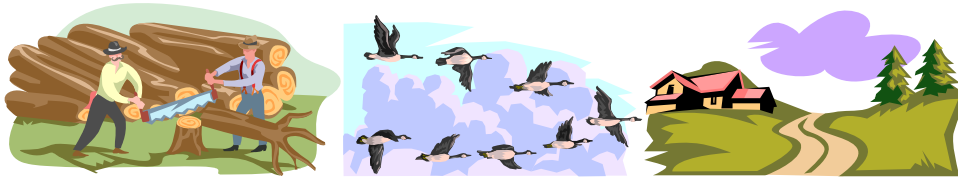


Umbrella Certification System

Operations Manual



The mission of the Umbrella Certification System is to increase and improve access to Forest Stewardship Council certification by providing access to certification for small, private forest ownerships.

The Umbrella Certification System Operations Manual provides information regarding the history, operating structure, management philosophies, objectives and services, policies and procedures, and roles and responsibilities of the Umbrella Certification System as developed and administered by the Community Forestry Resource Center (CFRC). This manual provides detailed instructional guidance for CFRC staff and contractors, landowner members of the certified pool, participating resource managers, loggers, chain-of-custody certified businesses, and others on how the program operates and how to participate and access certification through the CFRC.



Prepared by the Community Forestry Resource Center of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, 2105 First Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55404, 612-870-3407, forestrycenter@iatp.org

The Community Forestry Resource Center (CFRC) of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) is a non-profit organization committed to promoting responsible forest management by encouraging the long-term health and prosperity of small, privately owned woodlots, their owners, and their communities.

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Acknowledgements

Cook County Sustainable Forestry Cooperative

Eastern Ontario Model Forest

Falls Brook Centre

Hiawatha Sustainable Woods Cooperative

Living Forest Cooperative

Massachusetts Woodlands Cooperative

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Residents Committee to Protect the Adirondacks

Sustainable Woods Cooperative

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource

Acronyms

BMP – Best Management Practices

CFRC – Community Forestry Resource Center

CWD – Coarse Woody Debris

DNR – Department of Natural Resources

FSC – Forest Stewardship Council

IATP – Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

NTFP – Non-Timber Forest Product

OSHA – Occupational Safety and Health Administration

RTE – Rare, Threatened or Endangered

SW - SmartWood

History and Background

What is Forest Certification?

Forest certification is the process of applying a system of recognized standards for forest management that ensures forests or woodlands are being well managed to meet long-term goals. Forest certification provides a voluntary opportunity for a forest enterprise (individual, company, or association) to undergo a formal assessment and verification of the quality of its forest activities. Verification of well-managed forests or woodlands is often indicated in the marketplace by a certification label, sometimes called an “eco-label.” Forest certification promotes continual improvement in the practice of sustainable forestry.

What are the Forest Stewardship Council and FSC Certification?

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international, independent, non-profit, membership organization. The goal of the FSC is to promote environmentally responsible, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world’s forests, by establishing a worldwide standard of recognized and respected Principles and Criteria for forest stewardship. The established Principles and Criteria provided the basis for the development of the *Regional Forest Stewardship Standard for the Lake States-Central Hardwoods Region (USA)*. A copy of this Standard can be found in the Appendix.

For several decades, there has been growing concern about the future of forests and the sustainability of harvesting levels. To address these concerns, the FSC created a system of independent forest inspection and certification to assure landowners, consumers, and others that forests certified under this system are well-managed and products from them are harvested in a ecologically, economically, and socially responsible manner.

Forest Stewardship Council certification provides a tool to assure landowners that their forests are being well-managed to meet long-term ecological, economic and social goals. Landowners, as well as general consumers and others, can feel confident that products from an FSC-certified forest are produced without compromising the long-term health and beauty of that forest. Also, FSC certification provides a marketing label that is increasingly recognized in the marketplace and clearly identifies the product as meeting the standards of FSC certification. Landowners can also purchase signs displaying the logo and information to post on their property to demonstrate their commitment to responsible forestry.

For more information contact: **Forest Stewardship Council – U.S. (FSC-US)**, 1155 30th Street NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20007, Phone: +1 202.342.0413, Fax: +1 202.342.6589, E-mail: info@fscus.org, <http://www.fscus.org>

What is Group Certification?

Individual certification for small landowners can be cost prohibitive. 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 group manager acts both as a source of information and is also able to organize a certification process that allows each individual group member to benefit from the economies of scale of being part of a larger group.

With all group certificates there is a structure involving the Certification Body, a Group Manager, and Group Members with a contract and other documentation defining the relationships.

What is Umbrella Certification?

The mission of the Umbrella Certification System is to increase and improve access to Forest Stewardship Council certification by providing access to certification for small, private forest ownerships.

Umbrella Certification is a model of group certification developed by the Community Forestry Resource Center (CFRC) to reduce the costs and technical barriers to Forest Stewardship Council certification for small forest ownerships. The CFRC is the “group manager” in the Umbrella Certification System. Landowners who become members of the Umbrella Certification System follow a process of assistance and oversight in partnership with the CFRC to assure that the FSC standards are met and maintained on their property. This system includes CFRC’s review of management plans, scheduling of field assessments to evaluate harvest designs, and arranging for the use of the FSC logo for marketing products from member lands. When available, the CFRC works closely with the landowner’s forestry cooperative or local association to provide these services. Members wanting to participate in the Umbrella Certification System must commit to meeting FSC standards.

SmartWood is the FSC-accredited certifier who is responsible for assessing CFRC’s ability to assure certification standards through the Umbrella Certification System. The Forest Stewardship Council is responsible for developing and updating the applicable regional standards for FSC-certified forestry operations.

Umbrella Certification differs from other group certification models in its emphasis on training and compliance assistance for participants and the ability for individual components of the Umbrella Certification System to be used as tools to address specific needs and technical gaps in existing resources. For example, the monitoring tools can be used separately from the Umbrella Certification System to assist existing certified management operations that need help meeting the monitoring requirements of their certificate.

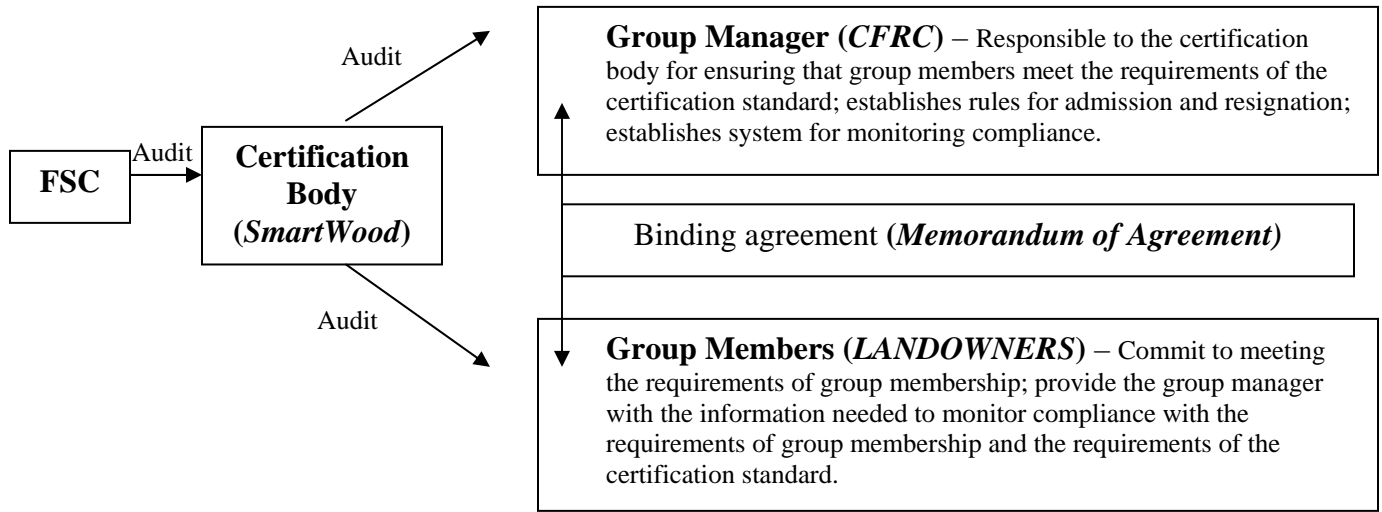
How was the Umbrella Certification System Developed?

The Umbrella Certification concept was first envisioned in 1999. The CFRC brought together the leadership of landowner groups, environmental organizations, and certifiers from the Midwest, Northeast, and Canada with common interests in improving access to FSC certification for small landowners. The CFRC asked participants to help define the needs of these small forest owners regarding improving the capacity to be certified. This discussion led to the vision of an umbrella structure involving CFRC, or a similar supporting organization, holding the certificate and being responsible for overseeing the landowners' operations. The CFRC framed the umbrella concept through multiple drafts of guiding documents. These drafts were circulated widely for comment. Individuals and organizations involved in the drafting process included certified and non-certified resource managers, state agencies, professional forestry organizations, environmental organizations, certifiers, and landowner groups throughout the United States and Canada.

