Background
The Ad-Hoc Interpretation Committee was formed by FSC Canada in response to an interpretation request submitted by SmartWood, in accordance with FSC Canada’s Interpretation Policy. In consideration of the broad relevance of the issues under consideration FSC Canada published the interpretation request on its website and welcomed comments from interested parties, which were considered in developing the responses below.

The original request is included as Appendix A to this interpretation. Appendix B compiles the comments that were received.

Members of the Ad-Hoc Interpretation Committee were Russell Collier, Peter Ewins, Brent Rabik and Chris Ridley-Thomas.

Interpretation

Question 1: Does indicator 6.2.1 require managers to include species in addition to the regulated provincial or federal species lists, as stated in the NBS glossary and the intent box OR does it explicitly and intentionally constrain the list to only species on government regulated lists?

In this response the term “Manager’s List” is used to refer to the list of species at risk to be compiled by the manager in accordance with 6.2.1. This term is used so as to clearly distinguish between the Manager’s List and other lists that may exist pertaining to species at risk in the region. Subsequent indicators in Criterion 6.2 apply to species on the Manager’s List.

When developing the Manager’s List in accordance with Indicator 6.2.1 managers should consider including species in addition to those included on regulated federal or provincial species lists.

There are four possible sources for species that might be included on the Manager’s List.

a) Species formally listed in schedules referenced in federal or provincial endangered species legislation

b) Species that have been identified as warranting “at risk” designation by bodies formally recognized in federal or provincial endangered species legislation (i.e. the Committee on the
Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, plus equivalent provincial bodies). These bodies have different ways to describe these species – some are “listed” while some are “recommended” for listing; the key consideration here is that the committee has considered and agreed that the species is at risk.

c) Species that are under consideration by the bodies referenced in (b) above, whether they are “watch” species, “under review,” “of special concern,” etc

d) Species that may be identified by other non-governmental bodies as being of concern

In the context of the requirements for Criterion 6.2 of the Boreal Standard, species to be listed by the manager in accordance with 6.2.1 and addressed in subsequent indicators may include species identified under all four of the categories described above. See Question 2 for further guidance as to whether or not such species actually should be included on the Manager’s List. Question 3 provides further clarification on the factors that should be considered in the management planning process.

**Question 2: Does the following additional guidance [See Appendix A] clarify the meaning, and ensure that a reasonable process is followed for adding SAR to the list?**

The following response confirms the proposed guidance in the interpretation request, providing additional guidance on its application.

Species included in categories (a) or (b) above should be included in the “Manager’s List” if they are present on the management unit.

Species included in category (c) above should be considered for inclusion in the Manager’s List, based on the impact of forest management activities on relevant vulnerability factors for that species.

Managers should consider information from other organizations. When assessing species identified by groups in category (d) above for possible inclusion on the Manager’s List the following factors should be considered:

a) the diversity of agencies involved in developing the species list;
b) the diversity of vulnerability factors considered; and

c) the impact of forest management activities on relevant vulnerability factors for that species.

**Question 3: Does the following additional guidance [see Appendix A] clarify the interpretation of 6.2.4 and 6.2.5?**

The following incorporates and builds on the guidance in the standard as well the additional guidance proposed in the interpretation request. The guidance below explains how all of the requirements in 6.2.4 and 6.2.5 can be met while recognizing the diversity of situations that will be experienced, including the number of species to be potentially considered, differing degrees of legislative protection,
varying degrees of risk from forest management and broad range of appropriate management responses.

**Guidance for 6.2.4 and 6.2.5**

“Species Recovery Plans” in this context refers to plans or strategies that have been developed and approved in accordance with federal or provincial legislation, and are sometimes called “Action Plans,” “Recovery Strategies,” etc. The development and approval of these plans is outside the scope of FSC certification, although 6.2.4 requires that the Manager respect and cooperate with the implementation of measures in approved Species Recovery Plans that pertain to their activities.

Completeness and adequacy of Species Recovery Plans (as per 6.2.5) can be evaluated by assessing whether the relevant considerations of 6.2.4 were addressed during the process of developing the Species Recovery Plan.

For species that are on the Manager’s List prepared in accordance with 6.2.1, and for which Species Recovery Plans are not in development, or not completed, or not approved, or not adequate, the Manager should prepare its own plan(s). These plans are not intended to replicate the detail and scope of Species Recovery Plans, but simply to outline the ways in which the manager is taking a precautionary approach to mitigating the impact of its activities on the species and/or allowing for its recovery. Measures may involve habitat protection, conservation zones, seasonal closures, etc. They will not necessarily require a stand-alone plan or strategy for each species, and may be reflected in measures to implement other requirements of this standard, in particular Indicator 6.1.11, Indicator 6.3.14 and Criterion 9.3. The manager should ensure that these plans are developed with appropriate expertise.

**General recommendation**

When the Boreal Standard is revised attention should be paid to the terminology used in order to ensure that the requirements are relevant and clearly understood in all jurisdictions in the boreal region. Particular attention should be paid to non-technical terms that are assigned specific meanings in various endangered species legislation, such as “lists,” “plans” and “regional.” These assigned meanings are not necessarily identical across jurisdictions, so care should be taken to ensure that the requirements in the standard can be consistently understood and interpreted.