



Public Briefing Paper for
FSC® Forest Management Certification Re-assessment of
Minnesota Counties Sustainable Forest Cooperative
in
Carlton & Koochiching Counties, Minnesota USA
June 19, 2018

Introduction - The NEPCon is conducting forest management and chain of custody certification re-assessments of Minnesota Counties Sustainable Forest Cooperative (MCSFC) with offices in located in Carlton, MN and International Falls, MN. MCSFC has been certified by NEPCon since 2013 (NC-FM/COC-006544). The re-assessment includes forests in Carlton and Koochiching Counties totaling approximately 144,785 hectares. The re-assessment will be implemented from August 12-15, 2019.

Scope of the Certification Re-Assessment – The forest management certification re-assessment will assess the environmental, silvicultural and socioeconomic aspects of the forests included in the MCSFC group certificate, using the *FSC-US Forest Management Standard (v1.0)* and the *FSC Standard For Group Entities in Forest Management Groups (FM-STD-30-005)*. To obtain a copy of these guidelines, please visit the FSC-US web site (at www.fscus.org/standards_criteria/forest_management.php) or contact NEPCon directly by telephone, fax, or e-mail as listed below. NEPCon is accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC®)¹ and this re-assessment process must follow procedures which have been approved by the FSC.

Re-Assessment Team Composition – The re-assessment will be conducted by:

- Dan Pubanz, Lead Auditor; and
- Karen Boyd, Auditor.

Assessment Steps and Schedule – Following is a short description of the certification process and a tentative agenda:

- ♦ Re-assessment organization – The NEPCon auditors and MCSFC staff will meet at one of the MCSFC offices on August 12th.
- ♦ Field assessments – The auditors will visit sites in Carlton and Koochiching Counties that are included in the scope of the MCSFC certificate from August 12-15.
- ♦ Re-assessment briefing – Prior to departure, the auditors will meet with MCSFC and other parties to finalize their data collection and present preliminary findings.
- ♦ Stakeholder consultation – The auditors will conduct interviews with stakeholders prior to, during, and after the re-assessment.
- ♦ Draft report production – The auditors will produce a confidential draft report that will be circulated for comment to MCSFC. This should occur 30 days after completion of the re-assessment field work.

¹ FSC® A000535

- ◆ Certification decision – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from MCSFC and other general stakeholder comments, NEPCon will reach a certification decision. Barring unforeseen obstacles, this should occur by October 15, 2019.

Your Input Sought – As a part of the forest certification re-assessment process we invite stakeholders to offer comment and feedback on the forest management on MCSFC certified forest in relation to conformance with the requirements of the forest management standard referenced above. We welcome input, either public or confidential, in whatever form is easiest and most secure for you. Your input will be valuable at any stage of the re-assessment process, but we would prefer to receive your comments either prior to the re-assessment, during the re-assessment, or prior to September 15, 2019 so that we can take them into consideration in reaching a certification decision by October 15, 2019. Your options for communicating your observations to us are as follows.

1. Meet with the NEPCon audit team during or shortly after the fieldwork.
2. Call and give comments to Kara Wires, the NEPCon staff person responsible for coordinating this certification re-assessment from the US Regional Office.
3. Submit written comments by mail, FAX or email to Kara Wires. Unless you request otherwise, these comments will be kept confidential and are solely for the purposes of auditing MCSFC as described in this briefing.

Contacting NEPCon

Kara Wires, Technical Manager, US/Canada Region

- ◆ Email: kwires@nepcon.org
- ◆ Worldwide Website – <https://www.nepcon.org/>
- ◆ Telephone – 802-391-4001
- ◆ Mail address – PO Box 99, Richmond, VT 05477

The source of any information provided will be kept confidential available to only the FSC and NEPCon staff.

Stakeholders who may wish to dispute any aspect of the forest certification process or decision can access NEPCon's Complaints, Appeals and Dispute resolution procedures at <https://www.nepcon.org/dispute-resolution-policy>.