

Maryland DNR Forest Service

Tawes Building, 580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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

1st Surveillance Audit





NSF Forestry Program Audit Report

A. Certificate Holder Information

Certificate Holder	Maryland DNR Forest Service
Customer Number	0Y301
Contact Information (Name, title, phone & email)	Jack Perdue, Forest Resource Planning 410-260-8505 (office), jack.perdue@maryland.gov
Scope of Certification	The forest management program of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources on the following Maryland State Forests: Chesapeake Forest Lands, Pocomoke State Forest, Green Ridge State Forest, Garrett State Forest, Potomac State Forest and the Savage River State Forest. SFI Forest Management code: NSF-SFI-FM-0Y301.
Scope is accurate and appropriate, and matches on certificate, FRS and audit plan.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Locations Included in the Certification Note: may be listed as plain text or included in an appendix or a separate file.	Chesapeake Forest Lands Pocomoke State Forest Green Ridge State Forest Garrett State Forest Potomac State Forest Savage River State Forest
Significant Changes to Operations or to the Standard(s)	No significant changes

B. Audit Team

Lead Auditor	Michelle Matteo, Sr. NSF Lead Auditor
Audit Team Member(s)	Beth Jacqumain

C. Site Visits

Date and Location of Each Visit	21-23 July 2020: Chesapeake Forest Lands and Pocomoke State Forest
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D. Audit Results

Auditor Recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/> Grant, maintain or renew certification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant, maintain or renew certification pending closure of CARs <input type="checkbox"/> Grant, maintain or renew certification pending follow-up assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Do not grant, maintain or renew certification (notify NSF office immediately)
Number and Summary of Findings of "Exceeds the Requirements"	One – SFI 11.1.2: Assignment and understanding of roles and responsibilities for achieving <i>SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard objectives</i> . Excellent communication exists between the MD-DNR Forest Service and Parker Forestry Service. This relationship allows a seamless working relationship between the two entities.



Number and Summary of Findings of “Opportunity for Improvement”	<p>One-</p> <p>SFI 11.1.3: Staff education and training sufficient to their roles and responsibilities. OFI: While the seed mix used on landings and roads has been previously approved by State Wildlife staff for food plots and for the Erosion and Sediment Control plan, there is an opportunity to improve staff education and training as it relates to the seed mixture (species and ratios) currently being applied on landings and roads, as only non-native, naturalized species are being used.</p> <p>2020 audit note: Interviews with other DNR staff display that native seed mixes are available as an option and are worth discussing with Forestry – this OFI remains open.</p>
Number and Summary of Findings of “Minor Nonconformity”	<p>One -</p> <p>SFI 14.1.1: The summary audit report submitted by the Program Participant (one copy must be in English), shall include, at a minimum,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">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; andthe certification decision. <p>The summary audit report will be posted on the SFI Inc. website (www.sfiprogram.org) for public review.</p> <p>CAR: The April 2019 Recertification Audit is not present on the SFI website, and there is no evidence/confirmation that it has been submitted.</p>
Number and Summary of Findings of “Major Nonconformity”	0
Summary of review of nonconformities from previous audit(s)	<p>One Minor CAR:</p> <p>SFI 11.1.4: Contractor education and training sufficient to their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Minor: This process is not fully effective.</p> <p>Evidence: Contract logger is a MD Master Logger, however there were issues with the equipment on-site. Dozer was persistently leaking on site onto the soil below the equipment, some oil was observed on the soil below the Skidder. Logger was not on site. No apparent safety equipment (no fire extinguishers & spill kits observed on all 3 machines on an active site), however, later interview stated that the fire extinguishers were behind the seats of the skidder and harvester out of view. Recent BMP inspection conducted by forester noted no issues.</p> <p>Closed: To better ensure fluid leaks are prevented, contained and cleaned up appropriately we have taken the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drafted the Standard Operating Procedures For Woodland Spill Management - Attachment F which will be part of all timber sale contracts.• This guidance document was based on a review of relevant Maryland regulations and conversations with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), the department enforcing fuel spill regulations.• Review of the Maryland Master Logger Program (MLP), required training for all logging contractors harvesting on Maryland state forests. The MLP has a



component on handling logging fuel spills which is based on prevention, containment, and clean up.

- Revised the Internal Silvicultural Audit inspection form to include for reviews of active logging jobs for personal protection equipment, spill kits, fire extinguishers, and first aid kits.
- Revised Best Management Practices (BMP) Checklist includes a review of fuel or oil leaks and safety equipment.

Seven OFIs:

SFI 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.

OFI: Regeneration criteria are forest-type specific. Confirmed that Western SFs use Oak-SILVAH for criteria and for protocols for regeneration surveys. No regeneration delays were observed in the field. Although planting is rare, there is an opportunity for improvement in the regeneration criteria in order to achieve acceptable species and stocking levels for naturally regenerating stands in the Eastern Region.

Closed: The guidance for forest regeneration criteria for the Chesapeake Forest Lands and Pocomoke State Forest can be found in the Policy and Procedures Handbook for the Chesapeake Forest Lands & Pocomoke State Forest (Updated: 2020.03.13). Specifically, beginning on page 8 of the P&P Handbook under the Forest Regeneration heading. Also, in that same document, Appendix K displays the Decision Tree For Regenerating Mixed Hardwood-Pine Stands.

SFI 2.2.5: Use of Pesticides banned under the Stockholm convention and Persistent Organic pollutants.

OFI: Although Pesticides are currently checked to the FSC checklist, there is an opportunity to improve the chemical review process, both internally and with external contractors, to ensure that current and future uses of pesticides that are banned under the Stockholm convention and Persistent Organic pollutants are not being used.

Closed: To address the issue of all pesticides used within our certification scope we the State Forest managers communicated with the utility companies working across our management units. They learned that some utilities have used pesticides on their Right-of-Way management that may be on the banned pesticide list. Pesticide use reporting on has been cryptic at best and in some incidences considered proprietary. We came to the conclusion it is best to remove these areas from our scope. Those acres excised from our forest certification scope. Our revised certified acres are 209,207. Staff members now routinely cross check the chemicals used against the Stockholm convention and Persistent Organic pollutants list.

SFI 3.1.3: Monitoring of overall best management practices implementation.

OFI: The organization currently conducts BMP monitoring with written checklists. Different checklists are used in the Eastern Shore and the Western SFs. There is an opportunity to improve the similarity of criteria used in the West vs the Eastern Shore (example with the criteria for 1-5 verses Yes NO and NA noted) in order to help improve consistency of evaluation of BMP effectiveness.

Closed: A revised FOREST HARVEST OPERATIONS – HARVEST SITE REVIEW ON STATE LANDS was created and has been in use. The responses available to the state forest staff are simplified with NA, Yes, and No. At the top of the document is listed the Evaluation System for these responses.



SFI 8.2.1 *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.

OFI: Although the Chesapeake/Pocomoke Forest Citizens Advisory Committee member has been recently established, there is an opportunity to continue efforts and seek input from indigenous people, including all MD State Forest regions, as the last formal outreach efforts were completed 5-6 years ago and per interview, there is not a regularly scheduled interval to re-evaluate the MD DNR SF outreach efforts.

Closed: During the 2019 audit an email communication from the Chesapeake Forest Lands office (dated April 3, 2019) was shared with the audit team that indicated that we did reach out to the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA) with a notice regarding an opportunity to have a native American member on the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). Since the 2019 audit (Feb 2020), we sent a personal invitation to MCIA to review our state forests for annual work plans and to follow up regarding CAC representation. A member has been appointed to the CAC.

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

OFI: There is an opportunity to improve the assignment and understanding of roles and responsibilities as it relates to contract requirements, per review of the Stone Mountain Road contract #0217. Internal contractual documents were incomplete on one page of the contract; per interview with multiple DNR staff, there were differing thoughts as to who was responsible for noting the official date and signature on the contract, i.e.: State Forest Staff vs. Central Office staff in Annapolis.

Closed: We have had internal discussions in how timber sale contracts are to be administered. This issue specifically, who enters the contract beginning date at the top of the timber sale contract has been an issue but has been resolved by the Department of Natural Resources Procurement office. Procurement has stated to us regarding the contract beginning date is to be signed after the contract has been approved and before it is returned to the logging contractor. The date is to be entered by the Forest Resource Planning program manager who administers timber sales for the Department of Natural Resources.

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

OFI: While the seed mix used on landings and roads has been previously approved by State Wildlife staff for food plots and for the Erosion and Sediment Control plan, there is an opportunity to improve staff education and training as it relates to the seed mixture (species and ratios) currently being applied on landings and roads, as only non-native, naturalized species are being used.

