

## Does Barge Forest Products meet FSC's Controlled Wood standard?

February 25, 2026

We are carrying out an audit of Barge Forest Products located in Mississippi, USA to see if their operations comply with FSC's [Controlled Wood](#) standard (FSC-STD-40-005 V3-1). We are writing to you to ask if you know of any reason why their operations would not meet this standard.

Controlled Wood is wood that meets minimum requirements and that can therefore be mixed with FSC wood and used in products with an FSC Mix label. In particular, the wood must not be:

- harvested illegally.
- harvested in violation of traditional and civil rights.
- harvested from forests with a high conservation value that is threatened by management activities.
- harvested from forests being converted to plantations or non-forest use.
- from forests in which genetically modified trees are planted.

We will carry out our audit in April 2026. Here is how you should comment, if you wish to do so:

- When? You should send comments to us before or during the audit.
- How? You can comment by:
  - Meeting with a Preferred by Nature staff member in person.
  - Phone to Andreeanne Meley, Preferred by Nature staff member from at 1 802 881 6480
  - Writing to 13 Jolina Court P.O. Box 99, Richmond, VT 05477
  - Email at [ameley@preferredbynature.org](mailto:ameley@preferredbynature.org)
  - In person by arranging to meet with Andreeanne Meley
- If you want your comments to be confidential please notify us when you submit the comments.

If you provide comments, we will provide feedback to you within 30 days of the audit.

Barge Forest Products has written a summary document that lists:

- the risks they have identified that they may source unacceptable wood
- the measures they implement to mitigate those risks.

We have attached this summary document to this letter.

If you wish to dispute any aspect of this forest certification process or the decision we reach as to whether this company meets the Controlled Wood standard, you can access our Dispute Resolution Policy at <https://www.preferredbynature.org/node/9284>.

Thank you for any help you are able to provide.

If you have any recommendations for contacting other stakeholders that may have an interest in providing comments on this company and audit, we would also gladly receive these from you.

Yours sincerely,

Andreeanne Meley

# FSC Controlled Wood Due Diligence System Public Summary

## 1. General information

Organisation name:	Barge Forest Products Company
FSC certificate code:	PBN-COC-064873; PBN-CW-064873
Organisation's DDS contact person:	Robert Cadenhead
DDS prepared/assisted by:	Prepared by Barge Forest Products and International Paper
Date last reviewed/updated (by the organisation):	5/10/2025

## 2. Suppliers

Participating site	Non-certified material type sourced	Exact number of suppliers	Supplier type(s)	Average no. of tiers in the supply chains	Approximate or exact number of sub-suppliers
<i>Name of organisation's site. All applicable sites shall be included.</i>	<i>Describe the type of product supplied e.g. logs, sawn logs, chips, wood pulp, etc.</i>	<i>Number of suppliers directly supplying material to the site</i>	<i>E.g. Forest management enterprise, Broker/trader without physical possession, Primary processor, Secondary processor, Distributor/wholesaler.</i>	<i>Average number of organisations within the supply chains, from forest to suppliers.</i>	<i>Total number of organisations that are sub-suppliers (indirect suppliers, or suppliers of your direct suppliers) within all supply chains</i>
<b>Barge Forest Products Company</b>	<b>Logs</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Producer &amp; Supplier</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

### 3. Supply areas

Supply area	Controlled wood category	Reference to risk assessment used	Risk designation
<b>Mississippi Counties:</b> Attala, Calhoun, Carroll, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Clay, Grenada, Holmes, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Lowndes, Madison, Montgomery, Monroe, Neshoba, Newton, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Rankin, Scott, Webster, Winston, Yazoo, Yalobusha	1	Refer to FSC NRA map for Barge Forest Products Company (See Annex)	Low risk
	2	Refer to FSC NRA map for Barge Forest Products Company (See Annex)	Low risk
	3	Refer to FSC NRA map for Barge Forest Products Company (See Annex)	Low risk
	4	Refer to FSC NRA map for Barge Forest Products Company (See Annex)	Low risk
	5	Refer to FSC NRA map for Barge Forest Products Company (See Annex)	Low risk
<b>Alabama Counties:</b> Lamar, Pickens, & Sumter	1	Refer to FSC NRA map for Barge Forest Products Company (See Annex)	Low risk
	2	Refer to FSC NRA map for Barge Forest Products Company (See Annex)	Low risk
	3	Refer to FSC NRA map for Barge Forest Products Company (See Annex)	Specified risk
	4	Refer to FSC NRA map for Barge Forest Products Company (See Annex)	Low risk
	5	Refer to FSC NRA map for Barge Forest Products Company (See Annex)	Low risk

