Quantification Guidance for Use with Forest Carbon Projects

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This document provides guidance for quantifying a forest project's onsite carbon stocks and carbon in harvested wood products, both for purposes of estimating a project's baseline as well as providing ongoing estimates of onsite project carbon stocks throughout the project life.

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1 Reporting Requirements for Forest Carbon Pools

Onsite forest carbon pools are broadly grouped into living biomass, dead biomass, and soils. Living biomass includes biomass in live trees and shrubs and herbaceous understory (live non-tree biomass). Onsite dead biomass includes biomass in dead trees, lying dead wood, and litter. Offsite dead biomass includes harvested wood products.

For standardized reporting, all estimates of forest carbon stocks must be provided in terms of metric tons (tonnes) of CO_2-equivalent (CO_2e) on a project and a per acre basis. Unless otherwise required in the referenced biomass equations, the following conversion formulae shall be used:

Base Unit	Conversion		Final Unit
Biomass	0.5 **x** biomass		Carbon
Carbon	3.667 **x** carbon	=	CO_2e
Pounds	lbs **/** 2204.6		Metric tons or tonnes (t)
Acres	0.404686 **x** acres		Hectares

Reporting requirements vary for each of the carbon pools. The estimates for the pools that are derived from sampling must meet the quality standards described later in this document. Table 1.1 displays the reporting requirements for each of the carbon pools.

Table 1.1. Reserve Requirements for Carbon Pool Categories and Determination of Value for Pool

<table>
<tr><th>Category</th><th>Carbon Pool</th><th>Improved Forest Management</th><th>Avoided Conversion</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Living Biomass</td><td>Live Trees</td><td colspan="2">Required for project reporting</td></tr>
<tr><td>Shrubs and Herbaceous Understory</td><td colspan="2">Not allowed for project reporting</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5">Onsite Dead Biomass</td><td rowspan="2">Standing Dead Trees</td><td colspan="2">Required for adherence to Natural Forest Management criteria</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Required for project reporting</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Lying Dead Wood</td><td colspan="2">Required for adherence to Natural Forest Management criteria</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Not allowed for project reporting</td></tr>
<tr><td>Litter</td><td colspan="2">Not allowed for project reporting</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Soil</td><td rowspan="2">Soil</td><td colspan="2">Required for emissions reporting associated with management activities, if applicable</td></tr>
<tr><td>Not allowed for reporting of project benefits</td><td>Optional for reporting of project benefits in Avoided Conversion projects only</td></tr>
<tr><td>Offsite Dead Biomass</td><td>Harvested Wood Products</td><td colspan="2">Required for project reporting</td></tr>
</table>

2 Guidance for Estimating Carbon in Forest Carbon Pools

This section describes requirements for the development of values for the forest carbon pools described in Table 1.1. Project Operators must include an inventory methodology in the Project Design Document. The inventory methodology must include the required provisions identified in this section.

2.1 Inventory Methodologies

All inventory methodologies must be based on randomized or systematic sampling and include the minimum quality parameters described in this section for each carbon pool. Inventory methodologies must describe the process for locating sample plots. Sample plot locations may be monumented in such a way to assist in relocating them for quantification and verification purposes. Plot monument strategies that incorporate Global Positioning Systems (GPS) along with additional navigational strategies at close range to plot centers (that direct verifiers to the precise plot location) that are resistant to weather, wildlife, and other environmental factors, can substantially reduce verification costs. Project Operators are advised to consider the verification guidance (Section 10 of the Forest Project Protocol) associated with verification of sampled carbon pools (in particular, the sequential sampling guidance) prior to settling on a strategy to monument plot locations.

To increase the efficiency of both project development by Project Operators and verification by verifiers, the Reserve has developed a Standardized Inventory Methodology that Project Operators may optionally use to determine how to collect sample data. The Standardized Inventory Methodology is available on the FPP webpage and draws on observations about the standards and methodologies that have performed well for registered forest carbon projects. Designed in consultation with experienced project developers, verifiers and forest mensuration experts, it was created in consideration of a variety of factors, such as being suitable for use in a variety of forest conditions, achieving consistent results in consecutive plot measurements, and minimizing ambiguity in interpretation of conditions in the field.

Additionally, the Standardized Inventory Methodology was developed to be consistent with the Climate Action Reserve Inventory Tool (CARIT), an inventory management computer application that Project Operators may also optionally use to manage and update their forest inventories. CARIT is available on the FPP webpage at no cost. With CARIT, Project Operators will be able to manage forest inventories, calculate timber and carbon stocking, and update inventories for growth, disturbances (including harvests), and updated sampling data. The volume and biomass equations required by the FPP are already programmed into CARIT, eliminating the need for Project Operators to apply such equations on their own and ensure they are correctly applied. Additionally, CARIT generates reports that are tailored specifically to the reporting requirements of the FPP.

The use of the Standardized Inventory Methodology does not obligate a Project Operator to use CARIT, nor does the use of CARIT obligate a Project Operator to use the Standardized Inventory Methodology. However, CARIT will only function properly if certain inventory standards are followed. For example, only fixed area plots may be used—variable radius plots are not allowed.

2.2 Updating Forest Inventories

Forest inventories are always in flux due to forest growth, harvest, and natural disturbances. Therefore, inventories of carbon pools must either be updated or re-measured at a frequency commensurate with the anticipated or actual changes in the specific carbon pools so that sample plots and forest stratification reflect current conditions. Project Operators must report their estimated carbon stocks on an annual basis. Since it is infeasible to immediately re-measure all plots following forest growth and disturbances that affect plot measurements, acceptable strategies for updating project inventory estimates are described in this section.

2.2.1 Updating for Forest Growth

Updating plot data for forest growth can be accomplished through the use of growth models or stand table projections that mimic the diameter and height increment of trees in the inventory database. Any plot data that are updated to reflect current conditions with the use of predicted increments of height and diameter data will be used during site visit verifications to compare against verifier's field measurements using the sequential sampling techniques described in the verification section of the Forest Project Protocol. This provision ensures that plot measurements and update processes are within accuracy thresholds.

2.2.2 Updating for Disturbances (Including Harvest)

Inventory estimates must be updated annually for any disturbance (including harvest disturbance) that results in an estimated reduction to the reported carbon pools of 0.5 percent or more. However, given that it may be infeasible to re-measure all plots following a disturbance, up to 5 percent of the total inventory plots used to derive the inventory estimate can be excluded at any one time. Only plots in disturbed areas may be excluded, and no plot can be excluded for a period of time greater than one reporting period. Plots that are geographically situated in areas that experienced forest cover class-changing harvests and/or natural disturbances in the previous year must be excluded from the inventory analysis until the plots are updated with re-measured data from field visits, subject to the 5 percent limit on excluded plots outlined above. If the inventory is stratified, the area that has been disturbed can simply be re-stratified with a stratum that reflects the post-disturbance forest condition, following the stratification rules developed for the project. Any plots that existed in the disturbed area must be removed from the set of plots used to estimate the stratum average unless, and until, the affected plots are re-measured. Verification of stratified inventories must ensure that the area disturbed is accurately characterized in the inventory GIS system and that the assigned stratum reflects the forest condition.

For non-stratified inventories, an estimated tree list that represents the post-disturbance condition of the forest must be assigned to any plots affected by the disturbance. The tree list must be carefully selected to not overstate the carbon pools present. Site verification of post-disturbance plots will evaluate whether the tree list assigned is appropriate for the post-disturbance condition. No more than 10 percent of the project's area may be represented through estimated plots without increased verification scrutiny during a site visit. Specifically, where more than 10 percent of the project's area is based on estimated tree lists assigned to plots, verification using sequential sampling techniques shall include all plots (including estimated plots) in the sequential sampling comparison between Project Operator estimates and verifier estimates.

Plots that are estimated shall not be used in the calculations for sampling error. Estimates from sampled pools must meet a minimum confidence standard of +/- 20 percent at the 90 percent confidence interval. It is acceptable to calculate the descriptive statistics, including confidence intervals, using plot data that have been updated to a current date. Discounts for uncertainty are applied to project estimates when confidence standards are below +/- 5 percent at the 90 percent confidence interval. This is described in greater detail below.