Open: The primary purpose for these seed mix is to provide a quick, reliable covering for disturbed soils and it provides that. It has been used for many years without an incident of being invasive. This seed mix was suggested by our Wildlife & Heritage Service as a good mix for wildlife benefits. It is preferred by our State Forest managers since it is readily available for purchase by logging contractors



	<p>from local sources and based on its quality, price and productivity. It has been our experience that this planting falls out (diminishes) after about 5-years and must be disked and replanted to maintain these open areas that also serve as wildlife food plots. One of these re-establishment sites was visited during the 2019 audit at Green Ridge State Forest.</p> <p>2020 audit note: Interviews with other DNR staff display that native seed mixes are available as an option and are worth discussing with Forestry – this OFI remains open.</p> <p>SFI 15.1.2: System for collecting, reviewing, and reporting information to management regarding progress in achieving <i>SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard objectives and performance measures</i>.</p> <p>OFI: Currently the document “Internal Review-ISA-FIELD-CHECKLIST-ALL-SF- is used; there is an opportunity to consider using other foresters from different regions to help strengthen and improve current auditing processes.</p> <p>Closed: When we first established our Internal Silvicultural Audit program, we considered many options. The first teams included members of the Interdisciplinary Teams (IDT). Later, we tested an option that included staff from other state forests units. Ultimately, we decided a review including the just the State Forest staff, the regional forester (State Forest manager supervisor) and the forest certification coordinator was the optimal review team. This provided direct review by the regional forester and continuity of the reviews from the forest certification coordinator.</p> <p>Our Internal Silvicultural Audit field document has been revised to better reflect issues to be addressed for silviculture review.</p>
Notes from Opening and Closing Meetings	Opening meeting was held outside the Snow Hill Office. Closing meeting was held with limited attendees in-person and the remainder of attendees calling into a conference call. These changes were made due to COVID-19 protocols.
All logos and/or labels, including ANSI, ANAB, SFI, PEFC, ATFS, etc. are utilized correctly in accordance with NSF policies.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes – Website usage. <input type="checkbox"/> No (a finding of nonconformity should be issued) <input type="checkbox"/> N/A (not using any labels or logos on any marketing materials, website, finished products, etc.)

E. Surveillance Review

Explain how the management system is capable of meeting the applicable requirements and expected outcomes of the audit	
Answer	<p>MD DNR has demonstrated effective implementation by having their annual internal audits (2019-20) and management reviews each fiscal year (viewed 2019). NSF auditor reviewed documented internal audits and management reviews, which demonstrate continued commitment by the organization. The organization addressed all internal/external findings including the recent external CAR & OFIs issued by NSF in FY 2019. Leadership commitment was demonstrated during the field portion of the audit. The Annapolis Director /State Forester and Associate Director Forester have oversight and input into management system, were actively engaged in communications during a portion of this year’s NSF field audit. This interaction demonstrated leadership commitment and the willingness to contribute to meeting the MDNR objectives in forest certification.</p>



F. Recertification Review

Consider the performance of the program over the cycle through a review of all audits in the previous certification cycle, internal audits, management reviews, corrective actions and continual improvement. Describe the evidence supporting:

- effective interaction between all parts of the program and its overall effectiveness,
- overall effectiveness of the system in its entirety considering internal and external changes,
- demonstrated commitment by top management to maintain the system and maintain continuous improvement,
- program contribution to the achievement of the client’s policy and objectives, and the intended results.

If there were any repeat findings during the audit cycle that indicate systemic issues, explain how they were addressed.

Answer

N/A, surveillance audit.

G. 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	Multi-site Checklist
Appendix 5	Site Visit Notes
Appendix 6	Meeting Attendance
Appendix 7	Forestry Program COVID-19 Report Appendix



Appendix 1

Audit Notification Letter

5 June 2020

Jack Perdue, Maryland DCR Forest Service
580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SFI® Forest Management Surveillance Audit (S1 audit)

Dear Mr. Perdue,

As we discussed, I will be conducting your SFI® surveillance audit as described in the attached itinerary. Please confirm that these dates are still appropriate for the audit of your program's continued conformance to the standards noted below:

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

Preparing for the Audit

A key part of the audit is a review of selected evidence related to your program, which may include:

- Receiving documents for raw material
- Supplier documentation of certification
- Approval for logo usage (if used)
- Verification of Controversial Sources
- Internal Audit records
- Management Review records
- Documentation for subcontracting/outsourcing
- Documentation for multisite organization (if applicable)
- Policies regarding certification, health, and safety
- Forest Management Plans
- Contracts for harvesting and silvicultural activities
- Documentation for monitoring, non-conformances identified and corrective action
- Training records, license, certifications
- Documentation for operation of complaint procedure

Please have this information available for me **during the audit**.

During this S1 audit, we will focus on the following SFI Objectives and Performance Measure (PM)/Indicators: Objective 1, Objective 9, Objective 11, Objective 12, Objective 13, Objective 14, and Objective 15, as well as findings from the 2019 audit: OFIs - 2.1.1, 2.2.5, 3.1.3, 8.2.1, 11.1.2, 11.1.3, 15.1.2, & Minor CAR - 11.1.4.

Scope of Certification: The forest management program of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources on the following Maryland State Forests: Chesapeake Forest Lands, Pocomoke State Forest, Green Ridge State Forest, Garrett State Forest, Potomac State Forest, and the Savage River State Forest. SFI Forest Management code: NSF-SFI-FM-0Y301.



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:

Courtney P. Guillen

Coordinator, Statistics and Label Use

Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Inc.

202.719.1392 ext. 338

Courtney.Guillen@sfiprogram.org

Multi-Site Sampling Plan

Your responsibilities for Public Lands Stewardship include the role of “central administration” for this multi-site program. We will review the SFI multi-site requirements during the office/document review time of the audit.

The following sites are included in the overall scope: **Chesapeake Forest Lands, Pocomoke State Forest**, Green Ridge State Forest, Garrett State Forest, Potomac State Forest, and the Savage River State Forest. The 2020 audit will include 2 of these 6, as follows and noted in bold above: Pocomoke State Forest, and Chesapeake State Forest. These forests were selected to include a broad cross-section of activities and of the sites, and to facilitate travel. Random sampling was not employed in the selection of these 2 forests but is used in the selection of sites to be visited.

Field Site Selection

Preliminary site selections include preparing a candidate site list of forest stands or areas harvested in the past 2 years with associated forestry environmental risk categories including FECV, RT&E, road construction, riparian areas, and other unique/special sites. Please provide this to your auditor(s) before July 7th 2020.

The NSF team will select an initial subset of sites for your certificate and will ask for supplemental information on these sites, including their accessibility and the likelihood of being actively harvested during the visit. Once we review this information, we will select a subsample of sites to visit. Final site selection will occur during the opening meeting of the audit. On the opening day of the audit, we would ask you to tell us about any sales that are being worked at that time, and we would add one or two of these if possible. Staff should be prepared to review audit routes each morning.

Total number of field sites to visit has been reduced due to COVID-19 health and travel considerations, reducing the interactions between staff and auditors on-site and allowing sufficient time to conduct remote interviews (phone/Skype/WhatsApp/etc.) with staff and stakeholders while on-site for the audit.

Audit Logistics

Travel: Auditors travel in to arrive by evening of Mon. 20 July 2020. Beth Arrive BWI: 5:29 PM, Michelle Arrive Mon: TBD

Rental Car: Auditors to have a rental car for travel to audit start and end locations. Auditors will not travel in State employee vehicles due to COVID-19 concerns; daily auditor travel will also be in the auditor’s rental vehicle.

Lodging: Auditors to book lodging in coordination with MD-DNR staff. 20 July 2020 - auditors to stay at the Hampton Inn, Salisbury, MD. Remaining nights location TBD.

Meals: Auditor and State employees will be limiting shared meals together, using takeout/prepared meals/delivery service. Daily lunches in the field will either be prepared lunches or purchased directly by auditors in the mornings.

Meetings & Conference Rooms: Meetings will be held outside where possible; if held indoors, social distancing and mask wearing will be required. Separate COVID-19 detailed guidance will be sent via email, as part of NSF’s Health and Safety Process. Auditors have been notified that the MD-DNR COVID-19 policy can be found at: <https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2020/05/06/frequently-asked-questions-about-governor-hogans-stay-at-home-order/> and we will adhere to your policy.

Document Exchange: We will be using a shared document drive such as Google Drive or Dropbox to share and access files. Please be prepared to upload any requested documents in advance of the audit, as we will limit sharing of paper documents among each other during the audit.

Staff and Stakeholder Interviews: Due to COVID-19 health concerns, we will be conducting some interviews remotely, rather than face-to-face as occurs on a typical audit. Contact information and schedules will have to be well-coordinated, so that auditors can achieve the needed interviews while maintaining social distancing.



Auditor contact information

Michelle Matteo, SFI Lead auditor, team FSC auditor - 413.265.3714 mmatteo@nsf.org

Beth Jacqmain, FSC Lead auditor, team SFI auditor – 218.256.2959 BJacqmain@scsglobalservices.com

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 "Michelle L. Matteo". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light gray rectangular background.

