

Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Forest Management Audit Report

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources – County Forest Program

Certificate #SCS-SFI/FM-000083

SFI 2022 Standards and Rules®, Forest Management
2025 Surveillance Audit

Client Address	Wisconsin DNR - Forestry Division 101 S Webster Street PO Box 7921
Client Contact	Jake Walcisak Phone: (715) 657-5812 jacob.walcisak@wisconsin.gov
Client Website	https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/timbersales/countyforests

SCS Contact:

Maggie Schwartz

Managing Director, Forestry

Natural Resources Division

mschwartz@scsglobalservices.com



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Public Summary Report

SFI® Forest Management Standard

SECTION A – PUBLIC SUMMARY

Foreword

Organization of the Report

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

Principles of SFI Forest Management

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

The 17 *SFI Principles* for Forest Management are:

Objective 1. Forest Management Planning.

To ensure forest management plans include long-term sustainable harvest levels and measures to avoid forest conversion or afforestation of ecologically important areas.

Objective 2. Forest Health and Productivity.

To ensure long-term forest productivity and conservation of forest resources through prompt reforestation, afforestation, deploying integrated pest management strategies, minimized chemical use, soil conservation, and protecting forests from damaging agents.

Objective 3. Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources.

To protect the water quality and water quantity of rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, and other water bodies.

Objective 4. Conservation of Biological Diversity

To maintain or advance the conservation of biological diversity at the stand- and landscape- level and across a diversity of forest and vegetation cover types and successional stages including the conservation of forest plants and animals, aquatic species, threatened and endangered species, Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value, old-growth forests and ecologically important sites.

Objective 5. Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits.

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

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.

Objective 7. Efficient Use of Fiber Resources.

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

Objective 8. Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples' Rights.

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

Objective 9: Climate Smart Forestry

To ensure forest management activities address climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.

Objective 10. Fire Resilience and Awareness

To limit susceptibility of forests to undesirable impacts of wildfire and to raise community awareness of fire benefits, risks, and minimization measures.

Objective 11. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

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

Objective 12. Forestry Research, Science and Technology.

To invest in research, science, and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based.

Objective 13. Training and Education.

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

Objective 14. Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach.

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

Objective 15. Public Land Management Responsibilities.

To participate and implement sustainable forest management on public lands.

Objective 16. Communications and Public Reporting

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

Objective 17. Management Review and Continual Improvement:

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



1. General Information

1.1 Name, Contact, and Certificate Information

Organization Name	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources – County Forest Program	
Certification Representative	Jake Walcisak 715-657-5812 jacob.walcisak@wisconsin.gov	Doug Brown 715-966-0157 Douglas.brown@wisconsin.gov
Phone Number	715-657-5812	
Address	Wisconsin DNR - Forestry Division 101 S Webster Street PO Box 7921	
Audit Dates	4-8 August 2025	
SFI Certificate Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Single <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multi-site. This Audit covered the requirements of the central organization and a subset of sites. These sites were selected based on proximity and length of time since previous audits. See Summary of Audit Itinerary for details of sampling.	

2. Summary Description of the Management Unit(s)

Description of Ownership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SFI: List of all sites under scope of the certificate, including certified acres.	
	County (acres):	
	Ashland	40,305
	Barron	16,304
	Bayfield	174,487
	Burnett	111,516
	Clark	134,742
	Douglas	281,893
	Eau Claire	52,712
	Florence	37,003
	Forest	15,251
	Iron	175,343
	Jackson	122,685
	Juneau	17,799
	Langlade	130,839
	Lincoln	100,843
	Marathon	30,674
	Marinette	230,103
	Oconto	43,792
Oneida	82,920	
Polk	17,183	
Price	92,294	

