

Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Tree Farm Group

101 S. Webster Street
Madison, WI 53703

FRS 1Y942

AFF 2015-2019 Standards of
Sustainability for Forest Certification of Private Lands

2016 Surveillance Audit

NSF International Forestry Program Audit Report

A. Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Tree Farm Group

NSF Customer Number (FRS) 1Y942

B. Scope of Certification

Enrolled Wisconsin Managed Forest Law program members.

The ATF certification number is NSF-ATF-1Y942.

The 2015-2020 ATFS Standards of Sustainability align and build upon the 2010-2015 ATFS Standards of Sustainability to expand and further enhance responsible forest management under ATFS. As such, conformity assessments to the 2015-2020 ATFS Standards of Sustainability through a third-party audit conducted by accredited certification bodies provides reasonable assurance that the 2010-2015 Standards of Sustainability are being achieved.

C. NSF Audit Team: Mike Ferrucci, NSF Lead Auditor; Tucker Watts, Kyle Meister, Auditors

D. Audit Dates: June 6-10, 2016

E. Reference Documentation (Standards, Guidance, etc.)

AFF 2015-2020 Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification and Guidance

ATFS Eligibility Requirements

ATFS Logo Use Guidelines

AFF Disputes and Appeals Procedures

Company Documentation (Program Manual, Procedures, etc.)

State of Wisconsin, Department of Natural Resources, Forest Tax Law Handbook 2450.5

MFL - Certified Group Members [PDF] (as of 2/29/2016) <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/TimberSales/mfl.html#members>

F. Audit Results: Based on the results of this assessment, the auditor concluded:

Acceptable with no nonconformities

The following nonconformities were identified and will require corrective action.

Major: 0 Minor: 0

In addition, 5 opportunities for improvement (OFIs) were identified)

Corrective actions and supporting documentation should be submitted to NSF through the NSF Online Customer Portal. For assistance, please contact your NSF Certification Project Manager.

G. Changes to Operations or to the Standard

Note: *Were there any significant changes in operations, procedures, specifications, facility records, etc., from the previous visit?*

Yes, please explain: There have been several administrative changes as directed by new legislation. Cutting notices can now be submitted by credentialed foresters or by persons with at least 5 years' experience in managing forests, with an option for the landowner to not select the box for "pre-treatment DNR review", reducing slightly the pre-treatment scrutiny; the Forestry Division still has post-treatment inspection/approval authority. In future for new entries parcels must have twenty

(20) contiguous acres to be eligible, yield taxes have been eliminated, and the opt-out provision has been changed to an opt-in provision.

No

H. Other Issues Reviewed

- Yes No N/A Public report from previous audit(s) is posted on the Wisconsin MFL website <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/TimberSales/mfl.html> , linked to the ATFS website.
- Yes No N/A Relevant industry specific logos or labels (SFI, PEFC, etc.) are utilized correctly.
- Yes No N/A Relevant accreditation logos (ANSI or ANAB) are utilized correctly and meet rules specified in AESOP 4876 sections 12-15 and AESOP 14680 section GP-59.
- Yes No N/A Nonconformities from previous audit were reviewed.

I. Future Audit Schedule

Following the initial registration audit, continued certification requires annual assessments commonly referred to as "Surveillance Audits". Additionally, at the end of the certification period, maintaining certification requires the completion of a recertification or "Reassessment Audit". The next audit is a Surveillance Audit, scheduled to be conducted June 2017.

J. Appendices

- Appendix 1 Audit Plan
- Appendix 2 ATFS Audit Checklists
- Appendix 3 Site Visit Notes
- Appendix 4 Opening and Closing Meeting Attendees
- Appendix 5 ATFS Summary
- Appendix 6 ATFS Reporting Form

Appendix 1 Audit Plan

March 30, 2016

Mark Heyde, Forest Certification Program Manger
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 S. Webster St.
Madison, WI 53703

RE: Audit Plan for the 2016 Wisconsin MFL Program, American Tree Farm System

Dear Mark,

As we discussed, I will be conducting your MFL Program, audit as described in the attached itinerary. Please confirm that these dates are still appropriate for the audit of your program's continued conformance to the American Tree Farm System standards.

Documentation Requested

Background material on the MFL and on the "Certified Plan Writer Program" should be updated, if there have been any changes.

On the first day in each DNR Office/County, please provide each auditor the following for the selected sites:

- Daily agendas including starting time and location
- List of Tree Farms selected (Note: The names of landowners and foresters we are expected to meet would be helpful but not critical to have in advance.)
- Management plans for the selected tracts
- Example timber harvest contracts (not required for all selections; a sample can be provided when we meet owners)
- Copies of the most recent inspection forms for the selected tracts

Role of the American Tree Farm Program

As a reminder, your organization is responsible for contacting ATFS and complying with all requirements before using or changing any Tree Farm Logo. Your contact is: [Kristina Duff, the Certification Manager at American Forest Foundation, at kduff@forestfoundation.org](mailto:kduff@forestfoundation.org).

Agenda for Review

Attached for your review is the tentative agenda that will guide the conduct of the audit. Please contact me via email or phone if you would like to recommend changes or have any questions regarding what is needed for the audit.

Thank you for selecting NSF International to provide your audit services.

Sincerely,



Mike Ferrucci, Lead Auditor, NSF
203-887-9248 mferrucci@iforest.com

Audit Agenda

Type of Audit

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Readiness Review (Stage 1) | <input type="checkbox"/> Registration (Stage 2) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Surveillance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reassessment | <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer | <input type="checkbox"/> Verification |

Audit Objectives

1. Review findings from past audits.
2. Determine whether the Group Organization's administration and management remains in conformance with the requirements of ATFS Independently Managed Group Certification Requirements, ATFS document Number: ATFS-IMG-2015-2020.
3. Determine whether the forest management of the Group Members is in conformance with the AFF Standards, Core Performance Measures and Primary Indicators of the 2015-2020 Standards.

Scope of Audit

The scope statement to appear on the certificate is as follows:

Enrolled Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Program members. The ATFS Certificate Number is NSF-ATFP-1Y942.

Audit Outline

Dates: June 6-10, 2016; June 5th travel day

Audit team - Mike Ferrucci (ATFS lead), Kyle Meister (FSC lead), and Tucker Watts

Six Audit Sites - Barron, Brule, Gordon, Pattison, Barnes, and Ellsworth DNR Offices/FMUs

FMU selection of active or completed timber sales within the last two years; stratified by acreage category per ATFS guidance. Total sample size of 6 FMUs.

Audit Logistics

Audit team- MSP arrival & departure

If lodging is needed for the audit team and has not yet been booked, please make arrangements at this time;

Plans should be made to have lunch on site to expedite the visit;

Travel will occur in your vehicle(s) each day during the audit. Audit team will have one rental vehicle for transportation to hotel location at the start and end of the audits.

Certification Coordinator: Wisconsin DNR

Mark A. Heyde, Forest Certification Coordinator

Public and Private Forestry Section, Bureau of Forest Management

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

phone: (608) 267-0565 cell: (608) 220-9780 mark.heyde@wisconsin.gov

Group Manager: Wisconsin DNR

Gerald (Jerry) Crow, Forest Tax Program Field Manager

Public and Private Forestry Section, Bureau of Forest Management

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

phone: (715) 453-2188 x1260 cell: (715) 612-0980 gerald.crow@wisconsin.gov

Audit Team:

Mike Ferrucci ATFS Lead Auditor for NSF	Cell: 203-887-9248	mferrucci@iforest.com
Kyle Meister FSC Lead Auditor for SCS	Cell: 503-758-7768	kmeister@scsglobalservices.com
Tucker Watts Audit Team Member	Cell: 601-622-6487	jtwatts1@gmail.com

Schedule

6 – June – 2016	
FMU/Location/ sites visited	Activities/ notes
(all auditors) 7:30 AM Gordon Fire Station	Opening Meeting: Introductions, client update, review audit scope, audit plan, intro/update to FSC and SCS standards and protocols, review of open CARs/OBS, final site selection
8 a.m. Depart for field	Ferrucci: Gordon Meister: Brule Watts: Pattison
7 – June – 2016	
FMU/Location/ sites visited*	Activities/ notes
Daily Schedule: 8 am to 4:30 pm	Ferrucci: Gordon Meister: Brule Watts: Pattison
8 – June – 2016	
FMU/Location/ sites visited*	Activities/ notes
	Ferrucci: Ellsworth Meister: Barron Watts: Barnes
9 – June – 2016	
FMU/Location/ sites visited*	Activities/ notes
	Ferrucci: Ellsworth Meister: Barron Watts: Barnes
10 – June – 2016	
FMU/Location/ sites visited*	Activities/ notes
ATF Central Office Review 7-10 am ATF Closing Meeting will be 10 am Ferrucci only	Baldwin Office: Closing Meeting Preparation: Auditor(s) take time to consolidate notes and confirm audit findings Closing Meeting and Review of Findings: Convene with all relevant staff to summarize audit findings, potential non-conformities and next steps
Auditors depart: Meister, Watts: evening of June 9; Ferrucci: 11 am June 10	

Appendix 2 ATFS Audit Checklists

**NSF International Forestry Program
American Tree Farm System Standard 2015-2020 Audit Checklist**

1Y942 - Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Tree Farm Group

Name of Group Manager: Wisconsin DNR Managed Forest Law Program

Date of audit: June 6 through 10, 2016

Audit Type

- Full Review
 Partial Review (Surveillance Audit)
 Regional Groups (RG)
 Independent Management Groups (IMG)

Logo use requirements under ATFS are met

- Yes
 No
 N/A

Audit Notes: No issues were observed.

Information from external parties about this program was reviewed

- Yes
 No
 N/A

Audit Notes: Interviewed loggers, sawmill owner, and some Tree Farm owners.

[For IMGs only]: Program categorized group member into one of 3 categories for types of group members

- Yes
 No
 N/A

Audit Notes:

Section 1: Group Organization Administration

1.1 Legal and General Requirements

a. The Group Organization must be a legal entity competent to sign agreements with Group Members and to enter into binding contracts with Certification Bodies and other outside entities.

- Yes
 No
 N/A

Audit Notes: The WDNR Division of Forestry is a legal entity created by the state legislature.

Chapter 21 of the Forest Tax Law Handbook contains the following relevant sections:

- Group Administration
- Group Membership Fees
- Group Membership for New MFL Orders and Transferred Lands"

b. The Group Organization must identify Group Members' category.