Michelle Matteo

Lead Auditor and Forestry Program Manager, NSF

413.265.3714

mmatteo@nsf.org



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 to the following Standards: SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules: Section 2, Forest Management

Schedule

21 July 2020 Tuesday	8:00 am	MD-DCR Pocomoke State Forest & Chesapeake Forest Lands Snow Hill Office, 6572 Snow Hill Rd, Snow Hill, MD	Michelle Matteo (MM) SFI lead auditor and Beth Jacqmain (BJ) SFI team auditor
		MD-DCR Pocomoke State Forest (PSF) & Chesapeake State Forest (CSF): Opening Meeting held outside the Snow Hill Office: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductions, Roles, and Audit Objectives Review Audit Procedures Discuss changes to the Facility Record Sheet (contact information, billing information, review scope, etc.) Overview by your staff of program Emergency and safety procedures for evaluation team Agenda Review; determine interviewees Discussion of corrective action requests / plans Overview of Logo or Label use Field Site Selection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predetermined initial list of sites used as a basis for selections Final site selections completed, including additional active sites where present 	
	10:00 am	Field site visits - Pocomoke SF & Chesapeake SF	
	4:30 pm	Daily debriefing	
22 July 2020 Wednesday	8:00 am	Pocomoke State Forest (SF) & Chesapeake SF	MM & BJ
22 July 2020 Wednesday	8:00 am	Office of Parker Forestry Services, contracted company for silvicultural work on PSF & CSF: 1323 Mount Hermon Rd, Ste 8B, Salisbury, MD Abbreviated opening; brief SF overview	MM & BJ
	8:30 am	Field site visits - Pocomoke SF and Chesapeake SF	
	4:30 pm	Daily debriefing	



23 July 2020 Thursday	9:00 am	Snow Hill Office, Auditors use conference room, attendees to the closing meeting call into conference call.	MM & BJ
23 July 2020 Thursday	9:00 am	Document and systems reviews, including Central Office, management system review, GIS, staff interviews Remaining Issues	MM & BJ
	2:00 pm	Closed deliberations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completion of audit checklist• Prepare for closing meeting - Auditor(s) take time to consolidate notes and confirm audit findings	
	4:00 pm	Closing Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review preliminary findings (potential non-conformities and observations)• Discuss next steps	
	4:30 pm	End	

** Audit conducted jointly with the FSC FM audit; times approximate and may vary.



Appendix 2

Maryland DNR Forest Service 2020 SFI® Forest Management Summary Report

Introduction

The SFI Program of the Maryland DNR Forest Service of Annapolis, Maryland has achieved continuing conformance with the SFI® 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard, including the sustainable harvest level requirement (Performance Measure 1.1), according to the NSF SFI-FS Certification Audit Process.

The Maryland DNR Forest Service initially obtained SFI Certification from NSF on July 24, 2003 and the program was re-certified in July 2006. Initially only the Chesapeake Forest Lands were certified, with the Pocomoke State Forest added in 2009 as part of an expansion of scope that included other recently acquired lands. In 2011 the organization sought and was granted recertification to the current scope based on an audit of the six largest state forests against the SFI 2010-2014 Standard. The state forests included in the current scope were re-certified to the SFI 2015-2019 Standards in April of 2014 and again in April 2019. The most recent audit was a partial surveillance audit conducted July 2020.

The multi-site certificate covers 6 different State Forests (Chesapeake Forest, Pocomoke State Forest, Green Ridge State Forest, Garrett State Forest, Potomac State Forest, and Savage River State Forests) also including the central office located in Annapolis MD. The 2019 audit included office reviews in the following Chesapeake Forest, Pocomoke State Forest, Green Ridge State Forest, and the central office located in Annapolis, MD. Field visits were conducted in 2 out of a total of 6 State Forests. This sample size was determined using the guidelines set forth in IAF-MD1. The State Foresters were selected based on a date rotation of total 6 different Forests. Approximately half of the field sites visited were randomly sampled. Within the 2 selected 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 NSF's protocols and procedures. 2 field offices, 1 central office and 12 field sites were visited, a smaller set of field sites was visited in 2020, in order to limit staff and auditor interactions, due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.

The 12 field sites consisting of the 1 active timber harvest (softwood 2nd thinning), 6 recently closed sale with wildlife considerations, 1 with herbicide application with invasive species, 3 High Conservation Forest, 3 planting sites, 1 Pre-commercial thinning site, 3 demonstration forests, and 1 research site (some sites met multiple considerations and are noted for each of those above). Both thinnings and final harvests were viewed for multiple sites. There were also several roads, several smaller road-trail/stream crossings with cross drains and BMPs being applied. Harvest levels are documented in Annual Work Plans and have been at or below levels identified in plans for MD DNR associated inventory and growth data as well as harvest-related planning documents are used to ensure that plans include long term harvest level and consistent with the growth and yield model generated by the PGSF and SRSF. Data from the 5-year stand-level inventory project was used to develop a volume-control target based allowable harvest levels for western forests.

Maryland DNR Forest Service has an extensive program for harvest planning and approval. A Sustainable Forest Management Plan has been developed for each forest, and these plans are regularly updated. Harvests levels have been modeled by forest type for sustainability by area control for a 50-year planning horizon. Based on the Sustainable Forest Management Plan an Annual Work Plan is developed for each forest including planned harvests and other management activities. The Annual Work Plan is reviewed by various agencies in the Maryland DNR, and a Citizen's Advisory Team. It is also posted on the Maryland DNR Forest Service website for public comment for a period of 30 days. Following review of comments, the finalized plan is approved and posted on the Maryland DNR Forest Service website.

This report describes the results of the 2020 Surveillance Audit which considered changes in operations, the management review system, and efforts at continuous improvement. A sample of the SFI requirements were selected for detailed review.

Maryland's State Forests

Maryland DNR Forest Service is responsible for the management of the 209,207 acres of Maryland State Forests through a variety of designations. The Forest Service is supported by other agencies within the Department of Natural Resources including Wildlife, Fisheries, Heritage, and the Natural Resources Police. Various management plans provide a useful summary of the importance of these forestlands and the broad policy goals:

Excerpted from the Savage River State Forest Management Plan:

'The resources and values provided from state forests reach people throughout the State and beyond. These resources and values range from economic too aesthetic and from scientific too inspirational. The Department of Natural Resources is mandated by law to consider a wide variety of issues and uses when pursuing a management



strategy for these forests. The importance of considering these factors is acknowledged in the Annotated Code, which establishes the following policy pertaining to state forests and parks:

"Forests, streams, valleys, wetlands, parks, scenic, historic and recreation areas of the state are basic assets. Their proper use, development, and preservation are necessary to protect and promote the health, safety, economy and general welfare of the people of the state. It is the policy of the state to encourage the economic development and the use of its natural resources for the improvement of the local economy, preservation of natural beauty, and promotion of the recreational and leisure interest throughout the state." (Annotated Code of Maryland, Natural Resources Article §5-102)

The Department recognizes the many benefits provided by state forests and has established a corresponding management policy in regulation.

"The state forests are managed to promote the coordinated uses of their varied resources and values for the benefit of all people, for all time. Water, wildlife, wood, natural beauty and opportunities for natural environmental recreation, wildlands experience, research demonstration areas, and outdoor education are major forest benefits." (Code of Maryland Regulations 08.07.01.01)

The 2020 Surveillance Audit was performed by NSF on July 21-23, 2020 by an audit team headed by Michelle Matteo Sr. Lead Auditor. Beth Jacqmain was the Sr. FSC Lead Auditor and supported the NSF lead auditor for SFI. Audit team members fulfill the qualification criteria for conducting audits contained in SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules, Section 9 - Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation.

The objective of the audit was to assess conformance of the firm's SFI Program to the requirements of the SFI 2015-2019 Standard and Rules, Section 2 – Forest Management.

The scope of the audit included forest management operations. Forest practices that were the focus of field inspections included those that have been under active management over the planning period of the past 2 years. In addition, practices conducted earlier were also reviewed as appropriate (regeneration and BMP issues, for example); SFI obligations to promote sustainable forestry practices, to seek legal compliance, and to incorporate continual improvement systems were also within the scope of the audit.

The SFI Standard was used without modifying any requirements. SFI requirements that are outside of the scope of Maryland's SFI program were excluded from the scope of the SFI Certification Audit as follows:

- Indicator 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. Maryland DNR Forest Service does not participate in research on genetically engineered trees.

Audit Process

NSF initiated the SFI audit process with a series of planning phone calls and emails to reconfirm the scope of the audit, review the SFI Indicators and evidence to be used to assess conformance, verify that Maryland DNR Forest Service was prepared to proceed to the SFI Audit, and to prepare a detailed audit plan.

The audit was governed by a detailed audit plan designed to enable the audit team to efficiently determine conformance with the applicable requirements. The plan provided for the assembly and review of audit evidence consisting of documents, interviews, and on-site inspections of ongoing or completed forest practices.

During the audit NSF reviewed a sample of the written documentation assembled to provide objective evidence of conformance. NSF also selected field sites for inspection based upon the risk of environmental impact, likelihood of occurrence, special features, and other criteria outlined in the NSF protocols. NSF selected and interviewed stakeholders such as contract loggers, landowners and other interested parties, and interviewed employees within the organization to confirm that the SFI Standard was understood and actively implemented. The activities of the central office were reviewed against the multi-site requirements as well.

The possible findings of the audit included conformance, major non-conformance, minor non-conformance, opportunities for improvement, and practices that exceeded the requirements of the standard.

A report was prepared and final approval was done by an independent Certification Board Member assigned by NSF. Follow-up or Surveillance Audits are required by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard[®]. The next Surveillance Audit is scheduled for the first week of April 2021.



Overview of Audit Findings

Maryland's SFI Program demonstrated conformance against the SFI 2015-2019 Standard. There was one non-conformance in 2020, and one "Opportunities for Improvement". As such, the program has earned continuing certification with the minor non-conformance.

