regeneration were treated with herbicide to facilitate black cherry and red oak regeneration. Some rutting was observed on either side of a pole ford. The harvesting work was fair, although a bit sloppy in places, with uncut leaning poles, and a higher level of damage to residual trees than on other sites viewed. The lot did have difficult topography with many stone outcrops which was a contributing factor to the residual damage. There were areas within the harvest zone that were left as is, which the auditor viewed as a valuable tool for wildlife and to re-establish the diversity of the site. Wetland setbacks were generous and well within the BMP's.

William Obear Lot

On this 47 acre property we met with the landowner, and toured portions of a 10 acre harvest in a mature red oak, northern hardwood, shagbark hickory stand. The harvest was a careful single tree selection harvest which retained an overstory of high quality red oak saw-timber along with a mid-story of sugar maple, red maple and hickory. We had a favorable discussion of membership in the MWC with the landowner. He spoke highly of the relationship. The harvest was well done with next to no collateral stand damage.

Constance Talbot Lot:

We viewed a 6 acre harvest of large, biologically mature white pine and hemlock. The harvest volumes were high, with 58M bd. ft. of white pine and 20M of hemlock harvested. The harvest was carried out with a chainsaw and a forwarder. This harvest was done by a logger who is a master of his craft, with nearly no damage to the residual stand. Coarse woody debris was plentiful and well distributed. The harvest was a single tree/group selection with some patch cuts included. We viewed both a pole ford crossing and a culvert installed for the harvest. Both were done in a manner that was easily within the specifications of Massachusetts Best Management Practices. Wet areas and minor waterways were well buffered.

3.3.5 Stakeholder Consultation

Pursuant to SCS protocols, consultations with key stakeholders were an integral component of the evaluation process. Consultation took place concurrent with, and following the field evaluation. The following were the distinct purposes of the consultations:

To solicit input from affected parties as to the strengths and weaknesses of management, relative to the standard, and the nature of the interaction between the company and the surrounding communities.

To solicit input on whether the forest management operation has consulted with stakeholders, regarding identifying any high conservation value forests.

Principal stakeholder groups of relevance to this evaluation were identified based upon results from the scoping evaluation, lists of stakeholders from MWC, and additional stakeholder contacts from other sources. The following types of groups and individuals were determined to be principal stakeholders:

- MWC subcontractors
- Purchasers of logs harvested on MWC forestlands
- Local and State regulatory agency personnel

Prior to, during, and following the site evaluation, a range of stakeholders from the regional area were consulted in regard to their relationship with the Sample Company, and their views on the management of the Sample Forest. Stakeholders included FSC contact persons, government and non-government organizations involved in forest management, local citizens and groups, employees, contractors, and others. Stakeholders were contacted with a notification mailing soliciting comment and/or phone contact. Comments were received via meetings and personal interviews “face-to-face”, phone interviews (“Interview”), and through written responses. Individuals or groups not offering feedback are labeled “no response” (“NR”). Additional comments may have been received from individuals not wishing to reveal their identities.

Name	Consultation
MWC Sawmill Contractors -2	Face to face
MWC Member Landowners -1	Face to face
State of MA Service Foresters -1	Call to ask if there were concerns
Loggers working on MWC member lands -2	Interviews

3.3.5.1 Summary of Stakeholder Concerns and Perspectives and Responses from the Team Where Applicable

A summary of the comments on the standard (where applicable) and major perspectives and concerns expressed by the stakeholders that were consulted during the course of this evaluation include:

Economic Concerns

Comment/Concern	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MWC is reasonable in their forest management guidelines, and the sales provide adequate income. (logger) 	Comment Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MWC did delay payment for one job. 	Comment Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They stick with the contractual agreements they make. (contract sawmill) 	Comment Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MWC's compensation rates are fair in the eyes of contract sawmill owners. 	Comment Noted

Social Concerns

Comment/Concern	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was noted that MWC's efforts to process harvested logs locally was very good for the community. 	Enthusiastic response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No agency foresters have had problems with MWC 	Comment Noted

Environmental Concerns

Comment/Concern	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harvest levels are conservative and lead to healthy, productive forests for the future 	Beneficial for both the land and the economy.

