

Wisconsin County Forest System

Forestry Field Operations Bureau
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 S Webster Street – FR/4
Madison WI 53707-7921

FRS 1Y943

SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules®
Section 2, Forest Management Standard

Recertification Audit





NSF Forestry Program Audit Report

A. Certificate Holder Information

Certificate Holder	Wisconsin County Forest Program
Customer Number	1Y943
Contact Information (Name, title, phone & email)	Doug Brown, County Forest & Public Lands Specialist, Forestry Field Operations Bureau, 715-453-2188 Douglas.Brown@wisconsin.gov Mark Heyde, Forest Certification Coordinator, Forestry Field Operations Bureau 608-267-0565 Mark.Heyde@wisconsin.gov
Scope of Certification	Land management for participating counties within the Wisconsin County Forest Program, encompassing approximately 2.2 million acres of forestland in the following 25 counties: Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Eau Claire, Florence, Forest, Iron, Jackson, Juneau, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Marinette, Oconto, Oneida, Polk, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, Vilas, Washburn and Wood. The SFI Forest Management number is NSF-SFI-FM-1Y943.
Locations Included in the Certification Note: may be listed as plain text or included in an appendix or a separate file.	See above
Significant Changes to Operations or to the Standard(s)	None

B. Audit Team

Lead Auditor	Michael Ferrucci
Audit Team Member(s)	Shannon Wilks

C. Site Visits

Date and Location of Each Visit	Ashland, Barron County: August 6th; Douglas County: 7th; Bayfield County: 8th; Closing meeting: Friday August 9th, 7:45-8:45 am in Brule.
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D. Audit Results

Auditor Recommendation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant, maintain or renew certification <input type="checkbox"/> Grant, maintain or renew certification pending closure of CARs <input type="checkbox"/> Grant, maintain or renew certification pending follow-up assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Do not grant, maintain or renew certification (notify NSF office immediately)
Number and Summary of Findings of "Exceeds the Requirements"	There were five areas where the Wisconsin County Forest Program Exceeds the SFI Requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forest management planning requirements with exceptionally detailed and comprehensive management plans and planning documents. (Indicator 1.1.1).• Barrens management work in the Northwest Sands is an exceptional program for the protection of significant species of concern and threatened and endangered species. (Indicator 4.1.5 and Indicator 4.2.1).• The program, through the work of county forestry personnel, DNR personnel who have significant duties in the program, and the Wisconsin County Forests Association provides an exceptional amount of leadership and support for numerous and diverse activities for public outreach, education and involvement related to sustainable forest management. (Indicator 12.2.1).• The program engages in an exceptional amount of involvement with a wide range of county, state, federal, and public entities in their land planning and



	<p>management activities. This work is done by county board members, forest administrators, and county foresters, with the WCFA providing leadership, guidance, support and coordination. (Indicator 13.1.1).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program maintains a high level of contact with local stakeholders over forest management issues through state, federal and individual collaboration. (Indicator 13.1.2).
Number and Summary of Findings of “Opportunity for Improvement”	0
Number and Summary of Findings of “Minor Nonconformity”	0
Number and Summary of Findings of “Major Nonconformity”	0
Summary of review of nonconformities from previous audit(s)	<p>Past nonconformities (and some OFIs in the past) involved roads, BMPs, and wildlife habitat issues. During the 2019 audit these areas were reviewed extensively and were found to meet the requirements. There was sufficient evidence of appropriate work on road design and maintenance, the use of BMPs as required to protect water and soil quality, and the protection of wildlife habitat at multiple scales to find conformance.</p>
Notes from Opening and Closing Meetings	<p>During the opening and closing meetings auditors discussed audit protocols including sampling, evidence used, definition of findings, and audit reporting. Representatives of the program described program changes and responses to Opportunities for Improvement from 2018. At the closing meeting the preliminary findings (5 “Exceptional Practices; all other areas “Conformance”) were presented and the Lead Auditor’s recommendation for recertification was announced.</p>
All logos and/or labels, including ANSI, ANAB, SFI, PEFC, ATFS, etc. are utilized correctly in accordance with NSF policies.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (a finding of nonconformity should be issued) <input type="checkbox"/> N/A (not using any labels or logos on any marketing materials, website, finished products, etc.)



E. Recertification Review

Auditors are required to review the reports from all audits in the current certification period, starting with the certification or recertification audit and including all surveillance or other audits. The auditor shall consider the performance of the program over the cycle through a review of internal audits, management reviews, corrective actions, continual improvement, and NSF audit findings, to determine if there is evidence of:

- An effective interaction between all parts of the program and its overall effectiveness?
- An overall effectiveness of the system in its entirety in light of internal and external changes?
- A demonstrated commitment by top management to maintain the effectiveness and improvement of the system to enhance overall performance?
- Continual improvement over the cycle?
- The program contributing to the achievement of the client’s policy and objectives, and the intended results?
- Repeated audit findings during the audit cycle that would indicate systemic issues?

Answer	<p>There is a strong program for internal audits, review of progress, and management reviews. Issues that arose during past third-party or internal audits are discussed in management meetings at several levels, including county-level partnership meetings and the program-wide annual management review. These issues (findings) are addressed with robust corrective action plans. There have not been unexpected repeated findings.</p> <p>Involvement in audits and management reviews by top-level staff from the WDNR, each county forest program, and the Wisconsin County Forests Association demonstrates commitment. As the support program of WDNR has been reorganized the commitment to the “time standards” has remained, and been strengthened by the rationalization of programs.</p> <p>This program is highly effective in meeting policy commitments to high-quality, publicly-accepted forest management.</p>
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F. Appendices

Appendix 1	Audit Notification Letter and Audit Agenda
Appendix 2	SFI Forest Management Public Summary Report
Appendix 3	Audit Standard Checklist - SFI Forest Management Standard
Appendix 4	Site Visit Notes
Appendix 5	Meeting Attendance



Appendix 1

Audit Notification Letter and Audit Agenda

June 5, 2019

Doug Brown, County Forest & Public Lands Specialist
Mark Heyde, Forest Certification Coordinator
Bureau of Forest Management
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 S Webster Street – FR/4
Madison WI 53707-7921

RE: Confirmation of 2019 SFI and FSC Audits, Wisconsin County Forest Program

Dear Mr. Brown and Mr. Heyde,

As we discussed, I will be leading your SFI Surveillance Audit as described in the attached itinerary, supported by Team Auditor Shannon Wilks. This SFI Audit Plan is based on the itinerary we discussed. Please confirm that these dates are still appropriate for the audit of your program’s continued conformance to the SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard.

SFI Scope

Land management for participating counties within the Wisconsin County Forest Program, encompassing approximately 2.2 million acres of forestland in the following 25 counties: Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Eau Claire, Florence, Forest, Iron, Jackson, Juneau, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Marinette, Oconto, Oneida, Polk, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, Vilas, Washburn and Wood. The SFI Forest Management certification number is NSF-SFI-FM-1Y943.

Itinerary

Table with 6 columns: County, Acres, Auditors, Day (August), Travel time from Ashland, Notes/ Lodging. Rows include Ashland, Barron, Douglas, and Bayfield.

Closing meeting: Friday August 9th, 7:45 to 8:45 am in Brule.

Additional details provided under “Field Site Selection Process” and in the “Schedule” on final page.



Preparing for the Audit

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

A key part of the audit is a review of selected evidence related to your program, which may include: Approval for logo usage; Internal Audit and Management Review records; Training records; or Documentation for multisite requirements; as well as information I've requested separately related to specific SFI requirements. To the degree possible in advance of the audit, please provide key written evidence for the SFI requirements selected for review (see list below). I would ask that you place particular emphasis on SFI-focused requirement (SFI Implementation Committee involvement, SFI reporting, etc.) as these are often overlooked when customers prepare for dual audits.

SFI Requirements Selected for 2019 Re-Certification Audit

The audit will include all relevant requirements within Objectives 1 through 15.

Field Site Selection Process

You have provided a spreadsheet of all currently established but unsold, currently sold and active, and closed (closed within the last 2 years) timber sales for counties involved in the 2019 WI County Forest Audit. As in the past, this spreadsheet contained several tabs, with data for each county.

Mike Ferrucci made a semi-random selection of timber sales that could be visited, and will be working with FSC Lead Auditor to ensure any specific types of sales that need to be seen from the FSC audit perspective are also included. 7 to 18 sales were selected per county in the initial filter.

After the initial sites were selected, the individual County Forest Administrators provided more information for each sale selected, including what is the primary forest cover type, whether there are wetlands within the harvest area or adjacent (for example as harvest unit boundaries), whether there are special sites or features within or nearby, and any other information that would help us to make our selection. Information was provided for the following headings in the spreadsheet your team completed:

Water in/or adjacent	Primary Timber Type	Special Sites	Active Sale	Access Issues?	Other economic (non-timber) uses	HCVFs, reserves, special sites	Planting sites	Chemical treatment sites	Research sites
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We used this additional information to select a smaller number of final selections. We hope to complete this process during the week of June 7th.

From our final selection list, we would ask the county personnel to develop audit routes that would take us to most those selected sites (based on access, sale activity, timing, variety, other unique features, etc.). These routes should include additional non-timber sale sites that demonstrate county forest management accomplishments. As in the past there is an interest in potentially visiting sites of forest conversions to other species and/or non-forest, indigenous people sites, HCVFs, and active timber harvests. The goal is to have a list of 9+ potential stops (timber sales and non-timber sale sites) for each daily audit tour.

Barron County: 1 auditor: Mike Ferrucci, SFI Lead Auditor

- Arrive noon; 30 minutes office
- 4+- hours field: Need 4 or 5 TS Selections; then augment with other types of sites to total 8-9.
- Daily closing briefing 4:45 (all days, if possible)

Ashland County: 2 auditors: Stefan Bergman, SCS Global, FSC Lead Auditor; Shannon Wilks, Team Auditor

- 10-11 am office audit (after overall program review from 8 to 10 am)
- 5-6 hours field, both auditors together for first 2-3 sites, then split into separate tours
- Need 7 or 8 TS Selections; then augment with other types of sites to total 11-14.

Douglas County: All 3 auditors

- 8:30 to 9:30 am office audit
- 7+- hours field, all auditors together for first 2 sites, then split into separate tours
- Need 12-14 TS Selections; then augment with other types of sites to total 16-22.



Bayfield County: All 3 auditors

- 8 to 9 am office audit
- 6 ½ -7 hours field, all auditors together for first 2 sites, then split into separate tours
- Need 12-14 TS Selections; then augment with other types of sites to total 16-22.

We accept that one or more selected sites may be inaccessible or challenging to include, and can discuss any that are dropped when we are in the daily opening meetings. During the opening meeting each audit day the auditor will review the list of potential stops and then select and adapt the sites to visit in the field time 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 Hamilton, Coordinator, Office of Statistics and Label Use
Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Inc.
343-803-0590
rachel.hamilton@sfiprogram.org

Thank you for selecting NSF to provide your audit services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Ferrucci".

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

Copy: Stefan Bergman, SCS Global, FSC Lead Auditor; Shannon Wilks, Team Auditor



Audit Outline

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, based on conformance to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Requirements (Section 2, 2015-2019 Standard).

Schedule Overview

Monday 5th Base of operations will be in Ashland, WI

Auditors arrive Ashland approximately 7:30 pm
(Based on M.F. proposed itinerary, subject to change)

Tuesday 6th All Three Auditors

7 am Breakfast with WCFA and DNR Personnel
8 am Opening Meeting (Ashland): Program-wide issues, multi-site requirements
Split the team: Opening meeting and Ashland office meeting continues for SB and SW
9:30 am Mike Ferrucci depart for Barron County; arrive noon to start office audit, field 1-5 pm
11 am to 5 pm SB and SW Field: Ashland County

Wednesday 7th All three auditors

8:30 am to 5 pm: Douglas County (1-hour office, then field)

Thursday 8th All three auditors

8 am to 4 pm: Bayfield County (1-hour office, then field)
4 to 5 pm Auditors work with DNR to review outstanding information needs

Friday 9th All three auditors

7:45 to 8:45 am Closing Meeting (Brule)
10:50 Flight from Duluth airport (Ferrucci, others?)

