

Wisconsin DNR County Forest System

101 S Webster Street - FR/4
Madison WI 53703

1Y943

SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard

Reassessment

August 12-14, 2015

NSF International Forestry Program Audit Report

A. Program Participant's Name

Wisconsin DNR County Forest System

NSF Customer Number (FRS)

1Y943

B. 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 Certification Number is NSF-SFIS-1Y943.

C. NSF Audit Team

Tucker Watts
Michelle Mateo

D. Audit Dates

August 12-14, 2015

E. Reference Documentation

SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard

Company Documentation

Silviculture Handbook
County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan
County Parks & Forestry Department Work Plan

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

- Acceptable with no nonconformities
- Acceptable with transitional nonconformities that must have an approved, implemented corrective action plan in place by December 31, 2015
- Not acceptable with minor nonconformities and/or one or two major nonconformities – corrective action required.
- Several major nonconformities – certification may be cancelled unless immediate action is taken

G. Changes to Operations or to the Standard

Are there any significant changes in operations, procedures, specifications, facility records, etc., from the previous visit?

- Yes (Please explain: explanation)
- No

H. Other Issues Reviewed

Yes No N/A Public report from previous audit(s) is posted on the SFI/SBP/etc. website

Yes No N/A Relevant logos or labels (SFI, PEFC, etc.) are utilized correctly.

Yes No N/A Nonconformities from previous audit were reviewed.

If yes, briefly explain:

I. New Corrective Action Requests

Corrective action plan is not required.

Minor Nonconformities: Corrective action plan should be provided within thirty (30) days of this visit. NSF may suspend the certificate if the plan is not received within sixty (60) days. Effectiveness of implementation of corrective actions will be verified during the next regularly scheduled visit.

Major Nonconformities: Corrective action plan should be provided within thirty (30) days of this visit. The auditor will make arrangements to verify the corrective action has been effectively implemented. All major nonconformities must be closed by a special verification audit or by desk review. NSF may suspend the certificate if the corrective action plan is not received within sixty (60) days and/or if evidence verifying the corrective action is not provided within 120 days.

At the conclusion of this audit, the following number of NCs was communicated:

Major: 0 Minor: 0

No opportunity for improvement (OFIs) was identified.

J. 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". Your next audit is a Surveillance Audit, scheduled to be conducted on week of August 8, 2016.

Appendices

[Appendix 1:](#) Audit Notification Letter and Audit Agenda (AESOP 7499)

[Appendix 2:](#) SFI Forest Management/Fiber Sourcing Public Summary Report Template

[Appendix 3:](#) Audit Standard Checklist - SFI Forest Management Standard

[Appendix 4:](#) Meeting Attendance

[Appendix 5:](#) Form for Reporting SFI/PEFC Certification – No Changes

Appendix 1

Audit Notification Letter

August 4, 2015

Joe Schwantes, County & Public Forest Specialist
Public & Private Forestry Section - Bureau of Forest Management
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 S Webster Street – FR/4
Madison WI 53707-7921

RE: Confirmation of SFI Re-certification and FSC Surveillance Audits, Wisconsin County Forest System

Dear Mr. Schwantes,

As we discussed, I will be conducting your SFI Re-certification Audit as described in the attached itinerary. This is the same itinerary as you received from Kyle 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.

Preparing for the Audit

I have received your documentation and information for the answering of key parts of the SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard. As the site visits have been selected, please have activity plans and monitoring documentation for these sites available.

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

Agenda for Review

Attached for your review is the tentative agenda that will guide the conduct of the audit. This agenda is similar to the FSC agenda provided by Kyle. 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,

James Tucker Watts

Tucker Watts
Lead Auditor, NSF
601-622-6487
Jtwatts1@gmail.com

Audit Agenda

Type of Audit

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

Audit Objectives: Determine if certification should be renewed.

Schedule

Day/Date	Time	Activity/Process to be Audited	Lead Auditor
August 11, 2015	6:00 PM	Pre-Audit Opening Meeting (Crivitz – all auditors) Introductions, client update, review audit scope & audit plan, familiarize team auditor with WI county forest program, discuss county forest program changes, intro/update to SFI and NSF standards and protocols, review of open CARs/OBS,	Tucker Watts (SFI) Kyle Meister (FSC)
August 12, 2015	8:15 AM	Opening Meeting: Introductions, review audit scope, audit plan, final site selection	Tucker Watts (SFI) Kyle Meister (FSC)
	10:00 AM	Florence County (all auditors) Recent harvests, planned management activities, protected areas, areas of special use or access rights, herbicide applications, etc.	Tucker Watts (SFI) Kyle Meister (FSC)
August 13, 2015	8:30 AM 8:00 AM	Forest County (FSC lead) Marinette County (SFI lead) Recent harvests, planned management activities, protected areas, areas of special use or access rights, herbicide applications, etc.	Tucker Watts (SFI) Kyle Meister (FSC)
August 14, 2015	8:00 AM	Oconto County (all auditors) Recent harvests, planned management activities, protected areas, areas of special use or access rights, herbicide applications, etc.	Tucker Watts (SFI) Kyle Meister (FSC)
August 14, 2015	1:00 PM	Closing Meeting Preparation: Auditor(s) take time to consolidate notes and confirm audit findings	Tucker Watts (SFI) Kyle Meister (FSC)
August 14, 2015	3:15 PM	Closing Meeting and Review of Findings: Convene with all relevant staff to summarize audit findings, potential non-conformities and next steps	Tucker Watts (SFI) Kyle Meister (FSC)

Appendix 2

NSF International Forestry Program Wisconsin County Forest Program Public Summary Audit Report

SFI Forest Management

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 selected Wisconsin County Forests including 25 counties 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 Joseph A Schwantes, DNR County Forests Specialist. A County Forest Certification Committee comprised of representatives of the counties, the Wisconsin County Forests Association, 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 audit was performed by NSF on August 11-14, 2015 by an audit team headed by Tucker Watts, Lead 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.

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.

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

Wisconsin County Forest Program was found to be in conformance with the standard. There were no previous minor non-conformances and corrective action identified.

NSF determined that there were no minor non-conformances.

No opportunity for improvement was identified.

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 their system of mapping and GIS. (Indicator 1.1.1 g)
- Wisconsin County Forest Program provides an extensive range of recreational activities within their forest management objectives. (Indicator 5.4.1)
- Wisconsin County Forest Program involves a wide range of county, state, federal, and public entities in their land planning and management activities. (Indicator 13.1.1)
- 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)

The next surveillance audit is scheduled for the week of August 8, 2016.

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 and supporting documents including WDNR manuals and handbooks, and the county forest inventory reports 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.

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, use of college-trained field biologists, 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, 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 all 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 communication and cooperative work 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:

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Appendix 3

**NSF International Forestry Program
SFI 2015-2019, Section 2: Forest Management Standard Audit Checklist**

1Y943 - Wisconsin DNR County Forest System

Date of audit(s): August 12 - 14, 2015

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:

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:

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).

