Introduction

The Rainforest Alliance is conducting the Forest Management/Chain of Custody (FM/CoC) Annual Audit 2014 of Norske Skog Paper Mills (Australia) Ltd. The forest area under the scope of the certificate (SW-FM/COC-005388) is located in Tasmania, with a total certified area of 27,825 hectares. This figure includes mainly *Pinus Radiata* plantations in Southern Tasmania but also *Eucalyptus Nitens* plantation and about 8,400 has of natural forest. The forest area under the scope of Norske Skog’s FSC CoC-CW certificate (SW-COC/CW-005501) is located across Tasmania.

At the Annual Audit 2014, the audit team will visit a sample of sites from the 15th to the 17th of April, 2014.

Scope of the Annual Audit 2014

The forest management certification audit will assess the environmental, silvicultural and socioeconomic aspects of the forests and plantations managed by Norske Skog, using the *Rainforest Alliance Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in Australia* (version June 2008) and *FM- 35 Rainforest Alliance Chain-of-Custody Standard for Forest Management Enterprises (FMEs)* August 2013.
To obtain a copy of the applicable guidelines or to make comments about the performance of Norske Skog against these standards, please contact Rainforest Alliance by telephone, email or website listed below. The Rainforest Alliance is accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and this assessment process must follow procedures which have been approved by the FSC.

The forest under evaluation contains about 3,525 hectares either identified as High Conservation Value Forests or where high conservation values, as defined by the FSC, are likely found. In particular, belonging to forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems (HCV3) and forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control) (HCV4) and also including a number of identified aboriginal and historic sites.

The Rainforest Alliance evaluates the identification, management and protection of these High Conservation Values and solicits related comments from stakeholders

**Audit Team Composition** – The FM/COC audit team will be led by Mrs. Malory Weston (BSc, MSc Botany, Aquatic and Terrestrial Ecology), and will include two auditors in training, yet to be confirmed.

**Audit Steps and Schedule** – Following is a short description of the certification process and a tentative agenda:

♦ Audit organization – The audit team will assemble at the Norske Skog Head Office in New Norfolk on the 15th April

♦ Field visits – The team will visit sites managed by Norske Skog in Tasmania during 15-17 April

♦ Stakeholder consultation – Throughout the fieldwork, the team will contact local stakeholders regarding Norske Skog forest management in towns surrounding the forest area. This may include private interviews and discussions, and public stakeholder meetings.

♦ Final audit briefing – On the 17th April, the team will meet with Norske Skog managers to finalize their data collection and present preliminary
findings.

♦ Draft report production – The audit team will produce a confidential draft report that will be submitted for comment to Norske Skog as well as internal Rainforest Alliance reviewers.

♦ Certification decision – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from Norske Skog forest managers and reviewers, and other general stakeholders comments, Rainforest Alliance will reach a certification decision. Barring unforeseen obstacles, this should occur by the end of May 2014.

Your Input Sought

As a part of the forest certification process we invite stakeholders to offer comment and feedback on Norske Skog forest management in relation to compliance with the requirements of the forest management standard referenced above as well as comments on the management and protection of High conservation Values within the forest under evaluation. We welcome input, either public or confidential, in whatever form is easiest and most secure for you.

For your input to be considered during this audit process we need to receive your comments either prior to the audit or during the audit. Your input is also welcomed at any stage after the audit and will be followed up with the certificate holder. You can contact the Rainforest Alliance in the following ways:

1. Meet with a Rainforest Alliance audit team member during or shortly after the fieldwork. Please, contact Lead Auditor Mrs. Malory Weston for arrangements.

2. Call and give comments to Anita Neville, Representative of the Rainforest Alliance in Australia.

3. Submit written comments by mail, fax or email to Anita Neville. Unless you request otherwise, these comments will be kept confidential and are solely for the purposes of assessing Norske Skog.

The source of any information provided will be kept confidential
available to only the FSC and Rainforest Alliance staff.

Stakeholders who may wish to dispute any aspect of the forest certification process or decision can access Rainforest Alliance’s Complaints, Appeals and Dispute resolution procedures at

www.rainforest-alliance.org

**Contacting Rainforest Alliance**

♦ Email: aneville.consultant@ra.org for Rainforest Alliance Representative in Australia.

♦ Telephone: Anita Neville: +61 (0) 431 913 214 or Lead Auditor Malory Weston: 0427 518 631

♦ Worldwide Website: www.rainforest-alliance.org

♦ Mail address:

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