



**FSC Certification Report for the  
2010 Annual Audit of:  
Chesapeake Forest Lands  
Certificate Number: SCS-FM/COC-00069P**

**Submitted to:**

**State of Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Service**

**Under the  
SCS Forest Conservation Program  
(An FSC-Accredited Certification Program)**

**Date of Field Audit: April 12-14, 2010  
Date of Report: July 5, 2010**

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Section 2.0 (Surveillance Decision and Public Record) will be made publicly available on the SCS website ([www.scscertified.com](http://www.scscertified.com)) no later than 60 days after the report is finalized.

## **1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **1.1 CONTACT INFORMATION**

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### **1.2 General Background**

This report covers the first annual audit following re-certification of the Chesapeake Forest Lands (CFL), which are managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR), pursuant to the FSC guidelines for annual audits as well as the terms of the forest management certificate awarded by Scientific Certification Systems in April 2009 (SCS-FM – 00069P). All certificates issued by SCS under the aegis of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) require annual audits to ascertain ongoing compliance with the requirements and standards of certification. A public summary of the 2009 re-certification evaluation is available on the SCS website [www.scs-certified.com](http://www.scs-certified.com).

Pursuant to FSC and SCS guidelines, annual/surveillance audits are not intended to comprehensively examine the full scope of the certified forest operations, as the cost of a full-scope audit would be prohibitive and it is not mandated by FSC audit protocols. Rather, annual audits are comprised of three main components:

- A focused assessment of the status of any outstanding conditions or Corrective Action Requests (CARs);
- Follow-up inquiry into any issues that may have arisen since the award of certification or prior audit; and
- As necessary given the breadth of coverage associated with the first two components, an additional focus on selected topics or issues, the selection of which is not known to the certificate holder prior to the audit.

At the time of the April 2010 annual audit, there were nine open Corrective Action Request, the status of MD DNR's response to which was a major focus of the annual audit (see discussion, below for a listing of the CAR and its disposition as a result of this annual audit).

### **1.3 Guidelines/Standards Employed**

For this annual audit, the SCS audit team evaluated the extent of conformance with the FSC Southeastern Regional Standard (Version 10.0), which was endorsed by the FSC in February 2005.

## **2.0 SURVEILLANCE DECISION AND PUBLIC RECORD**

## 2.1 Assessment Dates

The field portion of the 2010 annual audit took place on April 12-14, 2010. In addition to the three days spent on site for the field portion of the audit (two auditors for a total of six auditor days), a total of two additional auditor days were dedicated to pre-audit preparation, post-visit follow-up, and report preparation.

## 2.2 Assessment Personnel

**Michael Thompson, M.Sc.:** Michael Thompson is a Certified Wildlife Biologist and Principal of the firm Penobscot Environmental Consulting, Inc., located in Camden, Maine. He is a graduate of the University of Idaho, with a degree in Wildlife Resources, and received his M.Sc. degree in Wildlife Management from the University of Maine. Mr. Thompson was a member of the FSC's Northeast Regional Standards Working Group and has conducted FSC audits in Maine, Connecticut, Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Idaho, Ontario, and New Brunswick. He was the Team Leader for SCS's initial evaluation of the Chesapeake Forest Lands.

**Michael Ferrucci, M.F.:** Michael Ferrucci is a founding partner and President of Interforest, LLC, and a partner in Ferrucci & Walicki, LLC, a land management company that has served private landowners in southern New England for 20 years. Its clients include private citizens, land trusts, municipalities, corporations, private water companies, and non-profit organizations. He has a B.Sc. degree in forestry from the University of Maine and a Master of Forestry degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Mr. Ferrucci's primary expertise is in management of watershed forests to provide timber, drinking water, and the protection of other values; in forest inventory and timber appraisal; hardwood forest silviculture and marketing; and the ecology and silviculture of natural forests of the eastern United States. He is a member of the Forest Practices Advisory Board of the State of Connecticut, and past Chairman and Executive Committee member of the Connecticut Tree Farm Committee. He also lectures on private sector forestry, leadership, and forest resource management at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Mr. Ferrucci's has conducted numerous FSC audits, and he has lead a number of audits under the AF&PA's Sustainable Forestry Initiative program, including the FSC-SFI certification of the Chesapeake Forest Lands in 2003.

## 2.3 Assessment Process

The scope of the 2010 annual audit, as with all annual audits, included: document review, spending time in the field and office, interviewing management personnel and, as appropriate, interacting with outside stakeholders. The annual FSC audit was held in conjunction with the annual SFI audit for the forest and the general itinerary for both audits included:

### **Sunday, April 11**

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>
5:30 pm	Thompson flight arrives Salisbury

**Monday, April 12      11 am to 6:30- pm**

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>
7:50 am	Ferrucci flight arrives BWI
7:00 am	Thompson - breakfast meeting with Powers and others
8 am	Thompson – Review of open FSC CARs
10:50 am	Ferrucci arrives at DNR Forestry Offices
11 am	SFI Opening Meeting and Office Discussions Changes to the CFP Pocomoke forest management programs Non-conformances
Noon	Review Selected Sales and Finalize Field Visit (1 tour)
12:30 to 5 pm	Field Site Visits, Pocomoke State Forest
5 pm	Daily Briefing (at final field site)
6 pm	Dinner (auditors joined by DNR personnel as available)

**Tuesday, April 13      8 am to 5 pm**

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>
7:45 am	Auditors arrive at Vision Forestry Offices
8:00 am	Review Selected Sales and Finalize Field Visits (2 separate tours)
8:15 – 5 pm	Field Site Visits
6 pm	Dinner (with informal daily briefing)

**Wednesday, April 14      8 am to 2 pm**

7 am	Auditor private discussions
10 am-Noon	DNR Office – discuss remaining issues
Noon	Lunch; continue discussions as needed
1 pm - 2 pm	Final SFI Exit Briefing; Final FSC Exit Briefing
2 pm - 4 pm	Thompson - Available to discuss revised FSC standards (optional)
6 pm	Ferrucci flight from BWI airport Thompson flight from Salisbury airport

Selection of sites to visit during the 2010 surveillance audit was based on current harvesting areas, areas of special concern, and other operational areas. In addition to the specific areas

listed below, most stops included inspections of best management practices, forest regeneration, and roads.

