

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

Surveillance



NSF International

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NSF Forestry Program Audit Report

A. Certificate Holder

Wisconsin County Forest Program

NSF Customer Number (FRS)

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

B. Scope of Certification

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

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

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

C. Audit Team

Mike Ferrucci, NSF Lead Auditor; Shannon Wilks, NSF Team Auditor

Audit Dates

Taylor County Aug. 7

Oneida & Langlade Counties Aug. 8

Lincoln County Aug. 9

Closing Aug. 10

D. Significant Changes to Operations or to the Standard

None

E. Audit Results

No nonconformities or opportunities for improvement were identified.

There were two opportunities for improvement identified. Summary:

There is an opportunity to improve road maintenance to ensure future compliance with Wisconsin BMPs. (SFI Indicator 3.1.1)

There is an opportunity to improve in the timeliness of training for forest chemical applications regarding state-certified applicators. (SFI Indicator 2.2.7)

There were no Minor nonconformities were identified.

There were no Major nonconformities were identified.

Issues identified at previous audits reviewed for continued conformance. Summary:

2017 Minor Non-conformance closed; evidence provided that the culvert was replaced, road stabilized, and additional training is ongoing.

Yes No N/A (not using) All logos and/or labels, including ANSI, ANAB, SFI, PEFC, etc., are utilized correctly in accordance with NSF SOP 14680 and SOP 4876.



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:](#) Maps

[Appendix 6:](#) Meeting Attendance



[Appendix 1](#)

Audit Notification Letter

May 25, 2018; Revised June 6, 2018

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

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

Dear Mr. 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 Tucker Watts. 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

Monday 6th - Auditors arrive base operations will be in Merrill

Tuesday 7th - All Three Auditors

7 am Breakfast with WCFA and DNR Personnel

8 am Opening Meeting (Merrill): Program-wide issues, multi-site requirements

11 am to 5 pm Field: Taylor (FSC/SFI) 17,000 acres

Wednesday 8th - Split the team

8 am to 5 pm SFI Lead Auditor - Langlade (SFI Only) 128,000 acres

8 am to 5 pm FSC Lead Auditor and team member - Oneida (FSC/SFI) 83,000 acres

Thursday 9th - All three auditors

8 am to 3:30 pm Lincoln (FSC/SFI) 100,000 acres

3:30 to 4 pm Auditors work with DNR to review outstanding information needs

Friday 10th - All three auditors

9-10 am Closing Meeting (Merrill)

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 2018 Surveillance Audit

The audit will include requirements within Objectives 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, and 15. In addition, the following SFI requirement from Objective 12 will be audited:

12.2	Support and promote, at the state, provincial or other appropriate levels, mechanisms for public outreach, education and involvement related to sustainable forest management.
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.

(Note: The first number indicates the Objective and the second number the Performance Measure; for example 12.2.1 is under Objective 12, Performance Measure 2.)

Field Site Selection Process

In the past you have provided a spreadsheet of all currently established but unsold, currently sold and active, and closed (closed within the last 2 years [after July 1, 2016]) timber sales for counties involved in the 2018 WI County Forest Audit. In the past, this spreadsheet contained several tabs, the first being all forest stands involved in a sale which includes stand cover types for all stands, the second being all sales (multiple stands condensed into one sale record) for all four counties, and the next four tabs with the timber sale data by each of the four individual county forests to be audited. (Note: The individual county tabs did not show all stands, so to see all forest types in a particular sale one must need to refer back to the first tab.)

Mike Ferrucci will make 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. Approximately 10 to 15 sales will be selected per county in the initial filter. We will attempt to provide you with our initial sale selections by June 1 or sooner.

After the initial sites are selected, please ask the individual County Forest Administrators to provide more information. We'll want to know, for each sale selected, 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. You'll see these row headings in the spreadsheet we provide:

Water in or adjacent?	Primary Timber type	Special Sites?	Active sale?	Access issues?
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Please provide this information by July 6 if possible. We'll use this information to pare our list down to 10 or fewer sites for each county (perhaps 12 for Lincoln County). We hope to get the final selections to you by July 21st.

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 10-12 plus or minus potential stops (timber sales and non-timber sale sites) for each daily audit tour.



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

Agenda for Review

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

Thank you for selecting NSF 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: Brendan Grady, SCS Global, FSC Lead Auditor; Tucker Watts, Team Auditor



Audit Agenda

Type of Audit

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

Audit Objectives

Determine if certification should be maintained and review status of programs and activities related to recent findings.

Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15; Also Indicator 12.2.1 (Education and Outreach).

See letter for daily agendas.

Appendix 2

Wisconsin County Forest Program 2018 SFI® Public Summary Audit 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 nearly 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 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 7-10, 2018 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
- Indicator 10.1.2 – No research on genetically engineered trees

The next audit will be a recertification audit and is scheduled for August 5-9, 2019.

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 2018 audit is a Surveillance Audit for this multi-site certificate that covers 25 county forests (sites). Four county forests were included in the sample: Taylor County Forest, Langlade County Forest, Oneida County Forest, and Lincoln 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 was one previous minor non-conformance identified in the previous audit subject to review during the 2018 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 2018 audit. All of the SFI Indicators reviewed were found to be in conformance or exceed the SFI requirements, as described below.

NSF determined that the 2017 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.

Opportunities for Improvement

OFI 2018-01: There is an opportunity to improve road maintenance to comply with Wisconsin BMPs.

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

OFI 2018-02: There is an opportunity to improve in the timeliness of training for forest chemical applications regarding state-certified applicators.

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

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

- 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 (Langlade County, Lincoln County, Oneida County, and Taylor 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 which were reviewed during the 2018 audit (most of Objective 4 was not reviewed).*

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 Objective 6 was not evaluated during the 2018 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: Objective 9 was not evaluated during the 2018 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.

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: Objective 11 was not evaluated during the 2018 audits.

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. Most of the Objective 23 requirements were not evaluated during the 2018 audits.

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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nboatwright12@gmail.com

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Mark Heyde
Wisconsin DNR Forest Certification Coordinator
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Mark.Heyde@wisconsin.gov

Appendix 3

Audit Standard Checklist - SFI Forest Management Standard

1Y943 – Wisconsin County Forest Program

Date of audit: August 7-10, 2018

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** The WDNR has a link for the WI County Forest lands which includes SFI promotional logo that displays the correct WI County Land's License Code of "SFI-01617"<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/TimberSales/countyForests.html> . The WDNR has a link to the general information about SFI certificate on its web page and all appropriate information is in place: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/TimberSales/dnrLands.html>.

2017: During the 2017 audit the 2016 Minor Non-conformance regarding the use of SFI Logos was closed.

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

Audit Notes: Plans describe sustainable harvest levels based mostly on area control, with growth estimates by type factored into cutting intervals. The growing-stock volumes of most types are stable or increasing, with normal variations based on efforts to bring age-class distributions more closely into alignment.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** 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 above items.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan approved by WI DNR for Taylor, Langlade, Oneida, and Lincoln Counties.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Harvest levels for each county fall within the calculated AAC, which is set by acres.
2017: Vilas County records including 2016 Annual Report show that harvests have been at or below planned acres. For example for 2016 of the 2456 acres scheduled for recon and recon was done, 973 acres were scheduled for treatment, 262 acres were deferred (consider in future years) and 758 were set up for treatment.
2016: Burnett County, WisFIRS reports indicate that harvest levels are consistent with planned harvest acres (area control). Sawyer County, from Partnership Minutes: “Harvest Goals: Discussion by Peterson. There will be no change from 2015. The harvest goal will be between 3,500 – 3,600 acres.”
 Polk County’s goal is 450 acres per year. Washburn County has maintained harvest levels consistent with the 15-year plan and updates based on WisFIRS data.

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

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** 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.