Documents Requested for the 4 counties we are visiting:

- 15 Year Comprehensive Plans
- Annual Partnership meetings- DNR/County
- Annual Work Plans
- Last 3-year DNR internal Audits
- WCFA Legislative/Certification Committee Meeting Minutes for last year
- SFI- SIC meeting minutes
- WisFIRS reports
 - 114+115- Recon by age and recon accomplishments

Appendix 2

Wisconsin's County Forest Program 2019 SFI Forest Management Public Summary Report

Introduction

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

Wisconsin County Forest Program includes over 2.4 million acres of forestland managed by 29 counties in the central and northern portions of Wisconsin. The scope of the certification encompasses sustainable forestry activities of participating counties within the Wisconsin County Forest System and land management operations in 25 Wisconsin County Forests encompassing approximately 2.2 million acres of publicly owned forests, including the following counties:

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

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

The Wisconsin County Forest's SFI Program is managed by the Wisconsin DNR County Forest Specialist. A County Forest Certification Committee with representatives of the counties, the Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA), and DNR staff help implement the SFI program, reviewing progress and making suggestions for improvements or changes as needed. The Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) represents the forestry interests of 29 counties in Wisconsin with lands enrolled under Wisconsin's County Forest Law. WCFA provides considerable support for certification-related activities and is a key support mechanism for the program. The 25 participating Wisconsin County Forests have been certified to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Standard since December 10, 2004

The audit was performed by NSF on August 6-9, 2019 by an audit team headed by Mike Ferrucci, Lead Auditor, supported by Shannon Wilks, 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 program's SFI Program to 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 2 years. 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
- Performance Measure 8.3 – There is no private land involved in the program
- Indicator 10.1.2 – No research on genetically engineered trees

The next audit will be a recertification audit and is scheduled for August 3-7, 2020.

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.

The 2019 audit was a Recertification Audit for this multi-site certificate that covers 25 county forests (sites). Four county forests were included in the sample: Ashland County Forest, Barron County Forest, Bayfield County Forest, and Douglas County Forest. This sample size was determined using the guidelines set forth in IAF-MD1. These counties were selected based on a date rotation of the population of 25 participating counties.

Within the four selected participating county forests NSF's lead auditor 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. During the 3 ½ day audit 43 field sites were visited, including 15 completed timber harvests, 3 active timber harvests, 4 marked or planned harvests, 6 roads, 9 recreational trails and 2 recreation areas, 1 area of intensive, long term invasive plant control treatment, 3 special sites of historic or ecological interest, 2 sites with significant wildlife features (all harvest sites were also sites where wildlife management issues were considered), and 2 other sites (several sites fit into more than one category). Auditors also observed numerous sections of county forest access roads and extensive portions of the county forests while traveling between field stops, but it is not possible to quantify this portion of the sample into discrete field sites.

During the audit NSF also reviewed a sample of the written documentation assembled to provide objective evidence of conformance. NSF also selected and interviewed stakeholders such as contract loggers, landowners and other interested parties, and interviewed employees within the organization to confirm that the SFI Standard was understood and actively implemented. There were no recent minor non-conformances identified in the 2018 audit, but all areas where there had been findings during the five-year cycle were subject to intensive review during the 2019 audit.

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

Overview of Audit Findings

The Wisconsin County Forest Program was found to be in overall conformance with the standard and to the overall principles of sustainable forestry. Conformance to SFI Performance Measure 1.1 requiring "*long-term* harvest levels that are sustainable..." was demonstrated through its documentation of planned harvest levels using the area-control method and the implementation of harvest set up, sales, and harvests that were consistently well within the allowable harvested acres over the past five years for the four counties included in the 2019 audit. All of the SFI Indicators were found to be in conformance or exceed the SFI requirements, as described below.

NSF determined that the 2018 Minor Non-Conformance related to SFI Indicator 3.1.1 was effectively resolved and closed: There had been an isolated instance of not fully implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) on a forest access road also used for recreation. The plan provided to resolve this issue was fully implemented, with repairs made to the culvert involved, additional training provided, and an increased emphasis on BMPs on recreation trails.

Exceptional Practices

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

- Wisconsin County Forest Program exceeds forest management planning requirements with exceptionally detailed and comprehensive management plans and planning documents. (Indicator 1.1.1 requires 1.1.1. Forest management planning at a level appropriate to the size and scale of the operation...).
- Barrens management work in the Northwest Sands is an exceptional program for the protection of significant species of concern and threatened and endangered species. (Indicator 4.1.5 requires a "Program to address conservation of known sites with viable occurrences of significant species of concern." Indicator 4.2.1 requires "4.2.1 Program to protect threatened and endangered species.")
- The Wisconsin County Forest Program is exceptional by providing an extensive range of quality recreational activities within their forests. (Indicator 5.4.1 requires participants to "Provide recreational opportunities for the public, where consistent with forest management objectives.")
- The Wisconsin County Forestry Program, through the work of county forestry personnel, DNR personnel who have significant duties in the program, and the Wisconsin County Forests Association provides an exceptional amount of leadership and support for numerous and diverse activities for public outreach, education and involvement related to sustainable forest management. (Indicator 12.2.1 requires Periodic educational opportunities promoting sustainable forestry, such as
 - a. field tours, seminars, websites, webinars or workshops;
 - b. educational trips;
 - c. self-guided forest management trails;
 - d. publication of articles, educational pamphlets or newsletters; or
 - e. support for state, provincial, and local forestry organizations and soil and water conservation districts.

- The Wisconsin County Forest Program engages in an exceptional amount of involvement with a wide range of county, state, federal, and public entities in their land planning and management activities. This work is done by county board members, forest administrators, and county foresters, with the WCFA providing leadership, guidance, support and coordination. (Indicator 13.1.1 requires “Involvement in *public land* planning and management activities with appropriate governmental entities and the public”.)
- Wisconsin County Forest Program maintains a high level of contact with local stakeholders over forest management issues through state, federal and individual collaboration. (Indicator 13.1.2 requires “Appropriate contact with local stakeholders over forest management issues through state, provincial, federal or independent collaboration”.)

General Description of Evidence of Conformity

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

Objective 1 Forest Management Planning

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

Summary of Evidence: *The county forest management plans (Ashland County, Barron County, Bayfield County, and Douglas County), Timber Sale Notice and Cutting Reports for selected timber sales, supporting documents including DNR manuals and handbooks, and the county forest inventory reports produced from the WisFIRS system were the key evidence of conformance.*

Objective 2 Forest Health and Productivity

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

Summary of Evidence: *Field observations and associated records were used to confirm practices. There are ongoing programs for reforestation, for protection against insects and diseases and wildfire, and for careful management of activities which could potentially impact soil and long-term productivity. Efforts to deal with the Emerald Ash Borer were discussed and observed. Deer management efforts were also considered, along with documentation and observations of intensive efforts to slow the spread undesirable invasive, exotic plants in the four county forests reviewed.*

Objective 3 Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources

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

Summary of Evidence: *Field observations of a range of sites were the key evidence. Auditors visited portions of selected field sites that were closest to water resources and reviewed maps and harvest plans. Protection of water quality is clearly a very high priority and is embedded within many of the organization’s practices and procedures.*

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, and interviews of college-trained Wisconsin DNR field biologists who support the program 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. Clearcut blocks were observed to be modest in size and dispersed in ways that support visual quality. Maps of recreation sites as well as field visits to several recreational areas and trails helped confirm a very strong commitment to recreation programs and facilities.*

Objective 6 Protection of Special Sites

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

Summary of Evidence: While field observations of sites of ecological importance and many recreation sites were visited in the field during the 2019 audits.

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: Review of policies, interviews with staff, and documentation of systems for communication and cooperation were used to confirm the requirements.

Objective 9 Legal and Regulatory Compliance

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

Summary of Evidence: Field reviews of ongoing and completed operations were the most critical evidence. Information provided by Wisconsin DNR, a Google search, and the system of project review at multiple levels also contributed to conformance.

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 in the four county forests and from WDNR, 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: The Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) provided written evidence regarding its extensive and long-term outreach activities. Interviews, agendas for meetings, and participation in the Wisconsin SFI Implementation Committee were sufficient to assess the requirements associated with findings of Exceptional Practices.

Objective 13 Public Land Management Responsibilities

To participate and implement sustainable forest management on public lands.

Summary of Evidence: The Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) provided written evidence regarding the counties' outreach activities related to public land management. Support and involvement in the Good Neighbor Authority program for support of active management on national forests was also considered in the review. 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 to 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

SFI® Forest Management Standard Audit Checklist

1Y943 Wisconsin County Forest System

Dates of audits: August 6-9, 2019

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 ☐ Conforms ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Minor NC ☐ Major NC

Notes: There is no fiber sourcing programs or use of the SFI on-product labels.

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 ☑ Conforms ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Minor NC ☐ Major NC

Notes: Plans (outlined below) and harvest levels (also provided below) are consistent with a program organized and implemented to assure sustainable harvests of forest products well into the future. All involved with the program understand the need to limit harvests to levels that can be maintained.

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

- a. a long-term resources analysis;
b. a periodic or ongoing forest inventory;
c. a land classification system;
d. biodiversity at landscape scales;
e. soils inventory and maps, where available;
f. access to growth-and-yield modeling capabilities;
g. up-to-date maps or a geographic information system (GIS);
h. recommended sustainable harvest levels for areas available for harvest; and
i. a review of non-timber issues (e.g., recreation, tourism, pilot projects and economic incentive programs to promote water protection, carbon storage, bioenergy feedstock production, or biological diversity conservation, or to address climate-induced ecosystem change).

☐ N/A ☐ Conforms ☑ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Minor NC ☐ Major NC

Notes: The Wisconsin County Forestry Program exceeds forest management planning requirements with exceptionally detailed and comprehensive management plans and planning documents.

Forest management plans for each county are developed from a comprehensive template provided by the WDNR. Counties customize their individual plans considerably, adding locally-significant information throughout the plan. The resulting plans are realistic, locally-adapted, and quite thorough. The plans, supplemented by a robust GIS, decision support tools, and supporting documents, include all of the required items listed in the indicator.

“Comprehensive Land Use Plans” approved by WDNR for Barron, Ashland, Douglas, and Bayfield Counties. Also reviewed 2018 work plans. According to the Bayfield County 2018 Accomplishment Report: “The annual work plan gives direction and meaning to the Forestry and Parks Department budget, further defines and supplements the Comprehensive Fifteen Year Land Use Plan, and emphasizes current goals and needs of the County Forest, Parks and Trails Programs.”

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

- a. General Sale Description
- b. Ecological Considerations, including Management History, Silvicultural Systems, Green Tree Retention, Post-Harvest Regeneration Plan, Invasive Species Evaluation, Insect/Disease Concerns, Skidding/Seasonal Restrictions, Wildlife Action Plan/ Species of Greatest Conservation Need, Conservation Opportunity Area (COA), Results of NHI, and Comments
- c. Water Quality Considerations
- d. Aesthetic Considerations
- e. Wildlife Considerations, including Snag, Den and Mast Tree Retention, Game Openings, and Comments
- f. Recreation Considerations
- g. Resources of Special Concern Considerations (Archeological / Historical Review)

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

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

Notes: Harvest levels for each county fall within the calculated AAC, which is set by acres. For Bayfield County, the five-year (2014-2018) harvest goal was 4,829 acres, with 4,716 acres accomplished.

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

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

Notes: The reports regarding inventory status were reviewed and were discussed (see notes for the next indicator).

Forest inventory system is WisFIRS (Wisconsin Forest Inventory and Reporting System). A combination of WisFIRS and FIA data are used to calculate growth and yield. Although FIA data are reviewed to estimate growth, the system is not driven by volume growth estimates, but by stand-level assessments completed immediately prior to treatment to confirm or adjust target harvest dates. The 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.

Bayfield County has developed a robust Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) system. 25% of the plots have been installed, including the initial measurements.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: For each of the county forests audited this year two versions of reconnaissance reports documenting the status of inventory information (currency) were provided. This information supports conformance. The following reports regarding inventory status were reviewed:

- Barron County – Report #114 - 79% of acres had recon data collected within the past 10 years; Report #115_recon: 48% of acres (7,744) were updated from 2015 through 7.23.19.
- Ashland County – Report #114 - 72% of acres had recon data collected within the past 10 years; Report #115_recon: 39% of acres (15,601) were updated from 2015 through 7.23.19.
- Douglas County – Report #114 - 55% of acres had recon data collected within the past 10 years; Report #115_recon: 41% of acres (114,859) were updated from 2015 through 7.23.19.
- Bayfield County – Report #114 - 69% of acres had recon data collected within the past 10 years; Report #115_recon: 55.7% of acres (96,384) were updated from 2015 through 7.23.19.