Operating Structure

The Umbrella Certification System follows the guidelines involved with all FSC group certificates.

Graphic Representation of the Umbrella Certification System Group Certification Scheme



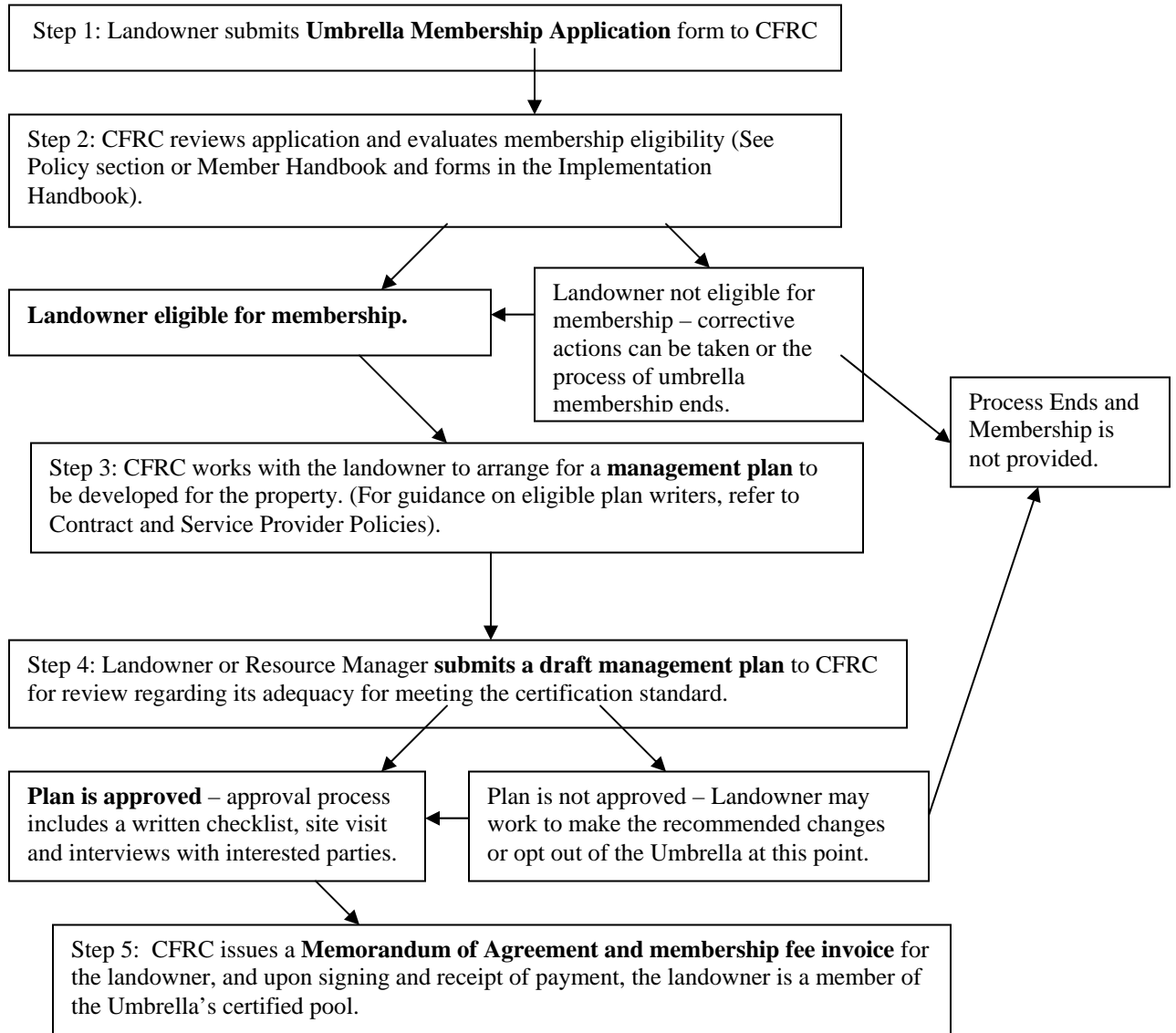
In the Umbrella Certification System, the CFRC is the Group Manager and the individual landowners are the Group Members. The binding agreement is the Memorandum of Agreement. The CFRC is directly accountable to the Certification Body (SmartWood) for all activities on member properties. The Certification Body (SmartWood) is accountable to FSC.

As Group Manager, the CFRC is responsible for establishing the rules for admission into the Umbrella Certification System, resignation or expulsion from the system, and the systems for monitoring the compliance with the certification standard. The CFRC accomplishes this through a process of management plan reviews, harvest plan reviews, site visits, and audits. To effectively maintain the Umbrella Certification System, the CFRC relies to some degree on the resources of the forestry cooperatives and other organizations where the group members also have membership and involvement. The CFRC formalizes these assisting roles through contracts and service agreements. Regardless of the assistance that the co-op or other organizations provide, the CFRC retains the ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance within the Umbrella Certification System and within the certification standard.

Operating Process

The following schematic outlines the process a landowner goes through to become a member of the certified pool of the Umbrella Certification System.

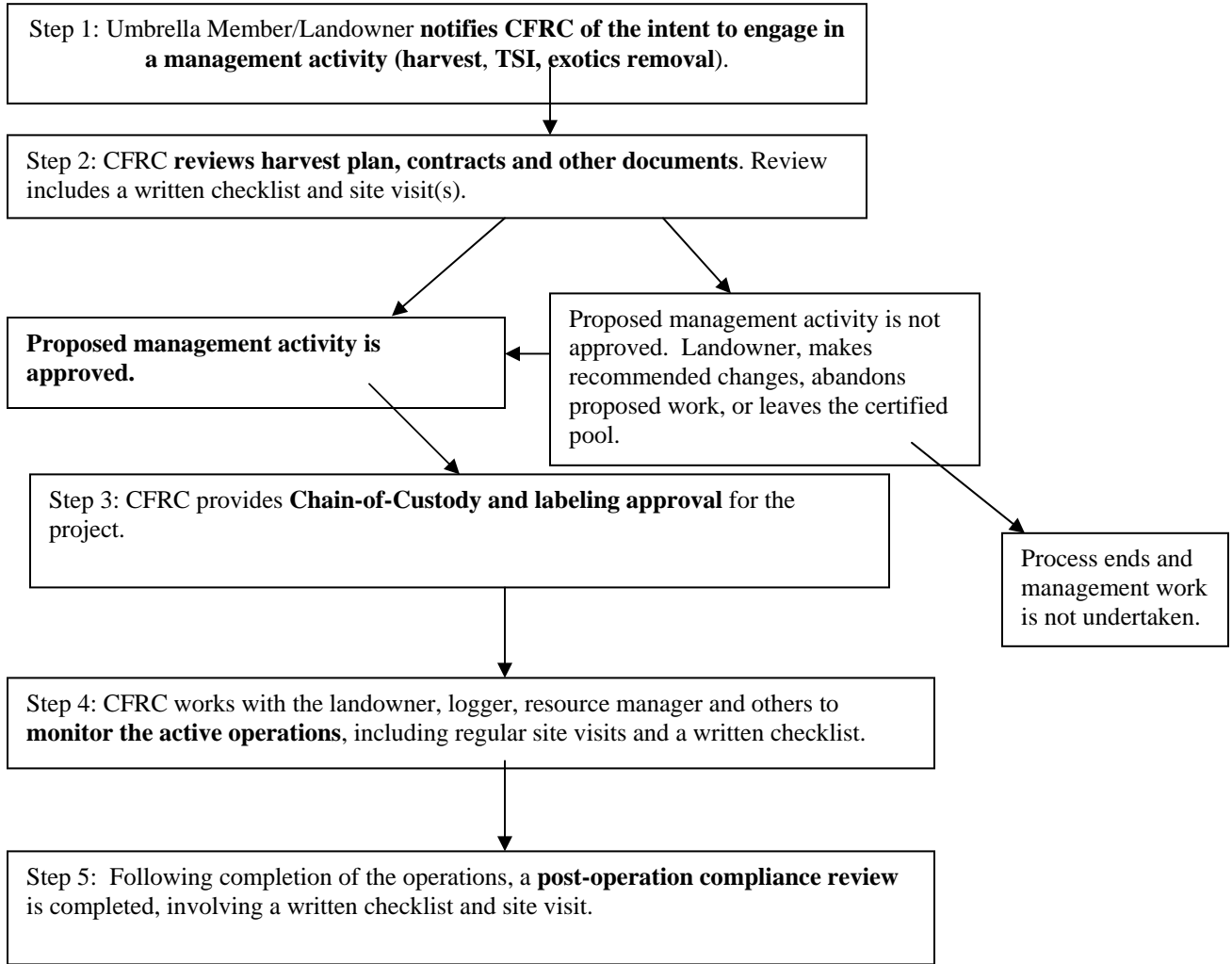
Graphic of Umbrella Certification System Membership Enrollment



The Implementation Handbook includes all the forms used in this process and the Policy sections of the Operations Manual outline the operational structure.