	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Rusk</td><td>89,253</td></tr> <tr><td>Sawyer</td><td>115,199</td></tr> <tr><td>Taylor</td><td>17,728</td></tr> <tr><td>Vilas</td><td>41,151</td></tr> <tr><td>Washburn</td><td>150,196</td></tr> <tr><td>Wood</td><td>37,826</td></tr> </table>	Rusk	89,253	Sawyer	115,199	Taylor	17,728	Vilas	41,151	Washburn	150,196	Wood	37,826																																																																																																							
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Total Forest Area (Acres)	2,360,041 acres																																																																																																																			
Management Unit Maps	Provide a link to any public maps https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/fl/RealEstate/PALApplication																																																																																																																			
Forest Types and Key Ecological Features	<p>Forest Type Acreages for the 2025 sites are typical of the CFP and are as follows:</p> <div style="text-align: right;">Pri</div>  <h3 style="text-align: center;">Property Forest Type Acreage</h3> <h4 style="text-align: center;">6100 - TAYLOR COUNTY FOREST</h4> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Forest Type</th> <th>Forest Type Description</th> <th>Stands</th> <th>Acres</th> <th>Percent of Forested Acres</th> <th>Percent of Recon Acres</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>A</td><td>ASPEN</td><td>178</td><td>4,973</td><td>32%</td><td>28%</td></tr> <tr><td>BW</td><td>WHITE BIRCH</td><td>3</td><td>130</td><td>1%</td><td>1%</td></tr> <tr><td>C</td><td>WHITE CEDAR</td><td>8</td><td>116</td><td>1%</td><td>1%</td></tr> <tr><td>FB</td><td>BALSAM FIR</td><td>1</td><td>11</td><td>0%</td><td>0%</td></tr> <tr><td>H</td><td>HEMLOCK</td><td>17</td><td>291</td><td>2%</td><td>2%</td></tr> <tr><td>MC</td><td>MISCELLANEOUS CONIFEROUS</td><td>2</td><td>12</td><td>0%</td><td>0%</td></tr> <tr><td>MR</td><td>RED MAPLE</td><td>51</td><td>695</td><td>4%</td><td>4%</td></tr> <tr><td>NH</td><td>NORTHERN HARDWOODS</td><td>167</td><td>6,675</td><td>43%</td><td>37%</td></tr> <tr><td>O</td><td>OAK</td><td>26</td><td>691</td><td>4%</td><td>4%</td></tr> <tr><td>PR</td><td>RED PINE</td><td>17</td><td>203</td><td>1%</td><td>1%</td></tr> <tr><td>PW</td><td>WHITE PINE</td><td>3</td><td>35</td><td>0%</td><td>0%</td></tr> <tr><td>SB</td><td>BLACK SPRUCE</td><td>11</td><td>138</td><td>1%</td><td>1%</td></tr> <tr><td>SH</td><td>SWAMP HARDWOODS</td><td>62</td><td>1,202</td><td>8%</td><td>7%</td></tr> <tr><td>SW</td><td>WHITE SPRUCE</td><td>5</td><td>17</td><td>0%</td><td>0%</td></tr> <tr><td>T</td><td>TAMARACK</td><td>28</td><td>435</td><td>3%</td><td>2%</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: right;">Total:</td> <td>579</td> <td>15,624</td> <td>100%</td> <td>88%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>  <div style="margin-top: 10px;"> <table border="1"> <tr><td>ASPEN</td></tr> <tr><td>WHITE BIRCH</td></tr> <tr><td>WHITE CEDAR</td></tr> <tr><td>BALSAM FIR</td></tr> <tr><td>HEMLOCK</td></tr> <tr><td>MISCELLANEOUS CONIFEROUS</td></tr> <tr><td>RED MAPLE</td></tr> <tr><td>NORTHERN HARDWOODS</td></tr> <tr><td>OAK</td></tr> <tr><td>RED PINE</td></tr> <tr><td>WHITE PINE</td></tr> <tr><td>BLACK SPRUCE</td></tr> <tr><td>SWAMP HARDWOODS</td></tr> </table> </div>	Forest Type	Forest Type Description	Stands	Acres	Percent of Forested Acres	Percent of Recon Acres	A	ASPEN	178	4,973	32%	28%	BW	WHITE BIRCH	3	130	1%	1%	C	WHITE CEDAR	8	116	1%	1%	FB	BALSAM FIR	1	11	0%	0%	H	HEMLOCK	17	291	2%	2%	MC	MISCELLANEOUS CONIFEROUS	2	12	0%	0%	MR	RED MAPLE	51	695	4%	4%	NH	NORTHERN HARDWOODS	167	6,675	43%	37%	O	OAK	26	691	4%	4%	PR	RED PINE	17	203	1%	1%	PW	WHITE PINE	3	35	0%	0%	SB	BLACK SPRUCE	11	138	1%	1%	SH	SWAMP HARDWOODS	62	1,202	8%	7%	SW	WHITE SPRUCE	5	17	0%	0%	T	TAMARACK	28	435	3%	2%	Total:		579	15,624	100%	88%	ASPEN	WHITE BIRCH	WHITE CEDAR	BALSAM FIR	HEMLOCK	MISCELLANEOUS CONIFEROUS	RED MAPLE	NORTHERN HARDWOODS	OAK	RED PINE	WHITE PINE	BLACK SPRUCE	SWAMP HARDWOODS
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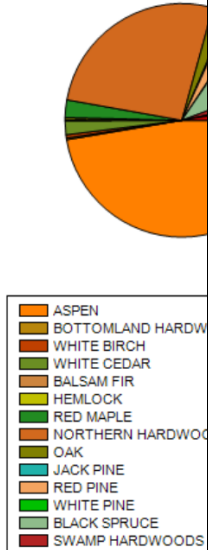


Property Forest Type Acreage

Print

3500 - LINCOLN COUNTY FOREST

Forest Type	Forest Type Description	Stands	Acres	Percent of Forested Acres	Percent of Recon Acres
A	ASPEN	1,141	39,646	47%	39%
BH	BOTTOMLAND HARDWOODS	8	188	0%	0%
BW	WHITE BIRCH	30	379	0%	0%
C	WHITE CEDAR	49	1,613	2%	2%
FB	BALSAM FIR	9	144	0%	0%
H	HEMLOCK	22	229	0%	0%
MR	RED MAPLE	87	2,028	2%	2%
NH	NORTHERN HARDWOODS	618	22,160	26%	22%
O	OAK	61	1,829	2%	2%
PJ	JACK PINE	19	256	0%	0%
PR	RED PINE	143	2,136	3%	2%
PW	WHITE PINE	15	180	0%	0%
SB	BLACK SPRUCE	148	8,158	10%	8%
SH	SWAMP HARDWOODS	100	1,966	2%	2%
SW	WHITE SPRUCE	38	599	1%	1%
T	TAMARACK	92	2,232	3%	2%
Total:		2,580	83,743	98%	82%

