

**Abbreviations:** FSC - Forest Stewardship Council, SCF – Simcoe County Forest, SAR – Species at Risk, HCV – High Conservation Value, MECP – Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, MNRF – Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, IBA – Important Bird and Biodiversity Area, S&SG – Stand and Site Guide, ANSI – Area of Natural and Scientific Interest, GIS – Geographical Information System, FMP – Forest Management Plan

FSC Canada, National Standard 2018 Appendix E HCV Framework			High Conservation Values				Sources, Contacts, and Background Information
HVC Type	HVC Element Description	Rationale	SCF Description	Management Prescription	Monitoring for Effectiveness	Trail Restrictions	
HCV 1 Element 1	Does the forest contain species at risk or potential habitat of species at risk as listed by international national or territorial/provincial authorities?	Ensures the maintenance of vulnerable and/or irreplaceable elements of biodiversity. This Indicator allows for a single species or a concentration of species to meet HCV thresholds.	Based on "Simcoe County Managers List 2018", periodically updated with Species at Risk occurrences from Natural Heritage Information Centre website <sup>[1]</sup> and Land Information Ontario <sup>[2]</sup> . Other information is used as available.	Source of management prescriptions is primarily MNRF Stand and Site Guide <sup>[3]</sup> (S&SG) and its background document <sup>[4]</sup> ; S&SG interpretation is provided by MNRF Management Biologist as needed.  Blocks reviewed by SCF for occurrence information using NHIC website.  Forest stands are updated at such time as the presence of a SAR is confirmed by staff, MNRF/MECP, or other sources.	Monitoring based on MNRF science and tech staff supporting the S&S Guide. Prescription interpretation is verified by MNRF Regional Species at Risk staff when required. The background document provides prescription effectiveness monitoring evidence.	Limited (Case Specific)	Technical information: Brett Dixon, SCF Extension 1172; brett.dixon@simcoe.ca; accredited by Natural Heritage Information Centre  Manager, Information Services & Apps: Matt Murray; ext. 1458  Information on SAR available through email SAR@ontario.ca, sources of information are listed in Client's Guide to Preliminary Screening for Species at Risk, 2019 (Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks Species at Risk branch)  Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks provides Land Information Ontario <sup>[5]</sup> /Natural Heritage Information Centre <sup>[6]</sup> tools to generate lists of species at risk.  Monitoring effectiveness: To fulfill a legislative requirement of the Endangered Species Act, 2007, the Government of Ontario (MECP) publishes an annual Review of Progress Towards the Protection and Recovery of Ontario's Species at Risk <sup>[7]</sup> . The Review shows how the Government of Ontario and its partners are helping to protect and recover species at risk in Ontario.
HCV 1 Element 2	Does the forest* contain endemic* species?	Ensures the maintenance of vulnerable and/or irreplaceable elements of biodiversity.	No endemic species in SCF.  A 2020 publication and maps of endemic species in Canada does not suggest any presence on the SCF.	None	None	N/A	Sources: Ours to Save - The distribution, status & conservation needs of Canada's endemic species v1 <sup>[8]</sup> . June 2020. Nature Conservancy of Canada and NatureServe Canada.
HCV 1 Element 3	Does the forest include critical habitat containing globally, nationally or regionally significant seasonal concentration of species (one or several species, e.g. concentrations of wildlife in breeding sites, wintering sites, migration sites, migration routes or corridors latitudinal as well as altitudinal)?	Addresses wildlife habitat requirements critical to maintaining population viability (regional "hot spots").	Two 'Important Bird Areas' - Tiny Marsh and Wye Marsh.  Freele Tract has potential bat roosting habitat (snags).  No heronries near operations (possible in middle of some of the large wetlands).  Deer wintering areas – deer common, not threatened. No critical life requirements in the SCF.	There are no forestry operations directly within IBAs.  Potential noise disturbances to breeding birds are mitigated through timing restrictions on operations, evaluated on a site-by-site basis prior to starting operations.  SCF to refer to stand and site guide and consult with MNRF biologist to ensure appropriate conditions on operations to protect possible bat roosting habitat.	None	Limited	Sources: IBA Canada website  Scoped Environmental Impact Study <sup>[9]</sup> . Proposed Environmental Resource Recovery Center, Springwater, Ontario (2016)  The majority of snags are situated within the older growth FOMM6-2 hemlock stand in the southeast corner of the property. Status of the use of this area for bat roosting is currently unknown.
HCV 1 Element 4	Does the forest contain critical habitat for regionally significant species (e.g. species declining regionally)?	Meta population viability	There are certain tree species that are uncommon or rare on the SCF. Some of these tree species are known to occur in the SCF but their distribution and condition are not fully known, aside from a white oak stand on one property (e.g. white oak, bitternut Hickory).	Operations prescribed where uncommon species exist will be designed to protect, and if possible enhance, the conditions required for the identified species to thrive e.g. oak management techniques have been implemented on the forest.  When possible, seed collection will occur.	GPS locations for stands and special trees maintained by SCF.	Limited	Identified uncommon or rare species are HCV.  Technical expert: Graeme Davis  Brett Dixon SCF : 705-726-9300 Ex 1172; brett.dixon@simcoe.ca  These forest stands are identified by forestry staff as a result of local knowledge and experience.  Additional stands may be identified which include other uncommon species, species assemblages, or site types as information becomes available.