The following schematic outlines the process for review and approval of harvests and other management activities on properties enrolled in the certified pool of the Umbrella Certification System.

Graphic of Umbrella Certification System Forest Management Activity Approval



Corrective actions may be taken at any time before, during or after the forest management operations if the approved operations plan is not being followed or if the certification standard is not being maintained. Corrective actions may include, but are not limited to, any applicable legal actions, expulsion from the Umbrella Certification System, and ineligibility to market current and/or future products as certified. All of the template documents, forms and checklists for this process are included in the Implementation Handbook. The policy sections of the Operations Manual outline the governing guidelines.

Guiding Policies

Introduction

These policies outline basic guiding principles regarding the Community Forestry Resource Center's (CFRC) interpretation and application of some key Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certification Standards and the roles and responsibilities of the CFRC staff and contractors, Umbrella Certification members, and Service Providers.

Mission Statement and Goals

The mission of the Umbrella Certification System is to increase and improve access to Forest Stewardship Council certification by providing access to certification for small, private forest ownerships.

The Community Forestry Resource Center (CFRC) of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) is a non-profit organization committed to promoting responsible forest management by encouraging the long-term health and prosperity of small, privately-owned woodlots, their owners, and their communities.

The Umbrella Certification System provides private landowners, who are committed to maintaining the long-term ecological, economic and social benefits of their forest, with access to independent evaluation and certification of their forestry management and allows them to use the FSC label for marketing and advertising.

By increasing and improving access to FSC certification, the CFRC aims to help forest landowners, their forests and communities receive numerous potential benefits:

- Landowners are better able to achieve management goals, document success, and contribute to a healthy forested landscape.
- The forest benefits from more ecologically-based, long-term, and landscape scale management.
- The community benefits from increased opportunities for diversified forest industries, jobs, and markets.
- Landowners receive an independent review of forest management that provides assurance that management activities support landowner's goals and long-term sustainability.

Membership Policies

Membership Eligibility

Membership in the Community Forestry Resource Center's Umbrella Certification System is available to private individuals owning forested property located within Minnesota, Wisconsin, Northeastern Iowa, or the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Preference is given to landowners who are also members of a forestry cooperative or another landowner organization that is able to provide additional resources to support high quality forest management. Landowners who are not members of a forestry co-op or other landowner organization may incur additional costs as a member of the Umbrella Certification System. Eligible landowners must demonstrate a commitment to meeting and maintaining the FSC standards in their forest management, and have a desire to provide an example in his/her community of this management standard. Eligible landowners must demonstrate a willingness and ability to understand and comply with the Umbrella Certification System policies and procedures.

Membership Duration

The FSC certificate has a duration of five years (April 1, 2008 – March 31, 2011). After five years, a new assessment is conducted to qualify for another five-year contract. Members can enroll at anytime during the contract period. Once enrolled landowners are strongly encouraged to remain committed for the remainder of the contract. If a landowner wishes to end their membership before the end of the contract, s/he will not be eligible to re-enroll.

If ownership of the enrolled property changes, the membership does not automatically transfer to the new owner(s). If the new owner(s) are interested in retaining the certification, a new Memorandum of Agreement can be established to keep the property certified.

Fee Structure

Members of the Umbrella Certification System are responsible for an annual membership fee which helps cover the administrative costs of certification. The membership fee is payable to CFRC. The Umbrella Certification System membership fee covers only the costs of assuring certification standards are met. The membership fee does not include the costs associated with forest management planning, harvest operations or other contract services. Members are responsible for paying any and all service fees to loggers, foresters or other natural resource professionals that provide management planning, harvest, or other services to them in helping meet their forest management goals. The Umbrella Certification System membership fees listed below are for landowners who are also members of a forestry cooperative or landowner organization. **Landowners who are not members of a supporting forestry organization should contact CFRC directly for a fee estimate.**

Umbrella Certification System annual membership fees for members of forestry cooperatives

<i>Acres</i>	<i>Fee/Year</i>
0-500	\$50.00
501 – 1,000	\$200.00
1,001 – 2,470	\$400.00
>2,470	TBD

Membership Application and Responsibilities

The first step in joining the Umbrella Certification System is the completion of the Membership Application. This application outlines the requirements of becoming a member and starts the process of meeting the FSC standards. The Implementation Handbook includes the Membership Application Form and the Memorandum of Agreement outlining the membership responsibilities. The following language is taken from the Memorandum of Agreement and describes the obligations of Umbrella Certification System members.

The landowner participating in the CFRC Umbrella Certification System agrees:

- to participate in FSC forest certification and establish a long-term commitment to the FSC Principles and Criteria by maintaining an FSC-certified and approved forest management plan.
- to notify CFRC when:
 - harvests or other management activities are being planned. The CFRC must be notified before activities begin. All harvesting activities need to be reviewed and pre-approved by the CFRC for FSC standards compliance before any products can be marketed as certified.
 - management plans are being developed or changed. Any proposed changes must be reviewed for certification compliance and approved by the CFRC.
 - long-term objectives or activities are no longer compatible with the CFRC Umbrella Certification System, the principles and criteria of FSC certification, or the approved forest management plan.
 - they are no longer interested in participating in the certified pool.
- to grant CFRC access to the forestland in the certified pool to review compliance with the certification standards.
- to pay the annual Umbrella Certification System membership fee as detailed in the Operations Manual (starts at \$50/year for properties up to 500 acres in size).
- to pay for any contracted services related to forest management activities, such as provided by foresters, loggers, tree planters or others.
- to contract with service providers that understand and are willing and able to maintain the FSC standards and meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the Operations Manual.
- to verify that the land in the certified pool is clear and legally secure, that all legal owners of the certified property are party to this agreement, that boundaries are properly identified on the ground, and that timber harvesting or other operations are legally permitted.
- to understand and abide by all current Umbrella Certification System policies and operational guidelines as defined in the Operations Manual.

- to understand and comply with all corrective actions, suspension or termination procedures relevant to meeting the certification standards and as outlined in the Operations Manual.

Disciplinary Procedures

Certification is entirely voluntary, and landowners can terminate their membership at any time. The CFRC may request a written notice or explanation of the reason for ending the membership. Landowners who voluntarily terminate their membership will not be able to reinstate their membership during the 5-year contract period.

To ensure compliance with the FSC standard, it is necessary for members of the Umbrella Certification System to maintain their commitment to the member responsibilities as expressed in the Memorandum of Agreement. If a member violates the agreement, or monitoring and site reviews reveal non-compliance with the certification standard, that member will be automatically made ineligible to market products using the FSC certified logo and their membership will be suspended. The CFRC will determine appropriate corrective actions to be taken if the member expresses interest in reinstating their membership. Egregious violations may make a landowner ineligible for membership reinstatement.

Examples of actions that may result in disciplinary action include:

- ***Failure to pay membership fee.*** After three requests or 90 days (whichever is longer), the membership will be suspended until payment is received.
- ***Lack of record keeping or failure to provide requested information.*** After three requests or 90 days (whichever is longer), the membership will be suspended until the requested information is received or an alternative solution is identified.
- ***Failure to notify CFRC before harvest/treatment activity.*** Materials from the operation may be sold as certified **IF** the operation fits the approved management plan **AND** does not violate the FSC standard. The site will be visited and reviewed and the member records and management plan will be updated to accurately reflect the changed property condition and management options. If the operation violates the FSC standard or has created adverse environmental impacts such as stream damage or sensitive habitat destruction, membership will be suspended until the conditions are restored and the management is again compliant with the FSC standard.
- ***Harvest/Treatment Activity does not follow approved plan.*** Similar to previous example, except materials from the operation cannot be sold as certified.

To avoid conflicts and disciplinary procedures, members are encouraged to communicate with the CFRC as much as necessary to avoid misunderstandings. Conflicts will largely be avoided if members ensure that their management and operational or harvest plans are reviewed and approved by the CFRC and treatments are done in accordance with the approved plan, and CFRC is informed of these activities. It is a goal of CFRC to not allow situations to develop to the point where members and any products are made ineligible involuntarily. The systems have been designed to avoid involuntary expulsion.

To help with dispute resolution, the CFRC has identified individuals to serve on an Advisory Committee. In the event that the CFRC and the Umbrella Certification System member cannot come to a resolution regarding appropriate disciplinary actions or corrective procedures, one or more members of the Advisory Committee will be asked to review the case and suggest a resolution.

