



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

Audit Managed by:
Canada Regional Office
P.O. Box 1771
Chelsea, QC, Canada
J9B 1T9
Tel: 613-422-5291
Fax: 866-438-1971

Contact person: David Brunelle
Email: dbrunelle@ra.org



The mark of
responsible forestry

Rainforest Alliance is an
FSC® accredited certifier

FM-06 - 24 July 2013



Rainforest Alliance

Forest Management **2017 Annual audit** Report for:

Eastern Ontario Forest Group In Kemptville, Ontario, Canada

Report Finalized:	July 25, 2017
Audit Dates:	June 12 to 15, 2017
Audit Team:	David Brunelle Yves Bouthillier

Certificate code:	RA-FM/COC-000232
Certificate issued:	January 28, 2013
Certificate expiration:	January 27, 2018

Organization Contact:	Jim Hendry
Address:	10 Campus Dr. PO Box 2111 Kemptville, ON, Canada

TABLE OF CONTENTS

.....	2
LIST OF ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS.....	3
1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RESULTS	4
2.1. AUDIT CONCLUSION.....	4
2.2. CHANGES IN FMEs' FOREST MANAGEMENT AND ASSOCIATED EFFECTS ON CONFORMANCE TO STANDARD REQUIREMENTS:.....	5
2.3. EXCISION OF AREAS FROM THE SCOPE OF CERTIFICATE.....	5
2.4. STAKEHOLDER ISSUES (COMPLAINTS/DISPUTES RAISED BY STAKEHOLDERS TO FME OR RAINFOREST ALLIANCE SINCE PREVIOUS EVALUATION):.....	5
2.5. CONFORMANCE WITH APPLICABLE NONCONFORMITY REPORTS	6
2.6. NEW NONCONFORMITY REPORTS ISSUED AS A RESULT OF THIS AUDIT	7
2.7. AUDIT OBSERVATIONS	7
2.8. NOTES	7
2.9. NEW NOTES AS A RESULT OF THIS AUDIT:.....	7
3. AUDIT PROCESS	7
3.1. AUDITORS AND QUALIFICATIONS:.....	7
3.2. AUDIT SCHEDULE	9
3.3. SAMPLING METHODOLOGY:.....	9
3.4. STAKEHOLDER AND INTERESTED PARTY CONSULTATION PROCESS	10
3.5. CHANGES TO CERTIFICATION STANDARDS.....	11
3.6. REVIEW OF FME DOCUMENTATION AND REQUIRED RECORDS	11
APPENDIX I: FSC Annual Audit Reporting Form:.....	13
APPENDIX II: List of visited sites (confidential)	15
APPENDIX III: List of stakeholders consulted (confidential)	17
APPENDIX IV: Forest management standard conformance (confidential)	19
APPENDIX V: Chain-of-Custody Conformance (confidential)	26
APPENDIX VI: Rainforest Alliance Database Update Form	32
APPENDIX VII: Group management conformance checklist FSC-STD-30-005 v1-0 (confidential)	33
APPENDIX VII-a: Certified Group Member/FMU List.....	40
APPENDIX VIII: NTFP Certification standard conformance checklist (confidential)	41

Standard Conversions

1 mbf = 5.1 m³
1 cord = 2.55 m³
1 gallon (US) = 3.78541 liters

1 inch = 2.54 cm
1 foot = 0.3048 m
1 yard = 0.9144 m
1 mile = 1.60934 km
1 acre = 0.404687 hectares

1 pound = 0.4536 kg
1 US ton = 907.185 kg
1 UK ton = 1016.047 kg

LIST OF ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

AOC	Areas of Concern
AR	Annual Report
AWS	Annual Work Schedule
CoC	Chain of Custody
CWG	Certification Working Group
EA	Environmental Assessment
ELC	Ecological Land Classification
EMS	Environmental Monitoring System
ENGO	Environmental Non-Governmental Organization
EOCWG	Eastern Ontario Certification Working Group
EOFG	Eastern Ontario Forest Group
EOMF	Eastern Ontario Model Forest
FME	Forest Management Enterprise
FMP	Forest Management Plan
FMPM	Forest Management Planning Manual
FMU	Forest Management Unit
FRI	Forest Resource Inventory
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GCF	Grey County Forest
GLSL	Great Lakes - St. Lawrence
GSCA	Grey Sauble Conservation Authority
ha	Hectares
HCV	High Conservation Value
HCVF	High Conservation Value Forest
HRF	Halton Region Forest
LPRCA	Long Point Region Conservation Authority
MFTIP	Managed Forest Tax Incentive Plan
MNO	Métis Nation of Ontario
MNR	Ministry of Natural Resources
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCR	Non-Conformance Report
NRVIS	Natural Resource Values Information System
OBS	Observation
RA	Rainforest Alliance
SAR	Species at Risk
SOCWG	Southern Ontario Certification Working Group
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SVCA	Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority
WHMIS	Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to document annual audit conformance of Eastern Ontario Forest Group, hereafter referred to as Forest Management Enterprise (FME). The report presents the findings of Rainforest Alliance auditors who have evaluated company systems and performance against the Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC®) forest management standards and policies. Section 2 of this report provides the audit conclusions and any necessary follow-up actions by the company through nonconformity reports.

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

This report includes information which will become public information. Sections 1-3 and Appendix I will be posted on the FSC website according to FSC requirements. All other appendices will remain confidential. A copy of the public summary of this report can be obtained on the FSC website at <http://info.fsc.org/>.

Dispute resolution: If Rainforest Alliance clients encounter organizations or individuals having concerns or comments about Rainforest Alliance and our services, these parties are strongly encouraged to contact Rainforest Alliance regional or Headquarters offices directly (see contact information on report cover). Formal complaints or concerns should be sent in writing.

2. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RESULTS

2.1. Audit conclusion

Based on Company's conformance with FSC and Rainforest Alliance requirements, the audit team makes the following recommendation:



Certification requirements met, certificate maintenance recommended
No NCR(s) issued



Certification requirements not met:

Additional comments:

Issues identified as controversial or hard to evaluate.

2.2. Changes in FMEs' forest management and associated effects on conformance to standard requirements:

Since last annual audit, no changes in group structure and responsibilities except for a change in management. The previous group manager left the organization during the audit period. Jim Hendry is now EOFG's group manager. This change, however, was not considered to be significant to affect the conformance of the group by the audit team.

2.3. Excision of areas from the scope of certificate

☒ Not applicable. Check this box if the FME has not excised areas from the FMU(s) included in the certificate scope as defined by FSC-POL-20-003. *(delete the rows below if not applicable)*

2.4. Stakeholder issues *(complaints/disputes raised by stakeholders to FME or Rainforest Alliance since previous evaluation):*

FSC Principle	Stakeholder comment	Rainforest Alliance response
P1: FSC Commitment and Legal Compliance	No comments received	No answer needed
P2: Tenure & Use Rights & Responsibilities	No comments received	No answer needed
P3: Indigenous Peoples' Rights	Overall, the indigenous representatives interviewed were generally satisfied with EOFG's level of engagement however a few concerns were shared with the audit team. Some First Nations representatives shared their opinion that the forest land owners, the members of the group certificate, didn't demonstrate enough awareness on First Nations values and interests.	The standard requires managers to demonstrate having familiarity with available information on Aboriginal communities with traditional rights within the region and protect any known sites of special interest. The forest managers and workers interviewed during the audit demonstrated substantial knowledge on First Nations values. The organization is conformant to these requirements.
	First Nation representatives commented on the fact that the Ash trees affected by the Emerald Ash Borer should not be burned right away. They believe it should be given to them for wood crafting purposes.	Burning of Ash trees and waste is not permitted on certified members forests. This practice was not witnessed by auditors during the field visits and was corroborated by interviews with the group manager. The burning of wood from harvesting occurs in Ontario, but not in the scope the Organization's certificate. The organization is still conformant to these requirements.

