



## PRESS RELEASE

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For more information contact:

- **Amy Lewis** *Managing Director of Policy & Campaigns, WILD.org; amy@wild.org*
- **Johanna Nilsson** *Director, WILD Sápmi Program, WILD.org; johanna@wild.org*

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### Swedish Forest Company SCA's Exit from FSC Certification

A Direct Attack on Indigenous Rights and Dangerous Step Backward for the Forests of Sápmi

**WILD.org** strongly condemns the decision by Swedish Cellulose Stock Corporation (SCA), Europe's largest private forest owner, to withdraw from the [Forest Stewardship Council](#) (FSC) certification system in Sweden for an underdetermined period - a strategic withdrawal from the rights of Indigenous Peoples, a disregard for the global climate, and a green light for increased ecological degradation.

The FSC system, despite its flaws, is one of the few global forestry standards that attempts to uphold Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and the rights of Indigenous Peoples. FSC's own principles are clear:

*"The Organization shall identify and uphold Indigenous Peoples' legal and customary rights of ownership, use and management of land, territories and resources affected by management activities" (FSC Principle 3.1) and "shall engage in free, prior and informed consent" (FSC Principle 3.2).*

In a [social media statement](#) from the Swedish Sámi National Association [Sámiid Riikkasearvi \(SSR\)](#), president Matti Blind Berg explains:

*"From the Sámi perspective, we are unfortunately all too familiar with how large exploitative representatives resort to various types of pressure when they do not get what they want. The way SCA is acting now is a clear example of this,"* says Blind Berg.

By walking away from FSC, SCA is walking away from even this minimal level of accountability.

*“SCA’s decision is a direct affront to the Sámi reindeer herders and the legal and moral obligation to secure their consent before exploiting their lands,”* says Amy Lewis, Managing Director, WILD.org. *“It is also a step backwards for nature-based solutions and the need to protect nature to effectively fight climate change.”*

The boreal forest is one of the most powerful carbon sinks on the planet. It stores more carbon per hectare than tropical forests, especially in its soils and old-growth stands. Disturbing these ecosystems through clearcutting releases vast quantities of carbon into the atmosphere.

At the heart of these forests lies Sápmi, home to the Sámi people, the last recognized Indigenous culture in Europe. Their traditional way of life, rooted in reindeer herding, is increasingly endangered by extensive logging in the boreal forests.

Johanna Nilsson, Director of WILD Sápmi, the Sámi-led program operating under the umbrella of WILD.org and which will publicly launch in late April, explains the relationship between Sámi lifeways and the continuation of the boreal forests in stark terms.

*“One of the strongest institutions, if not the strongest, protecting the remaining old growth forests in Sápmi is the relationship between Sámi reindeer herders and their herds,”* Nilsson contends. *“Because the reindeer require lichen for winter forage that thrives on old growth trees, the traditional Sámi people have argued more vociferously than anyone else for the protection of these areas.”*

## Why are they leaving?

SCA leaves FSC for an unspecified duration, arguing that the regulations threaten the availability of raw materials and, consequently, the production of climate-smart, renewable, bio-based products. But this narrative is deceptive.

*“It is about SCA planning to increase logging, which in turn will lead to higher emissions,”* says Göran Englund, researcher and professor at the Department of Ecology, Environment and Geosciences at Umeå University.

Scientific consensus has made it clear: the fastest and most effective climate action in forestry is to drastically reduce logging in intact forests, not to increase it.

*“Destroying the boreal forest to make products that replace fossil fuels is not climate action—it’s colonialism dressed up in green. We cannot cut our way out of the climate crisis.”* Lewis says.

## FSC is not perfect

FSC-certified forestry is far from perfect. It has not always delivered the protection for biodiversity or Sámi livelihoods that it promises but it sets at least a minimum framework of transparency, Indigenous consultation, and some ecological safeguards. Without it, there is

nothing standing between industrial logging and the most valuable, vulnerable forest ecosystems in Sápmi.

A recent report published by Greenpeace and Renskog highlights ongoing conflicts between forestry practices and reindeer husbandry, underscoring the necessity of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) in decision-making processes affecting indigenous lands ([Greenpeace/Renskog, 2025](#)). The report outlines serious shortcomings in how forestry operations have interacted with Sámi communities, particularly in the crucial areas of land use and resource management.

The loss of SCA's certification—nearly 20% of all FSC-certified forests in Sweden—also weakens FSC itself and potentially leads other companies to follow suit.

**WILD.org urges:**

1. **The Swedish government** to fulfill its obligations under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and to ensure FPIC is upheld in all forestry decisions.
2. **International actors and consumers** such as Nestle, Essity etc, to scrutinize SCA and reject greenwashing that erases Indigenous rights and climate science.
3. **FSC International** to hold firm to its existing principles and not water down its commitments under industry pressure.

**Earth's ecosystems are interconnected. What happens in Sweden has consequences for the entire planet.**

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