2.3 Requirements for Estimating Carbon in Standing Live and Dead Trees

It is required that both standing live and standing dead trees be sampled. It is acceptable, but not required, to combine standing live and dead trees during sampling such that descriptive statistics, including confidence statistics, address the combined pools. Whether combined or not, tree data must be coded so that mean estimates can be interpreted independently for standing live and standing dead pools to allow monitoring of standing dead trees with respect to requirements in the Natural Forest Management section (Section 3.9) of the Forest Project Protocol.

Inventory methodologies must include a description of how the sampled data will be archived and the analytical tools that will be included in the analysis of carbon stocks. The tree lists that are developed from inventory sampling and used to expand inventory estimates to the project level must be available for verification review. It is acceptable for the tree list to be presented and reviewed in an electronic format, such as in a database or spreadsheet application. Table 2.1 displays the requirements that all project inventory methodologies must include for standing live and dead trees.

Table 2.1. Requirements for Sampling Standing Live and Standing Dead Trees

Species	1. All trees sampled must include a species identifier. The inventory methodology must provide a crosswalk between any codes used to identify a species and the species name the codes represent. 2. Since all trees contain carbon, the inventory methodology must indicate that the sample methodology will include all species present within the project area.
Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) Measurements	1. Inventory estimates must include all trees 5 inches DBH and larger. It is acceptable that inventory methodologies include trees with DBH less than 5 inches. 2. The location of the measurement of DBH must follow U.S. FIA sampling guidelines (can be found on the Forest Project Protocol webpage). 3. Measurement precision must be no greater than the nearest inch.
Height	1. Inventory methodologies must describe whether all trees on sample plots are measured for height or whether a subset of the sample plot heights is measured and regression estimators are developed for unmeasured heights. 2. Inventory methodology must describe whether height measurements describe the tree's total height or some other top height measurement (regression estimators, or published form equations, may also be used to estimate top heights from a partial height or vice versa). Where regression estimators are used for tree heights, the inventory methodology must describe the populations from which the regression estimators were acquired. 3. The sampling precision for tree heights (when measured) must be stated in the inventory methodology. Stated acceptable precision for measured heights not to be greater than +/- 10 feet. 4. The inventory methodology must include a description of the maximum angle accepted for measuring tree heights. The stated maximum acceptable slope to the measured height shall not exceed 120 percent.

Weight (Plot Area and Forest Strata)	1. All methodologies must describe the sample plot areas used to determine which trees are included for measurement. 2. All tree lists must include a field(s) that displays the weighting of each sampled tree in order to expand the sampled tree to a per acre value. 3. Where inventories are stratified, the governing rules for stratification and stratification methodology must be described. The process for updating forest strata must be described. 4. Where inventories are stratified, stratum areas must be provided at verification with maps and tabular outputs.
Status	1. Each sampled tree must be identified as live or dead. 2. Dead trees must be coded with the decay status so density adjustments can be made. Decay class descriptions and density adjustments are provided below.
Biomass Equations	1. All projects must calculate the biomass in each tree using the biomass equations provided by the Reserve (can be found on the Forest Project Protocol webpage). 2. The project's inventory methodology must include a list of the equations and cite the version of the Reserve's equation file from which they were copied. a. The CARIT tool (optional) includes approved biomass equations to reduce the burden of verification.
Deductions for Missing Biomass	1. Both live and dead trees may have cavities, broken tops or other deformities that reduce the biomass in the trees. Therefore, the inventory methodology must include a description of how deductions are estimated to account for missing biomass. The Reserve has provided guidance below that is acceptable. Alternative methods that address deductions for missing biomass are subject to approval by the Reserve.

Sampling methodologies and measurement standards should be consistent throughout the duration of the forest project. If new sampling methodologies are incorporated during the project life, they must be approved by the Reserve. Sampling methodologies and measurement standards will be evaluated for their statistical validity. Additionally, uncertainties in estimates associated with modifications to sampling methodologies may require reconciliation to project data and/or baseline estimates and shall be conducted at the Reserve's sole discretion. The application of a revised sampling methodology can only occur as part of a site visit verification.

2.4 Use of Regression Equations

It is acceptable to develop carbon inventories using regression estimators to estimate tree heights. Project Operators must keep in mind that plots or (sub) populations will be randomly selected for verification and that regression estimators should be used where a high level of certainty can be developed from the estimators. Failure to do so will result in increased effort and cost to meet the standards of verification.

2.5 Forest Vegetation Stratification

Stratification is not required, but it may simplify verification and possibly lower the costs of verification. Where forest vegetation is stratified, inventory methodologies must describe the guidelines used for stratification. Traditional stratification decisions are usually based on species composition, forest stem size (DBH or height), and density. It is important that the stratification be relevant to sampling forest carbon. The minimum polygon size to which the stratification guidelines apply must be included in the methodology. A map of current forest strata must be included in the Project Design Document. The methodology must also include the process guidelines for updating forest strata for disturbance and growth events.

2.6 Quantification of Carbon in Live Trees from Project Data

All projects must use the appropriate biomass equations for the assessment areas the project is located in. The required biomass equations are found on the Reserve's Forest Project Protocol webpage. The calculation of CO_2e for each tree must be conducted in a manner that provides project estimates for:

- Whole tree biomass (roots, stump, bark, bole, top, and branches). Whole tree estimates are used to provide project totals and estimates of emissions associated with harvest activities.
- Bole biomass. The bole must be calculated when the bole portion of harvested trees are delivered to manufacturing facilities for processing. It is used as the basis for determining carbon persisting in long-term wood products.
- Aboveground portion (stump, bark, bole, top, and branches) used to compare project data to Common Practice statistics for Improved Forest Management projects.

Projects outside of California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, and Hawaii use estimators for non-bole portions of the tree referred to as the Component Ratio Method (CRM). The CRM must be used to compute the various portions of the tree mentioned above. Guidance for the use of the CRM is provided in the biomass equations section of the Reserve's Forest Project Protocol webpage.

Projects in California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, and Hawaii must use the biomass equations provided on the Reserve's Forest Project Protocol webpage to calculate the aboveground portion of the trees. The Cairn's equation (Cairns, Brown, Helmer, & Baumgardner, 1997) must be used to calculate CO_2e in the below-ground portion of the trees. The Cairn's equation is:

BBD = exp[-0.7747 + 0.8836 x ln(ABD)]

Where,			Units
BBD	=	Belowground biomass density of standing live trees	tonnes/hectare
ABD	=	Aboveground biomass density of standing live trees	tonnes/hectare

This estimate must be converted from biomass in tonnes per hectare to CO_2e in tonnes per acre using the conversions identified earlier in this guidance.

2.7 Adjustments to Standing Live and Standing Dead Trees for Missing Volume and Decay

Both standing dead trees and standing live trees may be missing portions of the tree as the result of physical and biological disturbances. Tree biomass needs to be adjusted for missing parts to produce an improved estimate of the tree's biomass. Calculating CO_2e in standing dead trees raises additional challenges since they may be in stages of decay such that density equations in standard biomass equations for live trees do not provide an accurate estimate. The guidance in this section provides a standardized method to account for biomass adjustments.

The first step is to estimate the gross biomass in the tree as if it were whole, using the biomass equations (the first step in the biomass and carbon calculations) provided on the Reserve's

Forest Project Protocol webpage. The tree's biomass is then adjusted based on the tree's 'net' biomass and adjusted density estimates for standing dead trees. To standardize, the tree is divided into four parts: top, middle, bottom (visually estimating the original disposition of the aboveground portion of the tree when it was alive and vigorous), and the below-ground portion. The below-ground portion must be calculated as it would for a normal, healthy tree, using the Cairn's equation where the regional biomass equations are used instead of the CRM. It is assumed that the below-ground portion is intact and complete. The standardized percentages assumed to be in each portion of the tree are shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2. Assumed Percentages of Biomass in Each Portion of the Tree

Tree Portion	Percent of Tree Biomass
Top 1/3	10%
Middle 1/3	30%
Bottom 1/3	60%

An ocular estimate is made of the portion remaining in each section of the tree during field sampling. Deductions from gross volume are made for anything that reduces the tree's gross biomass, including breakage and cavities. The percentage remaining in each third is then summed to calculate the net biomass remaining in the tree.