	First Nations representatives expressed the wish for more mentorship of young aboriginal forest workers by the Ontario Professional Forester Association (OPFA).	The mentorship of apprentice foresters by the OPFA is not the responsibility of the Organization. EOFG and its members continue to demonstrate being committed to support local events and responsive to local capacity building initiatives which are within their scope.
P4: Community Relations & Workers' Rights	Many stakeholders commented on the good opportunities the group members of the certificate provided to take part in the forest management planning process. Stakeholders commented on the considerable investments some group members are making in enhancing the multiple uses of the forests.	No answer needed
P5: Benefits from the Forest		No answer needed
P6: Environmental Impact	No comments received	No answer needed
P7: Management Plan	No comments received	No answer needed
P8: Monitoring & Assessment	No comments received	No answer needed
P9: Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forest	No comments received	No answer needed
P10: Plantations	No comments received	No answer needed

2.5. Conformance with applicable nonconformity reports

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

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

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

2.6. New nonconformity reports issued as a result of this audit

None.

2.7. Audit observations

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

None.

2.8. Notes

Notes are for the audit team only, and identify items that should be looked at during subsequent audits.

No notes from previous audit to evaluate.

2.9. New notes as a result of this audit:

No new notes issued during this audit.

3. AUDIT PROCESS

3.1. Auditors and qualifications:

Auditor Name	David Brunelle R.P.F, ing.f	Auditor role	Lead auditor
Qualifications:	Forest engineer cumulating 10 years of experience in integrated resource management, forest management and in forest and environmental certification. David was first in charge of a forest management project for a consulting firm specialized in technical work. He then worked for a logging company for 3 years as Forestry Department Coordinator. In this position, he was involved in all tasks related to forest management and forestry operations' support. As the head of the integrated resource management projects for the <i>Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec</i> , he worked in harmonizing the uses in Quebec's wildlife reserves for 3 years. During his short stint at the <i>Ministère des Ressources Naturelles du Québec</i> in 2012, he participated in the implementation of forestry and environmental certifications at the provincial level. Finally, he held a management position in a forest management consulting		

firm. In addition, he holds a Law certificate from the *Université de Montréal*. David joined the Canada Rainforest Alliance team in January 2016 as a Forest Management Associate and completed the FSC lead auditor training. David took part in 55 FM and COC audits.

Auditor Name	Yves Bouthillier Biol. M.Sc.	Auditor role	In charge of environmental aspects
Qualifications:	Forest Management Associate for Rainforest Alliance, Yves is a biologist and a FSC Forest Management Senior Lead Auditor and Chain-of-Custody Lead Auditor (ISO 19011). Since January 2014, he has completed more than 20 audits on private or public lands. He completed his master in forest ecology on riparian black spruce in Northern Québec at the Research Centre on Water, Earth, and the Environment of the INRS University. Prior to his master, he completed a baccalaureate in biology, with a concentration on conservation and environment at Laval University. He is a member of the Québec's association of biologists. Yves is fluent in English and French		

3.2. Audit schedule

Date	Location /main sites	Main activities
April 24, 2017	Remotely	Preparation call
June 9, 2017	Remotely	General Opening meeting
June 12-13, 2017	On-site	Field opening meeting - AM. Field visits in Eastern Ontario.
June 14-15, 2017	On-site	Field visits in Southern Ontario and closing meeting.
July 20, 2017	Remotely	RA provides draft report to certificate holder
July 21, 2017	Remotely	Certificate holder sends back draft report to RA with comments
July 25, 2017	Remotely	Finalization of report

Total number of person days used for the audit: 6,5
number of days spent in preparation, on site and post site visit follow-up including stakeholder consultation

3.3. Sampling methodology:

On-site sampling followed the guidance outlined in FSC-STD-20-007 (V3-0). Subsets were classified based on the forest size and type. No new members were added since the last annual audit. In total, 3 subsets were identified (private SLIMF below 1000 ha, 1,000 - 10,000 ha and above 10,000 ha). Rainforest Alliance then determined the minimum number of sites to be evaluated per subset by applying the sampling calculation formula based on the characteristics of the subsets (see FSC-STD-20-007 Annex 1 for formulas).

FMU category by area	# of FMUs	# of FMUs to visit during this audit (rounded up)
Above 10,000 ha	Existing: 2	$0.8 * 2 = 2$
1,000 – 10,000 ha	Existing: 10	$0.6 * \sqrt{10} = 2$
Below 1,000 ha	Existing: 99	$0.3 * \sqrt{127} = 4$
Total	111	8

Once the number of sites per subset was determined, site selection focused on evaluating active operations or operations that had had activity over the audit period, group members not visited previously, and sites that specifically related to the Principles and Criteria being evaluated this year (Principles 1, 4 & 10 and annual mandatory criteria). Other sites were selected based on their proximity to other sites being visited as to maximize the number of sites to be visited over the course of the on-site evaluation. The town of Oakville was selected this year to follow-up on conversions of forests to non-forest use that were disclosed during the last audit period.

3.3.1 List of FMUs selected for evaluation

FMU/Group Member Name	Rationale for Selection
Grey Sauble Conservation Authority	Above 10,000 ha. In Southern Ontario. No choice, this member needs to be audited every year.
Larose County Forest	Above 10,000 ha. In Eastern Ontario. No choice, this member needs to be audited every year.
Saugeen Valley Conservation	1,000 - 10,000 ha. In Southern Ontario. This member was chosen because of its proximity to other members (Grey Sauble), and because of ongoing intensive forest management activities.
United Counties of SD&G	1,000 - 10,000 ha. In Eastern Ontario. This member was chosen because of recent harvest and the likelihood of ongoing operations during the audit.
Private Property	SLIMF < 1,000 ha in Eastern Ontario. Maple Syrup producer.
Private Property	SLIMF < 1,000 ha in Eastern Ontario. No recent operations.
Private Property	SLIMF < 1,000 ha in Eastern Ontario. No recent operations.
Town of Oakville	SLIMF < 1,000 ha. Conversions of Forests to non-forests occurred during the last audit period. This member was chosen to address the conversions
Private Property	SLIMF < 1,000 ha. In Southern Ontario, close to other members to visit during the audit.

3.4. Stakeholder and interested party consultation process

An email was sent to all the stakeholders selected for this audit. According to the responses, interested stakeholders were contacted by phone for interviews.

