

Policy and Procedures

Presentation Overview

- Program Overview and General Eligibility Standards
- Forest Project Eligibility Standards

Legal Basis and Administrative Authority

- Created through SB 356 in 2004
- Provides for an official mechanism for the documentation of carbon sequestration activities in GA
- Actors:
 - Georgia Forestry Commission
 - GSCCCA
 - UGA
 - Stakeholders

Program Scope

- Focused on quantifiable carbon accretion and storage in terrestrial carbon pools
 - Carbon sinks in forests, agriculture, and other land-uses
- At this time, only Forestry activities are eligible
- Other activities may be incorporated in future
 - Urban forestry
 - Agroforestry
 - Agricultural soils, grass plantings, other conservation practices

Program Scope

- Project-level Reporting tool
 - Clearly defined and delineated parcels that have carbon sequestration as a primary management objective, in addition to other multiple uses.
- Not designed for entity-level reporting of carbon flux
 - flux = changes in carbon stocks (increases and decreases)
 - All lands under entity ownership or control

Registry Function

- Online reporting tool administered by GFC
- Voluntary, transparent documentation of carbon storage and accretion
- Facilitate the growth of the U.S. carbon market and ensure opportunities for Ga. Landowners
- Seek out revenue opportunities for Registry participants
- Monitoring and verification by GFC

Registry Function

- Technology Diffusion
- Market facilitation
- Tool for landowners
- Additional layer of documentation for GA-based projects in various markets
 - Transparency
 - Verification

What the Registry is NOT:

- Aggregator or carbon broker
- Transaction administrator
- Contract enforcer
- Market/exchange platform
- Offset purchaser/sponsor
- Cost-share or payment program
- Emissions reporting tool

Components:

- Policy and procedural protocol
 - Georgia Forestry Commission
- Forest Carbon Estimation Protocol
 - UGA (TIP3 Funding)
- Online reporting tool
 - GSCCCA

Who's Eligible to Participate?

- Any individual or legally-constituted entity
- Third-party registration:
 - Participant may or may not be landowner
 - “Carbon Rights” (e.g., G.R.E.E.N. program)
 - Landowner must agree to monitoring and verification procedures

Location Requirements

- Lands must be located within the state of Georgia
 - All counties eligible

Project Reporting Procedures

- Projects will register carbon stocks online with the assistance of approved forestry professionals.
 - Registered forester in good standing
 - Undertake training
 - Projects may be registered at any time of the year.
- Projects will estimate annual per-acre carbon stocks for starting year up to current report year.
- Also provide 10-year projections of per-acre carbon stocks.
- Annual Updates will be made to each project by participant.
 - Standard Updates
 - Reporting decrease in carbon stocks or change in project parameters.

Report Year

- Jan 1 – Dec 31 will constitute the Report Year
- Projects will report carbon sequestration that occurred during the report year in an annual update.
- Report sequestration **AFTER** it occurred.
 - e.g., report 2007 carbon sequestration in 2008...after the year is complete.

Annual Updates

- Report on Project Status
- Completed online
- Update deadlines:
 - January 1 through July 31
 - e.g., update for 2007 report year in 2008

Overview

- Standards developed with following considerations:
 - Existing market standards for forestry offset projects
 - Forest management and silviculture in GA
 - Cost effectiveness
 - SB 356 Provisions
 - Stakeholder input

Forest Project Definition

- Parcel(s) of forested land that has, as a primary management objective, the accretion and storage of carbon in one or more carbon pools
- Project Parcel:
 - Contiguous forest tract
 - Similar site, stand, and age conditions (stratum)
 - Multiple parcels need not be adjacent

All parcels share the following characteristics:

- Land title holder
- Project classification (afforestation, forest management)
- Forest carbon estimation method used at registration
- Land restriction status (restricted, unrestricted)

Afforestation Projects

- Tree establishment on lands previously dedicated to non-forest uses
- 1990 or later
- Limited to plantings that will result in properly-stocked native forests
- Urban forestry, agroforestry practices, “open grown” not eligible.

