



Forest Management and Chain of Custody Certification Assessment of the SFE «Forests of Ukraine», Branch «Smilyanske Forestry», Ukraine 22-24, November 2023

Introduction - NEPCon is conducting forest management and chain of custody certification assessment of the SFE «Forests of Ukraine», Branch «Smilyanske Forestry», located in Ukraine. The assessment will be implemented 22-24, November 2023.

Scope of the Certification Assessment – The forest management certification assessment will assess the environmental, silvicultural and socioeconomic aspects of Assessment of the SFE «Forests of Ukraine», Branch «Smilyanske Forestry», using *the “FSC-STD-UKR-01-2019 V 1-0”*. To obtain a copy of the applicable Standard please contact NEPCon by telephone, email or on website listed below; standard may also be found at the link in the internet www.preferredbynature.org.

The forest under evaluation contains areas either identified as High Conservation Value Forests or where high conservation values, as defined by the FSC, are likely found. NEPCon evaluates the identification, management and protection of these High Conservation Values and solicits related comments from stakeholders.

Assessment Team Composition: the assessment team will be led by LEAD AUDITOR Georgiy Bondaruk (Ukraine). The team members will be: auditors Oleksandr Topchii (Ukraine), Vasil Ivanchenko (Ukraine), Olesya Kaspruk (Ukraine).

Assessment Steps and Schedule – Following is a short description of the certification process and a tentative agenda:

- ◆ Assessment organization – NEPCon team will gather together in town Smila on 22 of November 2023.
- ◆ Field assessments – The team will visit sites, managed by the SFE «Forests of Ukraine», Branch «Smilyanske Forestry», 22-24 November 2023.
- ◆ Stakeholder consultation – Throughout the fieldwork, the team will contact local stakeholders regarding of the SFE «Forests of Ukraine», Branch «Smilyanske Forestry». This will include private interviews and discussions, and public stakeholder meetings.
- ◆ Public stakeholder meetings – A public stakeholder meeting will be held in the SFE «Forests of Ukraine», Branch «Smilyanske Forestry». Date, time, and location will be announced soon.
- ◆ Final assessment briefing – Prior to departure the team will meet with the SFE «Forests of Ukraine», Branch «Smilyanske Forestry» and other parties to finalize their data collection and present preliminary findings.
- ◆ Draft report production – The assessment team will produce a confidential draft report that will be circulated for comment to the SFE «Forests of Ukraine», Branch «Smilyanske Forestry» and a minimum of 2 independent peer reviewers. This should occur 30 days after completion of the reassessment.



- ◆ Certification decision – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from the representatives of the SFE «Forests of Ukraine», Branch «Smilyanske Forestry» and independent peer reviewers, and other general stakeholder comments, NEPCon will reach a certification decision. Barring unforeseen obstacles, this should occur by December 31, 2023.

Your Input Sought. As a part of the forest certification assessment process we invite stakeholders to offer comment and feedback on the SFE «Forests of Ukraine», Branch «Smilyanske Forestry» 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 assessment process, but we would prefer to receive your comments either prior to the assessment, during the assessment, or prior to November 22, 2023, so that we can take them into consideration in reaching a certification decision to December 31, 2023. Your options for communicating your observations to us are as follows

1. Meet with a NEPCon assessment team member during or shortly after the assessment.
2. Call and give comments to Olesya Kaspruk, NEPCon staff person responsible for coordinating this certification assessment as representative of NEPCon in Ukraine. If Olesya Kaspruk is not in the office, please give your comments to Georgiy Bondaruk.
3. Submit written comments by telephone, FAX or email to Olesya Kaspruk. Unless you request otherwise, these comments will be kept confidential and are solely for the purposes of assessing the SFE «Forests of Ukraine», Branch «Smilyanske Forestry».

The source of any information provided will be kept confidential available to only to FSC and NEPCon staff.

Stakeholders who may wish to dispute any aspect of the forest certification process or decision can access NEPCon's Dispute Resolution Policy at www.preferredbynature.org

Contacting NEPCon

- ◆ Email: okaspruk@preferredbynature.org (Olesya Kaspruk)
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