I. The Group Organization *must* document the group member category (see above section on Group Member types).

- Yes
 No
 N/A

Audit Notes: Group member category is declared in the revised Forest Tax Law Handbook, Chapter 21 p21-2: Group members within the MFL Certified Group are declared to be in Category 1, which means that group members retain all decision making responsibility for land management practices."

II. The Group Organization *must* describe roles and responsibilities of the Group Manager and Group Members with respect to forest management decisions and actions with respect to the implementation of the AFF Standards (e.g. plan development, harvesting, monitoring, etc.)

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: revised Forest Tax Law Handbook, Chapter 21:
 The Group Organization – Roles and Responsibilities

- Group Manager (21-4)
- DNR Service Forester (21-4)
- Cooperating Foresters (21-5)
- Group Members (21-6)

III. The Group Organization *must* have a written commitment to sustainable forestry and conformance to the AFF Standards.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: As documented in the Forest Law Handbook, DNR is committed to conform to ATFS principles, criteria and performance measures in the administration of the Managed Forest Law. Inspected the Authority and Purpose Section of the Handbook. Until a recent legislative change MFL participants who elected not to depart from the MFL Certified Group also agreed to conform to ATFS standards. The change to an Opt-in approach was being implemented at the time of the audit and was not reviewed in detail.

IV. The Group Organization *must* ensure Group Members have a written commitment to sustainable forestry and conformance to the AFF Standards of Sustainability.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: A commitment statement is found in the revised MFL Application Form R10-15 and in the revised Managed Forest Law Ownership Change Form 2450-159 (R06-16).
 MFL Landowners can opt-in or out of the MFL Certified Group at any time by filing the Managed Forest Law Group Application/Departure Request Form (DNR Form 2450-192). Landowners are not allowed to repeatedly opt-in and out, to ensure that they are not using this option to avoid certification requirements.

1.2 Roles & Responsibilities

a. The Group Organization must adhere to ATFS eligibility requirements and may further define membership parameters for their Group, if desired.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: WDNR has further defined its group membership parameters including:

- Own 10 to 2,470 acres (1,000 hectares) of MFL lands
- Have an MFL Forest Stewardship Plan for the land. "MFL large ownerships" as defined in chapter NR 46.18(4), Wis. Adm. Code are not eligible to join the MFL Certified Group. Such large ownerships (generally companies with their own professional forestry staff or retained access to forestry consulting services) should seek forest certification on their own and not through the MFL Program.
- Designate an entire MFL Order to be certified. Land enrolled under a single MFL order may be either in or out of the MFL Certified Group, but a single MFL order cannot have a portion which is certified and a portion which is not.

The Eligibility Section of Chapter 21 is undergoing revision to align the requirements with the new law, including a minimum of 20 contiguous acres for new contracts.

- b. The Group Organization must designate a Group Manager(s) that is responsible for overseeing all of the administrative details of ATFS Group Certification and for ensuring compliance with all applicable requirements.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: Gerald Crow, Forest Tax Law Field Manager is also acting in the role of group manager until the Division of Forestry Forest Tax Law Policy Chief/Specialist position is filled.

Per Chapter 21 of the Tax Law Handbook:

The Division of Forestry Forest Tax Law Policy Chief is designated as the group manager who administers the affairs of the MFL Certified Group. More broadly, the group manager may delegate authority to the DNR Forest Certification Coordinator, other central office staff, district staff and cooperating foresters. The group manager (including delegated roles):

- Maintains the records of the group organization.
- Track participation in the MFL Certified Group with the MFL master database.
- Processes applications for membership into the group organization.
- Conducts ongoing monitoring of conformance of group administration and members with the ATFS and FSC standards.
- Applies for certification on behalf of landowners in the MFL Certified Group and selects an accredited certification body to conduct the certification audit.
- Represents the group organization throughout the audit process.
- Maintains the ATFS and FSC group certificate on behalf of the group organization and controls the claims that the group organization can make.
- Is responsible for making sure that any public claims about the independent certification are accurate and truthful, and consistent with truth in advertising guidelines. (Use of applicable logos shall be in accordance with ATFS and FSC guidelines.)
- Is responsible for ensuring timely reporting and payment of fees to ATFS and FSC.”

1.3 Group Membership

- a. The Group Organization must inform Group Members of any and all fees associated with administration of the Group, if any, when they join the group organization.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: WDNR does not charge any fees to MFL owners. This is documented in the MFL fact sheet.

- b. The Group Organization must hold the ATFS Certificate on behalf of the Group Members.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: WDNR does hold the Certificate on behalf of the Group.

- c. The Group Organization must follow the ATFS logo use guidelines and ensure proper use of promotional claims about the Group Certification.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: Wisconsin DNR uses the ATFS logo on the website. This logo use has been reviewed and approved.

The WDNR Forest Certification Manager is aware of the requirements regarding promotional claims and regularly reviews documents for consistency with requirements. This increased awareness and effort is partially in response to the OFI from the 2015 Report “An Opportunity for Improvement is to review all uses of the term ATFS and American Tree Farm System to ensure proper use of the Registration Mark.”

- d. The Group Organization must issue a document to each Group Member that confirms the Group Member participation and coverage by the scope of the third-party certificate.

Yes No OFI

Audit Notes: The "Order of Entry" letter to each new or transferred MFL Contract includes a statement regarding membership in the ATF Group.

In addition, the application for enrollment in the MFL program has a check box:

"I/We elect to participate in the MFL Certified Group and agree to abide by the land management requirements as described in the current forest certification standards for both the American Tree Farm System® and the Forest Stewardship Council®. I/We understand that entering into the MFL Certified Group allows forest products to be marketed as "certified".

1.4 Group Member Entry & Departure from the Group Organization

a. The Group Organization must ensure that Group Members are notified that they are subject to all of the requirements and privileges of membership in the American Tree Farm System®. Under this requirement, category 1 Group Members must be notified to the individual landowner level and category 2 Group Members must be notified to the portfolio level.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: All participants are Group 1 members. The application for enrollment in the MFL program has a check box:

"I/We elect to participate in the MFL Certified Group and agree to abide by the land management requirements as described in the current forest certification standards for both the American Tree Farm System® and the Forest Stewardship Council®. I/We understand that entering into the MFL Certified Group allows forest products to be marketed as "certified".

A one page information sheet has been developed "MFL and Forest Certification- What does joining the MFL certified group mean for me?" As the Opt-in process is rolled out, more information and awareness of ATFS cert should serve to keep landowners in the Program.

b. The Group Organization must define and administer a procedure for admitting Group Members.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: Procedures for admitting group members are the same as for admittance into MFL. These procedures are extensive and found in various portions of the "Tax Law Handbook".

c. The Group Organization must maintain a procedure for expelling Group Members if they do not meet the requirements of the AFF Standard, and are not willing or able to take appropriate corrective action.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: From Chapter 21:

Deactivation from the MFL Certified Group

MFL Certified Group membership for an MFL Order may be deactivated under any of the following circumstances following appropriate procedures as outlined in Chapter 60 on Enforcement:

1. Voluntary withdrawal from MFL
2. Involuntary MFL withdrawal
3. MFL order expiration
4. Use of an FSC prohibited, highly hazardous pesticide except on a food plot that has been excised from the MFL group certificate.
5. Planting FSC-prohibited Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in a forest except on a food plot that has been excised from the MFL group certificate.
6. Mixing forest products harvested from non-MFL Certified Group land with MFL Certified Group wood to falsely claim the non-MFL products under the MFL Chain of Custody certification
7. Willful or blatant violations of Wisconsin Forestry Best Management Practices

- 8. Refusal to allow forest certification auditors or DNR staff onto the property for the purpose of conformance reviews
- 9. Deliberate or repeated violations of federal, state or local laws and regulations applicable to forest management
- 10. Inappropriate use of certification logos or trademarks
- 11. Deliberate or manifest nonconformance with other forest certification indicators

2015 Report "MFL Certified Group membership for an MFL Order may be deactivated under certain circumstances following appropriate procedures as outlined in Chapter 60 on Enforcement. Also inspected Chapter 21 addressing voluntary departure from Group Membership. Those Procedures will not be repeated here.

- d. The Group Organization must maintain and update the membership list and ATFS database to reflect entries and departures of Group Members from the Group Organization.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: The Wisconsin DNR website has a web page with a pdf document of the list of the current IMG members, as of February 29, 2016.

Information about departures is maintained in the History database.

1.5 Dispute Resolution

- a. The Group Organization must have a procedure for addressing and resolving disputes regarding conformance with the AFF Standards between and among the Group Members and the Group Organization pertaining to Tree Farm certification.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: The Forest Tax Law Handbook has a section titled: Enforcement and Dispute Resolution Process.

- b. The Group Organization must follow and conform to the AFF Dispute Resolution Policy and assist ATFS in resolving any such complaints.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: WDNR's dispute resolution process conforms to the AFF Policy.

Most enforcement cases are related to the MFL Law.

1.6 Maintaining Records of Group Member

- a. The Group Organization must maintain internal Group Member records and provide updated information on a regular basis to the ATFS Database.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: WDNR maintains a database that contains all required information about current members. Information is provided to ATFS on an annual basis.

Since the MFL and Forest Crop Law (FCL) lands share many of the same forms, an FCL property was marked as certified in the cutting notice (Order # 16-001-1998). The land manager in this case has lands enrolled in both programs. Since no harvest has occurred yet, there is still an opportunity to address this situation before it could result in a non-conformance.

Section 2: Requirements of Participation in the American Tree Farm System®

2.1 Access to the AFF Standards

- a. The Group Organization must make the AFF Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification accessible to Group Members.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: Confirmed the Standards are accessible via external links on WDNR's website. The current AFF Standard were inspected on the web link.

2.2 Conformance with AFF Standards

- a. The group organization must have a procedure for evaluating conformance with AFF Standards prior to property enrollment under the group certificate.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: Procedures for admitting group members are the same as for admittance into MFL. These procedures are extensive and found in various portions of the "Tax Law Handbook", Chapter 21.

- b. Management Plan: The Group Organization must ensure that each Group Member either has an individual management plan or is covered by a larger group management plan where responsibility for management has been delegated to a Category 2 with a qualified natural resource professional.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: WDNR requires that each group member has a current individual management plan. DNR provides potential group members with a list of Certified Plan Writers, which is also available through the on-line "Find a Forester" tool. Other DNR Procedures contained on websites, in Handbooks and other documents also constitute Group Organization planning.

