

Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Forest Management Audit Report

State of Wisconsin: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources – State Forests and Lands

Certificate # SCS-SFI/FM-000070

*SFI 2022 Standards and Rules®, Forest Management
Recertification Audit*

Client Address	101 S. Webster Street, PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921 USA
Client Contact	<u>Jake Walcisak jacob.walcisak@wisconsin.gov</u>
Client Website	<u>dnr.wi.gov/topic/forestry.html</u>

SCS Contact:

Maggie Schwartz

Managing Director, Forestry
Natural Resources Division

mschwartz@scsglobalservices.com



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Public Summary Report

SFI® Forest Management Standard

SECTION A – PUBLIC SUMMARY

Foreword

Organization of the Report

This report on the results of your audit assessment is divided into two sections. Section A provides the public summary and background information that is required by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative®. Section A is made available to the public and is intended to provide an overview of the audit process, the management programs and policies applied to the forest, and the results of the audit. Section A will be posted on the SFI website and Section B contains more detailed results and information for required SFI record-keeping or for use by the Certified Organization.

Principles of SFI Forest Management

The SFI 2022 Standards and Rules® for Forest Management promotes sustainable forestry and includes measures to *protect water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, species at risk and Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*.

The 13 *SFI Principles* for Forest Management are:

1. **Sustainable Forestry:** To practice sustainable forestry to meet the needs of the present while promoting the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by practicing a land stewardship ethic that integrates reforestation and the managing, growing, nurturing and harvesting of trees for useful products and ecosystem services such as the conservation of soil, air and water quality, climate change mitigation, biological diversity, wildlife and aquatic habitats, recreation and aesthetics.
2. **Forest Productivity and Health:** To provide for regeneration after harvest and maintain the productive capacity of the forest land base, and to protect and maintain long-term forest and soil productivity. In addition, to protect forests from economically or environmentally undesirable levels of wildfire, pests, diseases, invasive species and other damaging agents and thus maintain and improve long-term forest health and productivity.
3. **Protection of Water Resources:** To protect water bodies and riparian areas, and to conform with forestry best management practices to protect water quality, to meet the needs of both human communities and ecological systems.
4. **Protection of Biological Diversity:** To manage forests in ways that protect and promote biological diversity, including animal and plant species, wildlife habitats, ecologically important species and native forest cover types.

5. **Aesthetics and Recreation:** To manage the visual impacts of forest operations, and to provide recreational opportunities for the public.
6. **Protection of Special Sites:** To manage lands that are ecologically important, geologically or culturally important in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.
7. **Responsible Fiber Sourcing in North America:** To use and promote among other forest landowners sustainable forestry that is both scientifically credible and economically, environmentally and socially responsible.
8. **Legal Compliance:** To comply with applicable federal, provincial, state, and local forestry and related environmental laws, statutes, and regulations.
9. **Research:** To support advances in sustainable forest management through forestry research, science and technology.
10. **Training and Education:** To improve the practice of sustainable forestry through training and education programs.
11. **Community Involvement and Social Responsibility:** To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry on all lands through community involvement, socially responsible practices, and through recognition and respect of Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional forest-related knowledge.
12. **Transparency:** To broaden the understanding of forest certification to the Forest Management Standard by documenting certification audits and making the findings publicly available.
13. **Continual Improvement:** To continually improve the practice of forest management, and to monitor, measure and report performance in achieving the commitment to sustainable forestry.

1. General Information

1.1 Name, Contact, and Certificate Information

Organization Name	State of Wisconsin: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources – State Forests and Lands
Certification Representative	Jake Walcisak, Forest Certification Coordinator
Phone Number	715-657-5812
Address	101 South Webster Street Madison, WI 53703
Audit Dates	8 - 12 September 2025
SFI Certificate Type	☐ Single ☒ Multi-site. This Audit covered the requirements of the central organization and a subset of sites. These sites were selected based on proximity and length of time since previous audits. See Summary of Audit Itinerary for details of sampling.