Note: Requirement is new or significantly revised. Transition rules apply until December 31, 2015.

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

Audit Notes: Each county has County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Work Plans. Forest inventory is maintained in WisFIRS. Work Plan and inventory is updated annually.

- a) WisFIRS
- b) 5% updated annually
- c) Forest Type/Cover Type
- d) Age class by species
- e) ARC Map – Soils layer
- f) WisFIRS, FIA data
- g) WisFIRS, ARC Map
- h) Acreage control – (e.g. 57,900 acres sustainable; 48,400 acres harvested)
- i) Comprehensive County Forest Land Use Plans, Annual Work Plans, & WisFIRS

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:

Annual Acres Established (CY) (Rpt. 301)	Long-Term (15-yr avg) Harvest Goal (Planning Yr)(Rpt. 201)
2011 -- 59,790	--- 60,079 PY12
2012 -- 48,070	--- 59,493 PY13
2013 -- 45,025	--- 58,397 PY14
2014 -- 48,391	--- 57,872 PY15

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. 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. Witnessed during audit.

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: 5% of the forest inventory is updated annually. Reconnaissance is based on harvesting. Reports are run to identify the age of reconnaissance. Focus is on updating oldest as soon as possible. Witnessed during audit.

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: Forest practices documented in WisFIRS. List of planned treatments witnessed. List is reviewed for development of annual Work Plan.

Performance Measure 1.2

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

Note: Requirement is new or significantly revised. Transition rules apply until December 31, 2015.

- 1.2.1. Program Participants shall not convert one *forest cover type* to another *forest cover type*, unless the conversion:
- Is in compliance with relevant national and regional *policy* and legislation related to land use and forest management; and
 - 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
 - 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.

Note: Requirement is new or significantly revised. Transition rules apply until December 31, 2015.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC Transitional 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). Criteria are met when conversion was conducted.

- 1.2.2. Where a *Program Participant* intends to convert another *forest cover type*, an assessment considers:
- Productivity* and *stand* quality conditions and impacts which may include social and economic values;
 - 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
 - Ecological impacts of the conversion including a review at the site and *landscape* scale as well as consideration for any appropriate mitigation measures.

Note: Requirement is new or significantly revised. Transition rules apply until December 31, 2015.

N/A Conformance Exceeds O.F.I. Major NC Minor NC Transitional 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). Summary of conversions during the past 12 months was witnessed. Criteria are met when conversion was conducted.

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.

Note: Requirement is new or significantly revised. Transition rules apply until December 31, 2015.

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

Audit Notes: Conversion of forestlands to other land uses was not documented on list.

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: Each timber sale notice and cutting report describes the reforestation plan and type of reforestation required under the Ecological Considerations section (e.g. natural regeneration or planting).

Timber Sale Notice And Cutting Report – Section 15. b. Ecological Considerations includes “Post-Harvest Regeneration Plan”. Planting includes Jack Pine, White Pine, Red Pine, and occasionally mixed conifer. Aspen and northern hardwood types are regenerated naturally.

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: The DNR has developed some species specific analysis of forest cover types, which are available on the DNR webpage. DNR's Silviculture Handbook includes criteria for adequate regeneration and corrective actions and stocking rates. Discussed requirements and assessment process during site visits.

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: No planting of exotic tree species.

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: Witnessed during site visits. Protection of regeneration documented in Timber Sale Notice And Cutting Report.

Monitored on Closing And Compliance Check List. Each timber sale notice and cutting report also describes the species and size classes to be retained or protected in the General Sale Description section - Management Objective & Prescription and the Ecological Considerations section - Green Tree Retention.

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: Afforestation is not needed.

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: Acres of pesticides applied in the past year were provided by Wisconsin DNR in a Pesticide Use Table which covered the following information: County, Commercial Name of Pesticide/Herbicide, Active Ingredient, Quantity Used, Treatment Area (acres), and Reason for use. The total acres treated are quite low as a proportion of the lands in the county forestry program – about 1,809 acres or less than one percent of the lands are listed as receiving chemical treatment over the past 12 months. This figure is probably a significant overestimate because the acres include spot treatments of cut stumps and to destroy isolated populations of invasive species.

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: Chemicals used include traditional forestry chemicals and chemicals for weed control in parks. Complete list and amounts included in Pesticide Use Table.

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: On site visits, witnessed and discussed pesticide use and prescriptions. Additional information provided in Pesticide Use Table.

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: Appropriate pesticides are used.

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: Appropriate pesticides are used.

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

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

Audit Notes: County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan contains Chapter 600: Protection contains Integrated Pest Management. County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plans state: “Integrated pest management for the purpose of this Plan, is defined as follows: The maintenance of destructive agents, including insects, at tolerable levels, by the planned use of a variety of preventive, suppressive, or regulatory tactics and strategies that are ecologically and economically efficient and socially acceptable.”

Stands are monitored during silviculture programs and inventory collection. Flights are made for Oak Wilt during July. When presence of insects or disease is noted stands or spots are treated. A salvage or sanitation cut may be used if possible.

Good forest management and healthy stands are the key actions taken for integrated pest management.

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: Licensed applicators used for large applications. Witnessed license. Spot treatments are conducted by employees. License of employees witnessed.

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: Contracts witnessed contain practices. Practices discussed during site visits. Practices are being met during applications.

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: Soils maps available in ARC View and WisFIRS (Witnessed). Hard copies are also available through NRCS. Soils are used for planning harvesting and silviculture operations. Soil Type is noted on the Timber Sale Notice And Cutting Report – 15. a. General Sale Description.

Soils vulnerable to compaction are identified using soil maps, topographic maps, habitat classification, and site reconnaissance.

Methods to avoid excessive soil disturbance include contracts, Timber Sale Notice And Cutting Report, Timber Sale Prospectus, and compliance checks.

Sites visited demonstrated appropriate methods have been used. Minimal soil damage witnessed.

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: Witnessed during site visits. Erosion control measures included water bars, scattering debris, and scheduling of harvesting during frozen ground conditions.

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: Witnessed during site visits. Documented on Closing And Compliance Check List. No issues.

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: Witnessed during site visits. During marking, tree selection favored retention of vigorous trees.

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. Witnessed rutting requirements in Timber Sale Contract.

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

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

Audit Notes: Roads and skid trails are included in Timber Sale Notice and Cutting Report. Restrictions may be defined in Timber Sale Prospectus and Timber Sale Contracts to restrict road and skid tail use. Construction and maintenance of roads are defined in the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan and annual Work Plan. Replacement of 1 to 2 culverts is planned per year. County coordinates manpower with forestry department staff, county highway department staff and private contractors for road maintenance. Witnessed no issues on site visits.

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: 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.

County Forests receive forest health reports generated by WDNR Forest Health Staff – see link to website of annual and monthly reports. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestHealth/Publications.html> Additionally, county foresters can work directly with DNR forest health staff to diagnosis and treat forest health concerns.

