

Wisconsin County Forest System

Bureau of Forest Management
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 S Webster Street – FR/4
Madison WI 53707-7921

1Y943

SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard

Surveillance Audit

NSF International Forestry Program Audit Report

A. Program Participant's Name

Wisconsin County Forest Program

NSF Customer Number (FRS)

1Y943

B. Scope of Certification

Land management for participating counties within the Wisconsin County Forest Program, encompassing approximately 2.2 million acres of forestland in the following 25 counties:

Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Eau Claire, Florence, Forest, Iron, Jackson, Juneau, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Marinette, Oconto, Oneida, Polk, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, Vilas, Washburn and Wood.

The SFI Forest Management certification number is NSF-SFI-FM-1Y943.

The SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard meets and exceeds the requirements of the earlier SFI 2010-2014 SFI Standard (Section 2), therefore fiber sold under this certificate counts as 100% SFI and 100% PEFC certified forest content.

B. Audit Team

Mike Ferrucci, NSF Lead Auditor; Kyle Meister, FSC Lead Auditor; Michelle Matteo, Team Auditor

C. Audit Dates

August 8-11, 2016

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

SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard

Company Documentation (Program Manual, Procedures, etc.)

WDNR Silviculture & Aesthetics Handbook

County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plans: Burnett County, Sawyer County, Polk County, Washburn County-County Parks & Forestry Department Work Plan

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: 1

In addition, 1 opportunity for improvement (OFI) was 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

No

H. Other Issues Reviewed

- | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|-----|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A | Public report from previous audit(s) is posted on the [SFI/SBP/etc.] website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A | Relevant industry specific logos or labels (SFI, PEFC, etc.) are utilized correctly. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 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. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | N/A | Nonconformities from previous audit were reviewed. N/A: There were none in 2015. |

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 during August of 2017.

J. Appendices

- [Appendix 1:](#) Audit Notification Letter and Audit Agenda
- [Appendix 2:](#) SFI Forest Management Public Summary Report
- [Appendix 3:](#) Audit Standard Checklist - SFI Forest Management Standard
- [Appendix 4:](#) Meeting Attendance

Appendix 1: Audit Notification Letter and Audit Agenda

May 6, 2016; Revised June 24 2016

Mark Heyde, Forest Certification Coordinator
Bureau of Forest Management
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 S Webster Street – FR/4
Madison WI 53707-7921

RE: Confirmation of SFI and FSC Surveillance Audits, Wisconsin County Forest Program

Dear Mr. Heyde,

As we discussed, I will be conducting your SFI Surveillance Audit as described in the attached itinerary. This is the same itinerary as you received from Kyle Meister for the FSC Audit. Please confirm that these dates are still appropriate for the audit of your program's continued conformance to the SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard.

SFI Scope

Land management for participating counties within the Wisconsin County Forest Program, encompassing approximately 2.2 million acres of forestland in the following 25 counties:

Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Eau Claire, Florence, Forest, Iron, Jackson, Juneau, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Marinette, Oconto, Oneida, Polk, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, Vilas, Washburn and Wood.

The SFI Forest Management certification number is NSF-SFI-FM-1Y943.

The SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard meets and exceeds the requirements of the earlier SFI 2010-2014 SFI Standard (Section 2), therefore fiber sold under this certificate counts as 100% SFI and 100% PEFC certified forest content.

Preparing for the Audit

A key part of the audit is a review of selected evidence related to your program, which may include:

- Approval for logo usage
- Internal Audit and Management Review records
- Training records
- Documentation for operation of complaint procedure
- Documentation for multisite requirements

Please have this information available for me **during the audit**.

This audit is being conducted in conjunction with your FSC Forest Management Audit (conducted by SCS Global). Please provide me any information or documents that you provide to SCS Global or to their assigned Lead Auditor. This will help reduce the burden that the dual audit process places on you and your team.

To the degree possible in advance of the audit, please provide key written evidence for the SFI requirements selected for review (see list below). I would ask that you place particular emphasis on SFI-focused requirement (SFI Implementation Committee involvement, SFI reporting, etc.) as these are often overlooked when customers prepare for dual audits.

SFI Requirements Selected for 2016 Surveillance Audit

(Note: The first number indicates the Objective; for example 8.1 is under Objective 8.)

All requirements within Objectives 2 through 7 (field-oriented requirements) to the extent they are relevant to the field sites inspected.

- 8.1 Recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples' rights
- 8.2 Forest management on public lands and Indigenous Peoples
- 8.3 Communicate with and respond to local Indigenous Peoples with respect to sustainable forest management practices on their private lands
- 9.1 Forestry Law/Reg. Compliance System
- 9.2 Social Law Compliance (including ILO)
- 11.1 Training of Contractors and Personnel
- 11.2 Improved Wood Producer Professionalism
- 11.2.3 Logger certification
- 13.1 Public Lands Planning Involvement
- 14.1 Summary Audit Report
- 14.2 Annual Reporting to SFI, Inc.
- 15.1 Management Review System

Role of SFI Inc. Office of Label Use and Licensing

As a reminder, your organization is responsible for contacting SFI, Inc. and complying with all requirements before using or changing any SFI label or logo. Your contact is:

Rachel Dierolf, Manager of Statistics and Labeling
Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Inc.
900 17th Street NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20006
613-274-0124 rachel.dierolf@sfiprogram.org

Field Site Selection Process

As in the past, please provide spreadsheet of all currently established but unsold, currently sold and active, and closed (closed within the last 2 years [after July 1, 2014]) timber sales for counties involved in the 2016 WI County Forest Audit.

Last year you provided a spreadsheet with several tabs, the first being all forest stands involved in a sale which includes stand cover types for all stands, the second being all sales (multiple stands condensed into one sale record) for all four counties, and the next four tabs with the timber sale data by each of the four individual county forests to be audited. (Note: The individual county tabs did not show all stands, so to see all forest types in a particular sale one must need to refer back to the first tab.)

Next Mike Ferrucci will take the lead to provide a semi-random selection of timber sales that could be visited, working with Kyle Meister to ensure any specific types of sales that need to be seen from the SFI audit perspective are included. Approximately 12-15 sales will be selected per county in the initial filter. We will attempt to make our initial sale selections by July 4th or sooner.

After the initial sites are selected, please ask the individual County Forest Administrators to develop audit routes that would take us by 6-8 of those sites selected (based on access, sale activity, timing, variety, other unique features, etc.). These routes should include additional non-timber sale sites that demonstrate county forest management accomplishments. As in the past there is an interest in potentially visiting sites of forest conversions to other species and/or non-forest, indigenous people sites, HCVFs, and active timber harvests. The goal is to have a list of 10-15 potential stops (timber sales and non-timber sale sites) for each daily audit tour.

During the opening meeting each audit day the auditor will review the list of 10-15 potential stops and then select and adapt the sites to visit in the field time available.

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, SFI Lead Auditor

203-887-9248 mferrucci@iforest.com

Copy: Kyle Meister, SCS Global, FSC Lead Auditor

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

Determine if certification should be maintained by reviewing selected requirements and program changes.

Schedule

Audit dates	08-12 August 2016 (auditors arrive 08 August MSP; audit team with one rental vehicle)
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08 – August – 2016 3 hours	
FMU/Location/ sites visited	Activities/ notes
Partially by phone and email;	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
09 – August – 2016 (8 am to 6 pm)	
FMU/Location/ sites visited*	Activities/ notes
Washburn County Forestry Office	Opening Meeting, part 2: Introductions and review audit scope.
Washburn County (all auditors)	Recent harvests, planned management activities, protected areas, areas of special use or access rights, herbicide applications, etc.
10 – August – 2016 (8 am to 5:30 pm)	
FMU/Location/ sites visited*	Activities/ notes
Burnett (Meister & Matteo)	Recent harvests, planned management activities, protected areas, areas of special use or access rights, herbicide applications, etc.
Polk County (Ferrucci)	Recent harvests, planned management activities, protected areas, areas of special use or access rights, herbicide applications, etc.
11 – August – 2016 (8 am to 5:30 pm)	
Sawyer County (all auditors)	Recent harvests, planned management activities, protected areas, areas of special use or access rights, herbicide applications, etc.
12 – August – 2016	
FMU/Location/ sites visited*	Activities/ notes
Spoooner DNR Service Center 8:30 to 10 am	Closing Meeting Preparation: Auditor(s) take time to consolidate notes and confirm audit findings (previous evening and 7 to 8:30 am)
	Closing Meeting and Review of Findings: Convene with all relevant staff to summarize audit findings, potential non-conformities and next steps

Audit logistics:

- Lodging is needed for the audit team; please make arrangements;
- Plans should be made to have lunch on site each day to expedite the visit;
- Travel will most likely occur in your vehicle(s) each day during the audit, but the audit team will have one vehicle for transportation to one field location at the start and end of each audit day (note that team is splitting up on August 10th, so transportation from hotel to and from one of the counties will be needed).
- Remember for Sawyer that we have two auditors, each with their own audit path. So I have selected 22 sites (8-12 per auditor).
- The whole team is going to Washburn too, so we should have two audit paths (one auditor will go solo and two will pair up). Since it must be a shorter day, I have selected 12 sites (6 per team).

Appendix 2 : Wisconsin County Forest Program SFI Public Summary Audit Report

The SFI Program of the Wisconsin County Forest Program has demonstrated conformance with the SFI 2015-2019 Standard and Rules, Section 2 – Forest Management Standard, according to the NSF Certification Process.

Wisconsin County Forest Program includes over 2.3 million acres of forestland managed by 29 counties in the central and northern portions of Wisconsin. The scope of the SFIS Certification encompasses sustainable forestry activities of participating counties within the Wisconsin County Forest System and land management operations in 25 Wisconsin County Forests encompassing approximately 2.2 million acres of publicly owned forests, including the following counties:

Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Eau Claire, Florence, Forest, Iron, Jackson, Juneau, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Marinette, Oconto, Oneida, Polk, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, Vilas, Washburn, Wood

Responsibility for management of these forests rests with elected county boards, with management activities implemented by county-employed foresters supported by DNR personnel. The forests are managed to provide revenue, habitat, recreational opportunities, and to protect biodiversity values and special sites. The lands abound with a variety of game and non-game wildlife species, and attract a variety of recreationists from hunters to trail users to nature enthusiasts. The most common tree species in order are aspen, sugar maple, red maple, red oak, red pine, basswood, and white birch. Harvest levels over the past decade have averaged over 18 million board feet and 770,000 cords per year.

The Wisconsin County Forest's SFI Program is managed by the Wisconsin DNR County Forest Specialist. A County Forest Certification Committee comprised of representatives of the counties, the Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA), and DNR staff help implement the SFI program, reviewing progress and making suggestions for improvements or changes as needed. The Wisconsin County Forests Association provides considerable support for certification-related activities and is a key support mechanism for the program. The 25 participating Wisconsin County Forests have been certified to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Standard since December 10, 2004

The audit was performed by NSF on August 9-12, 2016 by an audit team headed by Mike Ferrucci, Lead Auditor, supported by Michelle Matteo, Auditor. Audit team members fulfill the qualification criteria for conducting audits contained in SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules, Section 9 - Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation.

The objective of the audit was to assess conformance of the firm's SFI Program to the requirements of the SFI 2015-2019 Standard and Rules, Section 2 – Forest Management.

The scope of the audit included forest management operations. Forest practices that were the focus of field inspections included those that have been under active management over the planning period of the past 3 years. In addition practices conducted earlier were also reviewed as appropriate (regeneration and BMP issues, for example), SFI obligations to promote sustainable forestry practices, to seek legal compliance, and to incorporate continual improvement systems were also within the scope of the audit.

Several of the SFI Section 2 requirements were outside of the scope of Wisconsin County Forest Program's SFI program and were excluded from the scope of the SFI Certification Audit as follows:

- Indicator 2.1.3 - No planting of exotic trees.
- Indicator 2.1.5 - No afforestation program.
- Indicator 10.1.2 - No research on genetically engineered trees.

The next surveillance audit is tentatively scheduled for the week of August 9, 2017.

Audit Process

The audit was governed by a detailed audit plan designed to enable the audit team to efficiently determine conformance with the applicable SFI requirements. The plan provided for the assembly and review of audit evidence consisting of documents, interviews, and on-site inspections of ongoing or completed forest practices.

During the audit NSF reviewed a sample of the written documentation assembled to provide objective evidence of 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 NSF protocols. NSF also selected and interviewed stakeholders such as contract loggers, landowners and other interested parties, and interviewed employees within the organization to confirm that the SFI Standard was understood and actively implemented. There were no minor non-conformances or corrective actions identified in the previous audit subject to review in the 2016 audit.

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

Overview of Audit Findings

The Wisconsin County Forest Program was found to be in overall conformance with the standard. NSF determined that there was one minor non-conformance: Use of SFI Logos did not fully conform with Section 5 - Rules for Use of SFI On-Product Labels and Off-Product Marks. A plan is in place to resolve this issue.

One opportunity for improvement was identified: There is an Opportunity for Improvement in the criteria and implementation of stand level retention within larger Aspen clear-cut blocks.

NSF also identified the following areas where forestry practices and operations of Wisconsin County Forest Program exceed the basic requirements of the SFI Standard:

- Wisconsin County Forest Program exceeds forest management planning requirements with exceptionally detailed and comprehensive management plans and planning documents.
(Indicator 1.1.1 requires 1.1.1. Forest management planning at a level appropriate to the size and scale of the operation...).
- The Wisconsin County Forest Program is exceptional by providing an extensive range of quality recreational activities within their forests.
(Indicator 5.4.1 requires participants to “Provide recreational opportunities for the public, where consistent with forest management objectives.”)
- The Wisconsin County Forestry Program, through the work of county forestry personnel, WDNR personnel who have significant duties in the program, and the Wisconsin County Forests Association provides an exceptional amount of leadership and support for numerous and diverse activities for public outreach, education and involvement related to sustainable forest management.
(Indicator 12.2.1 requires Periodic educational opportunities promoting sustainable forestry, such as
 - a. field tours, seminars, websites, webinars or workshops;
 - b. educational trips;
 - c. self-guided forest management trails;
 - d. publication of articles, educational pamphlets or newsletters; or
 - e. support for state, provincial, and local forestry organizations and soil and water conservation districts.)
- The Wisconsin County Forest Program engages in an exceptional amount of involvement with a wide range of county, state, federal, and public entities in their land planning and management activities. This work is done by county board members, forest administrators, and county foresters, with the WCFA providing leadership, guidance, support and coordination.
(Indicator 13.1.1 requires “Involvement in *public land* planning and management activities with appropriate governmental entities and the public”.)

Wisconsin County Forest Program maintains a high level of contact with local stakeholders over forest management issues through state, federal and individual collaboration. (Indicator 13.1.2 requires “Appropriate contact with local stakeholders over forest management issues through state, provincial, federal or independent collaboration”.)

General Description of Evidence of Conformity

NSF's audit team used a variety of evidence to determine conformance. A general description of this evidence is provided below, organized by SFI Objective.

Objective 1 Forest Management Planning

To ensure forest management plans include long-term sustainable harvest levels and measures to avoid forest conversion.