Stakeholder/Interested Party type (i.e. NGO, government, local inhabitant etc.)	Stakeholders/Interested Parties notified (#)	Stakeholders/ Interested Parties consulted or providing input (#)
Landowners	4	4
Forest managers	4	0
Forest Users	4	2
ENGO	2	0
Ministry	3	0
First Nation	3	3

3.5. Changes to Certification Standards

Forest stewardship standard used in audit:	Rainforest Alliance Adapted FM Standard for the GLSL region (August 2010)
Revisions to the standard since the last audit:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No changes to standard. <input type="checkbox"/> Standard was changed (detail changes below)

3.6. Review of FME Documentation and required records

a) All certificate types

Required Records	Reviewed
Complaints received by FME from stakeholders, actions taken, follow up communication	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: No complaints were received by the FME since last annual audit.	
Accident records	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Health and safety records were provided to the audit team prior to the audit. No major accident occurred during the audit period.	
Training records	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: FME provides training on a continuous basis to forest managers and members.	
Operational plan(s) for next twelve months	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Documents provided by forest managers for planned activities.	
Inventory records	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Inventory records were seen in individual management plans for field sites visited.	
Harvesting records	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Pre and post-harvest checklists were reviewed for harvests during the audit period for field sites visited.	

b) Group Certificates

Required Group Records	Reviewed
Group management system	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Policies and Procedures manual was reviewed. No major changes since 2016.	
Rate of membership change within the group	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: List of current members provided.	
Formal communication/written documentation sent to members by the group entity during the audit period	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: MOUs with forest managers and correspondence on particular issues addressed through the CWG was reviewed. Most correspondence with group members occurs verbally as needed.	
Records of monitoring carried out by the group entity	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Monitoring reports were reviewed through documentation provided by FME.	

Records of any corrective actions issued by the group entity	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Group manager maintains a list of corrective actions issued to group members.	
Updated list of group members	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: Updated list of group members was provided during the audit.	

APPENDIX I: FSC Annual Audit Reporting Form:

(NOTE: form to be prepared by the client prior to audit, information verified by audit team)

Forest management enterprise information:

FME legal name:	Eastern Ontario Forest Group		
FME Certificate Code:	RA-FM/CoC – 000 232		
Reporting period	Previous 12 month period	Dates	Jun 11 th 2016 to June 12 th 2017

1. Scope Of Certificate

Type of certificate: Group SLIMF Certificate: Small SLIMF

New FMUs added since previous evaluation Yes ☐ No ☒

Group Certificate: Updated of FMU and group member list provided in **Appendix VII-a:**

Multi-FMU Certificate: List of new FMUs added to the certificate scope:

FMU Name/Description	Area	Forest Type	Location Latitude/Longitude ¹

2. FME Information

☒ No changes since previous report (if no changes since previous report leave section blank)

Forest zone Temperate

Certified Area under Forest Type

- Natural	hectares
- Plantation	0 hectares

Stream sides and water bodies Linear Kilometers

3. Forest Area Classification

☒ No changes since previous report (if no changes since previous report leave section blank)

Total certified area (land base)

1. Total forest area ha

a. Total production forest area ha

b. Total non-productive forest area (no harvesting) ha

- Protected forest area (strict reserves) ha

- Areas protected from timber harvesting ha

and managed only for NTFPs or services

- Remaining non-productive forest 0 ha

2. Total non-forest area (e.g., water bodies, wetlands, fields, rocky outcrops, etc.) ha

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

☒ No changes since previous report (if no changes since previous report leave section blank)

Code	HCV TYPES ²	Description:	Area
------	------------------------	--------------	------

¹ The center point of a contiguous FMU or group of dispersed properties that together comprise a FMU in latitude and longitude decimal degrees with a maximum of 5 decimals.

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

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

5. Workers

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

Total number of workers	2 workers	
- Of total workers listed above	1 Male	1 Female
Number of serious accidents	0	
Number of fatalities	0	

6. Pesticide Use

☐ FME does not use pesticides. (delete rows below)

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

FSC highly hazardous pesticides used in last calendar year

Name	Quantity	# of Hectares Treated
		ha
		ha
		ha

Non FSC highly hazardous pesticides used in last calendar year 2016

Name	Quantity	# of Hectares Treated
Glyphosate	3.8 L	0.1 ha
Vision Max	77.4 L	21.7 ha
Garlon – RTU	56.8 L	10.7 ha
Ttre_Azin	6.5 L	EAB treatment

APPENDIX VI: Rainforest Alliance Database Update Form

Instructions: For each FSC certificate, Rainforest Alliance is required to upload important summary information about each certificate to the FSC database (FSC-Info). During each annual audit RA auditors should work with the certificate holder to verify that the information posted on FSC-Info is up to date as follows:

1. Print out current Fact Sheet prior to audit from FSC-Info website or direct link to fact sheets (<http://www.fsc-info.org>)
2. Review information with the FME to verify all fields are accurate.
3. If changes are required (corrections, additions or deletions), **note only the changes** to the database information in the section below.
4. The changes identified to this form will be used by the RA office to update the FSC database.

Is the FSC database accurate and up-to-date? YES ☐ NO ☒
(if yes, leave section below blank)

Client Information (contact info for FSC website listings)

Organization name			
Primary Contact	Jim Hendry	Title	Coordinator, Forest Certification Program
Primary Address		Telephone	613-258-8422
Address	jhendry@eomf.on.ca	Fax	
Email		Webpage	

Forests

Change to Group Certificate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Change in # of parcels in group	total members
Total certified area		Hectares (or)	139
			80,134 Hectares

Species (note if item to be added or deleted)

Scientific name	Common name	Add/Delete

Products

FSC Product categories added to the FM/CoC scope (FSC-STD-40-004a)		
Level 1	Level 2	Species

APPENDIX VII: Group management conformance checklist FSC-STD-30-005 v1-0 (confidential)

Group Certification Division of Responsibilities

Type of Forest Management Group:	Type I group	
Forest Management Activity	Group Entity	Group Member
Forest management planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FMU monitoring activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forest and resource inventory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Harvest planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Harvesting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Training of forest workers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Legal compliance (taxes, permitting, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Timber Sales	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marketing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FSC/RA trademark use (if applicable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Summary of division of responsibilities:
Policy 1.0 – EOMF Forest Certification Program Structure describes in details the roles and responsibilities of the group entity and group member.

Quality System Requirements

1.0 General Requirements

1.1 The Group entity shall be an independent legal entity or an individual acting as a legal entity. Yes ☒ No ☐

Findings required if No: The group entity has the legal right to use both names, Eastern Ontario Model Forest and Eastern Ontario Forest Group. The name Eastern Ontario Forest Group (EOFG) is used for the purposes of this FSC certificate.

1.2 The Group entity shall comply with relevant legal obligations, as registration and payment of applicable fees and taxes. Yes ☒ No ☐

Findings required if No:

1.3 The Group entity shall have a written public policy of commitment to the FSC Principles and Criteria. Yes ☒ No ☐

Findings required if No:

1.4 The Group entity shall define training needs and implement training activities and/or communication strategies relevant to the implementation of the applicable FSC standards. Yes ☒ No ☐

Findings: EOFG Policy 4.0 defines training needs and multiple examples (communications, interviews) were given of training that took place over the audit period.

2.0 Responsibilities

2.1 The Group entity shall clearly define and document the division of responsibilities between the Group entity and the Group members in relation to forest management activities (for example with respect to management planning, monitoring, harvesting, quality control, marketing, timber sale, etc).