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. Many fire detection towers operated by WDNR are located in partnership on county forest lands as outlined in WI Statute 28.11(4)f. 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.

Site visits and interviews confirmed foresters are monitoring invasive species and pests present and advancing into their county, including: Gypsy Moth, Emerald Ash Borer, Oak Wilt, and others.

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: 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.

County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan contains Chapter 600: Protection states silviculture as the chosen method to minimize impacts from damaging agents.

Site visits confirm forest management to promote health, vigorous growing stands. Combination of scheduling, planning and implementation demonstrated good forest management.

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: Responsibility for fire suppression is the responsibility of Wisconsin DNR.

Partnership Minutes demonstrate support and involvement with requirements. Witnessed minutes from Forest, Florence, Marinette and Oconto Counties.

County Forests receive forest health reports generated by WDNR Forest Health Staff – see link to website of annual and monthly reports. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestHealth/Publications.html>

Additionally, county foresters can work directly with DNR forest health staff to diagnosis and treat forest health concerns.

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. Many fire detection towers operated by WDNR are located in partnership on county forest lands as outlined in WI Statute 28.11(4)f. 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.

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: WDNR's Reforestation Programs consist of 3 parts: 1) Tree Improvement, 2) State Forestry Nursery Program, 3) Reforestation Monitoring.

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: Compliance with BMPs is stated in contracts witnessed.

Forms are used to monitor and document BMP implementation during timber harvest. Included are pre-harvest meeting, interim inspections, final inspection and closing.

BMP implementation is also monitored and documented during silviculture operations.

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: witnessed

Contracts witnessed contained BMP compliance

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: Management and protection witnessed in planning of timber harvest on Timber Sale Notice And Cutting Report – 15. C. Water Quality Considerations.

Contracts witnessed 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 lines for RMZs and avoiding areas during

operations. No issues 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: Witnessed in WisFIRS and ARC Map in development of timber sale and silviculture maps.

Riparian areas were witnessed during site visits as being used for sale boundaries or buffers were painted for protection.

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: Witnessed during site visits. No issues identified

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: Witnessed in Timber Sale Notice And Cutting Report – 15. b. Ecological Considerations. Skidding/Seasonal Restrictions defines acceptable operating periods.

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: Counties participate with the State in the implementation of the Wildlife Action Plan, identification of SNA's and HCVF habitats and forests. County employees have received training on the applicability of the WAP to their properties. WI DNR Wildlife biologists work with the Counties to insure that these programs are recognized and implemented on County lands.

HCVF & Exceptional Resource Areas witnessed include the following:

Forest: Gumm Bog

Florence: None identified

Oconto: Brazeau Swamp

Marinette: Several identified - None visited.

Implementation of the Wildlife Action Plan witnessed in the following projects:

- Ruffed Grouse habitat / Woodcock habitat / Golden Winged Warbler habitat

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: Criteria to retain stand-level wildlife habitat elements can be found in either the County Forest Comprehensive Land use plan or Chapter 24 of the Wisconsin DNR Silviculture Handbook. Included is guidance on retention of Reserve Trees, Mast Trees, Cavity Trees, and Snags. Criteria for retention of down woody debris and stumps can be found in the Biomass Harvesting Guidelines. The way these guidance documents are incorporated in stand level prescriptions is within the timber sale cutting notice narrative (Form 2460), section 15. Guidelines are also incorporated in comprehensive county forest land use plans, for retaining structural diversity in even-aged management systems. During site visits implementation was witnessed and discussed. No issues identified.

County personnel employ statewide silvicultural guidelines or individual county adopted tree retention guidelines as incorporated in comprehensive county forest land use plans, for retaining structural diversity in even-aged management systems.

Timber Sale Notice And Cutting Report – 15. b. Ecological Considerations contains documentation for Green Tree Retention.

Timber Sale Notice And Cutting Report – 15. e. Wildlife Considerations contains documentation for snag, den, and mast tree retention.

During site visits implementation was witnessed and discussed. No issues identified.

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:

Forest: Drumlin Hardwoods & Nicolet Hemlock Hardwoods.

Florence: Spread Eagle Barrens & Nicolet Hemlock Hardwoods.

Oconto: Brazeau Swamp, Nicolet Dry Forest, & Northeast Wisconsin Forest.

Marinette: Athelstane Barrens, Dunbar Barrens, Brazeau Swamp, & Lake Noquebay.

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 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.

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: The Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) is consulted prior to forest management activities. Foresters work in consultation with Wildlife and Natural Heritage Conservation 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 RTE species is documented in

timber sale files and the timber sale cutting notice (Form 2460).

During site visits implementation was witnessed and discussed. No issues identified.

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: In all counties, wetlands and State Natural Areas (SNAs) buffers are identified on the ground to avoid equipment entry into these areas. In certain wetlands, winter harvesting is allowed and can be used to favor early successional wetland species and to maintain species composition over time. Some vernal pools have been identified by outside surveys, have been mapped, and these sites are also identified on the ground to avoid equipment entry.

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: 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. Forest reconnaissance includes monitoring for invasive species. (Example flights for OAK Wilt). Sustainable forestry grants have been awarded for some control efforts.

A list of monitoring/control by county since the last audit was witnessed by the auditor and includes:

- Florence: We have identified some invasive species through RECON updates of stands and treated sites as they come up. Such as pulling of buck thorne and thistle.
- Forest: A small parcel of garlic mustard has been mapped and monitored in the past two years. There has been two dates which garlic mustard was pulled manually and disposed of by volunteers. It was also chemically treated. Honeysuckle was identified on one active harvest site and displays in WisFRS in the Invasives field for the harvested stand. The area will be mapped and treated at the conclusion of harvest.
- Oconto: Working on updating in 15 year plan that includes invasive species.

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: Prescribed fire used for wildlife management. Discussed use in Marinette and Oconto Counties. Prescribed fire is currently not used in Forest or Florence counties.

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. 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. Where old-growth forests have been identified, the Counties have designated 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 WisFRS.

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. 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. Timber Sale Notice And Cutting Report – 15. D. Aesthetic Consideration contains documentation for timber sales. Witnessed and discussed use of strips along trails and shape for aspen regeneration harvests.

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: Witnessed and discussed during site visits use of leave strips along trails and shape for Grouse clearcuts. Incorporation of aesthetics in high use and high visibility areas was exceptional. Aesthetics was a consideration in planning silvicultural activities in these areas.

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: 18.16 acres – 2014 average clear-cut size (27,696 acres / 1,525 patches)
 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.).

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: Witnessed WisFIRS database of clearcut size.

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.

Foresters were knowledgeable of green-up requirements. System of plan review and approval ensures multiple persons reviewing green-up requirements.

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: Timber sale maps and WisFIRS are used to review adjacent stands during sale planning to meet green-up.

Foresters were knowledgeable of green-up requirements. System of plan review and approval ensures multiple persons reviewing green-up requirements.