***Summary of Evidence:** The county forest management plans (Washburn, Burnett, Polk, and Sawyer counties), Timber Sale Notice and Cutting Reports for selected timber sales, supporting documents including WDNR manuals and handbooks, and the county forest inventory reports produced from the WisFIRS system were the key evidence of conformance.*

Objective 2 Forest Health and Productivity

To ensure long-term forest productivity, carbon storage and conservation of forest resources through prompt reforestation, afforestation, minimized chemical use, soil conservation, and protecting forests from damaging agents.

***Summary of Evidence:** Field observations and associated records were used to confirm practices. There are ongoing programs for reforestation, for protection against insects and diseases and wildfire, and for careful management of activities which could potentially impact soil and long-term productivity.*

Objective 3 Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources

To protect the water quality of rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands and other water bodies through meeting or exceeding best management practices.

***Summary of Evidence:** Field observations of a range of sites were the key evidence. Auditors visited portions of selected field sites that were closest to water resources and reviewed maps and harvest plans.*

Objective 4 Conservation of Biological Diversity

To manage the quality and distribution of wildlife habitats and contribute to the conservation of biological diversity by developing and implementing stand- and landscape-level measures that promote a diversity of types of habitat and successional stages, and the conservation of forest plants and animals, including aquatic species, as well as threatened and endangered species, Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value, old-growth forests and ecologically important sites.

***Summary of Evidence:** Field observations, written plans and policies, interviews of college-trained Wisconsin DNR field biologists who support the program, the availability of specialists, and regular staff involvement in conferences and workshops that cover scientific advances were the evidence used to assess the requirements that involved biodiversity conservation.*

Objective 5 Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits

To manage the visual impact of forest operations and provide recreational opportunities for the public.

***Summary of Evidence:** Field observations of completed operations and policies/procedures for visual quality were assessed during the evaluation. Maps of recreation sites as well as field visits to several recreational areas and trails helped confirm a very strong commitment to recreation programs and facilities.*

Objective 6 Protection of Special Sites

To manage lands that are geologically or culturally important in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.

***Summary of Evidence:** Field observations of completed operations, records of special sites, training records, and written protection plans were assessed during the evaluation.*

Objective 7 Efficient Use of Fiber Resources

To minimize waste and ensure the efficient use of fiber resources.

Summary of Evidence: Field observations of completed operations, contract clauses, inspection reports, and discussions with supervising foresters and with loggers provided the key evidence.

Objective 8 Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples' Rights

To recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional knowledge.

Summary of Evidence: Interviews and documentation of systems for communication and cooperation were used to confirm the requirements.

Objective 9 Legal and Regulatory Compliance

To comply with applicable federal, provincial, state and local laws and regulations.

Summary of Evidence: Field reviews of ongoing and completed operations were the most critical evidence. Information provided by Wisconsin DNR was also a factor.

Objective 10 Forestry Research, Science and Technology

To invest in forestry research, science and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based and broaden the awareness of climate change impacts on forests, wildlife and biological diversity.

Summary of Evidence: Financial records and awareness of predicted climate change impacts were confirmed.

Objective 11 Training and Education

To improve the implementation of sustainable forestry practices through appropriate training and education programs.

Summary of Evidence: Training records of selected personnel, records associated with harvest sites audited, and stakeholder interviews were the key evidence for this objective.

Objective 12 Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach

To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry through public outreach, education, and involvement, and to support the efforts of SFI Implementation Committees.

Summary of Evidence: Interviews, agendas for meetings, and participation in the Wisconsin SFI Implementation Committee were sufficient to assess the requirements.

Objective 13 Public Land Management Responsibilities

To participate and implement sustainable forest management on public lands.

Summary of Evidence: Interviews and review of policies were used to confirm the requirements.

Objective 14 Communications and Public Reporting

To increase transparency and to annually report progress on conformance with the SFI Forest Management Standard.

Summary of Evidence: Reports filed with SFI Inc. and the SFI website were the key evidence.

Objective 15. Management Review and Continual Improvement

To promote continual improvement in the practice of sustainable forestry by conducting a management review and monitoring performance.

Summary of Evidence: Records of program reviews including annual "Partnership Meetings", periodic internal audits, and agendas and notes from management review meetings, and interviews with personnel from all involved levels in the organization were assessed.

Relevance of Forestry Certification

Third-party certification provides assurance that forests are being managed under the principles of sustainable forestry, which are described in the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard as:

1. Sustainable Forestry

To practice sustainable forestry to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by practicing a land stewardship ethic that integrates reforestation and the managing, growing, nurturing and harvesting of trees for useful products and ecosystem services such as the conservation of soil, air and water quality, carbon, biological diversity, wildlife and aquatic habitats, recreation and aesthetics.

2. Forest Productivity and Health

To provide for regeneration after harvest and maintain the productive capacity of the forest land base, and to protect and maintain long-term forest and soil productivity. In addition, to protect forests from economically or environmentally undesirable levels of wildfire, pests, diseases, invasive exotic plants and animals and other damaging agents and thus maintain and improve long-term forest health and productivity.

3. Protection of Water Resources

To protect water bodies and riparian areas, and to conform with forestry best management practices to protect water quality.

4. Protection of Biological Diversity

To manage forests in ways that protect and promote biological diversity, including animal and plant species, wildlife habitats, and ecological or natural community types.

5. Aesthetics and Recreation

To manage the visual impacts of forest operations, and to provide recreational opportunities for the public.

6. Protection of Special Sites

To manage lands that are ecologically, geologically or culturally important in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.

7. Responsible Fiber Sourcing Practices in North America

To use and promote among other forest landowners sustainable forestry practices that are both scientifically credible and economically, environmentally and socially responsible.

8. Legal Compliance

To comply with applicable federal, provincial, state, and local forestry and related environmental laws, statutes, and regulations.

9. Research

To support advances in sustainable forest management through forestry research, science and technology.

10. Training and Education

To improve the practice of sustainable forestry through training and education programs.

11. Community Involvement and Social Responsibility

To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry on all lands through community involvement, socially responsible practices, and through recognition and respect of Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional forest-related knowledge.

12. Transparency

To broaden the understanding of forest certification to the SFI Standard by documenting certification audits and making the findings publicly available.

13. Continual Improvement

To continually improve the practice of forest management, and to monitor, measure and report performance in achieving the commitment to sustainable forestry.

14. Avoidance of Controversial Sources including Illegal Logging in Offshore Fiber Sourcing

(Applies only to the SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard)

To avoid wood fiber from illegally logged forests when procuring fiber outside of North America, and to avoid sourcing fiber from countries without effective social laws.

Source: Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) Standard, 2015–2019 Edition

For Additional Information Contact:

Norman Boatwright
NSF Forestry Program Manager

Daniel Freeman
NSF Project Manager

Mark Heyde
Wisconsin DNR Forest Certification
Coordinator

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Florence, SC 29502

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Ann Arbor, MI 48105

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Appendix 3: SFI 2015-2019, Section 2: Forest Management Standard Audit Checklist

FRS# 1Y943 – Wisconsin DNR County Forest Program

Date of audits: August 9-12, 2016

1.2 Additional Requirements

SFI Program Participants with fiber sourcing programs (acquisition of roundwood and field-manufactured or primary-mill residual chips, pulp and veneer to support a forest products facility), must also conform to the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard*.

Use of the *SFI* on-product labels and claims shall follow Section 5 - Rules for Use of *SFI* On-Product Labels and Off-Product Marks as well as ISO 14020:2000.

N/A
 Conformance
 Exceeds
 O.F.I.
 Major NC
 Minor NC

Audit Notes: Minor Non-conformance: Use of SFI Logos does not fully conform with Section 5 - Rules for Use of SFI On-Product Labels and Off-Product Marks.

The WDNR has a link to the general information about SFI certificate on its web page and all appropriate information is in place: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/TimberSales/dnrLands.html> .

Douglas County has a link to the SFI certificate and the SFI web site, on its web site, both are correctly presented: <http://www.douglascountywi.org/index.aspx?NID=568>

The WDNR has a link for the WI County Forest lands: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/TimberSales/countyForests.html>
 This link includes SFI promotional logo that displays the incorrect license code of "SFI-00059", WI-DNR's License Code, rather than the correct WI County Land's License Code of "SFI-01617".

Burnett County, Sawyer County, and Washburn County have a promotional use of the SFI trademark/logo on their Load Tickets. Logo usage does not conform to the Rules for Use of SFI On-Product Labels and Off-Product Marks. SFI License Code is noted as "SFI-00059", WI-DNR's License Code, rather than the WI County Land's correct License Code of "SFI-01617" or the License Code does not appear at all.

Sawyer County has additional uses of the SFI promotional logo on their "Forest Wood Residue, Forest Twig/Pole Harvesting, Permit to Cut Boughs", Bill to Purchaser, and Timber Sale Contract. Promotional logo is either missing the License Code or has the incorrect License Code as noted above. It is unclear if any of these logo approvals has been applied for and approved.

Objective 1 Forest Management Planning

To ensure forest management plans include *long-term* sustainable harvest levels and measures to avoid forest conversion.

Performance Measure 1.1

Program Participants shall ensure that forest management plans include *long-term* harvest levels that are sustainable and consistent with appropriate *growth-and-yield models*.

N/A
 Conformance
 Exceeds
 O.F.I.
 Major NC
 Minor NC

Audit Notes: Plans describe sustainable harvest levels based mostly on area control, with growth estimates by type factored into cutting intervals.

1.1.1. Forest management planning at a level appropriate to the size and scale of the operation, including:

- a. a *long-term* resources analysis;
- b. a periodic or ongoing *forest inventory*;
- c. a land classification system;
- d. biodiversity at *landscape* scales;
- e. soils inventory and maps, where available;
- f. access to *growth-and-yield modeling* capabilities;

- g. up-to-date maps or a geographic information system (GIS);
- h. recommended sustainable harvest levels for areas available for harvest; and
- i. a review of non-timber issues (e.g., recreation, tourism, pilot projects and economic incentive *programs* to promote water *protection*, carbon storage, *bioenergy feedstock* production, or *biological diversity conservation*, or to address climate-induced ecosystem change).

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Forest management plans for each county are developed from a comprehensive template provided by the WDNR. Counties customize their individual plans considerably, adding locally-significant information throughout the plan. The resulting plans are realistic, locally-adapted, and quite thorough. They include all of the above items.

Burnett County Comprehensive Land Use Plan originally approved by WI DNR 11/21/2006, updated annually

Sawyer County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan originally approved by WI DNR 03/23/06, Updated 7/11, updated annually

Polk County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan originally approved by WI DNR 12/29/2006, updated annually

Washburn County Comprehensive Land Use Plan originally approved by WI DNR 12/29/2006, updated annually

Timber harvest planning is robust and well-documented. As part of the harvest planning, approval and record-keeping process a "Timber Sale Notice and Cutting Report" is prepared for all sales. The "Narrative" portion includes the following sections:

a. General Sale Description

b Ecological Considerations, including Management History, Silvicultural Systems, Green Tree Retention, Post-Harvest Regeneration Plan, Invasive Species Evaluation, Insect/Disease Concerns, Skidding/Seasonal Restrictions, Wildlife Action Plan/ Species of Greatest Conservation Need, Conservation Opportunity Area (COA), Results of NHI, and Comments

c. Water Quality Considerations

d. Aesthetic Considerations

e. Wildlife Considerations, including Snag, Den and Mast Tree Retention, Game Openings, and Comments

f. Recreation Considerations

g. Resources of Special Concern Considerations (Archeological / Historical Review)

1.1.2. Documented current harvest trends fall within long-term sustainable levels identified in the forest management plan.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Burnett County, WisFIRS reports indicate that harvest levels are consistent with planned harvest acres (area control).

Sawyer County, from Partnership Minutes: "Harvest Goals: Discussion by Peterson. There will be no change from 2015. The harvest goal will be between 3,500 – 3,600 acres."

Polk County's goal is 450 acres per year

Washburn County has maintained harvest levels consistent with the 15-year plan and updates based on WisFIRS data.

1.1.3. A forest inventory system and a method to calculate growth and yield.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Forest inventory system is WisFIRS (Wisconsin Forest Inventory and Reporting System). A combination of WisFIRS and FIA data are used to calculate growth and yield. WisFIRS program is used each year to determine harvest levels (acres) based on the most recent inventory information. Basal area growth rates and stand ages are used to estimate the year in which stands will be silviculturally ready for the next treatment (thinning, regeneration, etc.), and that target date is recorded in WisFIRS. FIA data are reviewed to estimate growth, but the system is driven by stand-by-stand assessments completed immediately prior to treatment to confirm or adjust target harvest dates,

not volume growth estimates.

1.1.4. Periodic updates of *forest inventory* and recalculation of planned harvests to account for changes in growth due to *productivity* increases or decreases, including but not limited to: improved data, *long-term* drought, fertilization, *climate change*, changes in forest land ownership and tenure, or *forest health*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: For each of the county forests audited this year a reconnaissance report documenting the status of inventory information (currency) was provided. This information supports conformance.

Sawyer, from Partnership Notes: "Reconnaissance on 2.07% of the total acreage on the County Forest is 20 years old.

Polk, from Partnership Notes: "Discussed current recon status – 98 % of recon is less than 15 years old. Goal is to keep recon within 20 years. Discussed aspen/Jack Pine recon intervals and possible changes to handbook."

Burnett: 80% of acres have inventory information updated within the past 10 years. From 2011 to 2015 an average of 12,000 acres of inventory updates were done per year, out of 111,000 acres of commercial forestland.

Washburn: 75% of inventory plots are less than 20 years, with 65% less than 10 years.

1.1.5. Documentation of forest practices (e.g., *planting*, fertilization and thinning) consistent with assumptions in harvest plans.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Each county maintains records as required in their partnership agreement with WDNR. The system of records is WisFIRS, which is a comprehensive database of all stands including inventory information, harvests and vegetation management treatments and needs. WisFIRS is maintained and supported by WDNR and counties are provided secure access to the web-based system. Long term harvest planning and the setting of annual allowable harvest levels are based on assumptions regarding growth rates by major cover type, driven in most types primarily by basal area and its growth. The key assumption for partial harvests is that stocking will be maintained within acceptable limits, which was observed. The key assumption for regeneration harvests is that regeneration will be secured within 5 years, and this was observed, with isolated exceptions that are noted in the section on regeneration.

Performance Measure 1.2

Program Participants shall not convert one *forest cover type* to another *forest cover type*, unless in justified circumstances.

1.2.1. Program Participants shall not convert one *forest cover type* to another *forest cover type*, unless the conversion:

- a. Is in compliance with relevant national and regional *policy* and legislation related to land use and forest management; and
- b. Would not convert *native* forest types that are rare and ecologically significant at the *landscape* level or put any *native* forest types at risk of becoming rare; and
- c. Does not create significant long-term adverse impacts on Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value, old-growth forests, forests critical to threatened and endangered species, and special sites.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Most harvests have a goal of maintaining the current forest cover type, but there are some sites where cover type changes are needed to better align species composition with soil/site conditions or landscape considerations. In all cases soil/site conditions are determined (Field Guide to Forest Habitat Types – Kotar, etal) and then used to help guide decisions about forest type. These decisions are reviewed by wildlife biologists and, when needed, by other specialists. Overall goals for desired future conditions with respect to cover type have been developed with considerations at larger spatial scales and documented in plans. Native forest types that are rare are increased in many cases of type changes, and are not diminished.