Internal Operational Policies for the Community Forestry Resource Center

Membership and Management Records

The CFRC maintains a database of Umbrella Certification System members. The database contains all contact information for Umbrella Certification members as well as information pertaining to their membership status. The CFRC also maintains a database containing information related to the management plans and activities on properties within the certified pool. This database will list all known past, current and future management activities that have been approved for the property. This database will include results of management activities (i.e. growth and yield data) and ecological monitoring data. The CFRC maintains hard copy files for all members. These files contain copies of management plans, operational plans, the Membership Application, a Memorandum of Agreement, proof of legal land tenure, ecological monitoring records, harvest yield information, and any other relevant documents.

When a member enters or exits the CFRC group certified pool, the CFRC Umbrella Manager will contact SmartWood by email within 30 days to provide updated member pool information in an electronic format. Hard copies can be made available to representatives from SmartWood upon request.

Document Control and Confidentiality Policy

Documents and information related to the Umbrella Certification System and the individual members will be kept confidential. Only the individual landowner, SmartWood, and the CFRC will have access to records for individual properties. The landowner is free to share their own records as they see fit, but the landowner member must give CFRC permission before CFRC is allowed to share non-public documents with other parties. Summarized management plan information regarding the aggregated membership will be available and provided upon request. A small fee may apply. All operational information regarding the structure of the Umbrella Certification System is available at the CFRC website.

Structural Requirements and Limitations

The CFRC is not currently proposing to develop a three-tiered certification system. If operational plans change, the CFRC will contact SmartWood before proceeding in any manner.

Before approving a member application, the CFRC will notify SmartWood if a request for membership is received:

- from a landowner outside of the current service area of Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.
- for a property that is significantly larger than previously enrolled members (currently set at >2,470 acres).

- for a property that is of an ownership category that presents regulatory or administrative requirements that are significantly different than current membership (i.e., publicly owned lands).

The CFRC will notify SmartWood if the number of properties to be added to the pool in any given year expands the size of the pool by more than 300% in the first year, or 100% in the second year.

Forest Management Planning and Operations

The Umbrella Certification System is designed to build and develop local forest management capacity and resources as much as possible. For example, it is the goal of the system to have members contract for forest management planning services with local consulting foresters. However, in the absence of qualified natural resource professionals, the CFRC will assume all responsibility for delivery and assurance of forestry management services that maintain the FSC certification standards. In the absence of a qualified resource professional, the CFRC will create, facilitate, administer and enforce all timber harvesting contracts and other fundamental planning and implementation functions. This responsibility can only be delegated to another party if that party is shown to meet the standards (see section regarding Contract and Service Provider Policies) and a formal agreement is established between the service provider and the CFRC. If neither a qualified natural resource professional nor the CFRC is able to provide an adequate level of forest management expertise for the property, that property will be excluded from membership in the certified pool of the Umbrella Certification System until such time that adequate expertise is identified.

Safety Policy

Throughout all forest management operations and harvesting activities, all timber purchasers, operators, contractors and other agents or staff members are required to conform to standard OSHA safety measures as a requirement of participating in the Umbrella Certification System.

The CFRC maintains information about the most current applicable standards and available training opportunities. All staff and contractors are expected to know, understand and apply appropriate safety measures. The CFRC has safety equipment including hard hats, eye protection, hearing protection, high visibility vests, and first-aid kits available for use by staff and contractors during field visits.

When inspecting operations, the CFRC will evaluate safety measures being applied, identify deficiencies and issue corrective actions as needed.

Forest Health and Ecological Monitoring

The CFRC is responsible for development and implementation of a forest health and ecological monitoring system that adequately addresses the requirements of certification. Responsibility for any aspect of the monitoring requirements can only be delegated to

another party through the development of an explicit contract and formal agreement for services and a clear demonstration of ability to provide adequate services.

Social Impacts and Stakeholder Consultation

The CFRC is committed to identifying the potential social impacts of forest management conducted through the Umbrella Certification System and incorporating the results of evaluations of social impacts into planning and project implementation processes.

Because the lands enrolled in the Umbrella Certification System are generally small and privately owned, most lands 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 CFRC is committed to using several tools throughout management planning and operations to gather information and provide a reasonable degree of transparency. Summarized management plan information regarding the aggregated membership will also be made available and provided upon request to stakeholders. All operational information regarding the structure of the Umbrella Certification System is available at the CFRC website.

During the management planning, the CFRC utilizes a “pre-assessment checklist” based on the FSC standard to collect information about the land ownership, tenure and use rights for the property. Information about adjacent landowners and land uses and any existing conflicts or concerns is also collected and used in the development of the management plan. Whenever possible, the Umbrella Certification member landowners are expected to play a lead role in communicating with neighbors and other stakeholders about their planned activities. Landowners often also play a lead role in identifying reasonable solutions to any existing or discovered concerns. The management planning process includes the evaluation of known or suspected historical or cultural resources and sites and the development of protection recommendations when such resources are present.

During harvest or other treatment planning, interactions with surrounding properties, ownerships and uses must be addressed along with transportation and access arrangements. Property boundaries must be marked and verified as needed to ensure there is no opportunity for trespass to occur.

The CFRC gives preference to landowners who are members of local forestry cooperatives, landowner associations and community organizations that demonstrate a commitment to community benefit and public engagement. By hosting field days, supporting local businesses and demonstrating community leadership, many of the landowners enrolled in the Umbrella Certification System are a primary source of information about economic and social impacts of sustainable forest management.

Forest Aesthetics

The CFRC recognizes that the aesthetic impacts of forest management extend beyond the property level to include all current and future residents and recreational users within the viewshed. Forest management activities – particularly timber harvesting – often have short-term negative impacts on aesthetic quality, and have the potential to cause serious long-term aesthetic degradation. The CFRC believes that forest landowners and resource managers have a responsibility to maintain long-term aesthetic quality. What is aesthetically acceptable differs greatly among individuals, making it impossible to set specific guidelines and measurable targets for aesthetics management. The CFRC believes that high aesthetic quality is not a management goal in and of itself, but rather a byproduct of well-planned management that respects the biological and physical limitations of a site and promotes landscape-level ecological diversity. All of CFRC’s management implementation guidelines are firmly rooted in these concepts.

When addressing forest aesthetics, CFRC references the publication “A Guide to Logging Aesthetics: Practical Tips for Loggers, Foresters, and Landowners,” published in 1993 by the Natural Resource, Agriculture, and Engineering Services.

Certification Compliance and Performance Evaluation Protocol

The CFRC is accountable to SmartWood for assuring compliance with the certification standards and for meeting the requirements for field reviews. Umbrella Certification members are required to provide access to their property for the purpose of compliance reviews by the CFRC and/or SmartWood.

The CFRC is also responsible for providing a system of performance evaluations to ensure that natural resource professionals providing services to Umbrella Certification members possess appropriate expertise and meet established standards for quality, consistency, and compliance with the certification standards.

The CFRC will provide performance evaluations and determine certification compliance throughout the forest management process. The CFRC is responsible for conducting all necessary site reviews personally unless a formal agreement and service contract is developed with a qualified party.

As much as possible, the CFRC will notify the landowner prior to conducting a site visit.

The forms, checklists, and other documents related to these compliance and performance reviews are included in the Implementation Handbook.

The table on the following pages outlines the applicable forms and operational guidance for CFRC’s process of reviewing member performance and certification compliance.

Stages, Forms and Guidance for Performance Evaluation

Stage in Forest Management Process	Form(s)	Guidance
During the Management Plan Development Process	Management Plan Review Checklist and Records Form; Pre-Assessment Checklist - based on the FSC Regional Forest Stewardship Standard for the Lake States-Central Hardwoods Region.	At least one site visit will be conducted before the management plan receives final approval and the landowner is added to the certified pool.
Before Forest Management Activities	Harvest and Treatment Plan Review Checklist and Records Form, pre-harvest checklist and other forms designed for specific site conditions such as riparian management zones, cultural resources, etc.	A site visit will be conducted before active operations if the site has not been visited in the past 2 yrs or the activity includes commercial timber harvesting, road construction, RTE species or habitats, or other unique situations.
During Forest Management Activities	Harvest and Treatment Monitoring Checklist and other forms designed for more specific site conditions.	Commercial timber harvests will be monitored weekly or as appropriate dependant upon the degree, duration and intensity of the operation. Non-commercial activities will be monitored as necessary.
After Forest Management Activities	Post Harvest Monitoring Checklist and other forms designed for more specific site conditions.	At least one site visit will be conducted following the completion of site disturbing activities that include commercial harvesting, road construction, RTE species or habitats, or other unique situations.
Annual Reviews	Annual Compliance Review form.	CFRC staff will visit all properties at least once during the five-year certification period.