3.4 Total Time Spent on audit

For the full certification evaluation, 2 auditor days were expended in field, ½ auditor day was needed for document review prior to the field work, **1 auditor** day were required in advanced and follow-up stakeholder consultation, and **4 auditor** days required to draft the

final report.

3.5 Process of Determining Conformance

FSC accredited forest stewardship standards consist of a three-level hierarchy, principle, then the criteria that make up that principle, then the indicators that make up each criteria. Consistent with SCS Forest Conservation Program evaluation protocols, the team collectively determines whether or not the subject forest management operation is in conformance with every applicable indicator of the relevant forest stewardship standard. Each non-conformance must be evaluated to determine whether it constitutes a major or minor non-conformance at the level of the associated criterion or sub-criterion. Not all indicators are equally important, and there is no simple numerical formula to determine whether an operation is in non-conformance. The team must use their collective judgment to assess each criterion and determine if it is in conformance. If the forest management operation is determined to be in non-conformance at the criterion level, then at least one of the indicators must be in major non-conformance.

Corrective action requests (CAR's) are issued for every instance of non-conformance. Major non-conformances trigger major CAR's and minor non-conformances trigger minor CAR's

Interpretations of Major CARs, Minor CARs and Recommendations

Major CARs: Major non-conformances, either alone or in combination with non-conformances of other indicators, result (or are likely to result) in a fundamental failure to achieve the objectives of the relevant FSC Criterion given the uniqueness and fragility of each forest resource. If major CAR's arise after an operation is certified, the timeframe for correcting these non-conformances is typically shorter than for minor CAR's. Certification is contingent on the certified operations response to the CAR within the stipulated time frame.

Minor CARs: These are corrective action requests in response to minor non-conformances, which are typically limited in scale or can be characterized as an unusual lapse in the system. Corrective actions must be closed out within a specified time period of award of the certificate.

Recommendations: These are suggestions that the audit team concludes would help the company move even further towards exemplary status. Action on the recommendations is voluntary and does not affect the maintenance of the certificate. Recommendations can be changed to CARs if performance with respect to the criterion triggering the recommendation falls into non-conformance.

4.0 RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION

Table 4.1 below, contains the evaluation team's findings as to the strengths and weaknesses of the subject forest management operation relative to the FSC Principles of forest

stewardship. The table also presents the corrective action request (car) numbers related to each principle.

Table 4.1 Notable strengths and weaknesses of the forest management enterprise relative to the P&C

Principle/Subject Area	Strengths Relative to the Standard	Weaknesses Relative to the Standard
P1: FSC Commitment and Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultations with regulatory agencies confirmed no violations have been issued to MWC ▪ Boundaries are well marked. Foresters, contractors, and landowners actively patrol properties for unauthorized, or illegal activities. ▪ MWC included a synopsis of the FSC Principles & Criteria in their official “Protocol for Green Certification”. The Protocol is sent to each member along with a “MWC LLC Operating Agreement” to be signed and returned by each group member 	
P2: Tenure & Use Rights & Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land in this region has been deeded for well over 250 years and there are no questions related to MWC clients land ownership status and their legal rights to use the forest ▪ MWC is well integrated into the communities in which they live and work. They do all of their work using local people. ▪ These responsibilities are primarily under the auspices of the member landowners, with whom MWC meets every 6 months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MWC does not have a formal dispute resolution policy.
P3: Indigenous Peoples’ Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are no known Indigenous Peoples Rights on any MWC member lands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There has been no exploration of possible rights.
P4: Community Relations & Workers’ Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employees are provided with a locally competitive salary/wage. ▪ MWC is a community based organization. All loggers, and contractors working with MWC are local people. ▪ MWC staff has spoken to UMass classes, the SAF, and have been on panels to discuss forestry issues in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MWC has not been involved with contract negotiations for logging contractors. This is the job of the consulting forester.