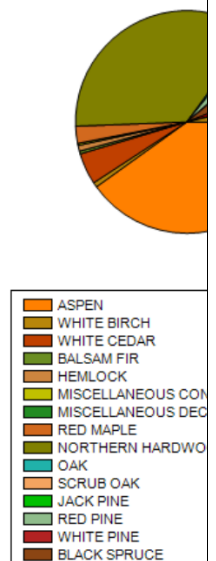


Property Forest Type Acreage

Print

3400 - LANGLADE COUNTY FOREST

Forest Type	Forest Type Description	Stands	Acres	Percent of Forested Acres	Percent of Recon Acres
A	ASPEN	1,833	45,670	40%	34%
BW	WHITE BIRCH	57	787	1%	1%
C	WHITE CEDAR	149	5,212	5%	4%
FB	BALSAM FIR	34	459	0%	0%
H	HEMLOCK	70	959	1%	1%
MC	MISCELLANEOUS CONIFEROUS	24	328	0%	0%
MD	MISCELLANEOUS DECIDUOUS	1	12	0%	0%
MR	RED MAPLE	120	2,823	2%	2%
NH	NORTHERN HARDWOODS	1,011	40,592	36%	30%
O	OAK	38	821	1%	1%
OX	SCRUB OAK	1	8	0%	0%
PJ	JACK PINE	8	78	0%	0%
PR	RED PINE	209	3,188	3%	2%
PW	WHITE PINE	23	425	0%	0%
SB	BLACK SPRUCE	215	5,676	5%	4%
SH	SWAMP HARDWOODS	121	2,359	2%	2%
SW	WHITE SPRUCE	34	340	0%	0%
T	TAMARACK	198	4,141	4%	3%
Total:		4,146	113,878	100%	84%



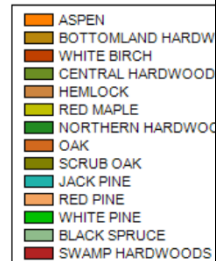
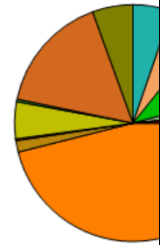


Property Forest Type Acreage

Print

1000 - CLARK COUNTY FOREST

Forest Type	Forest Type Description	Stands	Acres	Percent of Forested Acres	Percent of Recon Acres
A	ASPEN	1,440	50,866	46%	38%
BH	BOTTOMLAND HARDWOODS	39	1,727	2%	1%
BW	WHITE BIRCH	13	271	0%	0%
CH	CENTRAL HARDWOODS	1	3	0%	0%
H	HEMLOCK	1	5	0%	0%
MR	RED MAPLE	278	5,561	5%	4%
NH	NORTHERN HARDWOODS	11	379	0%	0%
O	OAK	776	17,906	16%	13%
OX	SCRUB OAK	292	6,095	6%	5%
PJ	JACK PINE	220	5,826	5%	4%
PR	RED PINE	284	6,091	6%	5%
PW	WHITE PINE	461	11,135	10%	8%
SB	BLACK SPRUCE	28	2,759	2%	2%
SH	SWAMP HARDWOODS	14	338	0%	0%
SW	WHITE SPRUCE	6	64	0%	0%
T	TAMARACK	56	1,404	1%	1%
Total:		3,920	110,430	99%	81%



Forest Management Planning

A general description of the overarching management system and all county FMPs are available via links on this webpage:
For the counties audit during this assessment:

- Taylor <https://co.taylor.wi.us/pdf/forestry/mp/15plan.pdf>
- Langlade https://www.langladeforestryandparks.com/parks/general_info/page/plans--reports/
- Lincoln <https://www.co.lincoln.wi.us/forestry-land-and-parks/page/plans-and-reports>
- Clark <https://filecloud.co.clark.wi.us/url/ejiqpt6gtx2gifsj>

Sustainable Harvest Level Assessment

Each year, County Forests run their harvest planning schedules using the WisFIRS application to determine annual allowable harvest levels. Harvest schedules reflect current RECON and silvicultural prescriptions aligned with Comprehensive Land Use Plans (management plans). WisFIRS uses an acreage-based harvest control calculation method.

