

**Alabama Treasure Forest Association
Forest Stewardship Council Project
Operations Manual**



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Foreword

Alabama TREASURE Forest Association (ATFA) was founded in 1974 and brings together over 3,500 stewardship-minded woodland owners (controlling over 2.5 million acres) dedicated to improving their forestland in Alabama and around the nation. The primary goal of ATFA is to spread the word about responsible forest management to enhance timber resources, wildlife habitat, environment benefits, and recreation opportunities. For more information please visit; www.atfa.net. In this initiative, one of the core purposes of ATFA is to provide an opportunity for private forest landowners to access the market of FSC certified wood and timber products.

With the growing demand for eco-friendly spaces at home and in the workplace, consumers are concerned about where their wood products are coming from, how they are being made, and how the forests from which they came are being managed. ATFA Resource management program seeks to fill that gap by providing an opportunity for ATFA members to certify their forestland and market FSC certified wood products. The ATFA group certification program will allow like-minded forest owners who value stewardship the opportunity to enter an emerging market at a cost that is affordable. In addition, the ATFA will provide operational and administrative support for members of the ATFA program.

Introduction

The operating procedures for the Alabama Treasure Forest Association's Forest Stewardship Council Project are laid out in this document. This document is intended as a handbook for Resource Managers, Forest Owners, and Forest Owner Representatives deciding whether to enroll and for those members already enrolled in the program.

Program Background

Forest certification & Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

In recent decades, the forestry community and the public at large have had growing concerns over the condition and long-term sustainability of the world's forest. As a response to these concerns, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) created a certification system that monitors forestry practices to assure landowners, consumers and other that forests and forest products certified under the FSC system are managed and harvested in adherence to the ecological, economic, and social guidelines established by the FSC. In addition to providing a marketing label, FSC certification allows landowners and consumers to produce and purchase wood products without jeopardizing the long-term productivity and health of forests.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an independent, non-profit membership organization with currently more than 300 members from over 40 countries. Current membership includes professional foresters, forest product manufacturers, timber companies, environmental groups, and community development organizations. The organization aims to support environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable forest management through the development of national and regional standards that regulate forest management activities. Third party accredited organizations then certify and monitor lands to ensure that management activities follow the established FSC principles.

For more information contact: Forest Stewardship Council U.S., 1134 29th Street NW, Washington D.C., 20007, tel: 202-342-0413, fax: 202-342-6589, www.fscus.org

SmartWood

The ATFA has selected SmartWood, as the third party auditor. SmartWood is accredited by FSC and has the authority to certify forests, as well-managed, in accordance with the *FSC Handbook for Forest Management Certification in the Southeast*. SmartWood is a program of the Rainforest Alliance, an international nonprofit environmental group based in New York City. SmartWood is managed by a headquarters staff of experienced forestry specialists and administrators and regional and national offices around the globe.

Resource Manager Certification

The cost associated with individuals becoming FSC certified often prevents landowners from pursuing certification. Group certification aims to overcome cost and other issues limiting small landowner certification by pulling together a number of small forest areas under a single "group manager". The Resource Manager program allows ATFA to act as a source of information and necessary guidance for forest landowners and managers, while providing a certification process that allows each group member to benefit from the economies of scale of being part of a larger group.

Group Certification

The mission of the Group Certification System is to increase and improve access to Forest Stewardship Council certification by providing access to certification for resource managers and the small, private forest ownerships with which they consult.

Group certification was developed to further reduce the costs and technical barriers to FSC certification for forest resource managers and small forest owners. The ATFA group certificate is designed to make FSC certification a more practical and affordable option for small landowners pursuing FSC certification. The group certificate is a voluntary program that allows multiple independent forest owners to be managed under a single FSC certificate that is primarily managed by the ATFA. This allows certified landowners to reap the benefits of certification while curtailing the costs and administrative duties associated with FSC certification.

Forest Owner that become members of the ATFA follow a process of assistance and oversight in partnership with the Group Entities to assure that the FSC standards are met and maintained on their property or properties. This system includes management plan review by the ATFA Manager, scheduling of field assessments, and arranging the use of the FSC logo for marketing products from member lands. Members wanting to participate in the ATFA must commit to meeting FSC standards as well as audit visits by both ATFA staff and certification body staff.

Forest Management under the program is conducted in accordance with the Principles and Criteria laid out by the Forest Stewardship Council. These can be found at <http://www.fsc.org>.

FSC requires a maximum number of Group members that can be maintained by current group system support- ATFA has set a current maximum of **100 members** based on current staffing and short term anticipation of group expansion. The maximum number may be raised as ATFA expands its capability to manage larger group membership. Updated information on ATFA's FSC certification program will be communicated through its website: <http://www.atfa.net/>

Program Operation Procedures

Organizational Description

The ATFA will administer the Program by maintaining overall responsibility for establishing policies and assuring conformance with the FSC Principles and Criteria. ATFA will also have responsibility for operational direction of the group as well as participation in the program.

Resource Managers are professionals trained in the natural resource sciences that provide management over site, monitoring and technical assistance to forest landowners.

Forest Owners are individual landowners that own or control timberland that is managed in accordance with the FSC Principles and Criteria. Forest Owner Representatives are legal representatives of the current forest owner.

Alabama Treasure Forest Association FSC Program Structure:

- Program Director: ATFA's, Executive Director
- Program Manager consultant: Foster Dickard
- Administrative Assistant: Patty Johnston

Resource Managers who meet eligibility criteria and who sign a contract are enrolled as participating RM's and will be able to enroll individual forest ownerships or management units under their guidance with approval by the Program Director. Note that all enrolled forest owners must also sign a contract agreeing to the requirements under the program.

Individual forest owners or forest owner representatives who wish to participate in the program but who are not affiliated with a certified Resource Manager will be directed to the ATFA Manager to determine if they are eligible to enroll. ATFA Manager will review the management plan of the forest owner to determine if initial eligibility requirements are met, and determine a timeline for on-the-ground review and monitoring of the plan as it is implemented.

ATFA is responsible for establishing the rules for admission, resignation or expulsion from the system, and for monitoring the compliance with the certification standard (FSC-US Standard). ATFA accomplishes this by directing review of management plans, harvest plan reviews, site visits, and audits. ATFA is directly accountable to the Certification Body (SmartWood) for all activities on member properties.

Responsibilities

ATFA will:

- Provide the administrative services of the program
- Liaison with and pay costs to the certification body (SmartWood) necessary to maintain FSC-endorsed certification for the group
Review eligibility for enrollment of Resource Managers, Forest Owners, and Forest Owner Representatives.
- Assess management planning documentation of applicant membership.
- Hold contracts with the enrolled membership, Resource Managers, Forest Owners, and Forest Owner Representatives.
- Undertake internal auditing on a sample basis of Resource Managers, Forest Owners, and Forest Owner Representatives compliance to program requirements

- Provide technical information relating to the program requirements and forest management
- Identify training opportunities for participants
- Provide template documentation and checklists for management planning, planning review, site visit and audits (if needed)
- Produce an annual program report
- Maintain Group member roster that includes:
 1. Records of the estimated annual overall FSC List of names and contact details of Group members, together with dates of entering and leaving the Group scheme, reason for leaving, and the type of forest ownership per member;
 2. Any records of training provided to staff or Group members, relevant to the implementation of this standard or the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard;
 3. A map or supporting documentation describing or showing the location of the member's forest properties;
 4. Evidence of consent of all Group members;
 5. Documentation and records regarding recommended practices for forest management (i.e. silvicultural systems);
 6. Records demonstrating the implementation of any internal control or monitoring systems. Such records shall include records of internal inspections, non-compliances identified in such inspections, actions taken to correct any such non-compliance;
 7. Production and annual FSC sales of the Group.

Resource Managers will:

- Provide detail of their eligibility to operate as a certified Resource Manager, relative to the requirements established by the ATFA.
- Sign a contract or be party to a log purchase agreement thereby agreeing to comply with the program
- Provide forest management services to their enrolled forest owners to ensure compliance with the program requirements
- Supply copies of checklists and other management planning documentation of enrolled members to ATFA
- Provide on-site visits to properties being managed for auditing purposes.
- Work with clients to provide access for ATFA representatives and FSC auditors for maintaining compliance with the program.
- Maintain copies of pertinent documents related to group certification, audits, and reviews for a minimum of five years and make these accessible to ATFA and FSC auditors as required.

Forest Owners and Forest Owner Representatives will:

- Sign a contract agreeing to comply with the program

- Be committed to the FSC Principles and Criteria
- Ensure that management on their land complies with the requirements of the program
- Allow access for periodic field audits by ATFA representatives and FSC auditors for compliance with the requirements of this program
- Maintain copies of FSC certified production and sales and other pertinent documents related to group certification, audits, and reviews for a minimum of five years and make these accessible to ATFA and FSC auditors as required.

Eligibility

Resource Managers: Any eligible resource manager operating within Alabama and the neighboring states. Eligible Resource Managers must demonstrate a commitment to meeting and maintaining the FSC standards in their forest management and must demonstrate a willingness and ability to understand and comply with the program procedures. Further, ATFA will review applicants' eligibility based upon letter of skills justification, resume, client references, interview and site visit to prospective enrolled properties. To become enrolled under the program, a Resource Manager must demonstrate:

- An understanding and long-term commitment to forest management that is in compliance with the FSC standards.
- An ability and experience in writing, administering and implementing management plans
- An interest in continual improvement in their forest management understanding.
- An understanding of the local, regionally significant forest resources and conditions
- A willingness to accept feedback and criticism and work with a variety of partners to reach landowner's goals
- A commitment to serving the program Members and helping them maintain their certification by complying with all policies and guidelines
- Full compliance with any and all applicable local, state and federal voluntary or regulatory policies and established standards regarding natural resource management, best management practices and the forestry profession.
- Possession of any legally required licenses

Forest Owners and Forest Owner Representatives: Can be any forest ownership or representative of forest ownership within Alabama and the neighboring states. Membership in any landowner associations or other organizations does not prohibit membership. Eligible forest owners or forest owner representatives must demonstrate a commitment to meeting and maintaining the FSC standards in their forest management and must demonstrate a willingness and ability to understand and comply with the ATFA Resource Manager Program policies and

procedures.

Enrollment

Resource Managers

Resource manager will be enrolled that have satisfied the eligibility criteria outlined above and who have one or more FMU's assessed to be in compliance with management planning against the ATFA/FSC standard (see below). A signed agreement between the group entity and the RM will be retained which outlines each party's responsibilities.

Group Enrollee Assessment

The following assessment steps will be undertaken when:

- Assessing a Resource Manager, Forest Owner, or Forest Owner's Representative's eligibility for enrollment.
- Enrolling a Forest Management unit.

Step 1: Forest Owner, Forest Owner Representative, or Resource Manager (RM) submits an application, Forest Management Plan and proof of property ownership or management authority to ATFA

Step 2: ATFA Director or Manager reviews submitted documentation and evaluates membership eligibility. Applicant is either eligible or deemed ineligible and corrective action must be taken before moving forward.

Step 3: If determined to take corrective action, ATFA Manager or RM works with the forest owner or forest owner representative to develop or review a management plan for the property

Step 4: Forest Owner, Forest Owner Representative, or Resource Manager submits a management plan and pertinent documentation for conformance to ATFA Manager for review regarding its adequacy for meeting the certification standard

Plan is approved – approval process includes a written checklist, site visit (by RM or ATFA Director, Manager, or Group Entity Manager or designee) and interviews with interested parties.

Or

Plan is not approved – Landowner may work to make the recommended changes or opt out of

the ATFA at this point.

Step 5: Membership agreement and Contract is signed with ATFA and Forest Owner, Forest Owner Representative, or Resource Manager.

Monitoring / Auditing

Monitoring for compliance is the essential element of the FSC certification program and is conducted through initial and subsequent assessment audits. The group certification scheme will be annually audited by SmartWood. This organization will undertake annual audits of the administrative aspects of the program (documentary records / procedures for the ATFA, the RMs, and Forest Owners or their Representatives) and will undertake sample audits of forest management units enrolled in the program for compliance against the FSC standards. The audits conducted by the certification body and its sample basis will be established in a manner that conforms to FSC auditing requirements.

Audit Frequency

FREQUENCY OF SITE VISITS			
Who is audited	Minimum Frequency	Additional	By whom
Alabama Treasure Forest Association	Annually	Certification body retains the right to conduct additional audits	Certification body
Resource Manager	One initial plus one compliance during the five-year period	ATFA retains the right to conduct additional audits Certification body will	ATFA and Certification Body

		audit a sample of RMs as needed	
Forest Owner or Forest Owner Representative	One initial plus one compliance during the five-year period	Additional assessment may be made: <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-operational <input type="checkbox"/> During Operations <input type="checkbox"/> Post-operational Certification body will audit a sample of enrolled Forest Owners or Forest Owner Representatives annually	ATFA and Certification Body

Internal Program monitoring

Group Enrollees

Each group enrollee will receive a review of its management plan as part of the entry assessment. This will be conducted by the ATFA manager in conjunction with the enrollee and may involve a site visit. During this initial assessment the monitoring responsibilities of the enrollee will be defined. These should include the research and data collection needed to monitor, at a minimum, the following indicators

- a) Yield of all forest products harvested.
- b) Growth rates, regeneration and condition of the forest.
- c) Composition and observed changes in the flora and fauna.
- d) Environmental and social impacts of harvesting and other operations.
- e) Costs, productivity, and efficiency of forest management.

The above indicators are to be evaluated according the FSC Standard Conformance Checklist (appendix 1) , the Chain of Custody section guidelines, and forest operations contracts, planning and monitoring forms.

The enrollees are required to report on the above defined monitoring objectives annually to the ATFA program manager. Results of monitoring will be derived from the indicator information and used in the revision of management plans prior to the next operational activity and at the end of the five-year cycle. The ATFA program manager will collate data from all enrollees monitoring programs to produce a summary report that describes issues, objectives and successes in relation to monitoring.