The tree's density must be adjusted to account for the varying states of decay in the remaining portion of the tree. Because standing dead wood does not have the same density as a live tree, a density reduction must be applied. Standing dead wood may fall into five decay classes, which must be recorded during the field sampling. The five decay classes, described in Table 2.3, are qualitative, based on the physical characteristics of the dead tree (USDA 2007, Woundenberg et al., 2010).

Table 2.3. Decay Classes

Decay Class	Description of Condition of Standing Dead Wood
1	All limbs and branches are present; the top of the crown is still present; all bark remains; sapwood is intact with minimal decay; heartwood is sound and hard.
2	There are few limbs and no fine branches; the top may be broken; a variable amount of bark remains; sapwood is sloughing with advanced decay; heartwood is sound at base but beginning to decay in the outer part of the upper bole.
3	Only limb stubs exist; the top is broken; a variable amount of bark remains; sapwood is sloughing; heartwood has advanced decay in upper bole and is beginning at the base.
4	Few or no limb stubs remain; the top is broken; a variable amount of bark remains; sapwood is sloughing; heartwood has advanced decay at the base and is sloughing in the upper bole.
5	No evidence of branches remains; the top is broken; less than 20 percent of the bark remains; sapwood is gone; heartwood is sloughing throughout.

The density identified for each species in the biomass equations posted on the Reserve's Forest Project Protocol webpage must be modified for decay classes 2 to 5 using the reduction factors displayed in Table 2.4,[1] which are multiplied by the densities provided in the biomass equations.

[1] Harmon et al. (2011). Differences between standing and downed dead tree wood density reduction factors: A comparison across decay classes and tree species. Res. Pap. NRS-15. Newtown Square, PA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northern Research Station. 40 p.

Table 2.4. Average Density Reduction Factors for Standing Dead Wood for Hardwoods and Softwoods by Decay Class

Softwoods		Hardwoods	
Decay Class	**Reduction Factor**	**Decay Class**	**Reduction Factor**
2	1.0	2	0.8
3	0.92	3	0.54
4	0.55	4	0.43
5	0.29	5	0.22

An example of field data that has all of the required elements for calculating the standing dead tree's CO_2e is shown in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5. Example: Data Attributes Needed to Calculate CO_2e in Standing Dead Trees

Tree Number	Species (type)	Status	DBH (inches)	Height* (feet)	Percent Remaining			Decay Class
					Top 1/3 of Tree	Middle 1/3 of Tree	Bottom 1/3 of Tree	
1	Hardwood	Dead	16	95	0%	50%	100%	3

*Estimated height prior to death

The density of the tree must be adjusted based on its decay class. The first step is to calculate the tree's biomass as if the tree were a normal tree to determine the tree's gross biomass. Net biomass is determined by multiplying the gross biomass of the tree by the reduction factor displayed in Table 2.4. An example is provided in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6. Example: Adjusting Biomass Calculation for Decay Using Density Adjustment Factors

Tree Gross Biomass	Density Reduction Based on Decay	Net Biomass
(tonnes CO_2e) (Assumed)	(from Table 2.4 for a hardwood with a decay class '3')	(tonnes CO_2e) (Assuming tree is whole)
0.100	0.54	0.054

As an example of the application of the biomass deductions for missing sections of the tree, using the data from Table 2.5 above, a tree (assuming normal form) with a net biomass of 0.054 CO_2e tonnes would be further adjusted to a net biomass for the missing portions of the tree as shown in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7. Example: Calculating Net Biomass in a Tree

Tree Portion	Percent of Tree Biomass	Gross Biomass	Percent Remaining in Tree	Net Biomass
	(from Table 2.2)	(tonnes CO_2e) Percent of tree biomass **x** tree biomass adjusted for density (Table 2.6)	(from example in Table 2.5)	(tonnes CO_2e) Percent remaining in tree **x** gross biomass
Top 1/3	10%	10% **x** 0.054 **=** 0.0054	0%	0.00000
Middle 1/3	30%	30% **x** 0.054 **=** 0.0162	50%	0.0081
Bottom 1/3	60%	60% **x** 0.054 **=** 0.0324	100%	0.0324
Total Biomass			200	0.0405

2.8 Requirements for Estimating Lying Dead Wood Carbon

All projects must either maintain an inventory of lying dead wood for the project area or monitor harvested areas according to the guidance in this section to ensure the project meets the conditions identified in Section 3.9.2 (Natural Forest Management) of the Forest Project Protocol. Lying dead wood is not eligible for crediting due to the high variability associated with estimating lying dead wood, resulting in estimates with unacceptable levels of uncertainty for crediting. Project Operators are required to include the status of lying dead wood with each monitoring report.

Project Operators that choose to meet the monitoring requirement by maintaining an inventory of lying dead wood must meet the following requirements:

1. Inventory plots or transects used to provide the lying dead wood estimate must be no older than 12 years.
2. Data collected for lying dead wood must include the estimated species, adequate data to estimate volume, and decay class, as defined by Table 2.8 below, to estimate the density of the piece of lying dead wood to determine biomass.
3. The sampling methodology must be included in the Project Design Document. The Reserve is not prescriptive with regards to the sampling design, other than adhering to general statistical principles of randomness. Fixed area plots and line transects, among other sampling methodologies, are acceptable.
4. The inventory sampling confidence in the estimate of lying dead wood must be at +/- 30 percent at 1 standard error.

Project Operators that choose to meet the monitoring requirement through monitoring of harvested areas must meet the following requirements:

1. A harvested area is any area where commercial removal of forest vegetation has occurred.
2. A map of all areas harvested during the last reporting period must be submitted with the annual monitoring report and must include the harvest date.
3. All harvested areas must be monitored within one year of the harvest date.

4. Fixed area strips shall be randomly located on compass bearings chosen by the Project Operator (but maintained consistent within each harvest area). A recommended width of the fixed area strip is 66 feet (1 chain), which will require monitoring in each of the 33 foot areas on either side of the center line. Ten square chains equals one acre. Project Operators can determine the width of the strip that best suits the vegetation conditions present in the harvested area.
5. A map shall be produced that displays the location of the fixed area strips on the harvested areas. The width of the strip shall be documented for each strip.
6. The minimum area monitored shall be 5 percent of each harvested area.
7. Data collected within the fixed area strip must include the estimated length of the piece of lying dead wood, the average diameter of the lying dead wood, the estimated species, and the decay class as defined by Table 2.8 below.

Lying dead wood density must be adjusted to account for the state of decay. Because lying dead wood does not have the same density as a live tree, a density reduction must be applied. Lying dead wood may fall into five decay classes, which must be recorded during the field sampling. The five decay classes are qualitative based on the physical characteristics of the dead tree (USDA 2007, Woundenberg et al., 2010).

Table 2.8. Decay Class Descriptions of Lying Dead Wood

Decay Class	Description of Condition of Lying Dead Wood
1	Sound, freshly fallen, intact logs with no rot; no conks present indicating a lack of decay; original color of wood; no invading roots; fine twigs attached with tight bark.
2	Sound log sapwood partly soft but cannot be pulled apart by hand; original color of wood; no invading roots; many fine twigs are gone and remaining fine twigs have peeling bark.
3	Heartwood is still sound with piece supporting its own weight; sapwood can be pulled apart by hand or is missing; wood color is reddish-brown or original color; roots may be invading sapwood; only branch stubs are remaining which cannot be pulled out of log.
4	Heartwood is rotten with piece unable to support own weight; rotten portions of piece are soft and/or blocky in appearance; a metal pin can be pushed into heartwood; wood color is reddish or light brown; invading roots may be found throughout the log; branch stubs can be pulled out.
5	There is no remaining structural integrity to the piece with a lack of circular shape as rot spreads out across ground; rotten texture is soft and can become powder when dry; wood color is red-brown to dark brown; invading roots are present throughout; branch stubs and pitch pockets have usually rotten down.