1.2.2. Where a *Program Participant* intends to convert another *forest cover type*, an assessment considers:

- a. *Productivity* and *stand* quality conditions and impacts which may include social and economic values;

- b. Specific ecosystem issues related to the site such as invasive species, insect or disease issues, riparian protection needs and others as appropriate to site including regeneration challenges; and
- c. Ecological impacts of the conversion including a review at the site and *landscape* scale as well as consideration for any appropriate mitigation measures.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: It is not uncommon to occasionally convert one forest type to another for reasons such as forest health, site productivity, and meeting property objectives. The assessment for the stand level decision to change cover types is documented on the narrative of the Timber Sale Cutting Notice (Form 2460).

Performance Measure 1.3

Program Participants shall not have within the scope of their certification to this *SFI Standard*, forest lands that have been converted to non-forest land use. Indicator:

- 1.3.1. Forest lands converted to other land uses shall not be certified to this *SFI Standard*. This does not apply to forest lands used for forest and *wildlife* management such as *wildlife* food plots or infrastructure such as forest roads, log processing areas, trails etc.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: There is little such conversion, but when lands are selected for changes in land use they are removed from the county forest system. Burnett County - the Namekagon land trade with WDNR removed some acreage from management and entered other acreage, with a net positive gain for County Forest acres.

Objective 2 Forest Health and Productivity

To ensure *long-term* forest *productivity*, carbon storage and *conservation* of forest resources through prompt *reforestation*, *afforestation*, *minimized* chemical use, soil *conservation*, and protecting forests from damaging agents.

Performance Measure 2.1

Program Participants shall promptly reforest after final harvest. Indicators:

- 2.1.1. Documented *reforestation* plans, including designation of all harvest areas for either natural, planted or direct seeded regeneration and prompt *reforestation*, unless delayed for site-specific environmental or *forest health* considerations or legal requirements, through *planting* within two years or two *planting* seasons, or by planned *natural regeneration* methods within five years.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Reforestation methods and criteria are detailed in the Silviculture Handbook, and site-specific implementation approaches are documented in the "Timber Sale Notice and Cutting Report" which is prepared for all sales. The "Narrative" portion includes relevant sections including, in part "b Ecological Considerations" a description of "Silvicultural Systems".

- 2.1.2. Clear criteria to judge adequate regeneration and appropriate actions to correct understocked areas and achieve acceptable species composition and stocking rates for *planting*, *direct seeding* and *natural regeneration*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Burnett County- Reviewed the regeneration survey data from 2015 and 2016 on spreadsheets. Work is being done to place summaries of regeneration data into WisFIRS. Field observations did not reveal any issues.
 Sawyer County- Foresters interviewed are knowledgeable regarding silvicultural methods and challenges, and specified that the Silvicultural Manual provides the criteria to judge adequate regeneration.
 Polk County- Jack Pine often browsed by deer, in some cases killing significant percentages of the planted seedlings. Polk County has been harvesting their own Jack Pine cones to obtain seed to grow their own seedlings; working with WDNR to limit deer damage by obtaining "nuisance deer permits" for the January-March time frame. This is an innovative approach, and one that the Wildlife Bureau thoroughly researched and documented prior to implementation. Based on the "Deer Trustee" report the WDNR has implemented County Deer Advisory Councils

(CDAC), and the nuisance permit approach was reviewed by the Polk CDAC, who preferred this approach to a county-wide reduction in targeted deer numbers. Another option was DMAP, which was not used because it didn't allow for the correct timing.

Washburn County- Foresters interviewed demonstrated thorough knowledge of all aspects of regeneration. They described their regeneration challenges and methods used to overcome these, including Jack Pine (regenerate stands before they decline too much, patience, scarification and aerial seeding), Birch (scarify and then harvest most trees in the stand), and Oak (the most-challenging; various techniques described).

2.1.3. Plantings of exotic tree species should minimize risk to native ecosystems.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: N/A Exotic tree species are not planted.

2.1.4. Protection of desirable or planned advanced *natural regeneration* during harvest.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Site visits confirm that advanced natural regeneration is protected during harvest. Methods include planning of timing of harvests (winter harvests as needed), planning skid trails, directional felling and the use of appropriate (fixed as needed) processor heads, as well as scarification of select areas of a stand prior to harvest.

2.1.5. *Afforestation programs* that consider potential ecological impacts of the selection and *planting* of tree species in non-forested *landscapes*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: N/A There is no planting of tree species in non-forested landscapes.

Performance Measure 2.2

Program Participants shall *minimize* chemical use required to achieve management *objectives* while protecting employees, neighbors, the public and the environment, including *wildlife* and *aquatic habitats*. Indicators:

2.2.1. *Minimized* chemical use required to achieve management *objectives*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Records, supplemented by interviews, show minimal use, totaling 68 acres for the 4 county forests included (389,000 acres, or less than two-hundredths of 1 percent of the acres (0.018%).

Sawyer: No Pesticide use in 2015

Polk: No Pesticide use in 2015 or 2016; pesticides are not used on this forest.

Burnett: 2015: 28 acres Hexazinone (Velpar) Red pine release; 1% solution, band-sprayed; Garlon 4 Ultra Triclopyr, 6 qts. Covering 2 acres for Oak wilt girdling; Applicator Mark Diesen (Asst. Admin)

Washburn: Spike 20p, Tebuthiuron 28 lbs., 40 ac., Wildlife openings; Applicator: Jed Hopp (DNR WLF)

Target Pests: Tebuthiuron 20 P Herbicide is for control of woody plants such as burrowed, ceniza, sagebrush, snakeweed, tarbrush, whitethorn, oak (bigelow/mohr/running/live/black/blue/bur/post/shrub/live), acacia, birch, dogwood, sumac, and several other listed woody plants and brush.,

Tebuthiuron 20 P Herbicide is for use in non-crop areas, including rangelands, permanent grass pastures, fencerows, rights-of-way, and clearings for wildlife habitats.,..."

<https://www.solutionsstores.com/tebuthiuron-20p-herbicide-spike>

2.2.2. Use of least-toxic and narrowest-spectrum pesticides necessary to achieve management objectives.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Hexazinone: Median lethal dose, oral toxicity: 1,690 mg/kg; Slightly Toxic (Category III); low dermal toxicity; fairly broad-spectrum but reasonable for Red Pine release. Source: USDA Forest Service

"Acute Toxicity: Hexazinone has a very low acute toxicity. Environmental Fate: Half of the applied herbicide is lost in soil after one to six months depending on the climate and soil type."

<http://pmep.cce.cornell.edu/profiles/extoxnet/haloxfop-methylparathion/hexazinone-ext.html>

Tebuthiuron 20 P Herbicide is intended for wildlife clearings, and its use appears to be consistent with the label.

2.2.3. Use of pesticides registered for the intended use and applied in accordance with label requirements.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Tebuthiuron 20 P Herbicide is intended for wildlife clearings, and its use appears to be consistent with the label.

2.2.4. The World Health Organization (WHO) type 1A and 1B pesticides shall be prohibited, except where no other viable alternative is available.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not reviewed during the 2016 SFI Audit.

2.2.5. Use of pesticides banned under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (2001) shall be prohibited.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not reviewed during the 2016 SFI Audit.

2.2.6. Use of *integrated pest management* where feasible.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Integrated pest management is required by policy, with a focus on use of proper silviculture to maintain healthy, vigorous stands. Stands are generally properly stocked; assessments of forest health incidents determine causes before treatments are selected; salvage harvests are employed to minimize the spread of insect pests and forest diseases, with a particular focus on sanitation and salvage harvests in stands afflicted by Oak wilt.

2.2.7. Supervision of forest chemical applications by state- or provincial-trained or certified applicators.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Interviews and documentation supported this finding. Some County employees hold applicator licenses, other Counties contract out the application to a registered applicator.

2.2.8. Use of management practices appropriate to the situation, for example:

- a. notification of adjoining landowners or nearby residents concerning applications and chemicals used;
- b. appropriate multilingual signs or oral warnings;
- c. control of public road access during and immediately after applications;
- d. designation of streamside and other needed buffer strips;
- e. use of positive shutoff and minimal-drift spray valves;
- f. aerial application of forest chemicals parallel to buffer zones to *minimize* drift;
- g. monitoring of water quality or safeguards to ensure proper equipment use and *protection* of streams, lakes and other water bodies;
- h. appropriate transportation and storage of chemicals;
- i. filing of required state or provincial reports; and/or
- j. use of methods to ensure *protection of threatened and endangered* species.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not reviewed during the 2016 SFI Audit.

Performance Measure 2.3

Program Participants shall implement forest management practices to protect and maintain forest and soil *productivity*. Indicators:

2.3.1. Process to identify soils vulnerable to compaction, and use of appropriate methods, including the use of soil maps where available, to avoid excessive soil disturbance.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: The allowable season of harvest and/or ground conditions for timber sales are designated by foresters who set up the sales. These designations are guided in part by a system of habitat classification and by site reconnaissance to judge soil suitability and seek sensitive sites, which are often painted out of the harvest units.

Interviews confirmed use of habitat classifications and/or soils and topographic maps for initial planning. This information is refined by site reconnaissance prior to finalizing harvest plans; site limitations are always considered when developing harvest boundaries. Many examples of excluding sensitive soils from sale areas and/or including seasonal restrictions in timber sale contracts were confirmed in the field by the audit team.

2.3.2. Use of erosion control measures to *minimize* the loss of soil and site *productivity*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Erosion control measures, specifically soil and water protection BMPs contained in the Wisconsin's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality, are routinely and widely employed. Proper road construction and skid trail placement, use of logging slash to protect sensitive portions of main skid roads, Waterbars, and stopping harvest when conditions are too wet are some of the techniques observed or confirmed in documents reviewed.

2.3.3. Post-harvest conditions conducive to maintaining site *productivity* (e.g., limited rutting, retained down woody debris, *minimized skid trails*).

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Field observations confirmed limited rutting, retained down woody debris, and planning to minimize skid trails. No rutting was observed in excess of the policy regarding rutting. Some site observations included the use of only historic or previously created skid trails/woods roads.

2.3.4. Retention of vigorous trees during partial harvesting, consistent with scientific silvicultural standards for the area.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Partial harvests reviewed in this audit had minimized damage. Residual trees (except some of those left to provide habitat) were vigorous and well-suited to the site. Use of cut-to-length processors in nearly all harvests helps ensure minimal damage to residual trees.

Some harvest operations have added a "hot saw" harvester or feller-buncher to fell trees, do some in-woods sorting, and bunch the trees in advance of processing in the more conventional manner of a cut-to-length system. This method can significantly increase productivity, but requires careful implementation to avoid damaging soils or to avoid damaging residual trees in partial harvest situations. One harvest reviewed has more than typical levels of residual stem damage; future contracts are likely to preclude use of this harvesting system when thinning stands. Other foresters interviewed will continue to allow this method but will oversee the operations closely to ensure that excessive damage does not occur.

2.3.5. Criteria that address harvesting and site preparation to protect soil *productivity*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Wisconsin BMPs for Water Quality and Wisconsin DNR Timber Sale Handbook contain rutting criteria. These are further detailed as formal rutting requirements is found in the timber sale contracts.

2.3.6. Road construction and skidding layout to *minimize* impacts to soil *productivity*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Forest roads observed during the field visits were generally well-maintained and properly designed. Some roads were being repaired or awaiting repair following an unusually severe rainstorm (more than 10 inches of rain fell within several hours' time in some places) which occurred a few weeks before the audit. Most roads held up well, evidence of proper drainage provisions.

Skid trails and skid roads observed were well planned and many had been protected by strategic placement of

logging slash, although more such slash could have been helpful on some sections of road that had minor rutting and ponding of water.

Performance Measure 2.4

Program Participants shall manage so as to protect forests from damaging agents, such as environmentally or economically undesirable wildfire, pests, diseases and *invasive exotic plants and animals*, to maintain and improve *long-term forest health, productivity and economic viability*. Indicators:

2.4.1. *Program* to protect forests from damaging agents.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: All counties visited prescribe and implement silvicultural treatments designed to establish and maintain healthy stands. Prescriptions are codified in the “Silviculture and Aesthetics Manual” based on up-to-date science and local experience and trials; the manual includes forest health considerations.

All treatments are planned and implemented by professional foresters and forestry technicians who understand forest health considerations and were able to describe local forest pests of concern, including European Ash Borer, Oak Wilt, Gypsy Moth and others.

In Polk County most of the scrub oak stands in the northwestern part of the property (on the NW Sands) have been impacted by oak wilt. On sands the oak wilt spreads too quickly for trenching to slow the spread; the infestations are too scattered and widespread regardless. An aggressive salvage harvest program is in place to capture some value from these trees and to begin the regeneration process, with different species goals where feasible (Jack Pine, Red Pine, or Aspen).

As part of the harvest planning, approval and record-keeping process a “Timber Sale Notice and Cutting Report” is prepared for all sales. The “Narrative” portion includes a section on “b Ecological Considerations, including Management History, Silvicultural Systems, Green Tree Retention, Post-Harvest Regeneration Plan, Invasive Species Evaluation, **Insect/Disease Concerns**, Skidding/Seasonal Restrictions, Wildlife Action Plan/ Species of Greatest Conservation Need, Conservation Opportunity Area (COA), Results of NHI, and Comments”

2.4.2. Management to promote healthy and productive forest conditions to *minimize* susceptibility to damaging agents.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Oak wilt, gypsy moth, Jack Pine insects, and emerald ash borer are current key concerns, with measures in place to deal with each of these and other forest pests. These measures include monitoring and pest impact evaluation, preventative actions (sanitation cuttings) and salvage work.

Burnett County, Sawyer County- Field observations confirmed that forest management practices are developing and maintaining healthy forests in most areas. Most stands observed were properly stocked to slightly overstocked; overstocked stands are prioritized during timber sale planning.

Polk County- Interviews and field observations confirmed exceptional efforts to maintain healthy forests in the face of a severe and widespread infestation of oak wilt in the scrub oak stands which comprise nearly one-quarter of the forests. Managers arrange an annual overflight to view this type to search for pockets of mortality to target for salvage/ pre-salvage harvest treatments. Observed several pine stands that have been consistently managed with periodic thinning to maintain stocking levels consistent with healthy, vigorous stems. Jack Pine stands are regenerated when they show signs of decline, both to avoid health problems and to ensure seed is available to attempt natural regeneration methods.

Washburn County- Field observations confirmed stands managed using methods that maintain healthy conditions. Relatively few trees were observed affected by insects or diseases. In partial harvests trees with the lowest vigor or signs of forest health issues were removed, except those needed to provide habitat (den trees and snags or snag recruitment).

