

# Standard 5

## THE HEALTH OF YOUR WOODS AND THE ANIMALS THAT CALL IT HOME

Managing your woodlands sustainably involves more than just managing your trees. A healthy woodland is one that supports diverse tree, plant, fish, and wildlife species, and your management activities should be planned to conserve biodiversity.

### Performance Measure 5.1

Forest-management activities *shall* protect habitats and communities occupied by *threatened or endangered* species as required by law.

#### INDICATOR 5.1.1

*Landowner shall* confer with natural-resource agencies, state natural-resource heritage programs, *qualified natural-resource professionals* or review other sources of information to determine occurrences of *threatened or endangered* species on the property and their habitat requirements.

#### INDICATOR 5.1.2

Forest-management activities *shall* incorporate measures to protect identified *threatened or endangered* species on the property.

### Managing Your Land to Protect Threatened or Endangered Species

The first section of Standard 5 describes your obligations as a **landowner** to protect **threatened or endangered** animals and their habitats under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and any applicable state laws. If you learn of any **threatened or endangered** animal species currently on your land, you are required to take appropriate action to protect them and their habitats. Learn the federal requirements, as well as those of your state.

Although, as a private **landowner**, you are not required to do an exhaustive search for **threatened or endangered** species on your property, you are expected to make a good-faith effort to identify any known occurrences of these species on your land. To identify any occurrences of these important species, you are required to consult with credible resources, such as a state natural-heritage database or a knowledgeable forester or qualified natural-resource professional to learn which species are known to be present on your land and to document your good-faith investigation in your forest-management plan.

If it is determined that **threatened or endangered** wildlife is present on your land, it is your duty review the legal requirements and take appropriate action in the management of your property. It is important to note, however, that the presence of

these species does not prohibit you from managing your woodlands. It does, however, require you to consider the impacts of your management activities on habitat for that species, and may influence the timing of those activities and the management techniques you choose. In designated habitat areas, you may need to:

- Limit the use of vehicles and mechanical equipment;
- Limit activities to certain times of the year;
- Restrict **pesticide** use;
- Maintain residual trees;
- Establish and maintain buffer zones around the habitat area;
- Limit hunting or fishing; and
- Post signs or mark the boundaries of the habitat area.

Your forester and qualified natural-resource professional(s) can help you develop a plan that allows you to manage your woods, while also meeting your legal obligations to protect listed species and their habitats.

If a **threatened or endangered** animal species with a range in your area is not identified on your property, you are not required under the ESA to protect its habitat. However, many ATFS-certified woodland owners choose to go above and beyond the federal law's requirements to protect unoccupied habitats. Indeed, protecting and enhancing habitats are goals for many **landowners**. Similarly, although you are not required to protect **threatened or endangered plant** species under the ESA, you are strongly encouraged to do so.

**STANDARD 5:**  
**Fish, Wildlife, Biodiversity,  
and Forest Health**

Forest-management activities  
contribute to the conservation of  
**biodiversity.**

In some specific circumstances, **landowners** may manage under a federally approved habitat conservation plan (HCP) designed to mitigate impacts of management to federally listed species. In these cases, the management activities implemented under the plan will be considered to be in compliance with the ATFS Standard.

### Resources: Endangered Species

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has free publications to help you understand your obligations under the ESA. Start by visiting: [www.fws.gov/ENDANGERED/esa-library/pdf/ESA\\_basics.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/ENDANGERED/esa-library/pdf/ESA_basics.pdf) to learn the basics.
- USFWS maintains a list of **threatened or endangered** species at: [http://ecos.fws.gov/tess\\_public/](http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/).
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) maintains a list of **threatened or endangered** freshwater fish that migrate to sea. Find the list at: [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/esa/](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/esa/).
- Contacting your state's natural-resources agency is usually an effective way to find out if a property or region is known to contain a **threatened or endangered** species. Find your state's natural-heritage resources, as well as the Wildlife Action Plan for your state: [www.treefarmssystem.org/woodland-resources](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/woodland-resources)
- The ATFS Management Plan Addendum: [www.treefarmssystem.org/atfsaddendum](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/atfsaddendum)