### 4. Risk assessment and mitigation

#### 4.a Risk mitigation for the origin of the material

Supply area:		
Indicator	Control Measures	Findings from field verification if undertaken as a control measure
<i>Number of the indicators designated specified or unspecified risk in the applicable risk assessment. Note that the number of applicable indicators will change depending on the type of risk assessment used, and not all will be applicable to company risk assessments and 'old' national risk assessments.</i>	<i>Describe the control measures implemented to mitigate the risk and describe their desired outcome. Describe the activities conducted to verify the effectiveness of the control measures. Include information on the cycle (how often you conduct verification), number of audits, justification of sampling intensity, and the key results of the audits. If you found non-conformities, state steps taken to address them.</i>	<i>Summarise findings, if field verification was conducted. Describe steps taken to address any non-conformities found, unless confidential. If information is deemed confidential and not published, provide a justification for this.</i>
Controlled wood category 1. Illegally harvested wood	<b>*NOT APPLICABLE*</b>	
Controlled wood category 2. Wood harvested in violation of traditional and human rights	<b>*NOT APPLICABLE*</b>	
Controlled wood category 3. Wood from forests in which high conservation values are threatened by management activities		
3.1a.	3.1.a.ii) Relevant documents were read and reviewed. Additionally, representatives from International Paper were at the ATL meeting & Appalachian meeting. International Paper staff reviewed documents from both regional meetings.	

3.1 – Southern Appalachian Critical Biodiversity Area	Contracts with suppliers will state mandatory Best Management Practice usage on harvesting operations. (See NRA Mitigation Guidance Mitigation Options Document Page 11 option “C”). Also, the FSC US CW Regional Meeting handout for the Southern App CBA will be distributed to all suppliers who may operate in Pickens County, Alabama. The desired outcome of these mitigation efforts is to educate all operations in Pickens County on the Southern App CBA and to ensure they are complying with BMP’s.	BFPC will field verify 100% of gatewood special trades and all tract trades, whether gatewood regular or gatewood special, when the origin is in Pickens county. Annual internal audits are in place to ensure the DDS is functioning correctly. The decision to sample was made by the low risk likelihood (found in Table 2 in annex) that there may be a tract of timber purchased where the basin overlaps with the SRA. If a tract of timber overlaps with the SA CBA then BFPC will field verify to ensure BMP compliance, look for Montane Longleaf forest, karts and rock outcrops, and to ensure there will be no conversion.
Controlled wood category 4. Wood from forests being converted to plantations or non-forest use.	*NOT APPLICABLE*	
Controlled wood category 5. Wood from forests in which genetically modified trees are planted.	*NOT APPLICABLE*	

#### 4.b Risk assessment and mitigation for mixing in the supply chain

Participating site	Supply chain type	No. of tiers	Risk of mixing	Control measures	Findings from field verification if undertaken as a control measure
Barge Forest Products Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wood delivered and purchased directly from concession holder to Organisation’s log yard (mill)</li> </ul> <p>All round wood is purchased from counties listed in Alabama and Mississippi. These specific counties are listed above in “3. Supply Area”</p>	1 Tier	Due to Barge Forest Products Company purchasing round wood directly from a concession holder, there is No Risk of any possible mixing activity. The basin BFPC procures from has a small specified risk in far East Pickens County located in Alabama.	No risk of mixing	If findings of non-conformance are discovered then corrective actions will be put in place and closed out within one year.