2.3 Eligibility

- a. The Group Organization must have a procedure for evaluating eligibility according to the ATFS Eligibility Requirements prior to property enrollment under the group certificate.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: Procedures for admitting group members are the same as for admittance into MFL. These procedures are extensive and found in various portions of the "Tax Law Handbook".

Section 3: Internal Monitoring and Reporting

3.1 Ongoing Monitoring

a. The Group Organization must establish and maintain a procedure and schedule for conducting ongoing monitoring of conformance with the AFF Standards.

Yes No N/A O.F.I.

Audit Notes: Interviews with DNR foresters who work with MFL group members indicated some confusion on what actions staff can take when group members' cutting notices are missing information or otherwise incomplete (DNR only reviews for approval upon landowner request). A FAQ document was prepared and distributed to some staff (note: this is not dated) this document mentions that concerns can be documented in the group member's file and communicated to the accredited forester. Updates to the law have broadened the group of people who can submit an MFL cutting notice. It is unclear to some staff what actions staff can or should take after the cutting notice is filed.

There is an Opportunity for Improvement for more guidance and/or training regarding the cutting notice and cutting report processes, and how deviations from ATF (and/or MFL) requirements are to be handled.

b. IMG Inspectors of the Group Organization conducting internal monitoring must have completed the current ATFS Tree Farm Inspector training course.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: Interviews confirmed that foresters who have had MFL duties for some time have the training, but employees with new MFL-related duties have not all yet received their training.

c. The Group Organization must review conformance to the AFF Standards and document the relevant findings.

Yes No N/A O.F.I.

Audit Notes: In the past, cutting notices were reviewed and approved by DNR. The new legislation has specified a broader range of expertise for this approach.

There is an Opportunity for Improvement to clarify the impacts of these changes on the variability of implementation of sound forestry practices and thus on the nature and extent of monitoring/internal auditing.

d. Where a non-conformance is identified during ongoing monitoring, the Group Organization must document the non-conformity and work with the Group Member and other appropriate parties to take corrective action.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: Review of internal audit report (4.04.16) and interviews with Wisconsin DNR foresters confirm that this is done.

e. The Group Organization must ensure implementation of the corrective action and monitor conformity as part of the regular schedule of internal monitoring.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: Review of internal audits and interviews with Wisconsin DNR foresters confirm that this is done.

3.2 Annual Reporting to the American Tree Farm System

a. The Group Organization must adhere to the annual reporting requirements as defined by ATFS and maintain copies of past annual reports.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: The report was sent to ATF on 2.26.16; the response was confirmed. A copy of the report was reviewed.

Section 4: Independent Audit

4.1 Managing the Group Certification Process

- a. The Group Organization must contract with an accredited Certification Body to conduct the independent certification. The accredited certification body is required to conduct the audit according to accreditation rule, #27 under ANSI – American National Accreditation Body or the Standards Council of Canada.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: WDNR has contracted with NSF to conduct the independent certification according to the ANSI accreditation rules.

- b. The Group Organization must coordinate the independent audit procedure to ensure the Certification Body has access to sufficient information and Group Member properties to determine conformance to the AFF Standard and ATFS Group Certification Standard.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: During the 2015 audit all requested information was provided by DNR staff. The WisFIRS* system and associated computer programs, databases, and tools integrate easily and ensure that all involved, including third-party auditors, have ready access to key information.

*WisFIRS (Wisconsin Forest Inventory and Reporting System) is a multi-year project being developed that will enable foresters to store data collected in the field, plan for and track completed treatments (e.g. timber sales), report accomplishments and calculate the financial aspects of the timber sales, to name a few. This application manages core business functions for public and private forest management in Wisconsin, serving hundreds of DNR staff as well as our partners (county foresters and certified plan writers). Due to the importance of knowing where on the landscape practices are being done, geographical information systems (GIS) is being integrated throughout the system. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestManagement/wisfirsIntro.html>

- c. If the certification audit results in a non-conformity, the Group Organization must work with all appropriate parties take corrective action and ensure timely implementation.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: There have not been any non-conformances in the past 2 years.

- d. The Group Organization must submit a copy of the ATFS Certificate and a summary of the audit report that is appropriate for public distribution to ATFS.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: Confirmed that this information was provided by reviewing the transmittal email.

- e. The Group Organization must keep the Group Organization's program up-to-date and in ongoing conformance with the AFF Standard.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: The MFL Program has been updated regularly and appears to be in on-going conformance.

(End)

NSF International Forestry Program

American Tree Farm System Standard 2015-2020 Monitoring Checklist

Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Tree Farm Group

NSF Customer Number (FRS) 1Y942

Name of Group Manager: Wisconsin DNR

Date of audit: June 6 to 10, 2016

A check Mark (X) indicates Conformance (Conform), Major Non-conformance (Major), Minor Non-conformance (Minor), and Opportunity for Improvement (OFI). N/A is indicated if the Core Performance Measure and/or Primary Indicators is not applicable under Objective Evidence. (Note that conformance is measured to the Core Performance Measures and Primary Indicators. Performance Measures and Indicators with the term shall are considered Core and Primary, respectively).

Standard 1: Commitment to Practicing Sustainable Forestry

Landowner demonstrates commitment to **forest health** and **sustainability** by developing a forest **management plan** and implementing sustainable practices.

Performance Measure 1.1

Landowner shall have and implement a written forest **management plan** consistent with the size of the forest and the **scale** and intensity of the forest activities.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: All enrolled MFL properties audited have written plans that are consistent with forest size and landowner objectives as well as the scale and intensity of activities, which are often modest. Management plans reflect not only the landowner's specific plan, but the other procedures and programs of the DNR's MFL Program. The partnership between the WDNR and Cooperating Foresters provides landowners with excellent advice and service.

Indicator 1.1.1

Management plan shall be active, adaptive and embody the **landowner's** current objectives, remain appropriate for the land certified and reflect the current state of knowledge about natural resources and **sustainable forest management**.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Plans are implemented and are updated in accordance with a systematic process. The "Cutting Notice" prepared prior to treatments provides an opportunity to adjust the prescription to accommodate changes in field conditions or objectives; this method was seen in the files for several of the MFL tracts selected for review.

Plans for 13% of the enrolled Tree Farms (comprising 15.5% of the enrolled acres) are associated with 50-year MFL Contracts/Agreements. All plans are updated when there is a change of ownership, a change in the landowner's objectives, or when forest conditions have significantly changed. Some portions of some plans may not be updated for many years, although plans selected for review during this audit were mostly up-to-date.

The use of the formal "Cutting Notice" portion of the form 2450 is an important mechanism driving plan currency. Good relationships between DNR's staff of "Private Lands Foresters" and the consulting foresters who are either "Certified Plan Writers" and/or "Cooperating Consultants" helps ensure that accurate, timely information about forest conditions is provided to the DNR foresters who enter update information into the WISFIRS database. Recent legislation affecting the operation of the MFL Program may impact the quality and reliability of cutting notice information used to update plans or other aspects of program operations. Future audits must include a thorough review of the impacts of any changes in the program.

Indicator 1.1.2

Management plans shall describe current forest conditions, **landowner's objectives**, management activities aimed at achieving **landowner's objectives**, document a feasible strategy for activity implementation and include a map accurately depicting significant forest related resources.

The forest management plan shall demonstrate consideration of the following resource elements: forest health, soil, water, wood and fiber production, threatened and endangered species, **special sites, invasive species** and **forests of recognized importance**. Where present and relevant to the property, the plan shall describe management activities related to these resource elements. Where present, relevant to the property, and consistent with **landowner’s objectives**, the plan preparer should consider and describe and evaluate the following resource elements: fire, wetlands, **desired species**, recreation, forest aesthetics, biomass and carbon.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: There are several elements to the “plans”, including:

- Managed Forest Lands – Stewardship Forestry Plan (more-recent), or
- Managed Forest Law Management Plan (Form 2450-132, older)
- Managed Forest Law Map (Form 2450-133)
- Land Exam and Practices Report (Form 2450-128)
- Cutting Notice & Report of Wood Products from Forest Crop and Managed Forest Lands (Form 2450-032)
- NHI data and associated maps
- Archeological data

DNR’s current policy is to update management plans under the following conditions:

- When closing out management practices after completion or when scheduled practices are not ready and/or needed.
- When new landowners purchase MFL lands and have new management goals.
- When current landowners request a change in their management plan due to changing management goals.
- When natural events occur that affect management practices as currently written (ex. Tornado, flooding, or other natural event change the stand conditions).

Plans reviewed met these requirements, with some exceptions regarding current forest conditions (see also the note for Indicator 1.1.1 above). In older plans (more than 20 years old) the descriptions of “Stand Conditions...” for stands not receiving treatment may not closely reflect current conditions, although they do help experienced local foresters who can interpret likely current conditions based on older description, elapsed time, and familiarity with the timber and vegetation types and their development patterns.

Indicator 1.1.3

Landowner should monitor for changes that could interfere with the management objectives as stated in **management plan**. When problems are found, reasonable actions are taken.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Monitoring can be done by landowners, or by their consulting foresters, supplemented by monitoring done by Wisconsin DNR Private Lands Foresters, who are attempting to increase the time devoted to such field review efforts. Several of the plans were updated, some due to changes on properties. Monitoring includes stand assessments done to prepare “Cutting Notices”, at which time the initial prescription can be modified to match conditions; harvests are occasionally deferred.

Standard 2:

Forest management activities comply with all relevant federal, state and local laws, regulations and ordinances.

Performance Measure 2.1

Landowner shall comply with all relevant federal, state, county and municipal laws, regulations and ordinances governing forest management activities.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: No instances of non-compliance were observed or reported.

Indicator 2.1.1

Landowner shall comply with all relevant laws, regulations and ordinances and will correct conditions that led to **adverse regulatory actions**, if any.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: No instances of non-compliance were observed or reported. Corrective Action to implement BMPs is immediate and oversight by the WDNR assures legal compliance

Indicator 2.1.2

Landowner should obtain advice from appropriate **qualified natural resource professionals** or **qualified contractors** who are trained in, and familiar with, relevant laws, regulations and ordinances.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Landowners obtain advice from Qualified Natural Resource professionals that are trained and in support of regulatory compliance, including advice provided by DNR and other agencies with expertise.