2. Summary Description of the Management Unit(s)

Description of Ownership	☒ SFI: List of all sites/FMUs under scope of the certificate, including certified acres.  Copy of DNR_STATE_LANDS_
Total Forest Area (Acres)	1,649,756 acres
Description of Sites and Group Membership under Scope	☐ Single site description ☒ SFI: List of all sites/FMUs under scope of the certificate, including certified acres. ☐ ATFS: Summary of Sites/FMUs under scope of certificate, including acres. ☐ Group: Description of group structure.
Management Unit Maps	Provide a link to any public maps.
Forest Types and Key Ecological Features	The department has embarked on a regional planning approach based on Ecological Landscapes. Ecological Landscapes (ELs) are regions of the state that are distinguished by unique ecological characteristics and management opportunities. These regions were delineated using a land classification system developed by the U.S. Forest Service in cooperation with other federal and state partners. A regional master plan for each of the 16 ELs in Wisconsin will include all department properties within that landscape. Properties are usually assigned to the EL within which most of their acreage resides. To date, 8 plans have been completed, 3 are in progress, 3 are in the initial planning stage and 2 remain to be planned in the future. https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/fl/PropertyPlanning/About
Forest Management Planning	The management plan outlining forest management policies and objectives: See Property Planning Facilities and Lands Wisconsin DNR
Sustainable Harvest Level Assessment	Document review and interviews confirm the WisFIRS system (Wisconsin Forest Inventory and Reporting System) is developed and maintained to house forest inventory from all state lands. The DNR uses area regulation to determine sustainable harvest levels. Review of Growth vs Removals State Lands document indicate positive growth vs removal. The overall ratio of growth to removal is 1.88, which indicates more growth than removal.

Monitoring Program Description	See https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/forestmanagement/regenmonitoring , https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/ForestHealth , and https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/forestmanagement/bmp for examples.
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3. Audit Process

3.1 Applicable Standards and Audit Objectives

Certificate Code	SCS-SFI/FM-000070		
Audit Type	☐ Stage 1, Preliminary Review Audit		☐ Stage 2, Certification Audit
	Re-Certification		☐ COVID-19 Additional Surveillance
	☐ 1 st , ☒ 2 nd , ☐ 3 rd or ☐ 4 th Surveillance		
	☐ Transfer		☐ Expansion of Scope
	☐ Other (<i>describe</i>):		
Applicable Standards	☒ SFI: 2022 Forest Management. <i>Objectives 3, 5, 6, 9, 15, 16, 17. Exclusions, if applicable:</i> ☒ SFI: Rules for Use of SFI On-Product Labels and Off-Product Marks ☒ SFI: Audits of Multi-Sites		
Multiple Standards	☐ N/A, this is not a multi-standard nor a multi-CB audit. This was a dual combined audit including FSC® US Forest management.		
	☒ Combined	☐ Joint	☐ Integrated
	<i>A combined audit is when a client is being audited against the requirements of two or more</i>	<i>A joint audit is when two or more auditing organizations cooperate to audit a single client.</i>	<i>An integrated audit is when a client has integrated the application of requirements of two or more management systems standards into a single management system and is being audited against more than one standard.</i>
SFI Substitute or Modified Indicators	☒ None, ☐ Yes, Substitute or Modified Indicators used and justification:		
Certificate Scope/ Statement	The scope of the certificate includes all forest management activities associated with the Organization's sustainable forest management system with defined forest lands located in Wisconsin and including the harvest unit and associated landing site(s), and other forest management system activities for the Audit Objectives. The Organization has sufficient control over any contracting or outsourcing of forest management planning and activities to ensure conformance to applicable certification requirements. These forest management activities occur on approximately 1.65 million acres of Wisconsin state forest, park, fisheries, and wildlife lands.		
Description of Sampling Approach	Categories included in the DNR Lands forest certification review include: • State Forests • State Parks		