### **Tuesday April 12, 2010**

Pocomoke State Forest (PSF); (Ferrucci and Thompson together):

1. PSF Chandler Tract ORV trail
2. PSF Dividing Creek Tract; P-05-10 Compartment 14 Stand 17; Final Harvest 8.5 acres; logger interview Sonny; just starting harvest, felling trees; confirmed pre-harvest information
3. PSF Nazareth Church Tract; P-01-10 Compartment 8 Stand 7; Completed Final harvest 24.3 acres; also protection for nearby rare community- sand dune; used shovel logging approach
4. PSF Nazareth Church Tract; P-03-10 Compartment 9 Stand 10; Completed Seed tree harvest 24.3 acres leaving Shortleaf pine to restore more of this species; matches site conditions;

### **Wednesday April 13, 2010**

Focus on Chesapeake Forest Project (CFP); one PSF site

Southern tour (Ferrucci):

1. CFP W57 Willie complex; first thin 10 acres; completed selection harvest 59 acres; confirmed field forester's knowledge of vernal pool training information
2. CFP WR17 Livingston complex; completed final harvest 24 acres
3. CFP WR17 Livingston complex; completed final harvest located north of previous selection; confirmed regeneration status (ample Loblolly pine and hardwood seedlings; fewer but generally quite robust oak seedling sprouts and stump sprouts)
4. CFP WR18 Buck Harbor Complex; first thinning area 141 acres and final harvest 9 acres; final harvest portion modified at request of Heritage botanist to remove most trees from relict sand dune to restore the natural community type
5. PSF Camp Road Proposed Timber Sale
6. CFP WR02 Littleton Fooks Complex; first thin 86 acres; final harvest 40 acres
7. CFP WR28 Abe Harmon Complex; spray area 37 acres for release of natural pine regeneration; portions of site were planted to three different oak species (White, Swamp white, and Willow)

### **Wednesday April 13, 2010 continued**

Northern tour (Thompson)

1. CFP C02 Seipp Complex; first thin 25.7 acres; ESA Zone 1 associated with buffer for Upper Nanticoke River; confirmed forester's understanding of standards for harvesting adjacent to an ESA Zone 1; observed properly flagged buffer and confirmed that forester explained the harvest exclusion zones to the harvesting contractor

2. CFP C03 Messenger Branch Complex; first thin 40 acres; harvest operation was part of an effort to enhance habitat for quail; design of treatment blocks (control, light thinning, heavier thinning) was accomplished by State of Maryland Wildlife Biologist Robert Long; northern boundary of the block is mapped as FIDS habitat, although the harvest area fell within a loblolly pine stand type, which is not preferred FIDS habitat and no mandatory standards apply;
3. CFP Marshy Hope Complex; pine removal/oak restoration 20 acres; originally prescribed as a shelterwood harvest, but modified to heavy pine removal by Maryland Natural Heritage Program; goal of the harvest was to retain and promote oak as a habitat restoration measure, especially on a rare sand ridge community; the harvest was nearly complete and the desired outcome of maintaining and enhancing conditions for oak was observed; the operation had been temporarily shut down due to wet ground conditions; procedures for when to shut down operations due to wet weather were confirmed by the forester
4. CFP D10 Huhne Complex; pre-commercial thin 21.4 acres; pre-commercial thinning of loblolly pine to achieve desired spacing; spacing goals appeared to have been met; harvest block included a stream buffer, where PCT goals include promoting hardwoods
5. CFP D13 Rhodesdale Complex; shelterwood 115.4 acres; loblolly pine stand with a high-quality, un-ditched stream and associated buffer; powerline running through harvest block also harbors a rare plant that is threatened by *Phragmites* invasion; foresters GPS surveyed the stream to ensure an accurate buffer delineation; confirmed that forester understood and properly executed buffer policy; powerline had been herbicided by the utility, thereby achieving the goal of *Phragmites* reduction;
6. CFP W23 Greenhill Complex; site preparation for planting, planting, and invasive species control 77.4 acres; previously harvested site planted with pine and hardwoods, followed by an herbicide treatment; reviewed planting spacing and records for aerial application of herbicide.

Participants during various phases of the annual audit included:

- Mike Thompson, Lead Auditor, SCS
- Mike Ferrucci, Lead Auditor, NSF
- Kenneth Jolly, Associate Director, DNR Forest Service
- Jack Perdue, DNR Forest Service
- Kip Powers, DNR Forest Service
- Sam Bennett, Forest Manager, Pocomoke State Forest
- Mike Schofield, CFP Manager, DNR Forest Service
- Wes Knapp, Ecologist, Maryland Natural Heritage Program
- Anne Hairston-Strang, Forest Hydrologist, Maryland DNR
- Don Kronner, CFP Technician, DNR Forest Service
- Roy Miller, Pocomoke State Forest Technician
- Wade Dorsey, Forest Manager, Savage River State Forest
- Neil Sampson, Vision Forestry, LLC
- Larry Walton, Vision Forestry, LLC
- Kenny Rees, Vision Forestry, LLC

- Judy H., Vision Forestry, LLC
- Alexander Clark, Vision Forestry, LLC
- Bill Cheesman, Vision Forestry
- Robert Feldt, DNR Forest Service
- Dr. Joan Maloof, Department of Biological Sciences, Salisbury University, Citizen Advisory Committee
- Arthur Egolf, Egolf Forest Harvesting, Inc. , Citizen’s Advisory Committee
- Bill Giese, Blackwater NWR, Citizen’s Advisory Committee
- Tony DiPaolo, Forester, Cropper Brothers Lumber Company

## 2.4 Status of Corrective Action Requests

At the time of the audit there was nine open Corrective Action Requests (CARs) and evaluating compliance with the CAR was a specific goal of the audit. The audit team also considered the status of 14 recommendations (REC) that were open at the time of the audit.

<b>Background/Justification:</b> Certified parties must receive approval from SCS, as an FSC-accredited certification body, for all uses of FSC logos, names, and trademarks. During the audit evidence was lacking to prove that such approvals had been received for the use of FSC logos, names, and trademarks on such documents as management plans, websites, brochures, and PowerPoint presentations. Following the audit the Forest Service sought and received approval from SCS for current logo use. A Minor CAR, however, is justified to ensure compliance with the requirements for logo use approval over the next year.	
<b>CAR 2009.1</b>	The Forest Service must develop a written procedure for ensuring that SCS approval is received for all use of FSC logos, names, and trademarks, where appropriate. The procedure must ensure that FSC design and use standards are adhered to and that appropriate staff are trained in implementation of the procedures. The Forest Service must also maintain records of the use of FSC logos, names, and trademarks and provide evidence that SCS approved such uses prior to their being employed.
<b>Deadline</b>	A response is due by the 2010 annual audit.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC-TMK-50-201 Requirements for Promotional Use of FSC Trademark
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
A procedure for ensuring that SCS approval is received, as necessary, for all use of FSC logos, names, and trademarks was developed and presented during the audit, along with evidence of approvals from SCS for all current logo and trademark uses.	
<b>Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED</b>	