Rare, Threatened or Endangered Resources

The CFRC is committed to identifying and protecting rare, threatened, or endangered (RTE) resources on all properties enrolled in the Umbrella Certification System. The CFRC requires that forest management plans include investigations to identify RTE plants, animals and/or natural communities in the field. The CFRC requires plan writers to investigate existing RTE databases and records. The CFRC also requires that plan writers demonstrate a technical knowledge of RTE species and an ability to identify them in the field.

If an RTE plant, animal or community is identified, the CFRC requires that it be documented in the forest management plan. Appropriate management guidelines must also be clearly outlined in the management plan and during 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 law and the certification standards.

Historical, Archeological, Architectural, and Cultural Resources

The CFRC is extremely concerned about any loss or damage to any historically or culturally significant resources on member properties. It is well known that properties within the Lake States can include a wide variety of cultural resources related to both indigenous populations as well as early pioneers and various waves of settlement and land use activities.

The CFRC requires that the forest management plan development process include an investigation of known or potential historical and cultural resources. This information can be gathered through interviews with the landowners, consultation with state agencies or state maintained databases, and site reconnaissance.

If historical and/or cultural resources are identified on the 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 described. Management or protection of the resource must be detailed in the management plan and in subsequent site disturbing activities. 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 must be notified in the event that a burial site or human remains are found or suspected to be present.

The CFRC maintains a list of Tribal Historic Preservation Offices based on information from the National Park Service Heritage Preservation Services Website (<http://www.mnhs.org/localhistory/mho/tribal.html>). In order to become a certified member of the Umbrella Certification pool, landowners must contact and request cultural resource identification and protection information from their local Tribal Historic Preservation Office

(when applicable). CFRC can consult with perspective group members on whether this provision is applicable to them, and provide contact information for the local office.

Tenure, Use Rights, and Indigenous Peoples' Rights

The CFRC is committed to upholding FSC Principles 2 and 3 in relation to Tenure and Use Rights and Responsibilities and Indigenous Peoples' Rights. To this end, the CFRC expects all participating landowners to verify that the land they are enrolling is clear and legally secure and that the boundaries are properly identified on the ground and that timber harvesting or other operations are legally permitted. The CFRC may request copies of a land title or other document to verify claims.

The CFRC is committed to identifying and protecting any known or suspected cultural or historical resources or sites on member lands. The CFRC has made a commitment to developing strong working relationships with indigenous groups in the region and staying informed about current land use issues.

High Conservation Value Forests and Habitats

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

- a) 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 if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance
- b) Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems
- c) Forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g., watershed protection, erosion control)
- d) 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).

In the Lake States Region, it is important to note that high conservation value habitats are not limited to forests. The CFRC recognizes that member properties may include rare wetlands, bluffs, prairies, shorelines, savannas or other habitat types that deserve HCV status. The CFRC is committed to identifying and protecting or restoring all types of high conservation value habitats.

The CFRC requires that the management plan identify intact natural communities. These communities can be identified through existing records and databases, interviews with the landowner, and site reconnaissance.

If a high conservation value habitat is identified, the management plan must provide information about the location, size and composition. The management plan must also provide detailed guidance for appropriate management that is in compliance with both the 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 regulation. The appropriate state or federal agency will be contacted as required.

Conservation Zones and Protected Areas

The CFRC recognizes the value of identifying conservation zones and protected areas within the certified pool of the Umbrella Certification System. These zones can serve as reference areas that can help improve management design. These areas can also enhance monitoring and research efforts. Although the CFRC anticipates that most members of the Umbrella Certification System will meet the definition of a “small” or “low-intensity” operation and therefore be largely exempted from requirements for conservation zones, the CFRC encourages the development of conservation zones when appropriate 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 includes plantation(s)
- the member is committed to establishing protected areas or conservation zones
- the property contains an area or habitat most appropriately managed through conservation or protection.

Representative Sample Areas

The CFRC looks for opportunities to identify and protect intact or partially intact examples of natural communities, as defined by each state’s Natural Heritage program. Potential representative sample areas are identified by comparing existing vegetation or landscape features with documented occurrences of intact natural communities within the watershed or eco-region (a benchmark community). When a potential sample area is identified, it is assessed based on its ecological condition and potential for enhancement. Active management may be used to develop species composition and structure that more closely fits the benchmark community. Representative sample areas may vary significantly in size, from a small discreet feature (such as a moist cliff) to broad land cover type (such as a hardwood swamp).

Contract and Service Provider Policies

Umbrella Certification System members are encouraged to contract with local natural resource professionals for forest management services including, but not limited to, management plan development, harvest planning, tree marking, road construction, prescribed burning and tree plantings. All service providers must demonstrate an understanding of the FSC regional standard and the Umbrella Certification System policies and operations as well as show a willingness to comply with all requirements.

Throughout all forest management operations and harvesting activities, all natural resource professionals, resource managers and other service providers are required to conform to standard OSHA safety measures as a requirement of participating in the Umbrella Certification System. The CFRC maintains information about the most current applicable standards and available training opportunities. All staff and contractors are expected to know, understand and apply appropriate safety measures. The CFRC has safety equipment including hard hats, eye protection, hearing protection, high visibility vests, and first-aid kits available for use by staff and contractors during field visits. When inspecting operations, the CFRC will evaluate safety measures being applied, identify deficiencies and issue corrective actions as needed.

Potential service providers include forestry co-op staff/members, private forestry consultants, public agency foresters, and other public or private natural resource professionals. The CFRC will provide template management plans, checklists, and example documents to Umbrella Certification members and service providers. The CFRC has made all Umbrella Certification System documents and materials available through its website. Copies will also be mailed to service providers upon request.

In the absence of a qualified natural resource professional, the CFRC will create, facilitate, administer and enforce all timber harvesting contracts and other fundamental planning and implementation functions. If neither a qualified natural resource professional nor the CFRC is able to provide an adequate level of forest management expertise for the property, that property will be excluded from membership in the certified pool of the Umbrella Certification System until such time that adequate expertise is identified.

Resource Manager Eligibility

Individuals or organizations wishing to provide natural resource management services related to management or harvest planning, administration, supervision, implementation, or monitoring as part of the Umbrella Certification System and in the interest of an Umbrella Certification member must demonstrate the following qualifications:

- An understanding of, and long-term commitment to, forest management that is in compliance with the FSC standard.
- An ability and experience in writing, administering and implementing management plans that meet the FSC regional standard.
- An interest in continual improvement of their forest management knowledge and practices.
- 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 goals.
- A commitment to serving the Umbrella Certification members and helping them maintain their certification by complying with all Umbrella Certification System 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.

To determine qualifications, the CFRC may request:

- examples of previous management and harvest planning documents;
- a list of up to five references, including at least one employer and two landowner clients;
- an interview and site visit to a representative property;
- copies of transcripts or other documentation of training, experience, and relevant licenses.

Although the CFRC does not require any specific academic qualifications for resource managers, individuals or companies interested in meeting the FSC standard and providing services to Umbrella Certification members will likely find it beneficial to have or obtain the following credentials:

- A two or four year degree in forestry or a closely related natural science field.
- At least five years of experience with forest management, preferably on private lands.
- At least two years of experience in forestry in the Lake States Region.
- Registration with their state's department of natural resources (or other appropriate agency) as a Stewardship Plan Writer or Cooperating Forester.
- Registration as a Certified Forester with the Society of American Foresters, or similar documentation of a commitment to a continuing education program.

One of the goals of the Umbrella Certification System is to increase access to high quality resource management services for landowners. The CFRC is interested in helping resource managers develop their skills and capacities to meet the standards of certification and achieve landowner goals. The CFRC will provide interested resource managers with various tools to help them improve the likelihood that they will be able to provide qualifying services to Umbrella Certification members. The CFRC will provide template management plans, checklists, and other materials to resource managers interested in providing services. The CFRC will also work to develop or identify training opportunities to help build skills.

Division of Duties

CFRC is responsible for maintaining and assuring that the certification standard is maintained and enforced.

At all times, the CFRC is directly and solely responsible for assuring that the certification standard is maintained on Umbrella Certification member properties. The CFRC may find it beneficial to contract with qualified natural resource professionals and others to provide individual support services, but the certification accountability cannot be delegated. Contracts for individual services may include, but are not limited to services associated with site visits for management plan reviews, harvest reviews, weekly active operation monitoring, post-operational review, and annual reviews. The CFRC may also establish contracts with the Advisory Committee members for assistance with dispute resolution.

Natural Resource Professionals and Resource Managers are responsible for following the certification standard in their planning and operations, and complying with the Umbrella Certification System policies on behalf of their landowner clients.