Plans are developed by (written by) foresters who are "Certified Plan Writer" trained, and reviewed & approved by Wisconsin DNR Private Lands Foresters. In addition the MFL program mails information about mandatory practices or changes in the program to each participant regularly. The Wisconsin DNR also provides a significant amount of information on the department's website. Discussions are underway regarding the resumption of a periodic letter or newsletter, in electronic format, which could be provided to participants.

Standard 3: Reforestation and Afforestation

Landowner completes timely restocking of **desired species** of trees on harvested sites and non-stocked areas where tree growing is consistent with land use practices and the **landowner's objectives**.

Performance Measure 3.1

Reforestation or afforestation shall be achieved by a suitable process that ensures adequate stocking levels.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Regeneration observed on most sites was reliable and quite prolific (also see notes for Indicator 3.1.1 below).

There is an Opportunity for Improvement in the use of regeneration monitoring information as part of an adaptive approach to resource management.

Indicator 3.1.1

Harvested forest land shall achieve adequate stocking of **desired species** reflecting the **landowner's objectives**, within five years after harvest, or within a time interval as specified by applicable regulation.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Field observations during the 2016 audit showed appropriate stocking levels in the overstory or main canopy (regeneration issues are covered separately) following harvests. Foresters interviewed have excellent working knowledge of silvics and silviculture and apply this knowledge effectively when prescribing, implementing, and reviewing silvicultural treatments.

Regeneration observed on most sites was reliable and quite prolific, particularly following coppice harvests and clearcuts. Regeneration issues were observed on some sites in Pierce County, notably following selection harvests in northern hardwood stands. On two sites tree seedlings were not as numerous as would be expected in and between canopy openings (gaps) and most seedlings that were observed had been repeatedly browsed. Foresters reported that time constraints linked to understaffing have limited their ability to implement regeneration checks. Wisconsin has developed a program for the use of County Deer Advisory Councils (CDAC) that "provide input and recommendations to the department on deer management ... (and) develop 3-year recommendations on county population objectives and create annual antlerless harvest quotas."

There is an Opportunity for Improvement in the use of regeneration monitoring information as part of an adaptive approach to resource management.

Standard 4: Air, Water and Soil Protection

Forest management practices maintain or enhance the environment and ecosystems, including air, water, soil and site quality.

Performance Measure 4.1

Landowner shall meet or exceed practices prescribed by **state forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs)** that are applicable to the property.

- Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Field observations during the 2016 audit indicated that Wisconsin forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) were implemented as appropriate.

Indicator 4.1.1

Landowner shall implement specific **state forestry BMPs** that are applicable to the property.

- Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Field observations during the 2016 audit showed consistent implementation of BMPs. The most commonly applied BMPs were harvest planning, use of no-cut or no-equipment buffers, and the selection of appropriate season or weather (dry or frozen soils, for example) for harvesting.

Indicator 4.1.2

Landowner shall minimize road construction and other disturbances within riparian zones and wetlands.

- Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Field observations during the 2016 audit showed that riparian zones and wetlands were commonly buffered out of sales, that few crossings were required, and that crossings that were used were appropriately located to minimize impacts to riparian zones and wetlands.

Performance Measure 4.2

Landowner shall consider a range of forest management activities to control pests, pathogens and unwanted vegetation.

- Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Foresters prescribe restrictions on harvesting during Oak Wilt season and other measures such as stocking control or matching species to site so as to maintain healthy, vigorous stands. Cutting Notices routinely contact prescriptions to address invasive plants, but there is no mechanism to track implementation. Invasive plants were observed on many sites in Pierce County. Emerald Ash Borer is a major problem with no mitigation options. There is an Opportunity to Improve efforts to control invasive exotic plants.

Indicator 4.2.1

Landowner should evaluate alternatives to pesticides for the prevention or control of pests, pathogens and unwanted vegetation to achieve specific management objectives

- Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Herbicides are rarely used on the tracts that were inspected. Some Roundup is applied to control weeds and invasive plants. Most invasive plants are not treated with chemicals.

Indicator 4.2.2

Pesticides used shall be EPA-approved and applied, stored and disposed of in accordance with EPA-approved labels and by persons appropriately trained, licensed and supervised.

- Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Very little herbicide use was evident, and most lands have not had such treatments. Applicator for Site #2, 16-014-2013 Future Forests Inc. George Swanson

Performance Measure 4.3

When used, **prescribed fire** shall conform with **landowner's objectives** and pre-fire planning.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: No prescribed fire was observed or reported.

Indicator 4.3.1

Prescribed fire shall conform with the **landowner's objectives** and state and local laws and regulations.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: No prescribed fire was observed or reported.

Standard 5: Fish Wildlife, Biodiversity and Forest Health

Landowner's objectives stated in their management plans consistently listed conservation, hunting and wildlife as having high or the highest priority. Management practices such as large legacy or mast-producing trees retained for wildlife, food plots, and retention of standing dead and down trees or carefully-selected wildlife trees support a finding of "Exceptional Practices".

Performance Measure 5.1

Forest management activities shall protect habitats and communities occupied by **threatened or endangered** species as required by law.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: All plans reviewed indicated that the Wisconsin NHI database is queried to identify known occurrences of threatened or endangered species. Most reported RTE species or communities "hits" are found, after further investigation, not to be present on the sites to be treated. Efforts are made to ensure mitigation is in place, most commonly scheduling harvests to avoid active season.

Indicator 5.1.1

Landowner shall confer with natural resource agencies, state natural resource heritage programs, **qualified natural resource professionals** or review other sources of information to determine occurrences of **threatened or endangered** species on the property and their habitat requirements.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Landowners confer with qualified resource professionals for information on T&E and other species through the NH inventory. Foresters who write and approve plans are trained on the issues, species, and habitats. Plans include references to web sites and sources for additional information. Wisconsin DNR's Private Lands Foresters often contact DNR specialists (including regional ecologists) for assistance, which has included field visits.

Indicator 5.1.2

Forest management activities shall incorporate measures to protect identified **threatened or endangered** species on the property.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: When results of database queries and further consultation or research show that protection or avoidance is needed to protect or maintain threatened or endangered species these measures are specified in cutting notices and implemented during management activities.

Performance Measure 5.2

Landowner should address the **desired species** and/or desired forest communities when conducting forest management activities, if consistent with **landowner's objectives**.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Landowners receive input from multiple sources including the WDNR, Cooperating Foresters, other agencies, hunters and outside conservation organizations. This input is integrated into forest management plans and decisions.

Performance Measure 5.3

Landowner should make practical efforts to promote **forest health**.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: See below.

Indicator 5.3.1

Landowner should make practical efforts to promote **forest health**, including prevention, control or response to disturbances such as wildland fire, **invasive species** and other pests, pathogens or unwanted vegetation, to achieve specific management objectives.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Review of management plans and documentation associated with harvests, observations, and interviews confirm that landowners, the WDNR and Cooperating Foresters work to maintain appropriate stocking, reduce risk of forest health issues, and sometimes take steps to address invasive species and other pests.

Performance Measure 5.4

Where present, forest management activities should maintain or enhance **forests of recognized importance**.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: The DNR Cutting Notices describe the results of reviews for several categories of special sites that could be related to forests of recognized importance. These special site review categories include Natural Heritage Sites, Archaeological, Cultural and Historic sites.

The concept of Forests of Recognized Importance (FORI) was added to the 2015 ATFS Standard. These are features at a landscape level which contain rare and unique resources and values of regional, national and global significance. Evaluation of FORIs is to be conducted at the landscape level.

There is an Opportunity for Improvement in the use of the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan and the Conservation Opportunity Areas approach to meet the ATF requirements for Forests of Recognized Conservation Importance.

Indicator 5.4.1

Appropriate to the **scale** and intensity of the situation, forest management activities should incorporate measures to contribute to the conservation of identified **forests of recognized importance**.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: See notes from Performance Measure 5.4 above.

Standard 6: Forest Aesthetics

Forest management activities recognize the value of forest aesthetics.

Performance Measure 6.1

Landowner should manage the visual impacts of forest management activities consistent with the size of the forest, the **scale** and intensity of forest management activities and the location of the property.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Tree Farms visited had incorporated aesthetics considerations in overall management and during harvests. Clearcuts generally rapidly revegetate, and utilization of most of the tree ensures fast decomposition of remaining logging slash. Many of the properties are quite attractive, with vistas cut or maintained, roads and/or paths seeded or mowed, and food plots throughout some forests.

Indicator 6.1.1

Forest management activities should apply visual quality measures compatible with appropriate silvicultural practices.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: The application of visual quality measures exceeds the standards. Landowners apply visual quality considerations. Single tree and Group Selections where harvesting is not readily evident are common, and heavier harvests have rapid reforestation and/or visual considerations effectively planned. Most clearcuts are quite small and are buffered by adjoining uncut or selectively-harvested stands.

Standard 7: Protect Special Sites

Special sites are managed in ways that recognize their unique historical, archeological, cultural, geological, biological or ecological characteristics.

Performance Measure 7.1

Forest management activities shall consider and maintain any **special sites** relevant on the property.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: The DNR Cutting Notices include results of reviews of information about several categories of special sites including Natural Heritage Sites, Archaeological, Cultural and Historic sites. T&E species habitats are identified and protected. Wisconsin DNR's Private Lands Foresters often contact DNR specialists (including regional ecologists) for assistance, which has included field visits. Foresters report that specialists within the DNR are readily available, generally responding to requests for information quickly, and are eager to help when contacted.

Indicator 7.1.1

Landowner shall make a reasonable effort to locate and protect **special sites** appropriate for the size of the forest and the **scale** and intensity of forest management activities.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: The DNR Cutting Notices include results of reviews of information about several categories of special sites including Natural Heritage Sites, Archaeological, Cultural and Historic sites. T&E species habitats are identified and protected.

Standard 8: Forest Product Harvests and Other Activities

Forest product harvests and other management activities are conducted in accordance with the **landowner's objectives** and consider other forest values.

Performance Measure 8.1

Landowner should use qualified natural resource professionals and qualified contractors when contracting for services.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Interviews showed that most harvests are conducted by loggers who have FISTA training. The majority of the 2016 audits were conducted in the northwestern part of Wisconsin, an area with many SFI-certified mills which require FISTA or equivalent logger training. Observations of active and completed harvests were consistent with work done by trained, experienced, and conscientious loggers.

