

Family Forests Alliance

2011 Action Plan

Approved by core organizers 3/17/2011

The Family Forests Alliance was created to provide a national mechanism for bringing together individuals and organizations committed to promoting responsible forest stewardship through FSC standards; to create a forum for communication, cooperation, and information sharing; to support FSC certified groups; and to allow participants to pursue issues of common interest, learn from one another, and enlarge the community of landowners and small businesses practicing responsible forestry.

The four primary purposes of the Family Forests Alliance are to:

- Advocate for FSC policies, public policies, and procurement policies that better serve FSC-certified family forests.
- Work collaboratively to develop new resources and tools for group certification programs.
- Operate as a forum to share information and strategies for successful models of certification, forest management, policy development, and market development.
- Provide more visible networks and membership opportunities for family forest owners who feel underserved by existing forest management models and landowner organizations.

Background

In 2007, the core organizers of the FSC Family Forest Alliance hosted an inaugural national gathering at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin, and the outcomes of that gathering defined the Alliance's first Action Plan. Since that meeting the Alliance participated in the development of the FSC family forest standards as a part of the FSC standards revision process. The Alliance partners have also initiated carbon credit projects for family forest owners, supported marketing alliances and participated in FSC's global efforts with small forest holders.

Alliance Organizational Structure

Secretariat. The Alliance Secretariat is the primary contact for the Alliance and has responsibilities for managing Alliance activities.

The current Secretariat is:

Katie Fernholz, Dovetail Partners

Organizers. The Alliance Organizers are the individuals and organizations that are responsible for the development and implementation of the Action Plan of the Alliance. The original Organizers were the groups that first formed the Alliance at the Wingspread Conference in 2007.

Individuals involved with that effort have remained as core organizers though some are no longer associated with FSC groups. A focus of this action plan will be to recruit additional core organizers from active FSC groups.

The current core organizers are:

- Harry Groot, consultant, Christiansburg, VA
- Joe Smith, consultant, Phillipston, MA
- Kathryn Fernholz, Dovetail Partners, Minneapolis, MN
- John Gunn, Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Brunswick, ME
- Alyx Perry, Southern Forests Network, Asheville, NC
- Dylan Jenkins, Finite Carbon, Williamsport, PA

Partners. Alliance Partners are individuals and organizations that support the purposes of the Alliance and have been involved with or are pursuing and supporting the development of FSC certification programs for family forest owners. Benefits of being a partner include receiving notices and updates from the Alliance about issues related to family forest certification, an opportunity to contribute to the four purposes of the Alliance, and access to the other partners in the Alliance as resources for solutions to certification's technical challenges. A focus of this action plan will be to reconnect with existing partners and to add new partners.

The Alliance Partners are:

- Appalachian Sustainable Development
- Cook County Sustainable Forestry Cooperative
- Eastern Ontario Model Forest
- The Forest Guild
- Forestry for the Bay Program, Chesapeake Bay Program
- Harrop-Procter Community Forest
- Masconomo Forestry
- Massachusetts Woodlands Cooperative
- National Wildlife Federation, Northeast Natural Resource Center
- Northwoods Forestry Cooperative
- Residents' Committee to Protect the Adirondacks
- Scientific Certification Systems
- Rainforest Alliance, SmartWood
- Sustainable Northwest
- Sustainable Woods Network
- Vermont Family Forests
- Wisconsin Family Forests

Sponsors. Sponsors are the individuals and organizations that have provided financial support to the Alliance to aid in the implementation of the Action Plan and the Alliance's four purposes. A focus of this action plan will be to obtain additional sponsorships for the continued operation of the Alliance.

The Alliance sponsors are:

- Verso Paper (First Founding Sponsor)

- Fox Foundation (in memory of Elaine Fox, Founding Sponsor)
- NewPage Corporation (Founding Sponsor)
- Domtar Inc.
- Ford Foundation
- Flintridge Foundation
- Potlatch Corporation
- The Johnson Foundation
- Stora Enso
- Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation

Fiscal Agent. The fiscal agent for the Alliance is Dovetail Partners.

2011 Action Plan

Alliance activities in 2011 will focus on three action areas:

1. Alliance organization
2. Advocacy for FSC-certified family forests
3. Support for FSC-certified groups

1. Alliance Organization

Identify Community

Background: Individual and group family forest participation in FSC changes over time. In order to fulfill its primary purposes the Alliance needs to stay connected to this community, but a current roster of the participants does not exist. In the short term the Alliance needs to develop a working list of FSC family forest participants and supporting organizations as a basis for developing their organization, engaging with partners, and creating a communication network. The Alliance also needs to work with FSC-US to develop and make available a formal list of FSC-certified groups.

Action 1.1: Develop a working list that identifies as many FSC-certified groups and other potential partners as possible and compile contact information.

Action 1.2: Work with FSC-US staff to get information about the availability of group certification, and certified groups in the U.S., on the FSC-US website. If FSC cannot list groups on their site, prepare a separate FFA webpage that does so.

Enhance Core Organizers

Background: Six of the seven original core organizers were actively involved in the management of FSC-certified groups at the time the Alliance was formed. Only one of the current core organizers is still active in that role. While the group contains significant knowledge and experience related to FSC and group certification, it would benefit greatly from the addition of active group managers and participants.