HCV 1 Element 5	Does the forest support concentrations of species at the edge of their natural ranges or outlier populations?	Relevant conservation issues include vulnerability against range contraction and potential genetic variation at range edge. Outlier and edge of range populations may also play a critical role in genetic/population adaptation to global warming.	Potential areas to be considered (Corry, Shephard)	None	None	Limited	Carolinian species: Black walnut and shag bark hickory do occur but were planted, not natural. Not HCV.  Other herbaceous plants may be at edge of range; but are considered SAR, so management is described in Element 1.
HCV 1 Element 6	Does the forest lie within, adjacent to, or contain a conservation area: a) designated by an international authority, b) legally designated or proposed by relevant federal/provincial/ territorial legislative body, or c) identified in regional land use plans or conservation plans.	Ensures compliance with the conservation intent of a designated protected area.	Minesing Swamp is designated as a RAMSAR site (confirmed June 2018).  It is also listed in element 11 as a provincially significant wetland.	Management prescription for all legally designated areas must follow regulations, land use plan or Official Plan.  Wetlands follow S&S Guide prescription. See also element 11.	Monitoring for regulatory requirements are by enforcement branches of the applicable Act	Limited	No properties are adjacent or on the Niagara Escarpment (confirmed June 2018).  Not adjacent to any Provincial or National Parks.  Not adjacent to Georgian Bay Biosphere (confirmed June 2018).  Management direction is provided by a suite of legislation and policy, including: • Oak Ridges Moraine Act • Lake Simcoe Protection Act • Special policy areas within the Simcoe Official Plan, and other municipal official plans (e.g. ANSIs and other)
HCV 2 Element 7	Does the forest constitute or form part of a globally, nationally, or regionally significant forest landscape that includes populations of most native species?	Large, intact ecosystems are genetic and population reservoirs for the surrounding lands and provide areas of sufficient size for landscape-scale natural processes to occur.	No, SCF does not contain any large tracts of intact forest of the scale intended here.	None	None	N/A	N/A
HCV 3 Element 8	Does the forest contain naturally rare ecosystem types?	These forests contain many unique species and communities that are adapted only to the conditions found in these rare forest types.	Example: upland oak dominated forest management to maintain oak as dominant species.	None For known sites - invasive species monitoring strict, access control practices employed.  Forest manager is knowledgeable in the management of ANSI. Forest management approach is dependent on particular values being conserved (earth/life science features).  Planning for forest operations includes consideration for ANSIs and known areas of concern, as identified in GIS layers available to managers.	Regular SCF staff on site verification of oak tree health and impacts from invasives and access.	Limited	ANSI are designated HCV by Simcoe County  A list of ANSIs is included in the HCV sub-directory maintained by the forest manager.
HCV 3 Element 9	Are there ecosystem* types within the forest* or ecoregion* that have significantly declined or under sufficient present and/or future development pressures that they will likely become rare in the future (e.g., old seral stages)?	Vulnerability and meta-population viability. This Indicator* includes anthropogenically rare forest ecosystem* types (e.g. late seral red and white pine in eastern Canada).	According to definition, true old growth forest ecosystems have not been identified to date in the SCF. However, there are some mature forest stands with characteristics of an old growth forest (21 ha in total). These have potential to continue to develop further. Attributes are defined in the SCF management plan.	Where prescribed, management will be designed to enhance old-growth features.  Modified operations may include the retention of higher residual basal area, additional large diameter trees, etc. to increase the characteristics listed above.  In addition, additional tolerant hardwood stands or portions of stands will be identified and managed to enhance old-growth characteristics over time.	Regular SCF staff on site verification of old growth characteristics.	Future Development Prohibited	Simcoe Country Forests Management Plan 2011-2030 - identified areas with old growth characteristics and potential identified in FMP as an HCV.