Indicator 8.1.1

Landowner should seek **qualified natural resource professionals** and **qualified contractors**.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: The Wisconsin MFL Program demonstrated exemplary levels of support for programs that ensure professional forestry advice is readily available in many forms.

Landowners consistently seek out the help of DNR Foresters, Cooperating Foresters, and other organizations with missions or programs involving forestry, conservation, and habitat management. Landowners are receiving and have multiple access points for professional forestry advice.

Indicator 8.1.2

Landowner should engage **qualified contractors** that carry appropriate insurance and comply with appropriate federal, state and local safety and **fair labor rules**, regulations and standard practices.

Note: *Auditors shall consider any complaints alleging violation of fair labor rules filed by workers or organized labor since the previous third-party certification audit. The auditor shall not take action on any labor issues pending in a formal grievance process or before federal, state or local agencies or the courts, however, until those process are completed. Absent a record of documented complaints or noncompliances, contractors and managers are assumed to be in compliance with this indicator.*

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Timber harvesting contractors engaged normally carry appropriate insurance, and most harvests audited were conducted by logging crews with one or more FISTA-trained loggers. The availability of such trained, credentialed loggers is very high in the northern half of Wisconsin, but drops off considerably in southern Wisconsin.

Indicator 8.1.3

Landowners should retain appropriate contracts or records for **forest product** harvests and other management activities to demonstrate conformance to the Standards.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Landowners said they retain contracts and other records, but there was limited opportunity to review these.

Performance Measure 8.2

Landowner shall monitor **forest product** harvests and other management activities to ensure they conform to their objectives.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Wisconsin DNR and Cooperating Foresters effectively monitor timber harvesting and other forest management activities to ensure they conform to the Managed Forest Law and the AFF Standards of Sustainability. This includes the formal "Cutting Notice & Report of Wood Products from Forest Crop and Managed Forest Lands (Form 2450-032)".

Indicator 8.2.1

Harvest, utilization, removal and other management activities shall be conducted in compliance with the **landowner's objectives** and to maintain the potential of the property to produce **forest products** and other benefits sustainably.

Conformance O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: See above. Field observations showed that most of the harvests were done carefully and professionally, with reasonable efforts to minimize impacts to forest resources. The harvests inspected during the 2016 audit were consistent with objectives and with maintenance of ability to produce forest products and other benefits. One harvest had an area with excessive bole bark damage to otherwise desirable residual trees.

Review of 2015 Opportunities for Improvement (OFI)

Resolved: 2015 OFI – IMG Indicator 1.3. “WDNR uses the copyrighted term “American Tree Farm System” in old correspondence to landowners (11/10/2014). Technically, ATFS requires that the ® mark be used to indicate that “American Tree Farm System” is a registered trademark of the AFF on all internal and external communication. Interviews with DNR staff indicated that they are aware of the registered trademark and ATFS use requirements and are in the process of working through their old forms and procedures and incorporating the use of the registration mark after the use of the term American Tree Farm System®. An opportunity for continual improvement is to review and update internal and external correspondence and documents to correctly use the registered trademark symbol.”

Resolved: WDNR is working with USFS to try to increase the amount of funding for practices. NRCS, FSA, through EQIP **2015 OFI – Indicator 3.1.1.** “An *Opportunity for Improvement (OFI)* is to provide additional information to other landowners/Cooperating Foresters about steps that can be taken to conduct additional post-harvest Timber Stand Improvement (TSI).”

Revised and issued a similar OFI in 2016: 2015 OFI – Performance Measure 5.4 ATFS has introduced the concept of Forests of Recognized Importance (FORI). These are at a Landscape level focused on regional, national and global rare and unique values. Evaluation is to be conducted at the landscape level. While T&E species, archeological sites and caves are considered, an *Opportunity for Improvement (OFI)* is for the DNR to review what opportunities exist to promote FORI. May be broader than SFI FECV and FSC HCVF.”

Revised and issued a similar OFI in 2016: 2015 OFI – Indicator 5.4.1. “An *Opportunity for Improvement (OFI)* is for the WDNR to review and discuss the approach in the AFF Standard regarding a landscape look at forests of recognized importance and determine if any additional measures and procedures would be appropriate.”

Not an issue on 2016 sites reviewed. 2015 OFI – Performance Measure 8.1 “ATFS says landowners should engage qualified logging professionals. Note that it is Not a Shall. But, landowners do not have access to qualified contractors (trained loggers) in very many cases in the Grant & Vernon Counties. There are few SFI Mills or CoC Mills to require trained loggers. So, there appears to be a disparity between the Driftless area and other regions of the State and DNR jurisdictions. An *Opportunity for Improvement (OFI)* is to promote and logger training with logging contractors and small sawmills in the areas where industry does not require logger training and there is a shortage of qualified contractors.”

Not an issue on 2016 sites reviewed. 2015 OFI – Indicator 8.1.2 “An *Opportunity for Improvement (OFI)* is to promote and encourage logger training with logging contractors and small sawmills in the areas where industry does not generally require logger training.”

Appendix 3 Site Visit Notes

Mike Ferrucci June 6, 2016 Gordon Ranger Station South

Mark Heyde, Forest Certification Coordinator
Craig Golembieski, Wisconsin DNR Area Team Leader
Eric Martin, Wisconsin DNR Forester
Nate Haskins, Wisconsin DNR Forester
Terry Asleson, Wisconsin DNR Forester
Jeff Dendeleone, Forman, Max Erickson Logging

Site 1 16-005-2015 (280 acres) Owner Arnold Johnson: Walked significant portion of parcel, confirming healthy forests and ample natural regeneration in Stand 12 harvested 5 years ago. Stand 1 not yet harvested likely due to low stocking and wet conditions.

Site 2 16-014-2013(160 acres) Owner Tom Lansing: Objectives not fully described on portions of plan available for this site, but plans for adjacent tracts of same owner state ecological forestry objectives- older forest, high stocking, closed-canopy, more pine, and aesthetic quality of lakes. Reviewed several areas: a) Clear-cut with Red Pine Reserves 3 years ago before enrolled in MFL, significant scrub oak layer; herbicides Accord XRT, Chopper Gen 2 and Oust broadcast spray applied by contractor Future Forests in August 2014, disk-trenched, planted Red Pine and White Pine Spring 2015; Stand 21, 55 acres recently-completed harvest to remove remaining poor-quality Jack Pine and scrub oak left from past harvest. Starting to treat dense scrub oak layer using mechanical means, will then spray and plant; c) Lakes, driveway, house that has "FireWise" landscaping, plantings; d) Similar to b except more-complete efforts to treat dense scrub oak layer using mechanical means.

Site 3 16-011-2015 (16-004-1998 old MFL number) (34 acres) Owner Birney Dibble: Recently-completed 5 acre regeneration harvest removing Aspen, Jack Pine and Scrub Oak and retaining all Red Pine. WDNR private lands forester combined many small stands from several MFL parcels with mandatory harvest practices, all located on sandy sites, to find a buyer for harvest during a rainy time in the fall of 2015. No soil impacts and excellent utilization as well as ample new Northern Pin Oak seedlings were observed.

Site 4 16-006-2014 (30 acres) Owner Robert Lehman: Stand 1 (22 acres) had a coppice regeneration harvest (Aspen and hardwood) completed in the summer 2015. Retention was per plan including Red and White Pine and regeneration patches of Aspen and Oak; buffered Chain Lake and adjacent sphagnum swamp. Interviewed Jeff Dedeleone, Forman for Max Erickson Logging; Jeff and most of the company's loggers (there are 4 crews) have FISTA training.

Site 5 16-005-1991 Owner Earl Zimmerman (40 acres) Stand 2 (19 acres) having a harvest of all Jack Pine; final loads of wood were recently trucked. Logger Dale Johnson hand-felled trees and yarder logs with a forwarder, resulting in well-distributed tops and retention of Red and White Pine regeneration at levels not normally seen following heavy cutting. Larger Red Pine also retained, leaving an excellent and diverse pine stand.

Mike Ferrucci June 7, 2016 - Gordon Ranger Station North

Site 6 16-008-2012 (240 acres) Owner Irene Michel Trust: Completed Red Pine Thinning in two stands: Stand 12 14-acre, 63-year old plantation; Stand 13 3-acre natural stand. Most of the harvested logs were used for dimension lumber, but poles will be likely output next harvest. Results met harvest goals, leaving well-spaced, good quality trees with large crowns, no residual stem damage, rutting, or soil compaction noted.

Site 7 16-005-1997 (69 acres) Owner L.R. Altman: Inspected Stand 2, a 25-acre stand which had a clear-cut with reserves completed in the summer of 2014. Reserved Red Oak, White Pine, Black Ash and Balsam Fir and cut trees larger than 2-inch diameter of all other species. Wetlands were buffered, no soil damage was observed, with good utilization, scattered, lopped tops, and no residual damage. The property has a good road system and several well-maintained food plots.

Site 8 16-002-2014 (40 acres) Owner RG & JR Sandfort: An 11-acre regeneration harvest was completed in 2014. Property is managed for wildlife and timber, and wildlife food plots with fenced fruit-trees scattered in them. Significant diversity of species, size, and ages of trees. There is an internal road and trail system, a camping and canoe launch area with a fire pit, and a cabin.

Site 9 16-008-1998 (80 acres) Owner Thomas Heiland: Recent harvest of 8 acres of Scrub Oak, completing partial harvests done years ago to conform with plan. Also reviewed three stands not recently treated to confirm that the current forest conditions are accurately depicted in the plans. Stand 6 is a 1990-origin Red Pine Plantation with some Scrub Oak competition; this stand is scheduled for its first thinning in 2020, a realistic prescription. Stand 12 is 1990 origin Scrub Oak, confirmed by observation. Stand 13 was thinned in 2005 removing scrub oak and marked Red Pine.

Mike Ferrucci June 8, 2016 - Pierce MFL Certification Audit

Mark Heyde, Forest Certification Coordinator

Andy Sorenson, Wisconsin DNR Area Leader

Matt Molback, Wisconsin DNR Forester

Rob Strand, Wisconsin DNR Forester

Dolores Lecheler, Wisconsin DNR Office Associate

Bob Bee, Bee Forest Products

Toby Tulip, Procurement Forester, Bee Forest Products.