<b>Background/Justification:</b> FSC Indicator 1.6.b requires that forest owners or managers document the reasons for seeking partial certification. This is part of the requirement to demonstrate a long-term commitment to adhere to the FSC Principles and Criteria. Although the FSC does not mandate timetables for certifying all properties under a common management system, it does require the conservation of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) on uncertified management units. A CAR (CAR 2007.1, Part B) was previously issued that required that the Forest Service develop a process for identifying HCVF on uncertified State Forests. Such a process was developed and the CAR was closed. The Forest Service, however, must provide
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evidence that these procedures are being employed on uncertified State Forests, thereby ensuring the conservation of HCVF attributes.	
<b>CAR 2009.2</b>	The Forest Service must document that HCVFs have been identified and mapped on all uncertified State Forests and demonstrate that management activities in such areas, if any, are not resulting in the diminishment of HCVF attributes.
<b>Deadline</b>	A response is due by the 2010 annual audit.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicators 1.6.b, 9.1.a, 9.3.c
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
MFS Operational Procedures were revised to reflect the requirement for mapping HCVF on all Forest Service lands. The revised procedures were based on several internal meetings and meetings with outside experts (e.g., Vision Forestry) to determine how best to identify and delineate HCVFs on the non-certified State forests. HCVFs were identified and initial HCVF maps were generated for each State forest. The Central Office of the MFS is working with District Forest managers to implement operational procedures related to the conservation and management of designated HCVFs.	
<b>Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED</b>	

<b>Background/Justification:</b> FSC Indicator 6.5.c requires that logging operations avoid damage to residual trees, regeneration, ground cover, soils, waterways, and wetlands. In addition, FSC Indicator 6.5.h requires that special management zones be established for vernal pools. During the site visit a potential vernal pool was observed in a recently logged area; the pool had been generally protected from logging operations, but forest managers indicated that they were not aware of any definitive internal guidelines for the conservation of vernal pools. Natural Heritage Program staff indicated that such guidelines were being developed.	
<b>CAR 2009.3</b>	The Forest Service must develop a scientifically credible definition of significant vernal pools for the Eastern Shore and develop protocols for identifying such areas within harvest blocks. The Forest Service must also: 1) prepare management guidelines for conserving significant vernal pools; 2) provide evidence that forest managers have been trained to apply such guidelines, and 3) provide evidence that the guidelines are being implemented during harvest planning and operations.
<b>Deadline</b>	A response is due by the 2010 annual audit.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicators 6.5.c and 6.5.h
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
The MFS, in collaboration with the Maryland Natural Heritage Program, prepared management guidelines for conserving significant vernal pools. Early season training in vernal pool identification and harvest guideline implementation has been held, as evidenced by training logs and interviews with attendees, which included foresters and harvesting contractors. Additional training is also planned for off-season vernal pool surveys. The MFS also provided evidence that the new guidelines were being implemented on active harvests and would be implemented on future harvests, including those in previously approved work plans.	
<b>Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED</b>	

<b>Background/Justification:</b> FSC Indicator 7.2.a requires that the management plan be current and reviewed and revised as necessary (at least every five years). A 10-year management plan was prepared for the Pocomoke State Forest in 1996, to take effect in 1997. The plan, however, was
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not formally adopted until 2000, meaning that the 10-year window will expire in 2010. Although not officially out-of-date, the Pocomoke State Forest management plan is dated and should be updated to reflect all the elements identified in FSC Criterion 7.1.	
<b>CAR 2009.4</b>	The Forest Service must provide evidence that the Pocomoke State Forest management plan has been periodically (at least every 5 years) reviewed and revised as necessary. The Forest Service must also provide a timeline for the completion of a new sustainable management plan and explain how management will transition from using the current plan to implementing a new plan.
<b>Deadline</b>	A response is due by the 2010 annual audit.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 7.2.a
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
The MFS prepared a new management plan for the PSF, with a draft issued on January 29, 2010. The draft plan was reviewed during the annual audit. The Plan is going through the normal management plan review process and the MFS expects it to be finalized and implemented by Fall 2010.	
<b>Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED</b>	

<b>Background/Justification:</b> FSC Indicator 8.1.a requires that the implementation and effectiveness of the management plan are periodically monitored to assess the degree to which the vision, goals, and objectives of the plan have been achieved; deviations from the management plan have been documented; unexpected effects of management activities have been identified; and social and environmental effects of management activities have been evaluated. As previously noted (see Minor CAR 2009.4), the Pocomoke State Forest management plan is becoming out-of-date and is slated for updating. It was not clear at the time of the audit the degree to which the implementation and effectiveness of the management plan had been monitored.	
<b>CAR 2009.5</b>	The Forest Service must provide evidence for how the implementation and effectiveness of the Pocomoke State Forest management plan have been monitored since 2000 and describe how the results of such monitoring efforts have influenced or modified management programs.
<b>Deadline</b>	A response is due by the 2010 annual audit.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 8.1.a
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
The MFS provided evidence, including annual work plans, that demonstrated that activities on the PSF were being monitored in a manner similar to the Chesapeake Forest. Via the annual work plan process, proposed harvests are modified based on formal and informal monitoring of forest conditions. The MFS also demonstrated that periodic monitoring of the PSF had a role in shaping the new management plan for the property (see Minor CAR 2009.4).	
<b>Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED</b>	

<b>Background/Justification:</b> FSC Indicator 8.2.a.1 requires that forest managers maintain records of standing timber and timber harvest volumes by species, volume, and product class (e.g., saw timber and pulp). At the time of the audit, the status of the CFI and the harvest record-keeping system for the Pocomoke State Forest was not clear (i.e., would they be as comprehensive as the Chesapeake Forest).	
<b>CAR 2009.6</b>	The Forest Service must provide evidence demonstrating that a current inventory of standing timber is available for the Pocomoke State Forest.

	The Forest Service must also demonstrate how the harvest volumes by species, volume, and product class are monitored for the Pocomoke State Forest.
<b>Deadline</b>	A response is due by the 2010 annual audit.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 8.2.a.1
<b>State of Maryland Response:</b> Following the audit, the Forest Service demonstrated that 2002 CFI data are available for the Pocomoke State Forest. The Forest Service also documented that detailed records of harvest volumes by species, volume, and product class are available for the Pocomoke State Forest.	
<b>Disposition of this CAR: CAR CLOSED IN 2009</b>	

<b>Background/Justification:</b> The FSC's regional standards define High Conservation Value Forests (HCVFs) as those that possess, among other attributes, forest areas containing globally, regionally, or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g., endangered species). The Delmarva Fox Squirrel (DFS) is an endangered species, according to the Federal Endangered Species Act, and habitat for this species is found on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The Forest Service has comprehensive management programs for conserving and enhancing DFS habitat on the Chesapeake and Pocomoke Forests, but such forests have not been identified as HCVF.	
<b>CAR 2009.7</b>	The Forest Service must either include DFS habitat in its definition of HCVF for the Chesapeake and Pocomoke Forests or provide a rigorous defense for why such forests do not meet the FSC's definition of HCVF.
<b>Deadline</b>	A response is due by the 2010 annual audit.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 9.1.a
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
The MFS has designated all DFS Core Habitat as HCVF. The FSC-US also recently provided guidance, related to lynx in Maine, indicating that Federal designation of Critical Habitat under the Endangered Species Act does not, by itself, result in HCVF designation. This guidance provides support for not designating non-core DFS habitat as HCVF.	
<b>Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED</b>	