Six OFIs identified in the 2019 audit have been resolved, one remains open:

1. **SFI 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.
OFI: Regeneration criteria are forest-type specific. Confirmed that Western SFs use Oak-SILVAH for criteria and for protocols for regeneration surveys. No regeneration delays were observed in the field. Although planting is rarely done, there is an opportunity for improvement in the regeneration criteria in order to achieve acceptable species and stocking levels for naturally regenerating stands in the Eastern Region.
Closed: The guidance for forest regeneration criteria for the Chesapeake Forest Lands and Pocomoke State Forest can be found in the Policy and Procedures Handbook for the Chesapeake Forest Lands & Pocomoke State Forest. Also, in that same document, Appendix K displays the Decision Tree For Regenerating Mixed Hardwood-Pine Stands.
2. **SFI 2.2.5:** Use of Pesticides banned under the Stockholm convention and Persistent Organic pollutants.
OFI: Although Pesticides are currently checked against the FSC checklist, there is an opportunity to improve the chemical review process, both internally and with external contractors, to ensure that current and future uses of pesticides does not include pesticides banned under the Stockholm convention and Persistent Organic pollutants are not being used.
Closed: To address the issue of all pesticides used within our certification scope we the State Forest managers communicated with the utility companies working across our management units. They learned that some utilities have used pesticides on their Right-of-Way management that may be on the banned pesticide list. Pesticide use reporting on has been cryptic at best and in some incidences considered proprietary. We came to the conclusion it is best to remove these areas from our scope. Those acres excised from our forest certification scope. Staff members now routinely cross check the chemicals used against the Stockholm convention and Persistent Organic pollutants list.
3. **SFI 3.1.3:** Monitoring of overall best management practices implementation.
OFI: The organization currently conducts BMP monitoring with written checklists. Different checklists are used in the Eastern Shore and the Western SFs. There is an opportunity to improve the difference in criteria used in the West vs the Eastern Shore (example with the criteria for 1-5 verses Yes NO and NA noted) in efforts to help improve consistency for evaluation of BMP effectiveness.
Closed: A revised FOREST HARVEST OPERATIONS – HARVEST SITE REVIEW ON STATE LANDS was created and has been in use.
4. **SFI 8.2.1** *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.**OFI:** Although the Chesapeake/Pocomoke Forest Citizens Advisory Committee member has been recently established, there is an opportunity to continue efforts and seek input from indigenous people, including all MD State Forest regions, as the last formal outreach efforts were completed 5-6 years ago and per interview, there is not a regularly scheduled interval to re-evaluate the MD DNR SF outreach efforts.
Closed: During the 2019 audit an email communication from the Chesapeake Forest Lands office (dated April 3, 2019) was shared with the audit team that indicated that we did reach out to the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA) with a notice regarding an opportunity to have a native American member on the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). Since the 2019 audit (Feb 2020), we sent a personal invitation to MCIA to review our state forests for annual work plans and to follow up regarding CAC representation. A member has been appointed to the CAC.



5. **SFI 11.1.2** Assignment and understanding of roles and responsibilities for achieving *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard objectives*.
OFI: There is an opportunity to improve the assignment and understanding of roles and responsibilities as it relates to contract requirements, per review of the Stone Mountain Road contract #0217. Internal contractual documents were incomplete on one page of the contract; per interview with multiple DNR staff, there were differing thoughts as to who was responsible for noting the official date and signature on the contract, i.e.: State Forest Staff vs. Central Office staff in Annapolis.
Closed: This issue specifically, who enters the contract beginning date at the top of the timber sale contract has been an issue but has been resolved by the Department of Natural Resources Procurement office. Procurement has stated to us regarding the contract beginning date is to be signed after the contract has been approved and before it is returned to the logging contractor. The date is to be entered by the Forest Resource Planning program manager who administers timber sales for the Department of Natural Resources.
6. **SFI 11.1.3** Staff education and training sufficient to their roles and responsibilities.
OFI: While the seed mix used on landings and roads has been previously approved by State Wildlife staff for food plots and for the Erosion and Sediment Control plan, there is an opportunity to improve staff education and training as it relates to the seed mixture (species and ratios) currently being applied on landings and roads, as only non-native, naturalized species are being used.
Open: The primary purpose for these seed mix is to provide a quick, reliable covering for disturbed soils and it provides that. It has been used for many years without an incident of being invasive. This seed mix was suggested by our Wildlife & Heritage Service as a good mix for wildlife benefits. It is preferred by our State Forest managers since it is readily available for purchase by logging contractors from local sources and based on its quality, price and productivity. It has been our experience that this planting falls out (diminishes) after about 5-years and must be disked and replanted to maintain these open areas that also serve as wildlife food plots. One of these re-establishment sites was visited during the 2019 audit at Green Ridge State Forest.
2020 audit note: Communications with other DNR staff display that native seed mixes are available as an option and are worth discussing with Forestry – this OFI remains open.
7. **SFI 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*.
OFI: Currently the document “Internal Review-ISA-FIELD-CHECKLIST-ALL-SF- is used. There is an opportunity to consider using other foresters from different regions to help strength and improve current auditing processes.
Closed: When we first established our Internal Silvicultural Audit program, we considered many options. The first teams included members of the Interdisciplinary Teams (IDT). Later, we tested an option that included staff from other state forests units. Ultimately, we decided a review including the just the State Forest staff, the regional forester (State Forest manager supervisor) and the forest certification coordinator was the optimal review team. This provided direct review by the regional forester and continuity of the reviews from the forest certification coordinator.
Our Internal Silvicultural Audit field document has been revised to better reflect issues to be addressed for silviculture review.

One Minor CAR identified in the 2019 audit has been resolved:

1. Contract logger is a MD Master Logger, however there were issues with the equipment on-site. Dozer was persistently leaking on site onto the soil below the equipment, some oil was observed on the soil below the Skidder. Logger was not on site. No apparent safety equipment (no fire extinguishers & spill kits observed on all 3 machines on an active site), however, later interview stated that the fire extinguishers were behind the seats of the skidder and harvester out of view. Recent BMP inspection conducted by forester noted no issues. This process is not fully effective for SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules®, Section 2 – Forest Management, Indicator 11.1.4 Contractor education and training sufficient to their roles and responsibilities.
Closed: To better ensure fluid leaks are prevented, contained and cleaned up appropriately we have taken the following steps:
 - Drafted the Standard Operating Procedures For Woodland Spill Management - Attachment F which will be part of all timber sale contracts.
 - This guidance document was based on a review of relevant Maryland regulations and conversations with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), the department enforcing fuel spill regulations. MDE contacts included:
 - Geoffrey Donahue, Chief of Emergency Response Division — (410) 537-4460
 - Thomas Walter, Chief of Compliance for Oil Control Program — (410) 537-3473
 - Review of the Maryland Master Logger Program (MLP), required training for all logging contractors harvesting on Maryland state forests. The MLP has a component on handling logging fuel spills which is based on prevention, containment, and clean up.



- Revised the Internal Silvicultural Audit inspection form to include for reviews of active logging jobs for personal protection equipment, spill kits, fire extinguishers, and first aid kits.
- Revised Best Management Practices (BMP) Checklist includes a review of fuel or oil leaks and safety equipment.

There was one new Non-Conformance in the 2020 audit:

1. **SFI 14.1.1:** 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*. The April 2019 Recertification Audit is not present on the SFI website, no confirmation was provided that it has been submitted. Progress in implementing this corrective action plan will be reviewed in subsequent surveillance audits.

There was 1 OFI that was not closed and remains open in 2020:

1. **SFI 11.1.3** Staff education and training sufficient to their roles and responsibilities.
OFI: While the seed mix used on landings and roads has been previously approved by State Wildlife staff for food plots and for the Erosion and Sediment Control plan, there is an opportunity to improve staff education and training as it relates to the seed mixture (species and ratios) currently being applied on landings and roads, as only non-native, naturalized species are being used.
Open: The primary purpose for these seed mix is to provide a quick, reliable covering for disturbed soils and it provides that. It has been used for many years without an incident of being invasive. This seed mix was suggested by our Wildlife & Heritage Service as a good mix for wildlife benefits. It is preferred by our State Forest managers since it is readily available for purchase by logging contractors from local sources and based on its quality, price and productivity. It has been our experience that this planting falls out (diminishes) after about 5-years and must be disked and replanted to maintain these open areas that also serve as wildlife food plots. One of these re-establishment sites was visited during the 2019 audit at Green Ridge State Forest.
2020 audit note: Communications with other DNR staff display that native seed mixes are available as an option and are worth discussing with Forestry – this OFI remains open.
This finding does not indicate a current deficiency, but served to alert Maryland DNR Forest Service to areas that could be strengthened or which could merit future attention.

NSF also identified the following areas where forestry practices and operations of Maryland DNR Forest Service exceed the basic requirements of the standard:

There was one area where the forestry program of Maryland DNR's Forest Service "Exceeds the Requirements":

1. **SFI 11.1.2** Assignment and understanding of roles and responsibilities for achieving *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard objectives*.
Excellent communication exists between the MD-DNR Forest Service and Parker Forestry Service. This relationship allows a seamless working relationship between the two entities.

General Description of Evidence of Conformity

NSF's audit team used a variety of evidence to determine conformance. The 2020 audit included State Forest reviews in the following by the NSF audit team, Chesapeake Forest, Pocomoke State Forest, and the central office located in Annapolis, MD. Field visits were conducted in 2 out of a total of 6 State Forests. 2 field offices, 1 central office and 12 field sites were visited. The 12 field sites consisted of the 1 active timber harvest (softwood 2nd thinning), 6 recently closed sale with wildlife considerations, 1 with herbicide application with invasive species, 3 High Conservation Forest, 3 planting sites, 1 Pre-commercial thinning site, 3 demonstration forests, and 1 research site (some sites met multiple considerations and are noted for each of those above). Both thinnings and final harvests were viewed for multiple sites. There were also several roads, several smaller road-trail/stream crossings with cross drains and BMPs being applied. A further description of the audit evidence is provided below, organized by SFI Objective. NSF's audit team used a variety of evidence to determine conformance.

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 forest management plans for both the Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests and supporting documentation and the associated inventory data and growth analyses were the key evidence of conformance for eastern forests.*



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 including annual work plans and “State Forest Database” reports were used to confirm practices. Maryland DNR Forest Service has programs for reforestation, for protection against insects, diseases, and wildfire, and for careful management of activities which could potentially impact soil and long-term productivity.

