

Conservation Forest Certification Checklist 20.3
FORESTED LANDS more than 2 acres

Check green boxes if you have implemented 3 items from the list and all required practices. Criteria 6 is optional if not harvesting, and criteria 7 is optional. See Biodiversity in the Forests of Maine (BFM) and Focus Species Forestry and for more information on many of these practices. Some practices are awarded points in more than one criteria. Please schedule an initial visit by SWCD staff if needed to complete the checklist. *Indicates required practice. USE INSERT KEY TO TYPE ON THIS FORM IN MICROSOFT WORD. You must re-save this document to edit; please add your name to the document name. Small properties may add any of these criteria to their residential/small property checklist.

CORE CRITERIA 1 : Provide wildlife habitat.

1.1. Provide food for wildlife

Optional Points _____
(5 points for each type present)

Some high value food plants in woodlands are yellow birch, beech, aspen, black cherry, sugar maple, apples, native shrubs such as dogwoods, blueberries, winterberries, etc. Ensure that woodland area has food producing woody plants with:

- Seeds Species _____
- Edible berries Species _____
- Foliage/Twigs Species _____
- Nuts: Maintain composition of mature nut producing trees.
Species _____
- Other Fruits Species _____
- Pollen/nectar Species _____

Notes (You can add other species here)

1.2. Provide clean water source(s) for wildlife

Optional Points _____
(5 points for each source)

Recommended:

- Adjacent or nearby water source: Lake, bay, wetland, river, stream, pond
- Integrated water source: pond, wetland, woodland seeps and springs
- Other:

1.3. Protect vernal pools.

Optional Points _____
(5 points for each practice)

Required: *

- Mark and map all vernal pools (seasonal small wetlands) using Maine Vernal Pool Assessment.*
- Do not disturb the pool depression with equipment, sediment or slash *
- Create and mark a 100 foot buffer area around vernal pools that will not be harvested or disturbed, no soil disturbance or compaction, no chemical application, and a 400 foot zone of 50% canopy retention and other amphibian life zone BMPs. Add 3 points if these are distances are exceeded.*
- Conserve abundant coarse woody debris in vernal pool buffer and amphibian life zone 400 buffer.*

(Vernal pools practices continue on next page)

Recommended vernal pools practices:

- Leave > 75% canopy between pools that are less than ¼ mile apart.
- Implement other BMPs for vernal pools. List those implemented:

1.4. Provide shelter for wildlife

Optional Points _____
(5 points for each)

Conserve:

Notes:

Required: *

- Brush piles and/ coarse woody debris*
- Slash left after harvest*
- Dead trees or snags at various stages of decay. Inventory if smaller parcel. Leave all if less than 5 per acre, and at least 5 when more are present. Leave dying trees to become snags, and orient retained patches around snags. Use management practices that will foster future development of snags and debris.*
- Intact ground cover vegetation*

Recommended:

- Rock pile or wall
- Cave
- Dense shrubs or thicket
- Evergreens
- Burrows
- Mature/large (>18 inches in diameter) trees
- Older trees with cavities or branch structure to support raptor nests
- Post harvest young forest areas
- Nesting box(es)
- Significant host plants for caterpillars: oaks, cherries, birches, aspen, willows, others

Notes

CORE CRITERIA 2 Practice soil and water conservation.

2.1. Reduce stormwater runoff

Optional Points _____
(5 point for each practice implemented)

Required *

- Create less disturbed vegetation buffers for all riparian areas and shoreline that include mature woody vegetation, following Maine forestry rules (and DEP rules where applicable) for shoreline areas. *
- Preserve shoreline integrity of all perennial streams and rivers, lakes and wetlands with an undisturbed, no harvest 75 foot buffer (10 points).*
- Add additional undisturbed buffer from 75 to 250 feet (10 additional points)
- In areas of activity, add water slowing and infiltration structures where needed: rocks, swale plantings, wetlands, ponds, ditching ending in vegetation absorption area.
- Mulch disturbed areas with slash during harvest.
- Create turnouts and water bars for roads where needed.

2.2. Other water conservation practices

Optional Points _____
(10 points for each practice implemented)

- StreamSmart principles applied to all stream crossings
- LakeSmart requirements implemented near developed shore areas including camps

2.3. Control soil erosion

Optional Points _____
(5 points for each practice)

Required:*

- Mulch disturbed slopes*
- Create multi-level vegetation buffers for water bodies.*
- Minimize soil disturbance during harvest: mulch equipment areas with slash, avoid water crossing, site landings appropriately according to MFS BMPs, only in frozen or dry soil conditions.*
- Use Maine erosion and sediment control practices during any construction or activity near slopes.*
- Maintain gravel road, woods road and trail surfaces and ensure proper drainage.*
- Add plants to areas that need soil stabilization.
- Do not disturb vegetation on slopes greater than 8%.
- Other soil conservation practices (note below).

Notes

CORE CRITERIA 3 Control invasive species.

3.1 General Practices

Optional Points _____
(10 points for each practice implemented)

Required*

- Assess invasive plant presence and populations.*
- Have an invasive plant management plan developed.
- Remove, contain or suppress invasive plants and animals based on recommended priorities.*
- Monitor for invasive pests and plants and practice Early Detection Rapid Response to control new infestations.*
- Report uncommon or new invasive species to state or local conservation agencies.

Describe invasives management activities and monitoring

CORE CRITERIA 4 Manage vegetation for ecosystem support.