Growth to Removal Ratios

Ownership	Growth-to-Removal Ratio	Net Growth (CuFt)	Plots	Removals (CuFt)	Plots
National Forest	5.39	57,192,085	530	10,616,417	35
State	1.88	33,822,950	360	17,985,658	56
County and Municipal	1.93	100,927,066	844	52,402,751	151
Private	2.40	504,703,152	4,026	210,002,591	618
Overall	2.39	698,613,982	5,685	292,166,915	864

<p>Monitoring Program Description</p>	<p><u>COUNTY FOREST INTERNAL REVIEW</u></p> <p><u>Purpose</u></p> <p>Internal reviews of county forest timber sales satisfy the Division’s responsibility to ensure adherence to s. 28.11, Wis. Stats. The reviews also build our partnership with the counties and ensure responsible use of state funds. Timber sales on County Forest land shall be conducted in accordance with the applicable 15 Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan, the management objectives for that property, and s. 28.11, Wis. Stats. Timber sales often involve large sums of public money as well as the ethics of good forest management. Those who are delegated authority to establish, conduct, and approve timber sales have a legal responsibility to the public to establish the best forest practices possible for the sustainability of Wisconsin forests.</p> <p>The Department of Natural Resources provides grants to counties for a portion of the salaries of County Forest Administrators, short-term sustainable forestry projects, and wildlife habitat projects. The Department also provides loans to the counties that are to be paid back out of timber sale revenue. The County’s administrative efforts determine the degree of control and accountability over its timber sales program.</p> <p>The internal review consists of three distinct portions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Timber sale financials <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sale closeout process b. Annual timber sale financial review 2. Compliance with 28.11 Wis. Stats. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Grants and loans b. Severance to townships 3. Forest certification standards (for those counties that are third-party certified) <p><u>TIMBER SALE FINANCIALS</u></p> <p>Timber Sale Closeout Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ County will upload the final sale summary/ledger of volume/value per species/products sold into WisFIRS or provide document). ○ At the time of sale closeout approval in WisFIRS, DNR will review the uploaded ledger of final volumes/values to ensure it matches WisFIRS final reported volumes/values entry. ○ If any discrepancy is found, DNR and County Forest Administrator will discuss to resolve. <p>Annual Timber Sale Financial Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Utilize the County Forest Internal Timber Sale Review Checklist on Public Lands Toolkit. ○ DNR County Forest Liaison is responsible to conduct the annual internal review in partnership with the County Forest Administrator (and other staff as needed) at the County Forest office. ○ Reviews will be conducted after January 1 and completed by the Annual Partnership Meeting where results shall be discussed. ○ The internal review shall include 10% of sales closed in the previous calendar year or 2 sales (whichever is greater). ○ Per each sale review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Verify classified newspaper ad for each sale. ▪ Direct vs Advertised
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Direct, meet 28.11(6)(b)Wis. Stats. (\$10K or 500 Cd Equiv) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Salvage sales are exempt from this requirement. ▪ Invoice values add to final sale value. ▪ Invoices and payments match. ▪ 1 invoice per sale, check every mill/haul/woods scale slip for accuracy. ▪ If discrepancies, DNR Liaison and County Forest Administrator discuss. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional invoices may need to be reviewed. <p><u>COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTE</u></p> <p>Once every five years, at minimum, the County Forest and Public Lands Specialist will conduct a review of the following items. This review will occur on the same 5-year schedule as the Forest Certification review by the Forest Certification Coordinator.</p> <p>Items to review:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. County Forest Administrator Grant 2. Wildlife Habitat Grant 3. County Forest Severance Payments to Towns (utilize WisFIRS Report 51A) <p><u>County Forest Administration Grant</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responsibility – To ensure that the grant was used for the Administrator or Assistant Administrator’s salary. The grant covers 50% of the salary and 50% of the fringe benefits (total fringe benefits not to exceed 40%). 2. If the review finds a difference in the documented values versus the grant application reported values, then the County Forest & Public Lands Specialist shall make an adjustment. This shall be noted in the review and the succeeding years Administrator Grant checked for the adjustment. 3. This grant is paid on the anticipated salary and benefits for the current year, with consideration to the difference of the previous year’s requested and reported values. The County Forest & Public Lands Specialist verifies the submission of the annual work plan and salary and benefit package as required by s. NR 47.70, Wis. Admin. Code, each year prior to distributing the annual grants. <p>*References – s. 28.11(5m), Wis. Stats, NR 47.70, Wis. Adm. Code, Administrator Grant summary (provided by County Forest & Public Lands Specialist)</p> <p><u>Wildlife Habitat Grant</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responsibility - Verify that the funds are being deposited in a segregated, non-lapsing wildlife habitat account and the balance is no more than the sum of the allocations for the three previous years. It is the local Department Wildlife Biologist’s responsibility to ensure that funding has been used for the agreed upon projects. 2. This grant provides up to a \$.05 an-acre grant for wildlife habitat projects on County Forest land. These funds are non-lapsing and can be carried for 3 years. Each year must be viewed individually for carryover. If funds are not spent, they should be returned to the state unless requesting and granted an extension by the County Forest & Public Lands Specialist.
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3. Verify the funds are being spent. A separate ledger should itemize the grant and the expenditures.

4. Grant projects need to be identified in each County's 15 Year County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan. These projects are agreed upon with the local Department Wildlife Biologist, approved by the County Forest Administrator, and revisited each year at the Annual Partnership Meetings and the Annual Work Plan .