<b>Background/Justification:</b> FSC Indicator 9.3.b requires that management of HCVFs maintains or enhances their defining characteristics, and their extent, and is implemented according to the management plan. A summary of management activities planned for these forests must also be included in the publicly available summary of the management plan (see FSC Indicator 7.4.1). The Forest Service undertakes a variety of management activities in HCVF that are designed to maintain or enhance conservation attributes. The Forest Service also documents management activities in HCVF within publicly available annual work plans. The Forest Service does not, however, provide a summary of these management activities in its publicly available summary of the management plan.	
<b>CAR 2009.8</b>	The Forest Service must provide a summary of management activities in HCVFs in the publicly available summary of the management plan for both the Chesapeake Forest and the Pocomoke State Forest.
<b>Deadline</b>	A response is due by the 2010 annual audit.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 9.3.b
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
The MFS makes all management plans and annual work plans available to the public on their website. Annual work plans describe management activities in HCVF and these reports meet the	

intent of the CAR.
<b>Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED</b>

<b>Background/Justification:</b> When existing information suggests that rare, threatened, or endangered species may be present, a survey is conducted to determine if they are present or management plans are developed based on their assumed presence. It appears that rare species may be associated with sand dune communities associated with the ORV trails on the Pocomoke State Forest, but surveys have not been conducted to determine if they are actually present. In addition, evidence of riders going off the designated trail onto sand dune communities was observed.	
<b>CAR 2009.9</b>	We recommend that the Wildlife and Heritage Service screen existing ORV trails on the Pocomoke State Forest for the presence of rare, threatened, or endangered plants or animals that could potentially be impacted by trail use.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 6.2.a
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
A study and report regarding ATV use on DNR lands has been delivered to the Secretary of the agency and is currently under review. This report may have important implications for future ORV use on these lands. With regards to the Pocomoke State Forest, due to the damage that has occurred on ATV trails, the trails have been closed until further notice. While recognizing that ORV use of State Forests is currently under review, we still recommend screening for RTE species should trails be re-opened on the PSF.	
<b>Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED</b>	

The following recommendations were made as a result of the evaluation:

<b>Background/Justification:</b> FSC Indicator 3.3.a requires that forest managers consult with Native American representatives regarding the location of sites of cultural importance on the certified forest. Such consultation has been explicitly conducted on the Chesapeake Forest and managers suggested that similar consultation had occurred on the Pocomoke State Forest. Formally adopting the procedures used on the Chesapeake Forest on the Pocomoke State Forest, however, would ensure conformance to Indicator 3.3.a.	
<b>REC 2009.1</b>	The procedures used to consult with Native American representatives on the Chesapeake Forest should be more formally adopted on the Pocomoke State Forest.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 3.3.a
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
The MFS has written a new management plan for the PSF and policies and procedures are now consistent between the two forests, including policies related to consultation with Native American representatives.	
<b>Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED</b>	

<b>Background/Justification:</b> FSC Indicator 4.2.a requires that forest managers develop and implement comprehensive safety programs. Contractors have specific safety programs, but forest managers appear to take differing approaches to ensuring their implementation on harvest operations.	
<b>REC 2009.2</b>	We recommend that the Forest Service consider the need for additional

	training in monitoring safety practices of contractors while maintaining appropriate arm's-length relationships with independent contractors (i.e., how to observe and document potential safety concerns without directing the contractor's employees).
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 4.2.a
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
The MFS and their consultants have evaluated their protocols for monitoring contractor safety and have taken steps to ensure consistent monitoring practices.	
<b>Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED</b>	

<b>Background/Justification:</b> FSC Indicator 4.4.b requires that outside experts be consulted to identify sites of special cultural significance. Such consultation has happened on the Chesapeake Forest, but whether such consultation has occurred in sufficient detail on the Pocomoke State Forest is not as transparent as it could be.	
<b>REC 2009.3</b>	We recommend that the Forest Service better document efforts taken to consult with experts regarding the potential location of sites and features of special cultural significance (e.g., pre-historic and historic features) on the Pocomoke State Forest.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 4.4.b
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
Annual work plans for all State Forests are now reviewed by the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT). Beginning in 2010, MHT has been invited to participate in Annual Work Plan field reviews and any land-altering activities not included in the Annual Work Plan are subject to MHT review.	
<b>Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED</b>	

<b>Background/Justification:</b> FSC Indicator 4.4.c requires that adjacent landowners and/or nearby communities be informed of forest management activities with potential off-site impacts. The Forest Service has a detailed protocol for notifying stakeholders when prescribed burning will take place, but similar procedures are not used for harvest operations or the aerial application of herbicides.	
<b>REC 2009.4</b>	We recommend that the Forest Service consider the benefits of notifying adjacent landowners of scheduled harvest operations and aerial applications of herbicides.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 4.4.c
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
The Forest Service and Vision Forestry considered all aspects of landowner notification and noted that landowners are notified regarding herbicide application. Managers, however, concluded that landowners in the region were generally familiar with normal logging operations and that notification of pending harvests was unwarranted.	
<b>Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED</b>	

<b>Background/Justification:</b> FSC Indicator 5.6.a requires that harvest rates be sustainable, based on available data and harvest records. CFI data are available for the Pocomoke State Forest and managers strive to ensure that annual harvests do not exceed estimated annual growth rates.	
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Loblolly pine is the primary commercial species and annual harvest rates (all species) on the Pocomoke State Forest approach the estimate of annual growth for loblolly pine. More specific estimates of the AAC for loblolly pine and other commercially important species, therefore, may be warranted.	
<b>REC 2009.5</b>	We recommend that CFI data and other information be used to develop specific AAC estimates for each major commercial species on the Pocomoke State Forest.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 5.6.a
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
The MFS developed a new management plan for the PSF that includes revised wood supply analyses with species group AAC models. These analyses were reviewed as part of the annual audit.	
<b>Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED</b>	

<b>Background/Justification:</b> FSC Indicator 6.3.a.2 requires that forest managers restore a portion of the forest to the natural distribution of age classes of trees. The Forest Service has a definition of old growth that guides management decisions, but this definition should be compared with the FSC's regional definition to ensure consistency.	
<b>REC 2009.7</b>	We recommend that the Forest Service compare their definition of old growth to the current definition found in the FSC's Southeast Regional Standards to ensure that they are similar.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 6.3.a.2
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
The MFS compared their definition of old growth to the current definition in the FSC's Southeast Regional Standards and found no material differences. This assessment was provided to the auditors during the annual audit.	
<b>Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED</b>	