The density identified for each species in the biomass equations posted on the Reserve's website must be modified for decay classes 2 to 5 using the reduction factors displayed in Table 2.9,[2] which are multiplied by the densities provided in the biomass equations.

[2] Harmon et al. (2011). Differences between standing and downed dead tree wood density reduction factors: A comparison across decay classes and tree species. Res. Pap. NRS-15. Newtown Square, PA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northern Research Station. 40 p.

Table 2.9. Average Density Reduction Factors for Lying Dead Wood for Hardwoods and Softwoods by Decay Class

Softwoods		Hardwoods	
Decay Class	**Reduction Factor**	**Decay Class**	**Reduction Factor**
2	0.87	2	0.74
3	0.70	3	0.51
4	0.40	4	0.29
5	0.29	5	0.22

An adjusted density coefficient for the downed logs is calculated by multiplying the density coefficient provided with the biomass equations on the Reserve's Forest Project Protocol webpage by the reduction value in the table above. The adjusted density value is multiplied by the volume estimate in the lying dead wood to determine the biomass.

2.9 Requirements for Estimating Soil Carbon Emissions and Soil Carbon Quantification for Avoided Conversion Projects

All projects must estimate the soil carbon emissions associated with project management practices. Avoided Conversion projects are eligible (optional) to report the baseline soil carbon emissions the project activity is avoiding. This section provides guidance for estimating soil CO_2e within the project boundaries, and quantifying emissions associated with project activities.

No direct sampling of soil carbon is required for projects that are reporting soil carbon emissions only as part of project management practices. Rather, the estimate of emissions is based on soil carbon estimates from United States Geological Survey (USGS) data for project sites and comparing the data to standardized guidance to assess emissions based on management activities.

For Avoided Conversion projects, the project benefit is determined by comparing the project soil carbon estimate (from sampling) to the standardized estimate of emissions associated with the activity. Currently, only Avoided Conversion projects that demonstrate a risk of conversion to agriculture (grazing not included) are eligible to report soil carbon benefits associated with the avoided conversion activity. Conversion risks to housing, development, golf courses, etc., are not currently eligible.

To summarize, Table 2.10 provides the two different approaches to quantifying soil carbon benefits and/or emissions.

Table 2.10. Soil Carbon Quantification Methods by Project Type

Project Description	Project Type Identification	Method to Estimate Project Soil Carbon (CO_2e) Stocks	Method to Estimate Project Effects on Soil Carbon (CO_2e)
Project will provide benefits by avoiding soil carbon emissions associated with conversion to agriculture (Avoided Conversion)	1	Soil carbon sampling required at project initiation	Initial avoided conversion effects estimated through standardized guidance
			Follow guidance in Step 7
		Follow guidance in Steps 1, 4, 5, and 6	Ongoing project effects estimated through default estimates of soil carbon emissions
			Follow guidance in Steps 1, 4, 5, and 6
Project is reporting management-related emissions	2	Use of USGS data	Project effects estimated through default estimates of soil carbon emissions
		Follow guidance in Steps 1, 2, 3, and 6	Follow guidance in Step 7

2.9.1 Developing an Estimate of Soil CO_2e within the Project Boundaries

Step 1: Identify Soil Orders Present Within Project (**Project Types 1 and 2**)

Project Operators must determine the soil orders present in their project area and the area each soil order represents. Where Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) soil data is available on the NRCS website (http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx), projects must use this data. Where NRCS data is either unavailable or believed to be in error at the project site, Project Operators may present the soil orders and area represented by each order with an official letter from a local NRCS representative stating that the portrayal of the soil orders by the Project Operator is accurate. The letter must state why existing data is either absent on the NRCS website or why the data is not accurate.

On the NRCS website mentioned above, users must create an Area of Interest (AOI), using the website tools, that approximates the project boundaries. To determine the soil order, users select the soil reports tab, select land classifications, and select "Taxonomic Classification of Soils". This report provides a taxonomic classification of each of the soils in the AOI. The last four letters of the soil descriptions correspond to the soil order. For example, a soil classified as Xerochrepts is in the Inceptisol order. Table 2.11 below displays the soil orders associated with the last four letters in the soil descriptions.

Table 2.11. Soil Orders

Soil Order	Last Four Letters in Soil Description
Alfisol	-alfs
Andisol	-ands
Inceptisol	-epts
Mollisol	-olls
Spodosol	-ods
Ultisol	-ults
Histosol	-ists

Step 2: Obtain Soil Organic Matter Values (**Project Type 2**)

Select the tab entitled 'Soil Properties and Qualities', then select 'Soil Organic Matter' and within the advanced options, select 'Weighted Average'. For the aggregation method, select 'Higher' as the tie break rule, and designate '0-30 cm' for the soil depth. Next, click 'View Ratings' to review the organic matter percentage for each soil type in the AOI. Convert the number from the rating to decimal percent by dividing by 100.

Step 3: Obtain the Soil Bulk Density Values (**Project Type 2**)

Soil bulk density estimates are determined by first selecting the 'Soil Properties and Qualities' tab, the 'Bulk Density' tab next, followed by the 'On-third Bar'. Specify the 'Weighted Average' method and soil depth (0-30 cm, unless otherwise noted). Select 'View Ratings. The ratings will provide bulk density values for each soil type in the AOI. If the bulk density values are not available in the database, determine whether the soil orders are qualified as sandy, loamy, or clay using the 'Surface Texture' value in the Soil Properties and Qualities tab and then apply default values of 1.2 g/cm^3 for clay soils, 1.6 g/cm^3 for sand soils, and 1.4 g/cm^3 for loam soils.

Step 4: Sample for Soil Organic Matter (**Project Type 1**)

Soil carbon estimates are based on sampling soil organic matter for the project. Materials needed include:

- Rubber mallet
- Square spade (for removing organic material from core site)
- Soil probe
- Compass
- Trowel and/or sturdy knife (for cleaning soil off outside service of probe)
- Plastic bags (1 bag for each soil core)
- Marking pen
- Measuring tools (meters and centimeters)

Step 4a: Identifying the Plot Locations

Plots must be located randomly or systematically with a random start in each of the soil orders that occur on the project site. An adequate number of plots is needed to ensure the overall estimate of soil carbon meets or exceeds the minimum confidence levels stated in the Forest Project Protocol (+/- 20 percent at 90 percent confidence interval). It is acceptable to use the same, or a subset of, plot locations as used for biomass sampling, so long each soil order is sampled and the overall soil carbon estimate achieves the confidence standards stated above.

Step 4b: Identify Four Random Locations at Each Plot and Extract Soil Organic Matter Samples

4b-i: Select a random number by glancing at a watch's second hand (or digital version). Multiply this number by six to derive a compass bearing to use for the soil sample locations. Following the determined compass bearing, measure 10 meters from the plot center and establish each of the four soil sample locations. Minimal spatial adjustments (less than 2 meters) can be made to avoid rocks and roots from impacting the ability to sample. If obstacles cannot be avoided within 2 meters, an additional sample location must be selected using the method described above.

4b-ii: For each sample location, insert a soil core probe (minimum diameter, ½ inch) into the soil at the sample location to a depth of 30 cm. A rubber mallet may be used to facilitate penetration. If the probe will not penetrate to the required depth, the probe must be removed, wiped free of soil, and inserted in an alternate location with a 2 meter radius from the sample location. If repeated efforts result in difficulties achieving full penetration, an additional sample location must be chosen as described in Step 4b-i. If full penetration is not achieved within two efforts to locate a satisfactory sampling location, the sample must be taken from the initial sample location and the depth recorded.

4b-iii: Soil must be extracted carefully from the probe to avoid losing any of the soil collected. Should any soil be lost, the sample must be rejected and a new sample location selected as described above. The extracted soil is placed in a sealable plastic bag. Label the bag with the plot number followed by the letter "SOM", indicating the sample is a "soil organic matter" sample (not a bulk density sample).