*References – s. [23.09\(17m\)](#), Wis. Stats, and the Annual Partnership Meeting minutes.

Severance to Towns

1. Responsibility - To verify that towns received their statutory share of County gross timber sale financial records. In some cases, Counties have elected to distribute additional funds to the towns. This is permissible but a minimum of 10% must be dispersed. County Forest Tax Acreage by Towns (Report 51A) is provided by the County Forest and Public Lands Specialist to identify what percentage of acreage is in each township.
2. Payments to the town are to be made by March 1 of each year.

*References – s. [28.11\(9\)\(d\)](#) Wis. Stats., Report 51A-County Forest Tax Acreage by Towns, and County financial records.

COUNTY FOREST CERTIFICATION

Many of the County Forests participate in forest certification through either the **Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®)** or **Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®)**. The individual county forests are members in a group certification format whereby the Department is the Group Manager and certificate holder. While each member county is periodically audited by third-party auditors, it is the Department's responsibility to establish internal control mechanisms to ensure group member compliance to the certification principles and standards. The regularly scheduled (5-year) Department reviews will be used to document progress on certification issues for participating counties.

Prior to the internal review, the Forest Certification Coordinator will send the County Forest Internal Certification Review document to be completed by the County Forest Administrator. The Forest Certification Coordinator and the County Forest Administrator will discuss the document to ensure completeness and discuss any recent CARs.

The Department's role as Group Certification manager is also assessed during this process. Use the County Forest Internal Certification Review document to document compliance with the certification standards. County forest policies and procedures are interwoven into the checklists, aligning certification indicators with existing County Forest policies. Where non-conformances are found, the Forest Certification Coordinator shall fully document the rationale for the non-conformity on an Internal CAR form. It is expected that prior to the issuance of any internal CAR there will be communication between the County Forest Administrator, liaison, Department Forestry team leader, Department Group Certification Manager, Chair of the respective County Forest Committee, and the WCFA Executive Director. The Group Manager and Department Certification Coordinator shall be responsible for monitoring follow-through on Internal CARs issued by Department Certification Coordinator

SUMMARY REPORT

Upon completion of the Compliance with Statute and County Forest Certification reviews, a Summary Report will be created by the County Forest and Public Lands Specialist. A draft report will be presented to the County Forest Administrator and DNR Forestry Liaison within 15 business days. Comments on the draft report must be submitted back to the County Forest and Public Lands Specialist within 15 business days. A final Summary Report will be submitted to the County Chair of the Forestry Committee (or similar). Copies will be distributed to the County Forest Administrator, DNR Forestry Liaison, and DNR Forestry Public & Private Forestry Section Chief.

3. Audit Process

3.1 Applicable Standards and Audit Objectives

Certificate Code	SFI: SCS-SFI-FM-000083		
Audit Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Stage 1, Preliminary Review Audit	<input type="checkbox"/> Stage 2, Certification Audit	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Re-Certification	<input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 Additional Surveillance	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 st , <input type="checkbox"/> 2 nd , <input type="checkbox"/> 3 rd or <input type="checkbox"/> 4 th Surveillance		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Transfer	<input type="checkbox"/> Expansion of Scope	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>describe</i>):		
Applicable Standards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SFI: 2022 Standards and Rules® Forest Management. Objectives: 3,6,9,11,13,16,17 (annual) plus Objectives 2 and 5. <input type="checkbox"/> SFI: Rules for Use of SFI On-Product Labels and Off-Product Marks <input type="checkbox"/> SFI: Audits of Multi-Sites		
Multiple Standards	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A, this is not a multi-standard nor a multi-CB audit. Forest Stewardship Council U.S. Forest Management Standard v1.0		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Combined	<input type="checkbox"/> Joint	<input type="checkbox"/> Integrated
	<i>A combined audit is when a client is being audited against the requirements of two or more</i>	<i>A joint audit is when two or more auditing organizations cooperate to audit a single client.</i>	<i>An integrated audit is when a client has integrated the application of requirements of two or more management systems standards into a single management system and is being audited against more than one standard.</i>
SFI Substitute or Modified Indicators	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None, <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Substitute or Modified Indicators used and justification:		
Certificate Scope/ Statement	The scope of the certificate includes all forest management activities associated with the Organization’s sustainable forest management system within defined county-owned- and -managed forest lands located in the State of Wisconsin and includes the harvest, transport, and sale or trade of forest products, and other forest management system activities for the Audit Objectives. The Organization has sufficient control over any contracting or outsourcing of forest management planning and activities to ensure conformance to applicable certification requirements.		
Description of Sampling Approach	Four counties were sampled based on sampling formulae in accreditation requirements. Within each county, the audit team visited examples of management activities completed within the past three years.		
Deviations from the Audit Plan	Were there any significant deviations from the Audit Plan? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. If yes, provide a description and explanation.		