During the initial assessment, Corrective Action Requests (CAR's) may be raised that identify

shortfalls in management planning requirements.

During the five-year period of enrollment each enrollee will receive a minimum of one further site assessment audit by the Program Manager or designee regardless of operational activity. The Program Manager or designee will, seek to complete the assessment during pre-operational planning or other operational activity planning.

Resource Managers

During the five-year period of enrollment each Resource Manager will be assessed for compliance against program requirements during the initial enrollment process and at a minimum once more, regardless of operational activity. The second assessment will include a review of documentation and record keeping and a site visit to a minimum of one forest management unit in the respective Resource Managers portfolio.

Resource Managers will be required to make periodic visits to each forest management unit under their respective management during periods of operational activity. In addition pre-, during- and post-operational site visits are required and should be conducted using checklists either supplied by ATFA or designed by the Resource Manager that meet the defined monitoring requirements. All documents should be retained by the Resource Manager and copied to both Forest Owner, Forest Owner Representative (if existing), and the ATFA Resource Manager. All landowner specific information is maintained as confidential.

Monitoring Tools

Operational internal monitoring is conducted using the operational checklists, records and summary reports and

- Management planning, policies and operational checklists, Membership lists, training communication, production, sales, inventory and usage records
- Annual reporting summaries

Corrective actions

Both the ATFA personnel and Resource Managers will be required to utilize ATFA checklists or checklists of their own design when visiting group enrollees. Shortfalls identified should be annotated on checklists and a Corrective Action Request (CAR) issued for each minor non conformance of the standard. Corrective Action Requests (CARs) can be made at anytime from application for enrollment, during site visits and formal audits.

Availability and Distribution of Monitoring Results

Following the completion or receipt of annual audits and monitoring report for group members, the ATFA Manager will prepare a summary of these reports. Annual summaries will be reported on the ATFA website (www.ATFA.net). Items that may be included in this group report include a list of group certificate members, harvest plan numbers, and names of areas harvested under the group certificate in any given year. Also included in the report will be a discussion of any corrective actions noted by either FSC auditors or ATFA inspectors during operations (though these will not be tied to individual plans).

Disciplinary procedures

To ensure compliance with the FSC standards, it is necessary for members of the ATFA to maintain their commitment to the member responsibilities as expressed in the signed purchase order. If a member violates the agreement, or monitoring and site reviews reveal non-compliance with the certification standards, that member will be automatically made ineligible to market products using the FSC certified logo and their membership will be suspended. ATFA will determine an appropriate probationary period and corrective actions to be taken if the member expresses interest in staying involved with the program and reinstating their membership.

Dispute resolution

To avoid conflicts and disciplinary procedures, members are encouraged to communicate with their RM (if existing) and program manager as much as necessary to avoid misunderstandings. Conflicts will largely be avoided if members make sure their management and operational or harvest plans are reviewed and approved by the program manager and treatments are done in accordance with the approved plan and the program manager and affected neighbors are informed of these activities.

If significant disputes arise related to resolving grievances, forest owner or manager follows appropriate dispute resolution procedures at a minimum, the forest owner or manager maintains open communications, responds to grievances in a timely manner, demonstrates ongoing good faith efforts to resolve the grievances, and maintains records of legal suites and claims.

Dis-enrollment (destitution)

Participation in the program is voluntary and as such enrolled members may opt out at anytime by informing the ATFA Program Manager. However, the FSC standard demands that participants demonstrate long term commitment to certified management. Participants that opt

out may not be eligible to rejoin or may be given a probationary period for re-entry, to be determined by the ATFA Director.

Operational Activity Management

Close supervision of operational activity is essential in ensuring compliance with the FSC standard. The process by which this occurs is outlined below.

Step 1: Group member notifies the ATFA Program Manager of the intent to harvest a stand or apply herbicides to a stand.

Step 2: ATFA Program Manager reviews management planning documentation (THP, FMP, and any operational management plan against regional guidelines and in accordance with auditing schedule guidelines. Review includes a written checklist and may include site visit(s) depending on audit schedule rationale

Proposed work plan is approved. Program Manager is notified

or

Proposed work plan is not approved. Group member makes recommended changes, abandons proposed work or leaves the certified pool.

Step 3: ATFA executes Purchase Order with group member and provides or appropriate RM or Forest Owner Representative numbers for log ticket entry.

Step 4: ATFA Program Manager works with the landowner, logger, resource manager and others to monitor the active operations, including regular site visits.

Step 5: Following completion of the operations, an ongoing site post-operation review is completed. A written checklist of compliance is completed.

Chain of Custody

ATFA member's transfer of ownership (forest gate) is at the severed stump. Upon execution of the Purchase Order between certified buyer and the AFTA group member, the ATFA certificate number or documentation shall be entered on sales information. (See a-h below)

If group members transfer ownership beyond their certified forest then the members **shall include the same information as required in a-h below in the related transport documentation, if the invoice (or copy of it) is not included with the shipment of the product until the point where ownership is relinquished to a certified buyer.**

All applicable records related to production and sales of FSC certified products are to be kept and maintained for a minimum of 5 years.

ATFA group members shall ensure that all invoices issued for outputs sold with FSC claims include the following information:

- a) name and contact details of the organization;**
- b) name and address of the customer;**
- c) date when the document was issued;**
- d) description of the product;**
- e) quantity of the products sold;**
- f) the organization's FSC certification (Chain of Custody) code;**
- g) clear indication of the FSC claim (ex. "FSC 100%") for each product item or the total products as follows:**
 - vi. the claim "FSC Controlled Wood" for products from FSC Controlled Wood product groups or for products from FSC Mixed product groups that will not be sold as FSC-certified.**
- h) if separate transport documents are issued, information sufficient to link the invoice and related transport documentation to each other.**

Trademark Use

No on product use of FSC logo will be used. Off product trademark use will comply with FSC – TMK-50-201 and as described below.

Note: Off product promotional use items include advertisements, brochures, web pages, catalogues, press releases, tradeshow booths, and stationary templates, corporate promotional items (e.g., t-shirts, cups, hats, and gifts).

1. If the FSC trademarks are used for promotion of FMUs, FME shall limit promotion to FMUs covered by the scope of the certificate.
2. In cases that the Rainforest Alliance trademarks are used (50-201, 13.1, 13.2):
 - a) The FSC trademarks shall not be at a disadvantage (e.g., smaller size);

- b) The FSC checkmark tree logo shall be included when the RAC seal is in place.
3. In cases that the FSC trademarks are used with the trademarks (logos, names, identifying marks) of other forestry verification schemes (SFI, PEFC, etc.), SmartWood approval shall be in place (50-201, 3.0)
 4. Use of the FSC trademarks in promotion of the FME's FSC certification shall not imply certain aspects are included which are outside the scope of the certificate (50-201, 1.6).
 5. Use of the FSC trademarks on stationery templates (including letterhead, business cards, envelopes, invoices, paper pads) shall be approved by SmartWood to ensure correct usage (50-201, 12.0).
 6. In cases that the FSC trademarks are used as part of a product name, domain name, and/or FME name, SmartWood approval shall be in place (50-201, 9.0, 10.0).
 7. Records and correspondence for off product use of FSC/Rainforest Alliance trademarks will also be kept and maintained for a minimum of 5 years.

Policy Guidelines

Certification Compliance and Performance Evaluation Protocol

Stage in Forest Management Process	Conducted By	Form(s)	Guidance
During the Management Plan Development Process	Resource Manager or Forest Owners or Forest Owner Representatives Or ATFA Program Manager or designee	Management Plan and associated Timber Harvest Plan or Non-Industrial Timber Harvest Plan	At Least one site visit will be conducted by the Resource Manager or ATFA Program Manager and the plans shall be written to adhere to FSC Regional Guidelines.
Before Forest Management Activities	Resource Manager or Forest Owners or Forest Owner Representatives Or	Management Plan Review, A sales and or service contract with legal, insurance and safety requirements (see sample), a Before Harvest Operation	The ATFA Assistance Manager or Program Manager or designee may conduct a site visit before active operations if the site has not been visited

	ATFA Assistance Manager or program manager, or designee	Checklist, and a Regional guideline Checklist or herbicide use form if appropriate. (see Appendix 1 and sample checklist form). Resource Manager or Forest Owner Representative will hold pre-harvest site with assigned Timber Operator using checklist or monitoring form	in the past two years or the activity includes commercial timber harvesting, road construction, pesticide application rare species or habitat, other unique situations.
During Forest Management Activities	Resource Managers or Forest Owners or Forest Owner Representatives	Management Plan Review Checklist; Regional guideline Checklist (see Appendix 1 and sample forms for Operations inspections and Pesticide use).	Resource Managers or Forest Owners or Forest Owner Representatives will monitor operational activity sufficient to ensure operations proceed according to planned activity and in accordance with the FSC Standard. Non-commercial activities will be monitored as necessary.
After Forest Management Activities	Resource Manager or Forest Owners or Forest Owner Representatives Or ATFA Assistance Manager, Program Manager or Designee	Post Harvest/Operations Checklist or Pesticide use form	At least one site visit will be conducted by following the completion of site disturbing activities by the Resource Manager or ATFA Program Manager, Assistance Manager or Designee. Site disturbing activities include commercial timber harvesting, road construction and

			other unique situations.
Annual Reviews	ATFA Program Manager	Annual Compliance Review	The ATFA Program Manager will assure that all properties are visited by ATFA Assistance Manager, Program Manager, or their Designee at least once during the five-year certification period and a minimum twice if operational activity occurs.

Group Policies

Document Control & Confidentiality Policy

Documents and information related to ATFA Group and individual Group members are kept strictly confidential. Only the individual landowner, the Certification Body and Group Management will have access to records for individual properties. Landowners are free to share their own records as they see fit, but must give the Group Manager permission to share documents with other parties. Summarized information regarding the aggregate Membership will be available upon request.

Contract and Service Provider Policies

To be eligible to participate in the ATFA, forest owners or their representatives must either contract with an enrolled RM or work directly with the ATFA Manager. All service providers must demonstrate an understanding of the FSC regional standard and the ATFA policies and operations as well as show a willingness to comply with all requirements. Potential service providers include forestry co-op staff, private forestry consultants, public agency foresters, and other public or private natural resource professionals. ATFA will make all manuals, documents, and materials regarding this program available to service providers upon request.

Pesticide Use Policy, Strategy and Prescription Criteria sample pesticide form
Pesticide refers to all forms of “pest” controls (e.g., pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides)

chemicals of any type, including pesticides, are used on the forest they will be applied according to the product label instruction or by an applicator (contractor) registered with the State for the appropriate type of application. As for all contractors working on the forest, there will be a contract specifying the work to be done and appropriate restrictions such as those involving drift, safety in handling of the product, and responsibility for spills and clean up if spills occur.

Herbicides are the most likely chemicals to be used on the forest for site preparation and pine release. Use of herbicides may be less costly and prove less damaging to the environment than mechanical site preparation. The use of chemicals is kept to a minimum, and will ensure that no chemicals in the FSC list of highly hazardous chemicals will be used without prior approval from FSC. See FSC Pesticide policy: FSC POL 30-001. The two most probable herbicides that will be used are formulations commonly known Arsenal and Roundup, both of which are approved for use by FSC.

Pesticide Strategy:

Every situation that may require pest control should have a prescription based on a strategy for pest control. The most common strategy for use of these herbicides (among others) is that have been proven by research and years of forest use results to be the best option for minimal risk to the environment and virtually non to humans and wildlife. Chemicals can be used when other non chemical methods of pest control are not adequately effective, economically feasible or result in potentially more environmental damage by top soil loss, soil litter, woody debris and standing snags from traditional mechanical means. Pesticide use is applied at the least rate effective to control pest with ideal long-term goal of reducing or phase out use of chemical whenever feasible.

Decision Criteria for Pesticide Prescriptions

1. Pesticides will not be applied if there is significant risk that it will:
 - Endanger public health (including workers)
 - Get into watercourses or
 - Drift onto neighboring properties or public lands
 -
2. Pesticides will be used when:
 - A pest outbreak is considered to be at epidemic levels (define) and/or
 - The productivity of a forest unit is being compromised, AND
 - Other alternatives are not feasible (mechanical or hand have been proven ineffective or exorbitantly expensive).
3. Pesticides chosen for use will not be:
 - A chemical listed on the World Health Organization Type 1A or Type 1B list
 - A chemical banned for use by FSC or is illegal
4. Pesticides chosen for use will be:
 - Proven effective for eradicating or managing the pest
 - The least damaging to the environment and public health

5. The method of pesticide application will be:
 - The least invasive alternative
 - Done during appropriate weather conditions
 - By trained and informed personnel or licensed contractors
 - In accordance with all state and federal requirements

Safety Policies

Throughout all forest management operations and harvesting activities, all timber purchasers, operators, service providers and other agents or staff working for Group members are must conform to required Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) safety measures in service contracts and agreements. All logging operators are required to conform to state safety laws. The Group Manager and Group members are encouraged to hire only qualified contractors that can conform to FSC operational requirements. All Group members are encouraged to use a service contract that requires compliance with all relevant legal requirements including safety requirements. A sample Service contract is provided as a supplement to this operations manual.

References for Certification (found on FSC US website: <http://fscus.org/documents/>)

FSC-STD-30-005 (V1-0)	FSC standard for group entities in forest management groups
FSC-STD-01-001	FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship
FSC-STD-01-002	FSC Glossary of Terms
FSC- STD-01-003	SLIMF Eligibility Criteria
	FSC-US Forest Management Standard (v1.0)
FSC-POL-30-001	FSC Pesticides Policy (2005)
FSC-GUI-30-001 (V2-0)	FSC Pesticides Policy: Guidance on Implementation (2007)

Operational Policies

The ATFA Group Manager Operations Manual provides information regarding the operating structure, policies, and procedures of the program. This Operations Manual is intended to conform to the FSC Standards and other associated standards and procedures stated below. Detailed instructional guidance for Group members and their contractors is provided in this Operations Manual.