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

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

Notes: Training and the Public Forest Lands Handbook (2460.5) specify detailed protocols for record-keeping; records and activities based on these protocols are rigorously reviewed at multiple levels.

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

Performance Measure 1.2

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

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

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

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

Notes: The assessment for any stand level decision to change cover types is documented on the narrative of the Timber Sale Cutting Notice (Form 2460). Most harvests have a goal of maintaining the current forest cover type, but there are some sites where cover type changes are needed to better align species composition with soil/site conditions or landscape considerations. In all cases soil/site conditions are determined (Field Guide to Forest Habitat Types – Kotar, et al) and then used to help guide decisions about forest type. These decisions are reviewed by wildlife biologists and, when needed, by other specialists. Overall goals for desired future conditions with respect to cover type have been developed with considerations at larger spatial scales and documented in plans. Native forest types that are rare are increased in many cases of type changes, and are not diminished.

Landscape-level issues regarding trends for forest cover types are considered in the 15-year plans, and site-level considerations are also reviewed. These conversions are consistent with natural stand development pathways and with site quality assessments. Planting is not used to drive cover-type conversion.

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

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

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

Notes: Managers occasionally seek to convert one forest type to another, for reasons such as forest health, site productivity, and meeting property objectives. Any assessment for the stand level decision to change cover types is documented on the narrative of the Timber Sale Cutting Notice (Form 2460). One example is the 22-acre oak and hardwood stand in Baron County Tract Number 2-2018, Sale Number 368 which is being managed toward uneven-aged structure dominated by northern hardwoods, with a reduced component of oak.



Performance Measure 1.3

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

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

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

Notes: Records indicate that there is little such conversion out of county forest status. When lands are selected for changes in land use they are subject to a robust review process before receiving approval to be removed from the county forest system.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: DNR’s web page on forest regeneration monitoring <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestManagement/regenMonitoring.html> describes the new FRM protocol. For FRM one of the goals is to collect statewide regeneration data to monitor and inform forest management in several major forest cover types. Another goal is to provide county-level browse information to the County Deer Advisory Councils (CDACs). “This monitoring effort is similar to Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) and Wisconsin Continuous Forest Inventory (WisCFI) efforts, but will collect samples more intensively to provide county-specific forest regeneration data... The inclusion of height classes to seedling and sapling counts can better:

- illustrate growth trends;
- measure regeneration establishment;
- assess release needs; and
- forecast stand composition.

The four counties included in the 2019 audit rely on natural regeneration for most forest types and the vast majority of managed forest acres. Discussions with foresters and review of regeneration sites in all four counties confirmed successful regeneration in Aspen-dominated stands and considerable challenges in maple-dominated stands. A new FRM tool has been rolled out that provides a three-year regeneration measurement system for sites with suspected, deer-caused regeneration delays.

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

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

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

Notes: Interviews confirmed statement in Barron County Partnership Meeting Notes: “Foresters use WisFIRS to code survival checks and monitor regeneration. All site prep tools and silvicultural prescriptions are considered in order to encourage natural regeneration.” The WDNR Forestry Liaison does the monitoring work and then compares results to the criteria listed in the Silviculture Handbook. Regeneration challenges are mostly driven by high deer populations. Canopy gaps are used in combination with thinning in the northern hardwood stands, under the selection system.

Interviews and field sites confirmed a strong program for ensuring regeneration in even-aged stands, and changes in approaches and new tools to address long-standing challenges in uneven-aged (northern hardwood) stands.

The system of documents that guide forest management include several key handbooks:

- [Timber Sale Handbook \[PDF\]](#)
- [Forestry Silviculture and Aesthetics Handbook](#)
- [Public Forest Lands \[PDF\]](#)
- [Ecological Landscapes](#)

Chapters in the Silviculture Handbook provide silvics information and regeneration methods and criteria for the following types: White Pine, Red Pine, Jack Pine, Fir-Spruce, Swamp Conifer-Balsam Fir, Black Spruce, Tamarack, White

Cedar, Hemlock Hardwood, Northern Hardwood, Oak, Aspen, Paper Birch, Black Walnut, Swamp Hardwood, Bottomland Hardwood, Red Maple, and for Central Hardwoods.

Public Forest Lands Handbook, Section 135, pages 135-10 to 135-12 describe the monitoring protocol.

Mike Amman, Bayfield County 16 years- CFI- 667 plots randomly sampled on 5-year cycle. Grant from DNR Sustainable Forestry grant. Some plots are contracted. FMR (Forest Regeneration Metric). Plots and sub-plots based on Timber Types; For example: Aspen 46 % of species- 46% of plots.

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

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

Notes: N/A Exotic tree species are not planted. Reviewed documents including: 2018-2019 Reforestation Program Partner Meeting Summary; Strategic Plan 2019-2029 Wisconsin Forest Genetics Program, 2019 Distribution report; 2018 Reforestation Program Annual Report.

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

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

Notes: Site visits confirm that advanced natural regeneration is protected during harvest. Methods include planning of timing of harvests (winter harvests as needed), planning skid trails, directional felling and the use of appropriate (fixed as needed) processor heads, as well as scarification of select areas of a stand prior to harvest. Some sites are scheduled for winter harvest when deep snow is expected to protect most small seedlings from any impacts.

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

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

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

Performance Measure 2.2

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

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

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

Notes: FSC-POL-30-001a FSC Lists of highly hazardous pesticides.

Records, supplemented by interviews, show very low to modest levels of chemical use, mostly for the control of undesirable, invasive exotic plants. Six of 25 SFI-certified counties applied no chemicals in the 12 months since the previous surveillance audit, and twelve others only for invasive control. 863 acres of site preparation treatments were completed, 20 acres to maintain openings, a modest area was treated for oak wilt control, and the remaining treatments were to control invasive species on approximately 800 acres.

In Ashland, Barron, and Douglas County herbicides are only used to control invasive species.

Bayfield County: Herbicides are used for site preparation and to control invasive species. They are applied only as needed and in amounts at or below label rates. Alternatives to chemicals are used (mechanical site preparation, bud capping instead of chemical repellants, for example). A total of 717 acres were treated for site preparation over the past year.

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

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

Notes: Use of Garlon (triclopyr) for Buckthorn control (see notes under Indicator 2.2.3 below, Aspen Buckthorn Sale) conforms.

Glyphosate is the most commonly used pesticide for treatments other than invasive control. This chemical has low toxicity and is considered to be non-toxic and safe when used according to the label.

Review of spray rates for sites visited indicates rates are not excessive.

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

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

Notes: Interviews indicated that personnel involved in planning or implementing pesticide (primarily herbicide) applications are guided by the label, and understand that they must follow the label.

From Barron County Partnership Meeting Notes: "Written prescriptions and maps are prepared for each pesticide application. Follow-up is done to determine treatment success."

Reviewed the "Pesticide Applications Prescription and Record" for the Aspen Buckthorn Sale. Portions of the harvest area had pre-harvest herbicide treatment of dense understory buckthorn. The treatment plan was to treat a 50-foot-wide strip, 25 feet on each side of the existing loop trail. The treatment was successful, with buckthorn only found as scattered sprouts outside of the treatment area. Use of Garlon for Buckthorn control conforms.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: A list has been compiled of all pesticides applied in the Wisconsin County Forest System (DataRequest_chemicals_complaints_controversy_accidents). Mark Heyde, Forest Certification Specialist compared these to the WHO type 1A and 1B list and there are no such prohibited chemicals. There is also a guidance document (Revision 2 April 6, 2017) covering SFI Prohibited Pesticides. Audit also reviewed list of chemicals applied, no issues.

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

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

Notes: A list has been compiled of all pesticides applied in the Wisconsin County Forest System (DataRequest_chemicals_complaints_controversy_accidents). Mark Heyde, Forest Certification Specialist compared these to Stockholm Convention pesticide types and there are no such prohibited chemicals.

2.2.6 Use of *integrated pest management* where feasible.

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

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

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

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

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

Barron Co. staff has not applied pesticides on the forest. Pesticide applications are contracted out to certified applicators. Confirmed records of Certified and Licensed Applicators of company 4 Control, which does the work.

- 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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: Common practices include posted notices on site, required certification of applicator, specified restricted entry interval, PPE for applicator, review of site and development of control plan by specialist. Ashland County-Observed Herbicide Application Record for activity on 6/27/19. Application site is gated and sign posted after application. Use of Accord on 8 acres for site preparation. Application record in Barron County, Aspen Buckthorn Sale, Buckthorn control (see notes under Indicator 2.2.3 above) conforms. For this application confirmed Notification of adjoining landowners regarding pesticide application.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: Wetland areas, streams and watercourses are identified on the timber sale map pre-sale and marked out as needed during sale operations. Barron County uses a "Timber Sale Contractor Checklist, Pre-Sale Meeting" which includes review of roads, wetlands and crossings, BMP issues and much more related to general sale administration.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Notes: Field observations confirmed limited rutting, retained down woody debris, and planning to minimize skid trails. No rutting was observed in excess of the policy regarding rutting. Post-harvest conditions were particularly good considering the recent extended period of unusually high precipitation amounts.
Earthen berms, road closed signs, and/or gates are used to control access to logging trails and forest roads to help prevent the spread of invasive plants and to minimize damage to roads lacking gravel surfaces or otherwise susceptible to damage by vehicle use at inappropriate times.

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

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

Notes: Partial harvests reviewed in this audit had minimized damage. Residual trees (except some of those left to provide habitat) were vigorous and well-suited to the site. Use of cut-to-length processors in nearly all harvests helps ensure minimal damage to residual trees.
Foresters mark trees to be removed (or retained) in partial harvests in accordance with Silvicultural Guidelines that are based on science and that are updated regularly. A “worst first” approach is evident, as implemented by following “order of removal” rules which emphasize trees form, vigor, health, and suitability for the site.

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

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

Notes: Rutting criteria are listed in all timber sale contracts.

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

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

Notes: All Counties: Skid roads observed had been planned and installed per BMPs, minimizing impacts.
Barron County: There are two logging roads that are maintained by the CF program. Both are single-track which access boat launches. Both have gates which are closed and locked when conditions are too wet.
Douglas County: Roads are well designed and maintained and clearly meet BMPs for permanent forest road. The highest use roads are crowned and surfaced with sufficient gravel to protect the road, allow for a good running surface, and facilitate regular grading. Most of the vegetation on the road shoulders is herbaceous or grassy, evidence of regular mowing to prevent encroachment of wood vegetation. There are over 100 miles of system forest roads.
Bayfield County: Roads are well designed and maintained and clearly meet BMPs for permanent forest road. The highest use roads are crowned and surfaced with sufficient gravel to protect the road, allow for a good running surface, and facilitate regular grading. Most of the vegetation on the road shoulders is herbaceous or grassy, evidence of regular mowing to prevent encroachment of wood vegetation. There are over 50 miles of system forest roads.
In all county forests reviewed skid trails and skid roads observed were well planned and many had been protected by strategic placement of logging slash. Rutting levels on skid trails and roads were well within acceptable levels, with very few locations with notable rutting or compaction. Systems and methods used to minimize impacts to soil productivity appear to be widely understood, employed, and effective.
Forest roads observed during the field visits were generally properly designed and well-maintained.

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
 Conforms
 Exceeds
 O.F.I.
 Minor NC
 Major NC

Notes: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestHealth/Publications.html> and <https://forestrynews.blogs.govdelivery.com/category/forest-health-news/> provide forest health updates and publications.

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

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

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

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

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

Notes: Field observations confirmed that forest management practices are developing and maintaining healthy forests in most areas. Most stands observed were properly stocked to slightly overstocked; overstocked stands are prioritized during timber sale planning. Relatively few trees were observed affected by insects or diseases. In partial harvests trees with the lowest vigor or signs of forest health issues were removed, except those needed to provide habitat (den trees and snags or snag recruitment).

Oak wilt, gypsy moth, Jack Pine insects, hemlock wooly adelgid, beech bark disease, and emerald ash borer are current key concerns, although not all of these were present in the northwestern region where the 2019 audits occurred. Measures are in place to deal with each of these and other forest pests. These measures include monitoring and pest impact evaluation, preventative actions (sanitation cuttings), limited spraying for gypsy moth, oak wilt treatments including girdling, and salvage work.