Site 1: 48-009-1992 (18 acres) Owner Jack Noll: Recently completed improvement harvest in a 50-year old, 18 acre northern hardwood stand. Interviewed owner of mil and procurement forester

Site 2: 48-011-2015 (120 acres) Owner Gordon Thayer Estate: Significant regeneration harvest was completed during interim period between MFL contracts. Harvested areas have ample natural regeneration, mostly Aspen, but also Red Oak stump sprouts. Wisconsin foresters will conduct post-harvest reconnaissance assessment and will revise the MFL plans as needed. Steep section of main skid trail has had more water bars installed and is mostly stabilized.

Site 3: 48-003-2004 (11 acres) Owner Richard Oddy: Stand 1 consists of 8 acres of northern hardwoods scheduled for treatment, but many efforts to sell the timber without success led to decision to reschedule for 2014 in association with harvest in 3 acres of Aspen. Most trees in booth stands are healthy and growing well. Interview of owner confirmed that his objectives are accurately represented in the plan and in the revised prescription.

Site 4: 48-029-2013 (60 acres) Owner Balalaika Company: Harvest completed in 2013 from Stand 1, a second-row thinning of a young Red Pine plantation, and Stand 3, a coppice regeneration treatment in Aspen.

Mike Ferrucci June 9, 2016 - Pierce MFL Certification Audit

Mark Heyde, Forest Certification Coordinator

Steve Courtney, SW District Forester, Wisconsin DNR

Andy Sorenson, Wisconsin DNR Area Leader

Dean Edlin, West-Central Ecologist, Wisconsin DNR

Matt Molback, Wisconsin DNR Forester

Kyle Coopman, Wisconsin DNR LTE Forester

Dolores Lecheler, Wisconsin DNR Office Associate

Site 5: 48-037-1992; 48-015-2017 (25 acres) Owner Gaard Family Trust: Interviewed Terry Gaard, owner, who confirmed that the plan reflects his objectives and described the history of the conifer plantations.

Stand 1 7 acres White Spruce – 2 Mandatory thinnings in next 25-year contract period in 2019 and 2032.

Stand 2 18 acres Northern Hardwoods – Single-tree selection prescribed in 2019

Site 6: 48-013-1996 (71 acres) Owner Francis and Linda Evans were interviewed and described goal of creating a forest for timber and pulp, which they have done through planting a mixture of white pine, ash, and red oak in alternate rows (Stand 1). The plantation has developed well but will require thinning, and there are challenges with markets as well as deciding how to treat the Ash component given the expected arrival of Emerald ash borer soon. Stand 2 had some Aspen cut in 1998 and is indicated for a selection harvest soon. Letters have been sent the past two years advising the owners of due (now overdue) practices in these two stands, but thus far the owners have been unable to sell these projects. A discussion of options ensued, indicating regular efforts by WDNR foresters to assist in such situations to attempt to avoid withdrawal process.

Site 7: 48-022-1995 (58 acres) Owner Edwin Wojcik: Reviewed northern hardwood Stand 1 that is being managed using the selection system. A consultant marked and set up a sale that was completed in 2004, with a planned mandatory selection harvest in 2018. Although some foresters are designating mandatory regeneration checks in WisFIRS (database) following selection harvests this was not done here. Observed appropriate size gaps and reviewed regeneration in gaps and in lightly-thinned matrix. There are very few regeneration seedlings, and most that were found have been heavily and repeatedly browsed. Discussed monitoring, changes in the science program to increase emphasis on natural regeneration, and the development of County Deer Management Advisory Councils which are advising the Wildlife Bureau on deer goals.

Site 8: 48-034-1993 (80 acres) Owner Wayne Caturia et al: Regeneration harvest in 4-acre Stand 4 completed in 2011. Aspen and some oak and hardwood trees have sprouted, along with significant numbers of Common Buckthorn. This stand had been part of a larger stand that had been incompletely harvested in 2006. During reconnaissance work in 2008 the Wisconsin DNR forester designated this harvest as a mandatory regeneration harvest, demonstrating effective monitoring and adaptive management in this case.

Site 9: 48-012-1992 (43 acres) Owner Michael Pittman: 1991 original plan, updates 2014. Reviewed small harvest in northern hardwood stand in rich site. Discussed gradual loss of oak component on such sites absent landowner willingness to implement heavy cutting. Reviewed entire file and confirmed that procedures were followed, comprehensive records are kept, and that the conclusions of no impact regarding initial “hits” in the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Database search were appropriate.

Site 10: 48-206-1997 Owners Merlin and Virginia Place: Active single tree and group selection harvest in a northern hardwood stand. Cutting notice by procurement forester and harvest by St. Croix Forestry using processor and forwarder. Substantial number of residual trees have been damaged during logging by removal of small to moderate-sized bark patches. Interviewed landowners but not logger or forester. Landowners confirmed that their objectives were consistent with the harvest.

Tucker Watts June 6, 2016 - Pattison Office

Site 1: 16-004-2004 (26 acres) Owner Patricia & John Heintz: Mandatory regeneration harvest and thinning in 2019. Due to EAB, Ash will be removed. Management plan will be updated to note change. Maple and Elm will be retained. BA of 60–70 retained. Sale is marginal due to size and winter requirement. No issues identified.

Site 2: 16-026-2004 (34 acres) Owner Mark Tomczak: Selective harvest and thinning completed in 2012. Winter logging sale. Canopy gaps good. Landowner planted oak, Wild Apple, Pear Trees for wildlife. FIA plot is on property. Vernal pools buffered. No issues.

Site 3: 16-017-2013 (155 acres) Owner Charles Elmberg: Aspen Regeneration in 2013. Stand is well stocked. Grouse habitat created. Discussed monitoring of regeneration. RMZ exceeds minimum requirements. Stream crossing has been removed and banks stabilized. No issues identified.

Site 4: 16-056-2003 (158 acres) Owner Gerald & Sheila Befort: Aspen Regeneration 2013. Winter logging. Diversity with Aspen, scattered pine, Maple. Habitat created for grouse and wintering for deer. No issues.

Site 5: 16-002-2004 (77 acres) Owner Randy, Patti, Brian, Mellissa Stank: Aspen Regeneration cut in 2008. RMZ exceeds minimum requirements. Crossing of RMZ removed and stabilized. Old field has been planted in clover for food plot. Chemicals have been used for weed control. No issues identified.

Tucker Watts June 7, 2016 - Pattison Office

Site 1: 16-051-2005 (26 acres) Owner Bonnie Plachta/James Sidwell: Harvest planned for 2006 regeneration harvest of 24 acres. RMZ flagged on main stream and drains. RMZ exceeds minimum requirements. Due to small acreage and winter harvest the landowner has been unable to contract the sale. Documentation of letters, Notice of Investigation, and sale proposal witnessed. Process followed for not completing mandatory practices. No bids were received when bid 1/13/14. Consultant continues to try to sell timber.

Site 2: 16-043-2004 (29 acres) Owner Jack & Kenneth Lundberg: Logger began cutting prior to approval of Cutting Notice for T&E species complete. Harvest area is within 300' buffer of Wagner Creek on adjacent property. Logger stopped. Area investigated for take. No issues identified. Buffer was increased in area. Line flagged for harvest area. Winter harvest. Minor rutting. No issues.

Site 3: 16-026-2003 (78 acres) Owner Gregory & Michelle Johnson: No mandatory activity required. Diversity in age classes of Aspen. No issues.

Site 4: 16-009-2012 (41 acres) Owner Michael Pearson: Mandatory practice in 2028 – Seed Tree Regeneration. Objective recreation, timber, syrup. No issues.

Tucker Watts June 8, 2016 - Barnes Office

Site 1: 16-005-2006 (23 acres) Owner Hentschel Family Rev Trust: Germann Road Fire in 2013. Salvage in 2013. Scrub oak chipped for biomass. Site prep of trench and chemical application. Containerized seedlings planted 2015. Good survival. Planted on contour. Great job of salvage and regeneration.

Site 2: 16-003-2005 (69 acres) Owner Gordon A Schaeffer Trust: Germann Road Fire in 2013. Salvage in 2013. Buffer around lake. Site prep of disk, trench and chemical application. Containerized seedlings planted April, 2015. Good survival. Planting on contour. Survival check in year 1, 3, and 5. Great job of salvage and regeneration. County and DNR worked together.

Site 3: 16-201-2004 (40 acres) Owner William & Michelle Loomis: Germann Road Fire in 2013. Salvage in 2013. Slash chipped for biomass. Pond buffered. Site prep of trench and chemical application. Containerized seedlings planted 2015. . Various species planted for diversity – containerized Red Pine on slopes; Black Spruce in RMZ; Jack Pine on .6 acres for diversity. Good survival. Planted on contour. Great job of salvage and regeneration.

Site 4: 16-012-2015 (79 acres) Owner Stoeckel Family Rev Living Trust (Randy Stoeckel): Marked thinning of Pine and Aspen prior to enrollment. No mandatory practices during 25 year plan. Buffer around pond. Good road system. No issues.

Site 5: 16-013-2015 (53 acres) Owner Stoeckel Family Rev Living Trust (Jane Stoeckel): Marked thinning of Pine and Aspen prior to enrollment. No mandatory practices during 25 year plan. Good road system. No issues.

Tucker Watts June 9, 2016 - Barnes Office

Site 1: 04-005-2016 (15 acres) Owner Camp Harmony: Objective recreation and hunting. Shelterwood harvest with oak retained for seed source. Regeneration of oak and maple. Harvest timed to good acorn crop. Residual stand well protected. Scarify soil for oak regeneration. Slash used to stabilize slopes. Wet areas buffered. Pine retained along road and wet area for seeding.

Site 2: 04-002-2006 (40 acres) Owner Jerry, Jay, Joyce Wood: Objective is recreation. Even aged management. Reserved island for legacy. Oak and White Pine retained for regeneration. Site scarified for oak regeneration. Access road seeded for stabilization. Buffer around cabin.

Site 3: 04-053-2004 (39 acres) Owner Steven & Nicole O'Dell: Uneven-aged management. Winter harvest. Gap harvest with thinning. Removed high risk trees. Marked to remove and thin between. Maple target for regeneration. Coordinated with County to harvest along river. Trail used for buffer along bog.