The following operational policies are organized in the order of the FSC 10 Principals and are intended to explain how ATFA Group Manager and Group members conform to FSC certification requirements.

1. Compliance

1.1. Membership & Management Records

ATFA Group Manager maintains a database of all Group members including all contact and Membership status information. The Group Manager also maintains copies of Group members' forest management plans, Group Membership Applications, Group Membership Agreements, proof of legal land tenure, ecological monitoring records, harvest yield information, sales data, and all other relevant documents. These documents and data are also kept in electronic format using the Group's enterprise software. Any documents not available in digital format are stored in files in Group Manager's main office. All proprietary Group member information is kept confidential. Proprietary information is available only for internal assessments and for verification purposes by the Certification Body.

1.2. Document Control & Confidentiality Policy

Documents and information related to ATFA Group Manager and individual Group members are kept strictly confidential. Only the individual landowner, the Certification Body and Group Management will have access to records for individual properties. Landowners are free to share their own records as they see fit, but must give the Group Manager permission to share documents with other parties. Summarized information regarding the aggregate Membership will be available upon request.

1.3. Structural Requirements & Limitations

ATFA Group Manager will notify the Certification Body of every new property added to the Group program within 90 days of acceptance. location, acreage and description of forest type. The Group Manager or designee will also notify the Certification Body within 10 days of any Group member properties whose certification status is suspended or terminated.

1.4. Certification Compliance & Performance Evaluation Protocol

ATFA Group Manager is accountable to the Certification Body, the FSC accredited certifier, for assuring compliance with the certification standards and for meeting the requirements for field reviews. Group members are required to

provide access to their property for the purpose of compliance reviews by Group Management and the Certification Body.

The Group Manager evaluates the performance of natural resource professionals providing services to Group members. Performance evaluations are used to determine that service providers possess appropriate expertise and meet established standards for quality, consistency, and compliance with the certification standards.

The Group Manager determines certification compliance throughout the forest management process. The Group Manager is responsible for conducting all necessary monitoring visits unless a formal agreement and service contract is developed with a qualified party. The Inspector will notify the landowner at least two days prior to conducting a site visit.

The forms, checklists, and other documents related to these compliance and performance reviews are included in the Operations Manual Appendix,

ATFA Group Manager maintains an up-to-date document library of its policies and FSC documents on its website, or provides active links to such documents on the FSC website. This library will be updated as new policies emerge, and will be checked annually to ensure that links are active and that correct documents are posted.

<http://www.ATFA.net>

Additional documents are available on the FSC-US website.

http://www.fscus.org/standards_criteria/

2. Tenure & Use Rights

2.1. Tenure & Use Rights

ATFA Group Managers are committed to upholding FSC Principles 2 and 3 in relation to Tenure & Use Rights & Responsibilities and Indigenous Peoples' Rights. ATFA Group Manager requires all participating landowners to verify that title to land they are enrolling is clear and legally secure, that the boundaries are properly identified on the ground, and that timber harvesting or other operations are legally permitted. The Group Manager maintains copies of a land title or other documentation to verify claims. Group members will generally need to provide specific documentation third parties only where there is risk of infringing on use and access rights

2.2. Dispute Resolution

Prior to joining the Group, Group members are required to disclose any known disputes over land ownership, property boundaries, and indigenous rights claims. Group member properties should be free of such disputes prior to receiving Membership. If a dispute arises during Membership, Group members must make diligent effort to resolve the dispute following a process similar to the Group dispute resolution process described on page 13 of this document OPS manual or by appropriate application of local, federal, or tribal law.

When a dispute arises over land tenure or use, the Group member will notify the Group Manager within 30 days. The Group Manager will notify the Certification Body within 60 days if the dispute is not resolved. Group members will enter in good faith into mediation or arbitration to resolve any land tenure/ land use disputes. If these actions do not succeed, judicial action may be needed. Group members will obtain resolution that conforms to applicable laws.

3. Indigenous Peoples' Rights

3.1. ATFA Group Manager is committed to identifying and protecting any known or suspected cultural or historical resources or sites on Group member lands. The Group will be fulfilling this commitment by contacting appropriate public agencies and recognized tribal organizations to identify sites and historical resources. **The NRCS local office is the primary contact for landowners for information of known locations that may occur on their property. Locations will be identified and protected from negative impacts of forest operations.**

3.2. All Group members who have reason to believe that there are sites of interest to American Indians on Group member property will contact American Indian authorities to assess the risk of impact. Sites of interest include those with ecological, cultural or economic importance. A list of cultural, archeological or other related sites will be maintained where they are known or found to occur. Group members with large properties who are eligible because of low intensity of operations must attempt direct consultation with affected recognized Tribes. Most Group members will not be required to directly consult with American Indian groups.

4. Community Relations & Worker Rights

4.1. Social Impacts & Stakeholder Consultation

4.1.1. ATFA Group Manager is committed to identifying the potential social impacts of forest management conducted through the Group and

incorporating the results of evaluations of social impacts into planning and project implementation processes.

Because the lands enrolled in the Group are small and privately owned, individual properties have limited immediate public impact. However, these lands do provide an important 'matrix' in the landscape that helps protect and enhance forest health and aesthetics in the region. To address and identify social impacts and ensure that stakeholders are informed and invited to provide comment, the Group Manager is committed to summarizing information regarding the aggregated Group membership and making it available on request to stakeholders. All operational information regarding the structure of the Group, including a updated list of all Members, is available at the Group website or upon written request of the Group Manager.

- 4.1.2. ATFA Group Manager uses information about adjacent landowners and land uses and any existing conflicts or concerns is used in ongoing development of individual management plans. Whenever possible, Group members or the Group Manager are expected to notify in advance and communicate with neighbors and other potentially affected stakeholders about their planned activities. These communications are generally documented on Group member activity planning checklist. Group members often also play a lead role in identifying reasonable solutions to any existing or discovered concerns. This includes the evaluation of known or suspected historical or cultural resources and sites and the development of protection recommendations when such resources are present.
- 4.1.3. During harvest or other treatment planning, Group members or Group Management will ensure that no conflicts arise from surrounding landowners in relation to transportation and access arrangements. Property boundaries should t be marked and verified as needed to prevent trespass.

4.2. Historic & Cultural Resources

- 4.2.1. ATFA Group Manager will take precautions to avoid loss or damage to any historically or culturally significant resources on Group member properties.
- 4.2.2. The Group requires Group members to use a forest management plan development process that includes an investigation of known or potential historical and cultural resources on or near their property. This information can be gathered through interviews with the landowners, consultation with state agencies or state maintained databases, and site reconnaissance.

Group manager and or members will follow a consultation process similar to that used for assessing High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) to assess historical and cultural resources.

- 4.2.3. If Group members identify historical and/or cultural resources on their property or in a nearby location that may be affected by management on the property, the location of the resource must be recorded in the plan and the resource must be described. Management or protection of the resource must be detailed in the management plan and in subsequent operational plans. All protection measures must comply with Best Management Practices or site level guidelines (both mandatory and voluntary). All applicable laws must also be followed and the State archaeologist should be notified in the event that a burial site or human remains are found or suspected to be present.

4.3. Safety Policy

- 4.3.1. Throughout all forest management operations and harvesting activities, all timber purchasers, operators, service providers and other agents or staff working for Group members are must conform to required Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) safety measures in service contracts and agreements. All Group staff and service providers are expected to know, understand, and apply appropriate safety measures. All logging operators are required to conform to state safety laws. The Group Manager and Group members are encouraged to hire only qualified contractors that can conform to FSC operational requirements. Alabama Department of Labor and Industries list of documents on hiring independent contractors:

<http://www.alalabor.state.al.us/>

Alabama's Professional Logging Manager:

http://www.alaforestry.org/index.php?Itemid=73&id=44&option=com_content&task=view

Alabama Occupational Health & Safety Administration publications on forest workplace safety:

<http://www.alalabor.state.al.us/>

4.4. Service Provider Requirements

- 4.4.1. ATFA Group Members are encouraged to contract with formally recognized Preferred Providers for forestry related services, although Group members may contract with any natural resource professional meeting or

exceeding Group minimum requirements. In this case, it is the Group member's responsibility to verify that the contractor has appropriate training, meets the above listed qualifications, and complies with state health and safety laws and licensing requirements. All service providers must comply with Group policies, forest management plans, and the FSC Standard.

4.4.2. The Group Manager and Group members are responsible for communicating all Group requirements to service providers, preferably within the context of a service contract. The Group provides the FSC Principles & Criteria, US Forest Management Standard, template management plans, sample contracts, and all other documents and materials to Group members in the Operations Manual, Document Directory or by mail on request.

4.4.3. Service providers must:

- i. Strictly follow the Group member's approved management plan and Group Systems Procedures.
- ii. Follow the Group approved Chain of Custody procedures.
- iii. Carry adequate liability insurance.
- iv. Operate in full compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal voluntary policies, required laws, and established standards regarding natural resource management, best management practices, and/or the forestry profession.
- v. Demonstrate adequate ability and experience in writing, administering, and implementing management plans that meet the FSC US Forest Management Standard (Applies only to foresters).
- vi. Through their actions, demonstrate a commitment to serving Group members and helping them maintain FSC certification by complying with all Group policies.

4.5. Education and Communication

4.5.1. In the interest of providing continuing education opportunities for both Group members and natural resource professionals, The Group Manager facilitates continuing education intended to build skills and understanding in sustainable forest management. The Group Manager will verify in the Group Annual report and during site monitoring using the Group Member Monitoring Checklists to determine whether the performance of contractors meets FSC criteria and Group policies. The Group Manager will issue conditions to Group members if service provider work is out of compliance.

The Group Manager reserves the right to contact service providers to assess qualifications and competency to meet FSC requirements.

5. Benefits from the Forest

5.1. Local Economic Benefits

5.1.1. ATFA Group Manager supports landowner goals and long-term economic and ecological sustainability by providing technical and professional resources. The group certification provides an economy of scale that would otherwise keep the benefits of certification out of reach for many landowners.

5.1.2. The Group program provides market connections for forest land owners to sell timber to FSC certified mills, and mills who wish to buy from Group member properties. The Group Manager offers guidance to Group members on FSC Chain of Custody compliance to capture the full benefits of certification. Group Management will directly or through their Resource Managers offer technical and marketing services to Group members with value-added processing enterprises.

5.2. Rate of Harvest

5.2.1. The harvest of forest products must not compromise desired future conditions of FMP or extract resources at an excessive rate or in a manner that damages other resources, such as soil or water. Harvest operations must minimize waste and residual stand damage. Only commercially usable timber should be harvested, and most of the timber cut during harvest operations should be removed from the site. Harvest operations must, however, leave adequate biomass on the ground to protect soil productivity without unduly creating fire risks.

5.2.2. Timber harvest must not exceed growth over any 10 year period. Growth estimates and calculated sustained yield levels will be based on stocking and site condition using site index models or best available information. The Group encourages Group members to consult with foresters and document these estimates. Group members who harvest timber at intervals greater than 10 years must compute harvest based on the volume of growth since previous harvest and target stocking levels. The Group Manager will evaluate members' annual reporting forms to ensure that timber stands reach target stocking as quickly as is practicable. Stocking will of course vary depending on management objectives and species. The Group Manager provides monitoring and inventory guidelines. (see Monitoring section 8)

5.3. Non-Timber Forest Products

5.3.1. All materials originating from a certified forest have the potential to be marketed with the FSC label. However, because of the wide variability in the level of understanding regarding appropriate management of many non-timber forest products, ATFA Group Manager will take a precautionary approach to the harvesting and marketing of non-timber forest products from Group Member properties.

For non-timber forest products:

5.3.1.1. Management plans for properties enrolled in the [Program Initials or name] program must identify and address any existing or potential non-timber forest products on the property.

5.3.1.2. Members interested in continuing or beginning to harvest non-timber forest products must:

- Collect harvest volume records
- Document the location of harvests and existing populations
- Develop a detailed management plan for the species being harvested
- Demonstrate due diligence investigating current knowledge regarding appropriate management, harvest levels, utilization standards, and regeneration rates for the harvested species
- Maintain compliance with all FSC certification standards, with special attention paid to the applicability of High Conservation Value Forests and rare, threatened, or endangered species standards
- Develop and implement a monitoring plan

6. Environmental Impacts

6.1. Rare, Threatened or Endangered Resources

6.1.1. ATFA Group Manager is committed to identifying and protecting rare, threatened, or endangered (RTE) resources on all properties enrolled in the Group. The Group requires that forest management plans include investigations to identify RTE plants, animals and/or natural communities in the field. The Group Manager, their Resource Manager and or Group members will investigate existing RTE databases and records for the property and surrounding area and will facilitate communication with the appropriate parties. The Group also requires that plan writers demonstrate a technical knowledge of RTE species and an ability to identify them in the

field. The intensity of any surveys will increase with the size of the ownership.

- 6.1.2. If a plant, animal or community is identified as RTE, the Group requires that it be documented in the forest management plan and appropriate management guidelines be clearly stated and followed in any subsequent site-disturbing activities. The management guidelines must be species and site specific and comply with the most current available knowledge about the habitat or management requirements of the identified resource and any applicable regulation. The management plan, recommendations, and eventual treatment designs must include guidance for species-specific protection, conservation, or restoration of critical habitat elements where RTE species exist. The appropriate state or federal agencies will be notified as required by applicable law and certification standards.

6.2. Exotic Species

- 6.2.1. ATFA Group Manager discourages the planting of exotic tree species. Group members must not actively propagate or disseminate any exotic species that are known to be invasive or to reduce local biodiversity through competition. If non-invasive exotic species are planted, the Group member will document the origin of the seed or plant and the location of planting. The Group member is responsible for keeping this record and for monitoring the planting site.
- 6.2.2. Group members shall develop a policy to control or remove existing or invading exotic plant species on their property. Exotic species control will not violate the policy on use of chemical herbicides. Appropriate control techniques are mechanical removal (by hand, herbivore, or machine), or targeted use of narrow spectrum, non-persistent herbicides. It is the responsibility of the Group members and land managers to monitor property for invasive exotic species—plant, animals, insects, fungi – so that prompt control is possible.