Natural Resource Professionals, including foresters, loggers, tree planters, ecologists, and all other individuals, companies, or cooperatives providing forest management related services to Umbrella Certification members are obligated to demonstrate an understanding and effective use of both the applicable FSC certification standard and the policies outlined in the Umbrella Certification System Operations Manual. The role of the natural resource professional is to ensure that their landowner client is able to obtain and maintain their membership in the Umbrella Certification System by providing services that meet or exceed the FSC standard and comply with the Umbrella Certification System policies.

Natural resource professionals who provide services to Umbrella Certification members *may* need to assist their landowner clients with the following activities:

Forest Management Planning

- Submission of a draft management plan to the CFRC for review.
- Revision of the draft management plan based on comments from the CFRC.
- Arrangement and/or attendance of a site visit to verify the management plan.

Forest Harvest Planning

- Submission of a draft harvest plan to the CFRC for review.
- Revision of the plan based on comments from the CFRC.
- Arrangement and/or attendance of a pre-operation site visit.
- Arrangement and/or attendance of weekly active-operation site visits.
- Arrangement and/or attendance of a post-operation site visit.

Umbrella Certification members (landowners) are responsible for meeting the obligations defined in the Memorandum of Agreement.

The responsibilities of the Umbrella Certification members are further defined in the Memorandum of Agreement and Member Handbook.

General Roles and Responsibilities of Participants

	CFRC (Group Manager)	Landowner (Group Member)	Resource Manager ¹ (Primary Service Provider)	Other Contract Service Provider ²	Chain-of-Custody Certificate Holder ³	Forest Owner Co-op or Group	SmartWood ⁴ (FSC Certification Body)
Umbrella Certification System Operations	Develops structure and assures compliance of group certification	Agrees to membership policies. Signs MOA with CFRC	Agrees to contract and service provider policies. Signs MOA with CFRC	Agrees to contract and service provider policies. Signs MOA with CFRC	N/A	Agrees to established policies. Signs MOA with CFRC	Assesses CFRC and approves group certification.
Policies	Develops and assures they are understood and followed	Follows Member Handbook and/or Operations Manual	Follows Operations Manual	Follows Operations Manual	N/A	Follows Operations Manual	N/A
Fee Structure	Sets operating fees, pays for costs of maintaining certificate	Pays Umbrella Certification fee and fees for contracted services	Contracts for services	Contracts for services	Maintains C-O-C certificate, contracts for services	Contracts for services	Charges CFRC for certification auditing fees
Auditing	Audits landowner members, RM's and service providers for compliance	Monitors operations (voluntary)	Monitors operations	Monitors operations	Complies with C-O-C Auditing requirements	Monitors operations (voluntary/ under contract with CFRC)	Audits CFRC for compliance with FSC standards
Ecological and Forest Health Monitoring	Establish procedure and ensure implementation	Perform monitoring (voluntary)	Perform monitoring on behalf of landowner client	Perform monitoring on behalf of landowner client	N/A	Perform monitoring (voluntary/ under contract with CFRC)	N/A
Communication	Provides central point of communication between participants	Communicates with CFRC regarding activities, operations, and needs.	Communicates with CFRC regarding activities, operations, and needs.	Communicates with CFRC regarding activities, operations, and needs.	Communicate with CFRC regarding activities, operations, and needs.	Communicate with CFRC regarding activities, operations, and needs.	Communicate with CFRC
Training	Identifies participants training needs and offers assistance in building skills	Participate in workshops and trainings (voluntary)	Build and maintain skills to provide FSC compliant services	Build and maintain skills to provide FSC compliant services	N/A	Build and maintain skills to provide FSC compliant services	N/A

¹ The term "Resource Manager" refers to the individual(s), company or organization providing primary forest management services to the landowner. This person may be a forester, ecologist, logger or other natural resource professional. These services could include management plan preparation, harvest planning, monitoring activities, and other forestry related services. One landowner may have multiple resource managers providing services.

² "Other Contract Service Providers" include any and all individual(s), companies, or organizations providing natural resource management services to the landowner without primary resource manager authority.

³ Chain of Custody Certificate Holder is another entity that has received certification for tracking FSC-certified forest products.

⁴ SmartWood is the FSC Accredited Certifier responsible for establishing and auditing CFRC FSC Certificate.

Specific Roles and Responsibilities of Participants

	CFRC (Group Manager)	Landowner Member (Group Member)	Resource Manager ⁵ (Primary Service Provider)	Other Contract Service Provider ⁶	Chain-of-Custody Certificate Holder ⁷	Forest Owner Co-op or Group	Costs Paid By ⁸	Documentation
Umbrella Certification Membership Enrollment	Support and recruit members	Follow enrollment process	Support client's goals	Support client's goals	N/A	Support and recruit members (optional)	LO	Completed Membership Application
Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)	Sign and follow	Sign and follow	Sign and follow	Sign and follow	N/A	Sign and follow (optional)	--	Signed MOA
Forest management plan development	Review and approve	Contract for services, review and approve	Contract and provide services, comply with policies	Contract and provide services, comply with policies	N/A	Contract for services, review and approve (optional)	LO	Approved Forest Management Plan and Site Visit Records
Service Provider Selection	Provide guidance	Select service provider	Demonstrate qualifications, comply with policies	Demonstrate qualifications, comply with policies	N/A	Provide guidance (optional)	--	Record of Qualifications & Contract Agreements
Harvest or operational plan development	Review and approve	Contract for services, review and approve	Contract and provide services, comply with policies	Contract and provide services, comply with policies	N/A	Contract and provide services, comply with policies (optional)	LO	Approved Operational Plan and Site Visit Records
Pre-Operation Inspection	Perform inspection	Participate (optional)	Participate (optional)	Participate (optional)	N/A	Participate (optional)	CFRC	Pre-Operation Inspection form
Contract and Timber Sale Announcement	Provide template	Sign and follow	Develop, Sign and follow	Develop, Sign and follow	Sign and follow	N/A	LO	Contract and Timber Sale Announcement
Harvest Monitoring	Monitor activities	Perform monitoring (voluntary)	Perform monitoring as part of contract	Perform monitoring as part of contract	N/A	Perform monitoring as part of contract (optional)	CFRC or LO	Operation Monitoring Forms
Post-Harvest Inspection	Perform Inspection	Participate (optional), Comply with findings	Participate (optional), Comply with findings	Participate (optional), comply with findings	N/A	Participate (optional)	CFRC	Post-Harvest Inspection Form(s)
Annual Compliance Review	Perform review	Participate (required)	Participate (optional)	Participate (optional)	N/A	Participate (required)	CFRC	Annual Compliance Review form
SmartWood Audits	Participate	Participate (if requested)	Participate (if requested)	Participate (if requested)	Participate (if requested)	Participate (if requested)	CFRC	SmartWood Audit Report

⁵ The term "Resource Manager" refers to the individual(s), company or organization providing primary forest management services to the landowner. These services would include management plan preparation, harvest planning, monitoring activities, and other forestry related services. One landowner may have multiple resource managers providing services.

⁶ "Other Contract Service Providers" include any and all individual(s), companies, or organizations providing natural resource management services to the landowner without primary resource manager authority.

⁷ Chain of Custody Certificate Holder is another entity that has received certification for tracking FSC-certified forest products.

⁸ Indicates the responsible party.

Forest Management Planning Procedure

Development of a Forest Management Plan that meets the FSC certification standard is a critical first step in becoming a member of the Umbrella Certification System. A property is not enrolled in the certified pool of the Umbrella Certification System until a management plan is established that meets the certification criteria.

Forest management plans meeting Umbrella Certification System requirements must:

- Expressly identify the management recommendation 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
- Include a section on monitoring

The Implementation Handbook includes a Template Management Plan and the Management Plan Review Checklist. Other management planning resources are available from CFRC upon request.

The Management Planning Process includes several steps:

1. Identification of a qualified resource manager
2. Development and review of a draft management plan, submitted to CFRC
3. Revision of the management plan based on the review and comments received from CFRC, the landowner and other relevant parties
4. Site visit to verify the findings and recommendations of the management plan and make any final changes
5. Finalization and acceptance of the management plan by the resource manager, landowner, and CFRC

Throughout the management planning process, the CFRC is always the party responsible for assuring that the certification standard is being maintained. The resource manager and landowner are responsible for communicating with the CFRC throughout the various steps, providing any requested information, and complying with the Umbrella Certification System policies.

After a forest management plan is approved for the property, the landowner is invited to enroll their property in the Umbrella Certification System, is invoiced for the membership fee and is asked to sign the Memorandum of Agreement with the CFRC. To maintain their certification, the landowners must follow the management prescriptions outlined in the approved management plan and other obligations as described in the Memorandum of Agreement.

