

| How does NW Neutral Compare? | VCS | CAR 3.0 | NW Neutral |
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| Management Activities Recognized for Improved Forest Management Projects | Reduced impact Logging, Extending Rotation Age, Permanent Protection | Eligible activities include extending rotation ages, increasing productivity or stocking levels on poorly producing lands, and managing competing short lived species | Reduced impact Logging, Extending Rotation Age, Permanent Protection |
| Baseline and Additionality | Project based or performance benchmark baselines accepted if preapproved by VCS or are subject to a double approval process. | CAR 3.0 requires a regulatory and performance (business as usual) baseline. | NW Neutral uses a regulatory and performance benchmark comparing participating landowners to an average northwest forest business scenario. |
| GHG Pools Measured | Above ground trees, below ground biomass (optional), dead wood, soil (optional), wood products | Standing live carbon, standing dead carbon, understory (optional), laying dead carbon (optional), litter and duff (optional), soil carbon (optional), forest products | Live tree carbon, laying and standing dead wood, understory (optional), wood products |
| Group Aggregation | Grouped projects are allowed although no group monitoring protocols have been approved by VCS and no grouped forestry projects have been registered. | Future revisions promise to provide aggregation guidelines but they have not yet been developed. | NW Neutral's aggregation model is based on FSC group certification whereby a statistical sampling of members is field audited with each member being visited a minimum of every five years. |
| Leakage | Project developer must demonstrate no leakage within their ownership. Market leakage must be accounted for if timber production significantly decreases. | Leakage must be accounted for at the entity level, market leakage is included in GHG accounting with a default of 20% for management which decreases overall harvest level. | NW Neutral landowners must demonstrate zero leakage at the entity level (contract). Market leakage is included in the buffer pool. |
| Permanence | Minimum of 20, maximum of 100 year project period. | 100 year contracts or a conservation easement required. | Landowners sign either a 100 year contract or complete a permanent conservation easement transfer. |
| Buffer Requirements | A 10%-70% buffer withholding and deposit into the VCS buffer account is required based on project risk analysis and includes market leakage. | Buffer deposit requirements are 9%-17% based on risk assessment, market leakage is included in GHG accounting. Alternative insurance options will be considered. | NW Neutral requires a 20% buffer set aside from each landowner's carbon pool to account for risk and leakage. Distribution of many small ownerships decreases catastrophic loss risk significantly. |
| Verification and Monitoring | Verification must be provided by an approved VCS project validator, future verification not required unless project is renewed. | Annual, third party verified, monitoring reports required. Site visit and verification required every six years (minimum). | Field verification must be provided by an approved NW Neutral verifier, project reaudited at a minimum of every 5 years. |