	• State Recreation Trails • State Wildlife Areas • State Fisheries Areas • State Natural Areas • Natural Resource Protection and Management Areas • Lower Wisconsin Riverway • State Wild Rivers • State Owned Islands • Stewardship Demonstration Forests The following DNR properties (about 37,798 acres) are excluded from the certification project: • Agricultural fields/Cooperative farming agreements (due to pesticide use and potential GMO issue) • Stream Bank Protection Areas (eased lands not under DNR management) • Forest Legacy Easements (eased lands not under DNR management) • States Fish Hatcheries and Rearing Ponds (intensive non-forest use) • State Forest Nurseries (intensive non-forest use) • Nonpoint Pollution Control Easements (eased lands not under DNR management) • Poynette Game Farm and McKenzie Environmental Center (intensive non-forest use) • Boat Access Sites (intensive non-forest use) • Fire Tower Sites (intensive non-forest use) • Radio Tower Sites (intensive non-forest use) • Ranger Stations (intensive non-forest use) • Administrative Offices and Storage Buildings (intensive non-forest use) • State Park Intensively Developed Recreation Areas (intensive non-forest use) e.g. Peninsula State Park golf course, Blue Mound State Park swimming pool • State Trails Cooperatively Managed by Others (planning and management authority given to others by MOU; primarily counties). • Conveyed easements (utility ROWs) In 2025, sites were sampled in the Peshtigo and Woodruff Areas.
Deviations from the Audit Plan	Were there any significant deviations from the Audit Plan? ☒ No ☐ Yes. If yes, provide a description and explanation.

3.2 Audit Team

Auditor name:	Tom Harlan	Auditor Role	Lead SFI
Qualifications:	Tom Harlan graduated from North Carolina State University in 1983 with a BS in Forestry. He has over 40 years' experience in the forestry profession including experience in timber procurement, timber sale administration, forestry consulting and TIMO land management. Tom was a water quality engineer with the Virginia Department of Forestry where he worked with loggers and landowners to protect water quality and enforce the Chesapeake Bay Act provisions concerning forest operations. Tom managed land that was certified to SFI and FSC forest management standards and was audited to those standards. He was a FSC COC administrator for a small timber company on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Tom		

	joined SCS Global Services in October 2023 as a Technical Specialist. He is a SFI FM, SFI FS, ATFS, SBP, and FSC CoC Lead Auditor.		
Auditor name:	Sterling Griffin	Auditor Role	Team Member
Qualifications:	Sterling Griffin, Technical Specialist, Forest Certification – Sterling is a California Registered Professional Forester #2805 living in southern Oregon. He is a graduate of Purdue University with a degree in Forest Management. His career began with the U.S. Forest Service where he participated in long-term ecosystem productivity research in the Pacific Northwest. He later founded a consulting firm serving private landowners managing timber, water, recreation, fuels, and biodiversity. In 2007, he helped SCS establish its GHG verification program and later founded one of the largest U.S. developers of forest carbon credits. He is an FSC and SFI FM Lead Auditor and has evaluated over 20 million hectares of forestland around the world.		
Auditor name:	Jose Del Castillo	Auditor Role	Trainee
Qualifications:	Forester with eight years of experience in forest management and the lumber industry, specializing in certification for over five years. As a qualified lead auditor, the auditor holds credentials in ISO 9001:2015, FSC Chain of Custody (COC), PEFC, RSPO, 4C, and Fair-Trade USA. Auditor's expertise spans auditing, compliance, and quality assurance, ensuring organizations meet rigorous industry standards and best practices.		

3.3 Total Time Spent on Audit

A. Number of days spent on-site for the Audit	5
B. Number of auditors participating in on-site audit	3
C. Number of days spent by any technical experts (in addition to amount in line A)	0
D. Additional days spent on preparation, stakeholder consultation, and follow-up	3
E. Total number of person days used in audit	13

3.4 Summary of Audit Itinerary and Site Visits

Location(s) sampled	Peshtigo and Woodruff Areas
Number of field sites	15 timber sales and 6 non-timber sale sites
Summary of Cover Types visited	White-red-jack pine, Aspen-birch, Spruce-fir, and Maple-beech-birch (and other Northern hardwood mixes).
Summary Description /Number of Silviculture Activities inspected	Final harvest of ash, red pine and aspen-birch, thinning of white pine, even-aged and uneven-aged management of northern hardwood types, shelterwood harvests to regenerate oaks, thinning of pine stand. Wildlife management activities such as planned prescribed fire, mowing, wider buffers on rivers.
Summary Description of Road infrastructure inspections	Road and stream crossing maintenance, installation of water bars, and broad-based dips.