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: Wisconsin County Forests provide a diverse range of recreation opportunities for the public. Recreation is a major component of all management decisions. Recreation facilities include picnic areas, swimming beaches, boat launches, fishing docks, campgrounds, historic sites with interpretive signs, rifle and archery ranges, an arboretum, interpretive center, ski trails, and the following types of trails: nature or interpretive, hiking, biking, cross-country skiing facilities, snowmobile, horse, and ATV.

Color brochures and maps were witnessed for all counties visited. Interaction of the public and forest management was witnessed on all properties visited.

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: NHI and Archeological, Historical database checks are made before conducting timber sale activities. Natural heritage 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.

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

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 identified during site visits.

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.

Indicator:

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.

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: The Department of Natural Resources has an agency tribal liaison. 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.

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.

County Forests employees have participated in cultural resources training that included at least one tribal representative.

In 2014, auditors confirmed that Jackson, Clark, Eau Claire, and Juneau Counties have varying levels of contact with the representatives of the Ho-Chunk Nation. The Ho-Chunk Nation prefers to maintain the confidentiality of special sites and will inform county staff of areas to avoid or even ask to identify leave trees. For management activities being conducted within the ceded territory over which the tribe has use and access rights, Jackson County forest managers meet with representatives at least twice a year to review any measures necessary to protect tribal rights. In Juneau County, while not within the ceded area, tribal representatives have met with staff on proposed harvest sites to devise measures to protect burial mounds. Juneau is currently exploring an opportunity with a tribal member to collect some undesirable trees that are hindering regeneration objectives for hard-mast species such as oak.

County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan includes common measures to protect tribal resources in Chapter 200. 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 recently joined the Wild Rice Advisory Committee to represent the County Forest system. This committee has members from several tribes on it. WCFA hopes that its participation in this committee improves the relationship with the tribes. Notes from WCFA's representative at the meeting (8/11/14) were provided..

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: Timber Sale handbook (page 32-5) requiring a check of the cultural database be included for all County Forest timber sales and that 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.

Ashland	No inquires or concerns received.
Barron	Communication is available through phone, e-mail, ground mail and personal appointments. No inquiries have been made by any Indigenous Peoples.
Bayfield	Direct contact with Tribal representatives regarding every Committee meeting. Also, direct contact when establishing timber sales within Reservation boundaries. A Tribal permit is required on every timber sale within the Reservation. Respond to Indigenous Peoples' inquiries and concerns in a prompt and professional manner.
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.
Douglas	We have very little program involvement or participation from indigenous peoples since no reservation land is located within Douglas County.
Eau Claire	Open committee meetings and an open door policy for bringing any questions or concerns regarding any of the ceded territory.
Florence	The 15 year plan lays out indigenous people's rights. We have not had and inquiries or concerns brought to our attention.
Forest	We meet with the Sokaogon Chippewa Tribal Forester at least once a month. We meet with the Forest County Potawatomi Forester bi-weekly. Tribal members have the ability to see meeting agendas and participate in monthly Forestry meetings. Tribal attorneys review all Forestry Department grants and land acquisitions for Forest County.
Iron	As, necessary, contact is made for issues that may affect the tribes. Contacts are made in person, by phone, and through mail/email correspondence. The response to Indigenous People's inquiries and concerns are handled just like anyone else's concerns or questions. All are taken into consideration and issues are addressed as is necessary to resolve the situation.
Jackson	Twice a year timber sales are sent to the Ho-Chunk Nation for input. Ho-Chunk Nation is one of the partners that we work with on Elk reintroduction.
Juneau	We have not received any inquiries or concerns from Indigenous Peoples'. Juneau County contacts & invites input from local Native American groups during Outdoor Recreation Plan and 15-year Comprehensive Land Use Plan revisions.

Langlade	Send out prospectus to local tribes. Have had no inquiries.
Lincoln	Contact through WCFA and Committee meetings are open to the public
Marathon	Marathon County has land in the ceded territory although no tribal reservations are within the County. Marathon County sent a letter to GLIFWIC years ago asking for input and received no response. I have been in Marathon County for 19 years and have never had any inquiries or heard of any concerns from tribal members. We do have a program for gathering miscellaneous forest products that requires a permit should we get a request.
Marinette	Marinette County will collaborate with Indigenous Peoples representatives on projects that could potentially impact their archeological or cultural resources. A permit for gathering miscellaneous forest products on Marinette County Forest Lands for any treaty rights participants can be obtained through the Marinette County Forestry & Parks Office. There have been no inquiries by or concerns associated with Indigenous Peoples received by the department.
Oconto	No inquires or concerns received.
Oneida	Any time the County sets up a sale within the boundary of the McCord Indian Village, the two tribes (Lac Du Flambeau Ojibwe and Forest Co. Potawatomi) are notified of our intentions. They were also invited to pre-sale meetings with the contractor. The County also works closely with the State Archaeologist on management activities in the McCord Indian Village area.
Polk	Open meeting laws, use of the Department's Indigenous People's liaison for our area. No inquires/concerns received recently.
Price	We always invite the Indigenous Peoples to our annual partnership meeting. They have never attended a meeting or expressed any concerns.
Rusk	We Issued 2 Gathering Permits. 1 - Firewood. 1 - Walking sticks/birch bark.
Sawyer	No inquires or concerns received..
Taylor	Annually, they receive notification and invitation to our Annual Partnership Meeting. So far, they have chosen not to attend any of our meetings. We have not received any inquiries or concerns from any of the tribes.
Vilas	County Board has tribal concerns committee. County board reversed action on Town of Lac Du Flambeau ATV request for use of county highway route in that town based on meetings, objections, and concerns raised by the tribe. Have not received any other inquiries from local tribes.
Washburn	No inquiries or concerns received.
Wood	Committee meetings are legally noticed as required by statute. We have had no specific concerns or inquiries by indigenous peoples within the past year. We have worked with the Ho-Chunk Archaeologist in the past when possible archaeological hits occur in relation to timber harvest plans and activities.

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. County ordinances are listed in Chapter 330 with full text found in Chapter 900 of County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plans. Witnessed plans.

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: Documentation of relevant County ordinances is found in County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plans. Witnessed plans.

Foresters receive training on applicable laws and regulations.

Approval system for plans involves foresters at various levels of management to review and approve.

Contracts state compliance with laws and regulations.

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: No issues identified during interviews. Witnessed ledger with listing of all counties issues/problems with legal compliance with federal, state, local forestry and related social and environmental laws/regulations in the past year. No issues listed.

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.

Witnessed human resources bulletin boards in counties visited.

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 is conducted between workers and management. Witnessed during site visit.

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: 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.

Wisconsin DNR funds research on a broad range of issues. Funding is both internal and external. Information from the 2014 SFI Progress Report indicates investments in research as follows: \$ 883,127 Internal \$81,964 External. Forest Health and Productivity \$629,730 Internal & \$81964 External; Water Quality \$111,840 Internal; Wildlife and Fish \$141,557 Internal.