Action 1.3: Recruit at least three people actively involved in FSC group certification to serve as core organizers. These people can either replace or supplement current core organizers.

Build Partnerships

Background: The current partner list was created in 2007 and includes some organizations that no longer exist. The Alliance has had little direct contact with others over the past two years. Partners play a key role in supporting Alliance activities. The effectiveness of the Alliance would be enhanced by improving their communication with existing partners and identifying and adding new partners.

Action 1.4: Update partners list through direct contact with potential partners identified by Action 1.1. Obtain verbal or written commitment to FFA primary purposes and permission to list as partner on FFA web site and publications.

Develop Alliance Funding

Background: Alliance activities have been supported by funds contributed by sponsors in 2007 and 2008. This pool of money will be spent by the end of this year. Continuing Alliance activities will require the development of a reliable funding stream. Where possible the Alliance fund raising efforts could be done in collaboration with FSC-US.

Action 1.5: Obtain funding commitments sufficient to meet 2012 basic budget (\$20,000) plus cover any special projects in 2012 work plan.

Develop 2012 Work Plan

Background: Annual work plans focus limited resources to their most effective use and provide a means for evaluating organization and procedures and progress toward stated goals. They also can serve to engage partners and support fundraising.

Action 1.6: Develop 2012 work plan and budget for approval of core organizers by December 15, 2011.

2. Advocacy for FSC-certified Family Forests

Memorandum of Understanding with FSC-US

Background: A dynamic working relationship with FSC-US increases the Alliance's ability to achieve its primary purposes and enhances FSC-US' effectiveness. This relationship has been formally guided by a Memorandum of Understanding. FFA and FSC-US signed their first MOU in September, 2007. The memorandum was renewed in July, 2009. This agreement is effective through July 1, 2011. The purpose of the MOU is to develop and expand a framework of cooperation between FSC-US and the FFA. The document recognizes the shared interests of both parties to expand the use of the FSC tool on family forest lands. It states that FSC benefits from FFA's help in planning and delivering initiatives that engage family forest landowners in FSC certification and that FFA benefits from having the opportunity to participate directly in the development of the FSC-US family forests program, and by having a direct linkage with FSC-US.

Action 2.1: Renew FFA/FSC-US Memorandum of Understanding that expires in July, 2011. FFA commitments should focus on support and advocacy for group certificates. MOU should

include commitment to joint fundraising and should define FFA's advisory and support role for the FSC-US family forest program.

Communicate New Family Forest Standards

Background: A new national FSC forest management standard was implemented in the USA in 2010, replacing nine different regional standards. The new standard includes family forest indicators developed to define and facilitate the participation of family forests in FSC certification. Most family forest owners are not knowledgeable about the new standard, how it differs from the preceding standards, and how it applies to family forests. The Alliance could help bridge this knowledge gap by documenting the changes and making the information available to FSC-US for circulation.

Action 2.2: Create user-friendly summary of changes from regional to national standard that could inform family forest owners, group managers, and foresters.

Develop family forest community through newsletters and social media

Background: Communication is key to the achievement of the Alliance's primary purposes. In the past this has been achieved through the Alliance's web site, semi-annual national gatherings, and periodic news releases. These activities should be enhanced through regular communication with groups and partners identified through Action 1.1. In the short term this can be achieved through regular publication of an e-mail newsletter. In the long term the Alliance could use other social media to enhance communication.

Action 2.3: Produce and distribute a bi-monthly e-mail update on family forest issues mailed to groups and partners identified in 1.1

3. Support for FSC-Certified Groups

Follow up on NNRG Template project.

Background: In 2008 the Northwest Natural Resource Group obtained a grant with the Alliance's support to develop templates of FSC group management documents that could be shared with existing and potential groups. The Alliance should follow up on this project and assist in the distribution of the templates that have been produced.

Action 3.1: Obtain the complete set of templates developed for NNRG and make available through web site.

Develop group management database (eg Sales Force database)

Background: FSC family forest group managers must collect and manage a large amount of information. Computer databases provide the most efficient means of collecting, storing, and using this information, but many group managers are not aware of what is available and do not have the time or money to develop their own systems. The Alliance can assist these managers by developing criteria and parameters for a template database with input from FFA members and group managers, and by contracting with a consultant to complete development of an easily customizable template database and user guide. In the long term the Alliance could host and

record training and technical support webinars led by the consultant. The database could also include a template for group chain of custody organizations.

Action 3.2: Develop structure and format of group management database, obtain quotes for its development, and identify potential funding sources for the project.

Develop Specific Services and Benefits for Group Managers

Background: Group certificates provide family forest owners with the most accessible pathway to participation in FSC certification, but it is one that is difficult to maintain. The Alliance needs to determine how its resources can best be used to support existing groups and assist in the development of new groups. This could involve the development of templates and tools for group managers, providing training, developing models and case studies, assisting with marketing efforts, establishing regional resource centers, and representing the interests of groups before FSC-US. The Alliance must decide where to focus its efforts through communication with its members and partners and the deliberations of its core organizers. The resulting menu of proposed services would be used in the development of the 2012 work plan. Where necessary, grants or sponsorships could be sought to support specific initiatives.

Action 3.3: Develop proposed menu of services and benefits FFA can develop or provide for group managers for inclusion in 2012 work plan. Include estimated budget for each menu item.