From page 280-40 of the Public Lands Handbook, 24605: Pest Management: Forest insect and disease prevention, detection, and control will be conducted in an ongoing process by forestry personnel, both county and Department, throughout the year. Unusual pest outbreaks will be reported to the forest health specialist at the district level on the Forest Pest Report, Form 2400-89, or with the electronic database. Appraisals of pest population, hazard areas, damage, and forest reconnaissance will be conducted, and operational control procedures will be evaluated to determine if active control measures are needed. Integrated pest management (IPM) will be implemented at all times and the least invasive control method will have priority. Pest control through silvicultural manipulation using approved forest management techniques will be given first priority. Other control methods may include biological and/or chemical control. Evaluation before and after control methods will be conducted to measure effectiveness of control operations.

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

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

Notes: WDNR provides support for fire prevention and control activities. Reviewed map showing “Dispatch Group and Fire Response Units” which shows that the northern portion of Barron County is in the “South Spooner” dispatch group, Bayfield County is divided between the Barnes, Brule, and Washburn dispatch group and the areas with USFS responsibility, and Ashland County is divided between the Mellen dispatch group and the areas with USFS responsibility, and Ashland County is divided between the Pattison, Barnes, Gordon, and Brule dispatch groups.

Fire control specialists are employed by DNR and available to assist on county forests. Fire trucks and associated fire-fighting equipment in excellent condition were evident throughout the audit.

County forest administrators and managers are aware of forest pest issues.

WDNR employs regional forest health specialists who are available to county and state personnel managing county forests within scope. They compile and distribute periodic forest health updates.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/foresthealth/publications.html> Lists and provides links to publications

<https://forestrynews.blogs.govdelivery.com/category/forest-health-news/> News releases and updates.

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
 Conforms
 Exceeds
 O.F.I.
 Minor NC
 Major NC

Notes: Reviewed documents including: 2018-2019 Reforestation Program Partner Meeting Summary; Strategic Plan 2019-2029 Wisconsin Forest Genetics Program, 2019 Distribution report; 2018 Reforestation Program Annual Report.

Confirmed information provided by the County Forestry Specialist:

“The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry operates a Tree Improvement Program in partnership with the University of Wisconsin, Madison to develop genetically improvement material for use and distribution through its State Nursery Program. Material is tested for adaptability prior to use in seed orchards. Seed collected from seed orchards is then sown in the State Nursery Program to produce seedlings and distributed.”

Reviewed <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/TreePlanting/treelImprovement.html> “The Wisconsin forest tree improvement program” and the program’s 2017 Nursery Report. The 2015 and 2016 reports were also provided.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

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

Auditors reviewed many roads in all four counties audited in 2019, and did not observe any road maintenance issues that were not already at least on informal plans to address. Considering the record amounts of rainfall during the past year the roads observed were in very good condition.

In 2018 the audit team had this finding: OFI 2018-01: There is an opportunity to improve road maintenance to ensure future compliance with Wisconsin BMPs. The Wisconsin BMPs for active roads (page 61) include:

“Inspect the road system at regular intervals, especially after heavy rainfall, to detect problems and schedule repairs; Keep traffic to a minimum during wet periods and spring breakup to reduce maintenance needs; Shape road surfaces periodically to maintain proper surface drainage. Fill in ruts and holes with gravel or compacted fill as soon as possible to reduce erosion potential.”

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

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

Notes: Confirmed in a sample of contracts in each county.

3.1.3 Monitoring of overall *best management practices* implementation.

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

Notes: County foresters all monitor all harvests and note any BMP issues in harvest inspection reports. For example, in Barron County, Tract 2-2018, Sale# 368 both the “Timber Sale Contractor Checklist, Pre-Sale Meeting” and the “Timber Sale Inspection” report describe attention paid to BMPs.

The BMP assessment on state and county lands conducted every five-years was completed in 2018 and will be published soon. Dave Kafura, Forest Hydrologist provided excerpts from the executive summary (county only):

“34 sales were evaluated for a combined 2604 AC. Of the 34, 10 were harvested under winter only conditions. Aspen was most dominant timber type ID’d (19 sites) with bottomland hardwood (2 sites) the least dominant timber type for the sales evaluated. All 34 sites had wetlands ID’d either in, adjacent or crossed in the timber sale. 23 sites had streams within, adjacent to, or forest road crossed to get to timber sale. 6 sales had lakes adjacent/within the sale boundary. 31 of 34 sales had a forest road system. 25 of 34 had active forest roads within or to gain access to the sale.

BMP Application Rate: 90.7% BMPs applied correctly. This compares to 2013 rate of 93%. 7.5% BMPs not applied where needed. Fuels, waste and spills, along with RMZ received the highest BMP application rate of 98.5%. Forest Roads received an 81.9% correct application rate.

BMP Effectiveness Rate: When BMPs were applied correctly we had a 99.9% protection of water quality. When BMPs were not applied correctly the teams observed an impact to water quality 71.6% of the time.”

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

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

Timber sale administration and monitoring of silviculture operations addresses water quality issues. See notes for Indicator 3.1.3 above.

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

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

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

Notes: Confirmed during field audits accurate mapping of rivers, streams, lakes, and other water bodies on timber sale maps. Sale/harvest unit boundaries are painted or designated in the field, indicating “no-go” locations such as sensitive soils, wetlands, and/or wetlands buffers.

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

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

Notes: All harvest sites reviewed had wetlands protections in place.

Timber Sale Notice & Cutting Report narrative (2460-001) includes a section “c. Water Quality Considerations”. Timber sale maps and contracts depict such plans, including locations of wetlands and wetland buffers (harvest unit/sale boundaries).

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: County foresters report (and sale notes and/or observations support) instructing contractors to stop working, stop taking biomass (leaving more on site for slash mats to run equipment on), or place more slash in front of harvesting equipment to reduce rutting.

Barron County: Due to an extended period of higher-than-normal rainfall the county forest administrator has halted logging work since the spring thaw.

Douglas County: Provisions are made to ensure that season of harvest restrictions are consistent with ground conditions.

Bayfield County: Ongoing harvests inspected were on suitable ground; on some sites harvesting had been suspended or altered due to heavy rainfall the night before the audit.

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



Objective 4 Conservation of Biological Diversity

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

Performance Measure 4.1

Program Participants shall conserve biological diversity. Indicators:

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

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

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

15-Year Comprehensive Forest Plans include consideration of the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan and the Conservation Opportunity Areas.

County forests are eligible for Wildlife Habitat Grants, which fund several eligible items: trail mowing, seeding, gates, scarification, road work, acquisition of key access points, labor, materials and contracting with other agencies.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: The "Narrative" portion of the Timber Sale Notice and Cutting Report" prepared for all sales includes section "e. Wildlife Considerations, including Snag, Den and Mast Tree Retention, Game Openings, and Comments".

The retention of stand level wildlife habitat elements observed included snags, green trees, and den trees. Retention of less-common but desirable species via no-harvest designation is a widely employed and successful technique, often including oak, white pine, tamarack, hemlock, and/or yellow birch. Clumped retention within larger Aspen clear-cut blocks included trees that were representative of the prior stand, including mature or maturing Aspen trees.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

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.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: Regional conservation planning is covered in each county's forest management plan.

Douglas County: Barrens Management Area (Douglas County Wildlife Area).

Bayfield County: Barrens Management Area.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notes: Barrens management work in the Northwest Sands is an exceptional program.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Successfully completed invasive control projects were observed at selected field sites including control of Spotted Knapweed at the Bayfield Barrens.

Records of chemical applications demonstrated that most counties are using chemical pesticides to treat invasive species.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: The silvicultural systems used are based in large part on the ecology of natural disturbances.

Prescribed fire is primarily used for wildlife management. Prescribed fire is rarely used for silvicultural purposes.

Discussed reasons, mostly time constraints and public perception/acceptance.

Performance Measure 4.2

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

4.2.1 Program to protect threatened and endangered species.

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

Notes: Barrens management work in the Northwest Sands is an exceptional program.

Counties work with other state, federal, and private agencies to identify and protect RTE species and FECVs; there are no old-growth forests.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

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

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

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

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

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Audit Notes: Such sites are tracked/mapped in WisFIRS database and also listed and described in management plans. Witnessed on Timber Sale Notice And Cutting Report 15. b. Ecological Considerations. The Barron County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan contains section 530.1 Areas High in Locally, Regionally and Nationally Significant Biodiversity Values". These include:

1. Rock Creek Felsenmeer
2. Pigeon Creek Peatlands - Contains several natural communities
 - a) Central Poor Fen, b) Northern Wet Forest, c) Northern Sedge meadow, d) Floodplain Forest, e) White Pine /Red Maple Swamp, and f) Pine Barrens
3. Land Legacy Areas: a) Blue Hills, b) Hay River, c) Upper Red Cedar River, d) Silver Creek Woods

530.1.2 Species Concentration Areas

1. Heron Rookeries
2. Bald Eagle nesting sites are scattered throughout the forest
3. Osprey Nesting sites are found in several compartments

530.2 Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Ecosystems

530.2.1 Natural origin Pine Relics

530.2.2 Pine Barrens

530.2.3 Geological Features

The Rock Creek Felsenmeer, Protected as a SNA

Recessional Moraine

530.2.4 Rare and Geographically Restricted Natural Communities

See 530.1(2) Pigeon Creek Peatlands

The other county forests audited have similar lists of special sites. Plans are developed as needed. SNA plans were reviewed or discussed.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: FECVs have been identified using the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory database, input from DNR Natural Heritage Conservation experts, and input from local experts and stakeholders. These areas have been identified and mapped, and observed for selected Counties in WisFIRS. Confirmed that foresters and biologists are aware of and use the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan and its Conservation Opportunity Areas in their planning and management.

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

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

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 evident and were confirmed during interviews at several levels. The State continues to write management plans for T&E species and make them available to County personnel, with emailed updates as needed. The State provides specialist support as needed and shares results of research as it is available. Counties also work in conjunction with other agencies, such as the USFS for additional research and field applications. WCFA, DNR, and individual counties also distribute research findings in the form of published articles, professional newsletters, and informal studies with county forest group members. Counties incorporate results into long-term and annual planning and into stand level management decisions.

Objective 5 *Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits*

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

Performance Measure 5.1

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

5.1.1 Program to address visual quality management.

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

Notes: County Forests Comprehensive Land Use Plans contain Chapter 520 Aesthetic Management Zone. County foresters are aware of the need to manage visual quality, and do so. Foresters are trained and are responsible for addressing visual quality in locations where sales are visible to the public.

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

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

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

Notes: Barron County: Foresters consult with managers of the Ice Age Trail prior to harvesting near the trail, and attempt to modify the harvest using retention to diversity the aesthetic impacts. The forest has been managed for many years, so that the locations of roads and landings were determined long ago, limiting the ability to adjust for aesthetic purposes. Most harvests are selection (northern hardwoods) or partial (oaks, although many oak stands are transitioning to northern hardwoods) and thus there is no need for visual buffers.

Ashland County; Douglas County: Completed timber harvests were confirmed to have minimal residual logging slash, cleaned landings, and sale layout and retention to soften visual impact. Partial harvesting is employed in stand types where it is feasible.

Bayfield County: Interviews with leaders of users' groups for hiking, XC skiing, and mountain bike trails confirmed efforts by foresters to accommodate trail uses and to attempt to minimize visual impacts. Hikers using the Northern Country Trail apparently are least tolerant of harvesting activity. One completed aspen harvest was reviewed and a portion of the trail was hiked to assess the visual impacts; foresters described how they adjusted sale layout to minimize impacts, including leaving visual buffers, uncut portions of stands, and avoidance of crossing trail.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: Barron County: Most harvests are selection (northern hardwoods) or partial (oaks, although many oak stands are transitioning to northern hardwoods). Aspen is managed using coppice clearcuts which regenerate rapidly. All aspen stands contain fewer than 50 acres, so the average clearcut size is far less than the 120-acre criterion.

Observations in Ashland County, Douglas County, and Bayfield County during extensive travel within county forest blocks were of largely contiguous forest cover, with clearcut blocks always smaller than the maximum allowed by this indicator.

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

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

Notes: 17.3 acres - 2018 average clear-cut size.

Information on acres clearcut and number of blocks was present on the timber sale notice (and thus is present in the WisFIRS database) for all sales selected for review.