The following reports regarding inventory status were reviewed:

- Taylor_Rpt#114_recon; Taylor_Rpt#115_recon; 74% of acres were updated during 2013 to 2017;
- Langlade_Rpt#114_recon; Langlade_Rpt#115_recon 54% of acres were updated during 2013 to 2017;
- Lincoln_Rpt#114_recon; Lincoln_Rpt#115_recon 48% of acres were updated during 2013 to 2017;
- Oneida_Rpt#114_recon; Oneida_Rpt#115_recon 45% of acres were updated during 2013 to 2017;
- Discussed that some acres of “recon” are listed as last obtains 16-20 or 21-30 years ago (Taylor 9%; Langlade and Lincoln +- 6%; Oneida 4%; each also has some acres 30+ years). Reasons given are reasonable, including no access, inoperable sites, and efforts to spread the inventory across multiple years, a transition that is nearly complete (past inventory work may have been concentrated within a few years)
- Taylor: the 12% older (but still less than 30 years old) inventory is due to having done the initial inventory in a short period about 20 years ago; in the next few years by doing 1,000 acres of additional inventory per year they will reduce all ages of inventory data to 15 years or less.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** For each of the county forests audited this year a reconnaissance report documenting the status of inventory information (currency) was provided. This information supports conformance.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Training and the Public Forest Lands Handbook (2460.5) specific detailed protocols for record-keeping; 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

Audit Notes: **2018:** 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.

One such conversion was reviewed on Lincoln County forest, sale #T005-18, see notes. The assessment for the stand level decision to change cover types is documented on the narrative of the Timber Sale Cutting Notice (Form 2460). This conversion meets the requirements of this indicator.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** It is not uncommon to occasionally convert one forest type to another for reasons such as forest health, site productivity, and meeting property objectives. The assessment for the stand level decision to change cover types is documented on the narrative of the Timber Sale Cutting Notice (Form 2460). See notes under previous indicator.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Interview with the County Forest Program Specialist confirmed that there is little such conversion, but 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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Taylor County recently conducted a comprehensive regeneration survey on the southern one-third of the forest, measuring 133 plots to represent 5,400 acres of NH, WB, RM, and RO stands. The protocol involves measurements of tree seedlings and other vegetative cover, a deer-severity index, allowing for an analysis of interfering factors for regeneration.

Discussions with foresters and review of regeneration sites in all four counties confirmed successful regeneration in Aspen-dominated stands and some 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.

2017, 2016: 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

Audit Notes: **2018:** The system of documents that guide forest management include several key handbooks:

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

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

Audit Notes: **2018: N/A Exotic tree species are not planted.**

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

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** 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.

One site visited on the Langlade County Forest that was being harvested using chain-saw felling had a notable amount of advanced regeneration absent any harvest damage. Sites where mechanized felling equipment is used have more damage, but still acceptable levels.

Some sites (for example Lincoln County T020-17) 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

Audit Notes: **2018:** 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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Records, supplemented by interviews, show very low to modest levels of chemical use, mostly for the control of undesirable, invasive exotic plants.

Taylor County has only applied chemicals on two projects over the past 5 years, one treatment in the past year for maintenance of wildlife openings involved less than 5 acres.

Oneida County treated less than 1 acre and Lincoln County treated 56 acres; both counties' chemical use was solely for control of invasive plants. Langlade County treated approximately 1,000 acres, primarily for Invasive species control, with some ROW maintenance as the goal, often on the same acres.

Langlade also used 175 pounds of Cellu-treat for Annosum prevention.

In Taylor County a NWTF-funded project was conducted in the fall 2016 and spring 2017 to restore and maintain 7 existing wildlife openings, to re-create open structure and to replace cold-season grasses with native warm-season grasses. Sites were treated with Glyphosate by Pete Anderson, Sound Forest Management, who is a licensed contractor (Cert. # 87753), then disked and planted using native grasses. Thorough records are maintained.

Invasive Treatment Sustainable Forestry Grant 2015: Based on an inventory and management plan for invasive control on the county forest a grant was prepared and approved. Methods included spot spraying, stump treatments, or in some cases no spraying and just hand pulling.

Lincoln County's invasive plant control program is designed in part to minimize chemical use. Loggers must clean equipment, and are asked to work first in portions of sites without invasive plants before harvesting in infested areas. Lincoln County has an active program of invasive plant surveillance and immediate control, with the main effort involving Garlic mustard.

Currently most reforestation involves Red Pine planting sites. Generally do not use herbicides for site preparation; and release at reforested sites is done mechanically.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Taylor County: The only pesticide used in recent years has been Glyphosate. Oneida had one small treatment using Glyphosate.

Langlade County: Herbicides are currently only used for invasive control, and included Glyphosate, Sulfometuron methyl, and Triclopyr.

Lincoln County applied Dimethylamine salt of 2,4-D, Glyphosate, Sulfometuron methyl, and Triclopyr.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Taylor County, Langlade County, and Lincoln County: interviews and review of records confirmed appropriate use. Records reviewed contain "Pesticide Application Prescriptions" that include: Site Reference, Site Location, Soils, Site Description, Purpose & Objective, Proposed Date and Time, Pesticides Applied (with EPA Reg. No.), Amount and Rate, Potential Environmental Effects and Precautions Taken, Method of application, Mix & Load Location, Applicators, including applicators license numbers, Post-Treatment Inspection (preceding are the plan); and the "Record of Pesticide Application" that records: Date and Time of Application, Applicators, Results, and 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.

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

Audit Notes: **2018: 2017:** 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.

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

Audit Notes: **2018: 2017:** 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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Taylor: Taylor County has only applied chemicals on two projects over the past 5 years. Both involved careful pre-planning to determine the need, and treatments designed by specialists that involved applications minimized consistent with need.

Langlade County: Nearly all treatments were for the control of invasive plants. The county contracted the development of an invasive species assessment and control plan which is based on IPM.

Lincoln County: Nearly all treatments were for the control of invasive plants. Non-chemical methods (hand-pulling, avoidance) are included in the invasive control program.

Oneida County: The county contracted the development of an invasive species assessment and control plan which is based on IPM.

2018, 2016: 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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Taylor County: Jake Walcisak and Jordan Lutz of Taylor County are both trained for pesticide application. Langlade County: Interviews confirmed that foresters are trained and hold certificates. Lincoln County: All foresters regularly doing field work or involved in developing prescriptions or overseeing pesticide use are trained for pesticide application and hold applicator’s certificates: Dean Bowe- #80723; Lee Rahlf- #320969; Nick Behrens- #92493. Oneida County: Paul Fiene-38924, Expired on 3/31/18; reviewed documentation he has signed up for training on 9/19/18. Paul was the certificate holder for 2 applications for Garlic Mustard: 6/18/18 .5 Gal of Garlon Ultra; 7/3/18 .1 Gal of Garlon Ultra. Some County employees hold applicator licenses, other Counties contract out the application to a registered applicator. **OFI 2018-02:** There is an opportunity to improve in the timeliness of training for forest chemical applications regarding state-certified applicators.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Taylor County, 2015, 2016, 2017 projects: 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. Langlade County, Oneida County, and Lincoln County: Trained foresters oversee all applications. Training and the pesticide Handbook (2460.5) specific detailed protocols for use of many of the above practices.

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

Audit Notes: **2018, 2017, 2016:** 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

Audit Notes: **2018, 2017:** 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

Audit Notes: **2018:** 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.

Langlade and Oneida County Forests have recently increased the use of gates to control access to 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. Lincoln County uses earthen berms to control access to some logging trails and roads.

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

Audit Notes: **2018, 2017, 2016:** Partial harvests reviewed in this audit had minimized damage. Residual trees (except some of those left to provide habitat) were vigorous and well-suited to the site. Use of cut-to-length processors in nearly all harvests helps ensure minimal damage to residual trees.

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

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

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Taylor: Rutting criteria are listed in the management plan and in the timber sale contract.

Langlade County: Confirmed forester’s understanding of rutting criteria.

Oneida County and Lincoln County: Rutting criteria are listed in the timber sale contract.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** 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, with some road maintenance challenges notes elsewhere on this checklist.

In Taylor County the maintenance of logging roads associated with active harvests has been prioritized. Timber buyers implement some improvements, and the county often contributes materials and some work to support further logging road improvements.

Langlade County and Oneida County: The roads are constructed and maintained well, with most drainage structures intact and functioning very well.

Lincoln County: Some roads appear to need additional grading soon, with signs of drainage provisions impacted by use and perhaps by heavy recent rainfall. No impacts to wetlands were observed.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestHealth/Publications.html> provides forest health updates and publications.

2018, 2017, 2016: 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 “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

Audit Notes: **2018, 2017:** 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, with measures in place to deal with each of these and other forest pests. These measures include monitoring and pest impact evaluation, preventative actions (sanitation cuttings), limited spraying for gypsy moth, 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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Information provided by the County Forestry Specialist was confirmed.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** 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/treeImprovement.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

Audit Notes: **2018, 2017:** 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).

