

## FSC Forest Management Audit

### Public Summary Report

Audit Conducted By	Bureau Veritas Certification Holding SAS Tour Alto 4 Place des Saisons  COURBEVOIE  92400 France <a href="https://certification.bureauveritas.com/wood-scheme-certification-documents-and-standards">https://certification.bureauveritas.com/wood-scheme-certification-documents-and-standards</a>
Contact Person	Krzysztof Wypij
Report last updated on	12 January 2026
Certificate Holder	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources 500 Lafayette Road  St. Paul MN 55155-4044 USA <a href="https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/">https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/</a>
Contact Person	Adam James
Certified Forest Areas	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources State Forests
FSC certificate registration code	BV-FM/COC-020394
Certificate issue date	28 October 2025
Certificate expiry date	30 December 2026
Audit Sequence	Surveillance

This forest has been certified by Bureau Veritas Certification Holding SAS as meeting the requirements of FSC national forest standard US Forest Management v1.1.

# Certificate Holder and Certification Body Details

Question	Inputs
<b>Certificate Holder</b>	
1.01 Certificate holder name *	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
1.02.1 Street Address *	500 Lafayette Road
1.02.2 Address Line 2	
1.02.3 City *	St. Paul
1.02.4 State or Province	MN
1.02.5 Postal Code	55155-4044
1.03 Country *	USA
1.04 Contact person full name *	Adam James
1.05 Email *	Adam.James@state.mn.us
1.06 Telephone	651-259-5256
1.07 Website *	<a href="https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/">https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/</a>
<b>Certificate Parameters</b>	
1.08 FSC licence code *	FSC-C020394
1.09 Certificate code *	BV-FM/COC-020394
1.10 Former certificate code (if any)	SCS-FM/COC-00088N
1.11 Certificate type *	FM/COC
1.12 Group certificate *	No
1.13.1 Initial certification date *	2005-12-31
1.13.2 Most recent certification date *	2025-10-28
1.13.3 Certificate expiry date *	2026-12-30
1.14 Total number of MUs in the scope of certificate *	1
1.15 Total area certified *	2022369,13768012 ha
1.16 Change of scope since previous audit *	No
1.16.1 Nature of scope change	
1.17 Ecosystem services (ES) in the scope *	No
1.25 Name and/or location of the certified forest area(s)	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources State Forests
<b>Certification Body</b>	
1.18 Certification body name *	Bureau Veritas Certification Holding SAS
1.19.1 Street Address *	Tour Alto 4 Place des Saisons
1.19.2 Address Line 2	
1.19.3 City *	COURBEVOIE
1.19.4 State	
1.19.5 Postal Code	92400
1.20 Country *	France
1.21 Contact person full name *	Krzysztof Wypij
1.22 Email *	<a href="mailto:krzysztof.wypij@bureauveritas.com">krzysztof.wypij@bureauveritas.com</a>
1.23 Telephone	
1.24 Website *	<a href="https://certification.bureauveritas.com/wood-scheme-certification-documents-and-standards">https://certification.bureauveritas.com/wood-scheme-certification-documents-and-standards</a>

## The evaluation process

Question	Inputs
<b>Audit Parameters</b>	
2.01 Audit type *	Surveillance
2.01.1 Audit sequence	Surveillance
2.02 Audit start date *	2025-12-01
2.16 First stakeholder consultation date for this audit	
2.03 Audit finish date *	2025-12-04
2.04 Total person days *	15,0
2.05 Date of report *	2026-01-12
2.06 Total area under evaluation *	2022369,14 ha
<b>Normative Documents</b>	
<b>2.07 Evaluated international normative document(s)</b>	
2.07.1 Trademark standard FSC-STD-50-001 *	Yes
2.07.2 Group standard FSC-STD-30-005 *	No
2.07.3 CoC standard FSC-STD-40-004 *	No
2.07.4 ES procedure FSC-PRO-30-006 *	No
2.07.5 Excision Policy FSC-POL-20-003 *	Yes
2.07.6 Pesticides Policy FSC-POL-30-001 *	Yes
2.07.7 Applicable NTFP Standard *	No
2.07.8 CIP FSC PRO 30-011 *	No
2.08 Code(s) of NFSS or INS used *	US Forest Management v1.1
2.09 Web link to the standard used	<a href="https://connect.fsc.org/document-centre/documents/resource/242">https://connect.fsc.org/document-centre/documents/resource/242</a>
2.10 If applicable, the adaptation process of CB interim standard	

