

FSC Family Forests Alliance

2009 Action Plan

The FSC Family Forests Alliance has been created to provide a national mechanism for bringing together individuals and organizations committed to promoting responsible forest stewardship through FSC standards. By creating a forum for communication, cooperation, and information sharing, participants in the Alliance can pursue issues of common interest, learn from one another, and enlarge the community of landowners and small businesses practicing responsible forestry.

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

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

Alliance Organizational Structure

The Alliance Organizers are the individuals and organizations that are responsible for the development and implementation of the Action Plan of the Alliance. The Alliance Secretariat is the primary contact for the Alliance and has responsibilities for managing Alliance activities. The Secretariat serves for a two-year term. The current Organizers are the groups that first formed the Alliance and have served since the beginning. In 2009, the Alliance will begin the process of rotating organizers on the basis of three-year terms with up to two open positions each year.

Alliance Organizers:

Harry Groot, Blue Ridge Forest Cooperative, Christiansburg, VA

Don Arnosti, Community Forestry Resource Center, Minneapolis, MN

Kathryn Fernholz, Dovetail Partners, Minneapolis, MN

John Gunn, Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Brunswick, ME

Ian Hanna, Northwest Natural Resource Group, Port Townsend, WA

Alyx Perry, Southern Forests Network, Asheville, NC

Alliance Secretariat:

Kate Albert Read, Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands, New Gloucester, ME

Past-Secretariat:

Kathryn Fernholz, Dovetail Partners, Minneapolis, MN

Alliance Partners are individuals and organizations that support the purposes of the Alliance and are currently involved with or pursuing and supporting the development of an FSC certification program for family forest owners.

Alliance Partners:

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

Alliance Sponsors are the individuals and organizations that have provided financial support to the Alliance and to aid in the implementation of the Action Plan and the Alliance's four purposes. The Fiscal Agent for the Alliance is Dovetail Partners.

Alliance Sponsors:

Verso Paper, First Founding Sponsor
Fox Foundation (in memory of Elaine Fox), Founding Sponsor
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Domtar Inc.
Ford Foundation
Flintridge Foundation
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Stora Enso
Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation

Action Plan 2009

Ongoing Actions

1. Capacity Building to Support the Action Plan

Background: *The FSC Family Forests Alliance has demonstrated the value of a national organization to help speed the uptake of FSC certification by family forest advocates and service providers around the country. Growing the capacity of both the Alliance and the national network of group managers represented by the Alliance is essential to the development of a strong and resilient structure and strategy for supporting family forest certification, maintaining progress, and expanding participation.*

Action: In 2009, the Alliance will establish a more formalized organizational structure to help manage and plan for continued growth. To support effective and well-informed decision-making, the Alliance will begin the process of rotating Alliance Organizers on the basis of three-year terms with up to two open positions each year. The Alliance will also define partner and membership categories to support greater engagement of family forest advocates, FSC group managers, and related public and private organizations. The Alliance will undertake a broad fundraising effort to support this action plan that includes solicitation of FSC certified companies, industry associations, foundations, national NGOs, government agencies, and FSC US. The current Alliance Organizers have lead responsibility for completing this Action under the direction of the Secretariat and with input from the Alliance Partners and Sponsors.

2. Assist in finalizing the FSC US standards revision process

Background: *In 2008, FSC-US initiated a standards revision process that included the development of national Family Forest Indicators and guidance for their use. The Alliance and its partners have committed to participating in and supporting the completion of the FSC-US's standards revision process.*

Actions: The Alliance has signaled that its capacity to contribute to the standards drafting process is coming to a close and has encouraged FSC-US to move forward with the standard revision process into stakeholder review and field testing so that the new national standard will be completed and available for use in 2009. When FSC-US completes the development of the Family Forests Indicators standards and guidance, we anticipate a strong interest from a variety of partners to employ them. The Alliance will participate in and support the final approval process, campaign, communications plan and training. All of the Alliance Organizers, Partners and Sponsors have roles to play in this effort.

3. Facilitate strong collaborative relationships among FSC-US, the Alliance, and Alliance members

Background: *The Alliance's current and developing activities are most effective for all stakeholders when proactive communications and collaborative processes are functioning for family forests interests. As the FSC-US Family Forests program advances, the Alliance looks forward to a variety of co-operative structures, processes and outcomes.*

Actions: The Alliance will work to secure FSC-US commitment to fully recognize (in strategy, communications, planning, etc.) the role groups play and to include grassroots partners in related fundraising via development of a governance committee structure for the development of the Family Forests program that provides all certified groups adequate opportunity to directly engage with FSC staff, participate in FSC-US's strategy & program development, and build capacity to successfully facilitate certification. The Governing Committee should include: 1) Alliance representation, 2) representation of certified groups working to overcome obstacles to facilitating certification at a meaningful scale and for landowners who lack access, and 3) representation of certified groups from all geographic regions where they exist. Additional goals related to materializing this co-operative commitment are to:

- Increase level of communication among FSC, certification bodies and groups
- Get groups listed on FSC-US website along with certifiers
- Renew the MOU between the FSC-US and the FSC Family Forests Alliance; FSC-US and the FSC Family Forests Alliance established a memorandum of understanding in the summer of 2007 that laid a framework for co-operation. The MOU was active for one year and had an expiry date was September 14, 2008. The Alliance will review the previous MOU, update it for renewal in 2009 and extend the renewal cycle to every two years. FSC US has confirmed their intent to participate fully in this renewal. The Alliance Secretariat has lead responsibilities for completing this action.