4b-iv: The soil organic matter samples must be sent to a laboratory with expertise in analyzing soil carbon and physical properties within 106 hours of the acquisition of the samples from the plot sites. The laboratory must receive instructions that the samples are to be heated to over 1000 degrees Celsius. This heat will burn off the carbon and a detector is to be used to measure the amount of carbon dioxide produced and reported as a percent of the volume sampled.

Step 5: Sample for Bulk Density (**Project Type 1**)

Sampling for soil bulk density must be conducted on the project site. Materials needed include:

- Rubber mallet
- Piece of wooden 2x4 approximately 1 to 2 feet in length
- Square spade
- Soil core/ring with known volume
- Trowel and/or sturdy knife
- Plastic bags (1 bag for each soil pit)
- Marking pen
- Measuring tools (meters and centimeters)

Step 5a: One random location 4 meters from each plot center must be selected for soil data collection to dig a soil pit to a depth of at least 30 cm^3. The measure of depth must be below the organic layer (branches, leaves, moss, etc.). The sides of the pit can be made straight using the trowel or the study knife. Random selection is achieved through the use of the second-hand method described in Step 4b-i. Adjustments to the location of the pit can be made using the adjustments allowed for difficulties associated with inserting soil probes described in 4b-ii.

Step 5b: Two samples will be taken from the soil pit. The sample is taken by centering the soil ring at a depth of 7.5 cm and the second is taken by centering the ring at a depth of 22.5 cm. The ring is inserted perpendicular to the pit face. The location of each insertion must be into undisturbed soil, as occurs during the process of extracting the soil rings. The soil pit can be expanded to ensure that undisturbed soil is sampled.

5b-i: For each of the samples the sharp end of the ring is pushed in, without twisting, as far as possible with the hands.

5b-ii: The piece of wood is placed over the ring and gently hammered evenly into the soil. If strong resistance is encountered, an alternate location may be found within the pit, or a new pit located using the guidance described above.

5b-iii: Using the trowel or sturdy knife, soil is removed around the outside of the ring to allow for extraction of the ring without losing soil. The surfaces of the ring should be cleaned and cut flush to the surface of the ring. Small losses during extraction and cleaning (up to 2 cm^3) can be restored by filling the void with soil from the pit site and smoothing. Samples must be rejected if soil losses from the ring occurring during extraction and cleaning are greater than 2 cm^3.

5b-iv: The soil from both ring samples is placed in one sealable plastic bag and labeled with BD and the plot number.

5b-v: The bulk density samples must be sent to laboratory with expertise in analyzing soil carbon and physical properties within 106 hours of the acquisition of the samples from the plot sites. Bulk density instructions sent with the samples shall describe that the samples are to be dried at 105 degrees centigrade for at least 48 hours and that all portions of the sample are to be retained (including rocks). The laboratory shall present the results of the analysis of bulk density estimates as g/cm^3, displaying dry weight over total sample volume.

Step 6: Calculate the Total Soil CO_2 per Acre (**Project Types 1 and 2**)

Use Equation 2.1 (below) to calculate the soil CO_2 per acre.

Equation 2.1. Soil CO_2e per Acre

Soil CO_2e	=	Organic Matter Value (Steps 2 or 4) **x** 0.58 (Conversion of Organic Matter to Carbon) **x** Bulk Density Value (Steps 3 or 5) **x** Soil Depth Sampled (30 cm) **x** 40,468,564.224 (Conversion of 1 cm^2 to 1 acre) **x** 10^{-6} (Conversion of 1 gram to 1 metric ton) **x** 3.67 (Conversion of Carbon to CO_2)

An example is provided in Table 2.12 below.

Table 2.12. Example: Calculation for Total CO_2 per Acre

Organic Matter from Steps 2 or 4		0.05
Conversion of Organic Matter to Carbon	x	0.58
Bulk Density (g/cm^3) from Steps 3 or 5	x	1.2
Soil Depth Sampled (30 cm)	x	30
Conversion of 1 cm^2 to 1 acre (1 acre = 40,468,564.224 cm^2)	x	40,468,564.224
Conversion of 1 gram to 1 metric ton Carbon	x	0.000001
Conversion of 1 metric ton Carbon to 1 metric ton CO_2	x	3.67
Estimated Metric Tons CO_2 per Acre	=	155.05

Step 7: Quantify the Project Effects on Soil CO_2e (**Project Types 1 and 2**)

Project effects are calculated using the standardized guidance below. Avoided Conversion projects must use the standardized guidance for purposes of estimating project benefits. Soil carbon emissions resulting from management activities are determined where the activity, or set of activities, leads to a net loss of soil carbon across the entire project. Net emissions can occur across the project area in a sustainably managed forest where emissions from management activities are not restored during the rest, or growth, cycle of the stand. The default values provided are derived from scientific literature and address the high-end estimates of net emissions associated with management activities, except in the case of conversion where it is more conservative to underestimate the emissions associated with the avoided activity. The background documentation[3] for the default values is found on the Reserve's Forest Protocol Version 3.3 webpage under References.

Default emission values are provided as percentages for each soil order, based on harvesting intensity, site preparation intensity, and the frequency of disturbance. Project Operators must report their soil carbon emissions by grouping the total acres in each permutation, or class of soil order, harvesting intensity, site preparation intensity, and frequency of disturbance, rather than reporting on an individual stand basis. An example of reporting classes of management activities is provided below, following the descriptions of the management activities.

Net carbon emissions are estimated as the difference between carbon stocks (CO_2e) in the soil prior to the management activity and the carbon stocks (CO_2e) in the soil immediately prior to the subsequent harvest event for each harvested stand. Index values are provided for both harvesting intensity and site preparation intensity that, when combined, classify the harvesting intensity for the stand. The index value for harvesting intensity is derived from both the amount of biomass removed during harvest and the soil disturbance associated with the biomass removal. The index value for site preparation is based on the amount of soil disturbance associated with site preparation activities.

For each stand harvested in a given reporting year, Project Operators must determine the harvesting intensity using the guidance below. For Avoided Conversion projects, the guidance is used below to assist in determining baseline conditions and applied to the project rather than individual stands. First, the index value is determined for the stand based on the amount of biomass removed during harvest, based on guidance in Table 2.13.

Step 7a: Harvesting Intensity

The harvesting intensity value is calculated using a factor for the amount of biomass removed and the amount of soil disturbance that occurs removing the biomass. Both values are added together to calculate the harvesting intensity. The value for disturbance related to biomass removal is determined using Table 2.13 below:

[3] Gershenson, Alex. Establishing a Standardized Method to Account for Soil Carbon Emissions Associated with Management Activities.

Table 2.13. Determination of Biomass Removal Index

Biomass Affected by Harvest		
Percentage Pre-Harvest Aboveground Biomass Removed	**Silviculture Activities Generally Associated with Level of Biomass Removed**	**Biomass Removal Index**
< 10%	Sanitation Salvage	0
10 – 50%	Selection, Thinning	0
51 – 80%	Rotation harvest with biomass remaining in tree tops, seed/shelterwood and/or retained trees	1
> 80%	Rotation harvest with whole tree harvesting and little retention	2
Not a Silvicultural Activity – There is no intent to follow up with efforts to regenerate forested conditions		
100%	Conversion – only relevant to assessment of Avoided Conversion baseline	10

Step 7b: Soil Disturbance from Harvesting Activities

The second value considered for determining the harvest intensity is based on the level of soil disturbance associated with biomass removal. Soil disturbance within the harvested stands boundary may be the result of skidding logs, tree falling, and harvesting equipment. The disturbance may be extensive or minimized, depending on site-specific conditions and care taken during harvesting operations. The soil disturbance index is based on the amount of mineral soil (below the organic layer, including litter and duff) exposed due to harvest activities. The determination of the amount of mineral soil disturbance is from ocular inspection of harvested stands. Table 2.14 below is used to determine the soil disturbance index from harvesting.