Yes ☒ No ☐

NOTE: The actual division of responsibilities may differ greatly between different group certification schemes. Responsibilities regarding compliance to the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard may be divided between the Group entity and Group members in order to take into account of a landscape approach.

Findings: Policy 1.0 – EOMF Forest Certification Program Structure describes in details the roles and responsibilities of the group entity and group member. Those are also defined in the MOU agreements signed with all members and forest managers.

2.2 The Group entity shall appoint a management representative as having overall responsibility and authority for the Group entity's compliance with all applicable requirements of this standard.

Yes ☒ No ☐

Findings: Jim Hendry is the Forest Certification Program Coordinator and maintains overall responsibility for the group member compliance with the standard.

2.3 Group entity staff and Group members shall demonstrate knowledge of the Group's procedures and the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard.

Yes ☒ No ☐

Findings: During field interviews, the group manager and forest managers demonstrated appropriate levels of knowledge on the group's Policies and Procedures. The managers demonstrated active communication channels that would ensure requirements were appropriately implemented.

3.0 Group Entity Procedures

3.1 The Group entity shall establish, implement and maintain written procedures for Group membership covering all applicable requirements of this standard, according to scale and complexity of the group including:

- I. Organizational structure;
- II. Responsibilities of the Group entity and the Group members including main activities to fulfill such responsibilities (i.e. Development of management plans, sales and marketing of FSC products, harvesting, planting, monitoring, etc);
- III. Rules regarding eligibility for membership to the Group;
- IV. Rules regarding withdrawal/ suspension of members from the Group;
- V. Clear description of the process to fulfill any corrective action requests issued internally and by the certification body including timelines and implications if any of the corrective actions are not complied with;
- VI. Documented procedures for the inclusion of new Group members;
- VII. Complaints procedure for Group members.

Yes ☒ No ☐

Findings: The group's documented procedures cover the requirements of the standard.

- I. The EOFG has provided an organizational chart outlining the structure of the group that is included in the Policy and Procedure document.
- II. The EOFG's Policy & Procedure (P&P) - Policy 1.0 details the program structure, and the corresponding roles and responsibilities of the group entity (Resource Manager), Forest Managers and the group members.
- III., IV., VI. Policy 1.4 outlines the rules for entering and exiting the Group.
- V. Policy 3.1 outlines the Group's Corrective Action Request policy. Group audit and monitoring schedules are outlined in SOP 5.1.
- VII. Policy 3.2 outlines the Group's Dispute Resolution policy.

3.2 The Group entity's procedures shall be sufficient to establish an efficient internal control system ensuring that all members are fulfilling applicable requirements.

Yes ☒ No ☐

Findings: The online data management tool and the "do-forms" for on-field monitoring are an efficient internal control system. Strong communication between the group manager, group members, and forest managers was observed throughout the audit.

3.3 The Group entity shall define the personnel responsible for each procedure together with the qualifications or training measures required for its implementation.

Yes ☒ No ☐

Findings: Procedures distinguish who is responsible for policies and SOPs (ie. Resource Manager, Forest Manager, landowner etc).

3.4 The Group entity or the certification body (upon request of Group entity and at the Group entities expense) shall evaluate every applicant for membership of the Group and ensure that

Yes ☒ No ☐

there are no major non-conformances with applicable requirements of the Forest Stewardship Standard, and with any additional requirements for membership of the Group, prior to being granted membership of the Group.

NOTE: for applicants complying with SLIMF eligibility criteria for size, the initial evaluation may be done through a desk audit.

Findings: The group entity evaluated every new applicant and no Major non-conformance in regards to the GLSL standard that is identified is allowed prior to admission. There were no new applicants this year.

4.0 Group Member Informed Consent

4.1 The Group entity shall provide each Group member with documentation, or access to documentation, specifying the relevant terms and conditions of Group membership. The documentation shall include:

- I. Access to a copy of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard;
- II. Explanation of the certification body's process;
- III. Explanation of the certification body's, and FSC's rights to access the Group members' forests and documentation for the purposes of evaluation and monitoring;
- IV. Explanation of the certification body's, and FSC's requirements with respect to publication of information;
- V. Explanation of any obligations with respect to Group membership, such as:
 - a. maintenance of information for monitoring purposes;
 - b. use of systems for tracking and tracing of forest products;
 - c. requirement to conform with conditions or corrective action requests issued by the certification body and the group entity
 - d. any special requirements for Group members related to marketing or sales of products within and outside of the certificate;
 - e. other obligations of Group membership; and
 - f. explanation of any costs associated with Group membership.

Yes ☒ No ☐

Findings: EOfG has updated its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). It provides all the requirements demanded above:

- I. Reference to being provided a copy of the RA Interim GLSL standard;
- II. An overview of the certification process;
- III. Agreement that the property can be accessed for audit and compliance purposes;
- IV. What information is required to be made publicly available to RA or FSC;
- V. a. Maintenance of records of member's properties for the purpose of meeting the FSC requirements;
 - b. Maintenance of timber sale details;
 - c. Requirement to take prompt action to rectify non-conformances;
 - d. Details requiring the use of the 'Certified Forest' signs, and FSC trademark.
Maple syrup MOUs include provisions for labelling products with the FM/CoC code;
 - e. Other details of group membership;
 - f. The costs of the annual membership fee and for the use of the 'Certified Forest' signs.

Access to the relevant documents (FSC Standard and guidelines) is available to all members through the database tool.

4.2 A consent declaration or equivalent shall be available between the Group Entity and each Group member or the member's representative who voluntarily wishes to participate in the Group. The consent declaration shall:

- I. include a commitment to comply with all applicable certification requirements;
- II. acknowledge and agree to the obligations and responsibilities of the Group entity;
- III. acknowledge and agree to the obligations and responsibilities of Group membership;
- IV. agree to membership of the scheme, *and*
- V. authorize the Group entity to be the primary contact for certification and to apply for certification on the member's behalf.

Yes ☒ No ☐

NOTE: A consent declaration does not have to be an individual document. It can be part of a contract or any other document (e.g. meeting minutes) that specifies the agreed relationship between the Group member and the Group entity.

Findings: The membership MOU includes details regarding:

- I. the requirement to be in conformance with the certification standard;
- II. the role and responsibilities of the EOFG;
- III. the role and responsibilities of the group member;
- IV. the details of membership; and
- V. the management of the FSC certificate, and designation of a contact person for the landowner.

5.0 Group Records

5.1 The group entity shall maintain complete and up-to-date records covering all applicable requirements of this standard. These shall include:

- I. 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;
- II. Any records of training provided to staff or Group members, relevant to the implementation of this standard or the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard;
- III. A map or supporting documentation describing or showing the location of the member's forest properties;
- IV. Evidence of consent of all Group members;
- V. Documentation and records regarding recommended practices for forest management (i.e. silvicultural systems);
- VI. 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;
- VII. Records of the estimated annual overall FSC production and annual FSC sales of the Group.

Yes ☒ No ☐

NOTE: The amount of data that is maintained centrally by the Group entity may vary from case to case. In order to reduce costs of evaluation by the certification body, and subsequent monitoring by FSC, data should be stored centrally wherever possible.

Findings: The EOFG has implemented their online data management tool, where all records are maintained in regards to group membership and the requirements of the standard.