P5: Benefits from the Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During the auditor’s site visits, stands that were recently harvested remained well stocked with high quality over-story trees. Stocking levels were near or above the b-line. Timber sales were carefully conducted with attention paid to the protection of soils and wildlife habitats. ▪ Stakeholder interviews with the owners of the two sawmills with which MWC contracts their log sawing services showed a high level of satisfaction regarding contract sawing compensation rates. ▪ MWC produces and sells value added products, such as flooring, directly to end-users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪
P6: Environmental Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Herbicides are used on a small scale, to control invasive species, to manage Christmas tree plantations, and rarely to convert regenerating species on a small scale. Each member must report their herbicide use on a yearly basis to MWC. ▪ MWC’s members rely exclusively upon natural regeneration in their forest management activities. ▪ Most elements of habitat diversity are recognized and addressed by the consulting foresters who manage member lands. ▪ Bridges and fords viewed by the auditor were well-constructed and culverts were installed properly. ▪ To date there has been no conversion of natural forests into plantations and no conversion to non-forest use has taken place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MWC does not have a policy in place to encourage the designation of reserved lands on member properties. ▪ There is a lack of early successional habitat in the regions forests on a landscape level. MWC is aware of this and encourages their members to create forest openings. MWC member lands comprise a small percentage of the landscape forests in the region. ▪ Rutting was observed adjacent to one stream crossing, which could have been prevented by extension of a pole ford or the temporary use of slash.
P7: Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MWC reviews each plan submitted by consulting foresters for adherence to the FSC Management Plan Principles and Criteria. Plans found to be deficient are sent back to the forester for correction if any deficiencies are found to exist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The management plans contain a thorough description of timber resources and the inventory process. Fish and wildlife, soils, and non-economic resources receive considerably less discussion in the management plan. ▪ CAR 2008.1 The “Directions for the Preparation of a Management Plan to achieve Green Certification Standards”3/2007 will be amended to include the elements in CAR 2008.1

<p>P8: Monitoring & Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Massachusetts Current Use Tax Category, along with the MA Forest Stewardship Plan regulations require management plan updates every ten years. These requirements cover the majority of MWC member lands. ▪ Monitoring activities are performed before and after timber harvesting operations. The procedures include monitoring of compliance with BMPs, and management plan prescriptions. ▪ The Massachusetts Woodland Cooperative: Protocol for Green Certification, 9/14/05, states that “monitoring frequency and intensity is outlined in the landowner’s management plan”. An initial review process is conducted for any future members prior to acceptance of the property into the MWC FSC certified pool of members (all members are FSC certified). MLF licensed consulting foresters and MA Dept. of Conservation Service Foresters also periodically monitor member lands, as do the landowners themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪
<p>P9: Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HCVF are monitored by the state of MA Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program, which reviews each timber harvest site. They will locate “hotspots” of environmental concern, and can legally regulate activities in these zones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ These sites must be identified on management plans type maps with prescriptions in the forest management plan for their protection CAR 2008.2

4.2 Preconditions

N/A

4.3 Outstanding CAR's

N/A

5.0 CERTIFICATION DECISION

5.1 Certification Recommendation

As determined by the full and proper execution of the SCS *Forest Conservation Program* evaluation protocols, the evaluation team hereby recommends that the **Massachusetts Woodland Cooperative LLC** be awarded FSC re-certification as a "Well-Managed Forest" subject to the corrective action requests stated in Section 5.2. MWC has demonstrated that their system of management is capable of ensuring that all of the requirements of the Northeast Regional Standards are met over the forest area covered by the scope of the evaluation.

5.2 Corrective Action Requests- As a Result of the 2008 Re-certification the Following New CAR's are Issued.

Auditor Observation/Non-Conformity:
MWC forest management plans do not include all FSC requirements. Plans are prepared by MA Licensed Foresters. We conclude that specification of a Minor Corrective Action Request is appropriate.
CAR (minor) 2008.1:
The "Directions for the Preparation of a Management Plan to achieve Green Certification Standards" 3/2007 will henceforth require all of the forest management plan requirements in FSC Principle 7 Criteria to be included in the plan specifications. These criteria will be mandated for each new plan and plan update. The following issues will need additional coverage in the plans. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The environmental impacts of prescribed harvests (not timber related) must receive additional coverage in the plans.▪ Non-economic forest resources, including non-game wildlife species and habitats.▪ A description of the equipment to be used in prescribed harvests.▪ HCVF's are included in the "Directions for the Preparation of a Management Plan 3/07", however evidence of its implementation are required.
Reference: FSC Criterion 7, Regional Indicator 1.b.2, 1.f.1, 1.i
Time Frame for Conformance: Within 60 days of new plan approval by MWC.
Status: The first two new management plans submitted to MWC for approval will be sent to the SCS auditor for review.