Table 2.14. Determination of Soil Disturbance Index

Percent of Mineral Soil Exposed during Harvest	Soil Disturbance Index
< 5%	0
5 - 20%	2
20 - 40%	3
40 - 60%	4
> 60%	5

Step 7c: Determining the Harvesting Intensity Class

The values for the biomass removal index and the soil disturbance index are summed together to determine the harvesting intensity class, displayed below in Table 2.15.

Table 2.15. Harvesting Intensity Classes based on Summing the Biomass Removal and Soil Disturbance Indexes

Harvesting Intensity Classes	
Harvesting Intensity Class	**Sum of Biomass Removal and Soil Disturbance Indexes**
Light to Medium	< 3
High	3 - 4
Very High	5 - 7
Conversion	> 7

Step 7d: Determining Site Preparation Classes

For each stand harvested, the Project Operator must determine the site preparation index using the guidance in Table 2.16.

Table 2.16. Site Preparation Classes and Descriptions of Management Activities

Site Preparation	
Site Preparation Class	**Description**
Very Light	Less than 5% surface area disturbance of soil below litter and duff due to ripping, grading, raking, etc.
Light	5% to 24% surface area disturbance below litter and duff due to ripping, grading, raking, etc.
Medium	25% to 59% surface area disturbance below litter and duff due to ripping, grading, raking, etc.
Heavy	60% to 100% surface area disturbance below litter and duff due to ripping, grading, raking, etc.
Conversion	Soils cleared of trees, stumps and other forest vegetation and prepared for agriculture, grazing, and/or development. No return to forest vegetation.

Step 7e: Determining the Frequency of Disturbance

The frequency of disturbance is determined as the time between harvest activities associated with the specific silviculture event that is being evaluated for soil carbon emissions. The value for frequency of disturbance is assigned to each harvested stand based on the amount of pre-harvest basal area remaining in the post-harvest stand. The standardization of these values is based on protocol requirements that onsite forest carbon stocks be maintained or increased and the minimum rotation age in even-aged management silviculture effectively set at 50 years.

Table 2.17. Frequency of Disturbance Classification

Frequency of Disturbance	Harvest Retention	Assumed Years to Next Harvest
Short	> 75% of pre-harvest basal area	Up to 15 years
Medium	51 – 75% of pre-harvest basal area	16 to 35 years
Long	26 – 50% of pre-harvest basal area	36 to 50 years
Very Long	< 26% or pre-harvest basal area	> 51 years

Step 7f: Determining Emissions Associated with Management Activities

For each class of harvested stands, or stands that have received site treatment, a value is determined for each combination of harvest intensity, frequency of disturbance, site preparation, and soil order. A percent value is derived from Table 2.18 below based on the combination of the various classes.

Table 2.18. Estimated Net Carbon Loss

Harvesting Intensity	Frequency of Disturbance	Site Treatment	Estimated Net Carbon Loss by Soil Order						
			Alfisol	***Andisol***	***Inceptisol***	***Mollisol***	***Spodosol***	***Ultisol***	***Histosol***
Light to Medium	Short	Very Light	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	80%
	Medium		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	80%
	Long		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	80%
	Very Long		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	80%
High	Short	Very Light	Conifers 0% Hardwoods 20%	0%	8%	0%	10%	9%	80%
		Light	Conifers 5% Hardwoods 20%	5%	8%	5%	10%	9%	80%
		Medium	Conifers 10% Hardwoods 20%	10%	10%	10%	20%	11%	80%
		Heavy	Conifers and Hardwoods 20%	20%	20%	20%	41%	22%	80%
	Medium	Very Light	Conifers 6% Hardwoods 20%	0%	0%	0%	33%	24%	80%
		Light	Conifers 6% Hardwoods 20%	5%	5%	5%	33%	24%	80%
		Medium	Conifers 10% Hardwoods 20%	10%	10%	10%	33%	24%	80%
		Heavy	Conifers and Hardwoods 20%	20%	20%	20%	41%	24%	80%
	Long	Very Light	Conifers 0% Hardwoods 20%	0%	0%	0%	31%	0%	80%
		Light	Conifers 5% Hardwoods 20%	5%	5%	5%	31%	5%	80%
		Medium	Conifers 10% Hardwoods 20%	10%	10%	10%	31%	11%	80%
		Heavy	Conifers and Hardwoods 20%	20%	20%	20%	41%	22%	80%
	Very Long	Very Light	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	80%
		Light	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%	5%	80%
		Medium	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	11%	80%
		Heavy	0%	0%	0%	0%	41%	22%	80%

Very High	Short	Very Light	Conifers 6% Hardwoods 20%	6%	28%	6%	1%	6%	80%
		Light	Conifers 6% Hardwoods 20%	6%	28%	6%	10%	6%	80%
		Medium	Conifers 10% Hardwoods 20%	10%	28%	10%	20%	11%	80%
		Heavy	Conifers and Hardwoods 20%	20%	53%	20%	41%	22%	80%
	Medium	Very Light	Conifers 6% Hardwoods 20%	6%	6%	6%	0%	5%	80%
		Light	Conifers 6% Hardwoods 20%	6%	6%	6%	10%	6%	80%
		Medium	Conifers 6% Hardwoods 20%	10%	10%	10%	20%	11%	80%
		Heavy	Conifers and Hardwoods 20%	20%	20%	20%	41%	22%	80%
	Long	Very Light	Conifers 6% Hardwoods 20%	5%	6%	6%	0%	6%	80%
		Light	Conifers 6% Hardwoods 20%	6%	6%	6%	10%	6%	80%
		Medium	Conifers 6% Hardwoods 20%	10%	10%	10%	20%	11%	80%
		Heavy	Conifers and Hardwoods 20%	20%	20%	20%	41%	22%	80%
	Very Long	Very Light	Conifers 6% Hardwoods 6%	6%	6%	6%	0%	6%	80%
		Light	Conifers 6% Hardwoods 6%	6%	6%	6%	10%	6%	80%
		Medium	Conifers 6% Hardwoods 6%	6%	6%	6%	20%	6%	80%
		Heavy	Conifers 6% Hardwoods 6%	6%	6%	6%	41%	6%	80%
Conversion	Conversion	Agriculture	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	80%
		Residential - Commercial	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	80%

This percentage is multiplied by the soil carbon (CO_2e) estimate on a per acre basis and multiplied by the stand's acres to determine the emissions to report for each stand. The stand emissions are summed to determine the soil carbon emissions (CO_2e) reported annually. An example of the calculation is provided in Table 2.19 below.

Table 2.19. Example: Calculations for Annual Soil Carbon Reporting

Reporting Year			2012						
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Stand ID	Soil Order	Soil Carbon (CO_2e) Tonnes per Acre	Acres	Stand Soil Carbon (CO_2e) Tonnes	Harvesting Intensity	Disturbance Frequency	Site Preparation	Estimated Soil Carbon Loss %	Stand Soil Carbon Loss (CO_2e) Tonnes
	From Step 1	From Step 6		D **x** C	From Step 7a	From Step 7e	From Step 7d	Table 2.18	I **x** E
1	Alfisol	85	595	50,575	Very High	Very Long	Heavy	6%	3,035
2	Alfisol	85	683	58,055	Light - Medium	Short	Very Light	0%	-
3	Alfisol	85	2,232	189,720	High	Long	Light	5%	9,486
								Sum of Soil Carbon Emissions (CO_2e) Tonnes	**12,521**

2.10 Total Onsite Carbon Stocks and Calculating the Confidence Deduction

Annual reporting is conducted by summing the carbon stocks present at the end of the reporting period in all of the relevant carbon sources, sinks, and reservoirs for the project. Certain reported pools are sampled and the mean estimate is used for annual reporting. The number reported for the sampled pools is adjusted based on the confidence in the estimate of the carbon. The sampling error is calculated for each of the sampled pools at the 90 percent confidence interval and subsequently calculated as a percentage of the mean, using the following steps:

Step 1: Calculate the mean and the standard error[4] of the inventory estimate (for each pool or combined pools where applicable, such as with standing live and dead wood).

Step 2: Multiply the standard error by 1.645.

Step 3: Divide the result in Step 2 by the total inventory estimate and multiply by 100. This establishes the sampling error (expressed as a percentage of the mean inventory estimate from field sampling) for a 90 percent confidence interval.