HCV 3 Element 10	Are large landscape level forests (i.e., large unfragmented forests) rare or absent in the forest or ecoregion?	In regions or forests where large functioning landscape level forests are rare or do not exist, as in highly fragmented forests, many of the remnant forest patches require consideration as potential HCVs (i.e., best of the rest). Identifies remnant forest patches/blocks where unfragmented (by permanent infrastructure) landscapes do not exceed size thresholds.	Some tracts meet size criteria for significant woodlands under the County Greenlands designation.  SCF follows an acquisition strategy and abide by principles in the FMP.	Sale or development of forest lands avoided, land acquisition strategy is in place.  One of the primary criteria for land acquisition is increasing tract size and connectivity with other SCF lands.	None	N/A	FMP looks for opportunities to expand forest blocks, in keeping with the Greenlands designation from the Official Plan. Most larger forest tracts are within the ANSI designation which is in element 8.  See also County Forest Growth, Investment & Protection Policy (2020)
HCV 3 Element 11	Are there nationally /regionally significant diverse or unique forest ecosystems or forests associated with unique aquatic ecosystems?	Vulnerability; species diversity; significant ecological processes.	Simcoe County contains a number of large wetlands and two IBAs. Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSWs) boundaries are incorporated into SCF forest stand boundaries.	Forest operations generally don't occur in wetlands.  SCF follows Stand and Site guide prescription for PSWs, including timing restrictions as necessary.	Regular monitoring of forest operations to ensure mitigation of effects on wetland values.	Restricted	A list of PSW is included in the HCV sub-directory maintained by the forest manager.  Source: Land Information Ontario <sup>[5]</sup> , Natural Heritage Information Centre <sup>[6]</sup> , International Bird Areas <sup>[10]</sup>
HCV 4 Element 12	Does the forest provide a significant source of drinking water?	Forest areas play a critical role in maintaining water quantity and quality and the service breakdown has catastrophic impacts or is irreplaceable.	Review of SPP shows 'vulnerable areas' overlapping with a significant portion (approximately 50%) of the SCF. Therefore all of the SCF is managed consistently to protect this value.	Forestry activities generally not identified as a threat to drinking water quality. However, fuel handling and storage during forest operations could result in site contamination.  Fuel handling and storage is regulated under a federal and provincial legislation (eg. Transportation of Dangerous Goods, Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) in Ontario). Staff monitor for compliance and seek expert guidance where necessary.	Regular monitoring by Forestry staff of active forest operations.	N/A	Sources: South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Region's Source Protection Plan <sup>[11]</sup>  Clean Water Act, 2006 ONTARIO REGULATION 287/07 GENERAL <sup>[12]</sup>  MECP 2017-2018 Table of Drinking Water Threats <sup>[13]</sup>
HCV 4 Element 13	Are there forests that provide a significant ecological service in mediating flooding and/or drought, controlling stream flow regulation, and water quality?	Forest areas play a critical role in maintaining water quantity and quality and the service breakdown has catastrophic impacts or is irreplaceable.	Areas overlap with HCV 4 Element 11 for PSW's located within County Forests		Regular monitoring of forest operations to ensure mitigation of effects on wetland values.	See Element 11	
HCV 4 Element 14	Are there forests critical to erosion control?	Soil, terrain or snow stability, including control of erosion, sedimentation, landslides, or avalanches.	SCF has few large slopes with significant risk of erosion.	None	None	N/A	N/A
HCV 4 Element 15	Are there forests that provide a critical barrier to destructive fire (in areas where fire is not a common natural agent of disturbance)?	Recent forest fire events in Canada have raised the interest in this concept.	No significant forest management related to fire control.  Fire occurrences and impacts have been very modest as a result of the substantial resources allocated to fire control and diverse forest types.	Fire controls include monitoring, staff training, and equipment. Mobile fire caches are purchased by SCF and provided to local municipalities through agreements.  Agreements in place with all local municipalities regarding fire control / responsibilities.  Occasional use of prescribed fire to reduce fuel loading.	None Specific	N/A	Sources: Simcoe Country Forests Management Plan 2011-2030