Auditor Observation/Non-Conformity:
Although the state of MA is required to review each timber harvest for the location of endangered species, habitats, or rare ecosystems, HCVF's are not mentioned in the forest management plans.
CAR (minor) 2008.2:
Where applicable, MWC must ensure that management plans include an identification of HCV's and management strategies for maintaining or enhancing them. Additionally, HCVF must be identified on type maps.
Reference: FSC Criterion 9, Regional Indicator 1.a, 1.b, 3.a
Time Frame for Conformance: One year after award of certification.
Status: Conformance will be required during the first surveillance audit. The newly revised "Directions for the Preparation of a Management Plan to achieve Green Certification Standards"3/2007 includes a description of the criteria for HCVF's. Submission of a management plan complete with these requirements will allow for the closure of CAR 2008.2.

6.0 SURVEILLANCE EVALUATIONS

If certification is awarded, surveillance evaluations will take place at least annually to monitor the status of any open corrective action requests and review the continued conformance of the Massachusetts Woodland cooperative LLC to the Northeast Regional Standard (v9.0 2/10/05). Public summaries of surveillance evaluations will be posted separately on the SCS website (www.scscertified.com).

6.1 2009 SURVEILLANCE DECISION AND PUBLIC RECORD

6.1.1 Assessment Dates

Prior to the audit the auditor reviewed the 2008 SCS audit report and corresponded with MWC staff. The field visit for the audit was conducted on November 4, 2009, and was followed by a period in which MWC mailed various additional supporting documents.

6.2.2 Assessment Personnel

The audit was conducted by Michael Thompson, an independent contractor based in Camden, Maine. Mr. Thompson was a member of the FSC's Northeast Region Standards Working Group and has conducted audits for SCS in New Brunswick, Ontario, Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maryland, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Indiana, and Idaho. He is a Certified Wildlife Biologist with a B.Sc. degree from the University of Idaho and an M.Sc. degree from the University of Maine.

6.2.3 Assessment Process

MWC is a group certificate comprised of several small landowners in western Massachusetts. The auditor reviewed descriptions of harvest and other management activities for all group members and selected a sample of sites with recent activities to visit. Following an opening meeting, site visits were conducted at:

- Eve-Cowles property
- Payne property
- Gibson property
- Lashway property

6.2.4 Status of Corrective Action Requests

CAR 2008.1	Reference: Principle 7 and Indicators 1.b.2, 1.f.1, and 1.i
<p>The “Directions for the Preparation of a Management Plan to achieve Green Certification Standards” 3/2007 will henceforth require all of the forest management plan requirements in FSC Principle 7 Criteria to be included in the plan specifications. These criteria will be mandated for each new plan and plan update. The following issues will need additional coverage in the plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The environmental impacts of prescribed harvests (not timber related) must receive additional coverage in the plans. ▪ Non-economic forest resources, including non-game wildlife species and habitats. ▪ A description of the equipment to be used in prescribed harvests. <p>HCVF’s are included in the “Directions for the Preparation of a Management Plan 3/07”, however evidence of its implementation are required.</p>	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	
<p>MWC's <i>Directions for the Preparation of a Management Plan to achieve Green Certification Standards</i> document was updated in May 2009 to include all relevant plan requirements, as described in Principle 7. Recently updated plans were reviewed and found to include discussions related to environmental impacts, wildlife habitat, and equipment most suitable to proposed harvests. MWC also updated their HCVF policy, providing additional direction to group members, and implementation of the policy is centered on the group level, given the unlikelihood of HCVFs, as defined by the Northeast Region Standards, being found on the small parcels enrolled in the group. The Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program reviews all harvest notifications and would provide input should areas of unusually high biodiversity value be located in a proposed harvest area. The MWC will ensure that all HCVFs will be fully described in the parcel management plan, should any such areas be identified on a group member's property in the future.</p>	
Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED	