<b>Background/Justification:</b> FSC Indicator 6.3.a.2 requires that forest managers restore a portion of the forest to the natural distribution of age classes of trees. The Forest Service has a definition of old growth that guides management decisions, but it appears that more specific definitions of what constitutes late-successional or old growth stages for dominant species and natural communities would enhance management efforts.	
<b>REC 2009.8</b>	We recommend that the Forest Service consult with the Wildlife and Heritage Services to determine if it is appropriate to develop specific age class ranges for late-successional and old growth conditions for individual tree species and forested natural community types.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 6.3.a.2
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
The MFS consulted with Wildlife and Heritage to develop specific definitions of late-successional and old growth conditions that included a table of age requirements for Maryland tree species.	
<b>Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED</b>	

<b>Background/Justification:</b> FSC Indicators 7.1.a.1 and 7.1.c.1 require that forest managers document silvicultural strategies that will be employed to meet specified goals and objectives. Management plans contain detailed information regarding managing loblolly pine, the primary commercial species, but contain only general information regarding the silvicultural systems that will be used to manage other species.	
<b>REC 2009.9</b>	When updating management plans, more attention should be given to describing the silvicultural systems used to manage stands that aren't dominated by loblolly pine.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 7.1.a.1 and 7.1.c.1
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
The new draft of the Pocomoke State Forest management plan includes sections on the silvicultural systems that will be used to manage all general stand types.	
<b>Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED</b>	

<b>Background/Justification:</b> FSC Indicator 7.1.i requires a description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used. Forest managers discuss techniques and equipment with harvesting contractors, but the decisions made as a result of these meetings are not well documented.	
<b>REC 2009.10</b>	We recommend that the description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used be documented in the harvest prescription.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 7.1.i
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
The MFS and Vision Forestry make decisions on harvesting contractors - and their equipment - based on the specific harvest prescriptions made in the management plan. As noted above, the team recognizes that managers have a justification for harvest techniques and equipment, although the thought process is not always written down. The MFS and Vision Forestry are still considering how best to document decisions made regarding harvesting techniques and equipment to be used and will report on these discussions at the next annual audit.	
<b>Position in the end of this audit: OPEN</b>	

<b>Background/Justification:</b> FSC Indicator 7.3 requires that forest workers be adequately trained for their assigned duties to ensure the proper implementation of the management plan. The Forest Service encourages training and approves many training requests. The Forest Service, however, has not developed a list of required skills and related training needs for each major staff category that could be used to assess training needs for individual staff members.	
<b>REC 2009.11</b>	We recommend that the Forest Service define the training needs for each major staff category (e.g., technician, forester, manager) and develop more explicit training programs where appropriate; we further recommend annual reporting on training that has taken place each year.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 7.3
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
The MFS gave additional consideration to its training program and has more explicitly linked training needs to job descriptions. The MFS will provide reports of annual training activities at the time of the annual audit.	

**Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED**

**Background/Justification:** FSC Indicator 8.1.a requires periodic monitoring of the implementation of the management plan. The management plan for the Pocomoke State Forest has been in place for nearly a decade and it is not clear the degree to which implementation of the plan has been monitored. The management plan is scheduled for updating in the near future, which provides an opportunity for developing more specific protocols for monitoring implementation of the new plan.

<b>REC 2009.12</b>	We recommend that the updated Pocomoke State Forest management plan include specific protocols for monitoring implementation of the plan.
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<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 8.1.a
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**Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments**

The new PSF management plan contains a section with detailed monitoring protocols.

**Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED**

**Background/Justification:** FSC Indicator 8.1.b requires that specific protocols be developed when monitoring requires sampling efforts. Regeneration is monitored, both formally and informally, to determine if fill planting is warranted. Protocols for monitoring loblolly regeneration are somewhat quantitative, but monitoring mixed stands is still done on a qualitative basis and there are no protocols in place to guide decisions related to fill planting.

<b>REC 2009.13</b>	We recommend the development of more explicit protocols for monitoring regeneration in mixed stands (i.e., stands not dominated by loblolly pine). Such protocols should contain guidelines related to when fill planting is warranted; these protocols should also provide guidance related to species composition to be used for fill planting in mixed stands.
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<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 8.1.b
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**Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments**

The MFS and Vision Forestry are still considering how best to monitor regeneration in mixed stands and will report on the results of these discussions at the next annual audit.

**Position in the end of this audit: OPEN**

**Background/Justification:** FSC Indicator 9.3.b requires that management of HC VF maintains or enhances their value according to the management plan. Management plans and Annual Work Plans contain information related to activities in HC VF, but such documents could be improved through more specific descriptions of how HC VFs are being conserved through protection and/or management efforts.

<b>REC 2009.14</b>	We recommend more explicit descriptions in the management plan of how HC VFs are being conserved through protection and/or management efforts.
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<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 9.3.b
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**Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments**

Management plans, including the updated PSF plan, contain a section regarding designation and protection of HC VFs. Annual Work Plans also contain more explicit descriptions of management activities in HC VFs.

**Position in the end of this audit: CLOSED**

## 2.5 General Observations

Preparation of a new management plan for the Pocomoke State Forest was a proactive step toward ensuring consistent adherence to the FSC standards for this forest and the Chesapeake Forest. The PSF forest, while still under review, is comprehensive and similar in scope to the Chesapeake Forest. We further note that the MFS has taken steps to ensure consistent application of stakeholder consultation protocols (e.g., with Native Americans) on both forests.

The annual audit revealed ongoing positive collaboration with the Wildlife and Heritage Program as well as with State wildlife biologists. This was particularly apparent with regards to improved protection measures for vernal pools. We further note that, in addition to foresters, logging contractors were included in vernal pool training programs, which illustrates the strong professional relationships between foresters and contractors.

Efforts taken to ensure the protection of HCVPs on State Forests that have yet to be certified were positive, and we note that the MFS is making consistent steps toward getting these lands ready for an FSC evaluation.

As with previous audits, members of the Citizen's Advisory Committee participated in the audit and were encouraged to provide frank and candid comments. One site visit, in fact, was to an area specifically requested by a CAC member.

In at least one instance, Heritage Program staff were not notified about pending controlled burns in ESAs, as required by internal protocols. The ESA concept is seen as a strength of the MFS management system and failure to adhere to well-established communication and review protocols is a serious matter with regards to ensuring adherence to the FSC standards (see CAR 2010.1).

Overall management of the certified forests continues to be progressive and based on sound science and an open and transparent public consultation process.

