The following document summarizes the input received during and immediately following the 2018 Controlled Wood Regional Meetings and provides rationale for the resulting mitigation options for the Florida Panhandle Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA), along with definition of any identified gaps in the final set of options.

The US Controlled Wood National Risk Assessment identifies two drivers of biodiversity in this CBA that may be threatened by forest management activities: Longleaf Pine Savanna and the Apalachicola Bay/River System.

* Longleaf Pine Savanna: As the specified risk area associated with this CBA overlaps with the specified risk area associated with HCV 3 Native Longleaf Pine Systems (NLPS), any Organization that is mitigating risks associated with sourcing from areas of NLPS that are within this CBA will already be mitigating the identified risk associated with this driver of biodiversity, and no additional mitigation is needed.
* Apalachicola Bay/River System: Mitigation to address the identified risk associated with this driver of biodiversity will still be required, and the proposed mitigation options are provided below.

*Consultation Insights: Overall, stakeholder feedback on the proposed mitigation options for the Florida Panhandle CBA was generally limited. However, this limited feedback does provide support for the following thematic approaches: support for conservation initiatives, education and outreach, and research and mapping. Additionally, comments on similar themes for other risk topics have consistently suggested merging thematically similar options, adapting options to provide greater flexibility (e.g., avoid specifying any particular NGO for collaboration, avoid limiting the management tools that may be used for conserving biodiversity), and providing more information on the intent of the mitigation option and what it is expected to achieve. Finally, consistency of mitigation approaches between risk topics should provide the potential for efficiencies for Organizations that would like to take similar approaches for different risk topics, or in different regions, and therefore, the following revised options draw from options for similar themes that were developed for other risk topics.*

**Please note that almost any of the proposed mitigation options may be done individually or in collaboration with other certificate holders, or other entities that have similar desired outcomes. Collaboration is encouraged to scale up potential mitigation impact, and FSC US will seek to assist with that collaboration when feasible.**

**CENTRAL THEME: Conservation Initiatives**

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| Original Proposed Option  (#1) Support ongoing efforts to improve or conserve the water and land resources in the Apalachicola River Basin, such as: the Nature Conservancy’s (TNC) Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravine Preserve and Longleaf Pine Restoration Project; the Apalachicola Riverkeeper’s education, monitoring and research efforts; the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Watershed Restoration Program; and implementation of the Northwest Florida Water Management District’s (NWFWMD) Surface Water Improvement (SWIM) Plan | Topline Input   * Consistent support for option * Supporting efforts to protect bottomland hardwood forests is important * Concern about naming specific organizations * Proposed mitigation measures are difficult for smaller companies to implement * Clarify what ‘support’ means |

**Proposed Revised Mitigation Option**

**The following is offered as an option that could be scaled for any impact level:**

**Engage with and/or provide monetary or in-kind resources to conservation partnerships, organizations or similar entities that are supporting or promoting programs or projects to develop new or augment existing programs that will enhance or conserve aquatic biodiversity in the Apalachicola Bay/River System, with a particular focus on bottomland hardwood forests and forests identified as having higher risk within the portion of the Apalachicola Bay/River System that occurs within areas of the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area. These entities may include: 1) partnerships including government and/non-government organizations or non-governmental organizations working alone that have active programs/projects to conserve aquatic biodiversity or the forests important for doing so; and/or 2) federal, state and/or local governmental organizations.**

**CENTRAL THEME: Education & Outreach**

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| Original Proposed Options  (#3) Support partnerships such as the Gulf Coast Plains Ecosystems Partnership to advance adaptive management through the exchange of forest management information and aquatic restoration techniques and technology.  (#4) Increase public awareness through the development of education and outreach programs about the importance of long-term water protection investments to both humans and the environment. | Topline Input   * General support for both options * BMP compliance rates are very high in Florida and have been proven successful * Concern about naming specific organizations * Need to incorporate steep slope logging practices into the educational materials * Companies are not the best entities to develop educational materials * Proposed mitigation measures are difficult for smaller companies * Clarify what ‘support’ and ‘increase’ mean * Not just public awareness, also loggers, foresters and landowners |

**Proposed Revised Mitigation Option**

**The following is offered as an option that could be scaled for any impact level:**

**Using materials (as described below), and with a desired outcome of increasing and improving management practices that conserve aquatic biodiversity within the portion of the Apalachicola Bay/River System that is within the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area, communicate to audiences (as described below) the values of aquatic biodiversity, threats from poorly implemented forest management, and management practices that will reduce or eliminate these threats, including but not limited to practices for management activities on steep slopes.**

* **Materials: Developed by, or developed in cooperation with, organizations/individuals with expertise in aquatic biodiversity conservation, or FSC US, and delivered in a manner that will be the most effective in achieving the desired outcome of increasing and improving management practices that conserve aquatic biodiversity, while reflecting the specific context and characteristics of the Organization.**
* **Audiences: Audiences will reflect the specific context and characteristics of the Organization, but communications should be directed toward those audiences where the communications will be most effective in helping to achieve the desired outcome of increasing and improving management practices that conserve aquatic biodiversity within the portion of the Apalachicola Bay/River System that is within the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area. Depending upon the Organization’s location in the supply chain, communications may be directly with loggers, land managers or landowners responsible for the management activities implemented, or through intermediaries such as community members, forest managers, suppliers, forestry associations, landowner associations, or in collaboration with organizations/individuals already working with the same desired outcome.**

**CENTRAL THEME: Research & Mapping**

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| --- | --- |
| Participant Proposed Option  Develop more robust mapping to better identify areas where the threat is occurring | Topline Input   * No comments were received on this proposed option specific to this CBA. However, comments received as part of feedback for other CBAs suggest that this mitigation approach is supported, along with research to evaluate the effectiveness of BMPs that are implemented for water quality objectives in conserving biodiversity. |

**Proposed Revised Mitigation Option**

**The following is offered as a two-part option for ‘high impact’ organizations:**

1. **Engage with and/or provide monetary or in-kind resources to an entity or alliance that is currently conducting, or has the capacity to initiate, research on effectiveness of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for conserving aquatic biodiversity, or identifying landscapes within the portion of the Apalachicola River/Bay System that is within the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area that include forests where there is higher level of the identified risk; and**
2. **If research on effectiveness of BMPs, advocate for changes to state BMPs that reflect the results of the research, or if mapping of higher risk areas, use the results of the research to improve implementation of another mitigation option.**

**GAPS IN THE SET OF MITIGATON OPTIONS**

FSC US Staff evaluation of this set of mitigation options, through the lens of the shared criteria, did not identify any significant gaps, with the possible exceptions of the requirement for **'auditability**' and the requirement for having **an option within the set that is practical for Organizations that are closer to the beginning of the supply chain**. We will be looking to your comments for suggestions on how to address these potential gaps, as well as for identification of any other gaps and suggestions for their resolution. Additionally, we will be meeting with Certification Bodies during the consultation and expect that they will also provide input on improvements in auditability.