6.3. Conservation Zones & Protected Areas

- 6.3.1. ATFA Group Manager recognizes the value of identifying conservation zones and protected areas within the Group membership. These zones can serve as references areas that can help improve management goals and design. These areas can also enhance monitoring and research efforts. The Group encourages the development of conservation zones on Group member properties with special emphasis given in the following situations:

- The Member property contains rare, threatened, or endangered species or their habitats, or any identified High Conservation Values;
- The Member property has large areas of plantations (See the FSC US Forest Management Standard for minimum requirements of natural forest and late seral forest cover on plantation ownerships);
- The Member has a personal commitment to establishing protected areas or conservation zones;
- The property contains an area or habitat most appropriately managed through preservation.

6.3.2. The Group Manager verifies in Group member management plans that sufficient areas of conservation zones are designated. Most Group members protect a significant acreage by complying with the FSC US Forest Management Standard and state laws on watercourse buffer zones, and interior habitat requirements. Although the Group does not maintain a fine-scale map of all ownerships, it does maintain a region-wide map of point locations and verifies maps of property and protected areas within each individual management plan. Group members that do not meet Family Forest criteria with larger properties will endeavor to maintain a range of ecological successional stages.

6.3.3. The Group requires the management plan of each Group member not meeting Family Forest criteria to identify the location and extent of conservation areas. Although the Group will not map all conservation zones, it will verify during site visits and in Group member management plan maps that at least the minimum area is protected. Any changes to Group member ownership will be recorded in the Group database and reported to the Certification Body, as required under Section 1.3.4.

6.4. Forestry Practices

6.4.1. The ecology of local forests will be maintained, enhanced or restored by management activity. Group members maintain or create on their property biodiversity, productivity, natural processes, ecological successional pathways, forest regeneration, and old-growth stands and individual trees. The silvicultural practices on Group member property should promote and protect natural ecosystem function. Group members will use information on ecological succession, habitat, and land use patterns at various spatial scales to make decisions about forest management. Every Group member with a sufficiently large property will set a goal to restore rare native ecological communities.

6.4.2. Group members will use silviculture consistent with natural forest disturbance regimes. Silvicultural prescriptions will retain structural and biological diversity in the stand to maintain or restore productivity and habitat quality. That is, management will aim to retain areas including understory plants and advanced regeneration, a range of tree size and age classes, as appropriate to forest type, old-growth individual trees, animal habitat (e.g., logs, snags), and coarse woody debris. Even-aged silviculture may be used when necessary, within the restrictions of the FSC Standard. Silvicultural prescriptions will take into account natural disturbance risks such as fire and wind-throw, and attempt to minimize harm from such events. Any salvage harvest operations will consider ecological impacts, as well as economic benefits.

6.4.3. Existing old-growth stands, defined by FSC as stands (>100 years old) of more than 3 acres “that have never been logged or more than 20 acres that have been logged and display late successional / old-growth characteristics,” will not be harvested (except to maintain old growth characteristics for the latter example). The management plan of each owner will prescribe operational plans to protect water and soil quality. Road building and harvest operations will conform to detailed rules of FSC Criterion 6.5. Buffer zones around water bodies will at all times be respected. Minimal harvest activity may be allowed for restoration and fuels reduction reasons. Road construction and maintenance data will be collected by the member and Group as part of its annual monitoring), and will be evaluated during site visits by assessors.

6.5. Forest PESTICIDE USE GUIDELINES see Pesticide Policy in Group Program Procedures pg 19

6.5.1. ATFA Group Manager discourages the use of pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides if other methods are effective and feasible. The use of integrated pest management strategies should always be favored over the use of chemical pesticides, when feasible based on the precautionary principal and commonly accepted scientific evidence. Regular monitoring and vigilance is important protection against pest outbreaks. The Group acknowledges that in some circumstances exotic, invasive pests can only be effectively controlled with chemical pesticides. Permitted chemical compounds should only be used when justified based on the circumstances.

6.5.2. Evidence of use or improper storage of prohibited chemicals by a Group member or Member’s contractor will result in a corrective action request or precondition. The Group will suspend the membership of any Group

member who does not cease to use and store prohibited chemical pesticides. Prohibited chemicals include organochlorine and most chlorinated hydrocarbon-containing pesticides, known carcinogens, persistent, toxic and bio-accumulating pesticides, and all pesticides banned by international treaty or agreement.

- 6.5.3. When chemicals are used, they should be low toxicity, narrow spectrum, targeted to the pest or pathogen of interest, and should not be environmentally persistent. Group members must monitor the effects and impact of chemical use and keep records of each application (see sample pesticide use form in appendix). Workers must be informed of the risk of pesticide exposure and how to limit exposure.
- 6.5.4. Group members and their contractors must dispose of chemicals and chemical containers, including permitted pesticides, and fuel and oil containers, in an environmentally responsible manner. Equipment must be regularly checked for leaks, and parked outside of riparian zones. Spills must be identified, contained, and cleaned up immediately. Notice of spills must be given to state authorities as required by law. Group members must have procedures in place to contain and clean up any chemical spills before forest operations begin. These procedures must be explained in the management plan.
- 6.5.5. All applicators, whether the landowner, an employee or contractor, must follow the laws and manufacturer recommendations on the use of the chemical.
- 6.5.6. The Group Manager will record all uses of chemical pesticides by Group members on the Group Pesticide Use Record or in the management database. Records include:
- Trade name of the product
 - Location of the site treated
 - Area of the site treated in acres
 - Method of application
 - Total quantity of the chemical used in gallons.
- 6.5.7. The Group encourages forest management avoids or minimizes use of chemical pesticide if there are effective alternative practices available. Chemicals that are prohibited from use are listed on pages 16 to 18 of the FSC Policy on Pesticide Use. Use of these chemicals will lead to termination of Membership in the Group.

The FSC Policy on Pesticide Use is available at:
<http://www.fscus.org/images/documents/FSC-POL-30-601.pdf>

Group members must exercise care by reading the containers of any pesticides to find the active ingredient and verify that the compound is not prohibited by FSC and Group policy. Group members must also ensure that chemicals are never stored in unlabeled containers.

6.6. GMOs & Biological Control Agents

6.6.1. The use of biological control agents should generally be avoided unless it is a widely accepted agent that presents a low risk of harm. As with chemicals, the use of biological agents must be well-documented, and reported to the Group before use. If absolutely necessary, non-invasive exotic organisms may be used to control invasive, exotic species. Such practice must follow scientifically accepted methods, and must be used under strict monitoring on a limited scale.

6.6.2. Group members shall not use genetically modified organisms on their property for re-forestation, pest control, or any other reason. Genetically improved organisms, i.e., Mendelian cross breeding, such as improved domestic tree varieties, may be planted.

6.7. Conversion

6.7.1. Forest conversion of natural or semi natural forests to plantations or non-forest land uses shall not occur, except in circumstances where conversion:

- entails a very limited portion of the forest management unit (2% of certified area over a rolling 5 year period) ; and
- does not occur on high conservation value forest areas; and
- will enable clear, substantial, additional, secure, long term conservation benefits across the forest management unit

6.7.2. Natural or semi-natural stands are not converted to plantations. Degraded, semi-natural stands may be converted to restoration plantations.

- 6.7.3. Justification for land-use and stand-type conversions is fully described in the long-term management plan, and meets the biodiversity conservation requirements of Criterion 6.3 (see also Criterion 7.1)
- 6.7.4. Areas converted to non-forest use for facilities associated with subsurface mineral and gas rights transferred by prior owners, or other conversion outside the control of the certificate holder, are identified on maps. The forest owner or manager consults with the CB to determine if removal of these areas from the scope of the certificate is warranted. To the extent allowed by these transferred rights, the forest owner or manager exercises control over the location of surface disturbances in a manner that minimizes adverse environmental and social impacts.

7. Forest Management Plan

7.1.1.Procedure

7.1.2.Development of a forest management plan that meets FSC standards is a critical first step towards eligibility for the Group program. A property cannot be enrolled in the certified pool until a management plan is established that meets certification criteria See Forest Management Plan appendixes attached

7.1.3.Forest management plans meeting ATFA Group Manager requirements must:

- Expressly identify the management objective chosen as the course of action to be followed for each stand;
- Be updated at least every five years to record changes in inventory, landowner goals, site conditions, and other factors;
- Incorporate regeneration data as a key factor in making future harvesting decisions.

7.1.4. The management planning process includes several steps: As described on P

- Development and review of a management plan, submitted to ATFA Group Manager.
- Revision of the management plan based on ATFA Group Manager Requirements and comments received from the Group Manager, the landowner, or service provider.
- Finalization and acceptance of the management plan by the landowner, service provider, and the Group Manager. (See Group Enrollee Assessment procedures on Page 9)

7.1.5. Throughout the management planning process, the Group Manager is the party responsible for assuring that the certification standard is being maintained. The service provider and Group member are responsible for communicating with the Group Manager throughout the various steps, providing any requested information, and complying with Group policies. To maintain their certification, the Group member must follow the management prescriptions and procedures outlined in the approved management plan and or Group operations manual.

7.2. Management Plan Content

7.2.1. Each Group member will have a forest management plan document. This document can be scaled to the size of the property—larger properties will require more detail and analysis. Management plans should be updated at least once every 5 years. All management plans will state the following:

- Management objectives
- Description of the forest resource, including:
 - Explanation of forest management systems to be used, i.e., silviculture;
 - Explanation for the rate of proposed harvest;
 - Provisions for monitoring environmental conditions;
 - Means of protecting the environment from the impacts of management;
 - Means of identifying and protecting rare, threatened and endangered ecosystems and species, and HCVPs
 - Maps of the property, management units, protected areas, watercourses;
 - Explanation of timber harvest operational techniques planned.

7.3. Inventory

7.3.1. The Group member must have procedures in place to monitor:

- forest product yield;
- growth rates, regeneration and forest condition;
- composition of flora and fauna species;
- environmental and social impacts of forestry, and;
- costs, productivity and efficiency of forest management.

8. Monitoring

8.1. Monitoring

The table on under Certification Compliance and Performance Evaluation Protocol page describes the procedure by which Group members will be monitored within the Group.

8.2. Data Collection

8.2.1. Group members will report annually on timber harvest and reforestation.

Using the Annual Activity Report Form the Group Manager will collect data on the area harvested, restocked by planting and by natural regeneration from each Group member. The Annual Activity Report Reporting Form (DFLMG-DOC-014) will be compared with copies or original mill tally sheets from Group members. The Group Members annual reports will be summarized in the Group Annual Report (DFLMG-DOC-015).

8.3. Inventory Procedure

8.3.1. ATFA Group Manager will maintain,, an annual allowable cut calculation for each Member property, including the sum of AACs (group AAC) of the entire Membership. The entire Membership harvest will be tracked through annual monitoring to compute the group harvest volume. The group harvest of the entire Membership will not exceed the group AAC.

8.3.2. Group members must include procedures for forest inventory in their management plans. These properties will base AAC on forest inventory. The Group Manager will estimate an AAC based on soils, stand age, and species composition for small properties, as described below.

8.3.2.1. Steps to Determining AAC (Example Methods)

8.3.2.1.1. Option 1 - NRCS Soil Productivity Estimates

1. Go to NRCS's web soil survey:
<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm>
2. Click on "Start WSS"
3. Enter street address of property (or closest numerical street address to property) and click "view"
 - a. If necessary, navigate to property
4. Click "Area of Interest" (AOI) icon towards top of map. Click and drag cursor to outline area of interest
5. Click on "Soil Data Explorer" tab towards top of screen
6. Click on "Soil Reports" tab
7. Click on "Vegetative Productivity" in left hand column
8. Click on "Forest Productivity"
9. Click on "View Soil Report"

10. Record the “Volume of Wood Fiber” number (cu ft/acre) for the dominant soil type and tree species on the property. . This represents the annual timber growth rate for the property once the forest has reached its culmination of mean annual increment (e.g., 50 years old for low site ground).

8.3.2.1.2. Option 2 - Yield Tables

1. Determine age and dominant species in the stand or across the property.
2. Determine site index for stand.
3. Using a Yield Table for the forest type, look up gross volume for primary species by age and site index.
4. If gross volume is in cubic feet per acre, convert to board feet per acre by multiplying by 12.
5. Divide board feet by age of stand to determine average annual volume growth per acre.
6. Multiply average annual volume growth by number of acres to determine annual growth rate for stand or property.

9. High Conservation Value Forests

9.1. Role of Group Certification

9.1.1. Though most lands eligible for the Group program have been significantly altered from their condition prior to European settlement, forests and habitats with high conservation value do remain within the Group focus area. Group members manage their property for the property’s specific forest values, while the group as a whole manages HCVs in a coordinated fashion. While the matrix landscape (not FSC-certified) presents a risk to HCVs, the growth of the group activity leads to a larger coordinated HCV effort.

9.1.2. The Group uses a program of annual monitoring, appropriate to the size and vulnerability of the conservation attributes. The presence of, impacts on and mitigation of impact is monitored as part of the process using site visits, spot checks, Annual Reporting Form reporting. The Group Manager tracks the total area and type of HCVF that is protected at the group level. This monitoring will also quantify the impact of the group on HCVs to ensure that the net impact will be an increase in acres of protected HCVF.

9.1.3. High Conservation Value Forests are those that possess one or more of the following attributes:

- Forest areas containing globally, regionally, or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g., endemism, endangered species,

refugia); and/or large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.

- Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened, or endangered ecosystems.
- Forest areas that provide critical ecosystem services. See FSC Principle 5.5.
 - Habitat for old-growth/ late successional forest-dependent species;
 - Watershed protection;
 - Erosion control;
 - Protection of fish-bearing streams.
- Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g., subsistence, health) and/or critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).