Specific requirements are met in the following ways:

- I. The online data management tool tracks membership and can generate specific reports on many aspects of the certification requirements.
- II. Records of training are now attached directly to each property and to each user profile, including the group manager and forest managers.
- III. Each group member's FMP include details regarding the property included in the group, and include maps and descriptions of the property.
- IV. MOUs for all members are on file;
- V. FMPs and silvicultural prescriptions are on file for each landowner/property. FMPs are now being stored electronically in the online data management tool
- VI. Internal audit records are stored in the online data management tool. Examples were reviewed during the audit
- VII. FSC timber sales are summarized on an annual basis (July-July) and reported through the online data management tool

5.2 Group records shall be retained for at least five (5) years.

Yes ☒ No ☐

Findings: Group records are digital and kept indefinitely

5.3 Group entities shall not issue any kind of certificates or declarations to their group members that could be confused with FSC certificates.

Yes ☒ No ☐

NOTE: Group member certificates may however be requested from Rainforest Alliance.

Findings: No certificates are issued. Group members are given a sign with an approved promotional trademark panel to highlight their membership in the EOFG group.

Group Features

6.0 Group Size

6.1 The Group entity shall have sufficient human and technical resources to manage and control the Group in line with the requirements of this standard.

Yes ☒ No ☐

NOTE: The number of Group members, their individual size and the total area will influence the evaluation intensity applied by the certification body in their annual audits.

Findings: Capacity of the group has expanded along with membership. Under the group organizational structure there are multiple forest managers who directly oversee their own private land SLIMFs, and the community forests have their own forest management staff. This collective capacity is more than sufficient to manage and control the group in line with the requirements of the standard. The Certification Working Group (CWG) includes all forest managers in the group and provides an excellent platform for addressing the standard requirements using the combined expertise of the group members.

6.2 The Group entity shall specify in their procedures the maximum number of members that can be supported by the management system and the human and technical capacities of the Group entity.

Yes ☒ No ☐

Findings: The maximum number of participants continues to be set relative to the capacity of the group management structure.

7.0 Multinational Groups

7.1 Group schemes shall only be applied to national groups which are covered by the same Forest Stewardship Standard.

Yes ☐ No ☐
NA ☒

Findings required if No:

7.2 The Group entity shall request formal approval by FSC IC through their accredited Certification Body to allow certification of such a group scheme.

Yes ☐ No ☐
NA ☒

Findings required if No:

Internal Monitoring

8.0 Monitoring Requirements

8.1 The Group entity shall implement a documented monitoring and control system that includes at least the following:

- I. Written description of the monitoring and control system;
- II. Regular (at least annual) monitoring visits to a sample of Group members to confirm continued compliance with all the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard, and with any additional requirements for membership of the Group.

Yes ☒ No ☐

Findings: SOP 5.0 contains details regarding internal auditing of group members by the group entity. An auditing schedule is outlined in Table 9 of SOP 5.0 and is implemented by forest managers and the group manager. EOFG is now using an internal database tool to monitor the data gathered by the group manager during field audits. Records of site visits by EOFG, prescriptions and inspection-harvest forms since last audit were provided to the audit team.

8.2 The Group entity shall define criteria to be monitored at each internal audit and according to the group characteristics, risk factors and local circumstances.

Yes ☒ No ☐

Findings: SOP 5.0 defines the criteria to be monitored during internal audits. These criteria are used during monitoring by the group manager and forest managers.

8.3. The minimum sample to be visited annually for internal monitoring shall be determined as follows:

a) Type I Groups with mixed responsibilities (see FSC-STD-30-005 v-1 section D Terms and definitions)

Groups or sub-groups with mixed responsibilities shall apply a *minimum* sampling of $X = \sqrt{y}$ for 'normal' FMUs and $X = 0.6 * \sqrt{y}$ for FMUs < 1,000 ha. Sampling shall be increased if HCVs are threatened or land tenure or use right disputes are pending within the group.

b) Type II Resource Manager Groups (see FSC-STD-30-005 v-1 section D Terms and definitions)

Group entities who also operate as resource managers may define the required internal sampling intensity at their own discretion for the forest properties they are managing, independent of their size and ownership (the minimum numbers as defined above do not apply here).

Yes ☒ No ☐

NOTE: for the purpose of sampling, FMUs < 1,000 ha and managed by the same managerial body may be combined into a 'resource management unit' (RMU) according to the proposal made in FSC-STD-20-007 Annex 1.

Findings: More than the minimum sampling was applied since last audit: every member was visited by the group manager. Field audits are carried out by forest managers and the group manager during active operations (pre-harvest assessment, spot audits, post-harvest inspection).

FSC-STD-30-005 recommendations for internal monitoring.

8.4 For monitoring purposes the Group entity should use the same stratification into sets of 'like' FMUs as defined by the certification body in their evaluation.

8.5 The Group entity should visit different members in their annual monitoring than the ones selected for evaluation by the certification body, unless pending corrective actions, complaints or risk factors are requiring a revisit of the same units.

8.6 In the selection process of members to be visited, the Group entity should include random selection techniques.

Comments: Audit schedules are based on a stratification of membership types. Site selection tends to be based on relative risk, with properties scheduled for active management or those with current issues/concerns selected for internal audits.

8.7 The Group entity shall issue corrective action requests to address non-compliances identified during their visits and monitor their implementation.

Yes ☒ No ☐

Findings: The group entity has developed a template for the issuance and monitoring of non-compliances. This more formal way of issuing non-compliances to members includes specific actions and timelines.

8.8 Additional monitoring visits shall be scheduled when potential problems arise or the Group entity receives information from stakeholders about alleged violations of the FSC requirements by Group members.

Yes ☒ No ☐
NA ☐

Findings: The group manager described active monitoring over and above internal monitoring requirements in response to active management or issues being identified on member properties.

Group Assessment Requirements: (Completed by RA Task Manager/Lead Auditor)

Group member size restriction:

The procedures and measures put in place by the group manager (ex. the data management tool, do-forms), the technical expertise provided to the group by the Southern and Eastern Certification Working Groups and the forest managers's expertise allow for a reasonable and effective growth of the group. There are no current concerns with group size.

RA Certificate auditing strategy:

Follow auditing strategy outlined in FM-01 and FSC-STD-20-007.

APPENDIX VII-a: Certified Group Member/FMU List

1. Total # members in the certified pool: 139 FMUs
2. Total area in Current Pool (ha. or acres): 80,134 ha

Full and updated list of members on file at RA.