2.4.3. Participation in, and support of, fire and pest prevention and control *programs*.

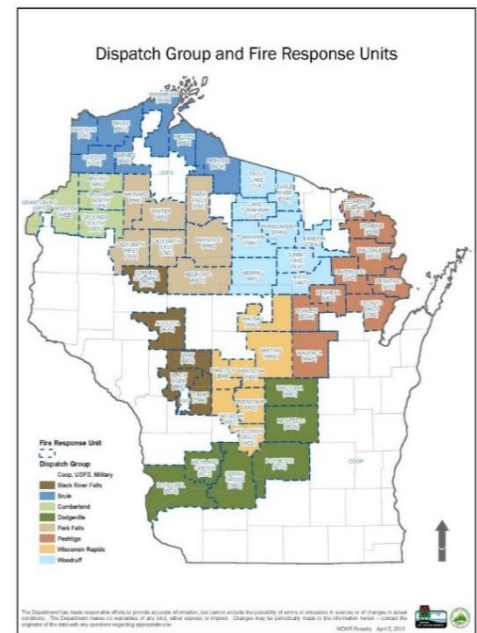
N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Northern region health reports posted on-line include reports through May 2014. Other regions are current.

Foresters regularly receive forest health reports generated by WDNR Forest Health Staff via email. When needed county forests can request support from DNR forest health staff to diagnosis and treat forest health concerns. County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plans all include a chapter (typically chapter 600) which describes the program to protect forests from damaging agents. This includes protection from uncontrolled fire and from pests and pathogens and involves an integrated pest management approach. Integrated pest management combines elements of silvicultural prescriptions, timber sale contract requirements, biological, mechanical, and chemical control to minimize the impacts of damaging agents.

From WDNR: "Many of the county forests lie partly or completely within the boundary of areas protected from forest fire by WDNR. DNR along with local resources detect and suppress wildfires. Previously, many fire detection towers operated by WDNR are located in partnership on county forest lands as outlined in WI Statute 28.11(4)f. WDNR has now moved to decommission towers and rely on more aerial and citizen reporting. Hazard mitigation grants are also available to counties to perform projects that help protect forest resources, such as construction & maintenance of fire breaks. Many county forest staff participate in WDNR incident management teams that are assembled to help respond to large forest fires and other natural disasters. Attached below is a map of WDNR protection areas and a summary year to date (2016) of fires and acres burned on all lands in this area."

DNR Dispatch Group (see map)	YTD Fires	YTD Acres Burned
Black River Falls	37	93.71
Brule	43	35.67
Cumberland	47	58.66
Dodgeville	68	82.15
Park Falls	74	77.17
Peshtigo	95	77.67
Wisconsin Rapids	85	72.12
Woodruff	65	29.65
Totals for calendar year:	514	526.80



Performance Measure 2.5

Program Participants that deploy improved planting stock, including varietal seedlings, shall use best scientific methods. Indicator:

2.5.1. Program for appropriate research, testing, evaluation and deployment of *improved planting stock, including varietal seedlings.*

- N/A
 Conformance
 Exceeds
 O.F.I.
 Major NC
 Minor NC

Audit Notes: Reviewed Tree Improvement and nursery operations information for the state’s nursery in Boscobel in southern Wisconsin from Nursery News newsletters from web-site to confirm management by trained, experienced specialists (including Joe Vande Hey - Reforestation Team Leader/Nursery Superintendent) but has not filled the geneticist position. Hayward Nursery closed, but space has been leased to PRT, to grow containerized stock.

Interviewed Jeremiah Auer, Regeneration Specialist, who reviews performance of planted stock and provides support for a variety of regeneration issues including on the Wisconsin County Forests.

The department has a Forest Genetics and Tree Improvement Program as described in the “Wisconsin’s Reforestation Programs 2014 Annual Report”. The program is a WDNR collaboration with the UW-Madison, Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology which has a tree-improvement technical position with part-time oversight by Dr. Ray Guries. The program has, among other accomplishments, developed 3rd-generation Jack Pine seed orchards with 20% growth gain, and which were the source of 80% of the Jack Pine shipped last year. The

tree improvement program is in a holding pattern at this time, with no current work being done to further improve stock, but past work, based on scientific protocols continues to yield good stock.

“The Wisconsin Tree Improvement Program, with the long-term support of the state forest nurseries, continues to develop and manage tree seed orchards using a combination of parent tree and family selection, progeny testing, and selective breeding. First-generation seed orchards currently are established for white pine, jack pine, red pine, white spruce, red oak, and black walnut. Second and third-generation seed orchards are established for jack pine.”

Polk: Ship cones to Canada for extraction, seed-bank storage, and growing on a contract basis.

Objective 3 Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources

To protect the water quality of rivers, streams, lakes, *wetlands* and other water bodies through meeting or exceeding *best management practices*.

Performance Measure 3.1

Program Participants shall meet or exceed all applicable federal, provincial, state and local water quality laws, and meet or exceed *best management practices* developed under Canadian or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency–approved water quality *programs*.

Indicators:

3.1.1. *Program* to implement federal, state or provincial water quality *best management practices* during all phases of management activities.

- N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Trained foresters plan and oversee all management activities, with review and approval by senior managers and/or specialists who have an impressive depth of knowledge and experience. Wisconsin’s Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality are the basis of the program and are embedded into many aspects of the overall program (training, contracts, monitoring, management review).

3.1.2. Contract provisions that specify conformance to *best management practices*.

- N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Burnett County- confirmed in sample of contracts; Sawyer County-page 4, guidelines under rutting policy
Polk County-Contract No. 477 Clause 18 g 1; Washburn County- confirmed in Clause 27.

3.1.3. Monitoring of overall *best management practices* implementation.

- N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: BMP implementation is monitored during timber sale administration and silviculture operation.
A BMP assessment on state and county lands is conducted periodically. The last assessment was conducted during Fall of 2013. The report has been published <http://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/pubs/fr/fr555.pdf>.

Performance Measure 3.2

Program Participants shall implement water, *wetland* and *riparian protection* measures based on soil type, terrain, vegetation, ecological function, harvesting system, state *best management practices (BMPs)*, provincial guidelines and other applicable factors.

Indicators:

3.2.1. *Program* addressing management and *protection* of rivers, streams, lakes, *wetlands*, other water bodies and *riparian areas* during all phases of management, including the layout and construction of roads and *skid trails* to maintain water reach, flow and quality.

- N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: There is a comprehensive program for the protection of wetlands and watercourses. Foresters plan all harvests and treatments; other specialists are available to review these plans when needed. Wetlands and watercourse protections are the first priority during planning and implementation. All foresters are trained to follow Wisconsin’s BMPs, and trained loggers implement harvests per contracts which include provisions for water quality.

Timber sale administration and monitoring of silviculture operations addresses water quality issues.

During site visits implementation of protections witnessed by painting sale boundary or cutting unit lines for RMZs and avoiding areas during operations. No issues were identified.

3.2.2. Mapping of rivers, streams, lakes, *wetlands* and other water bodies as specified in state or provincial *best management practices* and, where appropriate, identification on the ground.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Confirmed during field audits accurate mapping of rivers, streams, lakes, and other water bodies on timber sale maps.

3.2.3. Document and implement plans to manage and protect rivers, streams, lakes, *wetlands*, other water bodies and *riparian areas*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Timber Sale Notice & Cutting Report narrative (2460-001) includes a section "c. Water Quality Considerations". Timber sale maps and contracts depict such plans.

3.2.4. Plans that address wet-weather events in order to maintain water quality (e.g., *forest inventory* systems, wet-weather tracts, definitions of acceptable operating conditions).

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: For each harvest the "Timber Sale Notice And Cutting Report" in "15. b. Ecological Considerations. Skidding/Seasonal Restrictions" defines acceptable operating periods. Foresters and loggers are aware of the regions and areas having coarse, well-drained (deep sandy) soils and offer/stockpile such areas for harvesting when other areas are too wet to support logging equipment.

Objective 4 Conservation of Biological Diversity

To manage the quality and distribution of *wildlife habitats* and contribute to the *conservation of biological diversity* by developing and implementing *stand-* and *landscape-level* measures that promote a diversity of types of *habitat* and successional stages, and the *conservation* of forest plants and animals, including *aquatic species*, as well as *threatened and endangered species*, *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*, *old-growth forests* and ecologically important sites.

Performance Measure 4.1

Program Participants shall conserve biological diversity. Indicators:

4.1.1. Program to incorporate the *conservation of native biological diversity*, including species, *wildlife habitats* and ecological community types at *stand* and *landscape* levels.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: County forests are eligible for Wildlife Habitat Grants, which fund several eligible items: trail mowing, seeding, gates, scarification, road work, acquisition of key access points, labor, materials and contracting with other agencies. Additional information was obtained in two of the counties:

Sawyer Co – Works on wildlife habitat improvement grants thru the DNR liaison and wildlife biologist. County assisted WDNR in the Elk range expansion project and selection of a release site/pen in the Winter Block. Ongoing assistance to WDNR deer research project within county forest bounds.

Washburn Co. – Wildlife habitat improvement grants used for habitat improvement work thru the DNR liaison and wildlife biologist.

4.1.2. Development of criteria and implementation of practices, as guided by regionally based *best scientific information*, to retain *stand-level wildlife habitat* elements such as snags, stumps, mast trees, down woody debris, den trees and nest trees.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: There is an Opportunity for Improvement in the criteria and implementation of stand level retention within larger Aspen clear-cut blocks.

Leaving standing Aspen trees within Aspen clear-cut units is occasionally done, generally in association with the protection of other features such as vernal pools or small wetlands or seeps. More often when Aspen are left uncut they are located on the edges of clear-cut units as part of riparian or visual buffers. Identified, isolated live den trees are also left when noticed. Foresters are able to describe many good reasons for not retaining individual or groups of live, standing Aspen trees in Aspen clear-cuts. There is less familiarity with reasons for leaving some.

As part of the harvest planning, approval and record-keeping process a "Timber Sale Notice and Cutting Report" is prepared for all sales. The "Narrative" portion includes relevant sections including "b. Ecological Considerations, including Management History, Silvicultural Systems, Green Tree Retention, Post-Harvest Regeneration Plan, Invasive Species Evaluation, Insect/Disease Concerns, Skidding/Seasonal Restrictions, Wildlife Action Plan/ Species of Greatest Conservation Need, Conservation Opportunity Area (COA), Results of NHI, and Comments" and "e. Wildlife Considerations, including Snag, Den and Mast Tree Retention, Game Openings, and Comments".

On all other habitat types visited, retained stand-level wildlife habitat elements were observed, including game openings and snag and mast tree retention

4.1.3. Document diversity of *forest cover types* and age or size classes at the individual ownership or forest tenure level, and where credible data are available, at the *landscape* scale. Working individually or collaboratively to support diversity of *native forest cover types* and age or size classes that enhance *biological diversity* at the *landscape* scale.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Assessments of under-represented, naturally occurring successional stages occur during comprehensive land use planning processes. Specific property goals for management of these areas are described in the comprehensive plan and/or in annual work plans. The DNR has developed some species specific analysis of forest cover types, which are available on the DNR webpage.

Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) and Conservation Opportunity Areas (COA) serve as tools for assessment and planning. Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs) located in the selected audit counties but not necessarily on County Forest Land include the following: Burnett: Namekagon Barrens, Crex Meadows, Flambeau Headwaters, Brunet and Thornapple River; Polk: Clam Falls; Sawyer: Spring Brook Drumlins; and Washburn: St. Croix River

The following webpage allows searching by county for Conservation Opportunity Areas:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/WildlifeHabitat/county.asp> .

4.1.4. *Program Participants* shall participate in or incorporate the results of state, provincial, or regional *conservation* planning and priority-setting efforts to conserve biological diversity and consider these efforts in forest management planning. Examples of credible priority-setting efforts include state *wildlife* action plans, state forest action plans, relevant *habitat conservation* plans or provincial *wildlife* recovery plans.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) and Conservation Opportunity Areas (COA) serve as tools for assessment and planning.

The Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) is consulted prior to forest management activities. Foresters work in consultation with Wildlife and Natural Heritage Conservation (NHC) staff to address any occurrences. Forestry, wildlife and NHC staffs often conduct additional site surveys for species if the NHI database indicates the need. The NHI system allows for reporting of any additional occurrences by a variety of staff.

Impacts to rare, threatened and endangered (RTE) species are documented in timber sale files and the timber sale cutting notice (Form 2460). County staff cooperates and collaborate with Wisconsin DNR staff on upcoming timber sales during the Annual Partnership and/or work planning meetings and also receive additional site specific input on RTE species detection and management on a case by case basis, when needed.

The Wisconsin DNR has recently filled a position dedicated to developing early successional habitat in the Northwest Sands Ecological Landscape.

Sawyer County: County assisted WDNR in the Elk range expansion project and selection of a release site/pen in the Winter Block. Ongoing assistance to WDNR deer research project within county forest bounds.

Burnett County: A Northern long-eared bat colony was found locally, however not on County land. County foresters were made aware of its presence and the need to follow regular protocol if found on County lands.

4.1.5. Program to address conservation of known sites with viable occurrences of significant species of concern.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Interviews with field personnel supported this information provided by WDNR:

“WDNR’s Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation (NHC) provides a wide array of information and works with the county forests in protecting sites and species of concern. Included in the information is Wisconsin’s Strategy for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, species guidance documents, and a listing of Wisconsin rare species and natural communities. This information can be accessed at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/nhi/wlist.html> In addition, NHC maintains the Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) database. Prior to ground-disturbing, activities foresters working on county land will review this database to check for species that have been, or may be, located on the site in question. For timber sales this check is documented in a general nature in the Timber Sale Notice & Cutting Report narrative (2460-001). Any mitigating measures are also documented there.

NHC continues to write management plans for T&E species and make them available to County personnel. DNR biologists provide specialist support as needed and shares results of research as it is available. The Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA), WDNR, and individual counties also distribute research findings in the form of published articles, professional newsletters, and informal studies with county forest group members. Counties incorporate results into long-term and annual planning and into stand level management decisions.”

Per interview with DNR Wildlife biologist, if any listings appear or change, communication is sent out to all employees, so they are aware of it.

4.1.6. Identification and protection of non-forested wetlands, including bogs, fens and marshes, and vernal pools of ecological significance.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Field observations confirm that non-forested wetlands and small pocket forested wetlands are generally excluded from the harvest area on maps and on the ground using blue paint lines or flagging. Tops and logging slash are generally kept out of these areas, per BMPs enforced by foresters overseeing timber harvests.

4.1.7. Participation in programs and demonstration of activities as appropriate to limit the introduction, spread and impact of invasive exotic plants and animals that directly threaten or are likely to threaten native plant and animal communities.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Forest reconnaissance includes monitoring for invasive species. (Example flights for Oak Wilt). As part of the harvest planning, approval and record-keeping process a “Timber Sale Notice and Cutting Report” is prepared for all sales. The “Narrative” portion includes a section on “b Ecological Considerations, including Management History, Silvicultural Systems, Green Tree Retention, Post-Harvest Regeneration Plan, **Invasive Species Evaluation**, Insect/Disease Concerns, Skidding/Seasonal Restrictions, Wildlife Action Plan/ Species of Greatest Conservation Need, Conservation Opportunity Area (COA), Results of NHI, and Comments

Burnett County- foresters interviewed are aware of pending threats from invasive plants further to the south, with only one isolated invasive plant present in isolated places in the county. WisFIRS has capability to record data on invasive sites with provision to code and track instances and control plans.