3.5 Evaluation of Management Systems

SCS deploys teams with expertise in forestry and other relevant fields to assess the certified organization's conformance to SFI standards and policies. Audit methods include reviewing documents and records, interviewing personnel and contractors, implementing sampling strategies to visit a broad number of forest cover and harvest prescription types, observing implementation of management plans and policies in the field, and collecting and analyzing relevant stakeholder input. When there is more than one team

member, each member may review parts of the standards based on their background and expertise. Applicable aspects of the Management System under evaluation, such as Management System Review and other relevant Objectives, Performance Measures, and Indicators will also inform the audit team. On the final day of an evaluation, team members convene to deliberate the findings of the audit jointly. This involves an analysis of all relevant field observations, interviews, reviewed documents and records, and relevant stakeholder input. Where consensus among team members cannot be achieved due to lack of evidence, conflicting evidence or differences of interpretation of the standards, the team is instructed to report these in the certification decision section and/or in observations.

3.6. Changes to Management System

- ☒ There were no significant changes in the management and/or harvesting methods that affect the FME's conformance to the SFI standards, rules, and policies.
- ☐ Significant changes that affect the management system occurred since the last audit described as follows (describe):

3.7 Confirmation of Meeting Audit Objectives

The objectives for this audit included:

- Determination of the conformity of the client's management system, or parts of it, with audit criteria (Selected Objectives, Performance Measures, and/or Indicators).
- Determination of the ability of the management system to ensure the client meets applicable statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements.
- Determination of the effectiveness of the management system to ensure the client can reasonably expect to achieve specified objectives.
- As applicable, identification of areas for potential improvement of the management system.

Audit Objectives were met	Yes ☒ No ☐ If no, provide an explanation:
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4. Results of Audit

4.1 Grading of Possible Findings

Once a consensus is reached by the audit team, determinations of grading are made as to the level of findings. Grading of findings may occur as follows:

- *Major CARs:* Major Corrective Action Requests (CARs) occur when one or more of the SFI 2022 Standard(s) performance measures or indicators has not been addressed or has not been implemented to the extent that a systematic failure of a Certified Organization's SFI system to meet an SFI objective, performance measure or indicator occurs.
- *Minor CARs:* An isolated lapse in SFI 2022 Standard(s) implementation which does not indicate a systematic failure to consistently meet an SFI objective, performance measure or indicator.

- *Opportunities for Improvement:* Opportunities for Improvement (OFIs) are identified by audit team members where the client is in conformance, but there is a risk to conformance in the future. Nonconformance with the standard requirements cannot be recorded as OFIs.
- *Exceeds:* Practices that exceed the basic requirements of the SFI 2022 Standards and Rules for Forest Management or Fiber Sourcing.

4.2 Table of Audit Results and History of Findings for Certificate Period

This table lists Findings to the Performance Measure and/or Indicator level for each year of the certificate period and is updated annually.

SFI Objective	Cert/Re-cert Evaluation (2023)	1 st Annual Evaluation (2024)	2 nd Annual Evaluation (2025)	3 rd Annual Evaluation (2026)	4 th Annual Evaluation (2027)
No findings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1		Minor 1.1.5	OFI 1.1.5		
2	OFI 2.2.8	Minor 2.2.8			
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13	OFI 13.1.2	Minor 13.1.3			
14					
15					
16					
17					
COC					
Trademark					
Group					
Other					

4.3 General Description of Evidence of Conformity

This section summarizes the general evidence found to verify conformity that is detailed in Appendix 5.

SFI Objective	Summary of Evidence
Objective 1. Forest Management Planning. To ensure forest management plans include long-term sustainable harvest levels and measures to avoid forest conversion or afforestation of ecologically important areas.	Not all of Objective was evaluated. OFI 1.1.5 Wisconsin DNR conducts wildlife habitat management and areas with farming agreements for wildlife food plots. A food plot with a farming