## 2.6 New Corrective Action Requests and Recommendations

<b>Background/Justification:</b> FSC SE Standards indicator 7.1.f requires that environmental safeguards be based on environmental assessments that are conducted primarily in response to P&C 6.1 and 6.2. The MFS has an ESA concept that zones the forest according to environmental assessments conducted primarily by the Maryland Natural Heritage Program. ESA designation, according to MFS management protocols, requires Heritage Program review for most management activities prior to implementing the activity. In the case of controlled burns, the Heritage Program is to be notified in advance of the burn so that they can participate in the planning and execution of the fire. As part of the 2010 annual audit auditors observed that there was at least one instance whereby the Heritage Program was not notified in advance of a controlled burn in an ESA.	
<b>CAR 2010.1</b>	The Forest Service must investigate and report on the circumstances surrounding the failure to notify the Heritage Program of controlled burn activities, assess whether such failure was due to a systematic break-down

	in communication, and develop - as warranted - procedures for ensuring full compliance with ESA management protocols.
<b>Deadline</b>	A response is due by the 2011 annual audit.
<b>Reference</b>	FSC Indicator 7.1.f (see also 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, and 8.2.d)
<b>Action Taken By Company/Auditor Comments</b>	
To be reviewed during 2011 annual audit.	
<b>Position in the end of this audit:</b> To be determined during 2011 annual audit.	

## 2.7 General Conclusions of the Annual Audit

Based upon information gathered through site visits, interviews, and document reviews, the SCS audit team concludes that management of the Chesapeake Forest Lands continues to be in strong overall compliance with the FSC Principles and Criteria, as now further elaborated by the Southeastern Regional Standards. That is, the SCS audit team has concluded from this annual audit that MD DNR's and Vision Forestry's forest management program is in general conformance with FSC Principles 1 through 10. As such, continuation of the certification is warranted, subject to ongoing progress in addressing open CARs and recommendations and subject to subsequent annual audits.

### 3.0 DETAILED OBSERVATIONS

This section is divided into two parts: Section 3.1 details the determining of conformance and non-conformance with the elements of the standard examined during this audit. Section 3.2 discusses any stakeholder comments.

#### 3.1 Evaluation of Conformance

The auditors chose to focus on Principles 7 and 9 during the 2010 surveillance audit:

REQUIREMENT	CONC	COMMENT/CAR
<p><b>P7 A management plan—appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management—shall be written, implemented, and kept to date. The long-term objectives of management, and the means of achieving them, shall be clearly stated.</b></p>		
<p><b>C7.1. The management plan and supporting documents shall provide:</b>            a) Management objectives. b) Description of the forest resources to be managed, environmental limitations, land use and ownership status, socio-economic conditions, and a profile of adjacent lands. c) Description of silvicultural and/or other management system, based on the ecology of the forest in question and information gathered through resource inventories. d) Rationale for rate of annual harvest and species selection. e) Provisions for monitoring of forest growth and dynamics. f) Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments. g) Plans for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species. h) Maps describing the forest resource base including conservation zones, planned management activities and land ownership. i) Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used.  <i>Applicability note: The management plan may consist of a variety of documents not necessarily unified into a single planning document, but which represents an integrated strategy for managing the forest.</i></p>	C	
<p>7.1.a. Management objectives</p>	C	
<p>7.1.a.1. A written management plan is prepared that includes the landowner's short-term and long-term vision, goals, and objectives (ecological, silvicultural, social, and economic). The objectives are specific, achievable, and measurable. Appropriate to the scale, intensity, and context of management, the plan includes description and rationale for:  <b>Silvicultural systems:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Regeneration strategies</i></li> <li>• <i>Maintenance of structural and species diversity, including rare, threatened, and endangered species</i></li> <li>• <i>Pest control (disease, insects, invasive</i></li> </ul>	C	<p><b>See REC 2009.9 (CLOSED)</b>            Detailed management plans have been prepared and are available to the public on the Forest Service's website; management plans tend to focus on pine, the dominant commercial species, and the audit team recommended in 2009 that when plans are updated more explicit attention be given to the silvicultural systems used to manage stands that are not dominated by pine; the MFS updated the Pocomoke State Forest Plan in January 2010 and included silvicultural considerations for all species groups</p>

<p><i>species, and vegetation)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Soil and water conservation</i></li> <li>• <i>Methods and annual rates of harvest, by species and products</i></li> <li>• <i>Equipment and personnel needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Transportation systems</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Fire management:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Prescribed fires</i></li> <li>• <i>Wildfires</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Fish and wildlife and their habitats (including non-game species)</b></p> <p><b>Non-timber forest products:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Methods and annual rates of harvest, by species and products</i></li> <li>• <i>Regeneration strategies</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Socioeconomic issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Public access and use</i></li> <li>• <i>Conservation of historical and cultural resources</i></li> <li>• <i>Protection of aesthetic values</i></li> <li>• <i>Employee and contractor policies and procedures</i></li> <li>• <i>Community relations</i></li> <li>• <i>Stakeholder notification</i></li> <li>• <i>Public comment process</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Indigenous peoples' issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Protection of legal and customary rights</i></li> <li>• <i>Procedures for integrating tribal concerns into forest management</i></li> <li>• <i>Management of sites of special significance</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Special management areas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Riparian management zones</i></li> <li>• <i>Set asides of sample representative ecosystems</i></li> <li>• <i>Protection of sensitive, rare, threatened, and endangered species n</i></li> <li>• <i>Other conservation zones and/or ecologically sensitive features in the forest</i></li> <li>• <i>Landscape level analyses and strategies</i></li> </ul>		
<p>7.1.b. Description of forest resources to be managed, environmental limitations, status of land use and ownership, socio-economic conditions, and a profile of adjacent lands</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Included in management plan (see, for example, 2010 PSF plan); the MFS also has a detailed GIS that is a component of the management plan; the GIS also includes information regarding adjacent and nearby lands;</p>
<p>7.1.b.1. Descriptions of the following forest resources at the stand level and summarized at the total forest level are included in the forest management plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Acreage</li> <li>•Timber inventory</li> <li>•Forest type</li> <li>•Soil type</li> <li>•Natural communities</li> <li>•Water resources</li> <li>•Fragile and unique areas</li> <li>•Fish, wildlife, and their habitats</li> <li>•Harvested non-timber forest products (e.g., botanical and mycological)</li> <li>•Non-economic natural resources (e.g., ground cover</li> </ul>	<p>C</p>	<p>Included in management plan (see, for example, 2010 PSF plan); the MFS also has a detailed GIS that is a component of the management plan and includes the forest resources listed in 7.1.b.1</p>

