

Forest Strategy Group Scheme

Group Management Plan

INTRODUCTION

The Forest Strategy Group Scheme has forest management members that care for a variety of forests and plantations for a range of objectives. The range of management activities that are completed on member's forests are planned and controlled by their individual Sustainable Forest Management Plans. These plans are available on request to interested and affected stakeholders seeking to understand and comment on the activities expected, underway and completed.

The forest and plantations within the group are managed so as to comply with The FSC® National Forest Stewardship Standard of Australia FSC-STD-Aus-01-2018 EN (The Standard). The Standard is available at the following website: <https://au.fsc.org/en-au/standards/forest-management>.

The Standard requires that to comply with it there must be a Management Plan for the certified forests. A Management Plan is defined as "The collection of documents, reports, records and maps that describe, justify and regulate the activities carried out by any manager, staff or organisation within or in relation to the Management Unit, including statements of objectives and policies". A Management Unit is defined as "A spatial area or areas submitted for FSC® certification with clearly defined boundaries managed to a set of explicit long-term objectives which are expressed in a Management Plan".

Within the Group Scheme each member's forests and plantations are covered by one Sustainable Forest Management Plan and are therefore treated as one Management Unit. The number of Management Units is set by the number of members.

For the Forest Strategy Group Scheme, the Management Plan is made up of three major components:

1. the Membership Manual, FS_GS_M_001, which includes the policies and procedures for group management and the registers that record the group's activities;
2. the Group Management Plan, FS_FM_M_003, this plan, which contains those statements that regulate all member's forests and activities. This document also provides a public summary of the management activities that can occur on the member's forests and plantations;
3. the Sustainable Forest Management Plan, FS_FM_SFMP_XXX, which is individually prepared for each member and their forests and plantations.

COMMITMENTS

Policy

The Group Scheme has a signed Commitment Policy, FS_GS_P_001 which defines the terms the group and its members will associate, procure forest products and manage the forests and plantations. The Commitment Policy is publicly available at: www.foreststrategy.com.au.

The vision for all members is to produce high quality forest products whilst maintaining or enhancing environmental values in a way that is socially responsible.

The values that apply to all members are:

Sustainability - Members are managing their forests and plantations to provide economic, environmental and social values in a balanced manner.

Honesty - The members will conduct their activities based on an open, honest and transparent manner.

Practicality - All the good intentions can fall away in the harsh light of reality. Everything we do will be the best we can in the real world and with real world constraints.

Longevity - All forest and plantations will be managed for the long-term values and are expected to be available for our children and grand children.

The vision and values specific to each member's forests and plantations are specified in the Sustainable Forest Management Plans.

Objectives

The objectives that apply to all members are:

- The values within the forests and plantations will be identified, maintained or enhanced; and
- The forest products removed from the forests and plantations will be sold to the best, value adding local markets available.

Specific management objectives for each member's forests and plantations are developed in the Sustainable Forest Management Plans.

Anti Corruption

Forest Strategy Group Scheme and its members commit to not offer or receive bribes in any form. We commit to prevent all forms of corruption in our dealings and in all our contractual arrangements. Our commitment includes adherence to Division 70 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cwth)*, all other relevant Commonwealth Law, including the *Trade Practices Act* and all the relevant state laws that prevent corruption.

If corruption is detected, corrective measures will be implemented, including removing the member from the Group.

ACTIVITIES

The following activities can be expected to occur on member's forests and plantations and shall be conducted according to these requirements.

Forest and Plantation Development

Members from time to time will wish to expand their forest estate. New plantings are conducted using the activities designed to optimise the chance of seedling survival and early growth. Appropriate site preparation will be used to improve soil condition, increase rainfall infiltration, control competition and to minimise the risks of erosion. Chemical weed control will be limited to cases where alternative non chemical treatments are unviable and where competing weeds will severely affect plant survival and early growth. Use of fertilizer will be limited to known

nutrient deficiencies. Environmental values will be protected during fertilizer use. Damage to environmental values resulting from fertiliser use will be mitigated and or repaired.

The species selected for planting shall be known to be non invasive or control measures for invasions are in place. Exotic species are used only when direct experience and or results of scientific research demonstrates that spread can be controlled and they can be justified in terms of growth rates, marketability, site suitability and management objectives. All members will not plant Genetically Modified Organisms in their forests and plantations.