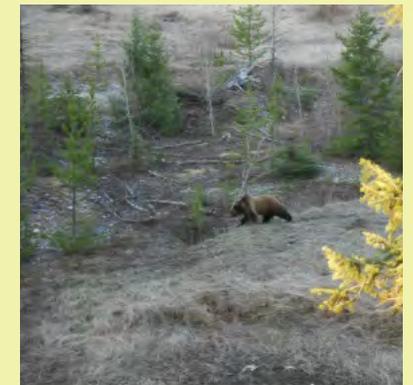
## Managing for wildlife and endangered species

### Duke & Naomi Hoiland Polebridge, Montana

Despite the presence of threatened Canada lynx and grizzly bears on their land, which is part of a wide swath of Montana lands designated as, “critical habitat” for these species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the law, “hasn’t changed our management or our behavior,” says Montana Tree Farmer Duke Hoiland. “There are no restrictions on how we manage our property. What we’ve found is that the more and better you manage your land, the better it is for the wildlife.”

Trail Creek, which flows through the Hoilands’ property for more than one-quarter mile, is an important spawning stream for the endangered bull trout, as well as supporting native cutthroat trout populations. To protect the fish, no fishing is allowed in the stream, but the Hoilands enjoy watching the large trout migrating up the stream to spawn every year, knowing that their careful stewardship is helping to ensure the bull trout’s survival.

To protect other species from human and animal predators, Duke and Naomi leave areas of trees and brush when they harvest timber to provide security, “So that deer and elk don’t have to run for half a mile to find cover,” Duke says. They also have planted protective roadside vegetation to protect wildlife from shooting.



Photos: Hoiland Family

## Performance Measure 5.2

*Landowner should address the desired species and/or desired forest communities when conducting forest-management activities, if consistent with landowner's objectives.*

### INDICATOR 5.2.1

*Landowner should consult available and accessible information on management of the forest for desired species and/or forest communities and integrate it into forest management.*

#### Managing Your Land to Attract Desired Species

The second topic addressed in Standard 5 is the issue of managing your land for desired plant and/or animal species that you have identified. If your **management plan** indicates that one of your goals as a woodland owner is to attract certain wildlife species to your land (bobwhite quail or deer, for example), Standard 5 recommends that you develop a strategy of specific management activities you plan to use to achieve your objective(s). Similarly, if you have stated your desire to reestablish a certain tree species, such as longleaf pine, you must address the specific management techniques you will employ to do this.

If attracting particular species is not one of your personal objectives, the Standards do not require you to address this in your **management plan**.

## Performance Measure 5.3

*Landowner should make practical efforts to promote forest health.*

### INDICATOR 5.3.1

*Landowner should make practical efforts to promote forest health, including prevention, control, or response to disturbances such as wildland fire, invasive species and other pests, pathogens, or unwanted vegetation, to achieve specific management objectives.*

#### Managing Your Woodland to Promote Forest Health

The third major topic addressed in Standard 5 is your responsibility to promote the health of your forest. Every day, your woods face new challenges from **invasive**

### Resources: Desired Species

If you have decided you want to create desirable habitats to attract particular species to your property, many resources are available. For information and help, consult:

- State and federal fish and game departments. The Association for Fish and Wildlife Agencies' members list includes links to all the state fish and wildlife agencies in the US: [www.fishwildlife.org](http://www.fishwildlife.org)
- Publications from your state's Extension service; find your extension representatives: <http://nifa.usda.gov/partners-and-extension-map>
- Nonprofit organizations that focus on the species you want to attract (e.g., Quail Forever [www.quailforever.org](http://www.quailforever.org), Quality Deer Management Association [www.qdma.com](http://www.qdma.com), Wild Turkey Federation [www.nwtf.org](http://www.nwtf.org), Trout Unlimited [www.tu.org](http://www.tu.org), Audubon [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)).
- Find your state's natural-heritage resources, as well as the Wildlife Action Plan for you state: <https://www.treefarmssystem.org/woodland-resources>

**species** and other forest pests, tree-killing diseases, wildland fire, and unwanted vegetation.

**Performance Measure 5.3** requires that you take a proactive approach to addressing these threats and that you seek out the advice of professionals who know and understand emerging forest threats in your state and region.