Forest Operations, Implementation Planning and Monitoring Procedures

After a forest management plan is approved for the property, the property is officially enrolled in the certified pool and eligible for harvesting and marketing of certified products as outlined in the approved plan. To ensure that the property maintains its eligibility, all forest operations and harvests must also be reviewed and pre-approved by the CFRC. All commercial timber harvests must include the development of a harvest plan and a timber sale contract. The Harvest Plan must be prepared and included as a legal addendum to the Timber Sale Contract. Examples of these documents are included in the Implementation Handbook. All timber purchasers, operators, contractors and other agents are required to conform to standard OSHA safety measures as a requirement of participating in the Umbrella Certification System.

Harvesting plans, timber sale contracts, and other harvesting agreements must include the following directly or through reference to the management plan as appropriate for the size and complexity of the operation:

- applicable BMPs, Site-Level Guidelines, and OSHA Safety Measures
- stand-level silvicultural prescriptions and marking guidelines
- pre-harvest stand inventory data and sale area reconnaissance, including information regarding biological resources and potential non-timber forest products
- Description and justification for use of harvesting machinery and techniques to be used during the harvest
- volume or basal area and species composition targets for the residual stand
- strategies for regeneration, structural diversity, species diversity, ecological processes, landscape issues, and protection of RTE resources
- strategies for conserving and restoring biological diversity and ecosystem function
- evaluations of potential stand level and landscape level impacts of proposed activities and related design elements for avoidance or mitigation
- utilization specifications that meet the highest and best known regional standards
- maximum acceptable levels of residual stand damage (stand damage assessments will be conducted and documented on all operations included in the Umbrella Certification System)
- retention of adequate coarse woody debris
- transportation and access plans to include general harvesting logistics, techniques, equipment, transportation systems, area limitations, and operational restrictions
- a map depicting the locations of property boundaries, harvest units, roads, and other special features.

The Implementation Handbook includes a Harvest and Treatment Plan Review Checklist and Records Form, Template Harvest Plan, Timber Sale Contract, Pre-, Active and Post-Treatment Site Visit Checklists, and other checklists for unique situations such as the presence of a Riparian Management Zone.

The Forest Operations or Harvest Process includes several steps:

1. Identification of a qualified service provider(s).
2. Development and review of a draft harvest plan, submitted to CFRC.
3. Revision of the plan based on the office review and comments received from CFRC, the landowners and other relevant parties.
4. Pre-Treatment site visit to verify the operational plan, design and layout.
5. Finalization and acceptance of the operational plan by the resource manager, landowner, and CFRC.
6. Establishment of a Timber Sale Contract between the Buyer and Seller, which includes the SmartWood CoC tracking number. (Template Timber Sale Contract is available in the appendix of this manual).
7. Arrangement of chain-of-custody tracking of products to be harvested, which includes identifying group products as certified through documentation at the forest gate and on sales documentation.
8. Periodic site visits during active operations to monitor for compliance with the certification standard and agreed upon plan.
9. Post-treatment visit to evaluate compliance with standard and success of accomplishing treatment goals.
10. Follow-up for any monitoring or post-harvest needs.

Throughout the forest management operations or harvesting process, the CFRC is the party responsible for assuring that the certification standard is being maintained. The resource manager, natural resource professionals, loggers and/or landowner are responsible for communicating with the CFRC throughout the various steps, providing any requested information, and complying with the Umbrella Certification System policies.

Chain-of-Custody Certification Tracking Policy

Chain-of-Custody (CoC) refers to the entire process in which wood from a certified forest is turned into a finished product available for use or for sale in the marketplace. Maintaining the CoC is essential to ensure the integrity of the Umbrella Certification System, SmartWood as a certifying body, and the Forest Stewardship Council standards.

When landowners want to process their timber or forest products through CoC certified companies, the following steps are necessary:

1. Dates and quantities of all materials sent out and received must be documented
2. Company's name, contact information, and CoC tracking number must be documented.

When a CoC certified processor is not available or a landowner decides for any other reason to work with a non-certified processor but still wants to market their timber or forest products as FSC certified, a Chain-of-Custody Outsourcing Agreement must be completed. A copy of this form is available in the Appendix.

- This Agreement allows a CoC certified company to outsource processing or manufacturing of certified wood products to another company that is not certified.
- The CFRC is responsible for getting the non-certified company to sign the Agreement and must ensure that the non-certified company is fully aware of its responsibilities outlined in the Agreement
- The CFRC must inform the landowner and/or land manager of the following necessary steps in outsourcing:
 1. All certified wood must be clearly marked on the wood itself as well as in the accompanying documentation
 2. The exact wood shipped to the non-certified company is the only wood that can be used in the final wood product
 3. Dates and quantities of all materials sent out and received must be documented

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Product Labeling Policy

For landowners or land managers wishing to use the FSC trademarks (logo, name, and initials) on their forest products, the following steps must be taken.

1. The Umbrella Certification Final Harvest Approval and Chain-of-Custody Procedure form must be completed for all harvests to be marketed as certified.
2. A description of the product and desired use of the FSC trademarks must be submitted to the CFRC.
2. CFRC will review the proposed labeling based on the FSC Logo Policy Manual and suggest any necessary changes
3. The approved statement, "*The wood in this product comes from well managed forests certified in accordance with the rules of the Forest Stewardship Council,*" must be included in the marketing/labeling materials. Changes to the statement must be approved.
4. The CFRC tracking number SW-COC-247 must be included on all marketing/labeling materials.

5. All uses of the FSC trademarks must be submitted for final approval to the certification body (SmartWood) before printing or labeling occurs.

Non-Timber Forest Products

All materials originating from a certified forest have the potential to be marketed as a “certified forest product.” However, because of the wide variability in the level of understanding regarding appropriate management of many non-timber forest products, the CFRC will take a precautionary approach to the harvesting and marketing of non-timber forest products from Umbrella Certification member properties.

The only non-timber forest product widely produced in the Lake States Region with established certification standards is maple syrup. Umbrella Certification members interested in managing for the production of maple syrup and other products derived from maple sap will be required to follow the applicable FSC standard. The FSC maple syrup standard is included in the Appendix.

For other non-timber forest products, the CFRC will take the following approach:

1. Management plans for properties enrolled in the Umbrella Certification System must identify and address any existing or potential non-timber forest products on the property.
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 RTE species standards
 - Make no claims that these products have been certified either by SmartWood or under the FSC.

Silvicultural Systems

The diversity of forest communities, site characteristics, tree species, and landowner management goals in the region create the opportunity for applying a wide range of silvicultural techniques.

All silvicultural systems and treatment designs planned and implemented on member lands are expected to comply fully with the FSC standard, regionally accepted operational guidelines, and known forestry science and applied research. Any experimental treatments will be approached cautiously and not applied broadly until proven successful. CFRC

maintains a collection of resources to assist with the design and evaluation of proposed management activities.

Specific to choosing between even-age or all-age silviculture, research in northern hardwood forests generally shows that heavy-seeded species such as sugar maple and white ash can be successfully regenerated using either approach. Whereas, light- or small-seed species are only well-managed using an even-age method.

Successful regeneration of the intended tree species is a primary consideration of forest management planning and treatment design. Forest management plans for lands enrolled in the Umbrella Certification System must gather information about existing tree regeneration and expected regeneration potential. Treatment plans for member lands must apply the known regeneration information, include design elements specific to ensuring adequate regeneration of the intended species, and plan for monitoring as necessary to evaluate success or identify a need for follow-up action.

Application of Uneven-Aged Silviculture in Even-Aged Stands

There is a growing realization among forest managers and landowners in the Lake States that human influence since European settlement has worked to simplify forest structure and composition across the landscape, and that this simplification has come at a cost. The extent of the cost is unclear, but as our understanding of forest and landscape ecology has grown so too has our appreciation of the benefits of older, more complex forests. They are home to a greater variety of species, more resistant to pathogens, and generally preferred for recreational use.

CFRC recognizes the role of shorter-rotation, fiber-maximization silviculture – the management that traditionally occurs in even-aged pine plantations, aspen and birch, and “off-site” hardwood stands - in forest management in the Lakes States. However, CFRC also contends even-aged stands with simple species and structural composition are overrepresented across the landscape and that older, more biologically and structurally diverse, multi-aged stands are underrepresented. CFRC encourages silvicultural treatments that enhance biological and structural diversity by mimicking natural disturbance regimes.

CFRC recognizes that such silviculture treatments may be innovative and have unproven results. Before moving forward with such treatments, the following conditions must be met:

- * The landowner understands the risks, as well as the potential benefits, of applying the treatment. An uneven-aged approach may mean reduced timber income (by leaving poorly formed trees to occupy growing space, and/or leaving some quality trees to die). In addition, the response of desirable regeneration may be poor and may require following up planting and/or release treatments. (Note: Landowners with Managed Forest Law or other pre-existing contracts may have already agreed to apply an even-aged system. CFRC can help landowners work with DNR foresters to amend mandatory practices to better fit their current goals, but these amendments are done at discretion of the DNR.)