Sawyer County-foresters interviewed are aware and monitoring when invasive plants are impacting desirable regeneration.

Washburn County, from Partnership Meeting Minutes: “WCF has a grant to continue to treat buckthorn (behind Elm Creek and near Chippanazie) and will implement this fall. Invasive Species Rule NR 40, The invasive species rule (Wis. Adm. Code Ch. NR 40) makes it illegal to possess, transport, transfer, or introduce certain invasive species in Wisconsin without a permit. Everyone is responsible to comply with these regulations. Some counties have had invasive species inventories and/or plans completed. Sustainable forestry grants have been awarded for some control efforts.

Witnessed Oak Wilt treatment and discussed control program. GIS points identified for locations.

4.1.8. Consider the role of natural disturbances, including the use of prescribed or natural fire where appropriate, and forest health threats in relation to biological diversity when developing forest management plans.

N/A
 Conformance
 Exceeds
 O.F.I.
 Major NC
 Minor NC

Audit Notes: The silvicultural systems used are based in part on the ecology of natural disturbances. Prescribed fire used for wildlife management. Discussed use in all Counties and prescribed fire is rarely used due to time constraints and public perception/acceptance.

Performance Measure 4.2

Program Participants shall protect threatened and endangered species, Forests with Exceptional Conservation Values (FECV) and old-growth forests. Indicators:

4.2.1. Program to protect threatened and endangered species.

N/A
 Conformance
 Exceeds
 O.F.I.
 Major NC
 Minor NC

Audit Notes: Counties are mandated to meet requirement. Work with other state, federal, and private agencies to identify and protect. Species are identified in NHI Database and reviewed prior to each stands management activity. If species or species habitat are identified, preventive measures such as buffers or seasonal closures are implemented, based on DNR guidelines. FECVs have been identified using the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory database, input from DNR Natural Heritage Conservation experts, and input from local experts and stakeholders. These areas have been identified and mapped.

4.2.2. Program to locate and protect known sites flora and fauna associated with viable occurrences of *critically imperiled* and *imperiled* species and communities also known as *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*. Plans for *protection* may be developed independently or collaboratively, and may include *Program Participant* management, cooperation with other stakeholders, or use of easements, *conservation* land sales, exchanges, or other *conservation* strategies.

N/A
 Conformance
 Exceeds
 O.F.I.
 Major NC
 Minor NC

Audit Notes: Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) is checked prior to establishing all timber harvests. Documentation of an NHI screening appears on the Timber Sale Notice And Cutting Report, and additional information may be available in the specific timber sale folder (on Form 2460). The species and communities included in the NHI database include those identified by endangered resources staff as threatened, endangered, and special concern and cover those that are considered imperiled and critically imperiled. Comprehensive land use plans also incorporate such considerations. FECVs have been identified using the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory database, input from DNR Natural Heritage Conservation experts, and input from local experts and stakeholders. These areas have been identified and mapped.

4.2.3. Support of and participation in plans or *programs* for the *conservation* of *old-growth forests* in the region of ownership or forest tenure.

N/A
 Conformance
 Exceeds
 O.F.I.
 Major NC
 Minor NC

Audit Notes: The DNR has developed some species specific analysis of forest cover types, which are available on the DNR webpage. Relict old growth stands (Type 1) are typed as reserved - no management. On any managed old-growth stand – any forest management is conducted primarily to maintain or enhance old growth characteristics. Witnessed in WisFIRS. No old-growth forests have been identified in the Counties visited. If found, Counties designate these lands for old growth protection or management that promotes old-growth characteristics. Witnessed in WisFIRS.

Performance Measure 4.3

Program Participants shall manage ecologically important sites in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities. Indicators:

4.3.1. Use of information such as existing natural heritage data or expert advice in identifying or selecting ecologically important sites for *protection*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: NHI and Archeological, Historical database checks are made before conducting timber sale activities. FECV sites were identified in consultation with ER staff during development of comprehensive land use plans.

Witnessed on Timber Sale Notice And Cutting Report 15. b. Ecological Considerations.
Sites witnessed in WisFIRS database.

4.3.2. Appropriate mapping, cataloging and management of identified ecologically important sites.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Sites witnessed in WisFIRS database.

Witnessed on Timber Sale Notice And Cutting Report 15. b. Ecological Considerations.

Performance Measure 4.4

Program Participants shall apply knowledge gained through research, science, technology and field experience to manage *wildlife habitat* and contribute to the *conservation of biological diversity*. Indicators:

4.4.1. Collection of information on *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value* and other *biodiversity*-related data through *forest inventory* processes, mapping or participation in external *programs*, such as NatureServe, state or provincial heritage *programs*, or other credible systems. Such participation may include providing non-proprietary scientific information, time and assistance by staff, or in-kind or direct financial support.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: FECVs have been identified using the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory database, input from DNR Natural Heritage Conservation experts, and input from local experts and stakeholders. These areas have been identified and mapped, and observed for selected Counties in WisFIRS.

4.4.2. A methodology to incorporate research results and field applications of *biodiversity* and ecosystem research into forest management decisions.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Counties have access to research results, analysis and planning completed by the State of Wisconsin DNR, which they incorporate into their forest management decisions. Wisconsin DNR biologists are involved in all county forestry programs. Good working relationships were witnessed. The State continues to write management plans for T&E species and make them available to County personnel, with emailed updates as needed. The State provides specialist support as needed and shares results of research as it is available. Counties also work in conjunction with other agencies, such as the USFS for additional research and field applications.

WCFA, DNR, and individual counties also distribute research findings in the form of published articles, professional newsletters, and informal studies with county forest group members. Counties incorporate results into long-term and annual planning and into stand level management decisions.

Objective 5 Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits

To manage the visual impact of forest operations and provide recreational opportunities for the public.

Performance Measure 5.1

Program Participants shall manage the impact of harvesting on *visual quality*. Indicators:

5.1.1. Program to address visual quality management.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: County Forests Comprehensive Land Use Plans contain Chapter 520 Aesthetic Management Zone. Foresters are trained and are responsible for addressing visual quality in locations where sales are visible to the public.

Timber Sale Notice And Cutting Report – 15. D. Aesthetic Consideration contains documentation for timber sales.

5.1.2. Incorporation of aesthetic considerations in harvesting, road, landing design and management, and other management activities where visual impacts are a concern.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Observed and discussed use of visual buffer strips along trails and modification of harvest block alignment and shape for aspen regeneration harvests. Also saw examples of large blocks of Aspen that are being managed to avoid clearcutting large areas at one time, in part for visual management and in part to provide improved habitat for Aspen.

Performance Measure 5.2

Program Participants shall manage the size, shape and placement of clearcut harvests. Indicators:

5.2.1. Average size of clearcut harvest areas does not exceed 120 acres (50 hectares), except when necessary to meet regulatory requirements, achieve ecological *objectives* or to respond to *forest health* emergencies or other natural catastrophes.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Average clearcut harvest in 2015 was under 20 acres (see details below).

5.2.2. Documentation through internal records of clearcut size and the process for calculating average size.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: From WDNR:
 "19.59 acres – 2015 average clear-cut size (23,903 acres / 1220 patches)
 18.16 acres – 2014 average clear-cut size
 17.73 acres – 2013 average clear-cut size
 16.99 acres – 2012 average clear-cut size.
 17.53 acres -- 2011 average clear-cut size.
 18.95 acres - 2010 average clear-cut size.
 *Advanced timber sale report/export from WisFIRS (based on sales established during calendar year, with total even-aged acres divided by total number of even-aged patches)."

Performance Measure 5.3

Program Participants shall adopt a *green-up requirement* or alternative methods that provide for *visual quality*. Indicators:

5.3.1. *Program* implementing the *green-up requirement* or alternative methods.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Foresters are knowledgeable about green-up requirements. WisFIRS recon system is utilized to schedule future harvests in stands adjacent to harvest areas and/or regeneration evaluation activities, and can be scheduled to ensure adequate green-up. Additionally, small clearcut sizes and fast growth of most even-aged types in Wisconsin make meeting SFI green-up requirements fairly easy. System of timber sale harvest plan review and approval by county forest administrator and DNR liaison ensures multiple persons review and approve sales and ensure green-up requirements are met.

5.3.2. Harvest area tracking system to demonstrate conformance with the *green-up requirement* or alternative methods.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: From WDNR: "WisFIRS recon system is utilized to schedule future harvests in stands adjacent to harvest areas and/or regeneration evaluation activities, and can be scheduled to ensure adequate green-up. All timber harvests are mapped, providing a spatial view of harvests. After harvests recon is updated and regeneration success is noted. Where regeneration is questionable or does not fully occupy the site, foresters will schedule future regeneration checks to confirm that the site has been adequately reforested. Small even-aged harvests and fast growth of most even-aged types in Wisconsin make meeting SFI green-up requirements fairly easy. The system of timber sale harvest plan review and approval by county forest administrator and DNR liaison ensures multiple

persons review and approve sales and ensure green-up requirements are met.”

5.3.3. Trees in clearcut harvest areas are at least 3 years old or 5 feet (1.5 meters) high at the desired level of stocking before adjacent areas are clearcut, or as appropriate to address operational and economic considerations, alternative methods to reach the *performance measure* are utilized by the *Program Participant*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Witnessed during site visits. No issues identified.

Performance Measure 5.4

Program Participants shall support and promote recreational opportunities for the public. Indicator:

5.4.1. Provide recreational opportunities for the public, where consistent with forest management *objectives*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: The Wisconsin County Forest Program is exceptional by providing an extensive range of quality recreational activities within their forests. (Indicator 5.4.1).

All four counties involved in the 2016 audit provide a range of recreational opportunities, and do so as a priority, working to avoid conflicts between recreation and forest management activities.

Burnett County- ATV and other trails communities stated high levels of satisfaction with recreation opportunities and management.

Sawyer County- extensive recreation program including traditional recreation, Cross-county skiing, fat-tire bike trails, and others. Consult with hiking groups before setting up sales.

Polk County- Forest map shows trails for ATVs, snowmobiles, horses, and walking. Walked or drove sections of Governor Knowles Horse Trails (aka Equestrian Trail) and the ATV Loop and visited one trail head parking lot.

Washburn County has extensive recreational infrastructure, some observed during audit, also seen on maps and referenced on various web links on the web site: <http://www.co.washburn.wi.us/departments/forestry/>

“Online Campground Reservations ... Trails, Routes & Maps

- Forest Resource Maps
- Washburn County Road and Access Information
- ATV Trails
- Cross Country Skiing
- Equestrian Trails
- Mountain Bike Trails
- Snowmobile Trails
- Campgrounds & Maps
- Canoeing Routes”

Objective 6 Protection of Special Sites

To manage lands that are geologically or *culturally important* in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.

Performance Measure 6.1

Program Participants shall identify *special sites* and manage them in a manner appropriate for their unique features. Indicators:

6.1.1. Use of information such as existing natural heritage data, expert advice or stakeholder consultation in identifying or selecting *special sites* for *protection*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not reviewed during the 2016 SFI Audit.

6.1.2. Appropriate mapping, cataloging and management of identified *special sites*.

N/A
 Conformance
 Exceeds
 O.F.I.
 Major NC
 Minor NC

Audit Notes: Burnett County: Auditors saw a historic informal family cemetery plot which was buffered from harvesting after foresters employed a “cadaver dog” to precisely locate the graves.

Objective 7 Efficient Use of Fiber Resources

To *minimize* waste and ensure the efficient use of fiber resources.

Performance Measure 7.1

Program Participants shall employ appropriate forest harvesting technology and in-woods manufacturing processes and practices to *minimize* waste and ensure efficient utilization of harvested trees, where consistent with other *SFI Standard objectives*. Indicator:

- 7.1.1. *Program* or monitoring system to ensure efficient utilization, which may include provisions to ensure:
- a. management of harvest residue (e.g., slash, limbs, tops) considers economic, social and environmental factors (e.g., organic and nutrient value to future forests and the potential of increased fuels build-up) and other utilization needs;
 - b. training or incentives to encourage loggers to enhance utilization;
 - c. exploration of markets for underutilized species and low-grade wood and alternative markets (e.g., bioenergy markets); or
 - d. periodic inspections and reports noting utilization and product separation.

N/A
 Conformance
 Exceeds
 O.F.I.
 Major NC
 Minor NC

Audit Notes: Timber Sale Contract includes utilization clause and logger training requirement. Utilization is monitored during timber sale administration. Foresters interviewed are knowledgeable of local markets and utilization specs. No utilization issues were identified during site visits.

Foresters have experimented with sale requirements that require more-thorough utilization (for example in Burnett County a 3-inch top requirement).

Objective 8 Recognize and Respect *Indigenous Peoples’* Rights

To recognize and respect *Indigenous Peoples’* rights and traditional knowledge.

Performance Measure 8.1

Program Participants shall recognize and respect *Indigenous Peoples’* rights.

- 8.1.1 *Program Participants* will provide a written policy acknowledging a commitment to recognize and respect the rights of *Indigenous Peoples*.

N/A
 Conformance
 Exceeds
 O.F.I.
 Major NC
 Minor NC

Audit Notes: “Wisconsin Executive Order #39 directs all state agencies to recognize and consult with Indian Tribes located in Wisconsin on a government to government basis. A policy signed in 2005 was established by the DNR directing DNR staff on consultation with Wisconsin’s Indian Tribes. This policy recognizes the unique relationship between our governments, and is meant to respect each government. Individual County Forests recognize and respect the rights of tribal members to gather forest products on county forest lands within the ceded territory. This written policy is included in county forest plans and in county ordinances.

County Forestry Policies confirmed: Burnett County, in Management Plan; Sawyer County, in Management Plan: 525 Treaty Rights: Gathering Miscellaneous Forest Products 500-45; 915.12 Native American Gathering Permit 900-87; Polk County- In plan in Section 525; Washburn County-525 Treaty Rights (500-31 to 500-34)

Performance Measure 8.2

Program Participants with forest *management responsibilities on public lands* shall confer with affected *Indigenous Peoples* with respect to sustainable forest management practices. Indicator:

- 8.2.1. *Program* that includes communicating with affected *Indigenous Peoples* to enable *Program Participants* to:

- a. understand and respect traditional forest-related knowledge;
- b. identify and protect spiritually, historically, or culturally important sites;
- c. address the use of non-timber forest products of value to Indigenous Peoples in areas where Program Participants have management responsibilities on public lands; and
- d. respond to Indigenous Peoples' inquiries and concerns received.

N/A
 Conformance
 Exceeds
 O.F.I.
 Major NC
 Minor NC

Audit Notes: Burnett County- One logger was a tribal member from a distant tribe who confirmed that the county forest allows gathering and respects rights to gather. Maintained list of approx. 8 Tribes recognized. Permits for firewood, boughs, and birch saplings were issued.