9.1.4. It is important to note that high conservation value habitats are not limited to forests. The Group recognizes that Group member properties may include rare wetlands, prairies, shorelines, or other habitats in the forest that merit conservation. The Group requires that the management planning process include steps to identify intact natural communities within Group member properties. These communities can be identified through existing records and databases, interviews with the landowner, and site reconnaissance. Group staff will assist land owners/managers in verifying that appropriate steps are taken to determine the presence of HCVF attributes on Group member lands. The Group member's assessment will be conducted at the time of drafting or submitting the management plan to the Group manager. (See FSC Principle 9)

9.1.5. Group members will communicate to the Group Manager by completing the Annual Monitoring Form, in which Group members will state the types of management activity conducted, the locations (at the management unit level), possible or observed impact on HCVs (if they occur), and steps taken to reduce or mitigate harm to HCVs. The Group Manager will record this information in the Group records.

9.2. Framework

9.2.1. Group members must ensure their property is assessed for presence for high conservation value forests. The Group uses the framework developed by Gary Dodge, Director of Science & Certification for FSC-US. See FSC-US HCVF Draft Framework 20 July 2010.pdf at <http://www.fscus.org/documents/>. The assessment of HCVF for the Group is summarized in DFLMG-DOC-024. The assessment must also appear in the Group member forest management plan. At the time of joining, The Group Manager will verify the adequacy of the HCVF assessment and framework application. The framework will be used as a checklist to verify that Group members have properly identified HCVs, and can appropriately protect HCVFs.

9.3. Procedures

9.3.1. Group staff will verify procedures are followed to evaluate the effectiveness of Group member HCV assessments and that management plans have followed these procedures:

- Identify existing resources (maps, management plans, scientific and historical literature)
- Determine if HCVFs are present on the property of interest
- Consult with foresters and other resource professionals, the local community, and American Indian community
- If HCVF attributes are identified, the land manager will proceed to the next two steps below. In the absence of likely HCVs, the manager may stop here. However, Members must document the assessment and be aware of the possibility of later identification of HCVs because of, for example, new scientific knowledge or shifting habitat
- The Management Plan must address the likely impact of management on HCVF, and propose means of minimizing negative impacts
- There must be a monitoring plan to annually check the impact of management on HCVs. Monitoring must include field checks; and if management activities are causing negative impacts, the management plan must be adapted to attempt to reduce or eliminate the impact. Field checks can be informally conducted as part of other management activity.

9.3.2. Members will report in their Annual Forms responses for the following information about their property. Each item will specify whether the particular HCV is present and, if so, will describe its location, extent, and characteristics. See FSC Step by Step Guide, p. 18.

- Concentration of rare, threatened or endemic species
- Landscape-level contiguous forest area

- Rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems
- Area critical for:
 - watershed function
 - erosion control
 - fire barrier
- Basic needs of local community
- Area critical to cultural identity

9.3.3. For Group members who identify HCVFs on their property, The Group Manager will assist with the creation of site-specific management options. If a high conservation value habitat is identified, the management plan must provide information about the location, size, and composition of the habitat. The management plan must also provide detailed guidance for appropriate management that is in compliance with both FSC standards and the most current and reliable knowledge about effective protection, restoration, or maintenance of the identified habitat. The management must comply with all applicable regulations. Appropriate state or federal agencies must be contacted as required.

10. Plantations

10.1. Definitions

10.1.1. The definition of a plantation in the FSC US Forest Management Standard, Principle 10 is, “tree dominated areas substantially lacking in natural forest attributes that generally require human intervention to be maintained.” The highly productive landscape of the Southeast Region has long been used for industrial forestry with short rotations of even-aged single cohort, single species stands. These characteristics are found on at least part of many Group members’ properties. The Group promotes the use of silviculture in planted forests offer as an excellent opportunity to move the even-aged mono-specific stands into diverse species, age and structural composition.

Group members may maintain plantations on their property. Plantations on land converted from natural forest after 1994 are not typically certifiable if the owner is the party responsible for conversion unless the plantation is managed for restoration to semi-natural condition. Existing forest in High Conservation Value areas must not be converted to plantations or non-forest land uses such as agriculture.

Natural forest will be maintained or restored on properties with significant plantations. Areas of forest/Plantation that are to be restored are chosen using a landscape analysis focusing on enhancing native forest characteristics or providing important ecological benefits such as under-represented forest conditions or the social values associated with natural forest condition. Management plans should include rationale for selection and location of the area. Commonly underrepresented areas in the Southeast for example could include:

1. Mature forest conditions or Forested migratory corridors.
2. Successional habitat associated with prescribed burning in upland pine forests.

Ten percent of the area on properties under 100 acres will remain or be restored to natural forest, and 15% the area of properties from 100 to 1,000 acres will remain or be restored to natural forest, and 20% of the area on properties of 1,000 to 10,000 acres will remain or be restored to natural forest.

New planting will establish more diverse forest stands suited to each site. Nursery stock will be of local origin. See Section 5 **Error! Reference source not found.** on the GMO and exotic species policies. Soil fertility, forest health, e.g., risk of pest outbreak, fire damage, invasive species presence, and social impacts, will be monitored and protected by Members.

Appendix 1: FSC Standard Conformance Checklist

1. COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND FSC PRINCIPLES
 - a. Examine records for violations
 - b. Brief qualitative description of applicable laws. See FSC
2. TENURE AND USE RIGHTS
 - a. Are there any outstanding use rights and are they being observed?
3. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES RIGHTS
 - a. Are potentially impacted indigenous people consulted in forest planning phase?
 - b. Has there been a site inspection and contact with local NRCS office to determine if tribal sites (ex mounds or burial sites) are located on the property and are they protected?
4. COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND WORKERS RIGHTS
 - a. Are workers on the forest paid a competitive wages for the area?

- b. Are all safety laws observed and incorporated into service contracts?
- c. Have the potential social impacts or benefits of the forest management activities been evaluated? (see pre harvest activity planning form)

5. BENEFITS FROM THE FOREST

- a. Is the financial model for the operation sufficient to provide for long term sustainability?
- b. Are forest products fully utilized?
- c. Do management actions provide for protection or enhanced non-timber forest services such as fisheries, watersheds and wildlife?
- d. Are planned harvests of forest planning units or stands developed and incorporated to ensure that rate of harvest does not exceed levels that can be permanently maintained? See FMP' stand information (goals and planning)

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- a. Have environmental assessments, appropriate to the scale of operations, been made to assess the impacts of forest management (rare or threatened species and communities, water resources and stream habitat, soil resources)?
- b. Have impacts been mitigated to as much as practicable?
- c. Are rare and endangered species protected?
- d. Are keys ecological functions maintained intact, enhanced or restored?
- e. Are old growth stands and forests given special consideration for protection and does that protection maintain their value as old growth habitat
- f. Does forest management reasonably mimic natural forest processes?
- g. Are protection measures in place to insure long term forest soil productivity?
- h. Are adequate retention biodiversity measures in place to insure that biological values will be maintained or enhanced?
- i. If even- aged management is being used for conifer regeneration in existing conifer stands; do the stand opening sizes average 40 acres or less with out retention and no individual stand being greater than 80 acres without retention ?
- j. Are all forest openings with and without retention average less than 100 acres?
- k. Are harvested stands regenerated and fully stocked before harvesting adjacent stands?
- l. Are the different types and stages of forest ecosystems represented in the forest planning?
- m. Are unique ecosystems afforded special protection and management?
- n. Are written guidelines provided in the management plan that address forest and soil protection and are these measure put into place on the ground.
- o. Are watercourses adequately protected?
- p. Does the management scheme provide for minimized use or phase out of chemicals?
- q. If pesticides are used, are they on the list permitted by FSC and are they applied or contracted by state licensed applicators and according to the label. The pesticide use record must be used to document application of all pesticide use.
- r. Are genetically modified organisms used as a part of the overall

management scheme?

- s. Are there exotic pests and are they being managed for eventual removal?
- t. Is any part of the forested ownership being converted to non-forest use or plantations? If so are there sufficient tradeoffs occurring that will enable substantial, secure long-term conservation benefits?

7. FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN(FMP)- see attached sample FMP templates

Development of a forest management plan that meets FSC standards is a critical first step towards eligibility for the Group program. A property cannot be enrolled in the certified pool until a management plan is established that meets certification criteria with the minimum components below and approved by Group Manager

- a. Management objectives.
- b. Description of the forest resources to be managed, environmental limitations, land use and ownership status, socio-economic conditions, and a profile of adjacent lands.
- c. Description of silvicultural and/or other management system, based on the ecology of the forest in question and information gathered through resource inventories.
- d. Rationale for rate of annual harvest and species selection.
- e. Provisions for monitoring of forest growth and dynamics.
- f. Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments.
- g. Plans for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species.
- h. Maps describing the forest resource base including protected areas, planned management activities and land ownership.
- i. Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used.

8. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

- a. Are inventories updated and adjusted at least every ten years or between harvest entries so as to validate growth/yield assumptions?
- b. Do monitoring efforts provide for accurate assessments of other critical biological processes within the forest?

9. MAINTENANCE OF HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE FOREST (HCVF)

- a. Has the property been assessed for HCVF and are there any identified high conservation value forests (HCVF's) or attributes on the property? See Group HCVF policy
- b. If HCVF's are present, is prescribed management for those areas consistent with the maintenance of those HCVF's?

10. PLANTATIONS

- a. Is intensively managed plantations part of the management strategy?
- b. Has the ATFA been notified before harvesting for plantation establishment on land that was not recently plantation or agriculture
- c. Has there been an analysis areas of the forest and or plantations to be restored to

natural conditions to meet minimum percentages of natural/semi-natural forest condition:

- For 100 acres or less, at least 10 percent
- For 101 – 1,000 acres or less, at least 15 percent
- For 1001-10,000 acres or less, at least 20 percent
- For > 10,000 acres or less, at least 25 percent

Appendix 2 – Samples of Forest Operation Monitoring Forms, Checklists and Contract language

1. Sample questions to be considered before and reviewed post after harvest or other forest operations:

- 1) What is the stand condition (does the stocking meet what was prescribed in the harvest plan or management plan, how much stand damage occurred)?
- 2) Is erosion control implemented as proposed?
- 3) Are there any future plans for vegetation management or planting?
- 4) Were there any special concern areas retained or harvested with different prescriptions (e.g. stream zones, retention of biological legacies, endangered species buffers, etc)?
- 5) Were there any responses to the required notice of operations? If so, how did you address them?
- 6) Are there any sites of tribal significance protected in the treated area? Was there any tribal involvement or interest during or prior to operations?
- 7) Were there other specific mitigations prescribed in the harvest plan or **FMP** that need to be addressed?
- 8) Were there any notices of violation on this operation?
- 9) Did the volume removed fall within the allowable harvest levels as identified in the FMP or management plan?
- 10) Have there been any environmental or landscape changes (natural or man caused) that would trigger amendments to the FMP or management plan?
- 11) Have there been any regulatory changes that should be incorporated into the FMP or management plan?
- 12) Does this operation complete harvesting (or management) in this unit? If so, has the site been properly closed?
- 13) Were the forest products sold under FSC certification properly documented for Chain of Custody?

2. Sample Contract language that can be inserted in sales and service contracts to meet FSC legal and safety requirements.

Contractor shall, in its performance of this contract, comply with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes, rules of law, ordinances, regulations, and regulatory orders, including but not limited to the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended, Walsh-Healy Act, Robinson-Patman Act, applicable State Workers' Compensation laws, state and federal Occupational Safety and Health Acts, and all rules and regulations passed pursuant thereto, which are incorporated herein by this reference. Contractor agrees to be subject to all applicable contract clauses required by federal, state or local law, rule or regulation to be included in this contract, including but not limited to the following clauses, which are incorporated herein by this reference: Equal Opportunity Clause (41 CFR 60.1.4); Affirmative Action Clause for Disabled Veterans and Veterans of the Vietnam Era (41 CFR 60-250.4); Affirmative Action Clause for Handicapped Workers (41 CFR 60-741.4); and the Certification of Nonsegregated Facilities Clause (41 CFR 60.1.8; 41 CFR 1-12.803.10). In addition, Contractor agrees and certifies, if applicable, that it has developed a written affirmative action compliance program (41 CFR 60-1.40(a)) and annually files Standard Form 100 (EEO-1) (41 CFR 60-1.7 (a)).

The Contractor attests that it has verified the employment eligibility of all its employees and will continue to do so in compliance with the Immigration Reform Act of 1986 and its implementing regulations. The Contractor further attests that it is familiar with the requirements of the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act and its implementing regulations and it will continue to comply with the registration and information reporting requirements of that act. The Contractor agrees to indemnify Company for any claims against Company based upon the Contractor's failure to be in compliance with statutory and administrative requirements including without limitation the Immigration Reform Act of 1986 and the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act. This indemnification shall include but not be limited to attorney's fees, costs, fines and judgments or settlements.

State Best Management Practices for Forestry (BMP's) applicable to Contractor's performance shall be followed during all of Contractor's operations under this agreement. In order for the Company to comply with its commitments to SFI and applicable BMP's and law, the Landowner shall have the right to suspend Contractor's logging operations during periods of wet weather, which may occur from time to time, as determined by the Company in its sole discretion.