CAR 2008.2	Reference: Principle 9 and Indicators 1.a, 1.b, and 3.a
<p>Where applicable, MWC must ensure that management plans include an identification of HCV’s and management strategies for maintaining or enhancing them. Additionally, HCVF must be identified on type maps.</p>	
Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments	

As noted in CAR 2008.1, the MWC has updated its HCVF policy and is proactively implementing this policy at the group level. The MWC policy ensures that all HCVFs will be fully described in the parcel management plan, should any such areas be identified on a group member's property in the future. Given the definition of HCVF in the Northeast Region Standards, which imposes size restrictions on most HCVFs, it is highly unlikely that HCVFs will be found on the small parcels enrolled in the MWC group. Smaller areas with higher conservation value (e.g., rare plant locations) are treated as part of the MWC's Principle 6 response. Recently updated plans were reviewed and none of the properties encompassed HCVF.

Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED

6.2.5 General Observations

The MWC is a small, well-organized and highly motivated non-profit that is focused on community-based forestry. As such, it is an important mechanism for bringing FSC certification to the small woodlot owners of the region. MWC's training and outreach activities on behalf of its group members are notable.

Given the poor economy and weak markets for wood products in 2009, there has not been a great deal of harvesting activity on group member properties. Of the properties that were visited during the audit that had harvest activity, all were found to be light improvement cuts with careful attention to maintaining water quality and minimizing residual stand damage.

6.2.6 New Corrective Action Requests and Recommendations

No new Corrective Action Requests or formal Recommendations.

6.2.7 General Conclusions of the Annual Audit

Based upon information gathered through site visits, interviews, and document reviews, the SCS auditor concludes that MWC's management of its group certification system in western Massachusetts continues to be in strong overall compliance with the FSC Principles and Criteria, as further elaborated by the Northeast Region Guidelines. As such, continuation of the certification is warranted, subject to subsequent annual audits.

7.0 SUMMARY OF SCS COMPLAINT AND APPEAL INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

The following is a summary of the SCS Complaint and Appeal Investigation Procedures, the full versions of the procedures are available from SCS upon request. The SCS Complaint and Appeal Investigation Procedures are designed for and available to any individual or organization that perceives a stake in the affairs of the SCS Forest Conservation Program and that/who has reason to question either the actions of SCS itself or the actions of a SCS certificate holder.

A **complaint** is a written expression of dissatisfaction, other than **appeal**, by any person or organization, to a certification body, relating to the activities of staff of the SCS Forest Conservation Program and/or representatives of a company or entity holding either a forest management (FM) or chain-of-custody (CoC)

certificate issued by SCS and duly endorsed by FSC, where a response is expected (ISO/IEC 17011:2004 (E)). The SCS Complaint Investigation Procedure functions as a first-stage mechanism for resolving complaints and avoiding the need to involve FSC.

An “**appeal**” is a request by a certificate holder or a certification applicant for formal reconsideration of any adverse decision made by the certification body related to its desired certification status. A certificate holder or applicant may formally lodge an appeal with SCS against any adverse certification decision taken by SCS, within thirty (30) days after notification of the decision.

The written Complaint or Appeal must:

- Identify and provide contact information for the complainant or appellant
- Clearly identify the basis of the aggrieved action (date, place, nature of action) and which parties or individuals are associated with the action
- Explain how the action is alleged to violate an SCS or FSC requirement, being as specific as possible with respect to the applicable SCS or FSC requirement
- In the case of complaints against the actions of a certificate holder, rather than SCS itself, the complainant must also describe efforts taken to resolve the matter directly with the certificate holder
- Propose what actions would, in the opinion of the complainant or appellant, rectify the matter.

Written complaints and appeals should be submitted to:

Dr. Robert J. Hrubes
Senior Vice-President
Scientific Certification Systems
2200 Powell Street, Suite 725
Emeryville, California, USA94608
Email: rhrubes@scscertified.com

As detailed in the *SCS-FCP Certification Manual*, investigation of the complaint or appeal will be confidentially conducted in a timely manner. As appropriate, corrective and preventive action and resolution of any deficiencies found in products or services shall be taken and documented.