#### 5. Technical experts used in the development of control measures

Name	License/Registration #	Qualification	Scope of Service	Source of Informaton
Greg Swede	N/A	Tenured Professional in Forestry Sector of Southeast US (34 Years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mississippi state hardwood management short course</li> <li>-Worked on numerous consultations with Dr. Andy Ezell, hardwood silviculturalist.</li> <li>-Conducted thorough review of Mississippi &amp; Alabama State wildlife action plans.</li> <li>-Served as Cumberland plateau representative of forestland stewards.</li> <li>-Took Native Bat short-course.</li> <li>-Was a former member and sub chair of WSRI.</li> <li>- Member of AFA - Alabama Forest Association; MFA - Mississippi Forest Association; -FRA - Forest Resource Association; -WSRI – Wood Supply Research Institute and;</li> <li>-American bird conservancy Tombigbee partnership committee member.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Authors on literature can quickly be searched and credentials are provided</i></li> <li>- <i>Greg swede can be found on LinkedIn for professional profile.</i></li> </ul>

## 6. Stakeholder consultation processes

Supply area	Relevant controlled wood category	List of stakeholder groups invited to participate	Summary of comments received from stakeholders	Description of how stakeholder comments were taken into account	Justification for concluding that the material sourced from the area was low risk
		<i>Preferred by Nature will be conducting a 6 week long mandatory stakeholder consultation</i>			

## 7. Complaints procedure

We encourage stakeholders who have suggestions for improvements, comments, or complaints related to our controlled wood due diligence system to contact:

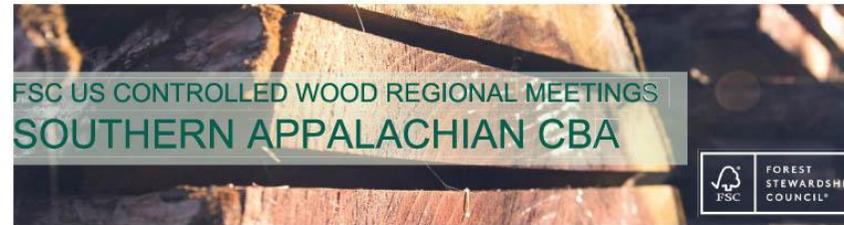
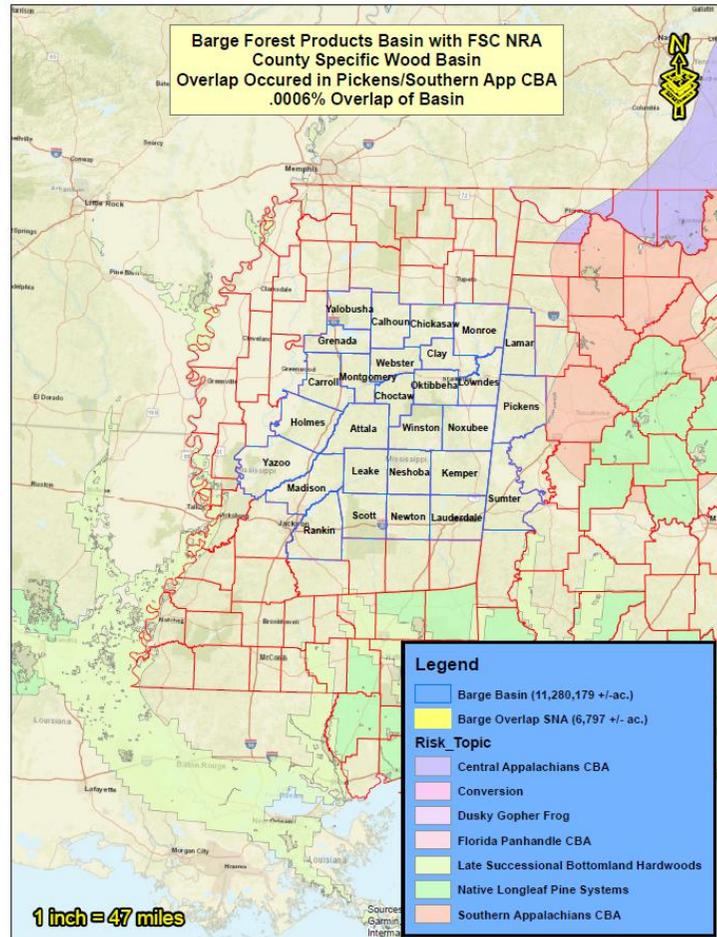
Robert Cadenhead  
[robertc@bfpc.com](mailto:robertc@bfpc.com)  
662-726-5481

We commit to follow up on stakeholder input as soon as we receive it and to provide stakeholders with feedback within 2 weeks.