Objective 3 Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources

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

Summary of Evidence: While this Objective was not audited in 2020, in the past evidence included field observations of a range of sites. Auditors visited the portions of field sites that were close to water various types of water resources, (primary waterways, secondary streams and drains) generally riparian buffers, and confirmed that these buffers were flagged during planning, painted prior to harvests and noted for input into GIS.

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: While this Objective was not audited in 2020, in the past evidence included field observations, written plans and policies for the protection of old growth, High Conservation Value Forests sites.

Objective 5 Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits

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

Summary of Evidence: While this Objective was not audited in 2020, in the past evidence included field observations of active and completed harvesting operations and policies/procedures for visual quality. Visits to recreation sites and contacting various stakeholder seeking input and obtaining feedback on how the DNR balances public interests while providing various recreational opportunities.

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 this Objective was not audited in 2020, in the past evidence included field observations of completed operations, assessments of GIS maps and other records of special sites, training records, and written protection plans. Partners within the DNR and outside stakeholders participate in identification of special sites and participate during audits.

Objective 7 Efficient Use of Fiber Resources

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

Summary of Evidence: While this Objective was not audited in 2020, in the past evidence included field observations of recently completed operations, contract clauses, and discussions with supervising field foresters and interviews with loggers.

Objective 8 Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples’ Rights

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

Summary of Evidence: All of the management plans include the policy statement developed to recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples’ rights.

Objective 9 Legal and Regulatory Compliance

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

Summary of Evidence: Field and office reviews of ongoing and completed operations were the most critical evidence. Foresters are licensed and have access to legal and regulatory listing electronic and hard copy.



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: While this Objective was not audited in 2020, in the past evidence included discussions with stakeholders and support for research on state forest lands. Forests are used for several ongoing research projects such as research projects involving, pollinators and prescribed burning, which are visited.

Objective 11 Training and Education

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

Summary of Evidence: Review of training records, and the records of support for the Maryland Master Logger Program. Further all harvests are conducted by logging crews with one or more Maryland Master Loggers. Training was check for licensed foresters and also for applicators applying chemicals on the forests.

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: Records provided by the audited organization and interviews were used to confirm the requirements.

Objective 13 Public Land Management Responsibilities

To participate and implement sustainable forest management on public lands.

Summary of Evidence: The Citizen Advisory Committee confirms the involvement with the public inputs does occur.

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 Inc. website provided the key evidence. The state forests web site includes the complete certification reports from the past years.

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: The state forests web site includes the organization's Sustainable Forestry Initiative Management Reviews for the past 10 years. The most recent of these program reviews, agendas and notes from field reviews, and interviews with personnel from all involved levels in the organization were assessed.

Relevance of Forestry Certification

Third-party certification provides assurance that forests are being managed under the principles of sustainable forestry, which are described in the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard as:

1. Sustainable Forestry

To practice sustainable forestry to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by practicing a land stewardship ethic that integrates reforestation and the managing, growing, nurturing and harvesting of trees for useful products and ecosystem services such as the conservation of soil, air and water quality, carbon, biological diversity, wildlife and aquatic habitats, recreation and aesthetics.

2. Forest Productivity and Health

To provide for regeneration after harvest and maintain the productive capacity of the forest land base, and to protect and maintain long-term forest and soil productivity. In addition, to protect forests from economically or environmentally undesirable levels of wildfire, pests, diseases, invasive exotic plants and animals and other damaging agents and thus maintain and improve long-term forest health and productivity.

3. Protection of Water Resources

To protect water bodies and riparian areas, and to conform with forestry best management practices to protect water quality.



4. Protection of Biological Diversity

To manage forests in ways that protect and promote biological diversity, including animal and plant species, wildlife habitats, and ecological or natural community types.

5. Aesthetics and Recreation

To manage the visual impacts of forest operations, and to provide recreational opportunities for the public.

6. Protection of Special Sites

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

7. Responsible Fiber Sourcing Practices in North America

To use and promote among other forest landowners sustainable forestry practices that are both scientifically credible and economically, environmentally and socially responsible.

8. Legal Compliance

To comply with applicable federal, provincial, state, and local forestry and related environmental laws, statutes, and regulations.

9. Research

To support advances in sustainable forest management through forestry research, science and technology.

10. Training and Education

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

11. Community Involvement and Social Responsibility

To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry on all lands through community involvement, socially responsible practices, and through recognition and respect of Indigenous Peoples’ rights and traditional forest-related knowledge.

12. Transparency

To broaden the understanding of forest certification to the SFI Standard by documenting certification audits and making the findings publicly available.

13. Continual Improvement

To continually improve the practice of forest management, and to monitor, measure and report performance in achieving the commitment to sustainable forestry.

14. Avoidance of Controversial Sources including Illegal Logging in Offshore Fiber Sourcing

(Applies only to the SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard)

To avoid wood fiber from illegally logged forests when procuring fiber outside of North America, and to avoid sourcing fiber from countries without effective social laws.

Source: Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) Standard, 2015–2019 Edition

For Additional Information Contact

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Appendix 3

SFI 2015-2019, Section 2: Forest Management Standard Audit Checklist

OY301 – Maryland DNR Forest Service

Date of audit(s): April 2-5, 2019

1.2 Additional Requirements

SFI Program Participants with fiber sourcing programs (acquisition of roundwood and field-manufactured or primary-mill residual chips, pulp and veneer to support a forest products facility), must also conform to the SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard.

Use of the SFI on-product labels and claims shall follow Section 5 - Rules for Use of SFI On-Product Labels and Off-Product Marks as well as ISO 14020:2000.

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

Audit Notes: MD DNR made changes in the 2018 to ensure the use of the trademark symbol (TM) is used in documents when first using the initials SFI. Confirmed through document review.

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.

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

Audit Notes: Plans include maximum harvest levels based on inventory data and growth models. Viewed growth and yield models for the SF system with Staff and confirmed that harvest is well-below growth. Forest Inventory completed in 2016 had approx. 1,000 plots over the area, CFI used 10th ac plots, with notes for insect and disease, mortality, and in-growth.

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).

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

Audit Notes: The Chesapeake Forest Lands and Pocomoke State Forests plans were last updated in 2018, with a planned update in 2019 to reflect recent DNR policies and will involve review and comments from the Interdisciplinary Team (IDT). This revision will also include acreage and zoning updates. The final update is not yet complete. The Sustainable Forest Management Plans are reviewed and updated nearly every year, often as a result of audit findings.



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: Harvest plans from recent years more accurately depict the extent of operable forestland and reserves in each harvest unit. Harvest plans incorporate the allowable harvest calculations.

Current harvest levels appear to be consistent with plans and with forest health maintenance.

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: Eastern forests: 2 CFI plots on CSF and 4 CFI plots on the PSF were used in addition to MD-DNR collected information. From 2014-2016, staff created forest types yield tables and updated the inventory. Multiple sets of data were viewed graphically by the auditors in order to confirm growth and yield and the development of long-term projections on the state forests.

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: Managers and field staff discussed the emphasis placed on inventory work. Actual volumes are well below "allowable" volumes in part due to these differences, and in part due to fluctuating markets, and specifically reduction of markets in the East, and limitations of logging and trucking capacity in the area.

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: Annual works plans are the primary tool for tracking, reporting, and making information available regarding implementation of forest practices. 2019 and 2020 Annual Works Plans viewed. Found at:

https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Documents/chesapeake/CF-PSF_AWP_FY2020.pdf

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/chesapeakeforestlands.aspx>

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:

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

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

Audit Notes: The AWP and the ID Team ensure that the requirements are met. Conversions are driven by ecological considerations including restoring rare or under-represented cover types. Observed in the field that majority of harvests goals include maintaining composition within broadly-similar stand types, consistent with natural stand dynamics such as pine in the Eastern SFs.



-
- 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: The AWP and the ID Team ensure that the requirements are met. Conversions are driven by ecological considerations including restoring rare or under-represented cover types. See field notes for the restoration of lupine (Site 1) and review of the stand types and occurrence over the SFs.

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: Confirmed through interviews and site visits that lands are not being converted to non-forest land use. The only conversion is for wildlife habitat and consultation occurs prior to the management being implemented in the field. Some acreage has been removed from the certified land base since the prior audit, because they are power line easements and MD-DNR does not manage these lands.



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: Forest Management plans provide direction; harvest prescriptions contain information regarding reforestation. Organizations harvest areas include a prescription for natural regeneration but the organization monitors and if needed planting does occur. Regeneration criteria are forest-type specific.

One site had regeneration delays and it was spot planted. On other sites, no regeneration delays were observed.

Viewed regen plot data for 2 selected sites. The guidance for forest regeneration criteria for the Chesapeake Forest Lands and Pocomoke State Forest can be found in the Policy and Procedures Handbook for the Chesapeake Forest Lands & Pocomoke State Forest (Updated: 2020.03.13). Specifically, beginning on page 8 of the P&P Handbook under the Forest Regeneration heading. Also, in that same document, Appendix K displays the Decision Tree For Regenerating Mixed Hardwood-Pine Stands.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Audit Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.



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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Confirmed chemicals used (glyphosate, Triclopyr, Imazapyr, or sulfometuron methyl) are not on prohibited list. CSF & PSF staff compare their list of usage with the Stockholm convention POPs and confirmed that none are on the list. This occurs on a regular basis by the Staff member.

2.2.6 Use of *integrated pest management* where feasible.

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

Audit Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.



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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.