	agreement had a management activity that was not documented in the harvest plan.
Objective 2. Forest Health and Productivity. To ensure long-term forest productivity and conservation of forest resources through prompt reforestation, afforestation, deploying integrated pest management strategies, minimized chemical use, soil conservation, and protecting forests from damaging agents.	Not evaluated.
Objective 3. Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources. To protect the water quality and water quantity of rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, and other water bodies.	Review of harvest sites confirmed Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources. Qualified personnel and harvest contractors were confirmed during implementation of forest management activities. No BMP issues were observed, and Riparian Management Zones were protected and observed during field site audit of all sites.
Objective 4. Conservation of Biological Diversity To maintain or advance the conservation of biological diversity at the stand- and landscape- level and across a diversity of forest and vegetation cover types and successional stages including the conservation of forest plants and animals, aquatic species, threatened and endangered species, Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value, old-growth forests and ecologically important sites.	Not evaluated.
Objective 5. Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits. To manage the visual impact of forest operations and provide recreational opportunities for the public.	Visual aspects are covered in the Requirements and Additional Requirements of the timber sale prospectus. Inspection of harvest sites sampled confirms implementation of aesthetic components.
Objective 6. Protection of Special Sites. To manage lands that are geologically or culturally important in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.	Interviews with NHI, Wildlife and DNR forestry personnel confirmed that databases are checked prior to forest management activities to ensure proper management of any sites is addressed. No special sites noted during audit.
Objective 7. Efficient Use of Fiber Resources. To minimize waste and ensure the efficient use of fiber resources.	Not evaluated.
Objective 8. Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples' Rights. To recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional knowledge.	Not evaluated.
Objective 9: Climate Smart Forestry To ensure forest management activities address climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.	Wisconsin's Forest action plan includes carbon, resiliency, and priority areas. Wisconsin has developed the Blueprint for Climate Action that addresses climate mitigation, climate adaptation and actions needed to address climate change. WDNR offered the Understanding Climate

	Change and Its Impacts in Wisconsin webinar to address the impact of climate change.
Objective 10. Fire Resilience and Awareness To limit susceptibility of forests to undesirable impacts of wildfire and to raise community awareness of fire benefits, risks, and minimization measures.	Not evaluated.
Objective 11. Legal and Regulatory Compliance To comply with all applicable laws and regulations including, international, federal, provincial, state, and local.	Not evaluated.
Objective 12. Forestry Research, Science and Technology. To invest in research, science, and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based.	Not evaluated.
Objective 13. Training and Education. To improve the implementation of sustainable forestry through appropriate training and education programs.	Not evaluated.
Objective 14. Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach. To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry through public outreach, education, and involvement, and to support the efforts of SFI Implementation Committees.	Not evaluated.
Objective 15. Public Land Management Responsibilities. To participate and implement sustainable forest management on public lands.	DNR is tasked with the management of the forests on state lands. It works with several agencies within the state and with the public to properly manage the forests on state lands.
Objective 16. Communications and Public Reporting To increase transparency and to annually report progress on conformance with the SFI Forest Management Standard.	Public Reports are available on Wisconsin DNR website and is listed on SFI website as required.
Objective 17. Management Review and Continual Improvement: To promote continual improvement in the practice of sustainable forestry by conducting a management review and monitoring performance.	Records of program reviews, agendas and notes from management review meetings confirmed detailed process for review. Review of internal and external audits confirmed compliance.

4.4 Existing Corrective Action Requests, OFIs, and Exceeds

Finding Number: 2024.1	
Finding and Deadline	☐ Major: Pre-condition to certification ☐ Major: 3 months from Closing Meeting ☒ Minor: Next audit (surveillance or re-evaluation) or 12 months from closing ☐ OFI: no deadline ☐ Exceeds: no deadline