2018: The 2017 Minor-Nonconformance has been resolved. The site was reviewed by specialists and the drainage structures were repaired. Local personnel were trained, and the 2018 training for BMPs included information on drainage provisions for recreational trails.

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.”

Poplar Road, a Lincoln County Forest Road, has extensive sections with many parallel, shallow (1 to 2 inch deep) ruts which are not causing erosion or movement of sediment off of the road. There were no water quality impacts observed. The road surface is fine-textured native material, with no crown, so the ruts hold rainwater which impairs the ability of the road surface to sustain use without further rutting. Site 6, Timber Sale 7-16 #648 has an improperly constructed water bar on a skid trail; the water bar was installed perpendicular to the trail and had no outlet. The same trail crossed an ephemeral stream, showing signs of erosion and compaction at the equipment crossing.

ATV/ORV trails observed throughout the audit are generally in good condition, but some challenges remain. Efforts are being made to create “more sustainable” trails by ensuring that trail surfaces are maintainable, meaning that they are “conductive to periodic grading or restoration that promotes water runoff from the trail surface and eliminates the opportunity for water flow to gain velocity, causing erosion.” Source: WCFA ATV/UTV Sustainable Trail Guidance. Presented 9.29.16. The recommendations in this report apply to new trails and to trail sections undergoing rehabilitation.

Reviewed the “Taylor County 2018 ATV Trail Maintenance Contract (Summer Use) which includes specifications to maintain the trail to meet Wisconsin Forestry BMPs for Water Quality and permit requirements.

2017 Minor-Nonconformance (resolved): A portion of the North County Trail (ATV trail) on the Iron County Forest was actively eroding. Sedimentation from trail ditches is discharging directly into a small Ash swale at the swale’s crossing with the trail. A cross-drain culvert observed nearby was silted in. Other portions of the trail are embedded into the hillside, with no drainage provisions.

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

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Confirmed in a sample of contracts in each county.

Taylor County Timber Sale Contract 1489-17, "Item 9. Road, Landing, Gates and Best Management Practices" includes a requirement to "comply with all rx BMPs".

Langlade County Timber Sales Contract NO. 1490-17 includes Clause 46 requiring BMPs.

Lincoln County: Contract reviewed and all timber sale prospectuses state requirement to follow BMPs.

Oneida County: Contract 1675 was reviewed and requires BMPs (Clause 34).

3.1.3 Monitoring of overall *best management practices* implementation.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** The BMP assessment on state and county lands conducted every five-years is underway. Program managers are selecting sites and conducting pre-reviews in preparation for the detailed, site-level reviews which will occur in the fall. Interviewed Dave Kafura, Forest Hydrologist who described the protocols involved and a current internal quality check as well as a soil disturbance review. The last published assessment was conducted during Fall of 2013. The report has been published <http://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/pubs/fr/fr555.pdf>.

Taylor County, Langlade County, Oneida County, and Lincoln County foresters all monitor all harvests and note any BMP issues in harvest inspection reports. For example in Taylor County for Harvest #655 the TS Inspection Checklist and Comments form has recorded forester inspections documenting visits on 7-31, 8-2, 8-3, and 8-6-18.

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

Audit Notes: **2018, 2017:** 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

Audit Notes: **2018, 2017:** 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

Audit Notes: **2018, 2017:** 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

Audit Notes: **2018, 2017:** For each harvest the "Timber Sale Notice And Cutting Report" in "15. b. Ecological Considerations. Skidding/Seasonal Restrictions" defines acceptable operating periods. Foresters and loggers are aware of the regions and areas having coarse, well-drained (deep sandy) soils and offer/stockpile such areas for harvesting when other areas are too wet to support logging equipment.

2018: Langlede 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.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Wildlife biologists (Wildlife Division) and conservation biologists (Natural Heritage Conservation) are involved in management of all county forests, regularly review proposed and ongoing management activities, and are readily available for consultation. These professionals maintain knowledge of research, often participating in research projects. They provide information during meetings, in written comments, and by providing research papers or white paper reports such as “Golder-winged Warbler Working Group. 2013. Best Management Practices for Golden-winged Warbler Habitats in the Great Lakes Region. www.gwwa.org”.

The Science Bureau develops research as needed to address issues not already covered by published scientific papers or reports. Specialists are involved in the development and regular updates of guidance and ensure that current scientific understanding is included. Training sessions often include updates on emerging research results.

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

Audit Notes: **2018, 2017:** 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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Taylor County: Observed higher basal area retention adjacent to Ice Age Trail, minimized crossings, and results of efforts to minimize impacts to trails at crossings. Contract included these provisions and slash management near trail. Extensive use of green tree retention also contributed to good visual quality management.

Langlade County: Observed similar adjustments to marking and harvesting practices in and near recreation sites.

Oneida and Lincoln County: Cutting notices include descriptions of aesthetic considerations.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Taylor County: Average sale size for the 22 sales under contract is 52 acres, with an average clearcut size of 28 acres.

Langlade County: Clearcut blocks in sales selected for review were generally under 25 acres, with many from 8 to 15 acres.

Lincoln County: Most clearcut blocks observed or within sales selected from review (and thus reviewed on maps and possibly also in field) were under 20 acres.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** 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

Audit Notes: **2018, 2017:** 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

Audit Notes: **2018, 2016:** From WDNR: "WisFIRS recon system is utilized to schedule future harvests in stands adjacent to harvest areas and/or regeneration evaluation activities, and can be scheduled to ensure adequate green-up. All timber harvests are mapped, providing a spatial view of harvests. After harvests recon is updated and regeneration success is noted. Where regeneration is questionable or does not fully occupy the site, foresters will schedule future regeneration checks to confirm that the site has been adequately reforested. Small even-aged harvests and fast growth of most even-aged types in Wisconsin make meeting SFI green-up requirements fairly easy. The system of timber sale harvest plan review and approval by county forest administrator and DNR liaison ensures multiple persons review and approve sales and ensure green-up requirements are met."

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

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

Audit Notes: **2018: 2017, 2016:** 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

Audit Notes: **2018:** 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.

Taylor County: Maps reviewed included the Snowmobile and Winter ATV Trail Map, Trail & Road Route Maps ATV/UTV & Off-Road Motorcycle, County Camp 8 Trail & Perkinstown Motorized Trail, and the Taylor Made Escapes recreation map showing campgrounds, picnic areas, boat landings, waysides, hiking trails, and lookout tower.

Langlade County: Extensive recreation program including many types of trails, campground, picnic areas, boat launch sites, supported by excellent recreation maps.

Lincoln County: Extensive recreation program including many types of trails, campground, picnic areas, boat launch sites, supported by excellent recreation maps. There are 6 county parks, 3 campgrounds, and 4 Ruffed grouse management areas, 3 fully developed and one in reserve to meet anticipated future demand. A section of Underdown Mountain Bike Trail was recently opened, providing links to existing bike trails.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 audits.

2017: NHI and Archeological, Historical database checks are made before conducting timber sale activities. Natural heritage sites were identified in consultation with ER staff during development of comprehensive land use plans.

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

Sites witnessed in WisFIRS database.

2016: Not reviewed during the 2016 SFI Audit.

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

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 audits.

2017: Sites witnessed in WisFIRS database.

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

2016: Burnett County: Auditors saw a historic informal family cemetery plot which was buffered from harvesting after foresters employed a “cadaver dog” to precisely locate the graves.

Objective 7 Efficient Use of Fiber Resources

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

Performance Measure 7.1

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

7.1.1 *Program* or monitoring system to ensure efficient utilization, which may include provisions to ensure:

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

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** 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.

The DNR has a program that works to promote forest industry.

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

Audit Notes: **2018, 2016:** "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.

2016: County Forestry Policies confirmed: Burnett County, in Management Plan; Sawyer County, in Management Plan; 525 Treaty Rights: Gathering Miscellaneous Forest Products 500-45; 915.12 Native American Gathering Permit 900-87; Polk County- In plan in Section 525; Washburn County-525 Treaty Rights (500-31 to 500-34).

Performance Measure 8.2

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

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

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

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Lincoln County: Forest administrator described program; only 6 or 7 permits were requested since inception of the program in 1991.