[4] Under certain circumstances, the finite population correction factor is normally required for the calculation of the standard error. As a conservative measure, Project Operators may opt not to apply the finite population correction factor.

Table 2.20. Example: Summing All Onsite Carbon Stocks and Calculating the Confidence Deduction

Carbon Pool	Source of Data	Project Type(s)	Required/ Optional	Mean CO_2e (Tonnes per Acre)	Sampling Error at 90% Confidence Interval	Sampling Error as a Percentage of the Mean Carbon Pool Estimate
Data Derived from Sampling						
				Example Data		
Standing Live Trees	Sampled within project boundaries	All project types	Required	95	6	6.32%
Standing Dead Trees	Sampled within project boundaries	All project types	Required	6	2	33.33%
Soil Carbon	Sampled within project boundaries	Avoided Conversion	Optional	65	8	12.31%
				Sum of Reported Pools	Calculation of Combined Sampling Error	Calculation of Combined Sampling Error as a Percentage
Summarizing Sampled Data				All Reported Pools from Sampling	Combined Sampling Error as a Percentage*Sum of All Reported Pools from Sampling Used to Determine the Confidence Deduction	$U_S = \frac{((U_1 \mathbf{x} R_1)^2+(U_2 \mathbf{x} R_2)^2+ \ldots +(U_n \mathbf{x} R_n)^2)\text{\^{}}0.5}{\lvert R_1 + R_2 + \ldots + R_n \rvert}$ *Where*, U_S = percentage uncertainty of the sum U_i = percentage uncertainty associated with pool *i* R_i = removal (emission) estimate for pool *i*
Summary of Example Data from Sampled Pools				**166**	**10.20**	**6.14%**
Data Not Derived from Sampling						
Soil Carbon Emissions	Standardized Guidance	All Projects	Required	-5 (Example)	NA Not Subject to Sampling Error	NA Not Subject to Sampling Error
Sum of Onsite CO_2e Tonnes				**156**	**NA**	**NA**

The per-acre unit must be expanded to the project area based on the number of acres in the project. The sum of onsite CO_2e tonnes for the project is input into the calculation worksheet for annual reporting.

2.10.1 Applying a Confidence Deduction to Sampled Estimates

Any forest carbon inventory derived from sampling will be subject to statistical uncertainty. Where statistical confidence is low, there is an increased risk of overestimating a project's actual carbon stocks and therefore a higher risk of over-quantifying GHG reductions and removals. To help ensure that estimates of GHG reductions and removals are conservative, Project Operators are required each year to apply a confidence deduction to the inventory of actual onsite carbon stocks. A confidence deduction is *not* applied to the forest carbon inventory when it is used to model baseline carbon stocks. Confidence deductions are applied, where appropriate, to estimated onsite forest carbon stocks each reporting period.

The confidence deduction must be updated each time the project is subject to a site visit verification but must remain unchanged between verification site visits. If increased sampling over time results in a lower confidence deduction at the time of a site visit verification, the lower deduction may be applied to inventory estimates in all previous years. The Reserve will issue CRTs in the current year for any increase in quantified GHG reductions and removals in prior years associated with the new (lower) confidence deduction. Conversely, if a loss of qualified sampling plots results in a higher confidence deduction, this higher deduction must also be applied to inventory estimates in all previous years. Any resulting decrease in creditable GHG reductions and removals for prior years will be treated as an avoidable reversal, and must be compensated for by retiring CRTs in accordance with Section 7.3.2 of the Forest Project Protocol.

2.10.2 Applying a Confidence Deduction to Non-Aggregated Projects

The target sampling error for the combined inventory estimates for non-aggregated projects is +/- 5 percent of the mean at the 90 percent confidence interval. Projects that cannot meet this target level are still eligible, but may have to take a "confidence deduction" that reduces their net reported carbon stocks.

The process for calculating the combined sampling error at the 90 percent confidence interval is shown above. The combined sampling error must be compared to the table below to determine the confidence deduction for the reporting period in which a site visit verification has occurred. The confidence deduction shall not be modified in the interim years between site visit verifications. The percent deduction from the table below is input into the calculation worksheet which calculates the net reported onsite stocks.

Table 2.21. Forest Carbon Inventory Confidence Deductions Based on Level of Confidence in the Estimate Derived from Field Sampling

Sampling Error (Percent of Inventory Estimate)	Confidence Deduction
0 to 5%	0%
5.1 to 19.9%	(Sampling Error – 5%) to the nearest 1/10 percentage
20% or greater	100%

2.10.3 Applying a Confidence Deduction for Aggregated Projects

The target sampling error for the combined inventory estimates for aggregated projects is on a sliding scale based on the number of projects participating within the aggregate. Project Operators enrolled in an aggregate may submit project inventories with reduced sampling requirements based on the statistical principle that the targeted standard error (+/- 5 percent of the mean at the 90 percent confidence level) is achieved across the entire aggregate. Refer to the Reserve Guidelines for Aggregating Forest Projects for the targeted sampling error for individual aggregate participants.

2.11 Requirements for Calculating Carbon in Harvested Wood Products

A portion of the carbon in harvested trees continues to be sequestered for long periods of time as wood products. Standardized guidance is provided to account for forest carbon that remains sequestered in harvested wood products. The protocol bases the accounting of harvested wood products on the average amount of carbon sequestered over a 100-year period. The 100-year period is consistent with the Forest Project Protocol's definition of permanence. The average amount of carbon remaining sequestered over the 100-year period is determined by calculating the amount of carbon delivered to the mills, the portion of the carbon that is converted to wood products using a coefficient that estimates the mill's efficiency, and determining the wood product classes manufactured by the mill, as different wood products have different decay rates.

An estimate of the average carbon remaining in use over the 100-year term is provided for each wood product class, which is the basis of baseline and annual reporting of harvested wood products. Furthermore, some wood products eventually end up in landfills where anaerobic conditions serve to reduce the rate of further decomposition. Since the amount of harvested wood products that end up in landfills and the actual decay rate of the wood products in landfills are highly uncertain, the accounting of harvested wood products in landfills is included only when it is conservative to do so. Conservative in this case means that if, in a given reporting year, the amount of harvested wood products in the baseline exceeds the amount of harvested wood products in the project activity, the carbon in landfills is reported. If there is more harvesting of wood products in the project case than in the baseline case, harvested wood products are not considered in either the baseline or the project case.

The Reserve has developed a spreadsheet tool to assist in the calculation of harvested wood products, which is available on the Reserve's Forest Project Protocol webpage. The Harvested Wood Products Calculation Worksheet contains step by step instructions for its use. Project reporting of harvested wood products occurs on an annual basis. The volume of logs delivered to the mill in the baseline case remains static throughout the project life. However, the mill efficiencies and the wood product classes identified in a reporting period are applied to the baseline harvested wood products the same way they apply to the project harvested wood products. The intent of this policy is to provide the best comparison of project activity to baseline activity possible.

The spreadsheet is designed with default values for converting volumetric units from logs delivered to mills to cubic feet and the values of mill efficiencies to be used on a geographic basis. The annual reporting of carbon in trees harvested for wood products is based on the relative proportion of volume in trees harvested for wood products and volume delivered to the mill(s) in the baseline case. Therefore, the reporting of volume delivered to mills is essential to calculating the volume in trees harvested for wood products.

Mill efficiency estimates from the actual mills the project logs are delivered to can be used if data exists to support the claim in a form that can be verified. Users must identify the mill(s) the project logs are delivered to and input the volume that is manufactured into lumber, plywood, oriented strand board, non-structural panels, miscellaneous products, and paper/pulp. Where the wood product class is unknown, the Project Operator must classify the product as miscellaneous products. In order to quantify unknown products categorized as miscellaneous conservatively, miscellaneous products are assigned a default storage factor of zero.

Project Operators must provide an affidavit from the mill that the reported wood product classes are reasonable according to production records at the mill, unless they use the default product classes provided in the Assessment Area Data file. Again, the wood product classes reported for a given reporting year apply both to the project and the baseline case which eliminates the calculation of project benefits or detriments based on comparisons of the decay rates of wood products alone.

