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RMS Launches Ecosystem Integrity Index to Scientifically Evaluate Ecological Impact in Working Forests

Advanced methodology enables ecosystem assessment at scale amid growing investor demand for quantifiable nature metrics

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (Jan. 15, 2026) — The timberland investment sector has long supported conservation initiatives and shared success stories with investors, but the absence of standardized metrics has made it difficult for timberland managers to demonstrate managed forests' contributions to the conservation of biodiversity. In response, [Resource Management Service](#), LLC (RMS), one of the world's largest and most experienced timberland investment management organizations, has announced the development of the RMS Ecosystem Integrity Index (EII).

The EII is a measurement tool designed to track and quantify biodiversity changes across RMS's timberland portfolio in the southern U.S. Its methodology is adaptable to other U.S. regions. The index was designed specifically for working forests where trees are actively harvested and replanted for commercial timber production while supporting conservation objectives through practices like prescribed burning, wildlife habitat enhancements and maintenance of streamside and riparian areas. This differs from restoration or rewilding projects where commercial activity often ceases.

As part of a pilot study, RMS will apply the index across more than 440,000 acres of RMS-managed U.S. South forestlands, covering eight states and multiple ecoregions. The project's scale will enable meaningful biodiversity measurement while providing insights that can inform both property-level management decisions and portfolio-wide conservation strategies.

The index produces a composite score that tracks how ecosystem integrity is changing over time. It does this by:

- **Evaluating three ecological dimensions:** ecosystem structure, composition and function.
- **Applying four measures to assess ecosystem condition:** forest structure, wetland and riparian area integrity, species assemblage and connectedness.
- **Tracking species diversity** among birds, reptiles and amphibians with plans to incorporate aquatic species in 2026.

- **Tracking the conservation value** of rare, threatened and endangered species present.

With the approval of global targets under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework by 196 governments in December 2022, Target 15 explicitly recognizes businesses and financial institutions as key actors in advancing biodiversity outcomes. This recognition is prompting many institutional investors to prioritize understanding their nature-related impacts, while regulatory frameworks and disclosure requirements are tightening. In Europe, standards such as the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive are establishing biodiversity reporting standards, and similar frameworks such as the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures are emerging globally. As a result, many investors may need a measurement tool to demonstrate conservation outcomes.

"Investors need quantifiable impact measurements, not just anecdotal conservation stories," said Alex Hinson, RMS President and Chief Executive Officer. "Biodiversity is complex and can't be reduced to a single number like carbon, but that doesn't mean we can't measure it rigorously. The Ecosystem Integrity Index provides investors with hard data to show that capital deployed into working forests is having a direct positive impact on nature."

RMS collaborated with [Nature Positive](#) and [RSK Wilding](#), two organizations with global experience developing ecological measurement systems, to develop the EII's methodology. The teams included PhD and master's-level ecologists, allowing RMS to leverage their specialized forest ecosystems knowledge.

The EII builds in part on the extensive data RMS already collects through its normal forestry operations, leveraging ecological information inherent to managing working forests while also incorporating enhanced monitoring capabilities. Throughout 2025, RMS expanded its biodiversity monitoring to support the rigorous measurement framework the EII requires, integrating advanced technologies including environmental DNA sampling, camera traps, passive acoustic monitoring and AI-assisted species identification to monitor ecosystems comprehensively at scale. This allows RMS to demonstrate positive ecosystem impacts that can now be meticulously measured.

"The EII enables us to make data-driven management decisions that enhance both timber value and ecosystem health," said Jimmy Bullock, RMS Senior Vice President of Forest Sustainability. "We've always known our conservation practices matter, but now we can actually measure whether prescribed burning or streamside protections are improving habitat for species in need of conservation attention. That means we can focus our efforts where they'll have the greatest impact and demonstrate to investors that sustainable forestry delivers financial returns alongside generating meaningful, measurable conservation value."

Beyond demonstrating conservation outcomes, the EII will also help RMS identify opportunities to monetize conservation value in the future as markets for ecosystem services continue to develop.

The index was built with adaptability in mind. "As measurement technologies advance and scientific understanding deepens, we expect the index methodology to evolve accordingly," Hinson said. "We've built a foundation that can adapt as we learn and as conservation guidelines evolve."

RMS recently joined Nature Positive in London for an in-depth discussion of the EII, sharing how the index promotes transparency and integrity of disclosures across working forests. The index framework is expected to be completed later this year and will undergo external review before full implementation. Comprehensive data collection across RMS properties began in 2024, with a baseline to be established by the end of 2026. RMS expects to begin reporting on biodiversity changes in 2027.

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About Resource Management Service, LLC

RMS is one of the world's largest and most experienced timberland investment and forestry management services providers. RMS is committed to being a leader in environmentally and socially responsible investing and practicing sustainable forest management on its clients' timberlands. As a company founded, owned and managed by professional foresters, RMS has long been guided by a strong stewardship ethic, understanding that responsibly managing all forest resources meets the needs of its clients, customers, employees, society and future generations. RMS seeks to generate attractive risk-adjusted near-term cash yield and long-term asset appreciation by employing state-of-the-art systems and the world's most sustainable advanced forest management practices. As an independently owned and operated company, RMS has established a legacy by striving to optimize the biological, financial and societal values of every asset its team manages. Based in Birmingham, Alabama, RMS is a U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission-registered Investment Adviser with \$5.5 billion of timberland assets under management in the United States and Brazil. Registration as an investment adviser does not imply a certain level of skill or training and is not an endorsement of the adviser by the Securities and Exchange Commission or any state securities regulator. For more information, please visit resourcecmgt.com.