4. Proactive Communications With Key Partners

Background: *There are many organizations and individuals concerned about the status of FSC certification for family forests and actions that will help increase participation. Communications to key interests and partners are important to spread awareness of the work of the Alliance, the results of the Wingspread conference and subsequent annual planning, opportunities for involvement in the development of the Family Forests Program of the FSC-US and the potential benefits from the Family Forests Indicators.*

Actions: The Alliance will continue to provide periodic updates on progress toward action plan goals, as well as press releases regarding substantial events. The Alliance will also maintain the

web site (www.familyforestsalliance.org) for communications benefits and to provide additional tools and resources that support current and new group managers. The Alliance Secretariat has lead responsibility for managing the completion of this Action.

New Actions in 2009

1. Develop a Long-Term Strategic Plan

***Background:** To date, the Alliance has relied on short-term annual action plans to guide our work. Current conditions warrant a deeper level of thought and detail, particularly in terms of growing existing group managers to a sustainable scale and recruiting new group managers in geographies with strong growth opportunities. A well-defined and vetted long-term strategy will also serve as a strong foundation for increasing capacity.*

Actions: With the help of a consultant, the Alliance will develop a phased, five-year strategic plan that includes goals, a growth plan, and financial objectives. As part of plan development, the Alliance will undertake a process to more clearly define the mission, vision, values, and role of the organization. This plan will be finalized at the Annual Meeting (see #4 below). The current Alliance Organizers have lead responsibility for completing this Action under the direction of the Secretariat and with input from the Alliance Members, Partners and Sponsors.

2. Establish an Alliance Coordinator

***Background:** To date the Alliance has been administered by individual core members acting as secretariat on a rotating basis and with general responsibilities to track and maintain the effort. For the Alliance to continue to grow and leverage strategic opportunities there is a need for greater day-to-day management and action plan implementation. The Alliance would benefit greatly by having a dedicated position that could contribute 10-20 hours per week to the effort.*

Action: The establishment of an Alliance Coordinator position will be fully explored as part of the development of the long-term strategic plan. All options will be explored, including diverse contracting structures and the possibility of more than one position to support diverse duties. The final action taken will follow upon the Alliance's creation of a formalized decision making structure and the achievement of financial objectives identified in the Strategic Plan as necessary to support a coordinator position. The current Alliance Organizers have lead responsibility for completing this Action under the direction of the Secretariat.

3. Full Alliance Meeting

Background: *The Alliance strives to hold a national level meeting in every odd numbered year, with core group national meetings in even numbered years. Meetings typically occur in summer or fall. These periodic meetings are critical for decision making, technology transfer and other benefits.*

Action: The Alliance will hold a full partnership meeting in the summer or fall of 2009. The meeting is planned to occur in the southeastern U.S. to highlight the opportunities and challenges of family forest certification in the region. The current Alliance Organizers have lead responsibility for completing this Action under the direction of the Secretariat and with input from the Alliance Partners and Sponsors.

4. Develop a National Registry of FSC Group Members

Background: *Currently no system exists to query the number, location or individual details of forests that are certified under FSC group certificates. The information listed in FSC databases relates only to the group manager's contact information and total acreage of the group. The lack of more detailed information impedes the FSC system in several ways. Manufacturers have a difficult time planning for or connecting to timber from family forests, environmental and social stakeholders have no means of knowing which landowners are included in groups, and Chain of Custody cannot be verified to the landowner level.*

Actions: The Alliance Organizers will work with FSC, FSC US, and Alliance Partners to research the opportunities and any potential impediments to developing a group manager/member registry at the national level that would provide summary information on group members such as location, preferred contact method, acreage, and inventory. If constructed, the registry would be voluntary any sensitive information would be protected. If interest and capacity exists, the registry could be expanded to serve as a national certification management database to support the success and growth of new and existing group managers. Examples of systems that could serve as models for the registry are already in use by Wisconsin's Managed Forest Law Program (public agency) and Northwest Natural Resource Group's Northwest Certified Forestry program (private non-profit). The current Alliance Organizers have lead responsibility for completing this Action under the direction of the Secretariat and with input from the Alliance Partners and Sponsors.

5. Develop Specific Services and Benefits for Group Managers

Background: In addition to the ongoing production of web available resources for partners, the development of FM group manager-specific tools underpins the grassroots aspect of the FFA mission and serves as the basis for additional group manager recruitment into the organization.

Actions: Alliance organizers will set a target for new recruitment of group managers and will hold a meeting in the fall of 2009 for group manager members and prospective members to define Alliance goals for services to group managers. Alliance organizers will also develop a group

manager section of the web site with tools for communication, trouble-shooting and information sharing among FSC FM group manager members. This section will include information on group management certification web tool options for group managers.

Recognizing the new modes of work being created in forests that are integrated with the emerging green collar economy, the Alliance will research Green Jobs funding, how it is disbursed, key strategies for accessing it, and new potential partners for supporting professional reinvention, job retention and job generation.

Alliance membership, services, and resources will be made available with sliding fee scales or other such mechanisms to facilitate equitable access and a fair level of investment by all members.