



**Public Briefing Paper for  
FSC® Forest Management Certification Re-Assessment of  
The Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands  
in  
Augusta, Maine, USA  
November 29, 2021**

**Introduction** – Preferred by Nature is conducting Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®) Forest Management and Chain of Custody certification re-assessments of The Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands with an office located in Augusta, Maine. The Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands has been certified by Preferred by Nature (formerly NEPCo) since May 16, 2006 (NC-FM/COC-001881). The re-assessment includes 21 properties in Vermont, Maine, and Rhode Island totaling approximately 4,209 hectares. Remote work for the re-assessment will begin on December 16<sup>th</sup> 2021, with onsite work occurring on December 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021.

**Scope of the Certification Re-Assessment** – The forest management certification re-assessment will assess the environmental, silvicultural, and socioeconomic aspects of the certified forests managed by The Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands using the *FSC-US Forest Management Standard (v1.1)* and the *FSC Standard For Group Entities in Forest Management Groups (FM-STD-30-005 V2-0)*. 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 Kara Wires, Lead Auditor, Forestry and Carolyn Loeb, Auditor, Forest Ecology.

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

- ◆ Re-assessment organization – The Preferred by Nature auditor and The Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands' staff will begin remote audit work on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
- ◆ Field assessments – The auditors will visit properties included in the scope of The Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands' certificate during December 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021.
- ◆ Re-assessment briefing – Prior to departure, the auditors will meet with The Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands' 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 The Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands. This should occur 45 days after completion of the re-assessment field work.
- ◆ Certification decision – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from The Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands and other general stakeholder comments, Preferred by Nature will reach a certification decision. Barring unforeseen obstacles, this should occur no later than March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

**Your Input Sought** – As a part of the forest certification re-assessment process we invite stakeholders to offer comment and feedback on The Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands' and group members' 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 Friday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, so that we can take them into consideration in reaching a certification decision. Your options for communicating your observations to us are as follows:

1. Meet with the Preferred by Nature auditors Kara Wires and Carolyn Loeb, during or shortly after the fieldwork.
2. Call and give comments to Carolyn Loeb, the Preferred by Nature staff person responsible for coordinating this certification re-assessment.
3. Submit written comments by mail or email to Carolyn Loeb. Unless you request otherwise, these comments will be kept confidential and are solely for the purposes of auditing The Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands as described in this briefing.

### **Contacting Preferred by Nature**

*Carolyn Loeb, Forestry Specialist at Preferred by Nature*

- ◆ Email: [cloeb@preferredbynature.org](mailto:cloeb@preferredbynature.org)
- ◆ Website: [www.preferredbynature.org](http://www.preferredbynature.org)
- ◆ Telephone: 802-829-3306
- ◆ 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>.