3.2 Audit Team

Auditor name:	Sterling Griffin	Auditor role:	Lead Auditor
Qualifications:	Sterling is a California Registered Professional Forester #2805 living in Corvallis, Oregon. He is a graduate of Purdue University with a degree in Forest Management. His career began with the U.S. Forest Service where he participated in long-term ecosystem productivity research in the Pacific Northwest. He later founded a consulting firm serving private landowners managing timber, water, recreation, fire protection, and biodiversity. In 2007, he helped SCS establish its GHG verification program and later founded one of the largest U.S. developers of forest carbon credits. He is currently a SCS Technical Specialist, FSC Lead Auditor and SFI Lead Auditor.		
Auditor name:	Christian Zinkhan	Auditor role:	Team Auditor
Qualifications:	Christian has extensive experience in forestry and land management, having worked in various roles across the US. He earned a bachelor's degree in environmental sciences from Franklin and Marshall College, followed by a Master of Science in Forestry from West Virginia University, and a Master of Trust and Wealth Management from Campbell University. He began his career as a forester with the Natural Resources Conservation Service on Maryland's eastern shore, supporting government programs and wetland restoration. He then managed trust-held timberland as a trust asset manager for Bank of America and Cushman and Wakefield in Atlanta, overseeing tracts from Florida to Texas and into Canada. In late 2024, he joined SCS Global Services as a Forest Management Technical Specialist. He is originally from North Carolina and is currently based in Atlanta, Georgia. In early 2025, he obtained his FSC Forest Management lead auditor certification.		

3.3 Total Time Spent on Audit

A. Number of days spent on-site for the Audit	5
B. Number of auditors participating in on-site audit	2
C. Number of days spent by any technical experts (in addition to amount in line A)	
D. Additional days spent on preparation, stakeholder consultation, and follow-up	2
E. Total number of person days used in audit	12

3.4 Summary of Audit Itinerary and Site Visits

Location(s) sampled	Lincoln County, Taylor County, Langlade County, Clark County, WI
Number of field sites	27

<p>Summary of Cover Types visited</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Forest Type</th> <th>Forest Type Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>A</td><td>ASPEN</td></tr> <tr><td>BH</td><td>BOTTOMLAND HARDWOODS</td></tr> <tr><td>BW</td><td>WHITE BIRCH</td></tr> <tr><td>C</td><td>WHITE CEDAR</td></tr> <tr><td>FB</td><td>BALSAM FIR</td></tr> <tr><td>H</td><td>HEMLOCK</td></tr> <tr><td>MR</td><td>RED MAPLE</td></tr> <tr><td>NH</td><td>NORTHERN HARDWOODS</td></tr> <tr><td>O</td><td>OAK</td></tr> <tr><td>PJ</td><td>JACK PINE</td></tr> <tr><td>PR</td><td>RED PINE</td></tr> <tr><td>PW</td><td>WHITE PINE</td></tr> <tr><td>SB</td><td>BLACK SPRUCE</td></tr> <tr><td>SH</td><td>SWAMP HARDWOODS</td></tr> <tr><td>SW</td><td>WHITE SPRUCE</td></tr> <tr><td>T</td><td>TAMARACK</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Forest Type	Forest Type Description	A	ASPEN	BH	BOTTOMLAND HARDWOODS	BW	WHITE BIRCH	C	WHITE CEDAR	FB	BALSAM FIR	H	HEMLOCK	MR	RED MAPLE	NH	NORTHERN HARDWOODS	O	OAK	PJ	JACK PINE	PR	RED PINE	PW	WHITE PINE	SB	BLACK SPRUCE	SH	SWAMP HARDWOODS	SW	WHITE SPRUCE	T	TAMARACK
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<p>Summary Description /Number of Silviculture Activities inspected</p>	<p>(8) Single tree selection, group/gap selection, Coppice clearcut, even-age pine regeneration, thinning, PCT, site preparation, planting</p>																																		
<p>Summary Description /Number of Harvest Areas inspected</p>	<p>(19) Harvest areas in Lincoln, Taylor, Langlade, and Clark Counties demonstrated a variety of active and completed forest management projects. In Lincoln County, stops included northern hardwood and red oak stands managed through single-tree selection and shelterwood harvests to maintain timber quality, encourage regeneration, and control competing vegetation. Harvests focused on adjusting basal area, creating canopy gaps, and retaining key species. Some sites targeted mixed hardwood and oak regeneration, while others improved lower-quality hardwood stands. In Taylor and Langlade Counties, tours featured overstory removals, coppice cuts, and selective thinnings aimed at increasing oak presence, rejuvenating aspen, and improving stand health. Several harvests addressed emerald ash borer and oak wilt through salvage and regeneration efforts. Early successional habitats were a priority for both wildlife and biodiversity goals. The Clark County visits wrapped up with examples of oak shelterwood treatments, aspen regeneration, and thinning projects, with marked trees and wildlife islands left to support habitat and visual quality.</p>																																		
<p>Summary Description of Road infrastructure inspections</p>	<p>(19) Road infrastructure was assessed at each harvest area inspected. Haul roads and skid trails were inspected for proper drainage and BMP implementation, evaluation of rutting guidelines, and landing/decking locations were inspected for placement and impact remediation if necessary.</p>																																		