WCFA and DNR both participate in the Wisconsin SFI Implementation Committee. 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:

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

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The support provided by DNR, WCFA, and individual counties have contributed to all of the above.

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: WCFA is actively involved with the Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science (NIACS).

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: Florence County has received funding for project titled, "Climate-informed scrub oak restoration in Florence County, Wisconsin".

WCFA Spring Administrators Meeting included presentation by Stephen Handle on "Climate Change Adaptation Projects.

Mike Dahlby, Chippewa County Forest Administrator, is on Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI).

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. Commitment to certification is found in Section 325 of each county’s forest management plan. In addition some county plans provide reference to the county resolution that authorized the commitment.

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: Every county and state employee involved in the county forest program clearly understands their responsibilities for achieving the SFI 2015-2019 Standard objectives. 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 Directors. All employees have ready access to the SFI requirements.

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: Staff education and training is ongoing and staff members receive training based on their position needs and previous experiences. In the past year there have been concerted efforts to provide habitat type training and WisFIRS training. Individual training needs and accomplishments vary and are tracked by employee. SFI refresher training is included in the WCFA meetings. Witnessed agenda of training.

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. Witnessed applicator license of applicator.

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: Timber Sale Contract includes requirement for qualified logging professional. Witnessed contract for each site

visited.

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: Loggers harvesting County Forest timber sales are required to complete Forest Industry Safety and Training Alliance, Inc. (FISTA) training. FISTA program contains required elements.

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). Witnessed on website and confirmed during interviews.

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: 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: 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. Witnessed SIC Minutes and conducted interviews to confirm support and participation.

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: WCFA has supported a variety of educational efforts including; contributions to Trees for Tomorrow a natural resources specialty school; sponsorship of SAF statewide meeting, development and sponsorship of a planned Teacher's Training on Forestry Workshop (in partnership with LEAF program), sponsorship of UWSP Forestry Conclave, outreach to the Wisconsin Counties Association; sponsorship of Marinette Logging Heritage Festival; and involvement by WCFA director Jane Severt on the UWSP campus in roles as faculty advisor, adjunct professor, and contact to student SAF chapter. An episode of "Discover Wisconsin" focused on Wisconsin County Forests was developed, filmed, and aired on February 7, 2015. The contract also includes 5 radio spots to be aired in 2015. This was funded by county forest group members and one of the primary purposes was as an education/outreach tool. The WCFA Strategic Plan identifies education as a high priority.

DNR conducts significant education and outreach to forest landowners as well. Individual counties also participate/contribute locally to forestry education in a variety of ways; including participating in Trees for Tomorrow teaching teachers and career days, making logging operations available for field days, conducting log-a-load charity/education events, presenting to local school and interest groups, providing news articles for local papers, and

though information on County websites.

Brochures and educational material were witnessed at each County Office visited in racks, available to the public.

Maps and recreation guides were provided to the auditor for each County visited.

WDNR develops material through its extension and private forestry programs.

Wisconsin SIC has developed landowner information.

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: WDNR supports the following programs and activities: Managed Forest Law Program is a current-use taxation program. The DNR has also received Forest Legacy funding and the state has purchased and currently manages conservation easements on significant acreage of forested land.

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: WCFA projects for education promoting sustainability include the following:

- Sponsors scholarships for high school students in urban areas to attend sessions at Trees for Tomorrow in Eagle River.
- Worked with LEAF to develop curriculum and host a teacher’s workshop at Camp Bird. Agenda witnessed.
- An episode of "Discover Wisconsin" focused on Wisconsin County Forests was developed, filmed, and aired on February 7, 2015. The contract also includes 5 radio spots to be aired in 2015.
- Jane Severt chairs a group working on “Increasing Public Understanding of the Benefits of Sustainable Forest Management”. This group was established following the Governor’s Forestry Economic Summit to address one of the 5 priority goals established by the summit.
- Numerous opportunities are available to address County Boards, County Forestry Committees, and other groups. Confirmed in letter from Jane Severt and discussions with County Foresters and DNR Foresters.

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: 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.

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: County forests are managed by professional staff under the direction of elected county board members, specifically through a “forestry” committee that is a sub-set of the full board. Extensive public opportunities for comment and input exist in the planning and management implementation processes. 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 groups which provide input.

The Wisconsin County Forest Program has not been made aware of any concerns received by the Wisconsin SFI Implementation Committee related to management of County Forest program lands. The toll-free hotline for reporting concerns can be found at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/forestlandowners/professionalorgs.html>.

Witnessed SIC Committee Annual Report and section with concerns received and responses. No issues with Wisconsin County Forests.

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:

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.

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 County Forest Administrators monthly committee meetings are open to the public. Public comments are welcomed.

Notes: The County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Annual Work Plan are brought before the county board for approval. Citizens can provide input or ask questions.

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.

SFI certified counties were surveyed regarding significant recent contact with stakeholders over forest management issues, their responses are included below.

Ashland	None
Barron	No significant / major forest management issues.
Bayfield	None
Burnett	Through the WCFA there have been many meetings held regarding wood supply issues. There are a number of reasons for this, examples: Lack of contractors to cut sales, to many stipulations dictating management (invasives, NHI hits, BMP's, ect...), lack of cutting in the National Forests.

Douglas	Stakeholder contact over forest management issues (both major and minor) continues on an on-going basis. Public participation is available monthly during Committee meetings.
Eau Claire	Nothing major...just minor maintenance of user group trails
Florence	None
Forest	We have established a committee known as the Federal Sustainable Forest Committee to address healthy, sustainable National Forest in Forest County.
Iron	There have been no significant concerns or issues with stakeholders. Normal questions and concerns that have been raised by the public, usually adjacent or nearby landowners, have been resolved with education of proper forest management and explanation of how the forest management occurs.
Jackson	Loggers have come to our monthly public meetings to talk about cost associated with logging.
Juneau	Within the last year, ATV/UTV enthusiasts have periodically called for access throughout the Juneau County Forest. With many alternative routes, restricting access to County Forest land by ATVs and UTVs is not seen as a hindrance to many riders.
Langlade	Correspondence, communicate with recreational clubs, loggers the challenges of dealing with invasive species on the landscape.
Lincoln	None
Marathon	None
Marinette	None
Oconto	None
Oneida	The Towns in which the County forest lies have been notified of harvest activities that may affect town roads. Severance paid to towns has been increased by 2% to help with road maintenance. Contact with BCPL and USFS regarding the possibility of a partnership with the county in managing their properties. Contact with ski club is ongoing regarding forest management activities adjacent to ski/bike trails. Snowmobile and ATV clubs are notified of harvest operations that may affect their trails.
Polk	Recent newspaper article(s) highlighting the reforestation efforts on the county forest. Presentation to the Polk County Sportsman's club on deer browse and how it affects seedlings.
Price	We have not had any major forest management issues in the past year.
Rusk	Local Ski Trail Association discussions of timber sale activities within the ski trail area. Archery Club discussions of timber sale activities within archery range.
Sawyer	None..
Taylor	No significant/major forest management issues with anyone. We do stay in contact with local IAT representatives, snowmobile and ATV clubs, ski club, local loggers and other local forest stakeholders.
Vilas	Partners in Forestry responded to county board member presentation and proposal to sell county forest lands. Forestry committee reviewed parcels and elected to forward only one parcel for withdrawal. Other stakeholder contact over the past year has been focused on recreational management and development – trails, camping facilities. A Recreational Trails Ad hoc committee made up of user groups was formed to collaborate and address stakeholder concerns in planning and development trails.
Washburn	No significant issues. Periodic inquiries regarding why certain management occurring but minimal and minor concerns.
Wood	Have not had any significant/major forest management issues.