3. Sample before Harvest Operations Checklist

BEFORE HARVEST /OPERATIONS CHECKLIST				
FMP harvest tract map included	Y	N	Contract ID#	
Tract:	County:		State:	
tract description- hdwd, pine, mixed, natural,semi natural plantation (other):				
Completed By:	Date:		Auth. #	
FSC Group Manager notification:	Y	N	Neighbor notification:	Y N NA
Landowner Informed About FSC,SFI, BMP's, Reforestation:			Y	N NA
Harvest Type:	Clearcut		Thin	Select Salvage
On-Site Prework conference Conducted?	Y		N	
Tract Evaluated For Presence Of T&E Species, Critically Imperiled and Imperiled Species, Forests of Exceptional Conservation Value (HCVF), Rare Plant Communities, Invasive Species If found, identify and list species. (Use appropriate county or topographic maps).				
RTE species:(G1-G3,S1-S3)	Y	N		
FECV/HCVF	Y	N		
Invasive Species	Y	N		
Disease indicators	Y	N		
Natural Forest Conversion	Y	N		
Species Habitat Requirements Reviewed:			Y	N
Species Habitat Found:			Y	N
Habitat Clearly Identified On The Ground:			Y	N
Does Harvest Type Meet Species Requirements?			Y	N NA
Special Sites Present:			Y	N
Identify Site:	Cultural	Ecological	Geological	Historical
How Protected:		Boundary	No Cut	Buffer
Tract Specifics:				
Aesthetics Consideration Level:	Low		Medium	High
SMZ's Established:	Y		N	NA
Cutting Boundaries Clearly Identified:	Y		N	
Logging Conditions:	All year		AVE	Dry Weather
Topography:	Flat		Rolling	Steep
Soil Erosion Potential:	Low		Medium	High
Soil Compaction Potential:	Low		Medium	High
Weight Limits on Haul Route:	Y		N	NA
Appropriate retention is maintained and protected.	Y		N	NA
Harvest Opening w/o retention avg < 40 acres, max 80 acres	Y		N	NA
All Harvest Opening average 100 acres or less	Y		N	NA
Road Work Required:				
Construct:	Y	N	Miles	
Upgrade:	Y	N	Miles	
Surfacing:	Y	N	Yd ³	
Culverts:	Y	N	Number/Size	
Stream Crossings:	Y	N	Type:	
Other Considerations:				
Comments:				

4. Sample Checklist to be used for evaluation of completed Harvest/Operations

AFTER HARVEST/OPERATION CHECKLIST				
Tract: _____		County: _____		Logger: _____
Date: _____		By: _____		
Type Operatoin: Clearcut, Select, Thin, Road work, Other _____ (Circle One)				
FSC / SFI Operational Plans policies compliant (circle each that applies)				
Item	Miles/Size	YES	NO	NA
All merchantable timber purchased harvested & hauled?				
Logging slash removed from standing trees around landing?				
Were all boundary lines protected/repared?				
All tops and debris removed from streams?				
All temporary stream crossing properly removed?				
All trash removed?				
All oil leaks and spills properly cleaned up and disposed of?				
Was equipment appropriate for site?				
Roads stabilized?				
Surfacing required? Estimated amount (yd ³).				
Will silt screen, mulch, or hay bales be needed?				
Will seed, or fertilizer be needed?				
Are new or replaced culverts needed and properly installed?				
Skid trails to be stabilized?				
landings require stabilizing?				
Do any areas require disking due to excessive rutting?				
Do any stream crossings require stabilizing?				
Will roadwork be completed within 60 days and approved?*				
Has landowner approved all closure work?				
Threatened & Endangered species/habitat properly protected?				
Critically Imp./Imperiled species/habitat properly protected?				
Special Sites properly protected?				
Aesthetic measures applied?				
Number of skid trails minimized?				
Stream crossings effective in protecting water quality?				
Damage to residual stand minimized/acceptable?				
Harvesting plan properly followed?				
Was any timber or road damaged on adjacent landowner?				
Comments:				
exotice/invasives noted/mapped				
Any Neighbor stakeholders concerns/ addressed				
was forest retention adequate for forest openings?				
Other environmental and or social impacts				

*If roadwork cannot be completed within 60 days, tract should be moved to long term completion folder.

5. Sample Checklist to use for monitoring and evaluating ongoing Harvest or other Forest Operations.

DURING HARVEST CHECKLIST			
Date Inspected: _____		Inspector: _____ Contractor: _____	
Tract: _____		County: _____ Opened: _____ Auth. # _____	
T & E Species Present? Y N	Species _____	Habitat Identified on the Ground? Y N	
Species of Concern Present? Y N	Species _____	Habitat Identified on the Ground? Y N	
Species of Interest Present? Y N	Species _____	Habitat Identified on the Ground? Y N	
Cr. Imperiled/Imperiled Sp. Present? Y N	Species _____	Habitat Identified on the Ground? Y N	
Proper Timber Harvesting Guidelines Being Followed For The Species or habitat If Present? Y N			
BMPs followed and SMZ functions and structure maintained			
If Not, Explain Why and Action Taken: _____			
Debris Removed From Surface and Ditches of Permanent Roads? Y N NA			
Road Rutting? Moderate __, Severe __, Slight __, NA __		Drainage Devices Protected? Y N NA	
Skidding on Permanent Roads or in Ditches? Y N NA		Temporary Stream Crossings Removed? Y N NA	
Skidding at 90 Degree Angle To Stream? Y N NA		Mud Tracked Onto Public Roads? Y N NA	
Skidder Rutting? Moderate __, Severe __, Slight __, NA __		Number Skid Trails Minimized? Y N NA	
Skidding in Stream Channels/Natural Drainage? Y N NA		Landings Located Outside SMZ's? Y N NA	
Tops and Debris Removed From Streams? Y N NA		Landings Stabilized and Trash Free? Y N NA	
Logging Slash Left Around Standing Trees? Y N NA		Special Sites Protected? Y N NA	
Oil Leaks or Spills Disposed of Properly? Y N NA		Boundary/Cutting Lines Violated? Y N NA	
Products Merchandised Properly? Y N		If No, Describe Action Taken. _____	
Stumps Proper Height? Y N		_____	
Merchantable material left on landings? Y N		_____	
Warning Signs At Entrance To Public Roads? Y N		_____	
PPE Being Worn? Y N		_____	
Residual Stand Damage? Moderate __, Severe __, Slight __, NA __			
COMMENTS:			
invasive species discovered? _____			
any neighbors/public concerns? _____			

6. Sample Pesticide Use record for stand and invasive species stand treatments

ATFA Group Member: _____ see ATFA pesticide policy and guidelines

Pesticide Used (Brand Name)	Active Ingredient(s)	Date of use	Amount Used	Application method	Forest unit/stand	Acres/Hectares	Target Pest

Attach Pesticide applicator's prescription plan and application records for each stand including locator and GPS maps.

Prescription information:

Site Specific Hazards:

Environmental risks:

Worker and application precautions: ex(health risks, safety equipment , training)

Effectiveness Evaluation (1 -12 months after application) and notes:

Appendix 3: Template for Management Plan



Template for Management Plan

For

INTRODUCTION **Prepared by**

A management plan is intended as a “blueprint” to guide forestry-related activities on the property. The plan is a tool to assist in achieving management goals, not a goal in itself. The management plan may be the greatest source of information on the property compiled in one document, but it seeks to remain concise and thus cannot include all relevant information. Significant management undertakings (such as timber sales or the establishment of wildlife forage plots) should be accompanied by shorter but more detailed and specific plans. Management plans are not rigid and may be revised when desired, strategic, or necessary (as in the event of a natural catastrophe). These plans are not written to last decades; they usually span five to ten years. As time passes new information is discovered about natural resource functions and new ideas emerge to manage in accordance with the new information. This plan is designed for a 5 year period before revision, but can be amended at any time. A public summary of the management plan is available if requested.

When followed by the landowner and carried out by the certified Resource Manager), this management plan will enable the ATFA group member to be recognized by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) as a “certified forest” and thus allow the landowner to receive any benefits which may arise from this distinction. The FSC is an international organization recognized for establishing high standards of forest and land management through third-party audits and chain-of-custody verification.

VISION AND GOALS FOR THE PROPERTY

Short-term goals –

Long-term goals -

OWNERSHIP AND PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Ownership –

Legal description-

Location –Description of forest resource on the property-

Environmental limitations (if any) -

Landscape description-

Adjacent holdings –

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Land use history-

Cultural heritage and legacy features –

FOREST INVENTORY AND MONITORING

Description of inventory system –

Results of forest inventory-

Determination of annual or Periodic growth rate –

Rational for determining annual/periodic harvest –

Yields of forest products harvested –

Costs, productivity, and efficiency of forest management activities -

SILVICULTURE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Description of the silvicultural system –

Management Scheduling –

Forest Health-

Fire-

Invasive species-

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS, SAFEGUARDS, MONITORING

Stream and water quality considerations –

Environmental assessments and monitoring (harvesting and other activities) –

Use of chemicals (herbicides/insecticides) –

Resource monitoring –

Invasive species –

IDENTIFICATION AND PROTECTION OF RTE SPECIES

List of possible RTE species and presence on the property–

Safeguards to protect RTE species and their habitat (if present)-

Monitoring of RTE species habitat (if present)-

IDENTIFICATION AND PROTECTION OF HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE AREAS AND OTHER SPECIAL AREAS ON THE FOREST

Type of area-

Consultation for determination –

Measures to protect these areas -

DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION OF HARVESTING TECHNIQUES AND EQUIPMENT TO BE USED

Sites that may have equipment or other restrictions for harvesting -

Types of harvesting operations and equipment that may be used –

Precautions to be used to match the equipment and procedure to the site-

Appendix I: Stand Summary Table

Appendix II: Stand Information and Recommendations

Appendix III: Management Scheduling- Summary of Stand Recommendations by Year of Operation

Appendix IV: List of Stand and Stand Types on the Property

Appendix V: Landowner Information Documents

MAPS OF THE PROPERTY

Forest Stewardship



Instructions to Complete Management Plan

For

Prepared by

INTRODUCTION

A management plan is intended as a “blueprint” to guide forestry-related activities on the property. The plan is a tool to assist in achieving management goals, not a goal in itself. The management plan may be the greatest source of information on the property compiled in one document, but it seeks to remain concise and thus cannot include all relevant information. Significant management undertakings (such as timber sales or the establishment of wildlife forage plots) should be accompanied by shorter but more detailed and specific plans. Management plans are not rigid and may be revised when desired, strategic, or necessary (as in the event of a natural catastrophe). These plans are not written to last decades; they usually span five to ten years. As time passes new information is discovered about natural resource functions and new ideas emerge to manage in accordance with the new information. This plan is designed for a 5 year period before revision, but can be amended at any time. A public summary of the management plan is available if requested.

When followed by the landowner and carried out by the certified Resource Manager), this management plan will enable the _____ Forest to be recognized by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) as a “certified forest” and thus allow the landowner to receive any benefits which may arise from this distinction. The FSC is an international organization recognized for establishing high standards of forest and land management through third-party audits and chain-of-custody verification.

VISION AND GOALS FOR THE PROPERTY

Short-term goals – e.g., improve stand composition; improve age and size class distribution; promote forest health; improve road system; boundary line marking and maintenance.

Long-term goals – e.g., provide sustainable income; provide recreational activities such as hunting and fishing; estate for the family

OWNERSHIP AND PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Ownership – Give owners name and address, ownership type (private), size of property

Legal description-The property is approximately 684 acres, located in sections 23,24,25, and 26, T14N, R 1W-1E, and in sections 7 and 18, T 14 N, R 2 E in Marengo County, Alabama (see maps included with management plan)

Location – Boundaries; relation to roads, streams, etc.

Description of forest resource on the property- forest types; stocking; road system; water resources; geology; soils, minerals

Environmental limitations (if any) - e.g. areas that can not be logged under wet conditions; steep slopes, wetlands

Landscape description- is it in a forest setting or surrounded by agriculture or other uses on a broad level;

Adjacent holdings – type of ownership and land use; private properties, state, federal, parks, etc.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Land use history- early settlement to present; what has been the use? agriculture, grazing, timber

Cultural heritage and legacy features – are there any features such as cemeteries, dwellings, Indian mounds, etc. Has this been verified by authorities such as local NRCS office cultural survey information or recognized tribes in the state. ?

FOREST INVENTORY AND MONITORING

Description of inventory system – Methods, design, frequency, measurements obtained (for forest and non forest products and uses). Has there been a cruise of the property? How was it done? Who did it?

Results of forest inventory- Should include a general description of forest and stands here (forest types, stand sizes, composition, age, stocking, etc. and then say SEE Appendix I for detailed forest and stand information). If information is available you should also include stand and stock tables showing numbers of trees by DBH class and volumes of material by species, size, e.g. forest cover types species composition, volume and stock tables. (Much of this information is likely covered in existing management plans under the section on **Stand Information and Recommendation Tables and in the Stand Summary Table**)

Determination of annual growth rate – how it is done/predicted. How do you determine how much to harvest and maintain a sustainable harvest? In some cases this may simply mean showing your intent to reforest and grow another rotation on the same volume of timber over a given time span? (See section 8 Monitoring in this manual)

Rational for determining annual/periodic harvest – Area regulation; volume regulation based on growth predictions, cruises, other considerations; some combination of the two

Yields of forest products harvested – system for monitoring yearly/periodic summaries. What kind of records do you keep of harvests? Stumpage sales? Delivered volumes? (records must be kept for 5 years)

Costs, productivity, and efficiency of forest management activities – Indicate kind of records you keep on expenses and income. These do not have to be shown, only that you keep records sufficient to show that it is an economic venture or acceptable for other reasons.

SILVICULTURE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Description of the silvicultural system – Even-aged vs. uneven-aged; regeneration methods (plantation, shelterwood, seed tree); intermediate treatments (thinning, pruning, fertilization etc.); justification for use of the system (e.g., natural system for the species, economics, etc.)(**This definitely needs to be addressed if not already done so in your current management plan; may need professional help on this one**)

Management Scheduling – Will constitute a major portion of the management plan. Stand level descriptions and recommendations for 10 year planning period. This is probably already given in your current management plan under **Stand Information and Recommendations and Recommendations Summary Table**. If so you can simply refer to it in the plan

Forest Health- possible insect and disease problems; integrated pest management procedures such as surveys, use of thinning, use of chemicals, etc. (This may already be addressed in your current plan. If so simply refer to it)

Fire-protection procedures, use of prescribed fire. Who is responsible for protection? Is an approved burn plan completed and followed. Do you use prescribed fire? How and when?

Invasive species- list of species; control procedures. Do you have invasive species? What are you doing to control them or prevent spread?

