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 Late Successional Bottomland Hardwoods, along with definition of any identified gaps in the final set of options.

**Please note that 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: Education & Outreach**

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| --- | --- |
| Original Proposed Options(#1) Identify areas that are more likely to have intact LSBH, assess the most effective methods for educating loggers about identification and compatible management of these forests, and implement methods identified.(#4) Develop and offer educational opportunities for foresters that increase knowledge about LSBH. Look for opportunities to do this through existing programs/initiatives, instead of re-inventing the wheel.(#5) Create and fund a fund that will provide grants to University research and/or extension programs that are: 1) already established and strong on forestry issues, particularly Bottomland Hardwoods, and 2) have experts and delivery mechanisms in place; focus on support for providing outreach on identification and compatible management opportunities for LSBH to foresters, landowners, and others who could have a positive impact on this rare forest type. | Topline Input* Support for education as an option
* Also for landowners, forest managers, auditors and suppliers
* Topics: identification, management, values
* Feasible, even for small organizations
* Must be accountable: How often, how many?
* Build on/improve existing, don’t create new (extension programs, SAF curriculum, forestry associations, master logger, etc.)
* Promote awareness, restoration and management
* ‘funds’ a problem – not an option for small organizations, needs definition: how much, how often, how long?
* Opportunities to merge: 1/4, 1/4/5
 |

*Consultation Insights: There is broad support for education as an option, across the perspectives and with very few detractors. With similar comments on numerous options related to education, it makes sense to merge with education as a central theme. There are many potential audiences, but there should be an emphasis on getting information to landowners in a way that will engage them and move them to action. The messages to be communicated are numerous, but there is a need to be very specific about the risk issue: What kinds of forests do we mean, why are they considered to be of high value and how should they be managed to restore or maintain these values? Focusing the action on funding is a problem, instead focus on the desired outcome and allow flexibility in how an Organization makes it happen.*

**Proposed Revised Mitigation Options**

**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 engaging landowners within the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area in conservation of Late Successional Bottomland Hardwoods (LSBH), communicate to audiences (as described below) the social benefits and values of LSBH, threats from forest management (and related loss of values), and management practices for restoration and maintenance, including the importance of natural functions (e.g., hydrologic processes).**

* **Materials: Developed by, or developed in cooperation with, organizations/individuals with expertise in LSBH conservation, or FSC US, and delivered in a manner that will be the most effective in achieving the desired outcome of engaging landowners in conservation of LSBH, 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 engaging landowners within the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area in conservation of LSBH. Depending upon the Organization’s location in the supply chain, communications may be directly with landowners, or through intermediaries such as community members, forest managers, suppliers, forestry associations, landowner associations, or in collaboration with organizations/individuals already working for conservation of LSBH.**

**The following is offered as an option for Organizations with suppliers that are land managers or that purchase directly from the source forest:**

**Develop/adapt a procurement policy that reflects the above communications themes and clearly states the expectation that suppliers will promote conservation of LSBH and will not provide materials from forests where these HCV were threatened as a result of the forest management activities that produced the forest materials. This will require providing a description of the forest type (as it occurs in the supply area), potential threats from forest management activities, and the kinds of activities that would maintain or enhance LSBH forest in the supply area.**

**NOTE: Actions to demonstrate policy enforcement and communicate policies on sourcing to suppliers should be audited under the Due Diligence system requirements within the 40-005V3-1 standard section 1.1**

**CENTRAL THEME: Implement Management Activities**

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| Original Proposed Options(#1) Identify areas that are more likely to have intact LSBH, assess the most effective methods for educating loggers about identification and compatible management of these forests, and implement methods identified.(#2) Create and fund a conservation fund to help projects focused on maintenance and enhancement of LSBH.(#3) Identify and restore examples of Bottomland Hardwoods that are very close to the functional and structural characteristics of Late Successional Bottomland Hardwoods, as defined by FSC US, and would require only a little extra effort to get them there. Goal would be to reduce rarity of LSBH. | Topline Input* Support for restoration, maintenance and enhancement of LSBH
* Some question as to why just LS not all BH
* Little support for ‘fund’ as an action
* Identification of specific sites and direct effort at sites not feasible/practical for many CH
* Not a landscape scale mitigation options
* Be more specific about what management is needed for restoration & maintenance
* Support ongoing/existing initiatives – lots of potential partners
* Clarify how to evaluate effectiveness
* Clarify who is responsible for what action
* Opportunities to merge options
 |

*Consultation Insights: There is a lot of support, across perspectives, for getting more/better management activities happening on the ground, including with a restoration focus. However, there is concern with ‘funds’ being the focus of action by an Organization, as opposed to other actions that might be more feasible and practical, particularly for small Organizations. Similarly, there is concern regarding the site-specific activities (‘identify and manage’) required in the original options, instead of a landscape-scale focus which would make it more feasible for Organizations that are further from the forest in the supply chain. A number of suggestions focused on broadening the options to not be as specific, focusing more on what needs to get accomplished, instead of exactly how. A number of comments asked why the focus is ‘Late successional’ when the threats may be similar for Bottomland Hardwoods of all ages, but for the purposes of implementing the Controlled Wood standard, the focus needs to be on mitigating the risk associated with HCVs and the late successional forests are the ones that are really rare.*