APPENDIX VIII: NTFP Certification standard conformance checklist (confidential)

Non-Timber Forest Products Addendum for the Certification of Maple Sugaring Operations in Canada - March 2007 version

CRITERIA AND INDICATORS	Yes	No	NA	Description of Conformance
PRINCIPLE #1: COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND FSC PRINCIPLES				
Criterion 1.1 Forest management shall respect all national and local laws and administrative requirements.				
<p>Indicator 1.1. MAPLE1</p> <p>Maple tapping and processing equipment, processing methods and transport meet all applicable international, national and local laws governing licenses fees, sanitation standards, quality control, and packaging and labeling requirements.</p> <p>Verifiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The sugarmaker adheres to national and state laws governing acceptable syrup density, color grading, packing and labeling regulations and other relevant laws. * The sugarmaker maintains an up-to-date color kit and an accurate, periodically tested hydrometer. * Enrollment in organic or state certification program (e.g., Vermont's "Seal of Quality" program). * No formal complaints have been filed with the sugarmaker about product quality. 	X			<p>Gary Ivens' maple farm was the only maple sugaring operation visited during the 2017 annual audit. As of 2017, 4 maple farms are certified with EOFG.</p> <p>Maple producers have met all applicable laws and provided evidence of conformance with the Canadian Food Safety Agency regulations. The volume, grade and batch of syrup produced is well recorded. This is a requirement of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. There have been no non-compliances reported.</p> <p>EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.</p>

Indicator 1.1.MAPLE2 For comestible items, management undertakes proactive product quality control actions to insure its products pose no health risks to the final consumer. Verifiers: * If a defoamer is used in the sugaring shed, it meets organic certification standards; * Cleaning practices do not introduce agents or chemicals not recognized or approved for cleaning of equipment used in the processing of food products; * Sugarmakers have their syrup independently tested for lead contamination over a period of at least three years unless they can demonstrate that equipment does not present a health risk; Use of paraformaldehyde pellets or other chemicals in tap holes is prohibited.	X			Maple producers meet all quality standards imposed by Ontario Food Safety and provided its certificate of the Canadian Food Safety Agency. No lead is used in any of the maple syruping facilities or tools. EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.
Criterion 1.2 All applicable and legally prescribed fees, royalties, taxes and other charges shall be paid.				
Indicator 1.2.MAPLE The FMO or NTFP harvester(s) maintains up-to-date harvesting permits, collecting licenses, collecting contracts or cultivation permits and pays any fees, leases, royalties, etc. in a timely manner. Verifiers: * Any invoices for purchasing sap/syrup from other sugarmakers or lease fees to tap trees on land not directly owned by the sugarmaker are up-to-date in payment.	X			All fees and dues are up-to-date. EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.
PRINCIPLE #2: TENURE AND USE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES				
Criterion 2.3 Appropriate mechanisms shall be employed to resolve disputes over tenure claims and use rights. The circumstances and status of any outstanding disputes will be explicitly considered in the certification evaluation. Disputes of substantial magnitude involving a significant number of interests will normally disqualify an operation from being certified.				
Indicator 2.3.MAPLE Any conflicting claims over traditional access to sugaring stands is being addressed in a systematic and effective manner.			X	There are no known claims over traditional access to these privately owned sugaring stands. Thus this indicator in N/A.
PRINCIPLE #3: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS				

Criterion 3.3 Sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance to Indigenous peoples shall be clearly identified in cooperation with such peoples, and recognized and protected by forest managers.				
Indicator 3.3.MAPLE Sites, as well as plants and animal resources of cultural and religious significance shall be identified and protected during sugaring activities.			X	No known sites, plants or animals of cultural and religious significance have been identified on maple sugaring sites. Thus this indicator is N/A.
PRINCIPLE #4: COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND WORKER'S RIGHTS				
Criterion 4.1 The communities within, or adjacent to, the forest management area should be given opportunities for employment, training, and other services.				
Indicator 4.1.MAPLE When hiring for sugaring operations, local communities and residents shall be given first preference for jobs involving sugarbush thinning, tapping, processing, packing or sale of maple products			X	There was no outside hiring in the maple sugaring operation viewed during this re-assessment as family members ran all operations. Thus this indicator is not applicable.
Criterion 4.2 Forest management should meet or exceed all applicable laws and/or regulations covering health and safety of employees and their families.				
Indicator 4.2.MAPLE1 Hired help for sugarbush management, tapping or work in the evaporating shed or sales area shall be fairly compensated in accordance with local laws and norms.			X	There was no outside hiring in the maple sugaring operation viewed during this re-assessment as family members ran all operations. Thus this indicator is not applicable.
Indicator 4.2.MAPLE2 Sugarbush and evaporator workers shall be provided with insurance to cover any work related injuries.			X	There was no outside hiring in the maple sugaring operation viewed during this re-assessment as family members ran all operations. Thus this indicator is not applicable.
Indicator 4.2.MAPLE3 The sugarbush manager shall keep an up-to-date log of the in-kind labor performed managing the sugar bush; people hours and relationship to the producer are recorded; and bartered services identified and recorded.			X	There was no outside hiring in the maple sugaring operation viewed during this re-assessment as family members ran all operations. Thus this indicator is not applicable.
Criterion 4.4 Management planning and operations shall incorporate the results of evaluations of social impact. Consultations shall be maintained with people and groups (both men and women) directly affected by management operations.				

Indicator 4.4.MAPLE1 Forest manager can demonstrate he has communicated in advance management activities to neighbours, local communities and other groups and individuals when sugarbush management or processing activities have the potential to negatively impact them.			X	There have been no instances of potential negative impacts of maple sugaring operations thus this indicator is not applicable.
Indicator 4.4.MAPLE2 Large-scale sugaring operation shall communicate management activities to affected communities in public meetings, mailings or other types of communications in advance when harvest or processing activities has the potential to impact local communities.			X	The operation viewed in this audit was small and thus this indicator is not applicable.
PRINCIPLE # 5: BENEFITS FROM THE FOREST				
Criterion 5.2 Forest management and marketing operations should encourage the optimal use and local processing of the forest's diversity of products.				
Indicator 5.2.MAPLE Forest managers shall keep up-to-date on sugarbush management and syrup processing developments and technology.	X			<p>The maple sugaring operations visited during this audit was up-to-date.</p> <p>Operators participate in or present workshops on a regular basis and network with each other through the EOFG and other associations.</p> <p>Operations visited was relatively small.</p> <p>EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.</p>
Criterion 5.3 Forest management should minimize waste associated with harvesting and on-site processing operations and avoid damage to other forest resources.				
Indicator 5.3.MAPLE1 Sap collection equipment shall be installed with minimal damage to trees and other resources and tubing and other material disposed of offsite upon completion of its useful life.	X			<p>As per previously viewed maple syrup operations, the operation visited was clean and well organized. There was no sign of any damage to trees as a result of sap collection.</p> <p>The woodland visited was clean and there was no sign of garbage. Proper disposal methods are followed using municipal facilities.</p> <p>EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.</p>

Indicator 5.3.MAPLE2 Maple sap gathering infrastructure (i.e. collection pipelines) and management activities do not negatively impact wildlife populations or other forest resources. Verifiers: * Mainline systems are installed in an appropriate and recognized manner and do not obstruct movement of wildlife populations e.g. block established travel corridors * Sap collection pipeline is removed immediately after sap season if areas of large mammal travel paths are obstructed. * Cleaning practices do not introduce into the environment agents or chemicals not recognized or approved for sugar bush use.	X			The audit team visited the site in summer. There were no visible impacts to wildlife in the operations viewed. EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.
Criterion 5.6 The rate of harvest of forest products shall not exceed levels which can be permanently sustained.				
Indicator 5.6 MAPLE1 The intensity, frequency and seasonality of sap harvest, by area and volume, shall be based on a combination of scientific study and/or long-term local experience and knowledge and does not exceed sustainable levels. Verifiers: * The area of the sugarbush is delineated on maps and the estimated number of taps used within the area is documented; * Minimum tapping diameter and the number of taps used per size class are documented; * Tapping guidelines following a recognized and appropriate system will be adopted and adhered to.	X			EOFG maple producers follow the provincial recommendations for level of harvest, as a minimum. A Guide to Improving and Maintaining Sugar Bush Health and Productivity , is one of the sources used, and is on the EOFG website. EOFG provides workshops and guidance to its sugar bush owners. There is a very high ethic among the owners to manage sustainably. Interviews with the owner and visits to its operations indicated appropriate tapping levels were used. EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.
Indicator 5.6.MAPLE2 Silvicultural treatments shall establish and maintain proper spacing of trees and adequate regeneration of sugar maple. Verifiers: * Thinning is based on spacing and tree vigor. * Retention of sugar trees may be supported by measuring sugar content of the trees (through use of a refractometer).	X			The operation visited had good spacing between trees, and used certified tree markers for selection of stems (as do all EOFG harvest operations). EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.