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS, SAFEGUARDS, MONITORING

Stream and water quality considerations – BMPs; road and trail construction and maintenance; logging damage from rutting and excessive soil movement. (This may be addressed in your current management plan under **Best Management Practices and SMZs but may need some elaboration**).

Environmental assessments and monitoring (harvesting and other activities) – pre-harvest assessment; ongoing assessment; close-out inspection forms should be used to ensure this

process is adequate and effective. It is recommended that check-off sheets or forms are used that are prepared for that purpose (see examples attached). You should be able to show that you or your manager visits the harvest sites with the contractor before harvest to make sure everyone knows what is to be done. This should include a harvest contract. This should also show that visits are made to the site during operations and that a final close out visit is made.

Use of chemicals (herbicides/insecticides) – possible chemicals to be used; how application will be done (contract?); precautions; justification for use

Resource monitoring – how it will be done (inventory cruises; observation of roads, trails, and streams; illegal activity on the forest; products harvested. How do you keep up with what is happening on the forest including growth and yield?

Invasive species – identification; monitoring; control measures (**may already be included in your plan, if not it must be addressed**)

IDENTIFICATION AND PROTECTION OF RTE SPECIES

List of possible RTE species and presence on the property– are they present? Who made the determination? Nature Conservancy, Natural Heritage Foundation, State Wildlife Agency; how was evaluation done?

Safeguards to protect RTE species and their habitat (if present) - Conservation zones; protection from inappropriate hunting, etc.

Monitoring of RTE species habitat (if present) - Methods to be used. If present, this is usually done by periodic visits to see that the habitat has not been disturbed by natural or man-caused events.

IDENTIFICATION AND PROTECTION OF HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE AREAS AND OTHER SPECIAL AREAS ON THE FOREST

Type of area- This may include RTE habitat, archeological sites, cultural sites, ceremonial sites, unique stands, rare plant communities, caves, wetlands, etc. High Conservation Value areas are areas that can be managed and harvested but the attributes that make it high conservation must be maintained. Most private landowners will not have High Conservation Value (HCV) areas but may have special areas that need protection.

Consultation for determination - Natural Heritage Foundation, Nature Conservancy, Wildlife Foundation, The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) office.

Measures to protect these areas – Some may have total protection (no harvest), but for most it may mean modification of how they are harvested to protect the conservation value.

DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION OF HARVESTING TECHNIQUES AND EQUIPMENT TO BE USED

Sites that may have equipment or other restrictions for harvesting – Simply list these if present

Types of harvesting operations and equipment that may be used – chain saw felling; feller-buncher; processor, etc. Should list possibilities for use as well as those that will not be permitted.

Precautions to be used to match the equipment and procedure to the site – e.g., on steep slopes may not use feller bunchers, may have to use cable skidding.

Appendix I: Stand Summary Table

Appendix II: Stand Information and Recommendations

Appendix III: Management Scheduling- Summary of Stand Recommendations by Year of Operation

Appendix IV: List of Stands and Stand Types on the Property

Appendix V: Landowner information Documents

MAPS OF THE PROPERTY

Forest Stewardship



Example Management Plan

For

INTRODUCTION

Prepared by

A management plan is intended as a “blueprint” to guide forestry-related activities on the property. The plan is a tool to assist in achieving management goals, not a goal in itself. The management plan may be the greatest source of information on the property compiled in one document, but it seeks to remain concise and thus cannot include all relevant information. Significant management undertakings (such as timber sales or the establishment of wildlife forage plots) should be accompanied by shorter but more detailed and specific plans. Management plans are not rigid and may be revised when desired, strategic, or necessary (as in the event of a natural catastrophe). These plans are not written to last decades; they usually span five to ten years. As time passes new information is discovered about natural resource functions and new ideas emerge to manage in accordance with the new information. This plan is designed for a 5 year period before revision, but can be amended at any time in response to new knowledge obtained from monitoring or research, or in response to changes in the forest due to unplanned disturbances. A public summary of the management plan, not containing proprietary information, is available if requested.

When followed by the landowner and carried out by the certified Resource Manager), this management plan will enable the _____ Forest to be recognized by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) as a “certified forest” and thus allow the landowner to receive any benefits which may arise from this distinction. The FSC is an international organization recognized for establishing high standards of forest and land management through third-party audits and chain-of-custody verification.

VISION AND GOALS FOR THE PROPERTY

Short-term goals – The immediate goals for management on the forest are: (1) to improve health and productivity of the resource, and (2) improve the infrastructure of the forest, i.e., the road and trail system, boundary lines, and access to the forest. Some areas on the forest are under stocked with desirable species and/or suffer from severe competition from less desirable species. Other areas are over stocked and in poor health. Also, the diameter distribution of desirable species is not satisfactory for a balanced forest. Most stands are in mid-to-late rotation ages with little area in the regeneration or sapling size classes. Roads on the property are in fairly good shape but need to be improved to facilitate drainage and improve year-round access. Gates need to be installed at a couple of points to prevent illegal access.

Long-term goals – The owner’s long-term desires for management on the forest are to: (1) to provide a sustainable income and an estate for the family, and (2) to create and maintain a forest with desirable aesthetic values and good recreational opportunities, mostly hunting, for the family.

OWNERSHIP AND PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Ownership – This management plan has been prepared for a ____ acre private tract of land owned by _____ at _____ .

Legal description- The property is approximately 684 acres, located in sections ____ and ____, T 14 N, R 2 E in ____ County, Alabama (see maps included with management plan). The owners have a clear deed to the property registered in -----and there are no disputes regarding ownership. The owners have title to mineral rights on the property and there are no lease arrangements for use of the property. Should disputes arise over ownership or use an attempt will be made to resolve them by open communication before resorting to the justice system.

Location description– The property is located approximately 15 miles southwest of _____, AL on State Highway _____. It is bounded on the east by State Highway ____ and on the north by County Road _____. Jones Creek forms the western boundary of the property and _____ Creek, a small tributary of Jones creek, forms the southern boundary. Blazed yellow trees are painted on all property lines.

Description of resources on the property- The property is located in the Southern Pine Hills District of the Coastal Plain Section of Alabama. Especially in the lower coastal plain (Pine Hills District), the topography is fairly flat with gently sloping hills. The relatively young soils are primarily Ruston, Smithdale, and Orangeburg that are deep, moderately well drained soils. Erosion hazard is low-moderated on these gently sloping soils.

There are four distinct forest cover types on the forest (See forest type map). Bottomland hardwoods occur on the relatively narrow floodplains along Jones Creek on the western side and the tributary on the south. The largest cover type on the forest is a natural 60 year-old stand of mixed loblolly pine/hardwoods on the northern part of the property. A fifteen-year-old natural stand of loblolly pine that regenerated on an abandoned field occurs in the middle of the property. The fourth stand that occurs on the southern part of the property is a 40-year-old mixed stand of loblolly and longleaf pine with hardwood in the understory.

There are two roads on the property. One is a well maintained road that enters the property from the County Road on the north and follows Jones creek to the intersection with the tributary stream. The second road also enters the property from the County Road but near the northeastern corner of the property. This road winds southwest until it intersects the other road about three quarters of the distance to the southern boundary of the property. It was constructed as a logging road and needs work to reduce erosion and make it into an all weather road.

Soil types on the property were identified using the USDA ----- county Soil Survey Manual and are identified as -----, -----, -----, and. There are no areas on the forest that are considered to be fragile or unique for that area.

Most of the headwaters on Jones Creek and its tributary are forested so the streams are relatively clear and free of sediment. Jones Creek is fishable for warm water fishes.

There are no known mineral resources on the property, and non-timber forest products are not harvested on the property.

Environmental limitations – Because of the soils and gentle topography, there are no serious limitations to harvesting or other operations on the property. Logging will be restricted during conditions when the soil is saturated. State BMP practices will be followed to protect stream quality.

Landscape description- The property is located in a heavily forested landscape that includes loblolly, slash, and longleaf pine plantations, natural stands of loblolly and longleaf pines, mixed stands of pines and hardwoods, and bottomland hardwood stands. There are some large areas of pasture land and some scattered row crop areas.

Adjacent holdings – All holdings immediately surrounding the property are forested. The property on the west side is owned by an investment company and all other property is owned by private non-industrial owners. The type of forestry practiced and methods used on those forested properties is essentially the same as practiced on the ----- property. Adjacent landowners that may be affected by operations on the forest will be notified before the operations begin.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Land use history- Before European settlement, the area was heavily forested with pine stands, mixed pine/hardwoods, and bottomland hardwoods. With European settlement, clearing began in the mid 1700's for agriculture and grazing. Rapid clearing of the forests occurred after the civil war with railroad expansion and portable sawmills. By the 1930's, the effects of commercial agriculture, industrial logging, and urbanization had almost completely cleared the forests of the area. Since that time, ownership of the land has undergone several changes from small farm holdings to large timber holdings and back to private non-industrial ownership. Most of the area in which the -----forest is located is now in timber production.

Cultural heritage and legacy features – There is one old family cemetery located on the property. The boundaries of the cemetery are well marked and it will be preserved. Family members of the deceased will be permitted to visit the site and to maintain the grave sites. The district NRCS office has been contacted to inquire if significant cultural sites to occur on the property. There are no historical structures on the forest, nor any traditional or customary rights of use or access. Also, there are no indigenous people's ceremonial or archeological sites.

FOREST INVENTORY AND MONITORING

Description of inventory system – There are a number of acceptable and satisfactory methods for doing forest inventory and monitoring. Under all methods, the stands and forest are “cruised” or measured to determine desired attributes such forest type, age, composition, size class distribution, density, and volume. Other attributes such as regeneration and need for silvicultural practices may also be noted. These methods vary in intensity and type data obtained from use of Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) and permanent sample plots to prism cruising and even estimates made from aerial photos. In this case, the decision was made to do a 10% cruise using the line/plot method in which 1/5 acre plots are systematically located along cruise lines in the forest. This method also permits establishment of stand boundaries in the forest. Inventories of this type will be conducted at five year intervals and can be used not only as a source of information for management decisions but also as a control to determine growth and yield and to ensure that harvest does not exceed growth. (Most plans would have more elaboration than this)

Results of forest inventory- Should **include a general description of forest and stands here (forest types, stand sizes, composition, age, stocking, etc. and then (SEE APPENDIX I for detailed forest and stand information)).** (**NOTE:** Most of this information is likely covered in the existing management plans under the section on **Stand Information and Recommendations** so you can simply refer to it here. However, if information is available you should also include stand and stock tables showing numbers of trees by DBH class and volumes of material by species, size, etc. e.g., forest cover types, species composition, volume and stock tables

Determination of annual growth rate – Annual and periodic growth rates will be determined from the 5 year cruises of the forest and from tree increment cores using stratified sampling to represent species and size classes in the forest. Predictions will account for the volume and size of material removed in periodic harvests. (**Note:** There are numerous ways to determine annual or periodic growth, but you need some base estimate of volume to begin with, such as obtained from a cruise. Growth can then be estimated from Forest and Inventory Analysis (FIA) data obtained from the USFS or it may be obtained using appropriate growth models. For smaller holdings this requirement may be satisfied simply by stating the determination to grow a stand, with periodic harvests, to rotation and then regenerating the stand to maintain sustainability over the length of the rotations)

Rational for determining annual/periodic harvest – Periodic harvests will be made on the forests. Harvests are tentatively scheduled at 5 year intervals, but may vary somewhat depending on such things as weather conditions and market conditions. At each harvest, it is planned to harvest approximately the volume of growth occurring between harvests. This volume may vary depending on markets and silvicultural needs, but over a 10 year period the harvest will not exceed growth. (**NOTE:** Periodic harvest may be determined using area regulation rather than

volume regulation, e.g., if you have a 1000 acre forest and are on a 50 year rotation, you may harvest 20 acres every year or 100 acres every 5 years).

Yields of forest products harvested – Records will be maintained of products harvested from the forest. These records will include sales records for each sale, records of delivered products, and value to the owner of these products. Records such as trip or load tickets and scale tickets will be maintained sufficient to allow tracking of products from the forest to the mill. Records will be maintained for at least 5 years.

Costs, productivity, and efficiency of forest management activities – Records of all management activities on the forest will be maintained. These records will include a detailed explanation of the activity, how it was performed (e.g. by contractor), cost of the operation, and if available, the efficiency and benefits to the forest and the owner.

SILVICULTURE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Description of silvicultural system – An even-aged system of silviculture, using natural and artificial methods of regeneration, will be used on the property. Even-aged stands are the most common natural condition for both pine and hardwood stands. They are also best in terms of simplicity of management. For bottomland hardwood stands, the management objective is to produce high-quality sawtimber trees, and the stands will be regenerated using the shelterwood method of regeneration. In regenerating hardwoods, special emphasis will be placed on timing of the harvests to take advantage of heavy seed crops and/or advanced regeneration of the desirable species. Some supplemental planting of hardwoods may be necessary where desirable seed trees are not present. Emphasis of intermediate harvests in hardwood stands, in addition to income production, will be to upgrade the stand in terms of composition and quality of final crop trees.

Pine on upland sites will be grown on rotations suitable for the production of high value products such as utility poles, sawtimber, and veneer. Rotation lengths of 40-50 years will be used. Natural regeneration using seed tree or shelterwood methods will be used, and longleaf pine will be favored whenever possible. Artificial regeneration, particularly for longleaf pine, may be necessary where a sufficient natural seed source is not available or where site conditions, such as severe competition, may prevent natural regeneration. Intermediate treatments may include pine and hardwood release treatments if necessary, pre-commercial thinning, timber stand improvement, and commercial thinning.

Management Scheduling – Stand level descriptions and recommendations for 10 year planning period. Again, you should give a general description of the process for arriving at scheduling and recommendations for the property and stands and then simply say see Appendix II for stand level scheduling and recommendations. **(This will constitute a large part of the management**

plan. It is the section in current management plans on Stand Information and Recommendations, Stand Summary Table, and Recommendation Summary Table). If this is used as a supplement to an existing plan, you can simply cite that part of the existing plan.