7.1.b.2. A general description of the history, including ownership and use, of the forest management area is included in the forest management plan.	C	Included in management plan (see, for example, 2010 PSF plan);
7.1.b.3. A general description of landowner and the forest management area includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•the landowner's name and address;</li> <li>•socio-economic context and conditions of the forest management area;</li> <li>•other interests in the property (e.g., conservation easements, hunting leases, usufruct rights and treaty rights, mineral rights, utility rights of ways);</li> <li>•significant plans to change ownership status or size of the forest management area;</li> <li>•the location, size, environmental limitations, and legal description of the forest management area and a profile (including ownership and use) of adjacent lands.</li> </ul>	C	Included in management plan (see, for example, 2010 PSF plan); some information is included in the management plan document and other information is available in the GIS or other MFS documents that represent components of the overall management plan
7.1.b.4. The management plan identifies relevant cultural and socioeconomic issues (e.g., traditional and customary rights of use, access, recreational uses, and employment), conditions (e.g., composition of the workforce, stability of employment, and changes in forest ownership and tenure), and areas of special significance (e.g., ceremonial and archeological sites).	C	General information, appropriate to the scale of operations, is included in management plan (see, for example, 2010 PSF plan);
7.1.b.5. The management plan incorporates landscape-level considerations within the ownership and among adjacent and nearby lands, including major water bodies, critical habitats, and riparian corridors shared with adjacent ownerships.	C	Included in management plan (see, for example, 2010 PSF plan);
<b>7.1.c. Description of silvicultural and/or other management system, based on the ecology of the forest in question and information gathered through resource inventories</b>	C	
7.1.c.1. Silvicultural prescriptions have a primary objective of perpetuating a sustainable forest ecosystem based on ecological parameters such as soil types, past harvest history, natural community types, and successional trends.	C	<b>See REC 2009.9 (CLOSED)</b> Management plans are explicitly targeted toward providing a sustainable flow of forest products while meeting other public demands and restoring the forest to more healthy conditions
7.1.c.2. Prescriptions are prepared prior to harvesting, site preparation, pest control, burning, and planting and are made available to people who carry out the prescriptions	C	Annual work plans contain detailed descriptions of management activities; such plans are reviewed by an interdisciplinary team of professionals and then made available to forest workers; the public is provided an opportunity to comment on annual work plans
<b>7.1.d. Rationale for the rate of annual harvest and species selection</b>	C	
7.1.d.1. The management plan includes reliable data on growth, yield, stocking, and regeneration (see also 5.6.b)	C	The management plan for the Chesapeake Forest includes a description of the a spatially explicit Woodstock model that is being developed; management of all forests is informed by recent CFI data; the January 2010 draft management plan for the Pocomoke State Forest contains preliminary wood supply analyses that are similar to the Chesapeake Forest's
7.1.d.2. Species selection meets the economic goals and objectives of the forest owner or manager, while maintaining or improving the ecological composition and structure and functions of the forest.	C	Forest managers strive to provide pine to area mills while fostering more diverse stand composition, where possible
7.1.d.3. A time line that includes a schedule for program level forest management activities to be implemented over a five-year planning horizon is	C	Management plans contain timelines, which are further supplemented by annual work plans

included in the forest management plan. Items to be addressed in the schedule include such activities as silviculture, monitoring, and assessment.		
7.1.e. . Provisions for monitoring forest growth and dynamics (see also Principle 8).	C	Monitored via CFI plots
7.1.e.1. Monitoring goals and objectives are stated in the management plan.	C	Included in management plan
7.1.f Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments.	C	Assessments completed by foresters and, where appropriate, ecologists and all management activities are subject to IDT review; Maryland Historical Trust now reviews annual work plans
7.1.f.1. Written safeguards are based on the results of environmental assessments (see 5.3, 6.1 and 2, and 8.2.d).	C	Included in management plan; note, also, that primary safeguards include zoning the forest according to species needs (e.g., FIDS and DFS habitat) and ecological sensitivity (i.e., ESAs); while in overall conformance with ESA protocols, there was at least one instance where the Heritage Program was not notified in advance of planned controlled burns in an ESA (see <b>CAR 2010.1</b> )
7.1.g. Plans for the identification and protection of rare, threatened, and endangered species.	C	Prepared and implemented by ecologists in the Wildlife and Heritage Service
7.1.g.1. The management plan provides descriptions of activities for maintaining sensitive, rare, threatened, or endangered species and their habitat(s)	C	Included in the management plan and annual work plans; the Wildlife and Heritage Service also prepares various technical reports and white papers related to specific conservation objectives
7.1.h. Maps describing the forest resource base, including protected areas, planned management activities, and land ownership.	C	The GIS is comprehensive and continues to evolve as more information is collected during field operations
7.1.h.1. The management plan includes maps of the forest's characteristics, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•relevant landscape-level factors;</li> <li>•property boundaries and roads;</li> <li>•timber production areas;</li> <li>•forest types by age and/or structure;</li> <li>•forest tracts mapped by community types;</li> <li>•topography;</li> <li>•soils, riparian zones (see Glossary) and springs and wetlands;</li> <li>•archaeological sites and cultural and customary use areas;</li> <li>•locations of and habitats for sensitive, rare, threatened, and endangered species; and</li> <li>•designated High Conservation Value Forests.</li> </ul>	C	Included in the management plan and GIS
7.1.i. Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used (see also Criterion 6.5). <i>Note: The working group considers this sub-criterion sufficiently explicit and measurable. Indicators are not required.</i>	C	<b>See REC 2009.10 (OPEN)</b> The description and justification for harvesting techniques and equipment to be used is achieved through contractor selection (i.e., choosing the contractor with a suitable equipment mix) and pre-harvest meetings with the contractor; interviews with foresters and contractors demonstrates that such assessments are being performed, but we recommend that such decisions be better documented
<b>C7.2. The management plan shall be periodically revised to incorporate the results of monitoring or new scientific and technical information, as well as to respond to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances.</b>	C	
7.2.a. The management plan is current and is reviewed and revised as necessary (at least every five years to coincide with certification re-assessments) to accommodate new research findings and the observed effects of previous practices, as well as changes in the resource base.	C	<b>See CAR 2009.4 (CLOSED)</b> The Chesapeake Forest management plan was recently updated and evidence is routinely provided to auditors demonstrating that the plan is reviewed and revised as necessary; the Pocomoke State Forest management plan was soon be out-of-date and in 2009 it was not clear how implementation of the Pocomoke management plan had been reviewed and revised as necessary during its