## The evaluation process

Question	Inputs
<b>Certification Decision</b>	
<b>2.20 Conditions (corrections of minor non-conformities) or pre-conditions (corrections of major non-conformities) associated with the certification decision</b>	
2.20.1 No specific condition *	Yes
2.20.2 Correction of minor NCRs issued within required timelines *	Yes
2.20.3 Correction of major NCRs issued within required timelines *	No
2.20.4 Correction of the pre-conditions to certification identified *	No
2.20.5 Other	
<b>2.21 Lead auditor opinion</b>	
2.21.1 The certificate holder's system of management, if implemented as described, is capable of ensuring that all of the requirements of the applicable standard(s) are met over the whole forest area covered by the scope of the evaluation. *	Yes
2.21.2 The certificate holder has demonstrated, subject to correction of the identified non-conformities, that the described system of management is being implemented consistently over the whole forest area covered by the scope of the certificate. *	Yes
<b>2.22 Auditor recommendation for the certificate holder's management system and performance</b>	
2.22.1 A certificate can only be issued/reissued/maintained when all identified Major CARs are closed *	No
2.22.2 The FM system of the evaluated enterprise does not comply with the provisions and standards of FSC. Due to the number of identified major non-compliances the auditors recommend the immediate suspension of the certificate *	No
2.23 Certification decision *	Maintain
2.24 Decision detail	The decision is to maintain the validity of the certificate until next surveillance audit.
2.25 Decision date *	2026-02-27
2.26 Decision making entity *	FSC FM HUB of Bureau Veritas Certification Holding

## Personnel / audit team

3.01 Name *	3.02 Role *	Person Days		Expertise					3.06 Auditor UAN (enter 0 if none) * 3.07 Profile
		3.03 Prep / pre-evaluation *	3.04 On-site *	3.05.1 Forestry	3.05.2 Ecology	3.05.3 Sociology	3.05.4 Environment	3.05.5 Economics	



## Forest management enterprise information

Question	Inputs	Units	Validation
<b>Forest Area</b>			
5.02 Brief description of any area of forest over which the certificate holder has some responsibility, whether as owner (including shared or partial ownership), manager, consultant or other responsibility) which the certificate holder has chosen to exclude from the scope of the certificate, together with an explanation of the reason.	Areas excluded from the certificate include power and gas leases, and State nurseries because MN DNR does not manage these areas and does not have control over them except through the lease agreements.		OK
<b>5.03 Area of forest owned/managed but excluded from MUs in the scope of certification</b>			
5.03.1 According to FSC-POL-20-003 *	60000	acre	OK
5.03.2 Other reasons *	0	acre	OK
<b>5.19 Environmental safeguards relevant to forest operations</b>			
5.19.1 buffer zone *	Yes		OK
5.19.2 chemical use control *	Yes		OK
5.19.3 conservation area set aside *	Yes		OK
5.19.4 erosion control *	Yes		OK
5.19.5 other, please specify			
5.20 Description of environmental safeguards	MN DNR, through the Forest Resources Council, follows the Minnesota's Forest Management Guidelines, their site-level best management practices. Also, all logging contractors are required to complete the MN Logger Education Program (MLEP) and MN DNR maintains a loggers safety education website ( <a href="https://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosh-wsc-logger-safety-education-site-training">https://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosh-wsc-logger-safety-education-site-training</a> ) to meet OSHA and MNOHSHA.		OK
<b>5.23 Species selection and rationale</b>			
5.23.1 fast growing *	No		OK
5.23.2 pest & disease resistant *	No		OK
5.23.3 climate change *	Yes		OK
5.23.4 other, please specify			
5.25 Main changes in forest management implemented to comply with requirements for FSC certification	None.		OK
5.26 Main strengths and weaknesses with respect to the overall conformity with the Forest Stewardship Standard used for the evaluation	None.		OK

# Management Units

Area Units: ha

7.01 MU name *	7.02 Forest zone *	7.03 SLIMF type *	7.04 Tenure-ownership *	7.05 Tenure-management *	7.06 Centroid Latitude *	7.07 Centroid Longitude *	7.08 Total production forest area *	7.09 Total non-production forest area *	7.10 Total area of MU *
<b>Number of Valid Entries:</b>					<b>Area Totals</b>		<b>1 133 119,79</b>	<b>889 249,35</b>	<b>2 022 369,14</b>
Minnesota DNR	Temperate	Non-SLIMF	State	State	93,08333333	44,95000000	1 133 119,79	889 249,35	2 022 369,14

## Main commercial timber species included in scope of the certificate

8.01 Species *	8.02 Product code *	8.03 Trade name	8.05 Remarks
Quercus spp	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Oak sawlogs/bolts/veneer/	includes White Oak, Red Oak, Bur Oack, Black Oak
Populus spp.	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Poplar sawlogs/veneer	includes Cottonwood, Largetooth Aspen, Trembling Aspen
Fraxinus spp.	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Ash sawlogs	
Ulmus spp.	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Mixed spp. Sawlogs/veneer	includes American Elm, Bitternut Hickory, Black Cherry, Black Walnut,
Ulmus spp.	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Mixed hardwoods pulpwood	includes American Elm, Bitternut Hickory, Black Cherry, Black Walnut, Boxelder, Hackberry, Shagbark Hickory & mixed hardwoods
Acer spp.	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Acer pulpwood	includes Red, Silver, Sugar and Maple spp.
Betula papyrifera	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Birch sawlogs	
Abies balsamea	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Balsam Fir sawlogs	
Pinus spp.	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Pine sawlogs	includes Norway & White Pine
Picea spp.	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Spruce logs	Includes Black & White Spruce
Thuja occidentalis	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Cedar pulpwood	
Larix laricina	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Larch pulpwood	