3.5 Evaluation of Management Systems

SCS deploys teams with expertise in forestry and other relevant fields to assess the certified organization’s conformance to SFI standards and policies. Audit methods include reviewing documents and records, interviewing personnel and contractors, implementing sampling strategies to visit a broad number of forest cover and harvest prescription types, observing implementation of management plans and policies in the field, and collecting and analyzing relevant stakeholder input. When there is more than one team member, each member may review parts of the standards based on their background and expertise. Applicable aspects of the Management System under evaluation, such as Management System Review and other relevant Objectives, Performance Measures, and Indicators will also inform the audit team. On the final day of an evaluation, team members convene to deliberate the findings of the audit jointly. This involves an analysis of all relevant field observations, interviews, reviewed documents and records, and relevant stakeholder input. Where consensus among team members cannot be achieved due to lack of

evidence, conflicting evidence or differences of interpretation of the standards, the team is instructed to report these in the certification decision section and/or in observations.

3.6. Changes to Management System

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

3.7 Confirmation of Meeting Audit Objectives

The objectives for this audit included:

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

Audit Objectives were met	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If no, provide an explanation:
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4. Results of Audit

4.1 Grading of Possible Findings

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

- *Major CARs:* Major Corrective Action Requests (CARs) occur when one or more of the SFI 2022 Standard(s) performance measures or indicators has not been addressed or has not been implemented to the extent that a systematic failure of a Certified Organization’s SFI system to meet an SFI objective, performance measure or indicator occurs.
- *Minor CARs:* An isolated lapse in SFI 2022 Standard(s) implementation which does not indicate a systematic failure to consistently meet an SFI objective, performance measure or indicator.
- *Opportunities for Improvement:* Opportunities for Improvement (OFIs) are identified by audit team members where the client is in conformance, but there is a risk to conformance in the future. Nonconformance with the standard requirements cannot be recorded as OFIs.
- *Exceeds:* Practices that exceed the basic requirements of the SFI 2022 Standards and Rules for Forest Management or Fiber Sourcing.

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

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

SFI Objective	Cert/Re-cert Evaluation (2024)	1 st Annual Evaluation (2025)
No findings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1		
2		
3		
4		
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12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
COC		
Trademark		
Group		
Other		

4.3 General Description of Evidence of Conformity

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

SFI Objective	Summary of Evidence
Objective 1. Forest Management Planning. To ensure forest management plans include long-term sustainable harvest levels and measures to avoid forest conversion or afforestation of ecologically important areas.	Not Evaluated in 2025
Objective 2. Forest Health and Productivity. To ensure long-term forest productivity and conservation of forest resources through prompt reforestation, afforestation, deploying integrated pest management strategies, minimized chemical use, soil conservation, and protecting forests from damaging agents.	The Wisconsin County Forest program ensures prompt regeneration of harvested sites through both natural regeneration and limited artificial planting when necessary, using locally sourced seedlings. Forest health is maintained through integrated pest management strategies that emphasize prevention and monitoring, with

	<p>minimal, well-documented chemical use limited to targeted applications within label recommendations and no use of prohibited pesticides. Soil and water resources are protected through adherence to Wisconsin’s Forestry Best Management Practices, including careful road and skid trail design, use of logging debris, and erosion control features. Continuous monitoring in WisFIRS, coordination with DNR specialists, and proactive measures to address threats from invasive species, pests, and disease ensure the long-term productivity, resilience, and ecological integrity of the forest resource.</p>
<p>Objective 3. Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources. To protect the water quality and water quantity of rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, and other water bodies.</p>	<p>The Wisconsin County Forest program meets Objective 3 by adopting the Wisconsin Forestry BMP manual, participating in state-level BMP monitoring, and requiring BMP compliance in all timber sale contracts. WisFIRS mapping layers identify water features and soil types, guiding RMZ buffer widths, retention requirements, and seasonal restrictions. 2025 audit site visits confirmed correct RMZ marking and management, with operational plans and Form 2460 ensuring soil protection and water quality are maintained.</p>
<p>Objective 4. Conservation of Biological Diversity To maintain or advance the conservation of biological diversity at the stand- and landscape- level and across a diversity of forest and vegetation cover types and successional stages including the conservation of forest plants and animals, aquatic species, threatened and endangered species, Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value, old-growth forests and ecologically important sites.</p>	<p>Not Evaluated in 2025</p>
<p>Objective 5. Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits. To manage the visual impact of forest operations and provide recreational opportunities for the public.</p>	<p>Not Evaluated in 2025</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Objective 6 is met by reviewing all timber sales through the Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) and Archaeological/Cultural Review processes to identify and protect geologically, ecologically, and culturally significant sites. Comprehensive Land Use Plans and WisFIRS mapping layers (e.g., State Natural Areas, HCVs) are used to locate rare species, natural communities, and special sites, with protections detailed in Timber Sale Notices and Cutting Reports. 2025 audit field visits confirmed that designated sites were properly</p>