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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

3.1.3 Monitoring of overall *best management practices* implementation.

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

Audit Notes: Consulting foresters and DNR Foresters monitor overall BMP. All tracts viewed this year are overseen by Parker Forestry, confirmed Forest Harvesting Operating documents contained BMP monitoring. Once a week the BMP monitoring inspections occur. Topics covered on the inspection forms landing, skid trails, safety, visual, stocking, and other items like trash.

A revised FOREST HARVEST OPERATIONS – HARVEST SITE REVIEW ON STATE LANDS was created in response to the 2019 OFI and has been in use. The responses available to the state forest staff are simplified with NA, Yes, and No. At the top of the document is listed the Evaluation System for these responses. Multiple harvest checklists (pre-, post-, and mid-harvest were viewed.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.



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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.



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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.



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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.



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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.



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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.



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: Not evaluated this audit year.



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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: The Nanticoke are based in Delaware. The Accohannock are based on the Maryland Eastern Shore. The Chesapeake/Pocomoke Forest Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) includes a spot for an Indigenous Peoples member. Email communication from the Chesapeake Forest Lands office (dated April 3, 2019) confirmed that MD-DNR did reach out to the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA) with a notice regarding an opportunity to have a native American member on the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). In Feb 2020, a personal invitation was sent to MCIA to review our state forests for annual work plans and to follow up regarding CAC representation. Currently, Mike Hinman is the CAC representative.

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: This program does not manage private lands.

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

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

Audit Notes: This program does not manage private lands.



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: Foresters confirmed they have access to relevant laws and regulations in the organization's internal web page for their reference or Manual on book shelves (Parker Forestry Services). Observed field offices visited had Federal, State laws and regulations posted.

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: Chemicals stored with labeling and SDS. Foresters' reports track usage to ensure compliance with federal, state and local laws and regulations as it relates to chemical management. Field visits on active harvests confirmed necessary permits.

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: Confirmed through field visits that organization is committed to legal compliance and BMPs.

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: Field observations confirmed numerous posters posted in each MD DNR State office and consulting office visited. including for example: EEO, anti-harassment and anti-discrimination, right to know, workers right to organize, and OSHA. A sample of training records for 3 employees were viewed and confirmed per interview with the Human Resources Director that the above topics are part of the regular process and policies for the MD-DNR.

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: Through interviews confirmed Annapolis Director/State Forester and Associate Director/Forester and HR director that there were no known ILO complaints.



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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.

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: Not evaluated this audit year.



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: Found on the State website: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/forestcert.aspx>

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: Field interviews confirmed that foresters understand roles and responsibilities. Confirmed documented MD Forest Service Organization chart signed May 2016 by the Director/State Forester.

Excellent communication exists between the MD-DNR Forest Service and Parker Forestry Service. This relationship allows a seamless working relationship between the two entities.

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: FY 2019 Webinar/Training:

Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment for the Mid-Atlantic Region.

Patricia Leopold Climate Change Outreach Specialist Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science (NIACS).

OFI: While the seed mix used on landings and roads has been previously approved by State Wildlife staff for food plots and for the Erosion and Sediment Control plan, there is an opportunity to improve staff education and training as it relates to the seed mixture (species and ratios) currently being applied on landings and roads, as only non-native, naturalized species are being used.

Per discussion with multiple Wildlife and Heritage Staff during the 2020 audit and the information provided about the PA company that they often recommend for native seed mixes (<https://www.ernstseed.com/>), this OFI remains open.

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: Interviewed contractors on active sale and they were current with MD Master Logger. Site was clean, no spills, spill kit and Master Logger manual present, along with a copy of the SFI FM Standard.

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: Reviewed agreements. See field notes.



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: Viewed multiple attendance records and minutes of SCI meetings and confirmed attendance of Ken Jolly. There were limited meetings in Q1 & Q2 of 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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: To gain Active Master Logger status, program participants must initially complete 4 four-hour core courses within two years, and submit proof of current First Aid and CPR training.

The four core courses are:

- OSHA Regulations and Logging Safety
- Sustainable Forestry I: Sediment and Erosion Control, Spill Cleanup and Prevention, Logging Aesthetics
- Sustainable Forestry II: Basic Forestry and Silviculture, Forest Certification
- Sustainable Forestry III: Threatened and Endangered Species, Logger Activism

Regular updates are also required.

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: There is no logger certification program in Maryland; the Maryland Master Logger Program fits the description under 11.2.1 above.



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: Kenneth Jolly is MFS rep on the SIC. Confirmed monetary support to the SIC from 2019-2020.

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: Confirmed through field interviews and the following information provided in response to the 2019 OFI:

- a) the MFS worked with MD Dept of the Environment to provide a series of BMP workshops for loggers, consulting foresters, and DNR foresters on the revised forest harvesting standards. MFS has also agreed to provide onsite inspections of logging jobs on private lands to support MDE regulations.
- b) MFS provides tree planting coordination for private landowners and assistance with cost share programs.
- c) Provided as part of the SIC
- d) MFS provides assistance with forest management plans to private forest landowners. Management plans provide information on wildlife management, endangered species, etc. relevant to the landowner's objectives. <https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Documents/publications/fcmp.pdf>
<https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/programapps/stewcon.aspx>
- e) Through market development, MFS has promoted the use of wood chips for use in boiler fuel and animal bedding products, which helps utilize forest harvest residues.
<https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/programs/fpum.aspx>
- f) Management plans provide information on exotic invasive species relevant to the landowner's objectives.
- g) Provided as part of the SIC
- h) MFS has an active wildfire prevention and response program. Wildfires are a common occurrence in Maryland. In an average year, the Maryland Forest Service responds to an average of 325 wildfires that burn more than 3,200 acres of forest, brush, and grasses. Fire departments respond to over 5,000 wildfire incidents per year. <https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/wfm.aspx>



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: Confirmed, with participation in the SIC.

Program Open Space – provides financial and technical assistance to local subdivisions for the planning, acquisition, and/or development of recreation land or open space areas. Established under the Department of Natural Resources in 1969, Program Open Space symbolizes Maryland's long-term commitment to conserving our natural resources while providing exceptional outdoor recreation opportunities for our citizens. Today more than 6,200 park and conservation area projects have been assisted through Program Open Space Local grant. <https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Pages/ProgramOpenSpace/home.aspx> Program continues to exist today.

and the following information provided in response to the 2019 OFI:

MD DNR Forest Legacy Program - The program is designed to identify and protect environmentally important forests through the use of perpetual conservation easements purchased at market value between willing sellers and willing buyers. A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and an eligible organization that restricts future activities on the land to protect its conservation values.

Up to 75% of the funding can be supplied by the Federal Government; at least 25% of funding will come from, State, Local, NGO funds or can be donated by the landowner.

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/programapps/forestlegacy.aspx>

Forest Conservation and Management Program – FCMPs purpose is to “Encourage landowners to manage their forest land in return for a reduced and/or frozen property tax assessment.

Any owner of five or more contiguous acres of forest land may enter the program. The program is a legal agreement between the landowner and the Department of Natural Resources and is recorded in the land records of the county in which the property is located. The landowner agrees to manage their forest land according to a management plan that is prepared for the property. The minimum acreage is five acres and the minimum length of the agreement is fifteen years. The property tax assessment on the forest land in the agreement is generally reduced and frozen at a low agricultural rate. If the agreement is broken through failure to follow the plan, sale of the property to someone unwilling to assume the responsibility or if the landowner just wants to be out of the program, back taxes will be levied and will be computed back to the beginning of the agreement. The agreement can be amended to increase or decrease acreage and it can be transferred to a buyer if the buyer is willing to assume the responsibilities of the agreement.

Accomplishments: There are approximately 1,300 agreements in effect covering approximately 84,000 acres.

Conservation Easements - Conservation easements are administered through the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET). MET was created as a quasi-public entity, both a unit of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and governed by a private Board of Trustees.

There are significant financial benefits available to landowners who agree to protect their land with a conservation easement including a deduction for federal income taxes and a credit for state income taxes. In addition, there is property tax credit and possible federal estate tax exemptions. Agreeing to protect your land in the form of a Deed of Conservation Easement can be considered a non-cash charitable gift by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

https://dnr.maryland.gov/met/pages/tax_benefits.aspx



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: Confirmed that different Forestry staff cover a) b) and d) throughout the year.

Additional evidence provided in response to the 2019 OFI:

- a) MFS is an active participant in workshops and seminars hosted by the Maryland Wood Energy Coalition to promote sustainable forestry. Within the last year, there was a series of wood energy webinars promoting the use of wood fuel for industrial and institutional facilities. <https://www.mdcleanenergy.org/biomass/>
- b) Confirmed, with participation in the SIC.
- c) Chesapeake Forest Lands has the Tom Tyler Tract https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Documents/w06_tom_tyler_nature_trail.pdf and Pusey Branch https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Documents/pusey_branch_trail.pdf which serve as a self-guided forestry tours for the public. https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/publiclands/eastern_pocomokeforest-recreation.aspx
- d) MFS provides information such as tree planting, wildfire crews deployed, for weekly Tree Tuesday forestry related stories and highlights through social media outlets. <https://www.facebook.com/MarylandDNR/> <https://twitter.com/MarylandDNR>
- e) MFS supports the Maryland Forests Association, a private sector forest advocacy organization. Beth Hill, the executive director, is a member of the CFL/PSF Citizens Advisory Committee (see stakeholders list). <https://www.mdforests.org/>

MFS currently supports and originally established the Forest Conservancy District Boards. The Forestry Boards were established in 1943 to assist the State’s Forest Park and Wildlife Service with the promotion of rural forest management on privately owned woodlands. Their original goal was to help assure a supply of wood fiber products through scientific forest management. Today, the role of the Forestry Boards has been expanded to help: Restore the Chesapeake Bay, Improve the environment in urban and suburban areas, and educate the general public about the wide range of forest benefits. <https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/fboards.aspx>

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: MD SIC is a small group; currently there is no toll-free number but the committee would address concerns if there was an issue on MD DNR foresters, confirmed through phone interview.