If any complaints are made to Barge Forest Products Company. then the following process below will be followed:

- a) Acknowledging receipt of complaints
- b) Informing stakeholders of the complaint procedure, and providing an initial response to complainants within a time period of two (2) weeks;
- c) Forwarding complaints related to risk designations in the relevant FSC risk assessment to the responsible body
- d) Conducting a preliminary assessment to determine whether evidence provided in a complaint is or is not substantial, by assessing the evidence provided against the risk of using material from unacceptable sources
- e) Dialogue with complainants that aims to solve complaints assessed as substantial before further actions are taken
- f) Forwarding substantial complaints to the certification body and relevant FSC National Office for the supply area within two (2) weeks of receipt of the complaint. Information on the steps to be taken by the organization in order to resolve the complaint, as well as how a precautionary approach will be used, shall be included with the complaint
- g) Employing a precautionary approach towards the continued sourcing of the relevant material while a complaint is pending
- h) Implementing a process (e.g. field verification and/or desk verification) to verify a complaint assessed as substantial by the organization, within two (2) months of its receipt
- i) Determining the corrective action to be taken by suppliers and the means to enforce its implementation by a supplier if a complaint has been assessed and verified as substantial. If a corrective action cannot be determined and/or enforced, the relevant material and/or suppliers shall be excluded by the organization;
- j) Verifying whether corrective action has been taken by suppliers and whether it is effective
- k) Excluding the relevant material and suppliers from the organization's supply chain if no corrective action is taken
- l) Informing the complainant, the certification body, and the relevant FSC National Office of the results of the complaint and any actions taken towards its resolution, and for maintaining copies of relevant correspondence
- m) Recording and filing all complaints received and actions taken

Annex: Include all company risk assessments and extended company risk assessments as annexes or refer to file name if attached separately.



**FSC REGION** Southeast (this Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA) is an extension of the Central Appalachian CBA, but for the purposes of this assessment, they are being separated at the regional boundary)

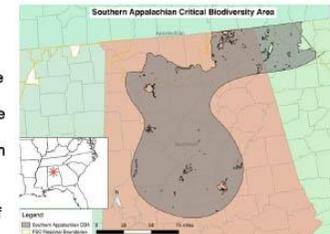
**HCVs IN FSC** A High Conservation Value (HCV) is a biological, ecological, social or cultural value of outstanding significance or critical importance. FSC is working to ensure that our system helps to maintain and enhance the special places that support these values. For more information on HCVs, see the Common Guidance for the Identification of High Conservation Values.<sup>1</sup>

**WHY IS THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN CBA CONSIDERED AN HCV?** This CBA is considered an HCV because it contains a high overall species richness, diversity, or uniqueness within a defined area compared to other sites within the same biogeographic area. The CBA was identified using a species richness index originally published by NatureServe and The Nature Conservancy that identifies areas with high concentrations of rare species. This index preferences species that have limited ranges by applying additional weighting. The results identify areas with concentrations of high biological diversity and spaces with an increased conservation significance.

**SUMMARY OF THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN CBA** Biodiversity values in the southern Appalachians include aquatic habitats, glades, and montane longleaf pine. Alabama is recognized as having the greatest number of freshwater species of mollusks and fish in the United States, and many of these species have very restricted distributions and specialized habitat requirements that make them highly vulnerable to extinction. The Cahaba River watershed is the center of the biodiversity hotspot, but the biodiversity area includes other smaller watercourses as well. Aquatic habitats driving this concentration of biodiversity include lakes, rivers, streams, bogs, swamps, ephemeral pools, fens, seeps, swamp forests and wet meadows. Other drivers of biodiversity include glades and montane longleaf pine.