**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 organizations or similar entities (as described below) that are facilitating active, on the ground implementation of management activities (as described below) to restore, maintain or enhance existing examples of Late Successional Bottomland Hardwoods (LSBH), with a goal of long-term conservation of this forest type, within the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area.**

* **Conservation Entities: These may include: non-governmental organizations that have active programs/projects to conserve LSBH; federal, state and/or local agencies with natural resource conservation responsibilities; and/or organizations that have active programs/ projects focused on habitat conservation for species dependent upon LSBH.**
* **Management Activities: These should include efforts to: increase and improve the use of existing Best Management Practices for LSBH, with particular focus on the vegetative structure and hydrology of the forest, and restore near high quality examples of LSBH.**

**CENTRAL THEME: Research & Mapping**

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| Original Proposed Options(#1) Identify areas that are more likely to have intact LSBH, assess the most effective methods for educating loggers about identification and compatible management of these forests, and implement methods identified.(#3) Identify and restore examples of Bottomland Hardwoods that are very close to the functional and structural characteristics of Late Successional Bottomland Hardwoods, as defined by FSC US, and would require only a little extra effort to get them there. Goal would be to reduce rarity of LSBH.(#5) Create and fund a fund that will provide grants to University research and/or extension programs that are: 1) already established and strong on forestry issues, particularly Bottomland Hardwoods, and 2) have experts and delivery mechanisms in place; focus on support for providing outreach on identification and compatible management opportunities for LSBH to foresters, landowners, and others who could have a positive impact on this rare forest type. | Topline Input* Positive response to supporting research, including identification of occurrences
* Negative response to specifying support through a fund
* Should improve: understanding of the system and of what management is working, knowledge of occurrences, definition of the HCV
* ‘Suitable for promotion/ development of LSBH’ instead of ‘likely to have intact LSBH’
* ‘Identify’ difficult for individual CH
* Not only universities do research
* ‘Identify’ similar for #1 and #3
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*Consultation Insights: There were mixed responses to the mitigation options that included some component of research, but overall support for an option focused on research. The negative responses were focused on the action being limited to creating ‘a fund’ and the inability of individual organizations to identify occurrences of LSBH on their own. Input indicated a particular interest in seeing the research focus on improving knowledge about the system, clarifying what management works, defining the High Conservation Value (HCV) itself (not just an 80-year cut-off), and locating places more suitable for maintenance and restoration. A number of comments indicated that the option needed to be broadened to include more than just universities, as there are many other entities completing research. Input associated with other risk issues has also suggested that research or mapping on its own will not mitigate the identified risk (the risk of sourcing materials from places where the HCV is threatened by the forest management activities) – something else is needed in addition.*

**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 Late Successional Bottomland Hardwoods topics pertinent to the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area that will: a) improve understanding of the system and how the High Conservation Value should be defined, b) identify and improve compatible management practices, and/or c) identify occurrences where restoration and maintenance are more likely to be effective; and**
2. **Use the results of the research to improve implementation of another mitigation option.**

**CENTRAL THEME: Landowner Incentives**

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| Original Proposed OptionNone | Topline Input* Provide financial incentives to landowners to conserve LSBH
* Support organizations that provide incentives to landowners for LSBH conservation (cost-share programs, tax credits, easements)
* If easements, should be working forest easements that require a certain type of management
* Build on existing systems and incentives
* Provide flexibility in how the Organization engages – may be different for those closer to and further from the forest in the supply chain
* Some support for protection tools when used with a working forest easement, or addresses preservation of small/fine-scale sites that are otherwise inoperable
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*Consultation Insights: While there has been some opposition to conservation approaches seen to ‘tie up’ forests permanently, there has also been support for approaches that put limits or requirements on the management activities if done on a micro-site basis, or with allowances for continued management following certain guidelines. Depending on the Organization’s location in the supply chain, they may be able to work with and assist landowners directly, or may have to engage with and support through intermediaries.*

**Proposed Mitigation Options**

**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 organizations or similar entities that are supporting or promoting programs or projects to develop new or augment existing incentive programs for landowner who restore, maintain or enhance existing examples of Late Successional Bottomland Hardwoods (LSBH) within the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area, or organizations that work to connect landowners with incentives provided by other entities within the same area. These entities may include: non-governmental organizations that have active programs/projects to conserve LSBH; federal, state and/or local governmental organizations; and/or organizations that have active programs/ projects to conserve habitat for species dependent upon LSBH. If the incentive involves a working forest easement, the easement language should include requirements for use of compatible forest management practices that will restore, maintain or enhance the LSBH.**

**The following is offered as an option for Organizations that have direct contact with the landowners that supply their materials:**

**Provide an incentive(s) to the landowner for conserving existing high quality or near high quality occurrences of Late Successional Bottomland Hardwoods (LSBH); or facilitate the landowner’s access to incentives provided by other entities that will conserve the existing high quality or near high quality occurrences of LSBH.**

**NOTE: Actions to demonstrate policy enforcement and communicate policies on sourcing to suppliers should be audited under the Due Diligence system requirements within the 40-005V3-1 standard section 1.1**