



Pennsylvania Certified Organic Transfers Forest Grown Verification Program to United Plant Savers

For Immediate Release

Spring Mills, PA (March 19, 2019) -- Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) is excited to announce the transfer of the PCO Forest Grown Verification Program to United Plant Savers (UpS) effective March 15, 2019. UpS's mission is to protect native medicinal plants of the United States and Canada and their native habitat while ensuring an abundant renewable supply of medicinal plants for generations to come. PCO sees UpS as the perfect home from the Forest Grown Verification Program in order to foster its growth and continued success.

The PCO Forest Grown Verification Program was established in 2014 with the purpose of creating a voluntary, third party verification for non-timber forest grown products that are produced and harvested in a sustainable and legal manner. This program benefits producers by building consumer confidence, demand and premium pricing; protecting forest "crop" in the event of theft, land development and legal matters through documentation; and may provide exemptions around wild stewarding plants. The program standards currently apply to producers, harvesters, processors and handlers of eleven forest botanical products from private forestland in the United States.

During the transition period, PCO and UpS will work together to ensure that there is not a lapse in verification status for any of the current clients in the program. UpS will work directly with operations intending to continue in the Forest Grown Verification Program. Additionally, PCO will no longer be accepting new applications. Please contact UpS directly for information on how to apply for this program.

PCO and UpS have been partner organizations since the initial implementation of the Forest Grown Verification Program, collaborating from cost share to events to standards revisions. This partnership has been cemented through this process. PCO is honored to see the program continue with UpS at the helm and looks forward to future collaboration opportunities.

For questions, please contact Kyla Smith at 814-422-0251 or via email at kyla@paorganic.org or John Stock at 740-742-3455 or via email at john@unitedplantsavers.org.

PCO is a non-profit organization based in Spring Mills, Pennsylvania, that educates and certifies more than 1,600 organic farms and processors. For more information on organic certification, contact PCO at www.paorganic.org, 814-422-0251.

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Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO)

pco@paorganic.org • www.paorganic.org • 106 School Street, Ste 201 • Spring Mills, PA 16875 • 814.422.0251 • fax 814.422.0255