

# FSC US CONTROLLED WOOD REGIONAL MEETINGS CENTRAL APPALACHIAN CBA



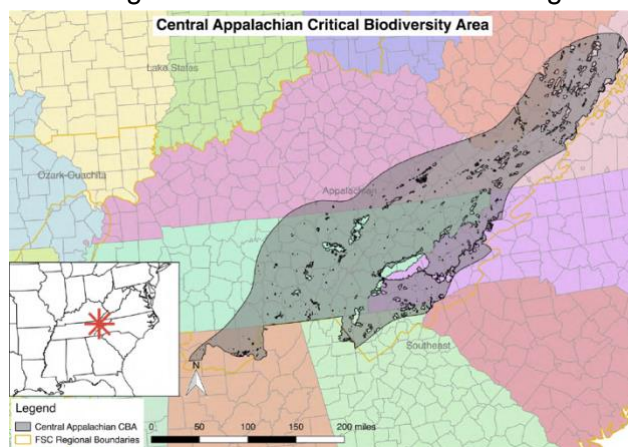
**FSC REGION** Appalachian (this Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA) is an extension of the Southern Appalachian CBA, but for the purposes of this assessment, they are being separated at the regional boundary)

**HCVS IN FSC** A High Conservation Value (HCV) is a biological, ecological, social or cultural value of outstanding significance or critical importance. FSC is working to ensure that our system helps to maintain and enhance the special places that support these values. For more information on HCVs, see the Common Guidance for the Identification of High Conservation Values.<sup>1</sup>

**WHY IS THE CENTRAL APPALACHIAN CBA CONSIDERED AN HCV?** This CBA is considered an HCV because it contains a high overall species richness, diversity, or uniqueness within a defined area compared to other sites within the same biogeographic area. The CBA was identified using a species richness index originally published by NatureServe and The Nature Conservancy that identifies areas with high concentrations of rare species. This index preferences species that have limited ranges by applying additional weighting. The results identify areas with concentrations of high biological diversity and spaces with an increased conservation significance.

**SUMMARY OF THE CENTRAL APPALACHIAN CBA** This CBA corresponds with the higher elevation portions of WWF's 'Appalachian Mixed Mesophytic Forest' area, one of their Global 200 biodiversity areas. The broadleaf forests and aquatic habitats drive the region's biodiversity. The forests are significant in the diversity of different forest types that occur and within them the large number of different tree species that occur, along with incredibly diverse understories and associated wildlife species. The geologic history, change in elevation, and diverse topography and climate have resulted in a very large number of microhabitats within the region – each with a unique biodiversity. Additionally, the mountains served as a refuge for northern species during the last ice age, and due to the changes in elevation that reflect changes in the climates at different latitudes, the area can harbor a mix of both traditionally more northern and more southern species within the same broad geographic area. The area is particularly diverse in songbirds, salamanders, land snails, amphibians and herbaceous plants. It also represents one of two regions left in the world where relics of ancient mesic forest still exist.

The region's freshwater systems are together considered to be the richest temperate freshwater ecosystem in the world – representing the highest richness and endemism in mussels, fish, crayfish and other invertebrates for the entire world. The southern running riverine systems allowed many aquatic species to escape the glaciers of the last ice age and then re-establish afterward.



<sup>1</sup>Common Guidance for the Identification of High Conservation Values (<https://ic.fsc.org/en/what-is-fsc-certification/consultations/archive/hcv-common-guidance>)

## IDENTIFIED THREATS TO CENTRAL APPALACHIAN CBA HABITATS

### Mixed Mesophytic Forests

Historically, forest management activities threatened and had significant negative impacts on the Mixed Mesophytic Forests of this CBA and there are lasting impacts from these activities today. Currently, however, widespread threats from forest management activities are not identified. Instead, the priority threats to the forests as a whole include: climate change, pollution from mining, new highways and utility rights-of-way, ORV recreation and overpopulation of deer.

### Aquatic Habitats

In addition to threats associated with agriculture, development, and mining, the following threats were associated with forest management: **Hydrologic alteration partially due to forestry practices and conversion from hardwood forests to non-native planted pine (which may include ditching as a practice in wetter areas), reduced water quality partially due to loss of near-stream forested habitat and sedimentation associated with forestry practices and lack of BMP implementation, and severe erosion of river banks.**

## WHAT ARE MITIGATION ACTIONS AND WHAT WOULD WE LIKE TO

**ACHIEVE?** Companies that mix FSC-certified forest materials and non-certified materials to make products with an 'FSC Mix' claim/logo are required to address certain risks before using the non-certified forest materials. One of these is the risk that their forest materials come from areas where HCVs are threatened by forest management activities. FSC has completed a US National Risk Assessment to identify where this risk is greater than 'low' and the Central Appalachians CBA is one of these places - specifically, the portions of the CBA that occur within the FSC US Appalachian Region and are not effectively protected<sup>2</sup>. Companies that wish to use non-certified materials from the identified places (like this CBA) are required to either avoid sourcing from specific sites where the threats are occurring, or to implement mitigation actions that reduce the risk of sourcing from those sites. For this CBA, any mitigation actions will need to address the threats identified above in **bold**.

The FSC US National Risk Assessment also introduces the concept of holding regional meetings to bring stakeholders together to collaboratively identify effective and practical mitigation actions. We are asking participants to consider landscape-scale mitigation actions, that will help to reduce risks across the landscape in which the companies source forest materials. An effective way to do this may be to build on existing programs and projects that are already tackling these issues. The companies implementing mitigation actions are required to select one or more from the options identified at the regional meetings.

**Please help us to determine what these mitigation actions should be, by visiting [engage.fsc.us.org](https://engage.fsc.us.org) and joining the virtual discussion, or attending a regional meeting.**

## INFORMATION SOURCES THAT MAY HELP GENERATE MITIGATION IDEAS

- [Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership](#)
- [The World Wildlife Fund's Global 200 – Appalachian mixed mesophytic forests](#)
- The Nature Conservancy
- [Greater Appalachian Conservation Partnership](#)

<sup>2</sup>Effective protection is demonstrated by GAP Status 1 & 2 areas in the PAD-US dataset (<https://gapanalysis.usgs.gov/padus/data/download/>) and USFS Inventoried Roadless Areas (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/roadless/2001roadlessrule/maps/?cid=stelprdb5382437>).