Langlade County: Tribal gathering permits are available. Gathering permits have not been requested by Native American participants in the last year.

The Mole Lake Tribe has interests in water levels on Mole Lake, and cooperative efforts are being made to replace culverts on county lands. Also work with Menominee Tribal Enterprises on invasive species control issues.

Langlade County Forestry staff members are familiar with gathering rights with the Chippewa treaty right to gather miscellaneous forest products (within the Chippewa ceded territory) and the associated gathering permit, as addressed in section 525 of most County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plans.

The county forestry department communicates with and/or solicits input from tribes Prior to timber sale bids by mailing bid notices to the tribes twice per year. There is public notice to the Tribes regarding Comprehensive CF Land Use Plan development process for the 15 year plan. Tribes are included in the public notice regarding the outdoor recreation planning process.

If a positive Tribal related cultural hit would occur, the tribe would be contacted.

Oneida County does extensive contact with Tribal leaders prior to any harvesting activities near Indian Village.



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

Audit 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

Audit 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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** The Wisconsin SFI® Implementation Committee (SIC) minutes for these meetings indicate attendance by representatives of Wisconsin DNR Forestry and WCFA: February 14, 2017; May 16, 2017; August 22, 2017; and October 17, 2017. Meeting minutes indicates that cooperative research was addressed during two of the meetings. Wisconsin DNR provides considerable support for research.

Research on Golden-winged Warbler is conducted on lands of Langlade County.

A major, long-term silviculture research project is underway on a northern hardwood stand in Taylor County.

Title: Diversifying northern hardwoods forests in a high deer environment: an evaluation of even-age management with scarification and artificial seeding. The Taylor County site is one of three treatment sites (stands).

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** NA: This requirement is not applicable. There is no such research, and no genetically engineered trees are used in this program.

Performance Measure 10.2

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

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

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

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** The Wisconsin SFI® Implementation Committee (SIC) minutes for these meetings indicate attendance by representatives of Wisconsin DNR Forestry and WCFA: February 14, 2017; May 16, 2017; August 22, 2017; and October 17, 2017. Meeting minutes indicates that some of these topics were addressed.

Information from Jane Severt, Executive Director, WCFA: "Wisconsin's County Forests continue to be engaged in deer management issues... In September 2016 Wisconsin Council on Forestry toured counties in NE Wisconsin to learn about deer impacts to forests... Several county foresters serve as forestry representatives on County Deer Advisory Councils."

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** The topic was addressed at the Wisconsin SFI® Implementation Committee (SIC) October 17, 2017 meeting, as shown in the minutes. Steven Handler, US Forest Service provided a presentation on the Adaptation Workbook from the Northern Institute of Applied Science.

Wisconsin DNR participates in WICI, which looks at impacts from climate change.

Forestry working group in WICI, Brad Hutnik, Silviculture represents the department.

Vulnerability assessment from 5 years ago: precipitation: same total amount, but in fewer, larger events in the summer, shift of rain from summer to winter; temperature includes warmer, with differences by season, particularly warmer winters; shorter frozen ground seasons; and information about individual tree species in terms of “winners and losers”, with white birch likely to diminish in amount.

The field foresters should be generally aware of tree species shifts, with potential northward shift of the tension zone, and more southerly species present and favored; more severe summer rains, and shorter winter harvest season.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) has a wildlife component. Jason Holmes, Bayfield County Forester, represents Wisconsin’s County Forests on WICCI. Understanding that with warmer conditions northern tree species are declining, and with them species like spruce grouse and habitats such as cold water streams are impacted. Field foresters interviewed demonstrated some knowledge of climate trends and predictions and possible impacts including shifts in species ranges. Biologists and senior foresters were better able to describe biodiversity impacts in greater detail.

2017: Partially reviewed during the 2017 audits. 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 Holmes, Bayfield County Forester, continue to represent Wisconsin’s County Forests on Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) Forestry Working Group.

May 16, 2017 SFI Implementation Committee Meeting minutes: “Pulskamp noted that Stephen Handler, Climate Change Specialist, U.S. Forest Service, Northern Research Station, will make a presentation on climate change and forestry at the October SIC meeting.”



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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Confirmed training status of loggers harvesting a sample of sites at all 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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: Confirmed participation in and support for FISTA.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Confirmed by review of SFI Implementation Committee meeting minutes.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** 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.

The website of The Wisconsin County Forests Association <http://www.wisconsincountyforests.com/> provides information about forest management in general and on the county forests.

The DNR supports a K-12 forestry education curriculum called LEAF (Learning Experiences and Activities in Forestry) and participates in Project Learning Tree.

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

The DNR maintains the Managed Forest Law Program, a tax incentive program for forest landowners that also requires the implementation of sound forestry practices. The MFL IMG is dual certified to the ATFS and FSC forest management standards.

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

- WCFA once again sponsored scholarships allowing high school students from both urban and rural areas to attend a Natural Resources Careers session at Trees for Tomorrow in Eagle River.
- Episode of “Discover Wisconsin”, featuring Wisconsin’s County Forests, aired for the final time on July 2, 2016. Videos from the episode available www.wisconsincountyforests.com. Member counties received a copy and use it to educate county boards and forestry committees as turnover occurs.
- Communication and involvement with North Woods & Waters of the St. Croix. Jeremy Koslowski, Rusk County Forest Administrator, has been involved with that group’s Forest Stewards Program and regularly participates in meetings and conversations.
- WCFA actively participated in several Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association (GLTPA) Log-a-Load-for Kids® events and educated hundreds of school children regarding multiple-use of our forests. Member counties regularly host Log-a-Load-for-Kids® events on our county forests.
- Participated in Forest Fest held at Trees for Tomorrow in Eagle River on July 28, 2018. This event is open to the general public and serves to educate attendees about sustainable forest management.
- Executive Director address county boards and county forestry committees in our member counties and in counties interested in learning more about our program, as well as civic organizations regarding the significance of county forests and WCFA. Presentations are made to other organizations as requested.
- Develop talking points to be used with new county board members and others relative to the role of WCFA and Wisconsin County Forests
- Assisted with the filming of a 2nd episode of “Into the Outdoors” funded by GLTPA.
- Dean Bowe Lincoln County Assistant Forest Administrator, and Executive Director assisted with a UWSP hardwood marking class on March 29, 2018

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

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

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Not reviewed during the 2018 Surveillance Audit.

Objective 13 *Public Land Management Responsibilities*

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

Performance Measure 13.1

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

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

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Same as 2017, Exceeds the requirements: Letter from Jane Severt, Executive Director, Wisconsin County Forests Association dated August 6, 2018 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.

2018, 2017: Exceeds the requirements: The Wisconsin County Forest Program engages in an exceptional amount of involvement with a wide range of county, state, federal, and public entities in their land planning and management activities. This work is done by county board members, forest administrators, and county foresters, with the WCFA providing leadership, guidance, support and coordination.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** 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.”

Taylor County provided a county forest tour for the Taylor County Deer Advisory Council in June 2018 to help provide context for deer harvest and population level decisions. The goal determined was to take more (female) deer to slow the rate of deer population growth.

The forestry department’s web site provides links to a wide range of information about forest management and recreation on the forest.
<http://www.co.taylor.wi.us/departments/f-m/forestry-recreation-2/>

Langlade County foresters described regular contacts with recreational users, during which they explain silviculture and policies, including restrictions on motorized access to roads to prevent invasive species expansion and to protect sensitive roads. Nov. 2 2017 county worked with Kretz Lumber and WDNR to present on invasive species and involvement with road closures and timber management in an event titled “Invasive Species Workshop”. Over sixty people attended. The Forest Administrator has an open-door policy.