	☐ Other deadline (specify):
SFI Indicator:	SFI 2.2.8, part i. Use of management practices appropriate to the situation, such as: a. notification of adjoining landowners or nearby residents concerning applications and chemicals used; b. appropriate multilingual signs or oral warnings; c. control of public road access during and immediately after applications; d. designation of streamside and other needed buffer strips; e. use of positive shutoff and minimal-drift spray valves; f. aerial application of forest chemicals parallel to buffer zones to limit drift; g. monitoring of water quality or safeguards to ensure proper equipment use and <i>protection</i> of streams, lakes, and other water bodies; h. appropriate transportation and storage of chemicals; i. use of spill response plans and chemical spill kits; j. filing of required state or provincial reports; and/or k. use of methods to ensure <i>protection of threatened and endangered</i> species.
☒ Non-Conformity ☐ Background/ Justification in the case of OFI or Exceeds Auditor visited active harvest operation and through interviews of contractor on site, it was determined that there was no complete spill kit on site. There was active harvesting, forwarding and trucking occurring during the site visit. Phone interview with the foreman of company that was not onsite, indicated the spill kit was in his truck. The contract clause 18 and the Timber Sale Contractor Checklist Pre-Sale Meeting form 2460-009 section 16 indicates required compliance with WI BMP's. The WI BMP manual requires that a complete spill kit be on site when equipment is operating.	
Root Cause Analysis (to be prepared by Organization)	Staff administering timber sales are required by handbook to verify the presence of a complete spill kit at initial pre-sale meetings and during active inspections. In part, the root cause lies in clarification of the word "verify" as it applies to visual or verbal verification. The secondary root cause is the responsibility of purchasers to maintain a complete spill kit onsite during operations as part of their FISTA training and compliance with WI BMPs for Water Quality which is a requirement of all DNR Timber Sale contracts. The audit team observed the absence of a complete spill kit onsite during operations. Each piece of equipment <u>did</u> contain a bucket and shovel. However, missing from the job site were absorbent material and plugs/clamps to stop a leak from a hydraulic line break. These two items were in the foreman's work truck which was off site for a period of two days while he roofed his home. The DNR forester administering this sale did verify a spill kit onsite with the purchaser during the pre-sale meeting and documented this on the Timber Sale Contractor Checklist. Wisconsin DNR Division of Forestry has systems and policies in place to assure compliance with BMPs for water quality, including provisions for spill kits. The information below details these systems and policies.

	Wisconsin DNR requires logging contractors to maintain training through the Forest Industry Safety and Training Alliance (FISTA). All Wisconsin DNR timber harvesting contracts require the Purchaser to ensure at least one in-woods person actively engaged in performance of the contract and responsible for the logging site complies with this training requirement. To be considered Trained as a Qualified Logging Professional (QLP) an individual must complete the following: 12 hours of Core Curriculum – <u>Best Management Practices (BMP) for Water Quality</u> and Basic Core II (Endangered species, logger safety, and OSHA); 4 hours (annually) of Continuing Education. All DNR State Lands timber sale contracts require the purchaser to follow the WI BMPs for Water Quality manual. The requirement for a spill kit is well defined in the manual (see page 116). This includes the four necessary components of a spill kit. Division of Forestry Timber Sale Handbook requires administering forestry staff to verify and document the presence of a complete spill kit at pre-sale meetings by using the Timber Sale Contractor Checklist: Pre-Sale Meeting (Form 2460-009). Those individuals administering timber sales must also verify and document the presence of a skill kit on all active operations using the Timber Sale Inspection Form (2460-002). The Applied Forestry Section conducts regular BMP Water Quality monitoring. The current format, which started in 2013, monitors specific land ownerships every 5 years and includes state forest lands among several other landownership types. This long-term monitoring has shown high rates of correct application on state owned lands in the category of “fuels, waste, and spills”. Most recently in 2023, a correct application of 98.7% was documented, while 100% in both 2018 and 2013 were recorded.
Correction <i>(to be prepared by Organization)</i>	This item was referred to Division of Forestry – Public Lands Team (PLT) on February 27th, 2025 for their review of handbook language and guidance provided to staff about spill kits on timber sales. The Team determined changes to the Timber Sale Handbook were not needed at this time and referred this item to the Field Implementation Team (FIT) for further communication to staff. On April 9th, 2025, FIT discussed this item. It was determined that FIT members would communication down their chain-of-command to emphasize this requirement to field staff.
Corrective Action Plan <i>(to be prepared by Organization)</i>	An article was published on April 29th, 2025 in the internal Division of Forestry newsletter, (ForesTREEporter). This weekly newsletter is the means by which critical information is distributed to all Division of Forestry employees. This newsletter is required reading for staff. The purpose of the article was to remind/educate staff of the existing handbook language and forms regarding spill kit requirements on timber sales.