* The desired future condition (DFC) is clearly specified. This condition should be based on a known natural community or native plant community that was historically associated with the landform. This association should be confirmed using (GLO) witness tree data. (Lists of communities for MN and WI are available at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/communities/descriptions.htm> http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ecological_services/nativeplantcommunities.html)

* Current stand conditions are evaluated. At a minimum, data exists to describe the attributes listed below, for all trees 2" DBH and greater.

- * Average basal area per acre by species and size class
- * Average number of trees per acre by species and size class
- * Overall diameter distribution
- * Average basal area and trees per acre by competitive status (suppressed, intermediate, co-dominant, or dominant)
- * Average growth rate by competitive status

* Based on the desired future condition, favorable and unfavorable species are identified. Any additional criteria (such as percent canopy cover) needed to evaluate the treatment are identified and measured.

* Opportunities (such as advance regeneration or good seed source of desirable species, strong landowner commitment to follow-up work) are noted.

* Obstacles to reaching the DFC are noted, and strategies to deal with obstacles are proposed. This might include deer browse, cone crop failures, or the proliferation of an undesirable species.

* The overall potential for successful achievement of DFC is evaluated by comparing opportunities and obstacles. If obstacles are too great, re-consider the DFC.

* Stand conditions are monitored based on the original criteria directly following the treatment and annually for the next five years. In the fifth year stocking levels of favorable species are compared to Table 40.2 of the Wisconsin DNR Silviculture Handbook (based on Arbogast, 1957 and Tubbs, 1977). If stocking levels are not progressing towards the targets listed in the table, a professional forester must initiate an alternative management strategy.

Chemical Usage

Chemicals such as herbicides and insecticides can be valuable tools to efficiently address management concerns and protect forest health. In some instances chemicals provide the most reasonable treatment alternative. CFRC has developed a resource (the CFRC Chemical Use Guide) to help landowners decide when pesticide use might be their best alternative. A

project implementation plan describing the treatment objectives, site conditions, material used, and timing and method of application must be submitted to CFRC and approved prior to any chemical application. All chemical use on umbrella certified lands must be documented and the types and volumes of material applied tracked.

When review of a management plan and an on-site property assessment indicate that use of chemicals may be a strategy that deserves consideration, landowners can receive information through personal conversations with CFRC staff or contracted resource managers, written reference materials, resource guides, and on-site demonstrations. Landowners are also provided with a list of land management service-providers whose standards are consistent with FSC and CFRC approach to chemical use.

The landowner receives information that addresses: 1) Assessment, prioritizing, and monitoring species of concern in the context of the management plan, and in the greater context of FSC Lake States Standards and the landscape as a whole. 2) Identification, natural history, and control of non-native invasive plants (IPM approach of best-possible options: combined techniques such as mechanical, prescribed fire, chemical controls), 3) Proper use of herbicides, safety, transportation and storage, mixing, labeling, clean-up, herbicide application.

All chemical treatments must comply with the FSC policies. The CFRC maintains a variety of references related to chemical usage and the most current FSC chemical usage policy. These documents are used to develop and review proposed chemical applications. All chemical applications must also, at a minimum, comply with product labeling guidance.

In general, CFRC strongly recommends that Integrated Pest Management be applied to utilize a variety of preventative methods as well as chemical controls when necessary. Landowners and land managers must also be sensitive to the prevalence of organic producers in the region. Landowners should disclose their chemical use to neighbors as necessary to avoid conflicts.

Monitoring

CFRC recognizes the importance of monitoring a broad set of forest conditions over the long-term in order to assess the impacts of its management on the landscape. It also recognizes the logistical challenges of deploying a comprehensive program, and the subsequent need to carefully prioritize monitoring parameters for each property. CFRC employs a “bottom up” monitoring strategy whereby monitoring needs are assessed individually for each property as part of the management plan development process and prior to implementation projects. The burden of executing long-term forest monitoring is then shared by the landowner and a qualified professional resource manager (either contracted or employed directly by CFRC).

I. Planning

A. Management Plans

As of December 2005, management plans written for potential umbrella members must include a monitoring section. This section will identify critical forest attributes that should be monitored, how these attributes will be measured, who will measure them, and how often monitoring will occur. Typically, the monitoring parameters discussed here will be property-wide and could be done by the landowner (such as monitoring for the presence of exotic invasive species or specific forest pathogens).

B. Implementation Plans

Implementation plans must also include a monitoring section that identifies the parameters, methods, and timing necessary to track the effectiveness of a treatment in reaching the stand-level desired future condition. In general, tracking this progress will require sample plot data collection by a qualified resource manager (such as seedlings and saplings per acre, percent canopy cover, or diameter distribution). Baseline values will be included for each monitoring parameter.

II. Execution

A. Annual Monitoring

Along with their annual fee invoice, each umbrella member will be sent an “Annual Forest Monitoring Checklist.” This list will include, but not be limited to, the parameters laid out in their management plan.

B. Implementation Post-Implementation Monitoring

The resource manager in charge of the implementation will complete “Implementation Monitoring” and “Post-Implementation Monitoring” checklists.

C. Long Term Monitoring

A CFRC staff or contracted forester is required to visit each umbrella member property at least once every five years. During this visit the forester will complete a “Long Term Forest Monitoring Report”. The purpose of this report will be to assess each monitoring parameter listed in the management plan (1A above), as well as the parameters listed in any implementation plans (1B) executed since the last Monitoring Report. The forester will assess the progress of each stand towards its desired future condition. He or she will also evaluate the effectiveness of implementation projects (based on the parameters) and suggest alternative management strategies, if needed.

III. Tracking and Reporting

Monitoring data will be stored in the UCS Database and available for custom queries and reports. It will also prompt CFRC staff when monitoring when monitoring data should be collected.

Umbrella Certification System Operations Manual Appendix

Applicable Standards

1. FSC Forest Stewardship Standard for the Lake States-Central Hardwoods Region
2. A Landowner's Guide to the Forest Stewardship Council Standards for the Lake States – Central Hardwood Region, USA

Membership Development Documents

1. Umbrella Certification – Membership Application
2. Umbrella Certification Pre-Assessment Checklist - based on the FSC Forest Stewardship Standard for the Lake States-Central Hardwoods Region
3. Example of Invitation to Join the Certified Pool
4. Membership Fee Invoice Template
5. Umbrella Certification – Memorandum of Agreement (CFRC and Landowner Members)
6. Certificate of Membership Template
7. SmartWood/FSC Sign Order Form
8. Certified Forestry News (newsletter for FSC-certified family forests)
9. Example of Anniversary/Annual Renewal Letter
10. Umbrella Certification Annual Forest Monitoring Checklist
11. Umbrella Certification – Member Handbook (including Appendix)
12. Umbrella Certification Protocol for Exiting Members

Management Plan Development Documents

1. Umbrella Certification Template Management Plan
2. Umbrella Certification Management Plan Review Checklist and Records Form

Implementation Planning and Monitoring Documents

1. Umbrella Certification Template Harvest Plan
2. Commercial Timber Harvest and Implementation Protocol
3. Commercial Timber Harvest and Implementation Protocol – Timeline
4. Umbrella Certification Implementation Plan Review Checklist
5. Umbrella Certification RTE Checklist
6. Umbrella Certification Cultural Resource Checklist
7. Timber Sale Contract
8. Umbrella Certification Harvest Standards
9. Umbrella Certification Pre-Harvest Site Review Checklist
10. Umbrella Certification Final Harvest Approval and Chain-of-Custody Procedure
11. Chain of Custody Outsourcing Agreement
12. Umbrella Certification Harvest Volume Records
13. Umbrella Certification Implementation Monitoring Checklist
14. Umbrella Certification Harvest Safety Monitoring Checklist
15. Lock Out/Tag Out Procedure for Skidder, Feller Buncher, Delimber
16. Materials Safety Data Sheet (OSHA Form 174)
17. Umbrella Certification Post Harvest Monitoring Checklist
18. Umbrella Certification Post Harvest RMZ and Water Quality Monitoring Checklist
19. Umbrella Certification Post Harvest RTE Checklist
20. Umbrella Certification Post Harvest Cultural Resource Checklist

Other Monitoring and Procedural Documents

1. Umbrella Certification Monitoring Guide
2. Umbrella Certification Template Project Plan and Monitoring Report

3. Umbrella Certification Annual Monitoring Report (What's New in Your Woods?)
4. Umbrella Certification Long Term Forest Monitoring Report
5. Umbrella Certification – Resource Manager/Contract Service Provider – MOA
6. GIS Stand Attribute Handbook
7. Umbrella Certification Database User Guide
8. Planning for Pesticide Use on FSC Certified Land
9. An Introduction to High Conservation Value Forests for Family Forest Owners