From WDNR:

20.36 acres – 2017 average clear-cut size (19,852 acres / 975 patches)

18.04 acres – 2016 average clear-cut size

19.59 acres – 2015 average clear-cut size (23,903 acres / 1220 patches)

*Advanced timber sale report/export from WisFIRS (based on sales established during calendar year, with total even-aged acres divided by total number of even-aged patches.)”

Performance Measure 5.3

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notes: Review of records, including maps, for all sites visited confirmed a robust and detailed system for tracking harvest.

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

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

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

Notes: Observed 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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

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

Recreation trails are found in most major blocks of county forests. These trails are well-marked with information and route signs, often with distances to landmarks, at most intersections. Maps are available showing locations of trails and many other recreation opportunities.

Barron County: Forestry is separate from the Barron County Maintenance, Parks, and Recreation Department, and most recreation sites are not on the county forests. However, there is one campground, one ATV trail and one snowmobile trail on county forests. Also have two mountain bike trails, with ongoing efforts to expand them. Foresters consult with managers of the Ice Age Trail prior to harvesting near the trail, and attempt to modify the harvest using retention to diversity the aesthetic impacts. Reviewed map “Mikana Area County Forest Trails” and saw trailhead signs.

Ashland County: Recreation uses provided in Ashland County include Augustine Hunter Walking Trail-jointly funded walking bridge over Augustine Creek.

Douglas County: Evidence including trail maps, interviews, and observations of trail signs, trailheads, and some trails at field sites confirmed an extensive, high-quality recreation program.

Bayfield County maintains an exceptional number and diversity of trails. Interviews with leaders of users’ groups for hiking, XC skiing, and mountain bike trails confirmed efforts by foresters to accommodate trail uses, including trail expansions, relocations, and timber management practices designed to support or even enhance the recreational experience. The county’s recreation forester provides maps of proposed sale areas in advance of finalizing harvest. The Chequamegon Area Mountain Bike Association’s “Trail Guide and Area Map” and “Mountain Bike Trails: Cable, Seeley, Hayward Clusters” document the breadth of mountain biking trails, many on Bayfield County Forest land. Infrastructure supporting the trails is modern and well-designed and maintained. This includes trailhead and on-trail signs, parking areas, and a number of cabins, yurts, and buildings associated with trail grooming and maintenance. A significant portion of the world-class American Birkebeiner Cross Country Ski Event occurs annually on trails on the forest.



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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

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.

Sites are shown in layers within the WisFIRS database. Also confirmed documentation of review results on the Timber Sale Notice And Cutting Report 15. b. Ecological Considerations.

Barron County: Pipestone Quarry sites are protected, based on information provided by the Wisconsin Archeological and Historic Society. The WDNR Liaison Forester reviews this database and the Natural Heritage Inventory for each timber harvest and any other major projects.

The Barron County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan contains section 530.3 Culturally Significant Sites

Compartment 1 (Doyle unit) contains five sites listed on the National and State

Register of Historic Places as the Wajiwani Mashkode Archaeological District:

1. Mason-Anderson Site, 2. Renowned Quarry Site, Johnson Pipestone Quarry, 4. Barta Quarry Site, and 5. Newell Creek Quarry (BN-283).

530.4 Locally Significant Sites: deserted cabin (homestead) sites.

Douglas County: there are many special sites including "High Conservation Value Forest", State Natural Areas, and the Douglas County Wildlife Area which is associated with the Solon Springs Sharptail Barrens SNA. Reviewed forestry and management practices on a portion of the Erickson Creek Forest & Wetlands SNA.

Bayfield County: The forest management plan describes numerous locations where special sites are addressed. One example is the Glacial Kettles Special Management Area, which is designated within 15-year plan, mapped- set aside as non-managed and utilized for hiking.

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

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

Notes: Sites are shown in layers within the WisFIRS database. Also confirmed documentation of review results on the 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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: The DNR has a program that works to promote forest industry, with representatives stationed in different portions of the state.

Guidelines exist and are implemented to ensure retention of coarse woody debris. Foresters and loggers interviewed were aware of the guidelines.

Timber Sale Contracts include comprehensive utilization clauses and a logger training requirement. Utilization is monitored during timber sale administration. Foresters interviewed are knowledgeable of local markets and utilization specs. No utilization issues were identified during site visits.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: County Forestry Policies confirmed in Ashland, Douglas, and Bayfield County.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: Foresters and staff interviewed were familiar Chippewa treaty gathering rights.

Ashland County: Ashland County has had limited interaction with the Bad River tribe. The County has reached out at various times for opportunities to comment on a topic, with no response. There is some contact between the tribe and Ashland County due to some County owned land (non-CFL) located within the Reservation boundary. Miscellaneous forest product permits are available for gathering but are rarely sought after. No permits issued or requested.

Douglas County: "Regulating Gathering Rights on Douglas County Forest Lands Ordinance 7.3" is included in Appendix D-I of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Outreach on Bridge Construction for Recreational Trail. 1 permit issued in 2018 for Douglas County on 3/2/18 (Permit Attached)-Gathering rights-no fee.

Bayfield County: Memorandum of Understanding (MOA) with Red Cliff Bank of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians to purchase/exchange/trade former tribal lands from Bayfield County. (MOA attached)

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: NA: This requirement is not applicable.

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

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

Notes: NA: This requirement is not applicable.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

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

Relevant County ordinances are found in in Chapter 330 of County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plans, with full text found of the relevant ordinances found in Chapter 900. Reviewed these plans for the four counties audited in 2019.

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

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

Notes: Confirmed that timber sales contracts state requirements for legal compliance, either all laws or selected, named laws. Foresters receive training on applicable laws and regulations, including regular updates during the WCFA forest administrators' meetings.

Management system for all actions on forests (plans, investments in cultural activities, infrastructure upgrades, timber sales) involves foresters at various levels of management to review and approve. System of pre-activity meetings, monitoring, and closing review ensure compliance of harvesting and silviculture operations.

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

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

Notes: Interviews with Ashland County Administrator, Douglas County Administrator and Bayfield County Administrator confirm no reports of regulatory violations. No violations regarding FM activities. Birch bark theft. Recreational officer, increased patrols and have painted some of stems with red paint. Most thefts are on National Forest and absentee landowners. No violations within previous 12 months.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

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 are posted in DNR and County Forest Office Buildings. Observed human resources bulletin boards in the four 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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

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

Objective 10 Forestry Research, Science and Technology

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

Performance Measure 10.1

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

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

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

Notes: Minutes from the Wisconsin SFI Implementation Committee confirmed the following grant/recipients amounts for research: US Forest Service - Northern Research Station/\$16,560; UW-Madison - Forestry & Wildlife Ecology/\$11,000; UW-Stevens Point – CNR, Forestry/\$7,590.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: Review of records and reports from the state tree improvement program shows that there was no such research.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: Interviews with field foresters support conformance. Plans show the use of some of this information.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: Field foresters are aware of increasing temperatures and of more variability in precipitation amounts, but may not have access to the latest data. The monitoring is done at a higher level.

Interviews with Chris Hoffman Ashland County Administrator, and with Sara Stack, Ashland County DNR Liaison- Climate change topic during Tree Haven field facility for UWSP training-Tomahawk.

Steve Probst-Bayfield County Assistant Administrator-During interview with auditor (MF), expressed knowledge of general awareness and impacts to Northern Wisconsin weather and impacts to forestry.

Information from Jane Severt, Executive Director, WCFA: "WCFA continues to be engaged in climate change issues through correspondence with Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science (NIACS). Jason Homes, Bayfield County Forester, continues to represent Wisconsin's County Forests on Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) Forestry Working Group." Jason Homes was able to describe the subject in detail. Jane shares latest information with administration to convey back to staffs.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: Foresters interviewed were able to discuss wildlife impacts in general terms. Specialists are very well informed, with DNR biologists doing some of the research.



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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: The commitment to the SFI 2015-2019 Standard is communicated throughout the organization via the Wisconsin DNR – Public Lands Handbook pages 290-11 through 290-13 and the County Comprehensive Land Use Plans in Section 325. In addition, some county plans provide reference to the county resolution that authorized the commitment. Vilas County page 300-5 to 6.

Information from Jane Severt, Executive Director, WCFA: “WCFA’s Legislative/Forest Certification Committee continues to meet on a regular basis and forest certification issues are also discussed during quarterly conference calls of the county forest administrators.”

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

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

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

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

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

Notes: Training records for selected staff (8) were reviewed. Records show a range of training, regularly completed.

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

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

Notes: Loggers are required to complete FISTA training, per contracts at all four counties visited. Sites visited were harvested by qualified logging professionals. Chemical applicators are required to complete state applicator training. Checked a sample of harvests to confirm that harvesting contractors have the Wisconsin-approved training. Barron Aspen Buckthorn Sale #368: Mark Halvorson’s Online SFI Certification Status and Training Record lists the dates and types of training. Similar information was reviewed in the other three counties.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

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

- Barron County: Tract 2-2018
- Ashland County: several
- Douglas County: Sale 4231 Tract #57-14
- Bayfield County: Tract 60-14

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: WCFA and DNR both participate in the Wisconsin SFI Implementation Committee (SIC). Individual county forest group members all belong to WCFA. WCFA's Executive Director or designee and DNR's Forest Certification Coordinator (Mark Heyde) regularly attend SIC meetings. Participation by personnel from the Wisconsin County Forests Association and WDNR in the quarterly meetings was confirmed by review of meeting minutes.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: Continuing education is required annually by Forest Industry Safety and Training Alliance, Inc. (FISTA). Website <https://www.fistausa.org/fista/default.asp> lists a range of core and continuing education courses in many subject areas.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: WCFA and DNR both participate in the Wisconsin SFI Implementation Committee (SIC). Individual county forest group members all belong to WCFA. WCFA's Executive Director or designee and DNR's Forest Certification Coordinator (Mark Heyde) regularly attend SIC meetings. Participation by personnel from the Wisconsin County Forests Association and WDNR in the quarterly meetings was confirmed by review of meeting minutes.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: Participation by personnel from the Wisconsin County Forests Association and WDNR in the quarterly meetings was confirmed by review of meeting minutes.

WCFA contributes to organizations SIC provides funding to: WCFA gives \$1,000 per year to Trees For Tomorrow (TFT) to be used for scholarship to attendees of TFT's Natural Resource Careers Workshop; and WCFA is a partner in Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership (WYFP); we have been part of this group from the beginning.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

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

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: The WDNR and individual counties continue to purchase land to add to the Wisconsin County Forest System, using Wisconsin's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program. Since 2010 over 26,000 acres have been added to the system using this funding source. There is a state budget line item of \$5 million for this purpose for each of the next two years.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

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

One notable example is the agreement with the Environmental Education Program of the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point. The list of educational activities since July 2018 (one-year period) totals 7 pages including activities by staff (mostly foresters) from 14 counties and from WCFA.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: DNR and county representatives attend SFI Implementation Committee meetings.

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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: The WI SFI SIC has a toll-free number for reporting inconsistent practices.

Each county tracks complaints received and responses to them. Interviews with staff, board members, and stakeholders confirmed that county forest administrators and foresters work regularly with citizens in formal and informal settings to ensure that the public's concerns are understood and are addressed to the extent possible.

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.

Exceeds the requirements for Performance Measure 13.1:

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

Indicators:

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

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

Notes: Exceeds the requirements (see statement below Performance Measure 13.1).

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

Letter from Jane Severt, Executive Director, Wisconsin County Forests Association dated August 5, 2019 describes the activities of the organization in many areas, including involvement in public land planning and in policy issues affecting all lands.

Several Wisconsin Counties have signed agreements with WDNR to accomplish work on national forests under the Good Neighbor Authority.

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

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

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

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

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

Notes: Exceeds the requirements (see statement below Performance Measure 13.1).

The approach taken is described in the Douglas County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Section 210 Cooperation: "The policy in dealing with other public agencies, non-profit organizations, private individuals, and public utilities is to meet the obligations of the Douglas County to the public in accordance with s.28.11 Wis. Stats. while maintaining the best interests of the County. Unless otherwise delegated to the Director of Forestry and Natural Resources, all considerations for special cooperation will be brought before the FPRC."

Interviews with county and DNR staff and with stakeholders and review of documents confirmed that the Wisconsin County Forest Program maintains a high level of contact with local stakeholders over forest management issues through state, federal and individual collaboration. Wisconsin County Forest Program, supported by the Wisconsin County Forests Association, maintains an exceptional level of contact with local stakeholders over forest management issues involving state, federal and individual collaboration working through an extraordinary number of initiatives, committees, and environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS).