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: Checked and no known complaints on the MD DNR.



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: The MD-DNR works within the State of MD framework, as noted below:

Board of Public Works - DNR timber sales directive. The sale of forest products is ultimately approved by the Maryland Board of Public Works (incl. Governor, Comptroller, Treasurer). Sale valued at less than \$50,000 has been delegated to the DNR.

The Timber Operations Order directs the timber sale process which includes the 3-step review process:

1. Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) (III-D-2-a-4)
2. Citizens Advisory Committee (III-D-2-a-9 through 11), and
3. 30-day public review process (III-D-2-a-11)

Environmental Review Policy - This process guides internal/external activities (e.g. research, special events, construction, state forests activities outside of the annual work plan development, including easements, emergency timber sales) on DNR lands.

- Purpose: To establish a consistent, coordinated procedure for internal review of proposed projects and actions that affect the responsibilities of various units of the Department of Natural Resources in protecting, enhancing and providing for balanced use of the Natural Resources of the State.
- State Forest management plans include some documented information about other governmental entities.

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: Ensured through the Pocomoke State Forest and Chesapeake Forest Lands Citizens Advisory Committee members and public input on lands management.



Objective 14 Communications and Public Reporting

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

Performance Measure 14.1

A *Program Participant* shall provide a summary audit report, prepared by the *certification body*, to *SFI Inc.* after the successful completion of a certification, recertification or surveillance audit to the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard*. Indicator:

14.1.1 The summary audit report submitted by the *Program Participant* (one copy must be in English), shall include, at a minimum,

- a. a description of the audit process, *objectives* and scope;
- b. a description of substitute *indicators*, if any, used in the audit and a rationale for each;
- c. the name of *Program Participant* that was audited, including its *SFI* representative;
- d. a general description of the *Program Participant's* forestland included in the audit;
- e. the name of the *certification body* and *lead auditor* (names of the *audit team* members, including *technical experts* may be included at the discretion of the *audit team* and *Program Participant*);
- f. the dates the audit was conducted and completed;
- g. a summary of the findings, including general descriptions of evidence of conformity and any nonconformities and corrective action plans to address them, opportunities for improvement, and exceptional practices; and
- h. the certification decision.

The summary audit report will be posted on the *SFI Inc.* website (www.sfiprogram.org) for public review.

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

Audit Notes: These reports contain the required information and are posted on the SFI Inc. website (www.sfiprogram.org):

- April 2014 Re-certification Audit Maryland NSF-ISR
- April 2017 Surveillance Audit - FM Maryland NSF-ISR
- April 2018 Surveillance Audit – FM Maryland NSF-ISR

The April 2019 Recertification Audit Report is not present on the SFI website, no confirmation that it has been submitted.

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: Confirmed that the MD DNR annually responds and files the SFI Inc. annual progress report survey, viewed confirmation email sent 05/21/20.

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: Record keeping is kept in hard copy and electronic format in order to provide documented evidence to the SFI annual progress report surveys.

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: Reports are kept in files, and those back through 2009 are kept on-line. Witnessed past report FY 2018.



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: All forests conduct and document regular logging inspections & seedling survival/regeneration counts. Monitoring of ESA restoration projects by Natural Heritage Commission (lupine – Site 1). Interdisciplinary Teams conduct Annual Work Plan reviews for all projects. See field notes.

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: Interviews confirmed that each area participated in the internal audits and Annapolis Director/State Forester and Associate Director have oversight and input into management system along with the state forester conducting the internal audits. Internal audits completed on:

GRST – 06/23/20, P-G – 06/24/20, SRSF – 06/25/20, and CSF-PSF – 06/30/20. Internal Review - ISA-checklist-2020 and ISA_Completed_2020 reviewed.

Additional evidence provided in response to the 2019 OFI:

“When we first established our Internal Silvicultural Audit program we considered many options. The first teams included members of the Interdisciplinary Teams (IDT). Later, we tested an option that included staff from other state forests units. Ultimately, we decided a review including the just the State Forest staff, the regional forester (State Forest manager supervisor) and the forest certification coordinator was the optimal review team. This provided direct review by the regional forester and continuity of the reviews from the forest certification coordinator.

Our Internal Silvicultural Audit field document has been revised to better reflect issues to be addressed for silviculture review.”



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: Interviews confirmed that each area participated in the internal audits and Annapolis Director/State Forester and Associate Director have oversight and input into management system along with the state forester conducting the internal audits. Viewed the minutes from the "State Forest Managers Meeting" on March 12, 2020 attended by the leadership team, central office staff, district foresters, and state forester managers.

Topics included:

- Maryland Forest Service Program Updates – Kenneth Jolly
 - State Forest Website Updates – Marian Honecny
 - Marketing Initiatives – Dan Rider
 - Forest Certification
 - Review of Certification Standards & Compliance
 - Streamside Management Zones
 - High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) designations
 - SFI Annual Reporting — deadline to SFI March 31
 - 2020 Auditors
 - State Forest Metrics & Quarterly Reports
 - REMINDER: AWP approval procedures (no printed copy, just signature page)
 - Next SFM meeting date – Wed, September 23, 2020
 - State Forests Internal Silvicultural Audit — GR (3/31), SR (4/1), PG (4/2), ES (4/7)
 - Audit – April 21 — Eastern Shore
-



Appendix 4

Checklist for SFI® Section 9, Appendix 1: Audits of Multi-Site Organizations

OY301 – Maryland DNR Forest Service

Date of audit(s): July 21-23, 2020

3 Terms and Definitions

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

For audits of conformance with SFI Section 4 in the SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules document, multi-site organizations using either IAF-MD1 or alternate approaches to sampling shall ensure that all the relevant sites (including the central function) are subject to the organization's internal audit program and shall have been audited in accordance with that program prior to the certification body starting its assessment. (Section 9, Requirement 4.1.5 Audit Procedures)

Note: Communicate with NSF Project Manager to confirm.

- Input boxes for N/A, Conforms, Exceeds, O.F.I., Minor NC, Major NC

Audit Notes: Internal audit checklist and management review provided by MD DNR for 2019-2020.

4.1 Eligibility Criteria / Method of Sampling (choose 1)

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



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

Applicable **Not Applicable**

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

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

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

Audit Notes: Individual field sites, MD DNR performs similar methods and procedures for forest management, wildlife management, and recreation.

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

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

Audit Notes: Forest management system is overseen by the state forester located at Maryland DNR Forest Service offices at 580 Taylor Avenue, Annapolis, MD. Interviews confirmed that each area participated in the internal audits and Annapolis Director/State Forester and Associate Director have oversight and input into management system.

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

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

Audit Notes: Interviews confirmed that each area participated in the internal audits and Annapolis Director/State Forester and Associate Director have oversight and input into management system along with the completion of the internal audits on 06/23/20, 06/24/20, 06/25/20, 06/30/20.

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

- i. System documentation and system changes;
- ii. Management review;
- iii. Complaints;
- iv. Evaluation of corrective actions;
- v. Internal audit planning and evaluation of the results;
- vi. Changes to aspects and associated impacts for environmental management systems and
- vii. Different legal requirements.

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

Audit Notes: Internal audits completed on 06/23/20, 06/24/20, 06/25/20, 06/30/20, and no outcomes noted for corrective actions. Confirmed through interviews that if different legal requirements are changed Annapolis Director/State Forester and Associate Director have oversight and input in communicating to the foresters. Complaints are dealt with internally and confirmed there haven't been any reported externally to the State SIC in 3-5 years. See additional evidence in 15.1.3.

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

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

Applicable **Not Applicable**



Appendix 5

Field Notes

MD-DNR 2020 Site Visits

Complex	Tract/Stand(s)	Harvest Type	Acres	Final	Notes
P02	Furnace T126 S11 / CF-29-19	Final - Chip	69.1	1	Restoration of lupine with retained oak. All oak left residually from pine plantation. Determined that residual was still too high so contractor was brought in to additionally reduce to 2 oak stems/acre. It will be prescribed burned every 2-4 years by MD Forest Service and USFS.
	Nazareth Church Tract 7, Stand 18			2	Logger interview. Works regularly with PFS and MD-DNR. Map and Rx provided to the logger; crew has a morning safety meeting every morning. Logger keeps MD-Master Logger booklet in service truck on-site, as well as a copy of the SFI Forest Management Standard. MD-Master Logger course completed in Nov 2019. Wetland protection retention area confirmed with soft maple and red sweet gum. Inspected equipment on-site and no spills or leaks, skidder and loader. Inspected log deck with loader on-site, no leaking noted. Low residual damage, site is clean. Discussion: Rutting and debris on skid trails.
WR25	Fleming Mill Pond Rd - Dividing Creek Tract, Stands 1,3,4&5 / P-05-18	First Thinning	251.1	3	Multiple stands, not finished. 1st thinning, various ages 25 years and older. 4 Resource areas: 2 types of DELMARVA (Delaware, Maryland, Virginia) Fox Squirrel-DFS habitat, Zone 1, & Zone 3). DFS Core and Future core areas (habitat). Zone 1 is emergent wetland, Zone 3 is an ESA, SMZ and Zone 1 are also designated as HCVFs. Stream with buffer inspected. 300' buffer for the stream with 50' no cut in thinning area. Flagged boundary. Retention of blue-lines trees. Historic house site buffered. Inadvertent cemetery discovery during harvest. Operator notes after harvesting completed, stopped work, and reported the feature. Per Md DNR procedures, the cemetery was entered into DNR GIS systems for future protection. Stilt grass present, discussion of management, including potentially using mechanical means if area is small, chemical use if large areas present, if treated, likely post-harvest.
				3a	HCV - ESA Zone 1 & 3, not yet cut. Zone 1 emergent wetland, Zone 3 expansion area. Shorter harvest cycle to maintain the HCVF. Many sand dependent species. SMZ is braided intermittent.
S28	Lynnwood Duncan Tract, Stand 5 / CF-S28	First Thinning	75.9	4	1st thinning loblolly stand introduced in the FY 16 AWP, previously was old loblolly plantation. Entire area is DSF Core area. Log deck Thinning w/ house buffered including a massive walnut snag/wildlife tree. All hardwood mast producing trees retained. DNR brought stone for road development. Harvest not complete, as site became too wet after 9 days of work. Preharvest check completed Oct 2019.