Forest Management

- Practices on existing forest lands that provide for tree growth and carbon storage
- Examples:
 - Lengthen rotations
 - Intensify management
 - Forest ecosystem restoration
 - Timber Stand Improvement
 - Other practices that increase carbon storage above current levels

Native Species Requirement:

- All forest projects must be comprised solely of native tree species.
- Reference:
 - Native Trees of Georgia by G. Norman Bishop
 - Available online at www.gatrees.org

Long-term Commitments to Forest Use

- Some markets require evidence that projects are dedicated to long-term forest use
- Examples:
 - Working forest easement
 - Transfer to land trust
 - Other legal measures
- Disparity between commitments undertaken by forest landowner and offset purchaser
- *Registry will not require this level of commitment!*

Restricted Projects

- Requirements (one of the following):
 - Long-term conservation easement (> 50 years)
 - Transfer to land trust, NGO, municipality, or government body
 - Other methods deemed acceptable (we're open to ideas!)
- Restriction will be denoted in the Registry

Forest Sustainability

All forest projects must have ONE of the following:

1. Current Ga. Forest Stewardship Plan
2. Tree Farm Certification
3. SFI certification
4. Other forest certification
5. Management plan that meets the standards of a Ga. Forest Stewardship Plan (signatures not required)
6. Other means deemed acceptable by registry

Forest Carbon Quantification Methods

- Default Look-up Tables
 - Based upon in-field stand examination or inventory
 - Low-cost
- Direct measurements and computer models
 - Inventory data (10% allowable error or less)
 - Conversion factors from green tons to carbon
 - SiMS stand simulation software to estimate from inventory forward

Approved Forester Endorsement

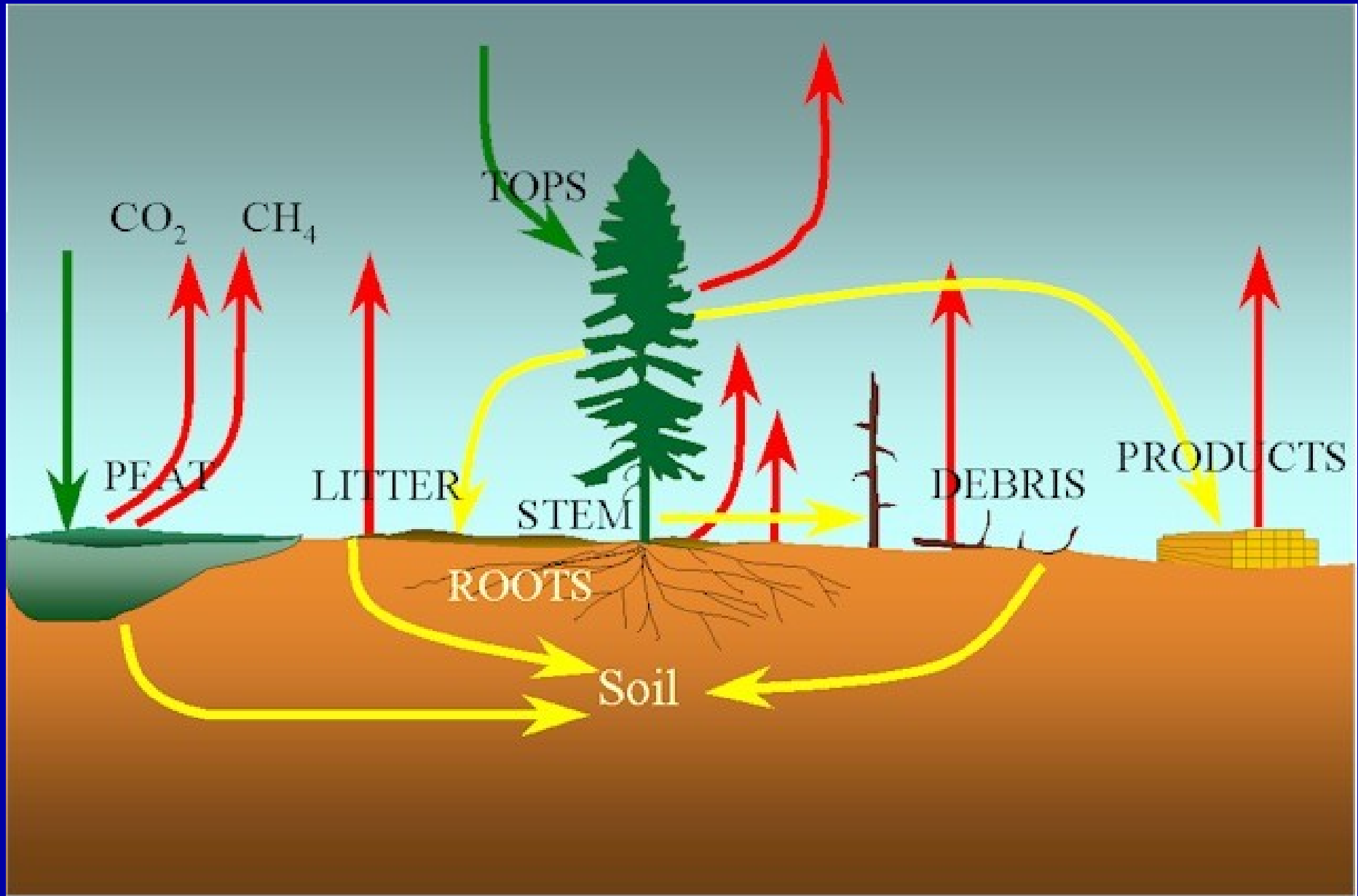
- All projects must be verified by an approved forester.
- Forest must electronically sign off on all data submitted to the registry.
- Forester should walk participant through entire process in order to ensure all information is accurately inputted