2.12 Improved Forest Management Leakage

Secondary Effects, or leakage, reflect market responses to changes in wood product production. The general assumption in this protocol is that modifying harvest in a Forest Project relative to baseline harvesting levels will lead the market to compensate via modifications to harvesting levels by other landowners. The greater the change in harvest by a Forest Project relative to baseline levels, the greater the response by the market to compensate.

Market leakage effects are accounted for under Improved Forest Management Projects by considering the impacts of shifting activities over the life of the project. Recognizing that Secondary Effects from a project may be influenced by long term harvesting trends, the evaluation in Equation 6.9 of the FPP considers cumulative harvest amounts since project inception. In some years, Secondary Effects may be negative, if project harvesting is below baseline harvesting (on both a cumulative and individual reporting period basis). If project harvesting later increases, deductions for prior negative Secondary Effects can be recouped. Once actual cumulative harvest amounts exceed baseline cumulative harvest amounts, Secondary Effects are zero – under no circumstances shall the net balance of the Secondary Effects over the course of a project be positive.

Table 2.22. Examples: How Secondary Effects Can Be Recouped Over Time

a. Qualitative example			
Reporting Period	**Greater of Actual or Baseline**		**Secondary Effect**
	Annual	**Cumulative**	
1	Actual	Actual	No secondary effect
2	Baseline	Actual	No secondary effect
3	Baseline	Baseline	Negative secondary effect resulting in deduction applied to GHG reductions
4	Actual	Baseline	Positive secondary effect resulting in recouping of previously deducted GHG reductions
5	Actual	Actual	No secondary effect

b. Quantitative example					
Reporting Period	1	2	3	4	5
Annual actual carbon in harvested trees	**1,100**	950	800	**1,100**	**1,100**
Annual baseline carbon in harvested trees	1,000	**1,000**	**1,000**	1,000	1,000
Cumulative actual carbon in harvested trees	**1,100**	**2,050**	2,850	3,950	**5,050**
Cumulative baseline carbon in harvested trees	1,000	2,000	**3,000**	**4,000**	5,000
Cumulative difference between actual and baseline C in harvested trees	100	50	(150)	(50)	50
Annual difference between actual and baseline C in harvested trees	100	(50)	(200)	100	100
Annual secondary effect	**-**	**-**	**(40)**	**10**	**-**

3 Modeling Carbon Stocks

This protocol requires the use of certain empirical models to estimate the baseline carbon stocks and project stocks of selected carbon pools within the project area (with the exception of the Improved Forest Management standardized baseline approach). These models may also be used to supplement assessments of actual changes in carbon stocks resulting from the forest project.

3.1 Models and their Eligibility for Use with Forest Projects

Empirical models are used for estimating existing values where direct sampling is not possible or cost-effective. They are also used to forecast the estimations derived from direct sampling into the future. Field measurements (standing live and dead trees) provide the base input data for these models. Project Operators should be careful to ensure that all required data inputs for the models are included in the inventory methodology.

The models that simulate growth projections have two basic functions in the development and management of a forest project. Models project the results of direct sampling through simulated forest management activity. These models, often referred to as growth and yield simulation models, may project information regarding tree growth, harvesting, and mortality over time – values that must ultimately be converted into carbon in an additional step. Other models may combine steps and estimate tree growth and mortality, as well as changes in other carbon pools and conversions to carbon, to create estimated projections of carbon stocks over time.

Models are also used to assist in updating inventory plots so that the plots can represent a reporting year subsequent to their actual sample date. The model simulates the diameter and height increment of sampled trees for the length of time between their sampled date and the reporting year. Plot data can be projected for the length of time the projection method is expected to accurately reflect actual forest growth. Inaccurate updating of plot data can lead to the inability of a project to be verified. Verifiers are directed to randomly select plots or stands for verification. If the Project Operator’s estimates deviate from the verifier’s measurements, the verification will fail. Hence, it is required that plot data be no older than 12 years.

The following growth models have been approved:

- CACTOS: California Conifer Timber Output Simulator
- CRYPTOS: Cooperative Redwood Yield and Timber Output Simulator
- FVS: Forest Vegetation Simulator
- SPS: Stand Projection System
- FPS: Forest Projection System
- FREIGHTS: Forest Resource Inventory, Growth, and Harvest Tracking System
- CRYPTOS Emulator
- FORESEE

A Project Operator may update inventory plot data for estimating diameter and height growth by incorporating data obtained from sample plots, as in a stand table projection. An example of an appropriate method of applying a stand table projection is as follows:

1. The project area is stratified into even-age management and uneven-age management.

2. Diameter increment shall be based on the average annual increment of a minimum of 20 samples of radial growth for diameter increment for each 8 inch diameter-at-breast-height (DBH) class, beginning at 0 to 8 inch DBH for each management type (even-age or uneven-age). The average annual increment shall be added for each year according to the plot's sample date.
3. Height increment is based on regression curves for each management type (even-age or uneven-age) developed from height measurements from the same trees the diameter increment data was obtained. The estimated height shall be determined using the regression estimators for the 'grown' diameters as described above.

The Reserve may include additional models following approval of a state forestry authority (i.e., a state agency responsible for oversight of forests) who will acknowledge in writing that the model:

- Has been peer reviewed in a process that 1) primarily involved reviewers with necessary technical expertise (e.g., modeling specialists and relevant fields of biology, forestry, ecology, etc.), and 2) was open and rigorous
- Is parameterized for the specific conditions of the project area
- Limits use to the scope for which the model was developed and evaluated
- Is clearly documented with respect to the scope of the model, assumptions, known limitations, embedded hypotheses, assessment of uncertainties, and sources for equations, data sets, factors or parameters, etc.
- Underwent a sensitivity analysis to assess model behavior for the range of parameters for which the model is applied
- Is periodically reviewed

3.2 Using Models to Forecast Carbon Stocks

The use of simulation models is required for estimating a forest project's baseline carbon stocks (with the exception of projects using the Improved Forest Management standardized baseline approach). Models may also be required to forecast actual carbon stocks expected under the forest project (e.g., in conjunction with determining expected harvesting volumes or in updating forest carbon inventories).

Standing live tree information must be incorporated into the simulation models to project carbon stocks over time. If a model has the ability to convert biomass to carbon, it must include all the carbon pools required by this protocol. Standing dead trees must be assumed to be static over the baseline modeling. Exceptions to this rule are allowed if approved in writing by the Reserve prior to verification.

Projected baseline carbon stocks must be portrayed in a graph depicting time in the x-axis and carbon tonnes in the y-axis. Baseline carbon stocks must be projected forward from the forest project's start date. The graph should be supported with written characterizations that explain any annual changes in baseline carbon stocks over time. These characterizations must be consistent with the baseline analysis required in Section 6 of the Forest Project Protocol.

3.3 Modeling Requirements

A modeling plan must be prepared that addresses all required forecasting of baseline carbon stocks for the forest project (with the exception of projects using the Improved Forest

Management standardized baseline approach). The modeling plan shall contain the following elements:

1. A description of all silviculture methods modeled. The description of each silviculture method will include:
    a. A description of the trees retained (by species groups if appropriate) at harvest.
    b. The harvest frequency (years between harvests) for each silviculture method modeled.
    c. Regeneration assumptions.
2. A list of all legal constraints that affect management activities on the project area. This list must identify and describe the legal constraint, how the legal constraint affects the project area, and discusses the silviculture methods that will be modeled to ensure the constraint is respected.
3. A description of the site indexes used for each species and an explanation of the source of the site index values used.
4. A description of the model used and an explanation of how the model was calibrated for local use, if applicable.

Modeling outputs must include:

1. Periodic harvest, inventory, and growth estimates for the entire project area presented as total carbon tonnes and carbon tonnes per acre.
2. Harvest yield streams on modeled stands, averaged by silviculture method and constraints, which must include the period over which the harvest occurred and the estimated CO_2e of wood (CO_2e in logs delivered to mills) removed.