4.1. Create or conserve varied functional plant assemblages and structure.

Optional Points _____
(10 points for each practice)

Required: *

- Implement harvest practices that create different age classes and cover, such as uneven aged individual and small group selection, 3 stage shelterwood, patch retention.*
- Conserve late successional and old growth forest areas, with single tree, small group selection or no harvest.*

Recommended:

- Create or conserve vertically structured plant communities that include several layers, from groundcover to large trees.
- Add or conserve spatial complexity of vertical structure and assemblages where possible.
- Create open areas with forbs, shrubs and small trees, mowed periodically to protect wildlife and provide pollinator plants.
- Increase rotation length to greater than 100 years for selected areas to foster mature age classes and retain large trees.

4.2. Enhance biodiversity through planting and vegetation management

Optional Points _____
(5 points for each practice)

- Conserve or add high invertebrate support plants: oaks, willows, cherries, birch, blueberry
- Conserve tree species diversity present, limited or no harvest of less common or unusual species, preserve inclusions, harvest in monotypical stands.
- Add plants that meet wildlife needs where species are lost or declining, such as adding hard (nuts) and soft (fruit and seeds) mast trees to replace chestnut, beech, elm and ash seeds.
- Maintain certain naturally uniform stands such as hemlocks, cedar, black spruce, silver maple
- Increase site plant diversity by planting species not currently present.
- Protect planted trees from deer and other browsing.

Notes List biodiversity plants added (additional native or adaptive plants added):

CORE CRITERIA 5 Implement organic practices.

5.1 General practices

Optional Points _____
(5 points for each practice implemented)

Notes:

- Practice Integrated Pest Management.*
- Eliminate Chemical Pesticides, or
- Use less toxic or persistent pesticides and herbicides.

- Mechanically remove pests.
- Organic Practices, continued:
 - Trap pests.
 - Add or lure organisms that control pests, such as insect support shrub and herbaceous planting belts.
 - Suppress weeds with cutting and mowing.
 - Control invasives through early detection, mechanical methods and other non-chemical practices.
 - Other:

Notes:

CORE CRITERIA 6 (Optional, if not harvesting) Choose harvest practices that support healthy ecosystems.

6.1 General practices

Optional Points _____
(5 points for each practice implemented)

Required *

Planning

- Identify owner objectives, classify forest stands, review and integrate wildlife management guides and integrate all into a forest management plan.*
- Consult a licensed forester in planning, layout, supervision and close out of management activities.
- Have a licensed forester develop the plan integrating the items on this checklist.
- Map natural communities with the assistance of a forester or SWCD staff.

Harvest

- Use continuous cover silvicultural practices, e.g. small group, single tree and shelterwood methods, depending on the stand type and wildlife needs. Use intermediate treatments such as thinning and crop tree management to manage species, structure, and growth. See Focus Species Forestry Practices.
- Harvest in winter when ground is frozen.*
- Protect water bodies and avoid crossings by equipment where possible. Use MFS Best Management Practices.
- Implement crop tree management, linear patch cut, small group selection as primary harvest methods.

Retention / Protection

- Leave groups of high quality, mature trees.*
- No harvest old growth forest on the site.*
- No harvest in rare or exemplary natural communities designated S1, S2, or S3.*
- Maintain or extend required buffers around Atlantic salmon, brook trout, alewife and other important fish habitat.*
- Follow all stream and river buffer regulations.*
- Create corridors and connections of non-harvested areas.
- Reduce harvest in mature stands.
- Leave greater stream and river buffers than required by law.
- No harvest in floodplain and swamp forests.
- No harvest in areas of woodland springs and seepages
- No harvest in rare or endangered species presence areas
- No harvest in high and moderate value waterfowl and wading bird habitat
- Maintain canopy cover type percentages over the site or in large stands.

- Where practical, allow beaver activity and flooding.

OPTIONAL CORE CRITERIA 7 Optional. Implement other best practices wildlife forestry.

7.1 Recommended practices

Optional Points _____

(10 points for each system where any additional practice not checked above is implemented from these guides. Attach an additional sheet if need for descriptions)

- Implement other Focus Species Forestry recommendations for your stand types.
- Implement other Biodiversity for Maine Forest practices.
(see our website section Forestry for information on these systems)

Describe additional practices implemented from these guides:

Resources See our website sections Conservation Land Management and Forestry for online and other resources for each Criteria on this checklist. The criteria numbers are matched with some resource links.

Feedback Please submit your suggestions for this checklist, including your suggestions for items that could be added to this checklist.

How to submit your certification application

1. Complete this checklist. If all green boxes are checked (3 items and all required items completed for each #1 through # 7), you qualify for basic conservation land certification provided the practices are implemented correctly on your site. Criteria #7 is optional. Submit the checklist by mail to our office or by email to aleta.waldosoilandwater@gmail.com, or to us at www.waldocountysoilandwater.org/contact-us/

If you would like to assess your progress in more detail, you can do point totals for each section, and work towards our Master Conservationist level of certification:

Beginning 30-224 Certification 225 Master Conservationist Level 400

POINT TOTAL FOR THIS APPLICATION _____ **AWARDED** _____ **SWCD USE**
Date _____ **Staff** _____

2. Contact us on our website or by phone to schedule a time for our staff to visit your property and review your practices on site. You can complete the checklist at this time or prior to the site visit.
3. If you successfully complete your land certification, you can receive a sign to post (\$20) and /or a certificate of certification, which can be used to support other land applications and requirements.
4. Certified Conservation Forest landowners will be recognized at our Annual Meeting and in our Annual Journal. You may also volunteer to help others complete this process.

Name _____

Property Address _____

Phone _____

Email address _____

Acres _____ Uses/ Notes _____