Indicator 5.6.MAPLE3 Allowable tapping rates and sap harvest rates and best management practices shall be followed in the forest. Verifiers: * Trees smaller than the minimum allowable tapping diameter are not tapped. * Number of taps used per size class follows management prescription. * Use of paraformaldehyde pellets or other chemicals in tap holes is prohibited. * Taps are immediately pulled from trees at the end of the sugaring season. * Tap holes are drilled with a slight upward angle and are not excessively deep (i.e., exceed 2.5 inches in depth). * "Cluster tapping" is not practiced. * Drop lines on tubing systems are of sufficient length to preclude cluster tapping (i.e., the drop line is long enough so that the tap can reach all sides of the tree and can be placed sufficiently above or below old tap holes).	X			Trees smaller than the minimum allowable tapping diameter were not tapped in the operation visited. Other criteria were also followed. No chemicals are used. EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.
Indicator 5.6.MAPLE4 Maple sap harvest levels shall be adjusted when populations exhibit decline or weakened condition. Verifiers: * Tapping is reduced or halted when trees exhibit decline, poor tap hole closure or symptoms of severe stress, or after a heavy thinning of the stand. * Thinning does not take place after several defoliation events or stress events in the sugarbush (e.g., ice-damage).	X			No decline was apparent at this time. Historically, this has been a problem and the owners are aware. EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.
PRINCIPLE #6: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT				
Intent of Principle 6: Principle 6 addresses the protection of biodiversity through a precautionary approach. The precautionary approach is particularly important in areas of steep slopes and other fragile soils, of slow growth and/or slow regeneration, in the presence of a concentration of species at risk, in the absence of a forest inventory or data on growth rates, etc. Such situations require a conservative approach to harvest levels, periods and techniques.				

Criterion 6.1 Assessment of environmental impacts shall be completed -- appropriate to the scale, intensity of forest management and the uniqueness of the affected resources -- and adequately integrated into management systems. Assessments shall include landscape level considerations as well as the impacts of on-site processing facilities. Environmental impacts shall be assessed prior to commencement of site-disturbing operations.			
Indicator 6.1.MAPLE Prior to operations, the manager identifies sensitive elements (e.g. diversity at the stand level, wildlife, species at risk, sensitive soils, etc.) on the site in order to minimize environmental impacts through recognized practices.	X		The small operation visited in this audit are assessed by the EOFG staff. In other cases, professional foresters or technicians review the sensitive elements. The tree marking guide is followed. EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.
Criterion 6.3 Ecological functions and values shall be maintained intact, enhanced, or restored, including: a) Forest regeneration and succession. b) Genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity. c) Natural cycles that affect the productivity of the forest ecosystem.			
Indicator 6.3.MAPLE1 Sugarbush management and sap collection practices shall minimize impacts to forest composition and soil structure and fertility Verifiers: * Management encourages retention of non-maple species in the sugarbush to promote diversity and, potentially, promote pest resistance of the stand. * Management practices avoid heavy cleaning of the sugarbush understory. * Grazing is prohibited in the sugarbush. * Access roads are kept to a minimum to avoid soil damage during spring snow melt. * Adequate sugar maple regeneration is present.	X		MIFTP approved plans identify guidelines for wildlife and uncommon tree species, including targets for retention, priority species and dispersion patterns. Site visit confirms diversity of non-maple trees, healthy understory and maple regeneration as well as a lack of grazing. No new access roads have been created, as these properties have established access routes. EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.

Indicator 6.3.MAPLE2 The Intensity of sugarbush management shall be based on understanding of species and site productivity and potential limitations. Verifiers * Sugaring takes place on sites well-suited for sugar maple growth; * Tapping on severely stressed trees is halted unless those trees are scheduled for removal; * Scheduled thinnings are delayed immediately after severe defoliation or after severe damage from a natural event.	X			The property visited has been active for maple syrup operations for a number of years. Sites are well suited to support continued levels of maple syrup operations. The forest owner demonstrated high level of understanding of best management practices with respect to tapping and how anchors on/around trees are to be used. Tapping follows guidelines set out in "A Guide to Improving and Maintaining Sugar Bush Health & Productivity" (see FMP section 5.2.2; and EOFG website). EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.
Criterion 6.5 Written guidelines shall be prepared and implemented to: control erosion; minimize forest damage during harvesting, road construction, and all other mechanical disturbances; and protect water resources.				
Indicator 6.5.MAPLE1 Sugarbush operations shall comply with or exceed Best Management Practices (BMPs) for water quality protection.	X			All group members have access to and are required to meet the EOMF Policy & Procedure manual. All operations must be reviewed by qualified staff or EOFG affiliate managers. They are familiar with the EOFG SOPs regarding water crossing (SOP 2.2), as well as minimum standards for the protection of waterways (AOC SOP 1.5). EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.
Indicator 6.5.MAPLE2 Sugarbush operations shall minimize damage to soils and site productivity. Verifier: * Operation monitors road and site conditions and suspend operations to avoid rutting or erosion.	X			There is harvest occurring at a very low level on the Ivens' property, and direction has been provided through EOFG. Trails are used to ensure no additional site damage occurs. Use of tubing reduces the impact during spring production. EOFG is in conformance with this indicator

<p>Criterion 6.6 Management systems shall promote the development and adoption of environmentally friendly non-chemical methods of pest management and strive to avoid the use of chemical pesticides. World Health Organization Type 1A and 1B and chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides; pesticides that are persistent, toxic or whose derivatives remain biologically active and accumulate in the food chain beyond their intended use; as well as any pesticides banned by international agreement, shall be prohibited. If chemicals are used, proper equipment and training shall be provided to minimize health and environmental risks.</p>				
<p>Indicator 6.6.MAPLE Use of pesticides in maple sap harvest areas shall be prohibited, unless said chemicals are allowed under local, national or international organic standards or they can be justified to control exotic and invasive species that pose a significant threat to the long term health and viability of the sugarbush and forest ecosystem.</p>	X			<p>The operation visited does not use pesticides. EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.</p>
<p>Criterion 6.7 Chemicals, containers, liquid and solid non-organic wastes including fuel and oil shall be disposed of in an environmentally appropriate manner at off-site locations.</p>				
<p>Indicator 6.7.MAPLE Unused sap collection materials and any waste generated from sugaring operations is removed from the forest and disposed of appropriately</p> <p>Verifiers: * Unused tubing and/or buckets are removed from the sugarbush. * Waste or rubbish generated from gathering or processing activities are removed from the forest and disposed of in an environmentally appropriate manner.</p>	X			<p>The site visit confirmed that any waste produced during the sap collection process has been removed from the sugar bush. There was no evidence of a lack of disposal, or of inappropriate disposal activities. EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.</p>
PRINCIPLE #7: MANAGEMENT PLAN				