Sometimes, new threats emerge at a **scale** or speed that is more than you, as an individual **landowner**, have the resources to prevent or control. That is why it is so important to take a practical and active approach to managing your woodlands, proactively building its resilience. Instead of thinking about your forest's health only when a fire, disease outbreak, or insect pest strikes your woods, manage your woods every day by thinking about what it takes to have a healthy and resilient forest. Work with professionals who understand the major threats and what to do to prevent them, and build resilience in the context of these stressors.

## RESOURCES

- Learn about how you can create healthier woods, including activities you can do to ensure the resiliency of your land: [www.mylandplan.org/create-healthier-woods](http://www.mylandplan.org/create-healthier-woods)
- The common pests and weeds you should be looking for where you live, what to do when you have an outbreak, prevention steps, and other resources can be found at: [www.mylandplan.org/pests](http://www.mylandplan.org/pests)
- Connect with your state extension foresters to get up-to-date information on the threats in your area: [www.mylandplan.org/extension-foresters](http://www.mylandplan.org/extension-foresters)
- Have you considered using integrated pest management (IPM) to address pests and weeds on your land? Learn more about what IPM is, how to use it, and what resources are available in your state at: [www.mylandplan.org/IPM](http://www.mylandplan.org/IPM)

## Performance Measure 5.4

*Where present, forest-management activities **should** maintain or enhance forests of recognized importance.*

### INDICATOR 5.4.1

*Appropriate to the scale and intensity of the situation, forest-management activities **should** incorporate measures to contribute to the conservation of identified forests of recognized importance.*

#### Managing Your Land as Part of a Forest of Recognized Importance

The final section of Standard 5 outlines what is required of you, as a woodland owner, if your property is part of a large, unique forested landscape known as a **forest of recognized importance** (FORI).

These are large, landscape-scale areas of forested land that are globally, nationally, or regionally recognized for their exceptional ecological, social, cultural, or biological values. Some **landowners** and natural-resource professionals may refer to these unique landscapes as “high-conservation value forests” or “forests of exceptional value.” Any one of these terms may be used to document your efforts to meet the requirements of Performance Measure 5.4.

A recognized FORI landscape generally has a combination of several exceptional attributes in high concentration, for example, critical habitats for multiple **threatened or endangered** species, or high densities of unusual cultural or geologic features. Many of these areas already are protected by federal or state governments or private land- conservation organizations.

If your land is located within a landscape recognized as a FORI, you have a special opportunity to support its conservation and have even greater impact through your own land- management practices.

In the United States, the concept of FORIs is relatively new, and no single organization or agency is responsible for their designation and conservation. What is agreed, though, is that there is a global need to protect such areas. Each **landowner** has a part to play in conserving the bigger landscape of which their woodlands is a part.

Not sure whether you are part of such a landscape? Your state’s natural-heritage database may be a good place to start to learn more about the special landscapes in your state, and which agencies and organizations are working to protect them. Due to the small **scale** and low-intensity of family-forest operations, informal assessment for the occurrence of FORIs through consultation with experts or review of available and accessible information is appropriate.

## RESOURCES

- Learn more about the Guidance provided with the Standards at: [www.treefarmssystem.org/fori](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/fori)
- And learn more about the concept of **forests of recognized importance** at: [www.mylandplan.org/fori](http://www.mylandplan.org/fori)