Sawyer County- Lac Courte Oreilles' (LCO) Reservation is located near Hayward in Sawyer County. The county forestry program has a tribal member on its county forestry committee. An LCO Conservation Representative attends all of the forestry committee meetings. DNR consults with the LCO when they make changes in Elk management. GLFWC has a representative on the Elk Advisory Committee. Training helped identify burial sites and what WDNR resources. Key resources: birch bark, birch poles, bough permits, and maple syrup sites. Protected a burial site on one development site associated with the Elk openings project.

Polk County- Local tribes have web sites which describe local traditional gathering including birch bark, birch twigs, boughs, firewood, maple syrup, medicinal plants, and other products as well as spiritual uses. There have been no gathering requests. No special sites have been identified. Archeological maps kept in Madison.

Washburn County- Discussed challenges of communicating with local tribes; neither local tribal entities responded due to their desire to interact at higher government levels (state or federal). Field staff have not found any native-American cultural sites. Permits issued for firewood, boughs, birch saplings for tepee poles, birch bark and cedar.

From WDNR: "The Department of Natural Resources has an agency tribal liaison (Shelly Allness). The department also has a system of individual forestry division tribal liaisons to develop strong communication channels and discuss issues related to forest management including traditional knowledge, important sites, non-timber forest products on state lands, and to respond to tribal inquiries and concerns. Individual county forests also maintain their own programs for communication with affected tribes based on the level of interest and engagement expressed by affected tribes, which may include regular in-person meetings, periodic solicitation for feedback on planning documents, and maintenance of a tribal gathering permit system. Each county in the ceded territory of Wisconsin maintains a permit system on county forests for tribal gathering, as allowed by treaty and federal court decisions. All county forestry committee meetings are also publicly noticed and open for attendance and participation by any member of the public, and in particular members of affected tribes. Inquiries or concerns would typically start with an individual county forest administrator and their respective county forestry committee. Any program-wide concerns would typically involve the DNR's County Forest Specialist in concert with the Executive Director of the Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) and the DNR tribal liaisons.

County Board meetings and forestry committee meetings in which policies for resource management and work plans are set allow for public input, including Native American organizations. The DNR and Counties also maintain relationships with local Tribes and solicit input as needed as confirmed through interviews."

Many employees of the county forests have participated in cultural resources training that included at least one tribal representative. This training was last held in 2009. The length of time since this training is considerable, but most of the more-experienced staff (who would be involved in most aspects of the program) demonstrated good working knowledge of tribal resources and of processes and resources of the WDNR available.

Burnett County- some staff recall the training in 2009; Sawyer County- three of the current staff had the training in 2009; Polk County- Ongoing discussions at WCFA meetings provide update training which supplements the more-formal training that was held in 2009; Washburn County- Cultural resource training was held several years ago during which field sites were visited to help identify what would be culturally-sensitive site.

Chapter 200 of the county forest comprehensive land use plans describe common measures to protect tribal resources. The Timber Sale Notice and Cutting Report is also used to document any field-level precautions and measures to take.

WI DNR uses a variety of mechanisms to consult with the six federally recognized Chippewa tribes regarding forest management and off-reservation hunting rights. These mechanisms include designating individual tribal liaisons to consult with each Chippewa tribes on forestry related topics including County Forests, specific inclusion and communications with Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission on important forestry management protocols (e.g., biomass harvest guidelines, BMPs for water quality, Invasive Species BMPs, Silviculture Handbook, and Forest Management Guidelines). In addition, all Chippewa tribes were consulted on the Division of Forestry’s “Strategic Direction”. Chippewa tribes participate in DNR management committees that relate to forest and wildlife management.

WCFA participates the Wild Rice Advisory Committee to represent the County Forest system. This committee has members from several tribes on it.

Performance Measure 8.3

Program Participants are encouraged to communicate with and shall respond to local *Indigenous Peoples* with respect to sustainable forest management practices on their private lands. Indicators:

8.3.1. *Program Participants* are aware of *traditional forest-related knowledge*, such as known cultural heritage sites, the use of wood in traditional buildings and crafts, and flora that may be used in cultural practices for food, ceremonies or medicine.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLFWC) tracks gathering and acts as a resource and advocate for support of the exercising of treaty rights throughout the ceded territories by the tribes. Tribes often approach WDNR through GLFWC or directly regarding other resources of interest (wild rice, wildlife or fish).

Tribes have expressed a desire not to share their tribal practices.

Foresters in each county were interviewed regarding awareness of *traditional forest-related knowledge*

Burnett County- foresters interviewed are aware of processes for checking on special sites, and were able to describe a list of forest-based materials used by tribes.

Sawyer County- The Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) Reservation is located near Hayward in Sawyer County. A tribal member serves on the county forestry committee. An LCO Conservation Representative attends all of the forestry committee meetings. DNR consults with the LCO when they make changes in Elk management. GLFWC has a representative on the Elk Advisory Committee.

Polk County- Local tribes have web sites which describe local traditional gathering including birch bark, birch twigs, boughs, firewood, maple syrup, medicinal plants, and other products as well as spiritual uses. There have been no gathering requests.

Washburn County- Awareness of some items traditionally-used include cedar, birch bark, boughs, sap, tipi (lodge)-poles, and traditional medicinal plants

Timber Sale handbook (page 32-5) requires a check of the cultural database for County Forest timber sales and such information be included on the Timber Sale narrative (Form 2460-1A). If special sites have been identified on a specific County, unit-level descriptions often mention that sites have been found or not (e.g., Oconto County).

FME staff consults with tribes on the location of known archeological sites, as confirmed in interviews in Forest County. The Chippewa and Potawatomi Tribes have rights to hunting and gathering on public lands within the ceded territory. Several of these rights are described in treaties and in decisions made during court trials over these rights. The tribes are invited for consultation during management plan writing. At the Forest County level, tribes have been consulted on law enforcement and economic development. DNR does consultations with tribes at broad levels over concerns on certain resources, such as birch bark.”

8.3.2. Respond to *Indigenous Peoples’* inquiries and concerns received.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: County Forest Administrators receive and respond to inquiries and concerns presented by tribal members. Significant issues are brought before the County Forestry Committee for discussion and decision. In addition to individual County relationships with tribes, the DNR has a system of individual forestry division tribal liaisons in order to develop strong communication channels and discuss issues related to forest management including traditional knowledge, important

sites, non-timber forest products, and to respond to tribal inquiries and concerns. The DNR tribal liaison also has consistent and continual communication established between the tribal leadership and the department. SFI certified counties were surveyed regarding how each has responded to Indigenous Peoples’ inquiries and concerns.”

Responses from the 4 counties involved in the 2016 audit to pre-audit and during audit inquiries:

Burnett	Local Tribes were contacted during our 15 Year Comprehensive Land Use planning process and encouraged to participate. Anytime we have documented Native American site on the forest within our management areas, we contact the tribes directly and review our prescriptions. We alter our prescriptions if necessary not to disturb these sites. If we are contacted by them regarding a particular site, we have met with them to review these site and make a recommendation for future management. We then update our recon so that these sites are noted in our data. We have also met with tribal members regarding gathering right and what options they have for exercising them.
Polk	Open meeting laws, use of the Department’s Indigenous People’s liaison for our area. No inquires/concerns received recently.
Washburn	No inquiries or concerns received.
Sawyer County	No inquiries or concerns received.

Objective 9 Legal and Regulatory Compliance

To comply with applicable federal, provincial, state and local laws and regulations.

Performance Measure 9.1

Program Participants shall comply with applicable federal, provincial, state and local *forestry* and related social and environmental laws and regulations. Indicators:

9.1.1. Access to relevant laws and regulations in appropriate locations.

- N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Relevant federal and state laws and regulations are available on-line.

Relevant County ordinances are found in in Chapter 330 with full text found in Chapter 900 of County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plans. Reviewed these plans:

Burnett County’s plan includes laws and ordinances.

Sawyer County- “905 Laws and Ordinances” pages 900-35 to 900-60; 115 Statutory Authority page 100-3; 120 County Authority page 100-3; 120.1 Ordinances page 100-3; and other pages.

Polk County- Same as above for Sawyer County

Washburn County-same

9.1.2. System to achieve compliance with applicable federal, provincial, state, or local laws and regulations.

- N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Confirmed that timber sales contract states a requirement for legal compliance in Burnett County, Sawyer County, Polk County (clause 32) and Washburn County.

Foresters receive training on applicable laws and regulations, including regular updates during the WCFA forest administrators meetings, per this recurring agenda item: “Legal Updates – Quinn Williams, Attorney Supervisor, WDNR Legal Services”.

Management system for all actions on forests (plans, investments in cultural activities, infrastructure upgrades, timber sales) involves foresters at various levels of management to review and approve.

System of pre-activity meetings, monitoring, and closing review ensure compliance of harvesting and silviculture operations.

9.1.3. Demonstration of commitment to legal compliance through *available regulatory action information*.

- N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Interviewed Polk and Washburn County forest administrator regarding any regulatory actions: none reported.

From WDNR: “Written policies demonstrating commitment to comply with social laws, such as those covering civil rights, equal employment opportunities, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment measures, workers’

compensation, Indigenous Peoples’ rights, workers’ and communities’ right to know, prevailing wages, workers’ right to organize, and occupational health and safety can be found in DNR and County Forest Office Buildings.”

Performance Measure 9.2

Program Participants shall take appropriate steps to comply with all applicable social laws at the federal, provincial, state and local levels in the country in which the *Program Participant* operates. Indicators:

9.2.1. Written *policy* demonstrating commitment to comply with social laws, such as those covering civil rights, equal employment opportunities, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment measures, workers’ compensation, *Indigenous Peoples’* rights, workers’ and communities’ right to know, prevailing wages, workers’ right to organize, and occupational health and safety.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Written policies demonstrating commitment to comply with social laws, such as those covering civil rights, equal employment opportunities, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment measures, workers’ compensation, Indigenous Peoples’ rights, workers’ and communities’ right to know, prevailing wages, workers’ right to organize, and occupational health and safety can be found in DNR and County Forest Office Buildings. Observed human resources bulletin boards in the four counties visited.
Polk County- Also reviewed the Polk County Employment Handbook, which contains many such policies and commitments.

9.2.2. *Forestry enterprises* will respect the rights of workers and labor representatives in a manner that encompasses the intent of the International Labor Organization (ILO) core conventions.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Open communication between workers and management was observed at all times and in all sites during the 2016 audits

Objective 10 Forestry Research, Science and Technology

To invest in *forestry* research, science and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based and broaden the awareness of *climate change* impacts on forests, *wildlife* and *biological diversity*.

Performance Measure 10.1

Program Participants shall individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees*, associations or other partners provide in-kind support or funding for forest research to improve *forest health*, *productivity* and sustainable management of forest resources, and the environmental benefits and performance of forest products. Indicators:

10.1.1. Financial or in-kind support of research to address questions of relevance in the region of operations. Examples could include, but are not limited to, areas of forest *productivity*, water quality, biodiversity, community issues, or similar areas which build broader understanding of the benefits and impacts of forest management.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: From Wisconsin SFI Implementation Committee:
“The Wisconsin County Forests Association is a regular and active participant in Wisconsin SIC meetings. Generally, Jane Severt, their executive director, represents the organization in our meetings; if she has a schedule conflict there always is another individual – either WCFA staff or a county forester – there in her stead....the WCFA is fully engaged in SIC board meetings, offering opinions and suggestions on topics addressed from routine business to policies and governance. My perspective, in a nutshell, is that the WCFA’s participation is beneficial to the SIC and as robust as could be expected.”
From WDNR:
“The Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) has been charged by the Wisconsin Legislature with conducting a study of forest practices within the state. This is a multi-year and multi-focused project that will utilize \$600,000 in grant funding and additional in-kind contributions from numerous organizations. WCFA, through financial support by member counties, contributes over two weeks of time (and associated travel expenses) annually to administering this grant.”

Wisconsin DNR funds research on a broad range of issues. Funding is both internal and external. Information from the 2015 SFI Progress Report indicates investments in research as follows: \$137,580.69 of internal funding for wildlife management at sand and landscape levels.

WCFA and DNR both participate in the Wisconsin SFI Implementation Committee (SIC). Individual county forest group members all belong to WCFA. Individual counties also participate in and provide support for research projects that are conducted in their county or within the state. Many county forest Comprehensive Land Use Plans have policies on grant permission to conduct research on county forest lands.”

10.1.2. Research on genetically engineered trees via *forest tree biotechnology* shall adhere to all applicable federal, state, and provincial regulations and international protocols ratified by the United States and/or Canada depending on jurisdiction of management.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: No genetically engineered trees are used in this program.

Performance Measure 10.2

Program Participants shall individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees*, associations or other partners develop or use state, provincial or regional analyses in support of their *sustainable forestry programs*. Indicator:

10.2.1. Participation, individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees* and/or associations at the national, state, provincial or regional level, in the development or use of some of the following:

- a. regeneration assessments;
- b. growth and drain assessments;
- c. *best management practices* implementation and conformance;
- d. *biodiversity conservation* information for family forest owners; and
- e. social, cultural or economic benefit assessments.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Information from Jane Severt, Executive Director, WCFA: “Work continues on Wisconsin’s Forest Practices Study (WFPS), in 2013 Wisconsin’s legislature designated \$600,000 in the form of a DNR grant for a study of Wisconsin’s forestry practices. Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association (GLTPA) and WCFA are joint grant recipients and we are charged with oversight of the study process. Research has been completed and WFPS subcommittees have been meeting to review results and identify additional information needs.”

Performance Measure 10.3

Program Participants shall individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees*, associations or other partners broaden the awareness of *climate change* impacts on forests, *wildlife* and *biological diversity*. Indicators:

10.3.1. Where available, monitor information generated from regional climate models on *long-term forest health*, *productivity* and *economic viability*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: See below.

10.3.2. *Program Participants* are knowledgeable about *climate change* impacts on *wildlife*, *wildlife habitats* and *conservation of biological diversity* through international, national, regional or local *programs*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Information from Jane Severt, Executive Director, WCFA: “WCFA continues to be engaged in climate change issues through correspondence with Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science (NIACS). Florence County received funding from Wildlife Conservation Society’s Climate Adaptation Fund through a grant proposal submitted by Sustainable Resource Institute for a project titled; “Climate-informed scrub oak restoration in Florence County Wisconsin”. Work on this project has been completed. Stephen Handler, Climate Change Specialist at Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science, USFS gave a presentation titled “Climate Change Adaptation Projects” at our

March 19, 2015 Spring Administrators Meeting. Jason Homes, Bayfield County Forester, represents Wisconsin's County Forests on Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) Forestry Working Group. County forests were represented at WICCI Forestry Working Group roundtables held in April of 2016."

Objective 11 Training and Education

To improve the implementation of *sustainable forestry* practices through appropriate training and education *programs*.