Site 4: 04--014-1992 (79 acres) Owner Donald & Nancy Fairbanks: Oak removal. Good oak regeneration. Harvesting coordinated during good acorn crop. Snags retained. Pockets of advanced regeneration protected.

Site 5: 04-006-2013 (78 acres) Owner David Ludzack: Overstory removal and gap management. Regeneration of Sugar Maple and Oak. Site scarified for oak regeneration. Snags left for retention. Debris used to stabilize skid trails. Residual tree protected – minimal damage. Ironwood removed for invasive control.

Kyle Meister June 6, 2016 - Brule Office

Site 1: 16-028-2003 (80 ac): 12 ac marked aspen regeneration harvest with planning individual and clumped retention of bur oak and black spruce; most likely will be winter-logged under frozen conditions. Walk-through of property to view: sale boundaries, wet and dry meadows, riparian features, and other stands. Interview with landowner, who confirmed no use of chemicals.

Site 2: 16-228-1999 (200 ac): 16 ac marked aspen regeneration harvest; most likely will be winter-logged under frozen conditions. Few other merchantable tree species present in overstory. Discussion about administrative process to increase sale sizes through an amendment and alteration of stand sizes.

Site 3: 04-002-2007 (160 ac): 55 ac completed aspen regeneration harvest with individual and clumped retention of bur oak, black spruce, birch, and snags. Ample slash left onsite for nutrient cycling and wildlife. Observation of riparian area and low impact logging. Natural Heritage Index hits; logged in winter under frozen conditions to avoid any potential adverse impacts to species that may be present. Interview with timber buyer and owner's representative.

Site 4: 16-088-2009 (58 ac): Planned regeneration (29 ac) and overstory removal (24 ac) harvest of two stands to occur within next eight years. Regeneration site includes objective to regeneration aspen and retain components of some other species such as red oak, black spruce, balsam fir, white pine, red maple, sugar maple, etc. The overstory removal stand will have retention focused on sub-merchantable material and larger oak for wildlife benefits. Balsam fir is expected to be most abundant with a mix of several hardwood species. Walk-through of stands and utility right-of-way.

Brule office: review of MFL group member records maintained onsite. Review of staff training records. No chemicals applied by group members sampled.

Kyle Meister June 7, 2016 - Brule Office

Site 1: 16-002-199 (75 ac): 75 ac of clear-cut with reserves to achieve aspen and oak regeneration; retention of snags, red maple, sugar maple, oak species, red pine, white pine and white spruce. Higher residual basal area than typical clear-cut with reserve harvest according to logger. Spacing of retention consistent with seed-tree or shelterwood harvest. Excellent utilization due to multiple markets for harvested material, including biomass. Tops left onsite and run over with equipment. Logger interviewed is FISTA-trained and attends continuing education courses to maintain certification. Mostly logged under frozen conditions. Property boundaries flagged. A few vernal pools were observed that had some material removed from buffer zone, but saplings left. Two pools near property boundaries had large shade trees from adjacent stands. No evidence of equipment entry into vernal pools. Discussion with MFL staff on how cutting notices lead to updates to group member management plans in WisFIRS.

Site 2: Same owner, multiple MFL and FCL properties (note: FCL is outside of the scope of FSC and ATFS, though FCL cutting notice for 16-001-1968 was checked as a certified for an unharvested sale):

- a. 16-023-2004 (40 ac): stand 2, 24 ac of aspen and jack pine regeneration harvest with retention of oak and red pine planned and unharvested. Jack pine is 62 years old and showing signs of significant decline.
- b. 16-016-1998 (75 ac): stand 5, 10 ac of aspen marked regeneration harvest with retention of oak species. Stand boundary well before the RMZ for the Brule River. Inspection of RMZ. Discussion on Non-timber Forest Product rules for MFL members.

Site 3: 16-258-1999 (80 ac), 16-269-1999 (80 ac), and 16-270-1999 (80 ac) (three MFLs under a single family's ownership and management): Approx. 65 ac of aspen clear-cut with reserves to regenerate aspen. Retention of red pine, white pine, oak species, and red maple spaced at seed-tree or shelterwood intervals, and clumps of sub-merchantable hardwoods retained where mature to over mature trees were lacking. Vernal pools protected with equipment exclusion and only large, merchantable aspen removed at the edges. Inspection of stand, property, and sale boundaries. Good use of slash to protect skid trails and well-distributed over site. Interview with procurement/ cooperating forester. Harvested material sold to pulp, bolt, and lumber markets; harvested volume to be divided between MFLs based on acreage. Spring-logged due to upland, sandy conditions that allow for quicker drainage. No use of chemicals.

Brule office: review of WisFIRS to see how cutting notices are tracked (example: 16-028-2003), demonstration of updates to MFL plans after mandatory practice (example: 16-002-1999). Observation of DNR forester's personal post-harvest inspection form, which is usually only used on more complex harvests. Demonstration of how Natural Heritage Index functions using map and polygon query. Hits may include species or plant community occurrences.

Kyle Meister June 8, 2016 - Barron Office

Site 1: Barron office: review of MFL group member records maintained onsite. Demonstration of use of county websites to find property ownership and tax information. No chemicals applied by group members sampled.

Site 2: Two MFLs under one family, timber sales harvested together in 2014:

- a. 03-015-2017 (27.5 ac): 7 ac of northern hardwood overstory removal to release primarily established sugar maple regeneration. Inspection of conifer and hardwood plantings in adjacent stand planted after fire two decades ago. Observation of water course buffers.
- b. 03-016-2017 (40 ac): 38 ac of northern hardwood sanitation-salvage and selection harvest; emphasis on removal of suppressed and defect trees with heavier removal of ash species. Inspection of water course buffer. Discussion of optional pre-harvest herbicide and scarification treatment to control stinging nettle and allow for establishment of advanced sugar maple regeneration for next entry, which did not occur. Next harvest entry in 15-20 years will likely emphasize group selection in order to establish more age classes. Interview with consulting forester. Feller-buncher and hand crew used.

Site 3: 03-015-1994 (40 ac): 40 ac selection harvest in 2014 in northern hardwood stand. Retention of oak, maple, basswood, and other associated species. Winter-logged. Pulp and saw timber products sold. Next entry will emphasize gaps to release pockets of oak and maple.

Site 4: 03-004-2007 (105 ac): Stands 1 (33 ac) and 2 (37 ac) to receive selection harvests in northern hardwood stands. Snags, yellow birch, basswood, white pine, and oak and maple species retained. Wildlife trees marked with a 'w'. Some gaps to be created to establish northern hardwood regeneration. Within single-tree selection areas, emphasis was on removal of suppressed and defect trees. Inspection of property boundaries. Stand 3 (16 ac) was a nearly complete aspen regeneration harvest with retention of oak and maple species. Excellent utilization due to use of mechanical harvester and good distribution of slash to control erosion and contribute to nutrient cycling. Interviews with group member and timber buyer.

Site 5: 03-002-2004 (80 ac): Property posted. Northern hardwood group and single-tree selection planned to establish more age classes and release regeneration. Wetter site, so more red maple and basswood present. Aspen regeneration harvest will occur on other areas where it is mature.

Site 6: Two MFLs under one family, timber sales to be harvested as one contiguous sale, 03-211-1997 (40 ac) and 03-022-1997 (26 ac): Northern hardwood selection harvest planned and marked with emphasis on removal of suppressed and defect trees, as well as ash due to pending potential impacts of emerald ash borer. Pulpwood is primary market, so lots of higher quality material will be left behind. Retention of oak and maple species. Inspection of water courses. Discussion of harvest timing. Interviews with timber buyers.

Site 7: 03-025-2015 (103 ac): Conifer thinning (red pine and white spruce) and aspen regeneration on 23 ac. Some hardwood removed from thinning areas. Buckthorn is well-established and is scheduled to receive control treatments when the conifers reach final harvest age in 30-40 years. Currently, control is too costly for any added benefit. Interview with consulting forester. Discussion with DNR staff on NHI compliance and timing of cutting notices.

Kyle Meister June 9, 2016 - Barron Office

Site 1: Barron office: Review of staff training records and MFL group member files.

Site 2: 03-010-2013 (76 ac): Single-tree and group selection to regenerate oak and aspen (25 ac) and red pine thinning (11 ac). Removal of suppressed and over mature trees in oak stand. Observation of lake buffer. Regeneration consists of little oak and mostly northern hardwood species.

Site 3: 03-005-2015 (47 ac): 39 ac of oak thinning with heavy removal of ash, birch and aspen, and 2 ac of red pine thinning. Oak thinning area with evidence of vehicle trespass that has led to some rutting. There was also evidence of rutting from logging equipment. DNR forester has not conducted final recon on this sale, but possible actions within DNR's authority include discussing the issue with the MFL group member to review possible avoidance measures in the future. Excellent retention of oak and northern hardwood species, evidence of oak regeneration in larger, scarified gaps.

Site 4: 03-015-1993 (40 ac): 24 ac of single-tree and group selection to favor residual oak and regenerate oak and aspen. Buckthorn is present onsite. No current plans for control. Aspen regeneration should be able to compete with this invasive species.

Site 5: 03-014-2002 (39 ac): 25 ac of northern hardwood thinning. Heavy removal of ash, ironwood, white birch and aspen, which has created some gaps to release existing regeneration or establish more where none was present. Higher quality residuals includes oak, hickory, and maple species, as well as yellow birch and other northern hardwoods. Landowner hunts and runs a sugar bush onsite; some evidence of tractor rutting.

Site 6: 03-019-2001 (154 ac): 74 ac of open MFL. 104 ac of oak thinning with some areas of overstory removal to release established regeneration. Removal of birch, aspen, and ash. Observation of small wetland meadows within thinning area; no evidence of equipment entry as it was winter-logged. 25 ac of tamarack seed-tree was then observed. Stand was harvested in winter to avoid negative impacts to swamp. Insect outbreak and age determined that a harvest was necessary to regenerate tamarack. Interview with procurement forester.

