



**Public Briefing Paper for  
FSC® Forest Management Certification Re-Assessment of  
The Nature Conservancy  
in  
Arlington, Virginia USA  
July 28, 2022**

**Introduction** – Preferred by Nature is conducting Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®) Forest Management and Chain of Custody certification re-assessments of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) with an office located in Arlington, Virginia. TNC has been certified by Preferred by Nature (formerly NEPCo) since 2003 (NC-FM/COC-000238). The re-assessment includes properties in Maine, Virginia, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Maryland, Tennessee, New York, Ohio, Kentucky, Louisiana, and Georgia totaling approximately 270,000 hectares. The re-assessment will begin on September 1, 2022.

**Scope of the Certification Re-Assessment** – The forest management certification re-assessment will assess the environmental, silvicultural, and socioeconomic aspects of the certified forests using the FSC-US Forest Management Standard (v1.1) 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 website (at <https://us.fsc.org/en-us/certification/forest-management-certification>) or contact Preferred by Nature directly by telephone, fax, or e-mail as listed below. Preferred by Nature 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:

- Reed Rossell, Lead Auditor, Wildlife Biology/Forest Ecology; and,
- Randy Coats, Forestry.

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

- ◆ Re-assessment organization – The audit will start with remote work including document review, planning and initial interviews. The Preferred by Nature auditors and TNC staff will meet onsite on September 26, 2022.
- ◆ Field assessments – The auditors will audit properties from September 26-29 (NY/PA); Oct 4-6 (ME); week of Oct 24 (GA); and the week of Oct 31 (TN/KY/VA).
- ◆ Re-assessment briefing – At the end of the field assessments, the auditors will meet with TNC 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.

---

<sup>1</sup> FSC® A000535

- ◆ Draft report production – The auditors will produce a confidential draft report that will be circulated for comment to TNC. This should occur 45 days after completion of the re-assessment.
- ◆ Certification decision – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from TNC and other general stakeholder comments, Preferred by Nature will reach a certification decision. Barring unforeseen obstacles, this should occur by December 31, 2022.

**Your Input Sought** – As a part of the forest certification re-assessment process we invite stakeholders to offer comment and feedback on management of properties included in CFM's group certificate 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 15, 2022 so that we can take them into consideration in reaching a certification decision by December 31, 2022. Your options for communicating your observations to us are as follows:

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

### **Contacting Preferred by Nature**

*Kara Wires, Technical Manager, United States & Canada*

- ◆ Email: [kwires@preferredbynature.org](mailto:kwires@preferredbynature.org)
- ◆ Website: [www.preferredbynature.org](http://www.preferredbynature.org)
- ◆ Telephone: 802-391-4001
- ◆ Mailing address: P.O. Box 99, Richmond, VT 05477, USA

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

Stakeholders who may wish to dispute any aspect of the forest certification process or decision can access Preferred by Nature's Complaints, Appeals and Dispute resolution procedures at <https://preferredbynature.org/certification/fsc/complaints-and-resolutions>.