	This item was also a component of the “Forest Certification 101” annual training recorded and distributed by Walcisk on July 24th, 2025 and covered in the State Lands Pre-Audit meeting by Walcisk on July 31 st , 2025.	
SCS Review of Action Plan	☒ Accepted	☐ Rejected (<i>explain</i>):
	SCS representative: Brendan Grady	Date: 12/20/24
Evidence and Actions Implemented by Organization	Review of articles and discussions with staff indicated that additional training had occurred and the staff was aware of the requirement.	
SCS Review of Implemented Actions	Interview with the one active logger indicated that the DNR staff had checked for a spill kit and that one was on-site the day the audit was conducted.	
Status of Finding:	☒ Closed ☐ Upgraded to Major ☐ Other decision (<i>refer to description above</i>)	

Finding Number: 2024.2	
Finding and Deadline	☐ Major: Pre-condition to certification ☐ Major: 3 months from Closing Meeting ☒ Minor: Next audit (surveillance or re-evaluation) or 12 months from closing ☐ OFI: no deadline ☐ Exceeds: no deadline ☐ Other deadline (specify):
SFI Indicator:	13.1.3 Staff education and training sufficient to their roles and responsibilities.
☒ Non-Conformity ☐ Background/ Justification in the case of OFI or Exceeds Management system procedures were not properly implemented on the Lodi Dodi timber sale. A new forester found that 65 acres were harvested with zero loads of timber accounted for in the pre-paid load ticket system. DNR did receive mill copies for only three loads, although pre-paid haul tickets were not used with these loads as required. Documents indicate the mandatory pre-sale meeting with DNR staff and the logging contractor was not done onsite and signed, as is required in the Timber Sale Handbook, and there were only 3 harvest inspections done with the first being done 6-weeks after cutting began. The logging contract breach has been properly forwarded to legal and upper management for ongoing investigation and resolution. Therefore, a minor Corrective Action Request is issued to provide forest workers with sufficient guidance and supervision to adequately implement their respective components of the plan (management system), as required by the indicator.	
Root Cause Analysis (to be prepared by Organization)	Administering forestry staff did not conduct a pre-sale meeting onsite with the operator/purchaser prior to harvest operations beginning. The Timber Sale Contractor Checklist: Pre-sale Meeting (Form 2460-009) was not used. The pre-sale meeting occurred verbally, over the phone only. The Timber Sale Inspection Form (2460-002) was utilized, but not as prescribed in handbook. There are numerous mandatory items which must be checked for contract compliance during each site visit. While the proper form was used, the entries only indicated the dates a forester visited the site. No other information

	was recorded. Lastly, the frequency of timber sale inspections was not conducted on a regular basis as operation of the sale dictated. This is required in handbook.	
Correction (to be prepared by Organization)	All staff who administer timber sales must use the Timber Sale Contractor Checklist: Pre-Sale Meeting (Form 2460-009) and Timber Sale Inspection Form (2460-002). Pre-sale inspections must occur with the purchaser onsite prior to operations commencing and to regularly inspect timber sale operation.	
Corrective Action Plan (to be prepared by Organization)	This item has been referred to Division specialist and the Public Lands Team (PLT) for their review of handbook language and guidance provided to staff specific to timber sale administration. PLT convenes the next Public Forest Lands Handbook update in October 2025. This item was also a component of the "Forest Certification 101" annual training recorded and distributed by Walcisak on July 24th, 2025 and will be a focal point of an upcoming new training series on timber sale administration for field foresters and first line supervisors. Dodgeville Area leadership has also addressed this matter with their local staff as a means to prevent it from occurring in the future.	
SCS Review of Action Plan	☒ Accepted	☐ Rejected (<i>explain</i>):
	SCS representative: Brendan Grady	Date: 12/20/24
Evidence and Actions Implemented by Organization	A new training was being conducted during the audit in the Dodgeville area that addresses this issue.	
SCS Review of Implemented Actions	Discussion with staff that were conducting the training and review of the training material confirmed additional training was occurring.	
Status of Finding:	☒ Closed ☐ Upgraded to Major ☐ Other decision (<i>refer to description above</i>)	

