



**Public Briefing Paper for  
FSC® Forest Management Certification Re-assessment of  
The Forestland Group, LLC  
in  
Chapel Hill, NC USA  
July 15, 2019**

**Introduction** - The NEPCon is conducting forest management and chain of custody certification re-assessments of The Forestland Group, LLC (TFG) with an office located in Chapel Hill, NC. TFG has been certified by NEPCon since 1999 (NC-FM/COC-000092). The re-assessment includes 58 properties across 22 states in the eastern half of the US totaling approximately 675,000 hectares. The re-assessment will be implemented from September 9-13; October 9-11 as well as one site visit July 18.

**Scope of the Certification Re-Assessment** – The forest management certification re-assessment will assess the environmental, silvicultural and socioeconomic aspects of the forests owned by TFG, using the *FSC-US Forest Management Standard (v1.0)*. To obtain a copy of these guidelines, please visit the FSC-US web site (at [www.fscus.org/standards\\_criteria/forest\\_management.php](http://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®)<sup>1</sup> 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:

- John Auel, Lead Auditor, Forestry;
- Reed Rossell, Forest Ecology/Wildlife Biology; and,
- Stephen Grado, Socio-economic Specialist

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

- ◆ Re-assessment organization – The NEPCon auditors and TFG staff will meet at TFG’s office or other local office to be agreed upon by TFG and the auditors at the beginning of each trip.
- ◆ Field assessments – The auditors will visit a sample of properties managed by TFG that are included in the scope of the certificate from:
  - ◆ July 18 (MN);
  - ◆ September 9-13 (Appalachia); and
  - ◆ October 9-11 (NC/SC/FL)
- ◆ Re-assessment briefing – Prior to departure for each trip, the auditors will meet with TFG managers 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.

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<sup>1</sup> FSC® A000535

- ◆ Draft report production – The auditors will produce a confidential draft report that will be circulated for comment to TFG. This should occur 30 days after completion of the all the re-assessment field work.
- ◆ Certification decision – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from TFG and other general stakeholder comments, NEPCon will reach a certification decision. Barring unforeseen obstacles, this should occur by December 1, 2019.

**Your Input Sought** – As a part of the forest certification re-assessment process we invite stakeholders to offer comment and feedback on TFG’s forest management 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 November 1, 2019 so that we can take them into consideration in reaching a certification decision by December 1, 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 Steve Grado the NEPCon audit team member responsible for coordinating stakeholder participation.
3. Submit written comments by mail, FAX or email to Steve Grado. Unless you request otherwise, these comments will be kept confidential and are solely for the purposes of auditing TFG as described in this briefing.

*Steve Grado, Socioeconomic Auditor*

- ◆ Email: [sgrado@hotmail.com](mailto:sgrado@hotmail.com)
- ◆ Telephone – 662-325-2792 (work); 662-617-3691 (cell)
- ◆ FAX – 662-325-8726
- ◆ Mail address – 707 Shadowood Lane, Starkville, MS 39759-4133

For more information or to provide comments on TFG’s forest management, you can also contact, Kara Wires, the NEPCon staff person responsible for coordinating this certification audit.

### **Contacting NEPCon**

*Kara Wires, Technical Manager, US/Canada Region*

- ◆ Email: [kwires@nepcon.org](mailto: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>.