The forestry department’s web site provides links to information about timber sales and recreation on the forest.
<http://www.co.langlade.wi.us/departments/forestry-recreation-parks/>

Lincoln County’s office has excellent accessibility for the public, with information brochures displayed and staff available to answer questions. The web site includes a web page with comprehensive information on the department’s programs and operations and links to information on forest management and recreation on the forest. <http://www.co.lincoln.wi.us/departments/services/?department=01dbecab494>

Oneida County has a web site containing all of its Timber Sale Maps, Prospectus & Results <http://www.co.oneida.wi.gov/section.asp?linkid=2172&locid=191>, as well as quick links to permits for Balsam boughs, firewood, or Christmas trees. <http://www.co.oneida.wi.gov/index.asp?locid=191>

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 description of the audit process, *objectives* and scope;
 - a description of substitute *indicators*, if any, used in the audit and a rationale for each;
 - the name of *Program Participant* that was audited, including its *SFI* representative;
 - a general description of the *Program Participant's* forestland included in the audit;
 - 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*);
 - the dates the audit was conducted and completed;
 - 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
 - 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

Audit Notes: **2018:** The reports from the August 2015 Re-certification Audit and the 2017 Surveillance 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

Audit Notes: **2018:** SFI Inc. confirmed receipt of the SFI annual progress report survey.

- 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

Audit Notes: **2018:** 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

Audit Notes: **2018, 2017, 2016:** Annual SFI Progress Reports for Wisconsin are retained electronically by the DNR Certification Specialist. Annual audit reports are available on the DNR's website at:

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

Objective 15 Management Review and Continual Improvement

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

Performance Measure 15.1

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

Indicators:

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

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Reviewed the Langlade County Forest Internal Certification Review checklist dated 11.1.17, confirming a detailed review of key certification requirements. Also reviewed Lincoln County Forest Program Review, Date of Review: November 15, 2016.

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

Audit Notes: **2018:** There are quarterly meetings involving participants in the program, including representatives of the country forests, the DNR, and WFCFA.

Partnership Minutes (aka "Annual Integrated Planning Meeting") for each of the four counties from the 2017 and 2016 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 these 2016 and 2017 "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

Audit Notes: **2018:** Reviewed the agenda and minutes from the Senior Management Review Meeting held on July 30, 2018. Invited to attend:

- Heather Berklund – Deputy State Forester, Division of Forestry
- Trent Marty-Forestry Field Operations Bureau Director
- Carmen Hardin-Applied Forestry Bureau Director
- Jim Warren-Public & Private Forestry Section Chief
- Jane Severt-Executive Director – Wisconsin County Forests Association
- Gary Zimmer-Assistant to the Executive Director WCFA
- Doug Brown- County Forest & Public Lands Specialist
- Mark Heyde-Forest Certification Coordinator
- Kristine Buchholtz- Forestry Specialist

Regular meetings with certification as an agenda item include Senior Level DNR staff and WCFA. There are three WCFA certification/legislation meetings per year, all of which cover certification issues; minutes were reviewed.

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

(End SFI Forest Management Checklist)

[Appendix 4](#)

Site Visit Notes - Wisconsin County Forest System, 2018 Audit

Date: August 7, 2018, Taylor County	
FMU / location / sites visited	Activities / notes
Lincoln County Office, Program-wide Opening Meeting 8:00 am – 10:00 am	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.
Taylor County Office	Overview of Taylor County’s forest and land management programs; review of training, CoC, and pesticide use records; final site selection.
Site 1: Gertsberger Pines Taylor County Park	Feature(s) of Interest: Approximately 9 acres of Type 1 Old Growth forest, although this has not been classified as HCVF. Dominant species white pine, red oak, birch, and basswood. Several white pines dead/dying due to lightning strikes. Trail with stations identifying unique characteristics. Mechanical removal of Buckthorn encroaching from adjoining landowner recently performed; the county will follow up with herbicide treatment of the buckthorn. 100% inventory performed at +/- 10 year intervals. Observed rocks cleared from adjacent fields by early settlers. In 1995, an interpretive trail was installed in collaboration with University of Wisconsin Extension. Aside from maintaining the interpretive trail and controlling invasive species, no active management occurs at the site.
Site 2: Taylor County Forest Timber Sale 9-14 #633	Feature(s) of Interest: 143-acre selection harvest. Observed gaps in forest canopy and two age classes of timber; the current harvest is intended to stimulate natural regeneration for a third age class by creating 25-foot gaps in the canopy. Managing for red oak and maple. Observed saplings of red oak and maple in understory with minimal damage to residual stands. No trash or spills observed. No sign of soil movement or erosion. Observed good utilization of timber. Ice Age Trail marked with yellow paint crossed the harvest unit, and care had been taken to minimize impact through the use of timber mats at equipment crossings and greater basal area retained along the trail. Observed equipment exclusion area marked with red to protect low/wet area. No evidence of equipment in the exclusion area, and no tops or tree removal within the area was evidenced per the prescription. Managed as uneven age stand. Viewed logger training document from FISTA, which was up to date.
Site 3: Taylor County Forest Timber Sale 9-14 #633	Feature(s) of Interest: Regeneration harvest area 17 acres. Area separated from adjoining selection harvest (Site 2) by yellow paint. All trees removed except red oak, white spruce, hemlock, and green marked trees and all yellow marked Ice Age Trail marker trees. Minimal damage to residual trees. Observed bald eagle nest identified by logger and mapped by National Heritage database; mitigation included no logging from 2/1 to 8/1. Observed reproduction of aspen 6+ feet high with only two growing seasons. Good timber utilization and no signs of soil movement or oil spills from equipment. Managed as even age stand. Observed red painted boundary protecting RMZ areas: 100-foot buffer around Wood Lake, and 15-foot buffer along the backwater.
Site 4: Wilderness Road	Feature(s) of Interest: Crowned and ditched Logging/ATV Road. Graveled with no issues or signs of soil movement. Last used for logging approximately 15 years ago.
Site 5: Taylor County Forest Timber Sale 1-17 #655	Feature(s) of Interest: 91-acre timber sale with 26-acre selection harvest, 51-acre over-story removal primarily for oak & maple regeneration, and 14-acre regeneration harvest primarily for aspen regeneration. Active harvest site by FISTA-trained logger with certification expiration of 12/18. Harvest dates comply with prescription for bald eagle management of nest (no harvesting 2/1-8/1 within 330 feet of the nest. Initial timber

	inspection on 7/31 with harvest operations beginning 8/2. Blue painted line separating stand and harvest types. Observed some wet areas due to recent rainfall and hail event. No soil movement or excessive damage to residual stand. Observed red painted area denoting no harvesting/machines or logging slash. County contractor has improved sections of interior logging access road by grading and graveling a low, wet section. Culvert and gravel will be installed at wet area before hauling, and no skidding will occur until the soil on the unit dries out. Minor soil compaction noted in spots.
Site 6: Taylor County Forest Timber Sale 7-16 #648	Feature(s) of Interest: 92-acre select harvest. Site harvested on 4/17 by FISTA trained logger with expiration of 2018. Sale not closed due to committee approval process. Observed various age classes and minimal damage to residual stand. Observed green painted area identifying black ash area with no harvesting/machines/debris observed within area. Good utilization of harvested timber. No visible signs of oil spills or soil movement. Dead trees left for snags/perches unless safety hazard. Canopy gaps created and ironwood removed, with some damage observed to residual saplings. Good regeneration observed. An improperly constructed water bar on a skid trail was observed; the water bar was installed perpendicular to the trail and had no outlet. The same trail crossed an ephemeral stream, showing signs of erosion and compaction at the equipment crossing.
Site 7: Taylor County Forest Road	Feature(s) of Interest: Bear Avenue planned rehab. This 2-mile section of forest road suffered the effects of a recent rain event with two failures at culverted crossings. The failures have been temporarily repaired. Within the next 30 days, the road will be rehabilitated, including graded with a crown and both diversion ditches upgraded with riprap.
Site 8: Taylor County Forest Timber Sale 9-17 #660	Feature(s) of Interest: 81-acre select harvest sale. Natural regeneration of red oak and maple. Observed road with gravel supplied by county on logging road. Taylor County forestry staff indicated low/vernal pool areas must be 0.2 acres or larger to be painted for no harvesting activity. Minimal residual stand damage observed with good utilization of timber. Observed minor residual stems within red painted areas; could be due to wind or broken tops from harvested timber. No visible signs of soil movement or oil spills.
Taylor County Field Briefing	Lead Auditor Briefing: Review of sites visited, outstanding issues, and logistics for next day.
Date: August 8, 2018, Oneida County	
FMU / location / sites visited	Activities / notes
Oneida County Office, County-level Opening Meeting	Overview of Oneida County's forest and land management programs; review of training, CoC, and pesticide use records; final site selection.
Site 1: Oneida County Forest Campground Hardwood #1675	Feature(s) of Interest: Active harvest sale of 123 acres. Primarily a marked 119-acre Northern Hardwood stand, which had been the site for a research project on canopy gaps in the early 2000s. Harvest all aspen, balsam fir, ironwood, and orange marked trees. Canopy gaps marked in purple paint: within the gaps all trees 1-inch and greater except oak saplings are to be cut. Observed regeneration within gaps of basswood, oak, and maple. Approximately 4-acre regeneration harvest with expectation to harvest all aspen, white birch, balsam, maple, ash, and ironwood. Sale was marked by forestry class from University of Wisconsin Stevens Point. Students mentored by Oneida County Forestry staff and given direction on marking. Site contained campground established in 2009; campground delineated with buffer in which no harvesting is allowed until after 12/1 to minimize conflict with campers. Sale also contained ATV/UTV trails maintained by ATV club. Observed minimal residual stand damage and evidence of good timber utilization on areas harvested. Observed bundle of merchantable wood that was flagged for logger to retrieve. Observed snags left for nesting species. White and red