	identified, managed with priorities other than timber, and protected during operations.
Objective 7. Efficient Use of Fiber Resources. To minimize waste and ensure the efficient use of fiber resources.	Not Evaluated
Objective 8. Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples' Rights. To recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional knowledge.	Not Evaluated in 2025
Objective 9: Climate Smart Forestry To ensure forest management activities address climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.	The Wisconsin County Forest program meets Objective 9 by integrating climate change adaptation and mitigation into forest management through county-specific risk assessments and adaptation plans based on the Lake States SIC Climate Smart Forestry Regional Assessment 2022. Statewide resources such as the WI DNR "Blueprint for DNR Climate Action 2021-2025," the Wisconsin Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Report, and clean energy progress reports guide planning and monitoring. The DNR's participation in the USFS DREAM project supports assisted migration for vulnerable species. Continuous inventory updates in WisFIRS, growth and yield modeling from FIA data, and documented harvest trends ensure long-term monitoring. Most regeneration is natural, with limited artificial planting for red and jack pine, supplemented by aerial seeding where needed. Field audits in 2025 confirmed healthy, well-stocked forests with no wildfire or adverse climate impacts, professional harvesting practices, and protection of retained trees and regeneration. Ongoing consultation with climate science organizations, participation in state and national initiatives, and annual SFI reporting ensure continuous improvement in climate-smart forestry practices.
Objective 10. Fire Resilience and Awareness To limit susceptibility of forests to undesirable impacts of wildfire and to raise community awareness of fire benefits, risks, and minimization measures.	Not Evaluated in 2025
Objective 11. Legal and Regulatory Compliance To comply with all applicable laws and regulations including, international, federal, provincial, state, and local.	Objective 11 is met by maintaining full compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws. Relevant regulations are incorporated into County Forest 15-year Comprehensive Land Use Plans, timber sale contracts, and operational handbooks. Foresters receive ongoing legal training and updates through WCFA forest administrators' meetings, and all management activities undergo

	<p>pre-activity review, monitoring, and post-activity inspection to ensure adherence. 202f audit found no violations, pending actions, or public complaints. Field visits confirmed all operations met legal requirements, with professional conduct by contractors and staff. Written policies for equal opportunity, anti-discrimination, labor rights, and workplace safety are posted in offices and included in employee handbooks, with personnel interviews confirming awareness and compliance.</p>
<p>Objective 12. Forestry Research, Science and Technology. To invest in research, science, and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based.</p>	<p>Not Evaluated in 2025</p>
<p>Objective 13. Training and Education. To improve the implementation of sustainable forestry through appropriate training and education programs.</p>	<p>Objective 13 is met by providing comprehensive training and education to support sustainable forestry. County FMPs and DNR certification materials show a strong commitment to forestry standards, and staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined between county personnel and DNR liaisons. Certain positions require four-year degrees, and training records confirm robust programs, including DNR-led courses. Timber sale contracts require FISTA-qualified loggers, ensuring professional and trained operations. The organization actively participates in SFI State Implementation Committee meetings and DNR-led initiatives covering BMP implementation, wildlife management, invasive species control, and other topics, reinforcing ongoing staff education and engagement in sustainable forestry practices.</p>
<p>Objective 14. Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach. To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry through public outreach, education, and involvement, and to support the efforts of SFI Implementation Committees.</p>	<p>Not Evaluated in 2025</p>
<p>Objective 15. Public Land Management Responsibilities. To participate and implement sustainable forest management on public lands.</p>	<p>Not Evaluated in 2025</p>
<p>Objective 16. Communications and Public Reporting To increase transparency and to annually report progress on conformance with the SFI Forest Management Standard.</p>	<p>The Wisconsin County Forest program meets Objective 16 by maintaining transparency and reporting on SFI conformance annually. The SFI Public Summary Report meets all required elements and was reviewed on the SFI website. The 2025 Annual Report Survey was submitted, by the DNR Forest Certification Coordinator. Compliance records are maintained in WisFIRS and other</p>

	<p>county-managed platforms, and interviews confirmed that previous surveys are archived and accessible through the SFI database.</p>
<p>Objective 17. Management Review and Continual Improvement: To promote continual improvement in the practice of sustainable forestry by conducting a management review and monitoring performance.</p>	<p>Objective 17 is met by promoting continual improvement through regular management review and performance monitoring. Periodic internal audits covering the previous five years are conducted for each county.. County Forest Administrators, DNR liaison foresters, and team leaders review and approve timber sales to ensure they meet silvicultural, ecological, and social objectives. Certification requirements are assessed during county forest audits, and annual County Partnership meetings review forest management activities and certification progress. Observations from 2025 site visits confirm that management review processes are actively applied, timber sales comply with guidelines, and continual improvement actions are documented and implemented across all counties.</p>

4.4 Existing Corrective Action Requests, OFIs, and Exceeds

NA – No open CARs or OFIs.

4.5 New Corrective Action Requests, OFIs, and Exceeds

No Corrective Action Requests, OFIs, or Exceeds issued.

5. Certification Decision

<p>The certificate holder has demonstrated continued overall conformance to the applicable Sustainable Forestry Initiative standards. The SCS annual audit team recommends that the certificate be sustained, subject to subsequent annual audits and the Certified Organization’s response to any open CARs.</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Comments:</p>	