Harvesting

Plantations and forests are grown for their productive timber values in a responsible and sustainable manner. The timber values are recovered by harvesting and marketing forest products to their highest end value. All harvesting activities will be planned and controlled using Timber Harvesting Plans in accordance with the Code of Practice for Timber Production 2014. These will be prepared irrespective of any requirements of the Planning and Environment Act and the local government planning scheme.

The expected products from member's forests and plantations include sawlogs, pulpwood, fencing logs, firewood, craftwood and construction timbers. Non wood products can also be produced when adequate markets are found. Seed, leaves, pine cones, gum nuts and fungi can be sold.

All products can be labelled as certified according to the FSC® standards.

Harvesting and extraction practices for timber and non-timber production are planned and implemented to protect environmental values identified in Sustainable Forest Management Plans, Timber Harvesting Plans and as required by the Code. Plans will include requirements to protect the largest sized biomass and forest structure in native forests. Harvesting will be conducted to protect retained trees and residual woody debris.

Regeneration

After harvest the forest and plantations will be regenerated and re-established in a timely manner that protects environmental values and is expected to recreate the original or improved forest and plantation composition and condition. Ecologically well-adapted species will be used for regeneration and re-establishment.

Native forests will be regenerated with local indigenous species using local provenances.

Monitoring

The knowledge gained through monitoring is important to understand the natural processes occurring in the forests and plantations.

Measuring tree size, growth and yield will occur on all forests and plantations periodically.

The lists of species occurring in each forest and plantation will be expanded by further observation and identification.

Environmental Care

Individual Forest Management Plans outline the direct conservation activities. In all plans there is a minimum of 10% of the forest area with a conservation priority objective. Also each plan requires at least 5% of the forest to be protected as a dedicated conservation area. These areas are usually specific plantings for conservation or existing reserves and their buffers such as stream reserves.

Development, maintenance and use of infrastructure, as well as transport activities, will be managed to protect environmental values.

Disturbance or damage to water courses, water bodies, soils, rare and threatened species, habitats, ecosystems and landscape values are mitigated, repaired and restored in a timely manner, and management activities modified to prevent further damage.

Managing Risks from Natural Hazards

Natural Hazards are disturbances that can present risks to social, economic and environmental values in the forests and plantations. They can also form part of the natural ecosystem functions. Examples of Natural Hazards include drought, flood, fire, landslide, storm, avalanche and other phenomenon. The most important natural hazard to our members forest and plantations is bushfire.

Bushfire mitigation activities are conducted on all member's properties according to the known risks. Activities will include firebreak construction and maintenance.

Properties with native forest will apply fire regimes to those forests in accordance with the forest's ecological needs. Prescribed burning may be conducted in these forests in accordance with the ecological and risk mitigation requirements of the forest and its affected assets.

The potential negative impacts of natural hazards on infrastructure, forest resources and communities are assessed in the individual Sustainable Forest Management plans.

Fencing

Fences will be constructed and maintained to meet forest, plantation and broader property objectives.

Weeds and vermin

Pests, weeds, feral animals and diseases can threaten the conservation and production values of the forests and plantations. Monitoring and control activities may be required on all properties. Any introduced invasive species will be controlled directly or in association with regulatory authorities and or neighbours. Biological control agents will not be used in the forest and plantations of members.

Silviculture

All harvesting operations will be followed by adequate silvicultural activities to ensure rapid and appropriate regeneration of the forest or plantation. Silvicultural regimes will be tailored to exact site and ecological requirements for each forest, plantation or site. The regimes can include small scale clearfall, group selection or single tree selection depending on tree silvics.

Properties with sugar gum plantations will be regenerated by clearfelling and coppice regrowth.

Regrowth tending activities may include pruning and thinning.

Silvicultural practices are implemented that are ecologically appropriate for the vegetation, species, sites and management objectives. Silvicultural activities will be managed to protect all environmental values including soil and water values.

Waste

Collection, clean-up transportation and disposal of waste materials is done in an environmentally appropriate way that conserves environmental values. All litter will be removed from the forests and plantations.

HOW DO YOU FIND OUT MORE?

Members welcome and encourage direct contact from their neighbours and other community groups on the conduct of activities summarised in this document. Alternatively contact the Group Manager, Gary Featherston of Forest Strategy Pty Ltd.

His details are:

Postal address: PO Box 727, Buninyong VIC 3357

Telephones 03 5341 3982 or 0428 408 144

Email gary@foreststrategy.com.au