Prescriptions (e.g., harvest plans) are prepared prior to each operation and are made available to the people who carry out the prescriptions.

Forest Health- An integrated pest management program will be used to improve and maintain the health of forest stands. This approach will rely heavily on proper maintenance of density and composition control in forest stands to promote health and vigor of the trees. It may also involve use of prescribed fire to control competing vegetation and reduce incidence of some disease problems. The owner will work closely with the Alabama Forestry Commission's insect survey group to keep track of possible insect or disease invasions in the area of the forest, and will follow their recommendations for prevention and control of infestations. There will be limited use of chemicals for pest control, but it may be necessary in some cases such as for the----- property. **(NOTE:** If hazard maps for the property are available it would be good to include those. If not, a general discussion of insect and pathogen potential should be included along with probable control or prevention measures).

Fire- Primary fire control for the property is provided by the Alabama Forestry Commission (need to elaborate on this). In addition the owner has equipment for installing and maintaining fire lanes where needed. Prescribed fires may be used in pine and older pine/hardwood stands for control of competition, forest health, and improvement of wildlife habitat. If used, the Alabama Forestry Commission will be notified and permission received for timing of the burn. (Does AI for Comm. Provide services for burning?)

Invasive species- Two invasive plant species are found on the property – Chinese Tallow Tree (popcorn tree) (*Tridialca sebifera*) and Kudzu (*Pueraria montana*). Efforts will be made to control and prevent the spread of these two species. We will work with the USDA, NRCS and the state of Alabama to develop control measures. For the tallow tree, the most likely control for larger material will be injection with Arsenal AC, and for seedlings and saplings, foliage spraying with either Arsenal AC, Krenite S, or Garlon 4. Kudzu will likely be controlled with Transline foliar treatment.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS, SAFEGUARDS, MONITORING

Monitoring is an important forest management tool that helps landowners keep track of changes to the natural resource over time. Monitoring can be as complex as very detailed inventories of growth and yield over time or as simple as checking delivery tickets to check volumes removed. In the end, monitoring is the primary tool for making decisions about forest management including those affecting the all parts of the resource.

Stream and water quality considerations – A major objective in performing management operations will be to protect stream and water quality. Management will comply with all of Alabama’s BMPs as regards use of SMZs, stream crossings, road and trail construction and maintenance, site preparation, and harvesting. When rutting and runoff occur, logging contractors will shut down or temporarily cease to use trails and roads until conditions improve. Pole fords and culverts may be utilized on intermittent streams. Copies of “Best Management Practices for Forestry” are available as a supplement to the management plan.

Environmental assessments and monitoring (harvesting and other activities) – Most management operations on the forest, such as harvesting, planting, road construction, and timber stand improvement will be done on a contract basis supervised by the owner or his/her representative. This process will involve a pre-operation (pre-harvest) assessment with the contractor that may involve discussion of such things as road and trail location, property boundaries, SMZ location and width, landing locations, utilization, logging damage, oil and chemical spills, trash on the site, and other logging restrictions. It will also involve ongoing assessment of the operation by visits to the site, and a close-out inspection to ensure compliance with the contract. These assessments are best done through use of check-off sheets prepared for that purpose (see given examples).

Use of chemicals (herbicides/insecticides) – If chemicals of any type, including herbicides, are used on the forest they will be applied by an applicator (contractor) registered with the State of Alabama for the appropriate type of application. As for all contractors working on the forest, there will be a contract specifying the work to be done and appropriate restrictions such as those involving drift, safety in handling of the product, and responsibility for spills and clean up if spills occur. Herbicides are the most likely chemicals to be used on the forest for site preparation and pine release. The use of chemical are kept to a minimum, and will ensure that no chemicals in the FSC list of highly hazardous chemicals will be used without prior approval from FSC. See FSC Pesticide policy: FSC POL 30-001. The two most probable herbicides that used for Forestry applications are Arsenal and Roundup, both of which are approved for use by FSC.

Pesticide Strategy:

Every situation that may require pest control should have a prescription based on a strategy for pest control. The most common strategy for use of these herbicides (among others) is that have been proven by research and years of forest use results to be the best option for minimal risk to the environment and virtually non toxic to humans and wildlife. Chemicals can be used when other non chemical methods of pest control are not adequately effective, economically feasible or result in potentially more environmental damage by top soil loss, soil litter, woody debris and standing snags from traditional mechanical means. Pesticide use is applied at the least rate effective to control pest with ideal long-term goal of reducing or phase out use of chemical whenever feasible.

Resource monitoring – Major resource monitoring will involve monitoring of the timber resource as described above under **Forest Inventory and Monitoring**. Monitoring of the timber resource will also involve keeping of detailed records on products harvested and income from the harvests.

Other components of the resource will also be monitored although less intensively. Monitoring of roads, trails, special areas including HCV areas, and streams will be done on a continuing basis primarily by simple observation when visiting the property. More intensive observations will be made after management activities and natural events such as very heavy rains. The emphasis on monitoring of special areas will be to ensure that the desired attributes for recognizing it as a special area are not being lost or damaged. Special attention will be given to observations to determine if any stream pollution is occurring.

Maintaining a healthy population of wildlife (game and non-game species) is a major objective of forest management on the property. Monitoring for wildlife will be primarily by observation of habitat conditions. We will work closely with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to determine the habitat conditions needed and the methods to achieve those conditions. All entrances to the property will be gated to deter illegal activities including hunting, and we will cooperate with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to prevent illegal activities.

Invasive species – Presence of invasive species and their control is discussed above. Monitoring will be primarily by observations. The owners, their representative, and contractors and others working on the property will be asked to report the location of the invasive species. The locations will be noted on maps of the property and scheduled for later control.

Summary of monitoring activities – Each year the owner will make a summary list of the monitoring activities performed during the year indicating any results that may be important for future management activities.

IDENTIFICATION AND PROTECTION OF RTE SPECIES

List of possible RTE species and presence on the property– More than 100 species of animals and plants that occur in Alabama are listed as RTE by the federal government. Through conversations with and inspections by authorities, it has been determined that there are no RTE species of plants or animals on the property, although some including the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker are known to occur in the area. Authorities consulted are with the Nature Conservancy, Alabama Natural Heritage Foundation, and Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Safeguards to protect RTE species and their habitat (if present) - Should any RTE species ever be found on the forest, appropriate measures will be taken to protect them and their habitat. Measures taken could include use of conservation zones in which harvesting or other operations

are closely monitored to protect the habitat, and illegal hunting or taking will be prevented. Management practices to conserve habitat will be chosen after consultation with authorities familiar with the species and their habitat.

Monitoring of RTE species habitat (if present) - Monitoring, as noted above, will consist primarily of observance of the species and its habitat to ensure that undesirable changes do not occur. Authorities from state and federal agencies will be permitted to study of monitor the species if desired.

IDENTIFICATION AND PROTECTION OF HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE AREAS AND OTHER SPECIAL AREAS ON THE FOREST

Type of area- After consultation with state and federal agencies, it was determined that there are no areas on the forest that should be classified as HCVF areas according to FSC criteria. The forest types, species composition, and age class distribution on the forest is typical of most of the forest in the surrounding area. There is an old family cemetery that will be delineated and protected and access permitted to the descendents by permission. There is also what appears to be an old house place occupying about 2 acres that will be protected. No archeological, cultural or ceremonial sites have been found on the forest, which is typical for this area considering past land use history.

Consultation for determination – Consultation for determining presence of HCVF areas, RTE species and habitat, archeological and ceremonial sites, and other special sites was obtained from the Nature Conservancy, Alabama Natural Heritage Foundation, National Wildlife Foundation, and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Measures to protect these areas – describe protection measures that will be implemented.

DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION OF HARVESTING TECHNIQUES AND EQUIPMENT TO BE USED

Sites that may have equipment or other restrictions for harvesting – There are no sites on the property that restrict equipment usage if done under the proper weather and soil moisture conditions. In SMZs where harvesting is permitted, heavy equipment will not be used. All felling will be done by chain saws with cable skidding from the SMZs.

Types of harvesting operations and equipment that may be used – Harvesting will be done either by mechanized operations or by hand crews. A typical mechanized operation will use a feller buncher and grapple skidders to move the trees to the landing where they are processed by a loader/slasher. Tops and residue are then carried by the grapple skidder back into the forest where it is spread on trails and in the woods. Hand crews fell the trees

with chain saws and the trees are removed from the woods with cable or grapple skidders. Processors have not been used on the forest but could be used, especially for thinning, if contractors have the equipment. If necessary, the harvest contract may specify the equipment that can or cannot be used. Regardless of the type equipment used, there will be conditions in the harvest contract regarding equipment safety and use, penalties for damage to the resource.

Precautions to be used to match the equipment and procedure to the site – As stated above, there are no site conditions on the forest that restrict equipment usage if done under the proper conditions. However, should the need arise to restrict certain types of equipment; the requirement will be placed in the harvest contract.

APPENDIX I: Stand Summary Table

If available, this one table should give information on stand composition and volumes for all stands on the property. If inventory data are not available, should use a stand summary table similar to the one in existing plans

APPENDIX II: Stand Information and Recommendations

There should be one table or sheet of information for each stand (can do it either way). This information should include:

Stand Number:

Forest Cover Type:

Stand size (acres):

Stand Age:

Site Index: (pine and hardwood if both present)

Basal Area (pine and hardwood if both are present):

Stand Volume (if available) or relative stocking:

Management Objective:

Product Class:

Overstory Species:

Understory Species:

Insect/or Disease Hazard:

Soil Type (Series):

Environmental/Soil Characteristics/Limitations: (slope & limits, erosion hazard, equipment limitations, windthrow danger)

Stand History:

Stand Recommendations:

APPENDIX III: Management Scheduling – Summary of Stand Recommendation by Year of Operation. For Example:

Stand Year of Operation Recommendation

1	2009	Regeneration Harvest; Burn
2	2009	Second Thinning to BA of 70
1	2010	Plant Longleaf pine in Containers
2	201	Prescribe Burn

APPENDIX IV: List of Stands and Stand Types on the Property

Stand #1 -----Pine plantation, 5 years old

Stand #2 -----Loblolly pine- hardwood stand, 40 years old

Stand #3 -----Bottomland hardwood stand, 50 years old

APPENDIX V: Landowner Information Documents

(Should include informational documents on such things as use of fire, planting, hardwood management, wildlife management, etc.)

MAPS OF THE PROPERTY

These should already be included in the current management plans, but would include:

Area map of the property (location map)

Map of the property (aerial)

Map of the property showing stands, roads, streams, and other details of management importance

Soils map from County Soil Survey manual

Appendix 6: Member Notification Letter



Alabama TREASURE Forest Association

P. O. Box 189

Chunchula, AL 36521

Client/Member, Title

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear ATFA Member:

This letter is to inform you that our organization is has a group certification under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), and to invite you to join our certified group of landowners/managers. FSC certification is a voluntary program whereby our organization submits to a third party assessment of the environmental, economic, and social performance of our forest management system and practices against a set of international forestry standards (http://fscus.org/standards_criteria/forest_management.php. and group certification requirements) Our organization is (getting) certified to: improve the value of our member services to you, help our landowner members provide the consuming public with certified wood products and, acknowledge our commitment to the environment and community.

Our Organization is undergoing an assessment with subsequent annual audits of our forest stewardship practices under the SmartWood program. A team of regional professionals with expertise in fields of forestry, ecology, and sociology conducts the certification assessment and audits. During the audits and assessments, the team selects clients in our certified group to review.

They review a sample of landowner management documents and/or visit a number of properties. If you participate in the group your documents and property may be selected. A public summary of the final report will be posted on the FSC website. We are asking our clients/members who may be interested in participating in this program to review the following terms and conditions and sign this document if you wish to be included in our certified group of landowners/managers. Information regarding any additional questions about member certification can be provided upon request.

REQUIREMENTS TO BE PART OF OUR COMPANY'S GROUP OF CERTIFIED LANDOWNERS/MANAGERS

Entry into the certified group

To enter the certified group of landowners/managers we ask that you:

- Acknowledge your acceptance of these terms and conditions of being a member of the certified group by signing this document.
- Manage your forest in accordance with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Principles and Criteria (Applicable FSC regional guidelines are enclosed).
- Adhere to the management plan prepared by or approved by our company.
- Allow our company and/or the certification auditors to review forestry practices on your land and review documents pertaining to the management of your land anytime during the certification period with due notice.
- Notify our company if there are any changes in the ownership or management of your land during the certification period.
- Pay annual membership fees (based on size and forest product sales).

Exiting the group of certified landowners/managers

Leaving the group of certified landowners/managers will be precipitated if you:

- Request that you be removed from the group giving 30 days notice (it is a voluntary program).
- Hire another forester to manage your land without notification and our approval.
- Do not adhere to your management plan and the FSC P&C.
- Refuse to allow us and/or our Certifier access to your land for auditing, monitoring, or land management purposes.
- Sell your property.
- Do not pay your membership fee.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR COMPANY AND LANDOWNERS/MANAGERS IN THE CERTIFIED GROUP

Landowner certification responsibilities

- Work with us to develop long-term goals and objectives that are compatible with your needs and the FSC P&C. Adhere to the long-term goals and objectives in your management plan.
- Communicate any issues with loggers, neighbors, and regulators to us regarding the management of your property.
- Communicate any changes in the management or ownership of your property.
- Manage your land according to the FSC P&C.
- Monitor harvest operations on your land at least weekly during active harvesting.

ATFA's certification responsibilities

- Monitor the management of your land for compliance with the FSC P&C at least annually
- Represent your interests in communications with the certifier.
- Communicate changes in FSC requirements.
- Notify you of any changes in our or your certification status.

[] Yes, I agree to the above requirements and want to include my property in the Company certified group of landowners/managers.

[] No, I do not want to be included.

[] I have questions and want you to call me.

Phone: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Signed: _____

Landowner/Manager Date

Signed: _____

Alabama Treasured Forest Association