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: Witnessed on SFI Website.

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: SFI Annual Progress Report submitted 3/20/15. Witnessed Report.

- 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. All documents requested witnessed.

- 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: Past report witnessed as requested.

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: System includes Partnership Meetings, Internal Audit and Management Review. Documents witnessed by auditor.

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: System includes Partnership Meetings, Internal Audit and Management Review. Documents witnessed by auditor.

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: Conducted on 7/27/15. Participants: Paul DeLong – Chief State Forester, Division of Forestry, Darrell Zastrow, Deputy Division Administrator, Jim Warren – Chief, Public & Private Forestry Section in Bureau of Forest Management, Gary Zimmer – Assistant to the Executive Director WCFA, Joe Schwantes – DNR County Forest Specialist, Mark Heyde – DNR Forest Certification Coordinator. Minutes witnessed by auditor.

Checklist for Section 9, Appendix 1:

Audits of Multi-Site Organizations **Applicable** **Not Applicable**

3 Terms and Definitions

- 3.1 Organization: The term organization is used to designate any company or other organization owning a management system subject to audit and certification.**
- 3.2 Site: A site is a permanent location where an organization carries out work or a service.**
- 3.3 Multi-Site Organization: An organization having an identified central function (hereafter referred to as a central office – but not necessarily the headquarters of the organization) at which certain activities are planned, controlled or managed and a network of local offices or branches (sites) at which such activities are fully or partially carried out.**
- 3.4 Group Certification Organization: A specific type of multi-site organization where forest owners, forest owners’ organizations, forest managers, forest products manufacturers or forest products distributors without a pre-existing legal or contractual link can form a group for the purposes of achieving certification and gaining eligibility for a sampling approach to certification audits.**

4.1 Eligibility Criteria / Method of Sampling (choose 1)

- Eligibility criteria established in IAF-MD1: **Use Sub-Checklist 9-1-A** below.
 - Alternative Approaches to sampling provided for in Section 9, Subsection 5.2 of the Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation document: **Use Sub-Checklist 9-1-B** below.
-

Sub-Checklist 9-1-A: Eligibility Criteria Established in IAF-MD1

Applicable **Not Applicable**

4.1.1 Multi-site organizations using IAF-MD1 as the basis for sampling shall meet the eligibility criteria established in IAF-MD1, including, but not limited to, the following:

a. The processes at all sites have to be substantially of the same kind and have to be operated to similar methods and procedures.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: All sites are forestry offices of County Forestry Program

b. The organization's management system shall be under a centrally controlled and administered plan and be subject to central management review and all relative sites (including the central administration function) shall be subject to the organization's internal audit program.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: Management system is centrally linked through Wisconsin DNR under the Wisconsin County Law.

c. It shall be demonstrated that the central office of the organization has established a management system in accordance with the SFI 2015-2019 Standards and that the whole organization meets the requirements of the standard.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: Management System for SFI is through Wisconsin DNR.

d. The organization should demonstrate its ability to collect and analyze data (including, but not limited to, the items listed below) from all sites including the central office and its authority and also demonstrate its authority and ability to initiate organizational change if required:

System documentation and system changes;

Management review;

Complaints;

Evaluation of corrective actions;

Internal audit planning and evaluation of the results;

Changes to aspects and associated impacts for environmental management systems and

Different legal requirements.

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: Witnessed during audit.

5.1 Sampling Approaches

5.1.1 Certification bodies auditing multi-site organizations using IAF -MD1 as the basis for sampling shall meet the sample selection and intensity criteria established in IAF -MD1. (Note: The Sampling requirements under IAF-MD1 are provided below in italics and using the numbering system from IAF-MD1)

Yes No N/A

Audit Notes: Based on a review of the applicable Sampling Requirements under IAF-MD1 as detailed below the organization was determined to meet the sample selection and intensity criteria for MD1.

Note: The Sampling Requirements under IAF-MD1 are provided; only the requirements which apply to the organization and which are mandatory (“must...”) were included.

5 SAMPLING

5.1 Methodology

- 5.1.1 The sample should be partly selective based on the factors set out below and partly nonselective, and should result in a representative range of different sites being selected, without excluding the random element of sampling.
- 5.1.2 At least 25% of the sample should be selected at random.
- 5.1.3 Taking into account the provisions mentioned below, the remainder should be selected so that the differences among the sites selected over the period of validity of the certificate is as large as possible.

5.2 Size of Sample

- 5.2.1 The certification body shall have a documented procedure for determining the sample to be taken when auditing sites as part of the audits and certification of a multi-site organization. This should take into account all the factors described in this document.
- 5.2.2 The certification body shall have records on each application of multi-site sampling justifying it is operating in accordance with this document.
- 5.2.3 The following calculation is an example based on the example of a low to medium risk activity with less than 50 employees at each site. The minimum number of sites to be visited per audit is:
- Initial audit: the size of the sample should be the square root of the number of remote sites: ($y=Mx$), rounded to the upper whole number.
 - Surveillance audit: the size of the annual sample should be the square root of the number of remote sites with 0.6 as a coefficient ($y=0.6 Mx$), rounded to the upper whole number.
 - Re-certification audit: the size of the sample should be the same as for an initial audit. Nevertheless, where the management system has proved to be effective over a period of three years, the size of the sample could be reduced by a factor 0.8, i.e.: ($y=0.8 Mx$), rounded to the upper whole number.
- 5.2.4 The certification body should define within its management system the risk levels of activities as applied above.
- 5.2.5 The central office shall be audited during every initial certification and recertification audit and at least annually as part of surveillance.
- 5.2.6 The size or frequency of the sample should be increased where the certification body’s risk analysis of the activity covered by the management system subject to certification indicates special circumstances in respect of factors such as:
- The size of the sites and number of employees (eg. more than 50 employees on a site);
 - The complexity or risk level of the activity and of the management system;
 - Variations in working practices (eg. shift working);
 - Variations in activities undertaken;
 - Significance and extent of aspects and associated impacts for environmental management systems (EMS);
 - Records of complaints and other relevant aspects of corrective and preventive action;
 - Any multinational aspects; and
 - Results of internal audits and management review.
- 5.2.7 When the organization has a hierarchical system of branches (e.g. head/central office, national offices, regional offices, local branches), the sampling model for initial audit as defined above applies to each level.