	<p>pinus left for diversity and wildlife habitat. Target residual species were red oaks, sugar maple, and basswood. No sign of soil movement, spills, or trash. Riparian management zone around Leech Pond. Historical logging camp site in sale area, which has also been buffered. Soils scarified to promote regeneration. Sale harvested by FISTA-trained logging crew; two operators were interviewed by the audit team. Shingle Mill Road showed some track damage from processor, which will be fixed by contractor.</p>
<p>Site 2: Perch Lake Shelter-Washburn Silent Trails Area</p>	<p>Feature(s) of Interest: Observed Perch Lake Shelter built for silent trails recreation area. Trails maintained by Rhinelander Area Silent Trails Association (RASTA). Annual revenue of approximately \$10K to county due to single use/annual fees. Built in 2005 and bathrooms established 2009. Interviewed RASTA member active in the organization’s leadership.</p>
<p>Site 3: Gobbler Lake State Natural Area</p>	<p>Feature(s) of Interest: 1,085-acre HCV area featuring esker, open bog, 20-acre lake. Surrounding lake is open bog (muskeg) dominated by sphagnum and sedges with scattered stunted black spruce, pitcher plants, shrubs, and grasses. Road is an esker and maintained by town. Designated as state natural area in 1974. No management. Protected by annual surveys for invasive species.</p>
<p>Site 4: Indian Village-McCord Village Special Site</p>	<p>Feature(s) of Interest: Special site protected by Oneida County. McCord Village was inhabited by Native Americans from 1890s to early 1950s. Several artifacts and significant structures have been mapped and surveyed by Wisconsin State Historical Society staff. Maps are protected and not for public use in order to secure locations from artifact hunters and looters. Forest management activities were coordinated with State Archaeologist and Native American tribes. Observed green painted buffer lines prohibiting activity within area. Oneida County forestry staff showed great care in protecting historical artifacts.</p>
<p>Site 5: East Strips Sale-White Birch Scarification #1677</p>	<p>Feature(s) of Interest: Approximately 70-acre completed birch shelterwood sale. Utilized approximately 27-foot spacing to encourage birch regeneration. Also maintained aspen to prevent coppice regeneration. Utilized DNR dozer/operator to scarify the ground in order to advance birch regeneration. Observed white birch seedling regeneration. Good utilization and no sign of damage to residual stand. Observed red painted RMZ area for Little Rice River with no sign of equipment entry. Cedar stand also buffered. Wood debris scattered and utilized to minimize soil movement. Sale harvested by FISTA-trained logger.</p>
<p>Oneida County Field Briefing</p>	<p>Lead Auditor Briefing: Review of sites visited, outstanding issues, and logistics for next day.</p>
<p>Date: August 8, 2018, Langlade County (SFI only)</p>	
<p>FMU / location / sites visited</p>	<p>Activities / notes</p>
<p>FME Office 8:00 am – 10:00 am</p>	<p>Opening Meeting: Introductions, client update, reviewed scope of evaluation, audit plan, intro/update to SFI standards, confidentiality and public summary, conformance evaluation methods, final site selection. County forest administrator provided an overview of the 130,000-acre forest and its management.</p>
<p>Site 1: Jack Lake Fire Lane</p>	<p>Feature(s) of Interest: County forest road that serves as a main route. The road is very well-maintained and meets BMPs.</p>
<p>Site 2: Stevens Spring Grade</p>	<p>Feature(s) of Interest: County forest road that is a less-used spur, well-maintained, meets BMPs. Grouse Hunting Kiosk, jct. Jack Lake & Stevens Spring Road with information sign and map.</p>
<p>Site 3: Sale 1403, Area 1</p>	<p>Feature(s) of Interest: Completed selection harvest of 85 acre hardwood stand on a good quality site. Confirmed that silviculture was done per guidelines, with most</p>

	canopy gaps somewhat small. Discussed challenges with deer population levels and browse impacts to desired regeneration.
Site 4: Sale 1403, Area 2	Feature(s) of Interest: Completed regeneration harvest of Aspen-dominated stand, 48 acres, 3 of 4 blocks viewed. All areas successfully regenerated, all having some retention of snag trees and some smaller oak or conifer.
Site 5: Jack Lake Cross Country Ski Trail	Feature(s) of Interest: Well managed trail with information signs at trail heads and road junctions.
Site 6: Sale 1379, Area 1	Feature(s) of Interest: Completed selection harvest of 101 acre hardwood stand on a good quality site. Confirmed that silviculture was done per guidelines, with most canopy gaps somewhat small. Discussed challenges with deer population levels and browse impacts to desired regeneration.
Site 7: Sale 1379, Area 2	Feature(s) of Interest: Completed successful regeneration harvest of 8 acre Aspen-dominated stand. Retention of snag trees and some smaller oak or conifer.
Site 8: Jack Lake Mountain Biking Trail	Feature(s) of Interest: Well managed trail with information signs at trail heads and road junctions.
Site 9: Sale 1489	Feature(s) of Interest: Active timber harvest Interviewed Randy Kutzke, FISTA-trained forwarder operator. Confirmed no residual stem damage from tree felling or yarding, no ruts and very little impact to desirable advanced regeneration seedlings/saplings. Foresters at all levels discussed options for “cleaning” gaps or not based on age, condition, and locations of sapling-size sugar maple trees.
Site 10: Logging Road, Sale 1489	Feature(s) of Interest: Condition of logging road being used to access active timber harvest was acceptable. Gate is left open during sale. After sale road will be graded, stabilized including wildlife mix seed, and gate locked.
Site 11: Augustyn-Bass Lake Trail	Feature(s) of Interest: New ATV trail also used by snowmobiles. The trail provides an important link between existing trails and allows additional loop-trip options. Cooperative project with Langlade County Highway Department and Town of Upham. One portion has a thick layer of crushed gravel purchased and trucked in. Other sections have native rougher surfaces, with more gravel to be added. Gates allow ATV/snowmobiles but restrict highway vehicles, per rules for ATV-program funded trails built since 2012.
Site 12: Sale 1307, Area 1	Feature(s) of Interest: Completed selection harvest of 76 acre hardwood stand on a good quality site. Reviewed sale administrator’s notes which showed that logging was done during three periods in 2016. Reviewed easternmost block and walked long section of internal skid roads and external access road. Many excellent examples of retained trees with hollow portions or having other habitat value.
Site 13: Sale 1307, Area 2	Feature(s) of Interest: Feature(s) of Interest: Completed successful regeneration harvest of 12 acre Aspen-dominated stand; viewed 2 of 3 blocks (11 of 12 acres) confirming Aspen coppice and retention of snag trees and some smaller oak or conifer.
Site 14: Augustyn Springs ATV Trail Head	Feature(s) of Interest: Trail head information signs, parking area, and discussion of pending construction of a wash station for ATVs; funding in place, plans approved; users expected to wash their ATVs prior to entering this trail system and before reloading the machines to leave, helping to reduce the spread of seeds and propagules of undesirable invasive exotic plant species.
Site 15: Ackley Block	Feature(s) of Interest: Discussions of eco-physical landform differences, including generally flat, poorly-drained, silt soils. Discussed management for species requiring young forest of open brushy conditions, including Golden-wing warbler and American