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

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

Ashland and Bayfield: Business cards and emails have survey link for comments.

Barron County: Notification of adjoining landowners regarding pesticide application.



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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: Audit reports are posted on the DNR web site: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/TimberSales/countyForests.html>

Confirm reports from the most recent recertification audit are posted on the SFI Inc. website (www.sfiprogram.org)

Summary report from NSF includes all of the required items listed above.

Performance Measure 14.2

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

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

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

Notes: From: Hamilton, Rachel, SFI; Sent: Tuesday, July 30, 2019 10:17 AM; Subject: RE: SFI Reporting:

Yes, we received their annual surveys.

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

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

Notes: The WisFIRS system tracks harvest information. Other systems are used to track contributions. Each year information in each county is compiled and reported, as described in each county forest plan. All documents requested were readily available.

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

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

Notes: Annual SFI Progress Reports for Wisconsin are retained electronically by the DNR Certification Specialist. Annual audit reports are available on the DNR's website at: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/TimberSales/documents/WisconsinCountySFI-2018.pdf>



Objective 15 Management Review and Continual Improvement

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

Performance Measure 15.1

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

Indicators:

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

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

Notes: "Ashland County prepares an annual accomplishment report that is shared with the County Board, and the County Forest Liaison and a copy is available at the Court House and the County Forest Office."

Annual Wisconsin DNR / Barron County Forestry Department Partnership Meeting: September 24, 2018.

Annual Partnership Meeting with Bayfield County Forestry and Parks: September 4th and 6th, 2018.

2018 Douglas County Forest and WDNR Annual Partnership Meeting.

County Forest/ DNR Partnership Report FY2018 Ashland County Forest.

The County Forest program conducts periodic internal audits to determine compliance with the County Forest Law, the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan (15 Yr. Plan), and Forest Certification standards. These are supplemented by partnership meetings and by regular review of activities conducted by the Wisconsin DNR Liaison Forester assigned to each county. Each county undergoes an administrative audit every three years.

Intensive county audits are conducted by Wisconsin DNR staff specialists on a rotating basis, on a 3-year cycle and recorded on the "County Forest Internal SFI Audit Checklist".

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

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

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

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

Notes: There are quarterly meetings involving participants in the program, including representatives of the county forests, the DNR, and WCFA.

Partnership Minutes (aka "Annual Integrated Planning Meeting") for each of the four counties from the 2017 and 2018 Partnership Meetings reflect a review and discussions among leadership of the county's programs and the supportive WDNR program. Topics covered (Note: not all topics are covered in every meeting) in these annual meetings may include: SFI Certification and Internal Audits with findings and progress on addressing these; "CARS & OFI/Observations (both SFI & FSC) from prior audits that may require attention and other potential issues"; Time Standards; Timber Sale Establishment; Recon; Site Preparation/Reforestation; Invasive Control; Wildlife Projects and Funds; Roads, Trails, Boundaries (surveys) and other Infrastructure; staffing changes including new or relocated personnel; training needs and opportunities. Reviewed the 2018 "Partnership Minutes" for all four counties.

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



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 Conforms Exceeds O.F.I. Minor NC Major NC

Notes: Reviewed the agenda and minutes from the "County Forest – Sr. Management Annual Certification Review" that was held on July 30, 2019 at the Division of Forestry Headquarters, Rhinelander. Interviews of several of the participants confirmed the 2019 annual review.

(End SFI Forest Management Checklist)

Appendix 4

Site Visit Notes

Date: 6 August 6 2019 Auditors: Mike Ferrucci, Stefan Bergman, and Shannon Wilks	
FMU / location / sites visited	Activities / notes
DNR office, Ashland, Wisconsin Program-wide Opening Meeting	Introductions, client update, review scope of evaluation, audit plan, intro/update to FSC and SCS standards, confidentiality and public summary, conformance evaluation methods and review of open CARs/OBS, emergency and security procedures for evaluation team, reviewed audit itinerary.

FMU: Barron County Forest Date: 6 August 2019 Auditor: Mike Ferrucci	
Location/ sites visited	Activities / notes
Drive from Ashland to Barron County	Topic discussed: overview of FMU's forest and land management programs; review of training; discussion of procedures; and review of site selections.
Site 1: Recreation site (lunch location)	Roadside picnic and fishing area at small pond. The site is well-designed and maintained.
Site 2: Goose Lake Access Road	Permanent county forest access road with gate, which is locked during deer hunting season and at other times when conditions are wet. Road is located at top of an esker that winds past and close to several kettle ponds and wetland depressions. Drainage provisions are generally working well, although more gravel is needed in places to fill wheel ruts and create a crowned profile. No resource damage is apparent, despite an extended period of rainfall amounts well above average and a major rainstorm the previous day.
Site 3: Upgraded logging access spur road from Goose Lake Access Road	Road improvements that do not meet BMPs and WDNR's expectations for repairs by timber buyer: The buyer's road contractor brushed out and regraded an existing access road spur. The road was cut below grade and through hills without providing relief options for water accumulation. The sale administrator plans to request that the buyer to rework the crossing per DNR recommendation.
Site 4: Tract 2-2018, Sale 368, Culvert Deer Stand Sale	72-acre sale, sold but uncut with 2 blocks: 22-acre marked thinning of hardwood stand and 50-acre aspen coppice regeneration prescription. Reviewed documentation and discussed methods used to develop, review, and finalize prescriptions, including the partnership meeting, sale layout, marking, and how Green Tree Retention will be implemented in the stand. Heritage database search printout was also reviewed and discussed. Contract provisions include requirements for use of BMPs, good utilization, FISTA-trained logger, seasonal restrictions, and criteria for rutting and disturbance. Hardwood stand marking observed to be consistent with silvicultural guidelines, including order of removal and creation of canopy gaps.
Site 5: Aspen Buckthorn Sale Tract 5-2018 Aspen Buckthorn Sale 371	Completed aspen coppice regeneration harvest with buckthorn control. Portions of the harvest area had pre-harvest herbicide treatment of dense understory buckthorn. The treatment plan was to treat a 50-foot-wide strip 25 feet on each side of the existing loop trail. The treatment was successful, with buckthorn only found as scattered sprouts outside the treatment area. Aspen regeneration is present throughout the sale area. A neighbor who has a handicapped access permit for his ATV stated that "the work really changed my world here, but I suppose it is for the best."



Site 6: Completed Selection Harvest	Completed selection harvest: discussed options for silviculture in northern hardwood stands; and reviewed results of selection harvest with canopy gaps of various sizes. All aspen was cut, creating most of the gaps.
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FMU: Ashland County Date: 6 August 2019 Auditors: Stefan Bergmann & Shannon Wilks	
Location/ sites visited	Activities/ notes
FME office, Ashland County	FSC & SFI opening meetings: introductions, client update, review scope of evaluation, audit plan, intro/update to FSC and SCS standards, confidentiality and public summary, conformance evaluation methods and tools review of open CARs/OBS, and emergency and security procedures for evaluation team
Site 7: Tract 10-15, Sale 1005	<p>Active northern hardwood shelterwood operation with cut-to-length processor working. Logger verified to be FISTA trained and demonstrated knowledge of safe operation of equipment, use of PPE, and BMPs. Presence of spill kit onsite verified; operator demonstrated knowledge of how to properly clean up spills and the reportable quantity. Fire extinguishers and other fire suppression tools onsite; processor has a fire suppression system. Operator is not CPR trained, but First-Aid kits are present and there have been no jobsite injuries. FME forester monitors sale activity 2-4 times per week. FME scales all saw logs at landing. No residual damage observed.</p> <p>Goal for sale is to maintain NH component based on sandy soil types. Treatment is to harvest all trees except cedar, hemlock, pine, and white spruce, as well as those marked with green paint. Green-painted trees were largely yellow birch retained for wildlife habitat (e.g., cavity and mast trees). FME's guidelines are for an average of 3 retention trees per acre for each sale. FME uses Wisconsin Forest Inventory and Reporting System (WisFIRS) in forest planning to track stands and activities.</p>
Site 8: Tract 1-17, Sale 1017	<p>Completed sale harvested in winter 2018. Stand split into 2 units with 45-acre OSR and 14-acre uneven aged stands with canopy gaps. Prescription called for harvesting mixed hardwood, balsam fir, and basswood pulp, as well as hard maple, basswood, and mixed hardwood logs. No cedar, hemlock, pine, or white spruce to be cut, nor any tree marked with green paint. Onsite observations matched prescription. No residual damage observed. 100-ft no cut RMZ established for Augustine Creek at the back of the unit.</p> <p>Roads seeded with winter rye and clover for wildlife and erosion control; seeding was locally sourced from Ashland and certified as being free of noxious weeds. Observed haul road on a slight hill with slash and debris; while it had no water bars, there was no evidence of erosion or historical issues of erosion, likely from the slash and debris embedded in the soil. FME staff stated that a berm will be installed at the road entrance to minimize the chance of vehicle use.</p>
Site 9: Augustine Hunter Walking Trail	Walking trail is maintained by the county for hunters. The trail is along an old logging road, which is protected by a locked gate to minimize the chance of vehicles. There are 6 such trails in county. Ashland County, DNR, and Ruffed Grouse Society jointly built a walking bridge over Augustine Creek in 2015; the wood bridge is in excellent condition and shows no sign of erosion. Wisconsin has a "Berry Picker Law" that means the county is immune from liability for the recreational use of county lands by the public. The county's recreation officer is a deputy sheriff, which has helped when there have been issues such as people cutting or going around gates.
Site 10: Tract 5-15, Sale 1000	77-acre aspen coppice sale completed in 2016. Retention trees left, including all spruce, hemlock, cedar, pine, and oak. Next scheduled entry is at 45 years. Observed abundant regeneration. Access road seeded with clover, which was well established. Large boulders were installed to block access. The stand includes a tag alder management shearing project



	for woodcock habitat; these projects are in non-managed lowland sites. Bobcat with Fecon mulching head used for the tag alder; goal is to establish 0.5-acre strips every 5 years to facilitate conditions that woodcock require.
Site 11: Tract 1-18, Sale 1027	Uncut sale originally planned in 2004. Planned for individual tree selection of northern hardwoods for saw logs. Trees marked in orange paint for removal. Goal is to promote a future stand of quality hardwood. Canopy gaps installed during last harvest around pockets of oak (primarily red oak). Observed regeneration of oak, maple, and birch in gaps. FME's basal area check confirmed 120-ft ² . New groups of 30-60 ft. in diameter will be established; existing groups from previous harvest will be expanded to provide additional light and a multi age class structure. Deer population not an issue in this area for regeneration. Boulders have been installed on the main haul road that will be used for the sale; they will be reinstalled after the sale is completed.

Date: 7 August 2019	
Auditors: Mike Ferrucci, Stefan Bergman, and Shannon Wilks	
FMU / location / sites visited	Activities / notes
FME office, Douglas County opening meeting	Overview of Douglas County's forest and land management programs; review of training, CoC, and pesticide use records; discussion of climate issues and CFI inventory; and final site selection.