BMP Adherence

- All projects shall adhere to standards outlined in the latest version of GA's BMPs for Forestry as published by the GFC.

Carbon Pools

- Forest carbon is stored in a number of distinct reservoirs, or Pools.
- Some carbon pools are easier to estimate than others...



Above Ground Live Biomass

- Main stem (bole) of tree
 - Merchantable height only
 - Estimated using look-up tables or direct measurements
 - Required pool
- Reported in short tons of Carbon per acre

Below Ground Live Biomass

- Coarse woody tree roots
- Estimated using standard factor
 - 25% of Above ground live biomass
 - Registry reporting tool will automatically calculate this carbon pool
- Reported in short tons of Carbon per acre

Forest Soils

- Afforestation projects on agricultural lands ONLY
- Estimated using look-up tables
- Measurement of Soil Organic Carbon
- Inorganic carbon is not included
- Reported in short tons of carbon per acre

Forest Carbon Projections

- Registration forest carbon data
 - Annual estimates: Starting Report Year through Current Report Year
 - 10 year annual projections of forest carbon stocks
- Direct Measurements: manually inputted data
- Default tables: automatically generated data

Forest Products

- Harvests do not equal emissions
- Products may store carbon for decades
- Estimates of product carbon provide a better accounting of carbon sequestration activity

Establishing a Start Year

- All projects must establish a “start year” to begin estimating and tracking carbon stocks.
- Project activity will be tracked from this start year
- Direct Measurement: start year = inventory or later.
- Lookup tables: any year on or after 1990
- It is unlikely that historical carbon stocks will have market value; however, projects may choose 1990 or later as start year.

Annual Updates

- Standard Updates:
 - No decreases in carbon stocks to report (any source)
 - No change in land title holder, market availability, land restriction to report
 - Self-reported by participant using online reporting tool
 - Projected carbon stocks (as initially reported) will be registered to the project account.

Annual Updates (con't)

- Non-standard Updates:
 - Require approved forester endorsement
 - Report decrease in Carbon stocks
 - Natural Disturbance
 - Harvest
 - Thin
 - Change in landownership
 - Change forest carbon estimation method

Project Location Information

Each parcel should have the following information:

1. Latitude and longitude of approx. parcel center
2. Map or aerial photo of complete parcel
 - Boundaries clearly marked
 - Electronic or paper format (pdf, shapefile, etc.)
3. Deed book number and page for ALL counties spanning parcel.

Supporting Documentation

- Registry will NOT collect all information pertaining to project
- Participant's responsibility to keep documentation on file for review
- This is documentation that may be necessary for marketing offset

Supporting Documentation

- Project Site Information:
 - Stand establishment year
 - Map or Aerial photograph indicating scale that clearly delineates project boundaries and all project parcels. Any unique or sensitive areas within the project should also be clearly indicated on the map.
 - Site Index for each project parcel
 - Timber Types in each parcel
 - Soils data, including soil series, physical properties and management limitations.
 - Dominant landform(s) within each project stratum (e.g., bottomland, upland)
 - General aspect of each project parcel

Supporting Documentation

- Land management history:
 - Pre-project land-use history, including practices and respective years.
 - Site preparation methods
 - Species planted and genetic improvement of planting stock
 - Trees per acre (TPA) at planting and tree spacing.
 - Survival surveys
 - Silvicultural activities with accompanying dates, residual stocking levels, etc.
 - All relevant data compiled from stand exams and/or inventories
 - Proof of open land prior to afforestation. (e.g., aerial photos, tax records, nursery receipts, CRP contract)
- Forest stewardship/sustainable management:
 - Appropriate documentation for all forest sustainability certifications
 - Forest management plan that meets or exceeds the standards of the Georgia Forest Stewardship Program.
- Evidence supporting “Restricted” project status, if applicable.

GFC Monitoring and Verification

- In the field verification
- Remote sensing
- Record auditing
 - i.e., supporting documentation

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