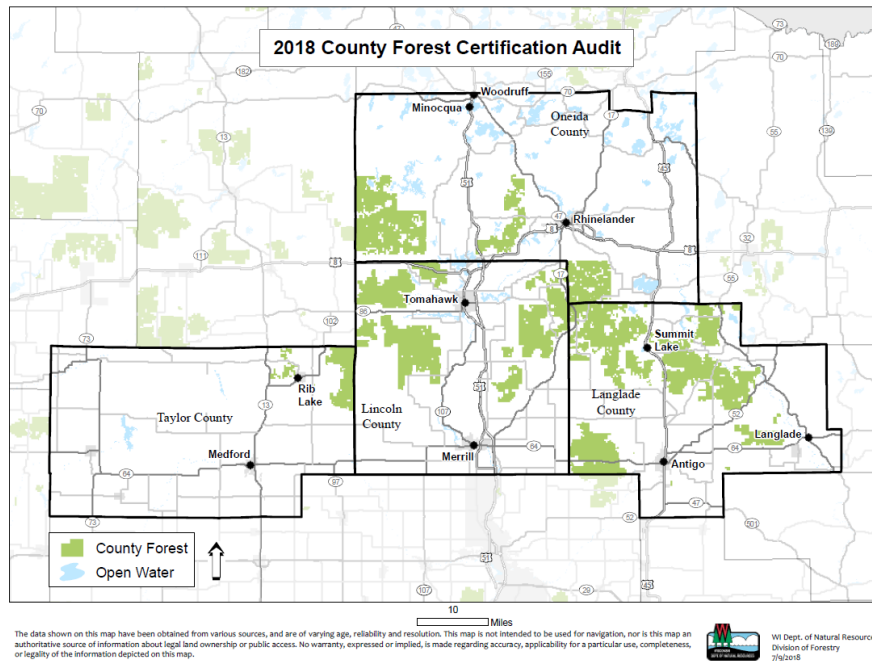
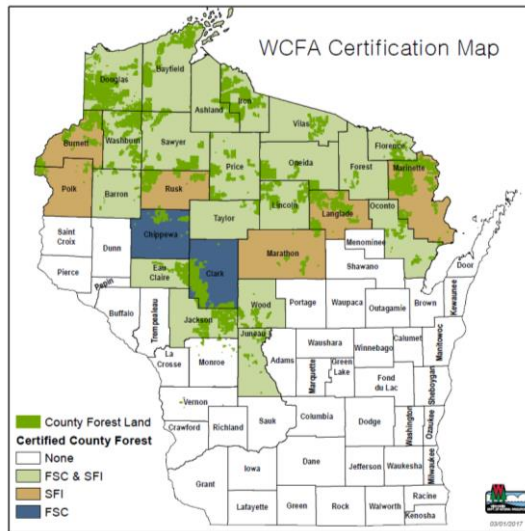
	woodcock. Harvest blocks are larger, providing for warbler's needs for larger blocks while also supporting Ruffed grouse and woodcock.
Site 16: Power Line	Feature(s) of Interest: New power line corridor created in county land providing grassy-brushy habitat for
Site 17: Sale 1444-16	Feature(s) of Interest: Completed Aspen regeneration harvest with retention. Wildlife management for early forest/brush/open species.
Field	Lead Auditor Briefing: Review of sites visited, outstanding issues, and logistics for next day
Date: August 9, 2018, Lincoln County	
FMU / location / sites visited	Activities / notes
Lincoln County Office, County-level Opening Meeting	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, final site selection.
Site 1: T005-18-1 #18005 Compartment 129 Stand 29	Feature(s) of Interest: 6-acre red pine 2 nd thinning. Objective is to improve residual stand by removing poor quality stems and crop tree release. Target is approximately 120 BA/acre of crop trees. Trees marked in orange paint to be harvested, double sided marked every 5 th row. Site includes invasive European honeysuckle, but no control measures as it is ubiquitous in the county. Prescription matched field inspection. Sale not harvested but contract awarded. Lincoln County forestry staff notify adjacent landowners as communication prior to harvesting operations.
Site 2: T005-18-1 Bike Trail- Underdown or Disconnect Trail	Feature(s) of Interest: Newly constructed mountain bike trail to connect with town bike trails. Observed recently installed water bars to control water movement and prevent erosion. Trails constructed to follow contour of land. Trail will be maintained by bike club. Bike trails on county lands contribute economic activity to local communities.
Site 3: T005-18-1 Squawberry Compartment 130 Stands 7 & 18	Feature(s) of Interest: 4 th thinning of red pine stand approximately 38 acres. Stand was planted around 1938. Large understory component of Northern hardwoods. Portion of sale included salvage harvest 10 years ago from a tornado. Site contains locally significant old/unused Girl Scout camp, and equipment is excluded from remnants of camp for protection. Site mapped within GIS and protected on ground from disturbance by painted delineation. Site will be allowed to return to Northern hardwood stand gradually with canopy gaps painted to encourage regeneration of red oak, basswood, and maple. Red painted area observed protecting wetland/kettle or pot. Discussion was centered on the information from research being distributed to forestry staff regarding the management of uplands around wetland areas. No logging activity has occurred yet on this site. Invasive species recently updated honeysuckle to GIS for management in future. RTE species review through National Heritage database identified state-listed species as threatened; no action required. Snags will not be cut unless they pose danger to logging crew. Prescription matched ground conditions.
Site 4: Horn Lake Road	Feature(s) of Interest: This county forest road is generally in good condition, with some surface erosion noted on sloping portions, some small potholes, and a minor roadside grading berm noted. The berm generally prevents road surface water from directly entering adjacent wetlands located in pothole depressions.
Site 5: Garlic Mustard Treatment Area within T022-18	Feature(s) of Interest: Site of garlic mustard invasive species treatment for past 12 years. Signs visible warning of invasives management, and horse trail had been sealed off with detour signs rerouting trail to an alternate route. Site treated annually in spring. Site has been identified in GIS system.

<p>Site 6: Horse Trail within area of sale T022-18</p>	<p>Feature(s) of Interest: Horse/ski trail in good condition (did not go beyond gate to minimize contact with garlic mustard). Discussed timber harvest restrictions as to timing and access routes to protect trail and user experience.</p>
<p>Site 7: T003-17-1 ATV Trail southeast of Turtle Lake Road</p>	<p>Feature(s) of Interest: Recreational ATV trail observed with water bars installed to prevent erosion. Observed signs for safety and warnings to stay on trail. Trail was well groomed and no visible signs of soil movement, trash, or oil spills. The county has a full-time Recreation Officer who patrols the forest.</p>
<p>Site 8: T003-17-1 Camp Kettle II</p>	<p>Feature(s) of Interest: 84-acre marked hardwood sale. Marked canopy gaps about every 4 chains with purple paint. Stems to be harvested marked in orange paint. Ecologist stated that single tree selection is being implemented in order to convert the stand and improve diameter distribution, increase multiple age classes, and enhance quality. Gaps utilized increase diversity of age classes, diameters, and species composition. Gaps utilized to assist with conversion from even age to uneven age characteristics. Understory component of maple, oak, basswood, and elm. Observed orange marked trees of lower quality basswood and maple. Canopy were impacted higher quality oak and basswood. Marking objective for crop tree release of sawlog potential stems.</p>
<p>Site 9: T003-17-1 Aspen Regen</p>	<p>Feature(s) of Interest: Approximately 30-acre aspen regeneration. Harvested in summer of 2017. Green tree retention and buffer observed protecting small lake with approximately 100-foot red painted boundary. No harvesting of white pine, oak, butternut, black ash, cherry, cedar, spruce, or hemlock. Two small retention “islands” with no harvest to ensure some aspen retained. Observed aspen regeneration of approximately 4-foot heights and some oak regeneration. No visible signs of soil movement, trash, or oil spills. Evidence of good utilization of timber resources.</p>
<p>Site 10: Otter Lake Campground and Day Use Area</p>	<p>Feature(s) of Interest: Well-maintained campground and picnic area with beach on lake.</p>
<p>Site 11: T019-18-1 Twin Peaks</p>	<p>Feature(s) of Interest: Active 56-acre logging job. Harvesting operations began within past 10 days. Mature aspen stand with objective to create diversity of age class and species. Oak, black ash, spruce, tamarack, pine, cedar, cherry, hemlock, and balsam fir not to be harvested. Interviewed logger, who is both FISTA trained and certified as a Wisconsin Master Logger. Processor and forwarder both using “Ecotracks” and “Eco-tread” tires to minimize soil compaction. No equipment or logging slash in vernal ponds, per prescription. Observed good stem utilization, woody debris left on site, no visible signs of oil leaks, trash or damage to residual stand.</p>
<p>Site 12: T024-17-1 Gimpy Trash Panda</p>	<p>Feature(s) of Interest: 39-acre regeneration harvest adjacent to Hwy 8. Aesthetic buffer painted blue along Hwy 8. Sandy soils. Observed red painted boundary protecting RMZ with no equipment incursions observed. Good utilization of fiber resources. No sign of oil spills or trash. Prescription matched ground conditions. Harvested by FISTA trained logger (same logger as Site 11).</p>
<p>Site 13: T023-16-1 Late Bait</p>	<p>Feature(s) of Interest: Approximately 88-acre aspen stand. Objective to create aspen age class diversity and regenerate other species present: oak, spruce, tamarack, pine, cedar, cherry, balsam fir, and hemlock were not to be harvested. Observed intermittent stream crossing on access road seeded with clover and herbaceous vegetation. Road blocked to ATV use by berm. Observed stands of spruce/aspen for green tree retention. Sale harvested in December/January during frozen ground conditions. Based on sale notes, appeared ground was not frozen solid during part of harvest. Observed signs that wood mats utilized by machinery for travel, though there were small areas with soil compaction. Snag retention observed for wildlife. Forestry staff during monitoring observed cutting green tree retention area. Contractor alerted and retention was</p>