Example:

- 1 head office: visited at each audit cycle (initial or surveillance or recertification)
- 4 National offices: sample = 2: minimum 1 at random
- 27 regional offices: sample = 6: minimum 2 at random
- 1700 local branches: sample = 42: minimum 11 at random.

5.3 Audit Times

- 5.3.1 The audit time to spend for each individual site is another important element to consider, and the certification body shall be prepared to justify the time spent on multisite audits in terms of its overall policy for allocation of audit time.
- 5.3.2 The number of man-days per site, including the central office, should be calculated for each site using the most recently published IAF document for the calculation of man-days for the relevant standard.
- 5.3.3 Reductions can be applied to take into account the clauses that are not relevant to the central office and/or the local sites. Reasons for the justification of such reductions shall be recorded by the certification body.

Note: Sites which carry out the most or critical processes are not subject to reductions (clause 3.1.1).

- 5.3.4 The total time expended on initial assessment and surveillance is the total sum of the time spent at each site plus the central office and should never be less than that which would have been calculated for the size and complexity of the operation if all the work had been undertaken at a single site (i.e. with all the employees of the company in the same site).

5.4 Additional Sites

- 5.4.1 On the application of a new group of sites to join an already certified multi-site network, each new group of sites should be considered as an independent set for the determination of the sample size. After inclusion of the new group in the certificate, the new sites should be cumulated to the previous ones for determining the sample size for future surveillance or recertification audits.
-

(END Sub-Checklist 9-1-A: Eligibility Criteria Established in IAF-MD1)

Sub-Checklist 9-1-B: Alternative Approaches to Sampling from Section 9, 5.2

Applicable **Not Applicable**

Field Notes

The following Wisconsin County Forest System and Wisconsin DNR employees were interviewed:

August 11th
Crivitz, WI - Dinner
Joe Schwantes (DNR-CO)
Mike Luedeke (WCFA)
Mark Heyde (DNR-Cert. Spec)
Jane Severt (WCFA)

August 12th
Florence County
Joe Schwantes (DNR-CO)
Mike Luedeke (WCFA)
Mark Heyde (DNR-Cert. Spec)
Pat Smith (Florence Cty Admin)
Andy Nault (Florence Cty)
Eric Brolin (Florence Cty)
Henry Sullivan (DNR-Liaison)
Liz Wood (DNR-FR)
Jason Cotter (DNR-WM)
Brian Spencer - Area Staff (DNR)
Carly Lapin (DNR-NHC)
Robby Richard (Florence LTE)

August 13th
Forest County
Gary Zimmer (WCFA)
Mark Heyde (DNR)
Dave Ziolkowski (Forest Cty Admin)
Dan Peters (Forest Cty)
Liz Wood (DNR-Liaison)
Brian Spencer - Area Staff (DNR)
Marinette County
Joe Schwantes (DNR-CO)
Pete Villas (Marinette Cty Admin)

Marcus Isaacson (Marinette Cty)
Andy Lange (Marinette Cty)
John Landenberger (Marinette Cty)
Jeremiah Oftedahl (Marinette Cty)
Brad Sauve (Marinette Cty)
Phil Fritz (Marinette Cty)
Dan Mertz (DNR-Liaison)
Cole Couvillion (DNR-Team Leader)
Chad Gottbeheut (DNR-FR)
Janet Brehm (DNR-WM)
Kate Lenz - Area Staff (DNR)
Ryan Severson (DNR-AFL)

August 14th
Oconto County
Joe Schwantes (DNR-CO)
Gary Zimmer (WCFA)
Mark Heyde (DNR-Cert. Spec)
Bob Skalitzky (Oconto Cty Admin)
Dave Borisch (Oconto Cty)
Shelley Wrzochalski (DNR-Liaison)
Dave Halfman (DNR-WM)
Kate Lenz Area Staff (DNR)
Ryan Severson (DNR -AFL)

Florence County

Timber sale 757: Combination coppice and single-tree selection harvest. Coppice used to regenerate Oak and Aspen. Single-tree selection used in transition zones (Oak-northern hardwood) and northern hardwood sites. Observation of Aspen snags within coppice sites, and various snags within single-tree selection area. Regeneration monitoring will be completed by summer crews.

Timber sale 775: Natural Red Pine stand marked for thinning from below with removal of Aspen, suppressed Jack, Red, and White Pine, and diseased Spruce-Fir component. Retention of vigorous Red and White Pine, Eastern Hemlock, and Northern White Cedar. 2 streams present (no stream crossings), red line for buffers. No issues.

Biochar experiment site (Dead Ox Timber sale): Use biochar and manure mixture in planting of Red Pine. Discussion of experimental controls, measurements, hypothesis, and relationship to climate change adaptation projects.

Timber sale 728, BFR: Climate Change Project from grant. Oak site impacted severely with Oak wilt. Oak removed and chipped. Regeneration of Aspen and Red Maple present. Wood ash applied on snow over the winter followed by planting of Jack Pine – 440 TPA. Discussion of regeneration and stocking monitoring after planting.

Timber sale 768: Active northern hardwood harvest; single-tree selection. Interview with logger on health & safety requirements, log specifications & sorts, BMPs, training on invasive species, and continuing education. Walk-through timber sale with logger to ask questions about slash, identification of retention trees, etc. Retained trees include Ash, Yellow Birch, Maples, and Basswood. Discussion of loss of gap-phase species over time on higher quality sites.

Timber sale 797: Lower quality northern hardwood marked selection harvest. Oak, Aspen, and Yellow Birch components. Larger gaps to be created to secure regeneration. Scarification reserved as an option in case competition from understory vegetation is too high. Invasives may be an issue, as survey completed when many spp were dormant; potential for re-survey.

Forest County

Timber sale 466: Aspen coppice and selection harvest of northern hardwood stand finished in 2014. Discussion of snag recruitment. Retention of longer-lived species; harvest of Aspen, Fir, White Birch, and suppressed trees. Coppice area with reserves of Maple, Aspen, and other species dispersed throughout stand. Observed reserved Legacy trees.

Timber sale 477: Marked northern hardwood selection harvest with some gaps. Planned retention of Maple, Basswood, Ash, Yellow Birch, Red Oak, Butternut, etc. Evidence of snag recruitment in retained deformed and frost- or storm-damaged trees. Adjacent to equestrian trail. Road recently graded for harvest.

Timber sale 465: Gravel pit. Topsoil and clays reserved in pile for reclamation after gravel and stone resource is exhausted. Gravel used on forest roads. Discussion of aesthetics, reclamation strategy, and conversion. Note that site does not qualify as conversion since it is for a management purpose, in this case maintaining roads.

Timber sale 459: Single-tree selection of northern hardwood forest type to release advanced regeneration of Maple, Ash, Basswood, and Oak. Discussion over grass seed mixes for erosion control. Observation of property boundary that existed before sale, but is no longer relevant due to county's acquisition of adjacent property. Areas noted on drive out of site - Green tree retention areas located to include as many spp as possible.