HCV 4 Element 16	Are there forest landscapes, or regional landscapes, that have a critical impact on agriculture or fisheries?	Mediating wind and microclimate at an ecoregional scale affecting agricultural or fisheries production. Riparian forests play a critical role in maintaining fisheries by providing bank stability, sediment control, nutrient inputs, and microhabitats. More local effects of forest areas adjacent to agriculture and fisheries production may be more relevant in the HCV component regarding meeting basic needs of local communities.	No areas identified within SCF	N/A	N/A	N/A	Sources: Simcoe County Forests Management Plan 2011-2030
HCV 5 Element 17	Are there local communities? This should include both people living inside the forest area and those living adjacent to it.	There is a distinction being made between the use by individuals and where use of the forest is fundamental for local communities	No community is solely dependent on SCF.  Two local softwood mills are heavily dependent on the wood supply of the SCF.  Hardwood Ski & Bike facility lease, employs 50 people.	Management of timber sales occurs through timber sales contracts between SCF and the sawmills involved.  A lease governs management of the Hardwood Ski & Bike arrangement.	N/A	No Restrictions	Source: Simcoe County Forests Management Plan 2011-2030  FMP covers the interests of the 2 mills.  Hardwood Hills has exclusive lease with Simcoe County (rent arrangement of ~101 ha or 250 acres of SCF for their activities). SCF does some careful logging in the lease area, mainly to minimize hazards.
HCV 6 Element 18	Is the traditional cultural identity of the local community particularly tied to a specific forest area?	In this context of this standard "local community" is defined as: (Human) communities that are in or adjacent to the Management Unit, and also those that are close enough to have a significant impact on the economy or the environmental values of the Management Unit or to have their economies, collective rights, or environments values significantly affected by the forest management activities on the Management Unit. In Canada, communities to be considered are the ones officially identified as a municipality by the Canada Revenue Agency who lists them and shows their qualified donees status under the Income Tax Act <sup>[14]</sup> . The respective provincial lists may be also used.	SCF has a number of archeological sites that are designated Borden Sites <sup>[15]</sup> .  These includes indigenous and non-indigenous sites.	County has Simcoe County's Archaeological Management Plan <sup>[16]</sup> (SCF was on Steering Committee)  FMP includes "Modified Operations Summary for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage Values"  Bordenized sites are managed site by site. Minimum is to reduce soil disturbance.  New access, landings placed carefully or restricted entirely, sometimes operations winter only.  Sites are brought forward regularly.	Monitoring by Forestry staff occurs during operations to ensure the soil is not disturbed, according to the prescription.	Limited (Case Specific)	Simcoe County Forests Management Plan 2011-2030  Bordenized sites are HCVs.  Archaeological sites are considered sensitive data, forest manager has access to GIS layer which is referred to when planning forest operations.  Sources: Simcoe County Archaeological Management Plan, GIS layer Bordenized Sites
HCV 6 Element 19	Is there a significant overlap of values, such as ecological and/or cultural values, that individually did not meet HCV thresholds, but collectively constitute HCVs?	Consideration of several spatially overlapping values is important in optimizing conservation management. Individual values that do not meet the threshold for critical and/or outstanding may collectively meet the threshold.	Slessor Tract limestone erratic area intermixed with mountain bike and hunting interests.	Special management of overlapping uses of this area which is a mix of intense use by the public and some sensitive micro sites.  Trails have been rerouted and SCF works with cycling groups to avoid known sensitive areas.	Monitoring of recreational use by Forestry and By-law staff.	Limited (Case Specific)	This area is identified as special concern due to the overlapping of different values.

**MNRF Regional Technical support: Southern Region, Regional Operations Division**

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**Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (SAR):**

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- Megan Eplett | Management Biologist | Landscape Species Recovery Section | Species at Risk Branch | megan.eplett@ontario.ca

**Aurora Midhurst and Owen Sound District MNR (Lands, Wildlife)**

- Jodi Benvenuti | Senior Program Advisor | 249-288-1818 | jodi.benvenuti@ontario.ca

**Links Referenced:**

- [1] [Natural Heritage Information Centre website](#)
- [2] [Land Information Ontario](#)
- [3] [MNR Stand and Site Guide](#)
- [4] [MNR Stand and Site guide background document](#)
- [5] [Land Information Ontario](#)
- [6] [Natural Heritage Information Centre](#)
- [7] [Review of Progress Towards the Protection and Recovery of Ontario's Species at Risk](#)
- [8] [Ours to Save - The distribution, status & conservation needs of Canada's endemic species v1](#)
- [9] [Scoped Environmental Impact Study](#)
- [10] [International Bird Areas](#)
- [11] [South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Region's Source Protection Plan](#)
- [12] [ONTARIO REGULATION 287/07 GENERAL](#)
- [13] [MECP 2017-2018 Table of Drinking Water Threats](#)
- [14] [Income Tax Act](#)
- [15] [Borden Sites](#)
- [16] [Simcoe County's Archaeological Management Plan](#)

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