FMU: Douglas County Forest	
Date: 7 August 2019	
Auditors: Mike Ferrucci, Stefan Bergmann, and Shannon Wilks	
Location/ sites visited	Activities / notes
Site 12: Hungry Bear Trail County Forest Road	This well-designed and maintained county forest road meets BMPs for a permanent forest road. The road is crowned and surfaced with sufficient gravel to protect the road, allowing for a good running surface and facilitating regular grading. Most of the vegetation on the road shoulder is herbaceous or grassy, evidence of regular mowing to prevent encroachment of woody vegetation.
Site 13: Cut-a-way Logging Dam	Originally established in 1905 as a walking bridge across the St. Croix River. Replaced 10 years ago for recreational trail; constructed of metal beams, metal railing, and concrete decking. County consulted Native Americans due to historical use of area for gathering of wild rice. Permit for construction contained hibernaculum consideration for northern water snakes. Observation of people in kayaks using waterway for recreation.
Site 14: Trail 7, snowmobile trail	Observed trail utilized for snowmobile and winter ATV/UTV recreation that goes through Popple Island Timber Sale (see Site 15). No issues.
Site 15: Tract 52-18, Sale 4459, Popple Island Timber Sale	179-acre uncut sale consisting of 2 stands; observation of stand 2 (aspen coppice) and lowland area of HCVF cedar swamp (called Lower Ox Lake Conifer Swamp). Timber sale planned for all trees except designated leave species—oaks, birch, etc. Black ash/balsam fir dominant stand to develop from sprouts over a 45 to 50-year horizon. Cedar legacy trees planned for retention as designated leave trees or located in reserved stand; county defines legacy trees as older representative species without regard to economic value. These trees are captured within WisFIRS by tree/acre/species. Objective on this site to protect cedars. This frozen ground harvest was purchased by a FISTA-trained logger. 120-ft no-entry RMZ red painted along St Croix River. Planned deer fence from SF Sustainable Forestry Grant through DNR for 30 acres to establish regeneration of cedar. Since this is a popular recreation area, in response to public concerns about impacts to the recreation trail the



	operation will use spur roads instead of the main trail as much as possible; "caution" signage will be posted onsite to warn of the active logging, and the county will speak with the snowmobile club prior to commencing activity. The invasive spotted knapweed is onsite, which the county monitors.
Site 16: Tract 14-18, Sale 4418, Snare Timber Sale	40-acre harvest with aerial seeding in spring 2019. Pockets of white pine residual left. Seeded 16 acres with white pine. Regen monitoring planned for 3 and 5 years. Updates to WisFIRS based on results. Process also used for follow-up prescriptions by designation in WisFIRS.
Site 17: Tract 61-15, Sale 4298, Spring Creek Aspen Timber Sale	Completed 44-acre aspen coppice harvest with small amount of jack pine and balsam fir. Part of stand blew down in 2011. Sale prepped in fall of 2015, with remnants painted and used to diversify age class. Western edge is Spring Creek with RMZ reserved, verified marking with red boundary paint. Two wetland areas also protected from harvest. Sandy all-season ground. Retained group of aspen and white pines around lowland area.
Site 18, Douglas County Wildlife Area, clubhouse	40-acre special use site (clubhouse). Rented to the public by Douglas County. Established in 1925 for United Field Trialers Association. Facility built around 1935. Lease agreement and funding provided by taxes on sporting goods/ammunition. Facility maintained from revenues. Uses by field trialers, horseback riders, blueberry pickers, and Friends of the Bird Sanctuary stakeholder group, though it is available to anyone from the public. Interviewed stakeholder representing ATV-motorized recreation trail association.
Site 19: Rolling Barrens Management Area	Semi-forested land surrounding clubhouse (Site 18) under long-term lease to state, but it is managed collaboratively between the county and state. Maintained by prescribed fire for sharp-tailed grouse, sand warblers, and other pine barren bird species. Friends of bird sanctuary group provides input and education; the group is in the process of buying a historic WDNR fire tower in the Rolling Barrens landscape, which will be rented out for recreation.

FMU: Douglas County Forest	
Date: 7 August 2019	
Auditors: Mike Ferrucci and Shannon Wilks	
Location/ sites visited	Activities / notes
Site 20: Tract 09-18, Sale 4416, Tommy G	134-acre timber sale not finalized. Harvested whole tree chips. DNR establishment goal: northern hardwood with 45-year old aspen stand. Sale is 80% frozen ground harvest. 5 acres marked as single tree selection with canopy gaps. Contractor installed new road for access on higher ground. Observed black spruce harvest. Observed open area maintained for wildlife. Buffer strip of timber maintained to minimize aspen regeneration. Habitat present for deer, bear, turkey, golden warbler, woodcock, and other species. Observed stand of single tree selection of northern hardwoods. Exemplified diversity of tract created through harvest.
Site 21: Ericson Creek Cut Across County Forest Road	This well-designed and maintained forest road meets BMPs for a permanent forest road. The road is crowned and surfaced with sufficient gravel to protect the road, allowing for a good running surface and facilitating regular grading. Most of the vegetation on the road shoulders is herbaceous or grassy, evidence of regular mowing to prevent encroachment of wood vegetation.
Site 22: Ericson Creek County Forest Road	Road meets BMPs for permanent forest road. Refer to notes for Site 22 above, all of which apply to this road as well.



Site 23: Wildlife openings along the Ericson Creek County Forest Road	Permanent wildlife openings maintained by DNR Wildlife Division
Site 24: Tract 06-17, Sale 4357, Ericson Aspen Timber Sale	101-acre sale closed June 2019. Objective to naturally regenerate stand of mature aspen. Wildlife opening mowed on 5-year cycle with surrounding uncut buffer. Contractor utilized cut-to-length harvesting system. Observed stand of red pine with aspen and oak slash used for skid trails in low areas. Some evidence of rutting but no violations of BMP guidelines or evidence of soil erosion. Observed aspen coppice regeneration. Sale area within Ericson Creek SNA boundary and Northwest Lowlands Bog Conservation Opportunity Area. Species retention of legacy species of oak, yellow birch, red, and white pine observed.
Site 25: Fred Bear Ridge County Forest Road	Road meets BMPs for permanent forest road. Refer to notes for Site 21 above, all of which apply to this road as well.
Site 26: Nanuug County Forest Road	Road meets BMPs for permanent forest road. Refer to notes for Site 21 above, all of which apply to this road as well.
Site 27: Recently built logging spur road	Crowned and prepped for harvesting operations. Road was cleared, grubbed, crowned, ditched, and gravelled. A good road with all BMPs covered. This road will be closed after harvesting operations.
Site 28: Tract 32-18, Sale 4438 New Nack Timber Sale	Red-painted sale boundary. Oak wilt restriction applicable: no harvesting from 15 April to 15 July. Seed tree harvest of 20 BA of leave trees in oak areas and 50 BA in maple areas. Primary function for 20 BA area is seed source, green tree retention, and habitat structures. Observed yellow birch marked with green paint. Observed regeneration of oak and maple in understory. Goal is to open stand and allow for oak and birch regeneration with sugar maple composition. Planned 3 and 5-year regeneration checks after harvest. Good example of northern hardwood management for desired species.

FMU: Douglas County Forest	
Date: 7 August 2019	
Auditor: Stefan Bergmann	
Location/ sites visited	Activities / notes
Site 29: Tract 55-16, Sale 4353, Moose Mayhem Timber Sale	Completed 94-acre coppice harvest along Ole Larson County Forest Road. Whole tree harvesting operation. Products produced included clean wood chips. Aesthetics were a consideration because of the unit's proximity to a public road, so residual trees included white oak from the overstory. 0.25-acre Green Tree Retention islands created. NHI database query picked up a federally-protected bird in the unit, but no nests were identified on the ground or in the database. 100-ft no-cut RMZ for Moose Creek was verified, the boundary marked with red paint.
Site 30: Tract 07-15, Sale 4250, The Waiting Game Timber Sale	Even-age 32-acre harvest of aspen stand completed two years prior and located next to the impoundment for the Jackson Box Flowage. Silvicultural goal is to naturally regenerate a mature mixed stand of white birch, fir, aspen, and red maple. The earthen dam creating the flowage was first constructed in the late 1960's and underwent a significant repair in the fall of 2009. The dam does not meet the height specifications or hazard rating to require State mandated inspections. However, the County continues to inspect the dam. Last inspection was completed in 2004. This is one of 7 water control structures on the county forest. There is discussion about removing the dam because of the ongoing cost of inspections and maintenance. The area is designated as a ruffed grouse special management area (one of 3 on the county forest), called Empire Swamp Grouse Management Area. The goal for aspen management for grouse is to coppice stands 10 years apart so that in any one area there are



	3 to 5 age classes, which the grouse requires. Additionally, migratory bird species require the young forests that clear cutting produces.
Site 31: Main haul road	Class 2 county forest road accessing active operation (see Site 32) is gated with a lock and is closed to public motorized recreational access; signage present. The dirt road was muddy and rutted because of the wet conditions; no hauling has yet occurred, so the rutting is limited primarily to pickup trucks. There is no risk of sedimentation to water bodies. The forester explained that the road would be repaired following harvesting. It will be considered for motorized recreational access opening to the public after resting for two years and carefully monitored. The county has a goal of increasing open motorized road access for the public in this forest block, and this road would open several miles of access.
Site 32: Tract 24-17, Sale 4385, Sweet Dreams	114-acre even-age seed tree harvest marked at 10 to 20 BA. Leaving scattered oak, as well as large red and white pine as legacy trees. Also left small understory oak. Cut all ironwood. Boundary of unit painted red. Oak regen prolific. The goal is to overwhelm the deer with browse in order to protect the regen. The small producer has a modern cut-to-length system with low-profile, low-impact tires producing just 14 psi. No residual damage observed. Interviewed logger; verified that FISTA trained and highly experienced with processor. Spill kit, fire extinguishers, First-Aid kits, firefighting equipment, and appropriate PPE found onsite. Logger running on thick layer of slash on trails to minimize impact to soil. Products produced include pulp, logs, and material for timber mats. County forester visits 2-3 times per week. Verified presence of haul tickets with appropriate FSC claim, as well as lockbox.
Site 33: Tract 59-18, Sale 4454, Town Road F Timber Sale	64-acre even-age coppice regeneration harvest, active operation. Silvicultural goals are to regenerate scrub oak and aspen. Sandy soil, so water is not an issue. No Green Tree Retention to maximize regeneration potential of target species in full sunlight. Interviewed logger; verified that FISTA trained. Spill kit, fire extinguishers, First-Aid kits, firefighting equipment, and appropriate PPE found onsite. All heavy equipment observed was quite old, although no leaks were observed.

FMU: Bayfield County Forest	
Date: 8 August 2019	
Auditor: Shannon Wilks	
Location/ sites visited	Activities / notes
Site 34: Tract 28-18, Sale 3526-B-18	105-acre active sale-mixed oak and aspen. Contractor purchased in 2018. FISTA training records maintained at office. Observed Green Tree Retention islands, snags and downed trees (used for grouse/drumming logs). 2 units in stand; 94 years of age. Initial recon found oak dying and mature aspen. Best management option is seed tree, with goal of leaving 3 to 10 BA. Leave red pine/white pine. Mark with purple paint scrub oak (northern pin oak/black oak) to leave. Site index 45-50. Natural stand of red pine to leave (rare in this area). Western boundary is adjacent to private landowner, observed painted blue. Notices are sent for FM activity to neighboring private landowners. Logging road will be closed after harvesting operations to vehicle traffic; only snowmobile and ATV traffic use will be allowed.
Site 35: Tract 34-16, Sale 3426-B-16	18-acre red pine plantation, even-age management (third thin). Contractor completed in December 2017. Plan is 97 BA residual. BA checks confirmed 100 and 90 BA on 2 random samples. Wildlife habitat improved by thinning. Food source/cover developing for deer and bear. Ground conditions matched FM plan.
Site 36: Glacial Kettles Special Management Area	376-acre Special Management Area. As glaciers retracted, melting left massive potholes. LiDAR used for recon of land without canopy and maps ground. Designated and mapped in 15-year plan; set aside as non-managed and utilized for hiking.



Site 37: Tract 01-19, Sale 3556-A-19, Unit 1	85 acres divided into 3 units (see Sites 38 and 39). At active site, observed red and white pine left for Green Tree Retention. Dead tree and snag retention. Minimal damage to residual stand.
Site 38: Tract 01-19, Sale 3556-A-19, Unit 2	Aspen coppice with small diameter oaks reserved. Equipment harvesting in process. No BMP issues observed.
Site 39: Tract 01-19, Sale 3556-A-19, Unit 3	Harvest cut with marked trees and conifers left as residual. Left retention island of aspen and oak. Observation of woody slash scattered throughout stand. No issues observed.
Site 40: Tract 08-18, Sale 3505-A-18	47-acre aspen mixed hardwood completed harvest. Observed 2 retention islands and grouse drumming logs. RMZ with 250-ft buffer due to slope/topography. Observed rock on haul road. No BMP issues. Road will be closed to all traffic except snowmobiles.
Site 41: Tract 27-14, Sale 3317-A-15	80-acre aspen coppice harvest. MOA with Red Cliff Band of Chippewa. Tribe has requested county to get permit for timber harvesting, as well as a 50-ft buffer along road. Tribe is interested in acquiring properties within their original boundary. County will cooperate with tribe regarding sale. Backside of sale area tribe acquired 80 acres from county post-harvest. Connection with water specific to tribe.