Performance Measure 11.1

Program Participants shall require appropriate training of personnel and contractors so that they are competent to fulfill their responsibilities under the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard*. Indicators:

11.1.1. Written statement of commitment to the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* communicated throughout the organization, particularly to facility and woodland managers, and field foresters.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: The commitment to the SFI 2015-2019 Standard is communicated throughout the organization via the Wisconsin DNR – Public Lands Handbook pages 290-11 through 290-13 and the County Comprehensive Land Use Plans in Section 325. In addition some county plans provide reference to the county resolution that authorized the commitment. Burnett County- also on web site <http://www.co.washburn.wi.us/departments/forestry/forest-certification> ; Sawyer County- page 300-5; Polk County- pages 300-5 to 300-7; Washburn County-in plan Information from Jane Severt, Executive Director, WCFA: "WCFA's Legislative/Forest Certification Committee continues to meet on a regular basis and forest certification issues are also discussed during quarterly conference calls of the county forest administrators."

11.1.2. Assignment and understanding of roles and responsibilities for achieving *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard objectives*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: All personnel involved in the 2015 audit of the county forest program clearly understand their responsibilities for achieving the SFI 2015-2019 Standard objectives, which are linked to their day-to-day jobs. Primary responsibility at the sites resides with the County Forest Administrators, supported by Wisconsin DNR personnel, chiefly the County Forestry Liaisons. Central responsibility is assigned to the Wisconsin County Forestry Specialist, supported by the Certification Coordinator and the WCFA Executive Director.

11.1.3. Staff education and training sufficient to their roles and responsibilities.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Reviewed training records, education, and experience for selected staff:

Burnett County- Bryson Grubbs – BMPs, Pest applic, NHI; Jason Nichols –Liaison meeting - Karner Blue, Biomass, Invasives, Wetland & Storm, BMPs; Susan Ingalls – Pest applic., Invasives, NHI, BMPs, Karner Blue, chainsaw; Tory Teske – CDL, BMPs, Karner Blue.

Sawyer County- Recent training emphases have included: habitat typing, insects and diseases, silviculture and assessment for management of Northern Hardwoods, and NHI. Several of the foresters are certified pesticide applicators.

Polk County- Jeremy Koslowski maintains CEUs from recent formal training; attends all of the WCFA meetings including the largest, the spring meeting in Marshfield. Reviewed a printout of the training records for Paul Heimstead which show regular, varied but relevant training.

Washburn County- Josh Buckridge training records viewed: Pest applicator License, NHI, WisFIRS GIS, Mining, Emergency Vehicle, Fire Equipment, Wildland Fire, Biomass Harvesting, Forestry BMPs for Invasives, FEMA. Other employees displayed similar training records.

A broad range of forestry training, including occasional SFI refresher training, is included in the WCFA meetings. Reviewed agendas of several WCFA meetings: 2016 Spring County Forest Administrators Meeting -Thursday, March 17 & Friday, March 18; 2015 Spring County Forest Administrators Meeting - Thursday, March 19 & Friday,

March 20. Both had SFI and SAF CEUs assigned to them.

11.1.4. Contractor education and training sufficient to their roles and responsibilities.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Loggers are required to complete FISTA training. Sites visited were harvested by qualified logging professionals. Chemical applicators are required to complete state applicator training. Checked a sample of harvests to confirm that harvesting contractors have the Wisconsin-approved training

Burnett County- Logger training is required per contract and is checked by foresters. Confirmed the following FISTA Training: Future Wood - 2015; Ericson Logging – all 2015: Max Ericson, Jordan Daleiden, Ed Johnson, and Lee B. Johmsu; Theodore Strzok Logging – 2015

Sawyer County- Maintain a database of trained contractors. Require that the person who holds the contract and at least one of the people working on the ground must have the FISTA training.

Polk County- required in contract, but because most harvests in the sandy portion of the ownership that was audited are done in the spring there were no active harvests and no opportunity to conduct interviews.

Washburn County- two active operations were visited, and the loggers on both had training. These loggers are current with FISTA training through 2016: Ericson Logging, Max Ericson; Bruce Burmeister; Theodore Strzok Logging.

11.1.5. *Program Participants* shall have written agreements for the use of *qualified logging professionals* and/or *certified logging professionals* (where available) and/or *wood producers* that have completed training programs and are recognized as *qualified logging professionals*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Each timber sale contract includes requirement for qualified logging professional in a section titled “Training Requirement”. Reviewed contract examples at each county visited.

Burnett County- Contract No. 3155-15 Clause 52.

Sawyer County- sample contract, page 3, Wisconsin SFI Training Standard

Polk County-Contract No. 477 Clause 15.

Washburn County- confirmed in a sample of 4 sale contracts reviewed; found in Clause 24.

Performance Measure 11.2

Program Participants shall work individually and/or with *SFI Implementation Committees*, logging or *forestry* associations, or appropriate agencies or others in the *forestry* community to foster improvement in the professionalism of *wood producers*.

Indicators:

11.2.1. Participation in or support of *SFI Implementation Committees* to establish criteria and identify delivery mechanisms for *wood producer* training courses and periodic continuing education that address:

- a. awareness of sustainable forestry principles and the SFI program;
- b. best management practices, including streamside management and road construction, maintenance and retirement;
- c. reforestation, invasive exotic plants and animals, forest resource conservation, aesthetics and special sites;
- d. awareness of responsibilities under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, the Canadian Species at Risk Act, and other measures to protect wildlife habitat (e.g., Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value);
- e. awareness of rare forested natural communities as identified by provincial or state agencies, or by credible organizations such as NatureServe, The Nature Conservancy, etc.
- f. logging safety;
- g. U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) regulations, wage and hour rules, and other provincial, state and local employment laws;

- h. transportation issues;
- i. business management;
- j. public policy and outreach; and
- k. awareness of emerging technologies.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: From WDNR:

“WCFA and DNR both participate in the Wisconsin SFI Implementation Committee (SIC). Individual county forest group members all belong to WCFA. WCFA’s Executive Director (Jane Severt) and DNR’s Forest Certification Coordinator (Mark Heyde) both regularly attend SIC meetings. DNR staff and County Forest staff have participated often in training supported by the SIC Committee through the Forest Industry Safety Training Alliance (FISTA). FISTA provides safety training and education to workers in forestry-related industries to:

- Decrease the number and severity of logging related accidents
- Improve productivity and professionalism
- Promote awareness and practice of environmentally sound principles

Participation verified by SIC minutes.

Confirmed Wisconsin DNR’s financial and other support for FISTA: “Who We Are - Located in Rhinelander, Wisconsin, the Forest Industry Safety and Training Alliance, Inc. is a nationally recognized, non-profit safety training and education organization for the forest industry. FISTA is a 501(c) (3) charitable organization governed by a twelve-member Board of Directors with two full-time staff members. In business since 1991, FISTA is committed to providing quality training at a fair cost.” <http://www.fistausa.org/index.html>

11.2.2. The SIC-approved *wood producer training programs* shall have a continuing education component with coursework that supports the current training *programs*, safety and the *principles of sustainable forestry*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Continuing education is required annually by Forest Industry Safety and Training Alliance, Inc. (FISTA). Website <http://www.fistausa.org/index.html> lists a range of core and continuing education courses in many subject areas. Examples are provided below:

- Business Management
- Forestry and Ecology
- Logging Safety, Technology, Resource Protection and Utilization
- BMP for Invasive Species
- BMP for Water Quality
- Chain Saw Safety Level 1 and Level 2; First Aid and CPR, DOT Compliance

11.2.3. Participation in or support of *SFI Implementation Committees* to establish criteria for recognition of logger certification *programs*, where they exist, that include:

- a. completion of *SFI Implementation Committee* recognized logger training *programs* and meeting continuing education requirements of the training *program*;
- b. independent in-the-forest verification of conformance with the logger certification *program* standards;
- c. compliance with all applicable laws and regulations including responsibilities under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, the Canadian Species at Risk Act and other measures to protect *wildlife habitat*;
- d. use of *best management practices* to protect water quality;
- e. logging safety;
- f. compliance with acceptable *silviculture* and utilization standards;
- g. aesthetic management techniques employed where applicable; and

h. adherence to a management or harvest plan that is site specific and agreed to by the forest landowner.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: FISTA <http://www.fistausa.org/> is Wisconsin’s SFI Implementation Committee-approved logger training. The “2016 SFI® Workshop Schedule” included varied courses in these categories: Business Management; Forestry and Ecology; and Logging Safety, Technology, Resource Protection and Utilization. The program listed core curricula in two areas: BMP for Invasive Species and BMP for Water Quality. Then many different topics were listed for “Continuing Education Workshops”. Overall the program appears robust and comprehensive, and meets the indicator.

Confirmed by email information from Wisconsin SFI Implementation Committee: “WDNR and WCFA contribute to the SIC through their time and participation. Mark Heyde, Wisconsin DNR Forest Certification Specialist and Jane Severt, WCFA Executive Director are on the SIC. WDNR has been involved with the Inconsistent Practices Committee. Through interviews and witnessing of SIC Minutes verified support and involvement.”

Support for the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association (GLTPA) was verified by review of the organization’s website <http://gltpa.org/>.

“Wisconsin SIC and Wisconsin DNR support Master Logger Certification Program through funding. The Master Logger Certification Program is represented on the SIC.

Objective 12 Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach

To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* through public outreach, education, and involvement, and to support the efforts of *SFI Implementation Committees*.

Performance Measure 12.1

Program Participants shall support and promote efforts by consulting foresters, state, provincial and federal agencies, state or local groups, professional societies, *conservation* organizations, *Indigenous Peoples* and governments, community groups, sporting organizations, labor, universities, extension agencies, the *American Tree Farm System*® and/or other landowner cooperative *programs* to apply *principles* of sustainable forest management. Indicators:

12.1.1. Support, including financial, for efforts of *SFI Implementation Committees*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: The program provides considerable financial and in-kind support for the Wisconsin SFI Implementation Committee.

12.1.2. Support, individually or collaboratively, education and outreach to forest landowners describing the importance and providing implementation guidance on:

- a. best management practices;
- b. reforestation and afforestation;
- c. visual quality management;
- d. conservation objectives, such as critical wildlife habitat elements, biodiversity, threatened and endangered species, and Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value;
- e. management of harvest residue (e.g., slash, limbs, tops) considers economic, social, environmental factors (e.g., organic and nutrient value to future forests) and other utilization needs;
- f. control of invasive exotic plants and animals;
- g. characteristics of *special sites*; and
- h. reduction of wildfire risk.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Jane Severt, WCFA Executive Director’s significant involvement in, and often leadership of, most of the forestry-related committees, sub-committees, and organizations in Wisconsin enhances her ability to support all of the activities of the Wisconsin SFI Implementation Committee. Additional outreach activities are listed under SFI

Indicator 12.2.1 below; some of those also support the SFI Indicator directly above.

12.1.3. Participation in efforts to support or promote *conservation* of managed forests through voluntary market-based incentive programs such as current-use taxation programs, Forest Legacy Program or conservation easements.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: The WDNR and individual counties continue to purchase land to add to the Wisconsin County Forest System. For example in Polk County “Mackie Lake Purchase: Polk County recently purchased 160 acres to be added to the Polk County Forest. The land purchased is surrounded by hundreds of acres of existing County Forest Land. Within the boundaries of this newly acquired parcel of land lies the undeveloped Mackie Lake and a portion of the Clam river. Mackie Lake can be found in McKinley Township at the end of 285th Ave. off County Hwy O. This purchase was made possible with a State Stewardship Fund grant for half the cost. The rest of the funds to pay for the acquisition will come from County Forest timber sale revenues”.

County forests have purchased nearly 20,000 acres to add to the county forest system since July 1, 2010, using matching funds provided under Wisconsin’s Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.

Performance Measure 12.2

Program Participants shall support and promote, at the state, provincial or other appropriate levels, mechanisms for public outreach, education and involvement related to sustainable forest management. Indicator:

12.2.1. Periodic educational opportunities promoting *sustainable forestry*, such as

- a. field tours, seminars, websites, webinars or workshops;
- b. educational trips;
- c. self-guided forest management trails;
- d. publication of articles, educational pamphlets or newsletters; or
- e. support for state, provincial, and local forestry organizations and soil and water conservation districts.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: The Wisconsin County Forestry Program, through the work of county forestry personnel, WDNR personnel who have significant duties in the program, and the Wisconsin County Forests Association provides an exceptional amount of leadership and support for numerous and diverse activities for public outreach, education and involvement related to sustainable forest management.

The Executive Director of the Wisconsin County Forestry Program regularly addresses County Boards and County Forestry Committees in the member counties, as well as a variety of civic organizations regarding the significance of county forests and WCFA. Presentations are also made to other organizations as requested. Partial list of WCFA outreach was provided by Jane Severt, Executive Director, Wisconsin County Forests Association:

- WCFA sponsored scholarships allowing high school students from both urban and rural areas to attend a Natura Resources Careers session at Trees for Tomorrow in Eagle River.
- Our episode of “Discover Wisconsin”, featuring Wisconsin’s County Forests, aired for the second time on Septen 2015. Videos from the episode continue to be available on our website www.wisconsincountyforests.com Add information is available on Discover Wisconsin’s website which currently contains a link to our episode. As part of contract, five radio spots, 3.5 minutes in length were developed and aired. These can be found on Discover Wisconsin’s website audio archives <http://discoverwisconsin.com/audio> Air dates were 5/18/20; Jeremy Koslov regarding reforestation, 7/21/2015; Andy LaChance regarding sustainable forest management, 9/4/2015; Fritz Schubert regarding hunting in county forests, 10/26/2015; Mike Peterson regarding timber management, 7/1/21 Dave Ziolkowski regarding Wisconsin County Forests.
- We have continued communication and involvement with North Woods & Waters of the St. Croix. Jeremy Koslc has been involved with that group’s Forest Stewards Program.
- WCFA actively participated in Log-a-Load events and educated hundreds of school children regarding multiple-u our forests. Member counties regularly host Log-a-Load events on our county forests.

- We once again participated in Forest Fest held at Trees for Tomorrow in Eagle River on August 6, 2016. This event is open to the general public and serves to educate attendees about sustainable forest management.
- We have once again updated our WCFA brochure and I am providing copies for each of you”

Other information from Jane Severt, Executive Director, WCFA: “We have been involved with hosting forestry tours for members of Wisconsin’s federal congressional delegation as requested over the past twelve months. In addition, we jointly hosted several members of Wisconsin’s State Assembly on a forestry tour last November. This tour included several members from southeast Wisconsin who have had limited exposure to forestry in our state.”

Performance Measure 12.3

Program Participants shall establish, at the state, provincial, or other appropriate levels, procedures to address concerns raised by loggers, consulting foresters, employees, unions, the public or other *Program Participants* regarding practices that appear inconsistent with the *SFI Standard principles and objectives*. Indicators:

12.3.1. Support for *SFI Implementation Committees* (e.g., toll-free numbers and other efforts) to address concerns about apparent nonconforming practices.

- N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not reviewed during the 2016 SFI Audit.

12.3.2. Process to receive and respond to public inquiries. *SFI Implementation Committees* shall submit data annually to *SFI Inc.* regarding concerns received and responses.

- N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not reviewed during the 2016 SFI Audit.

Objective 13 Public Land Management Responsibilities

To participate and implement sustainable forest management on *public lands*.

Performance Measure 13.1

Program Participants with *forest management responsibilities on public lands* shall participate in the development of *public land* planning and management processes. Indicators:

13.1.1. Involvement in *public land* planning and management activities with appropriate governmental entities and the public.