Appendix 4 Audit Attendees

Opening and Closing Meeting Attendees

Opening Meeting June 6, 2016 at Gordon Fire House, Pierce County

Mike Ferrucci, NSF – Tree Farm Lead Auditor
Mark Heyde, Forest Certification Coordinator
Gerald Crow, Forest Tax Law Field Manager Acting Group Manager
Craig Golembieski, Wisconsin DNR Area Team Leader
Dale Rochon, Wisconsin DNR
Zach Neitzel, Brule Ranger, Wisconsin DNR
Blake Johnson, Pattison Ranger, Wisconsin DNR
Eric Martin, Barnes Ranger, Wisconsin DNR
Rod Fouks Cumberland Area Forestry Leader, Wisconsin DNR

Closing Meeting June 10, 2016 at Baldwin DNR Service Center

Mike Ferrucci, NSF – Tree Farm Lead Auditor
Daryl Zastrow, Deputy Division Director, Wisconsin DNR
Mark Heyde, Forest Certification Coordinator
Gerald Crow, Forest Tax Law Field Manager Acting Group Manager
Steve Courtney, SW District Forester, Wisconsin DNR
Andy Sorenson, Wisconsin DNR Area Leader
Craig Golembieski, Wisconsin DNR Area Team Leader
Dale Rochon, Wisconsin DNR
Dan Dehmer, Wisconsin DNR
Zach Neitzel, Brule Ranger, Wisconsin DNR
Blake Johnson, Pattison Ranger, Wisconsin DNR
Dolores Lecheler, Wisconsin DNR Office Associate

Other Stakeholders Consulted

Name	Organization
Melvin Pearson	MFL group member
Ed Ballman	MFL landowner representative
Justin Holmes	Verso Paper
Mike Santikko	Santikko Logging
Robert Huray	FutureWood
Dennis Waterman	Waterman Forestry, LLC
Bryan Brunner	Schmitt Timber Corporation
Jake Wickham	Verso Paper
Geoff Morris	Verso Paper
Ron Hemauer	MFL group member
Ross Langham	FutureWood

Appendix 5 ATFS Summary

ATFS Public Audit Report

The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS®) Program of the Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Tree Farm Group has achieved continuing conformance with the AFF 2015-2020 Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification of Private Lands, according to the NSFATFS Certification Audit Process.

The Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Tree Farm Group was initially certified in 2004 and recertified in 2011 and in 2015, which involved an upgrade to the current standard. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources manages a Group Certification program for non-industrial forestland enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL). MFL Group Certification focuses on DNR's administration of the group and quality of management on member land. There are approximately 47,905 orders included in this certification that total approximately 2,595,142 acres (January 2016). These tree farms are scattered across the state.

The audit was performed by NSF on June 6-10, 2016 by an audit team headed by Mike Ferrucci (ATFS Lead) with Kyle Meister (FSC Lead) and Tucker Watts as the Team Auditors. Audit team members fulfill the qualification criteria for conducting ATFS Certification Audits contained in the AFF requirements. The objective of the audit was to assess conformance to the requirements of the American Tree Farm Program.

The scope of the ATFS Audit included the enrolled Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Program members in the Northwestern Counties of the State of Wisconsin that elected to take part in the certification. Forest practices that were the focus of field inspections included those that have been under active management over the planning period of the past 5 years. In addition, practices conducted earlier were also reviewed as appropriate (regeneration and BMP issues, for example). The management obligations of the group were also reviewed.

Some of the ATFS requirements were not observed as being within the scope of Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Tree Farm Group's ATFS program and were not audited during the scope of the ATFS Certification Audit:

- Performance Measure 4.3 - When used, prescribed fire must conform to forest owner's objectives, the forest management plan and pre-fire planning. Prescribed fire is not generally used on small, private forest ownerships in central and northern hardwoods.

No indicators were modified.

ATFS Audit Process

NSF initiated the ATFS audit process with a planning call and extensive follow up relative to site selection and to prepare a detailed audit plan. NSF then conducted the ATFS Recertification Audit of conformance to the ATFS Standards. A report was prepared and final approval was done by an independent Certification Board Member assigned by NSF. Follow-up or Surveillance Audits are required. The next Surveillance Audit is tentatively scheduled for the first week of June 2016.

The NSF "Upgrade" audit to the ATFS 2015-2019 Standards was governed by a detailed Audit Plan designed to enable the audit team to determine conformance with the applicable ATFS requirements. The plan included detailed provisions for the assembly and review of audit evidence consisting of documents, tract files, maps, reports, interviews, and on-site inspections of planned, ongoing or completed forest practices.

During the audit, NSF reviewed a sample of the written documentation assembled to provide objective evidence of ATFS Conformance. NSF also selected field sites for inspection based upon the risk of environmental impact, likelihood of occurrence, special features, and other criteria outlined in the NSFATFS-SOP. NSF also selected and interviewed stakeholders such as landowners, Certified Plan Writers (CPWs), forestry consultants, other interested parties including the Wisconsin Paper Council, and interviewed employees within the organization to confirm that the ATFS Standard was understood and actively implemented.

The possible findings of the audit included Exceed the Basic Requirements, Full Conformance, Major Non-conformance, Minor Non-conformance, and Opportunities for Improvement.

Overview of 2016 Audit Findings

Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Tree Farm Group's ATFS Program was determined to be in full conformance with the AFF (2015-2020) Standards of Sustainability and Independently Managed Group (IMG) Standard. The program has been recommended for continued certification.

There were no Major or Minor Non-conformances, five Opportunities for Improvement, and three areas where the program continues to exceed the requirements.

2016 Opportunities for Improvement

IMG 3.1 Ongoing Monitoring a. The Group Organization must establish and maintain a procedure and schedule for conducting ongoing monitoring of conformance with the AFF Standards.

There is an Opportunity for Improvement for more guidance and/or training regarding the cutting notice and cutting report processes, and how deviations from ATF (and/or MFL) requirements are to be handled.

IMG 3.1 Ongoing Monitoring c. The Group Organization must review conformance to the AFF Standards and document the relevant findings.

There is an Opportunity for Improvement to clarify the impacts of the cutting notice and cutting report process changes on the variability of implementation of sound forestry practices and thus on the nature and extent of monitoring/internal auditing.

Performance Measure 3.1 Reforestation or afforestation shall be achieved by a suitable process that ensures adequate stocking levels.

Indicator 3.1.1 Harvested forest land shall achieve adequate stocking of desired species reflecting the landowner's objectives, within five years after harvest, or within a time interval as specified by applicable regulation.

There is an Opportunity for Improvement in the use of regeneration monitoring information as part of an adaptive approach to resource management.

Performance Measure 4.2

Landowner shall consider a range of forest management activities to control pests, pathogens and unwanted vegetation.

There is an Opportunity to Improve efforts to control invasive exotic plants.

Performance Measure 5.4 Where present, forest management activities should maintain or enhance forests of recognized importance.

While T&E species, archeological sites and caves are considered, there is an Opportunity for Improvement in the use of the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan and the Conservation Opportunity Areas approach to meet the ATF requirements for Forests of Regional Conservation Importance.

Exceed the Basic Requirements:

Standard 5: Fish, Wildlife, Biodiversity

Landowner's objectives stated in their management plans consistently listed conservation, hunting and wildlife as having high or the highest priority. Management practices such as large legacy or mast-producing trees retained for wildlife, food plots, and retention of standing dead and down trees or carefully-selected wildlife trees support a finding of "Exceptional Practices".

Standard 6: Forest Aesthetics, Performance Measure 6.1, Indicator 6.1.1

The application of visual quality measures exceeds the standards. Single tree and Group Selections where harvesting is not readily evident are common, and heavier harvests have rapid reforestation and/or visual considerations effectively planned.

Standard 8: Forest Product Harvests and Other Activities, Performance Measure 8.1

Indicator 8.1.1 The Wisconsin MFL Program demonstrated exemplary levels of support for programs that ensure professional forestry advice is readily available in many forms.

For additional information contact:

Norman Boatwright, NSF Forestry Program Manager
843-229-1851, nboatwright12@gmail.com

Mark Heyde, Forest Certification Manager
608-267-0565, mark.heyde@wisconsin.gov

END OF SUMMARY REPORT

Appendix 6 ATFS Reporting Form

Note: This form is to be started by the Lead Auditor with assistance from the group’s management representative. It is to be included as the final page of the ATFS Audit Report. After the final report is approved by the NSFCB Reviewer, the form is completed by the NSF Certification Services Specialist (CSS). The CSS will submit the form to:

American Forest Foundation
 1111 19th St., NW,
 Washington, DC 20036
 (T) 202 463 2738
 (F) 202 463 2461



American Tree Farm System

Form for Reporting a Forest Management Certificate

For groups certified in conformance to the American Forest Foundation Standards of Sustainability for Forest Management 2010-2015

CERTIFICATE INFORMATION

Certificate Holder Name	Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Tree Farm Group
Certification Body Name	NSF
Certificate Number	1Y942-FC1
Certification Date	8-Aug-14
Certificate Expiry Date	7-Aug-17
Number of Properties Certified	47,905
Number of Landowners Enrolled When Certification Issued	

CERTIFIED FOREST INFORMATION

Forest Area (to which certification applies)	2,595,142
Land Ownership Type	Cat1
Is this same area certified to another forest certification standard?	FSC

GROUP ENTITY CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact Name	Gerald (Jerry) Crow, Acting Group Mgr./Forest Tax Field Manager Public and Private Forestry Section, Bureau of Forest Management Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources phone: (715) 453-2188 x1260 cell: (715) 612-0980 gerald.crow@wisconsin.gov
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Telephone	(715) 453-2188 x1260 cell: (715) 612-0980
E-mail	gerald.crow@wisconsin.gov
Fax	715-453-5998
Web Address	www.dnr.wi.gov

CERTIFICATION BODY CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact Name	Dan Freeman
Street, No.	789 N. Dixboro Road
City, State	Ann Arbor, MI
Zip Code	48105
Telephone	734-214-6228
E-mail	dfreeman@nsf.org
Fax	734-827-7102
Web Address	

Reporting Guidelines for Forest Management Certificates

Changes to Certification Status

Certification bodies are asked to report certifications and de-certifications as they become aware of this status. In the case of a change in ownership, the new entity’s certification will only be included when a certificate is issued in the new organization’s name by an accredited certification body.

Reporting Frequency

Certification bodies are responsible for completing the American Tree Farm System Certificate Reporting Form at the time of the certification audit, surveillance audit, and recertification audit.

Reporting Improvement

Certification bodies are welcome to propose a new reporting guidelines or change to the existing guidelines that they feel will benefit the transparency and consistency of reporting. All suggestions are welcome and will be considered. If an organization becomes aware of a certification that was reported incorrectly, please bring it to AFF staffs' attention.