<p>Criterion 7.1 The management plan and supporting documents shall provide:</p> <p>a) Management objectives.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>c) Description of silvicultural and/or other management system, based on the ecology of the forest in question and information gathered through resource inventories.</p> <p>d) Rationale for rate of annual harvest and species selection.</p> <p>e) Provisions for monitoring of forest growth and dynamics.</p> <p>f) Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments.</p> <p>g) Plans for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species.</p> <p>h) Maps describing the forest resource base including protected areas, planned management activities and land ownership.</p> <p>i) Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used.</p>				
<p>Indicator 7.1.MAPLE1</p> <p>The forest management plan shall specifically address and incorporate sugarbush management objectives and silvicultural prescriptions.</p> <p>Verifiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The sugarbush is incorporated into the management plan and on management maps and has clear management objectives. * Maps delineate the sugarbush area and indicate sugaring access roads and the sugaring shed. * Silvicultural prescriptions for the sugarbush, whether under even-aged or uneven-aged management, are documented and followed. * Silvicultural prescriptions, tree marking and harvesting operations do not favor the removal of non-maple species when is the dominant species 	X			<p>There are detailed maps showing property boundary, maple bush, sugar shed, roads, etc.</p> <p>Short-term objectives are to continue with general maintenance of the stand.</p> <p>Long-term objectives are to maintain a healthy uneven aged forest using it for maple syrup production with a high amount of maple regeneration.</p> <p>EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.</p>
<p>Indicator 7.1.MAPLE2</p> <p>The Sugarbush Management sections of the plan shall be technically sound and sufficiently detailed, given the size, complexity and intensity of the forest operation. The plan shall include a description of and justification for the intensity of maple sap harvesting, the implemented harvesting technique and the equipment used.</p>	X			<p>The FMP's complexity is appropriate to the level of operations ongoing on the maple sugar producer.</p> <p>Maple producers follow the provincial recommendations for level of harvest, as a minimum.</p>

<p>Verifiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The sugar bush management plan addresses silvicultural practices for non-maple species * The tapping rule is documented and information on the number of allowable taps per size class, the depth of taps and the placement of taps on the tapping band is specified in the management plan. * Rationale for the equipment used is justified. * If prescribed tapping rates vary from well-established norms, compelling evidence justifies the deviation. * Tapping rates are justified by prompt tap hole closure, published tapping guidelines and relevant site-specific data and observation. * Use of "health spouts" or "narrow spouts" on small diameter trees (<10 inches DBH) is conservative until research shows such usage is ecologically and economically viable. * The sugar bush management plan addresses silvicultural practices for non-maple species 			<p>A Guide to Improving and Maintaining Sugar Bush Health and Productivity, is one of the sources used, and is on the EOFG website.</p> <p>Practices viewed on site displayed sustainable sugar bush management.</p> <p>EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.</p>
<p>Criterion 7.2 The management plan shall be periodically revised to incorporate the results of monitoring or new scientific and technical information, as well as to respond to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances.</p>			
<p>Indicator 7.2.MAPLE</p> <p>Sugarbush management and harvesting practices shall be periodically adjusted to incorporate new scientific or technical information.</p> <p>Verifiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Forest manager follows research and development related to maple sap and syrup production 	X		<p>EOFG P&P manual requires adaptation to change. The group manager directs this and his level of awareness on management practices indicate capacity to adaptation.</p> <p>EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.</p>
<p>Criterion 7.3 Forest workers shall receive adequate training and supervision to ensure proper implementation of the management plan.</p>			
<p>Indicator 7.3.MAPLE</p> <p>Workers receive adequate training and supervision to ensure proper tapping and processing techniques.</p> <p>Verifiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Cluster tapping is not observed in the field. * Tap holes are properly drilled (at a proper depth, with a new sharp drill bit, showing infrequent splitting of the bark from driving taps too deeply or into frozen tissue). 	X		<p>As mentioned above, the forest manager is adequately trained to ensure proper tapping and processing techniques. Workshops are presented on these techniques.</p> <p>EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.</p>

PRINCIPLE #8: MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT				
<p>Criterion 8.1 The frequency and intensity of monitoring should be determined by the scale and intensity of forest management operations as well as the relative complexity and fragility of the affected environment. Monitoring procedures should be consistent and replicable over time to allow comparison of results and assessment of change.</p>				
<p>Indicator 8.1.MAPLE Sugarbush monitoring shall be incorporated into the overall monitoring plan for the forest management operation and provide data on forest changes upon which management prescriptions can be updated.</p>	X			<p>Monitoring of the sugar bushes is done through simple record keeping, appropriate to the small scale of the operation visited. Monitoring also conforms to the EOFG requirements as discussed in the FM assessment.</p> <p>EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.</p>
<p>Criterion 8.2 Forest management 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.</p>				
<p>Indicator 8.2.MAPLE The sugarbush monitoring plan is technically sound and identifies/describes monitoring of the following: * changes in the maple component of forest composition (size class and distribution) maple growth rates and regeneration; * changes in maple health (decline, die-back or poor tap hole closure rates); * presence of pests; and, * harvesting levels including the number of taps used, volume of sap collected and volume and grades of syrup produced.</p>	X			<p>Due to the small size and scope of the operation visited, monitoring is informal, but suited. The landowners are constantly present in the forest and monitoring the condition of the forest. The forest owner lives on the woodlot and meet with EOFG group manager (who is also their forest manager).</p> <p>EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.</p>
<p>Criterion 8.3 Documentation shall be provided by the forest manager to enable monitoring and certifying organizations to trace each forest product from its origin, a process known as the "chain of custody."</p>				

Indicator 8.3.MAPLE1 The volume and source of sap collected and the volume and grades of syrup produced shall be recorded for future tracing.	X		The volume, grade and batch of syrup produced is well recorded. This is a requirement of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Grading is limited but appropriate. Records are kept. EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.
Indicator 8.3.MAPLE2 Invoices of syrup or sap sales are documented, include required information (certification code, FSC product group) and are stored for inspection.	X		Volumes of syrup sold are documented. Sales of FSC-certified maple syrup can be to the end-user (consumer). As such, formal sales invoices are not issued, but instead, cash payment receipts are issued. In this case, since the landowner is selling to the consumer who will not be passing on the FSC claim, the FM/CoC code and the FSC claim is not required on the receipts. In other cases in the group, there is a process in place requiring the FSC claim (FSC 100%) and the FM/CoC code on sales invoices when product is being sold to a non-end user (ie. a store). EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.
Indicator 8.3.MAPLE3 For operations with multiple (certified and non-certified) sources of sap, production and labelling of product will follow FSC requirements for mixed products.	X		For the site visited, there is no mixing of non-FSC syrup with FSC syrup. EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.
Indicator 8.3.MAPLE4 100% FSC Certified syrup and sap is kept separate from non-certified product and clearly distinguished through marks, labels or other means.	X		This was not a concern on the operation visited. EOFG is in conformance with this indicator.