- N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Exceeds the requirements: The Wisconsin County Forest Program engages in an exceptional amount of involvement with a wide range of county, state, federal, and public entities in their land planning and management activities. This work is done by county board members, forest administrators, and county foresters, with the WCFA providing leadership, guidance, support and coordination.

Interviews in each county support a very high level of conformance with the indicator. County forests are run by the citizens of each county. Public comment is received during the planning process before implementation of plans. In addition to the county board members the county foresters are also involved with user group which provide input. Public members can comment during any monthly county forestry committee meeting.

Involvement of user groups and community groups in public land planning and management provide for a wide range of stakeholders representing various user interests. Site specific planned activities (e.g. timber sales) are often posted at kiosk in recreational areas for individual user review.

County and State land planning and management activities are closely coordinated through the use of the DNR Liaison foresters and by incorporating state forest management, private forestry, and county forestry activities within the same administrative line-staff field organization (DNR). Senior managers from the three key components of the county program (county forests, Wisconsin DNR forestry, and Wisconsin County Forests Association) have demonstrated continuing involvement in statewide planning efforts such as the Wisconsin Forest Practices Study, Wildlife Action Plan, Northern Long-Eared Bat management, the Deer Trustee Report, the Beaver Plan, the Marten Plan, the Wisconsin Forestry Plan, and countless other planning efforts at all levels.

Information from Jane Severt, Executive Director, WCFA: “WCFA is actively involved with issues surrounding

national forest management. Several member counties have signed agreements with WDNR to accomplish work under Good Neighbor Authority (GNA). Florence County has a Stewardship Agreement with CNNF and has made great progress accomplishing goods and service work. We continue to be involved with the Federal Sustainable Forests Committee (FSFC). Dave Ziolkowski, Forest County Forest Administrator, serves on the committee, both Gary and I are committee members. As indicated in last year’s letter to our auditors, WCFA’s Board of Directors is on record in support of FSFC’s efforts. The committee is focused on improving forest health through proper, sustainable forest management as identified in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF) Plan. A fair amount of congressional attention continues to be focused on national forest management and we are engaged in the dialog with our delegation. Bipartisan support was evident in passage of the farm bill which included language allowing Wisconsin to become engaged in GNA. I continue to serve on the advisory committee for Sustainable Resource Management (SRI)’s Stewardship Agreement with CNNF. WCFA has been participating in comment periods regarding forest certification on national forest lands.

13.1.2. Appropriate contact with local stakeholders over forest management issues through state, provincial, federal or independent collaboration.

- N/A
 Conformance
 Exceeds
 O.F.I.
 Major NC
 Minor NC

Audit Notes: Wisconsin County Forest Program, supported by the Wisconsin County Forests Association, maintains an exceptional level of contact with local stakeholders over forest management issues involving state, federal and individual collaboration working through an extraordinary number of initiatives, committees, and environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS). (Indicator 13.1.2)

Interviews in each county support the finding. County Forest Administrators monthly committee meetings are open to the public. A time is set aside for public comments. The County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plans and Annual Work Plans are brought before the county board for approval in systematic and well-publicized processes. Citizens can provide input or ask questions about these plans.

Web sites provide detailed information on county forestry programs, including forestry committee meeting agendas and minutes, annual work plans, and annual reports and (in some cases) 15-year plans.”

Washburn <http://www.co.washburn.wi.us/departments/forestry/>

Sawyer <http://www.sawyercountygov.org/Departments/Forestry/tabid/102/Default.aspx>

Polk http://www.co.polk.wi.us/index.asp?SEC=83A4E14C-0CB9-4544-9A2B-2C2261CAFCA6&Type=B_BASIC

Burnett <http://www.burnettcounty.com/index.aspx?NID=335>

Objective 14 Communications and Public Reporting

To increase transparency and to annually report progress on conformance with the *SFI Forest Management Standard*.

Performance Measure 14.1

A *Program Participant* shall provide a summary audit report, prepared by the *certification body*, to *SFI Inc.* after the successful completion of a certification, recertification or surveillance audit to the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard*. Indicator:

14.1.1. The summary audit report submitted by the *Program Participant* (one copy must be in English), shall include, at a minimum,

- a. a description of the audit process, *objectives* and scope;
- b. a description of substitute *indicators*, if any, used in the audit and a rationale for each;
- c. the name of *Program Participant* that was audited, including its *SFI* representative;
- d. a general description of the *Program Participant’s* forestland included in the audit;
- e. the name of the *certification body* and *lead auditor* (names of the *audit team* members, including *technical experts* may be included at the discretion of the *audit team* and *Program Participant*);
- f. the dates the audit was conducted and completed;
- g. a summary of the findings, including general descriptions of evidence of conformity and any nonconformities and corrective action plans to address them, opportunities for improvement, and exceptional practices; and

h. the certification decision.

The summary audit report will be posted on the *SFI Inc.* website (www.sfiprogram.org) for public review.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Past two summary audit reports are posted on the SFI Inc. website (www.sfiprogram.org). Summary report from NSF includes all of the required items listed above.

Performance Measure 14.2

Program Participants shall report annually to SFI Inc. on their conformance with the SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard. Indicators:

14.2.1. Prompt response to the *SFI* annual progress report survey.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Rachel Dierolf confirmed that the SFI Annual Progress Report for Wisconsin DNR County Forest Program was provided to SFI Inc. on March 28th.

14.2.2. Record keeping for all the categories of information needed for *SFI* annual progress report surveys.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: WisFIRS system tracks harvest information. Other systems are used to track contributions. Each year information in each county is compiled and reported, as described in this excerpt from the Polk County Plan:

“3100 ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORTS A copy of an annual accomplishment report shall be prepared and provided to members of the County Board and to official copyholders of this Plan for inclusion into this chapter. This report shall include, at a minimum, the following:

1. Timber sale accomplishments including gross and net sale receipts and harvest goals achieved.
2. Timber stand improvements accomplishments.
3. Recreation development and maintenance accomplishments including recreation revenues and expenses.
4. Wildlife management accomplishments including revenues and expenses.
5. Fisheries management accomplishments including revenues and expenses.
6. Other accomplishments identified as “needs” in Chapter 1000.

All documents requested were readily available.

14.2.3. Maintenance of copies of past survey reports to document progress and improvements to demonstrate conformance to the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard*.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Annual SFI Progress Reports for Wisconsin are retained electronically by the DNR Certification Specialist. Annual audit reports are available on the DNR’s website at:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/TimberSales/documents/WisconsinCountySFI-2015.pdf>

Objective 15 Management Review and Continual Improvement

To promote continual improvement in the practice of *sustainable forestry* by conducting a management review and monitoring performance.

Performance Measure 15.1

Program Participants shall establish a management review system to examine findings and progress in implementing the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard*, to make appropriate improvements in *programs*, and to inform their employees of changes.

Indicators:

15.1.1 System to review commitments, *programs* and procedures to evaluate effectiveness.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: The County Forest program conducts periodic internal audits to determine compliance with the County Forest

Law, the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan (15 Yr. Plan), and Forest Certification standards. These are supplemented by partnership meetings and by regular review of activities conducted by the Wisconsin DNR Liaison Forester assigned to each county.

Intensive county audits are conducted by Wisconsin DNR staff specialists on a rotating basis, on a 3-year cycle and recorded on the "County Forest Internal SFI Audit Checklist". County-level program review by Wisconsin DNR confirmed in the counties sampled in the 2016 third-party audits. The Sawyer County audit was done in 2013 and so was not reviewed in detail. Reviewed in detail the internal audit checklist and results for:

- Burnett County Internal SFI Audit June 14, 2016; and Executive Summary, Burnett County Forest Program Review (2013, 2014, 2015)
- Polk County Internal SFI Audit June 11, 2015; and Polk County Forest June 11, 2015 Program Review (2012, 2013 Executive Summary
- Washburn County Internal SFI Audit June 16, 2015; and Washburn County Forest June 16, 2015 Program Review (2013, 2014) Executive Summary

Records indicate that counties respond to third-party audit findings (none within SFI in recent years) and to any findings or suggestions from the internal audits.

Involvement by all enrolled counties in the Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) and involvement by the WCFA in many aspects of forestry throughout Wisconsin, but particularly public lands management, helps bolster an already strong management system and contributes greatly to consistency and to continual improvement. Work done by WCFA in support of the counties' forestry programs was evident throughout the audit.

15.1.2 System for collecting, reviewing, and reporting information to management regarding progress in achieving *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard objectives and performance measures.*

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: In addition to the County Forest Administrator, the Wisconsin DNR Liaison Forester and Team Leaders review & approve timber sales to ensure they are silviculturally-sound and address all the ecological and social considerations.

Partnership meetings are held annually between each participating county and the Wisconsin DNR.

Reviewed the 2015 "Partnership Minutes" to assess the programs to ensure that the overall County Forestry Program and individual county programs are meeting all requirements, including certification.

Burnett County Forest 2015 Partnership Meeting Minutes 6/30/2015

Sawyer County Forest and Wisconsin DNR 2015 Annual Partnership Meeting Minutes - Friday, October 23, 2015

Polk County Forest 2015 Annual Planning and Partnership Meeting - September 29th, 2015

WI DNR and Washburn County Forestry 2015 Partnership Meeting Minutes, May 27, 2015

15.1.3 Annual review of progress by management and determination of changes and improvements necessary to continually improve conformance to the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard.*

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC

Audit Notes: Reviewed information about management reviews, summarized by WDNR below.

"DNR annually conducts a meeting of Senior Forestry Leadership to apprise them of operational changes made to bring the County Forest certificate more into compliance with SFI standard. There is regular communication between DNR staff and County Forests through the WCFA Legislative / Certification committee in determining changes and improvements necessary to improve conformance to the SFI standard. Changes are communicated electronically to all staff working on County Forests (DNR and County Forest administrators) and verified through internal auditing procedures of individual county forests. Individual County Forests have annual property / partnership meetings where forest certification is a regular discussion item as well. Minutes of the Senior Mgt. meeting and the individual county meetings are retained electronically by the DNR County Forest Specialist.

Reviewed the Agenda for and the Minutes of the "County Forest – Annual Certification Review – July 6, 2016". The minutes, supported by interviews with several of the participants, show a program of annual review of

progress by management and determination of changes and improvements necessary to continually improve conformance

(End)

Appendix 4: Meeting Attendance

Company Name: Wisconsin County Forest Program

Location: Opening: Washburn County Forestry Office, Spooner; Closing: WDNR Service Center, Spooner

Type of Audit: Surveillance

Opening Meeting Date: August 8, 2016 Closing Meeting Date: August 12, 2016

NAME (Printed)	TITLE/POSITION	OPENING MEETING (Initials)	CLOSING MEETING (Initials)
Mike Ferrucci	SFI Lead Auditor	MF	MF
Michelle Matteo (auditor)	Team Auditor	MM	MM
Kyle Meister (auditor)	FSC Lead Auditor	KM	KM
Mark Heyde (DNR-Madison)	Forest Certification Coordinator	MH	MH
Gary Zimmer (WCFA)	Assistant Executive Director, WCFA	GZ	GZ
Jeff Barkley (DNR-Madison)	Acting Public Lands Specialist	JB	JB
Dave Kafura - DNR	Forest Hydrologist	DK	-
Mike Peterson	Washburn County Forest Administrator	MP	-
Buck Pettingill	Washburn County – Asst. Forest Admin.	BP	BP
Duran Bjorkland	Washburn County Forester	DB	DB
Brad Johnson - DNR	Forestry Team Leader	BJ	BJ
Amy Morales - DNR	County Forest Liaison	AM	AM
Nancy Christel - DNR	Wildlife Biologist	NC	
Rod Fouks - DNR	DNR Area Supervisor	RF	RF
Tom Duke - DNR	District Forestry Leader	TD	
Colleen Matula – DNR	Ecologist/Silviculturist	CM	
Jason Nichols	Burnett County Forest Administrator		JN
Brandon Shutt	Washburn County		BS
Larry Glodowski – DNR	Area Forestry Leader		LG
Pat Zimmer - DNR	Forestry Team Leader		PZ
Rod Fouks - DNR	Area Forestry Leader		RF
Jeremy Koslowski	Polk County Forest Administrator		JK
Paul Heimstead - DNR	Liaison Forester		PM
Amy Morales - DNR	Liaison Forester		AM

All Participants, 2016 County Forest Certification audit

<u>Washburn</u>	<u>Burnett</u>	<u>Polk</u>	<u>Sawyer</u>
Mike Ferrucci (auditor)	Michelle Matteo (auditor)	Mike Ferrucci (auditor)	Mike Ferrucci (auditor)
Michelle Matteo (auditor)	Kyle Meister (auditor)	Jeff Barkley (DNR-Madison)	Michelle Matteo (auditor)
Kyle Meister (auditor)	Mark Heyde (DNR-Madison)	Jeremy Koslowski - Polk County Admin.	Kyle Meister (auditor)
Mark Heyde (DNR Cert Specialist-Madison)	Gary Zimmer (WCFA)	Paul Heimstead - DNR Liaison Forest	Mark Heyde (DNR-Madison)
Gary Zimmer (WCFA - Asst. Exec. Director)	Jake Nichols -Burnett County Forest Admin.	Nolan Kriegel - DNR BMP / Hydrology	Gary Zimmer (WCFA)
Jeff Barkley (DNR County Forest Spec.-Madison)	Bryson Grubbs - Burnett County - Asst. Admin.	Michelle Carlisle - DNR Wildlife	Greg Peterson - Sawyer County Forest Admin.
Dave Kafura - DNR Hydrologist - Spooner	Eric Peterson - DNR - Liaison Forester	Rod Fouks - DNR Area Ldr.	Jeff Steidl - Sawyer Cty. Forester
Mike Peterson - Washburn County Admin	Mark Gossman - DNR Forester		Kyle Cummings - Sawyer County Forester
Buck Pettingill - Washburn County - Asst. Admin.	Dave Kafura - DNR Hydrologist		Roy Zubrod - DNR - Liaison Forester
Duran Bjorkland - Washburn County Forester	Bob Hanson - DNR -Wildlife		Laine Stowell - DNR – Wildlife
Brad Johnson - DNR Team Ldr.	Jim Ulmaniec - DNR Team Ldr.		Pat Zimmer - DNR Team Ldr.
Amy Morales - DNR - Liaison Forester	Nancy Christel - DNR Wildlife		Larry Glodoski - DNR Area Forestry Ldr.
Nancy Christel - DNR Wildlife Biologist	Steve Runstrom - DNR Staff Specialist		Nolan Kriegel - DNR Hydrology
Rod Fouks - DNR Area Ldr.	Tom Duke - DNR District Forestry Ldr.		
Tom Duke - DNR NWD District Forestry Ldr.	*Kari Letch - Burnett County Bookkeeper		
Colleen Matula - DNR Ecologist / Silviculturalist	*Tory Jeske - Burnett Cty. Forestry Tech / Equip. Op.		
Brandon Shutt - Washburn County LTE	*Ed Schmechel - Burnett County Parks LTE		* Indicates lunch crew