Bibb County Glades (i.e. rock outcrops), exposed limestone glades, and sandstone glades in Central Alabama have high density of rare plants. These are open habitats that are dominated by upland herbaceous plant species. There is typically an absence of a tree canopy on glades, resulting in large amounts of sunlight and heat on the surface.

Montane longleaf pine habitats occur in steep rolling topography historically maintained by fire, mostly outside of or on the edge of the Coastal Plain. Biodiversity values are driven in part by the understory plant community.



<sup>1</sup>Common Guidance for the Identification of High Conservation Values (<https://ic.fsc.org/en/what-is-fsc-certification/consultations/archive/hcv-common-guidance>)

## IDENTIFIED THREATS TO THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN CBA HABITATS

<p><b>Acquatic Habitats</b>  Numerous sources of information identify threats from forest management activities, particularly <b>non-point source pollution in aquatic habitats (primarily sediments, but also fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, when mis-managed near water bodies), and disturbance to riparian zones.</b></p>	<p><b>Glades</b>  Threats include grazing, non-native species, quarrying, root-digging, plant and animal collecting, removal of large rocks for landscaping, urban development, plowing for fire breaks, use as logging decks (resulting in soil/vegetation disturbance and soil erosion), conversion to other land uses, and ORV damage. No threats from forest management activities were identified.</p>	<p><b>Montane Longleaf Pine</b>  <b>Biodiversity values can be adversely affected by forest management activities via conversion of longleaf to other pine types, and the use of management techniques, including herbicide application that have the potential to inhibit native understory communities.</b> As the bulk of the biodiversity exists in the understory of a longleaf pine system, restoration or maintenance of understory species composition is an essential component of longleaf pine conservation. It is possible to harvest in and sustainably manage longleaf pine systems and therefore timber management by itself is not considered a threat. Other threats include fire-suppression, urban development, forest conversion, non-native species, climate change.</p>
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## WHAT ARE MITIGATION ACTIONS AND WHAT WOULD WE LIKE TO ACHIEVE?

Companies that mix FSC-certified forest materials and non-certified materials to make products with an 'FSC Mix' claim/logo are required to address certain risks before using the non-certified forest materials. One of these is the risk that their forest materials come from areas where HCVs are threatened by forest management activities. FSC has completed a US National Risk Assessment to identify where this risk is greater than 'low' and one of these is the Southern Appalachians CBA - specifically, the portions that occur within the FSC US Southeast Region and are not effectively protected<sup>2</sup>. Companies that wish to use non-certified materials from the identified places (like this CBA) are required to either avoid sourcing from specific sites where the threats are occurring, or to implement mitigation actions that reduce the risk of sourcing from those sites. For this CBA, any mitigation actions will need to address the threats identified above in **bold**.

The FSC US National Risk Assessment also introduces the concept of holding regional meetings to bring stakeholders together to collaboratively identify effective and practical mitigation actions. We are asking participants to consider landscape-scale mitigation actions, that will help to reduce risks across the landscape in which the companies source forest materials. An effective way to do this may be to build on existing programs and projects that are already tackling these issues. The companies implementing mitigation actions are required to select one or more from the options identified at the regional meetings.

**Please help us to determine what these mitigation actions should be, by visiting [engage.fsc.us.org](http://engage.fsc.us.org) and joining the virtual discussion, or attending a regional meeting.**

## INFORMATION SOURCES THAT MAY HELP GENERATE MITIGATION IDEAS

- [2015 Alabama State Wildlife Action Plan](#)
- [Cahaba River Basin Management Plan](#)
- [Upper Coosa Basin Watershed Management Plan](#)
- [America's Longleaf Alliance](#)

<sup>2</sup>Effective protection is demonstrated by GAP Status 1 & 2 areas in the PAD-US dataset (<https://gapanalysis.usgs.gov/padus/data/download/>) and USFS Inventoried Roadless Areas (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/roadless/2001roadlessrule/maps/?cid=stelprdb5382437>).