		implementation, which resulted in a CAR; the MFS prepared a new draft management plan for the PSF in January 2010; this plan will go through the normal intensive review process and is expected to be fully operational in Fall 2010
7.2.b. Relevant provisions of the management plan are modified in response to detrimental environmental effects of illegal and/or unauthorized activities, as documented by monitoring (e.g., road damage, depletion of timber and non-timber resources).	C	Short term responses to environmental effects or illegal use are frequently documented in annual work plans; management plans contain responses to environmental conditions, such as the periods of heavy rain during the last 5 years
7.2.c. Relevant provisions of the management plan are modified in response to changes in the forest due to unplanned disturbances (e.g. hurricanes, ice storms, floods, wildfire, pest outbreaks).	C	Plans are, or would be, modified as appropriate in response to such occurrences
<b>C7.3. Forest workers shall receive adequate training and supervision to ensure proper implementation of the management plan.</b> <i>Note: The working group considers this criterion sufficiently explicit and measurable. Indicators are not required.</i>	C	<b>See REC 2009.11 (CLOSED)</b> The Forest Service promotes worker training, but we recommend that they define the skill set needed for each major job category; this list of necessary skills could then be used to evaluate the need for additional training for individual staff members
<b>C7.4. While respecting the confidentiality of information, forest managers shall make publicly available a summary of the primary elements of the management plan, including those listed in Criterion 7.1.</b> <i>Applicability Note: Forest owners or managers of private forests may withhold proprietary information (e.g., the nature and extent of timber volumes by species, timber quality, size and age class, marketing strategies, and other financial information) (see also Criterion 8.5).</i>  <i>Note: The working group considers this criterion sufficiently explicit and measurable. Indicators are not required.</i>	C	<b>See MAJOR CAR 2009.1 (CLOSED)</b> Summaries of the management plan were either out-of-date (Chesapeake) or hadn't been prepared (Pocomoke); the Forest Service provided updated summaries shortly after the site visit; it should be noted that the Forest Service provides the entire content of all management plans and annual work plans on its website
<b>P9 Management activities in high conservation value forests shall maintain or enhance the attributes that define such forests. Decisions regarding high conservation value forests shall always be considered in the context of a precautionary approach.</b>		
<b>C9.1. Assessment to determine the presence of the attributes consistent with High Conservation Value Forests will be completed, appropriate to scale and intensity of forest management.</b> <i>Applicability Note: Small landowners who practice low intensity forestry may meet this requirement with brief, informal assessments. More extensive and detailed assessments (e.g., formal assessments by scientists) are expected by large landowners and/or those who practice more intensive forest management</i>	C	
9.1.a. Attributes and locations of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) are determined (in consultation with stakeholders and scientists) by: (1) Identification of globally scaled HCVF attributes that are present in the forest; (2) Identification and description of regionally and locally scaled HCVF attributes and areas that are in the landscape and/or certified forest; (3) Delineation by maps and habitat descriptions.	C	<b>See CAR 2009.2 (CLOSED)</b> <b>See CAR 2009.7 (CLOSED)</b> A public process was followed to define and identify HCVF on the Chesapeake Forest as part of the original certification of this area; a similar process was recently concluded for the Pocomoke State Forest;  A CAR (CLOSED) was issued in 2009 regarding demonstrating that protocols developed to ensure the protection of HCVFs on uncertified forests were being implemented; an additional CAR (CLOSED) was issued in 2009 regarding the relevance of HCVF

		designation to Delmarva fox squirrel (DFS) habitat
<p><b>C9.2. The consultative portion of the certification process must place emphasis on the identified conservation attributes, and options for the maintenance thereof (see 9.1.a and Note for 6.2).</b>  <i>Note: FSC understands that Criterion 9.2 is an instruction to FSC –accredited certification bodies and that no indicators are required.</i></p>	C	Parties involved in the Forest Service’s consultation process for HCVF designation were interviewed in 2009
<p><b>C9.3. The management plan shall include and implement specific measures that ensure the maintenance and/or enhancement of the applicable conservation attributes consistent with the precautionary approach. These measures shall be specifically included in the publicly available management plan summary.</b>  <i>Applicability Note: The applicability of the precautionary principle and the consequent flexibility of forest management vary with the size, configuration, and tenure of the HCVF:</i></p> <p>a) <i><b>More flexibility is appropriate where HCVF is less intact, larger in area, has a larger area-to-perimeter ratio, and its tenure is assured over the long term.</b></i></p> <p>b) <i><b>Less flexibility is appropriate where HCVF is more intact, covers a smaller area, has a smaller area-to-perimeter ratio, and future tenure is uncertain based on social considerations, and is consistent with Principle 3.</b></i></p> <p><i>In forests that take on the characteristics of a primary (“old-growth”) forest (see Glossary) as a result of management practices, harvesting is permitted, provided HCVF characteristics are maintained.</i></p>	C	
9.3.a. In intact old-growth forests (see Glossary) and un-entered old-growth stands (see Glossary), the precautionary principle requires that no active management is conducted unless it is ecologically necessary to maintain or enhance HCVF values, which includes old-growth attributes.	C	True old growth likely doesn’t exist on the subject forests; that said, the Forest Service has protected several late-successional stands from harvest
9.3.b. Management of HCVFs maintains or enhances their defining characteristics, their extent, and is implemented according to the management plan. A summary of the management activities planned for these forests is included in the publicly available summary of the management plan (see 7.4.1).	C	<b>See CAR 2009.8 (CLOSED)</b> <b>See REC 2009.14 (CLOSED)</b> Management efforts to maintain or enhance HCVFs are routine and documented in the management plan and annual work plans; a CAR (CLOSED), however, was issued in 2009 regarding providing summaries of such activities in the summary of the management plan; we also recommended in 2009 that more explicit descriptions of efforts to manage and conserve HCVF be provided in the management plan
9.3.c. Forest owners or managers of HCVFs (forests and/or stands) coordinate conservation efforts with owners and managers of other HCVFs within their landscape.	C	<b>See CAR 2009.2 (CLOSED)</b> See previous discussion regarding CAR; the Forest Service routinely consults with The Nature Conservancy and other conservation partners regarding forests with high conservation values
9.3.d Conservation zones are established to protect and/or maintain all managed, HCV old-growth forests (see Glossary). In these forests, the precautionary principle requires that no active management is conducted unless it is ecologically	C	True old growth stands are not found on the certified forests; late-successional stands are maintained and managed as part of the overall FIDS, DFS, ESA, and HCVF management system

acceptable and maintains or enhances HCVF values. Management of the conservation zones is described in the management plan and their locations are mapped.		
<p><b>C9.4. Annual monitoring shall be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the measures employed to maintain and enhance the applicable conservation attributes.</b></p> <p><i>Note: The working group considers this criterion sufficiently explicit and measurable. Indicators are not required.</i></p>	C	Most monitoring of HCVF is conducted by ecologists working for the Wildlife and Heritage Service

### 3.2 Stakeholder Comment

MD DNR and Vision Forestry have not received any substantial stakeholder complaints or disputes since the previous annual audit, and stakeholder consultation by the audit team has not revealed any further stakeholder complaints or disputes. General observations from some stakeholders were presented in the appropriate sections above.

### 3.3 Controversial Issues

No exceptionally controversial or difficult issues presented themselves during this surveillance audit.

### 3.4 Changes in Certificate Scope

No change in scope.