	marked in alternate location. No visible signs of oil spills or trash on site. Good utilization of fiber resources. Prescription matched ground conditions.
Site 14: Poplar Road	Feature of Interest: Poplar Road, a Lincoln County Forest Road, has extensive sections with many parallel, shallow (1- to 2-inch deep) ruts which are not causing erosion or movement of sediment off of the road. There were no water quality impacts observed. The road surface is fine-textured native material, with no crown, so the ruts hold rainwater which impairs the ability of the road surface to sustain use without further rutting. See Opportunity for Improvement 2018-01.
Site 15: T020-17	Feature of Interest: 35-acre Northern hardwood stand marked per selection system with canopy gaps. Confirmed that marking retained trees with the best form and potential for growth and increase in value. Trees with habitat features were retained, and sale layout included an unmarked buffer along a wetland.
Lincoln County FME Office	Lead Auditor Briefing: Review of sites visited, outstanding issues.
Date: August 10, 2018, Lincoln County	
FMU / location / sites visited	Activities / notes
Lincoln County Office, Program-wide Closing Meeting	Review preliminary findings (potential non-conformities and observations) and discuss next steps.

Appendix 5

Maps



Appendix 6

Meeting Attendance

Opening Meeting – August 7, 2018

Trent Marty	Forestry Field Operations Bureau Director
Carmen Hardin	Applied Forestry Bureau Director
Mark Heyde	Forest Certification Coordinator
Doug Brown	County Forest and Public Lands Specialist
Manny Oradei	Oneida County Forest Liaison
Bill Groth	Lincoln County Forest Liaison
Janet Brehm	Lincoln-Langlade Biologist
Kelsey Egelhoff	Langlade Forest Liaison
Kristine Buchholtz	Forestry Specialist
Erik Rantala	Langlade County Forest Administrator
Gary Zimmer	Assistant Executive Director WCFA
Kevin Kleinschmidt	Lincoln Forest Administrator
Dean Bowe	Lincoln Assistant Administrator
Nick Beherens	Lincoln Co. Forester
Lee Rahlf	Lincoln Co. Forester
John Bilogan	Oneida County Forest Administrator
Paul Fiene	Oneida County Forest Assistant Administrator
Jake Walcisak	Taylor County Administrator
Jordan Lutz	Taylor Co Assistant Administrator
Josh Spiegel	DNR Wildlife Biologist
Mike Ferrucci	SFI Lead Auditor
Shannon Wilks	SFI Team Auditor
Stefan Bergmann	FSC Lead Auditor

**Taylor County – August 7, 2018**

Jake Walcisak	County Administrator
Jordan Lutz	Assistant Administrator
Scott Lindow	DNR County Forest Liaison
Colleen Matula	DNR Silviculturalist
Carly Lapin	DNR Ecologist
Josh Spiegel	DNR Wildlife Biologist
Derek Johnson	DNR Wildlife Biologist
Nolan Kriegel	DNR BMP Forester
Dave Kafura	DNR Forest Hydrologist
Shelley Wrzochalski	DNR Team Leader
Mark Heyde	Forest Certification Coordinator
Doug Brown	County Forest and Public Lands Specialist
Kristine Buchholtz	Forestry Specialist
Gary Zimmer	Assistant Executive Director-WCFA
Mike Ferrucci	SFI Lead Auditor
Shannon Wilks	SFI Team Auditor
Stefan Bergmann	FSC Lead Auditor

Langlade County – August 8, 2018

Mike Ferrucci	SFI Lead Auditor
Erik Rantala	County Forest Administrator
Mark Heyde	Forest Certification Coordinator
Dave Kafura	DNR Forest Hydrologist
Luke Williams	County Forester
Craig Williams	DNR Team Leader
Cody Brauner	County Forester
Jane Severt	WCFA Exec. Director
Kelsey Egelhoff	DNR County Forest Liaison
Katherine Lenz	DNR Area Staff Spec.
Janet Brehm	DNR Wildlife Biologists
Rick Dedeyne	County Forester

Oneida County – August 8, 2018

John Bilogan	County Forest Administrator
Paul Fiene	Assist. Co Forest Administrator
Kristine Buchholtz	DNR Forestry Specialist
Doug Brown	DNR County Forest & Public Lands Spec.
Nolan Kriegal	DNR BMP Forester
John Gillen	DNR Oneida-Vilas Team Leader
Michele Woodford	DNR Wildlife Biologist
Eric Rady	Oneida County Forester
Joe Renik	Oneida County Forester
Manny Oradei	DNR County Forest Liaison
Nolan Kriegal	DNR BMP Forester
Allyssa Hoekstra	NHC Biologist
Skylar Vold	NHC Biologist
Mike Luedeke	Wisconsin County Forest Association
Carly Lapin	NHC Ecologist
Shannon Wilks	SFI Team Auditor
Stefan Bergmann	FSC Lead Auditor

Lincoln County – August 9, 2018

Kevin Kleinschmidt	Forest Administrator
Dean Bowe	Assistant Administrator
Nick Beherens	Forester
Lee Rahlf	Forester
Mark Heyde	Forest Certification Coordinator
Bill Groth	Lincoln County Forest Liaison
Janet Brehm	Lincoln-Langlade Biologist
Shelley Wrzochalski	DNR Team Leader
Brad Hutnik	DNR Silviculturalist
Janet Brehm	DNR- Wildlife Biologist
Gary Zimmer	Assistant Executive Director WCFA
Mike Ferrucci	SFI Lead Auditor
Shannon Wilks	SFI Team Auditor
Stefan Bergmann	FSC Lead Auditor



Closing Meeting – August 10, 2018

Heather Berklund	Deputy Division Administrator
Trent Marty	Forestry Field Operations Bureau Director
Carmen Hardin	Applied Forestry Bureau Director
Mark Heyde	Forest Certification Coordinator
Doug Brown	County Forest and Public Lands Specialist
Manny Oradei	Oneida County Forest Liaison
Bill Groth	Lincoln County Forest Liaison
Janet Brehm	Lincoln-Langlade Biologist
Kelsey Egelhoff	Langlade Forest Liaison
Erik Rantala	Langlade County Forest Administrator
Gary Zimmer	Assistant Executive Director WCFA
Kevin Kleinschmidt	Lincoln Forest Administrator
Dean Bowe	Lincoln Assistant Administrator
Nick Beherens	Lincoln Co. Forester
Lee Rahlf	Lincoln Co. Forester
Paul Fiene	Oneida County Forest Assistant Administrator
Jake Walcisak	Taylor County Administrator
Josh Spiegel	DNR Wildlife Biologist
Mike Ferrucci	SFI Lead Auditor
Shannon Wilks	SFI Team Auditor
Stefan Bergmann	FSC Lead Auditor