S55	Marumscos 11 / CF-S55	Final	27.7	5	Retention area called "House site" with green tree retention buffer around old homestead foundation. Boundary b/t house and final harvest was clearly marked. Incorporated 4 separate work plans. Green tree retention and CWD present. Part of the area was a Final harvest, 40 yr. old with house site that was buffered. Part of site was thinning. A few portions of the site were not cut due to wet conditions, thinning was complete. Sold as 'shavers' and sawlogs. Approx. 20 loads of stone applied to firm up road. Site was also visited in 2019 audit, but was not complete, due to the wet conditions at the time. Regeneration is different from the harvest in 2019 vs. the harvest in 2018. Regeneration plots to be completed winter 2020-2021. Discussion: Monitoring. Assess at stocking of 300 TPA.
S03	Covington Tract, Stand 5 / CF-S-03	PCT	40.2	6	PCT, thinning using contractor crew. Flagged to mark desirable species as part of training with immediate plot and species check. Used 11.7' radius plots for checks. Thinning crew was 14 men wide, 2 swaths completed in order to cover the site, completed in 2 days. Walk through of site observed extremely effective PCT.
D19	Revena Tract, Stands 1&3 / CF-19-S-07	First Thinning	73.4	7	Loblolly plantation established over a 6-year period from 1992-1998 in 3 stands. Harvested in 2019 in first thin with retention of hard mast species. Well signed and gated. Inspected stream and ditch buffers were well flagged and followed (respected). Overall area had considerations for DFS, FIDS (forest interior dwelling species), and ESA Zone 1 (stream with buffer). Landings clean. Discussions: residual tree damage specifications in contracts.
W46	Wicomico Demo, Stands 31,52,55,58,62&79 / CF-18-S-13	First Thinning	189	8	Wicomico Demonstration Forest. First thinning, retain all hard mast species. Overstocked loblolly pine plantations established in 6 cohorts from 1985-1995. Has ESA Zone 1, ESA Zone 3 pulpwood, Stream Buffer, and DFS Future Translocation (DFS FT) - DFS FT is to maintain the trees to 40 years of age or growing trees towards that age, used for potential trap and release program by USF&W. Water resources in demo forest is the Campbell Ditch. Soils identified. Inspected stream buffer, well flagged and followed. Examined stream crossing where bridge was removed. Natural regeneration abundant throughout stand, considered an exceptional regen year. No issues. Discussions: logger training and communications, and natural regeneration, DFS FT prescription versus core habitat. Rx and core habitat are similar but with distinctions. Both manage for 40 years and older, and designation when active with USFW, but have not done if for many years but is active for future considerations. Linked to USFWS WAP. Discussion with USF&W staff about the process and MD-DNR cooperative work. DFS was removed from the federally endangered species list in 2015, and is currently listed as a State of Maryland "Species in Need of Conservation". Habitat loss is thought to be the major issue for DFS, and the categories for conservation used by MD-DNR (for example: Core Habitat, Future Core Habitat, Future Translocation), work to grow and promote suitable habitat for the existing DFS populations. The CSF and PSF continue to have informal DFS Sightings tracked by the MD-DRN Forest Service staff and hunt clubs, then reported to USF&W to help in tracking the species range.
WR17	Parker-Phipps Tract, Stand 2 / WR-17	First Thinning	39.6	12	DROPPED



W46	Wicomico Demo Forest, Stand 108 / W-46	Spot plant, 8x10	10	9	Wicomico Demonstration Forest. 23 acres harvested in spring 2017 with objectives to retain pond pine and shortleaf pine and mast producer retention as specified by Wildlife and Heritage. Pond pine areas were selected and marked for retention with blue paint. In DFS Future Core and ESA Zone 3 Pulpwood Management. Sprayed for site prep in 2018 (Imazapyr and Escort). Site observations in Feb 2019 led to spot planting, completed in April 2020, approx. 10 acres planted in 3 spots, 5,000 loblolly seedlings (1st generation, from State of MD Nursery), planting notes viewed. Herbicide site prep and release maps were provided. Greenbrier was a significant issue and factored into decision to spray. Plans were to doze lines prior to planting, however discovery of an active eagle's nest led to decision to not use equipment. Verified water protection and eagle's nest protection buffers.
W46	Campbell Tract field, Mt. Hermon Rd. / W-46	Machine planted, 8x10	31.6	10	Machine planted to loblolly in old-field. Planted 8x10 April 2020. Seed source MD DNR Nursery, 1st gen loblolly. Verified seed source records.
W53	Twigg-Fooks field, Spearin Road / W-53	Hand plant, 8x10	2.9	11	Loblolly pine planting on 3 acres (old house site, split by public road), 8x10 spacing, 2500 planted. MD Nursery 1st gen seedlings.
W46 (sub)	Wicomico DF, stand 6, 8, 16, 107&110 / CF-19-S-18			12	First thinning with drainage buffer and stream crossing. 50' buffer is on a ditch, not a true intermittent. Can thin down to 70 ba/ac in buffer, with no major skid trails allowed in buffer. Log deck examined. Foresters excluded a small area from the sale after visual inspection confirmed trees were too small for commercial use. Retained legacy trees near the buffer (retention may not be long term). Examined access road shared by easement with farmer. Discussion: Forest Management Planning process, key stakeholders and public stakeholder consultation process, neighbor notifications.

Potential Field Sites and Map from which visited Sites were selected



CF & PF Harvests and Planting 2019



CF PSF Audit 2020.pdf



Appendix 6

NSF Audit Attendance Sheet

Company Name Maryland Department of Natural Resources – Forest Service
Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests –
Location Annapolis, MD
Type of Audit 2020 SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Surveillance Audit
Opening Meeting Date 21 July 2020 Closing Meeting Date 23 July 2020

Name	Position	Attended Opening Meeting?	Attended Closing Meeting?
Michelle Matteo	NSF- SFI Senior Lead Auditor	X	X
Beth Jacqmain	SCS- FSC Lead Auditor	X	X
Jack Perdue	MD-DNR- FS	X	X
Alexander Clark	MD-DNR-FS - Nassawango	X	X
Matthew Hurd	MD-DNR-FS - Salisbury	X	X
Kenneth Jolly	MD-DNR-FS - Tawes	X	X
Skip Jones	Parker Forestry Service	X	X
Stacey Esham	Parker Forestry Service	X	X
John Connors	Parker Forestry Service	X	



Appendix 7

Forestry Program COVID-19 Report Appendix

Client Name: Maryland DNR Forest Service

FRS: 0Y301

Is this a fully remote special audit? YES NO Justification: Audit was completed with document review and interviews completed remotely; field portion was on-site.

Is a remote special audit for certificate extension needed? YES NO Justification:

Approximate date of the future on-site special surveillance or re-evaluation audit to be completed within the allowed extension period. N/A

Was this remote audit able to be effectively completed using remote audit methods? YES NO If no, why? State reason if "no" is selected: Partial remote audit was effective.

Are there specific portions of the audit that could not be effectively evaluated? YES NO Portion of the audit that could not be audited:

Are there follow-up items needed from the remote event? YES NO Does additional time need be added to the next audit based on these follow-up items? State follow-up items needed if "yes" is selected:

Are there follow-up items needed from the remote event? YES NO Does additional time need be added to the next audit based on these follow-up items? State reason for and amount of additional time: Remote document review and on-site field visits made during same week of scheduled audit.

Table with 3 columns: Remote audit methods used, Remote method/tool, Used for. Includes entries for Document review, SharePoint, and Records review, File transfer technology.



Additional questions

When is it expected that the organization will be able to function normally?	Organization is back to normal operations, with the exception that the offices are not open to the public.
Is the organization able to ship products or perform the service defined within the current scope of certification? If not, when is it expected to be able to do so?	N/A
Does the organization need to use alternative manufacturing and/or distribution sites? If so, are these currently covered under the current certification or will they need to be evaluated?	N/A
Will some of the processes and/or services performed or products shipped be subcontracted to other organizations? If so, how will the other organizations' activities be controlled by the certified organization?	N/A
To what extent has operation of the management system been affected?	Operations of the management system have not been affected.
Has the certified organization conducted an impact assessment regarding COVID-19?	Impact assessment has been conducted. Staff employees are working from both home and office.