Finding Number: 2024.3		
Finding and Deadline	☐ Major: Pre-condition to certification ☐ Major: 3 months from Closing Meeting ☒ Minor: Next audit (surveillance or re-evaluation) or 12 months from closing ☐ OFI: no deadline ☐ Exceeds: no deadline ☐ Other deadline (specify):	
SFI Indicator:	1.1.5 Documentation of forest management consistent with assumptions in harvest plans.	
☒ Non-Conformity ☐ Background/ Justification in the case of OFI or Exceeds Review of WisFIRS records indicate that only 4 of 15 completed harvest operations visited had the next scheduled treatment completed. Next scheduled treatments can include regeneration monitoring following operations, thinning, or harvesting and is required stand data to be updated in WISFIRS		

according to the Timber Sale Handbook. Therefore, a minor Corrective Action Request is issued to address the non-conformance with indicator 1.1.5.		
Root Cause Analysis <i>(to be prepared by Organization)</i>	The root cause analysis has determined handbook language is unclear regarding the timeline in which recon updates must occur. Existing handbook language for the updating of recon is being interpreted differently amongst field staff and supervisors.	
Correction <i>(to be prepared by Organization)</i>	For all forestry staff who are responsible for recon updates, do so in a timely manner after a timber sale is closed-out. This includes all information contained within the WisFIRS “Recon” tab. The Public Forest Lands Handbook requires recon (all data within the WisFIRS Recon tab) to be updated when a timber sale is closed-out. This includes scheduling the next treatment for each stand which was part of the timber sale being closed-out. Treatments may include commercial, non-commercial, cultural practices, and/or regeneration checks.	
Corrective Action Plan <i>(to be prepared by Organization)</i>	Use analysis of WIFRS to determine issue in Jan. 2025 then use January 2025 analysis as “base” for current conditions and re-run analysis in August 2025 to show change through implementation actions. Review pertinent sections of Public Lands and Timber Sale handbooks. Public Lands Team (PLT) to identify potential opportunities for improved language on clarity of updating treatments after timber sale closeouts. March 14th, 2025 “Lunch and Learn” provided by Division of Forestry specialists and guest field staff on harvest planning and recon tips was presented to Division of Forestry staff and recorded. Much of this session was dedicated to correction of the 2024 Minor CAR mentioned above. March 20th, 2025, ForestREEporter article recapping the “Lunch and Learn” on harvest planning and recon tips	
SCS Review of Action Plan	☒ Accepted	☐ Rejected <i>(explain)</i> :
	SCS representative: Brendan Grady	Date: 12/20/24
Evidence and Actions Implemented by Organization	Review of analysis comparing January to August indicated the issue is being addressed.	
SCS Review of Implemented Actions	Review of analysis done in January compared to same analysis done in August confirm emphasis on this issue is working. The rate of issues dropped by 74%. Interviews with staff and review of the WIFRS system confirm that the treatments are being entered.	
	☒ Closed ☐ Upgraded to Major ☐ Other decision <i>(refer to description above)</i>	

4.5 New Corrective Action Requests, OFIs, and Exceeds

Finding Number: 2025-1

Finding and Deadline	☐ Major: Pre-condition to certification ☐ Major: 3 months from Closing Meeting ☐ Minor: Next audit (surveillance or re-evaluation) or 12 months from closing ☒ OFI: no deadline ☐ Exceeds: no deadline ☐ Other deadline (specify):	
SFI Indicator:	SFI PM 1.1.5 Documentation of forest management consistent with assumptions in harvest plans.	
☐ Non-Conformity ☒ Background/ Justification in the case of OFI or Exceeds Wisconsin DNR conducts wildlife habitat management and areas with farming agreements for wildlife food plots. A food plot with a farming agreement had a management activity that was not documented in the harvest plan.		
Action Plan and Root Cause Analysis (to be prepared by Organization)	<i>[Instruction: FME should describe actions to be taken to prevent <u>reoccurrence of the non-conformity</u>. This is due to the lead auditor within 5 days of closing meeting. Delete this instruction before submitting for technical review.]</i>	
SCS Review of Action Plan	☐ Accepted SCS representative:	☐ Rejected (explain): Date:
Evidence and Actions Implemented by Organization		
SCS Review of Implemented Actions		
Status of Finding:	☐ Closed ☐ Upgraded to Major ☐ Other decision (refer to description above)	

5. Certification Decision

The certificate holder has demonstrated continued overall conformance to the applicable Sustainable Forestry Initiative standards. The SCS annual audit team recommends that the certificate be sustained, subject to subsequent annual audits and the Certified Organization's response to any open CARs.	Yes ☒ No ☐
Comments: None	