Timber sale 460: Larger Aspen stand with dispersed and clumped retention of Aspen and other species. Discussion of monitoring protocols for inventory and post-harvest regeneration.

Ruffed Grouse Management Area: Discussion of early successional habitat management and rotation. Habitat management benefits primarily two game species, ruffed grouse and woodcock, and about thirty non-game species, including the Golden Winged Warbler, a State Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). ~10 acre blocks are clearcut every ten years to maintain dynamic between early and mid-successional stages.

Timber sale 480: Observation of HCVF adjacent to Aspen strip clearcut complex. Coordinate with adjacent DNR lands on breaking up age classes of Aspen. Retention grouped towards edges of sale due to its narrowness. Observation of >80' buffer width for stream.

Timber sale 464: Smaller Aspen coppice with retention of Oak, Hemlock, Cedar and Pine. Observation of dispersed and clumped Aspen retention.

Porcupine Pelt timber sale: Aspen coppice with dispersed and clumped retention. Retention clumps include Maple, Aspen, Fir, and some small Hemlock. Some retention clumps consist of wetlands and seeps. Adjacent block includes larger Maples and Hemlocks, which are seeding into harvest site. Discussion of retention's effect on efficiency of operations.

Acorn planting within old variable retention site: Mixed Northern Hardwood site was not achieving desirable mix of regeneration, so FME staff decided to plant some acorns of Red and Bur Oak, both of which occur in the overstory. Regeneration included lots of Ash and Basswood, with some Red Oak, Maple species, and Black Cherry.

Marinette County

Contract 3586: Athelstane Barrens. Control burn to keep Barrens open – control woody vegetation and trees. Retain Aspen, Oak, and Jack Pine. Winter harvest for ground conditions. Tops scattered. No issues. Regeneration of Jack Pine and Pin Oak. Bog contains retention of trees. Invasive species of Knapweed monitored in Athelstane Barrens. Annual spraying to control. Barrens is good birding area.

Contract 3777: Mixed Aspen-Maple-Swamp Hardwood. Winter logging. Goal is Aspen and Red Maple regeneration. Aesthetics practiced along snow mobile trail. No issues.

Contract 3622: Even-aged management of small stands to regenerate Red and Jack Pine. Minimal damage during thinning. Small areas open for Ruffed Grouse habitat and release suppressed trees.

Contract 3781: Clearcut of Northern Hardwood. Good utilization. Retention of snags and White Pine. Winter logging. Red line for RMZ. No issues.

Contract 3633: Shelterwood in White Birch, Oak, and Swamp Hardwood Coppice in Aspen. Harvest with Oak Wilt restrictions. Good utilization. No damage to residual stand. No issues.

Contract 3708: Oak Wilt restrictions. Treatment of pine stumps for Root Rot. Cedar retained. Retention of Tamarack-Spruce-Cedar is goal. Monitor regeneration for stocking of Tamarack following harvest. This could be slow regeneration. No issues.

Oconto County

Timber sale 286: Active harvest site. Aspen coppice and single tree selection to release and improve stand quality, retaining Oak and Cedar. Regeneration included lots of Oak and Maple. Site is surrounded by residential land and all stands are roadside. Retention grouped towards edges of sale due to its narrowness. Evidence of snag recruitment in retained edges of stand. Interview with loggers on health & safety requirements, log specifications & sorts, BMPs, training on invasive species, identification of retention trees, and continuing education. Additional discussion of snag retention and harvester safety. Safety equipment, spill kits, and logger safety training records viewed on-site. Potential vernal pond viewed and machinery did not enter area and avoided wet seeps.

Cultural site: Tribal burial mounds viewed on drive between sites. Mounds were found upon an initial cruise of the site and identified. Site has been classified as a non-harvestable site.

Timber sale 253: Release advanced regeneration by removing overstory of Pin and Red Oak. Oak mortality is significant due to oak wilt. Oak and conifers retained. Site was handcut and good oak regeneration observed.

Brazeau Swamp: HCVF dominated by Northern White Cedar. Site is a wintering deer yard and historical regeneration attempts through harvest failed due to the high winter deer populations. No harvesting currently occurs. Swamp observed from the bordering road with the SE/E border noted by a pine ridge. Area is frequented by local birders due to large diversity of neo-tropical migrant birds, including the Golden Winged Warbler, a State Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN).

Timber sale 187: Regenerate Tamarack stand with even-aged clearcutting with reserves. Sale has not yet been harvested and contract has been extended since 2010. No regeneration of any age classes of Tamarack observed in the understory. Mature Tamarack is declining due to multiple insect attacks. Discussion of the likely regeneration spp, based on observations of a privately owned adjacent stand of Tamarack. Parcel between the road and the Tamarack stand was purchased by the county recently and is primarily White Cedar.

Timber sale 106: Multiple smaller stands grouped to create one larger sale. Winter logging due to wet conditions. Aspen coppice, Pine thinning with single tree selection, and uneven age harvest to retain Oak and Pine. Pockets of older Pine, variety of age classes represented, and retained snags observed.

Timber sale 269: Oak Shelterwood. Retain White Oak for wildlife and next stand. Controlled burn used to control aspen and understory regeneration. Oak regeneration established. Monitor regeneration to protect during harvest. No issues.

Timber sale 217: Oak shelterwood and thinning. Retention of snags. Red line for drain. No entrance into area. Good regeneration. No issues.

Timber sale 197: Red Pine thinning. Minimal damage to residual trees. Good tree selection. No issues.

Timber sale 272: Clearcut for Poplar-Maple, Red Pine thinning. Minimal damage to residual trees in Red Pine thinning. Good regeneration in Poplar-Maple harvest. No issues.

Appendix 4

NSF Audit Attendance Sheet

Company Name: Wisconsin County Forest System
 Location (Plant # and/or City & State): 101 S Webster Street – FR/4, Madison WI 53707-7921
 Type of Audit: SFI Forest Management – Re-Certification Audit
 Opening Meeting Date: August 11, 2015 Closing Meeting Date: August 14, 2015

NAME (Printed)	TITLE/POSITION	OPENING MEETING	CLOSING MEETING
Kyle Meister	FSC lead	KM	KM
Michelle Mateo	FSC/SFI	MM	MM
Tucker Watts	SFI lead	TW	TW
Joe Schwantes	DNR-CO	JS	JS
Mike Luedeke	WCFA	ML	
Jane Severt	WCFA	JS	GZ
Gary Zimmer	WCFA		MH
Mark Heyde	DNR-Cert. Spec	MH	BS
Bob Skalitzky	Oconto County Admin		SA
Shelley Allness	DNR tribal liaison		JW
John Wendorski	Clark County Forest		KL
Kate Lenz	DNR - Area Staff Specialist		RS
Ryan Severson	DNR - Area Leader		
(green=call in)			

Appendix 5

No Changes