FMU: Bayfield County Forest Date: 8 August 2019 Auditor: Mike Ferrucci and Stefan Bergmann	
Bayfield County Forest Sites visited	Activities / notes
Site 42: #47-17	Active North End Oak sale in a block that has many heavily-used recreation trail. Red oak, aspen and northern hardwoods. Combination of red oak thinning and aspen coppice. 277 acres. Sold in May 2018. Ashland Mat. Actively being harvested (starting July 2019). Lead Forester(s): Jason Holmes and Mike Amman. Notes: significant recreational component within the sale, including the American Birkebeiner, CAMBA single track mountain bike and North End Ski Club trails; also, some examples of BMP's for water quality. Large sale that was designed to minimize impacts to the intensive rec component.
Site 43: Cable Rustic Yurt	Visited the Cable Rustic Yurt and discussion on various recreational opportunities on the county forest
Site 44: Ojibwe Mountain Bike Trail	A 10.5-mile-deep woods, single track mountain bike trail maintained by CAMBA. This trail is classified as intermediate "with narrow and technical sections".
Site 45: North End Trailhead and Warming Hut	Trailhead signs, gate, parking, warming cabin, and other infrastructure for trail use and maintenance. Recreation Stakeholders Ron Bergin, Executive Director for CAMBA and North End Ski Club and Ben Popp, Executive Director, American Birkebeiner Ski Foundations. Discussion regarding various non-motorized recreational trails within the Cable block and the cooperative arrangements between the clubs and the Bayfield County Forestry Department. The department was praised for being open, accessible, providing advance notice of potential harvests and a willingness to adjust harvesting to minimize impacts or to improve trail conditions.
Site 46: Town Road Aid Project	A portion of the road was maintained, in part, with county funds as per our County Forest Town Road Aid program (appropriates 2% of net timber sale revenue towards eligible town road repair projects). On average, \$80,000 per year is allocated for various town road projects (this is in addition to the mandated 10% stumpage revenue sharing payments).
Site 47: Deer Exclusion Fence	On route to Stop 5 briefly saw portion of 6,300 feet of fence installed to protect 22 acres of completed red oak shelterwood and 10 acres of white pine seed tree harvest, with adjacent unfenced control areas. Discussion was <i>incorporated as part of other designated stops</i> .



Site 48: Sale 40-12	Red Oak, northern hardwoods and white pine. Combination of red oak and hardwood thinning (with gaps) and white pine shelterwood. 136 acres. Sold in November 2012. Dane Amundson Logging. Completed November 2015, with significant deer browse damage to seedlings observed. Poly fence was installed in 2017 to exclude deer from many of the canopy gaps. Regeneration survey data comparing number of seedlings and their height show that there are far more desirable seedlings in the 5 to 10 foot and the 10 foot and taller height classes in the fenced gaps, and more undesirable (hornbeam) trees in the unfenced areas.
Site 49: Sale 39-17	Active harvest (starting in July 2019) by Fornengo Forest Products in a 136 acres Red Pine stand, with some aspen clones being cut and regenerated.
Site 50: Primary System Road	Main access to sale 39-17 is a well-maintained primary system road.
Site 51: Sale 60-14.	Red and white Pine (natural stand). Even aged management. 99 acres. Sold in May 2015. Ted Strzok Logging. Completed June 2017. Site was trenched in 2016, treated chemically in 2017 and planted with red pine in 2018. Discussed regeneration monitoring of planted sites and impacts of deer browse
Site 52 Knapweed control on primary system roads	42 miles of roads were treated to control spotted knapweed. Sprayed twice, then mowed, then released biocontrol beetles.
Site 53: Town Road Aid Project	More examples of local road maintenance supported by funds from the county forest.
Site 54 Barnes Barrens	Barnes Barrens Management Area. Special Management Area. Discussion including the Barnes Barrens, including prescribed burning, core area management (1,000 acre, permanently open grass/low shrub), spotted knapweed control and wildlife. Discussion will center around barrens management, including the control of invasive species and the importance of barrens habitat for wildlife. Includes example of large SNA; the use of chemical to control invasive species; and the use of fire to create/maintain habitat.
Site 55: Existing and New Roads, Barnes Barrens Core Area	Primary System Roads and a new road for the Barnes Barrens Core Area Discussion regarding the development of the core area, with an emphasis on construction of a new road to service the core area of the rolling barrens management system. Existing primary roads were also viewed. These are well designed, built, and maintained. Road technician has developed methods to maintain stable roads in very coarse sand by retaining organic matter in the road surface to ensure growth of some grass to hold roads together.
Site 56: Sale 15-16	Timber Sale 15-16: Completed regeneration harvest of a 42-acre Aspen and scrub oak/mixed hardwood stand. Sold in May 2016 to Fornengo Forest Products and completed in May 2017. North Country Trail runs along northern boundary) and wildlife considerations (grouse trees/drumming logs).
Site 57: North Country Trail	Walked 0.4 mile of the North Country Trail including portions in young timber and portions adjacent to Sale 15-16. Trail is in good condition but appears to receive very little use. Discussed methods used to buffer visual impacts of the clearcut, including design to avoid crossing, retention of uncut blocks, and sale shape.

Date: 8 August 6 2019	
Auditors: Mike Ferrucci, Stefan Bergman, and Shannon Wilks	
FMU / location / sites visited	Activities / notes
Brule River State Forest ski warming shelter, Wisconsin Program-wide Closing Meeting	Closing meeting: review preliminary findings (potential non-conformities and observations) and discuss next steps in report preparation.

**Appendix 5****Wisconsin County Forest Certification Audit Meeting Attendance****Opening Meeting – August 6, 2019, Ashland, WI**

Mike Ferrucci	NSF Lead Auditor
Stefan Bergmann	SCS Lead Auditor
Shannon Wilks	NSF/SCS Team Auditor
Gary Zimmer	WCFA Assistant Executive Director
Chris Hoffman	Ashland County Forest Administrator
John Cisek	Baron County Forest Administrator
Jason Bodine	Bayfield County Forestry and Parks Administrator
Jon Harris	Douglas County Director of Forestry & Natural Resources
Craig Golembiewski	Douglas County Forest Management Supervisor
Ben Broquard	Forest County Assistant Forest Administrator
John Wendorski	Clark County Assistant Forest Administrator
Sara Stack	DNR County Forest Liaison –Ashland County
Janette Cain	DNR County Forest Liaison—Barron County
Joseph LeBouton	DNR County Forest Liaison--Bayfield County
Jim Latvala	DNR County Forest Liaison--Douglas County
Eric Serrine	DNR Barnes Team Leader
Terry Asleson	DNR Brule Team Leader
Heather Berklund	DNR Forest Field Operations Deputy Administrator
Carmen Hardin	DNR Applied Forestry Bureau Director
Andy Stoltman	DNR Forest Economics and Ecology Section Chief
Larry Glodoski	DNR Northwest District Forestry Leader
Mark Heyde	DNR Sustainable Forest Certification Coordinator
Doug Brown	DNR County Forest and Public Lands Specialist
Kristine Buchholtz	DNR Forestry Specialist and Fire Program Staff Specialist

**Ashland County – August 6, 2019**

Stefan Bergmann	SCS Lead Auditor
Shannon Wilks	NSF/SCS Team Auditor
Gary Zimmer	WCFA Assistant Executive Director
Chris Hoffman	Ashland County Forest Administrator
Matt Schultz	Ashland County Assistant Forest Administrator
Jerome Wotachek	Ashland County Forester
Tom Ernst	Ashland County Office Assistant
Eric Serrine	DNR Barnes Team Leader
Sara Stack	DNR County Forest Liaison – Ashland County
Jenna Malinowski	DNR Wildlife Biologist
Doug Brown	DNR County Forest and Public Lands Specialist
Kristine Buchholtz	DNR Forestry Specialist and Fire Program Staff Specialist

Barron County– August 6, 2019

Mike Ferrucci	NSF Lead Auditor
John Cisek	Barron County Forest Administrator
Janette Cain	DNR County Forest Liaison – Barron County
Dave Kafura	DNR Forest Hydrologist
Nolan Kriegel	DNR Forest Hydrologist and BMP Forester
Kevin Morgan	DNR Wildlife Biologist
Kyle Young	DNR Spooner Team Leader
Mark Heyde	DNR Sustainable Forest Certification Coordinator

**Douglas County – August 7, 2019**

Mike Ferrucci	NSF Lead Auditor
Stefan Bergmann	SCS Lead Auditor
Shannon Wilks	NSF/SCS Team Auditor
Gary Zimmer	WCFA Assistant Executive Director
Mike Luedeke	WCFA Board of Directors
Mark Liebaert	Douglas County Board Chair
Jon Harris	Douglas County Director of Forestry & Natural Resources
Craig Golembiewski	Douglas County Forest Management Supervisor
Jim Latvala	DNR County Forest Liaison – Douglas County
Justin Holmes	Douglas County Forester
Lance Wegner	Douglas County Forestry & Parks Technician
Mark Hager	Douglas County Forester
Clint Meyer	Douglas County Parks & Recreation Supervisor
Alex Rowe	Douglas County Forester
Keb Guralski	Douglas County Inventory Forester/GIS Specialist
Cathy Khalar	Douglas County Office Associate III
Terry Asleson	DNR Brule Team Leader
Bob Hanson	DNR Wildlife Biologist
Greg Kessler	DNR Wildlife Biologist
Ryan Magana	DNR Regional Ecologist
Nolan Kriegel	DNR Forest Hydrologist and BMP Forester
Mark Heyde	DNR Sustainable Forest Certification Coordinator
Doug Brown	DNR County Forest & Public Lands Spec.
Kristine Buchholtz	DNR Forestry Specialist and Fire Program Staff Specialist

**Bayfield County – August 8, 2019**

Mike Ferrucci	NSF Lead Auditor
Stefan Bergmann	SCS Lead Auditor
Shannon Wilks	NSF/SCS Team Auditor
Gary Zimmer	WCFA Assistant Executive Director
Jason Bodine	Bayfield County Forestry and Parks Administrator
Steve Probst	Bayfield County Assistant Forest and Parks Administrator
Joseph LeBouton	DNR County Forest Liaison – Bayfield County
Jen Bratsch	Bayfield County Recreation Forester
Lindley Mattson	Bayfield County Office Manager
Caleb Brown	Bayfield County Forester
John Mesko	Bayfield County Forester
Mike Ammon	Bayfield County Forester
Jeremiah Neitzel	Bayfield County Forester
Andrew O’Krueg	Bayfield County Forester
Jason Holmes	Bayfield County Inventory and Analysis Forester
John Mesko	Bayfield County Forest Technician
Heather Berklund	DNR Forest Field Operations Deputy Administrator
Eric Serrine	DNR Barnes Team Leader
Todd Naas	DNR Wildlife Biologist
Dave Kafura	DNR Forest Hydrologist
Doug Brown	DNR County Forest and Public Lands Specialist
Mark Heyde	DNR Sustainable Forest Certification Coordinator
Kristine Buchholtz	DNR Forestry Specialist and Fire Program Staff Specialist
Kathleen Klow	DNR Forester
Jacob Coonen	DNR Forester

**Closing Meeting – August 9th, 2019, Brule, WI**

Mike Ferrucci	NSF Lead Auditor
Stefan Bergmann	SCS Lead Auditor
Shannon Wilks	NSF/SCS Team Auditor
Gary Zimmer	WCFA Assistant Executive Director
Chris Hoffman	Ashland County Forest Administrator
John Cisek	Baron County Forest Administrator
Jason Bodine	Bayfield County Forest Administrator
Mike Dahlby	Chippewa County Forest Administrator
John Wendorski	Clark County Assistant Forest Administrator
Jon Harris	Douglas County Director of Forestry & Natural Resources
Mike Peterson	Washburn County Forest Administrator
Heather Berklund	DNR Forest Field Operations Deputy Administrator
Carmen Hardin	DNR Applied Forestry Bureau Director
Andy Stoltman	DNR Forest Economics & Ecology Section Chief
Jim Warren	DNR Public & Private Forestry Section Chief
Sara Stack	DNR County Forest Liaison -- Ashland County
Jim Latvala	DNR County Forest Liaison – Douglas County
Tom Onchuck	DNR Park Falls Team Leader
Shelley Wrzochalski	DNR Wausau Team Leader
Mark Heyde	DNR Sustainable Forest Certification Coordinator
Doug Brown	DNR County Forest and Public Lands Specialist
Kristine Buchholtz	DNR Forestry Specialist and Fire Program Staff Specialist