## Main commercial timber species included in scope of the certificate

8.01 Species *	8.02 Product code *	8.03 Trade name	8.05 Remarks
Quercus spp	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Oak pulpwood	includes Black, Red, Bur, Pin, White & northern hardwoods
Acer spp.	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Acer sawlogs	includes Red, Silver & Sugar maple
Tilia americana L.	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Basswood sawlogs/veneer	
Betula papyrifera	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	poles	
Populus spp.	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Poplar pulpwood	includes Cottonwood, Largetooth Aspen, Trembling Aspen, Hybrid Poplar, Balm of Gilead
Abies balsamea	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Balsam Fir pulpwood	
Tilia americana L.	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Basswood pulpwood	
Picea spp.	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Spruce pulpwood	includes Black, White, mixed Spruce & mixed conifer spp.
Pinus spp.	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Pine pulpwood	includes Jack, Norway, White and mixed pine spp.
Betula spp.	W1.1 Roundwood (logs)	Birch pulpwood	includes Paper & Yellow Birch
Populus spp.	W1 Rough wood	biomass	All species
Pinus spp.	W1.2 Fuel wood	fuelwood	All species

# NTFP - non-timber forest products

9.01 Species *	9.02 Product code of NTFP *	9.03 Trade name	9.04 Current annual harvest
Picea mariana	N6.3.1 Christmas trees	decorative trees	554000,8 # items
Pinus resinosa	N10 Other NTFP n.e.c	boughs	66,5057132894 metric tonnes

## Pesticide use since previous audit/year

10.01 Active ingredient *	10.02 Restriction	10.03 Applied area *	10.04 Reason for use *	10.05 Quantity of ingredient *	10.06 Summary of ESRA *
glyphosate	Restricted	525,28196072 ha	invasive species control; site preparation control of woody vegetation; tending of woody vegetation in regenerated areas	1346,90629392396 litres	MN DNR has adopted the ESRA National Guidance- Appendix 1 for Glyphosate. There is minimal indication that Glyphosate will negatively impact environmental aspects when applied according to the label instructions for forestry applications. However, unintentional habitat/landscape/ecosystem effects are possible, primarily due to changes in vegetation.
imazapyr	Unrestricted	185,669771632 ha	to control competing vegetation;	16,364335142232 litres	MN DNR has adopted the ESRA national guidance FSC US- Appendix 3 for Imazapyr . As an unrestricted pesticide, there is minimal indication that Amazapyr will negatively impact environmental aspects when applied according to the label instructions for forestry applications. Amazapyr does not pose a risk to mammals, birds, honeybees, fish, and aquatic invertebrates; it is classified as "practically non-toxic" by the EPA. Unintentional secondary effects on habitat, landscape and ecosystem are possible due to changes in vegetation.
trichlopyr	Unrestricted	668,7430201 ha	to control competing vegetation; invasive species control	3009,7809094584 litres	MN DNR has adopted the ESRA National Guidance- Appendix 4 for Triclopyr. There is minimal indication that Triclopyr will negatively impact environmental aspects when applied according to the label instructions for forestry applications. However, unintentional habitat/landscape/ecosystem effects are possible, primarily due to changes in vegetation.
sulfometuron	Unrestricted	209,343881572 ha	to control competing vegetation	2095,01722479588 litres	MN DNR has adopted the ESRA National Guidance- Appendix 6 for Sulfometuron-methyl. There is minimal indication that Sulfometuron-methyl will negatively impact environmental aspects when applied according to the label instructions for forestry applications. However, unintentional habitat/landscape/ecosystem effects are possible, primarily due to changes in vegetation.

## Pesticide use since previous audit/year

10.01 Active ingredient *	10.02 Restriction	10.03 Applied area *	10.04 Reason for use *	10.05 Quantity of ingredient *	10.06 Summary of ESRA *
clethodim	Unrestricted	57,87004652 ha	to control competing vegetation; invasive species control	522,65180501688 litres	MN DNR has developed an ESRA based on the FSC US template - Appendix 7 for Clethodim. As an unrestricted pesticide, there is minimal indication that Clethodim will negatively impact environmental aspects when applied according to the label instructions for forestry applications. Clethodim does not pose a risk to mammals, birds, honeybees, fish, and aquatic invertebrates; it is classified as "practically non-toxic" by the EPA. Unintentional secondary effects on habitat, landscape and ecosystem are possible due to changes in vegetation.
aminopyralid	Unrestricted	328,766613936 ha	to control competing vegetation; invasive species control	45,68992023288 litres	MN DNR has developed an ESRA based on the FSC US template - Appendix 7 for Aminopyralid. As an unrestricted pesticide, there is minimal indication that Aminopyralid will negatively impact environmental aspects when applied according to the label instructions for forestry applications. Aminopyralid does not pose a risk to mammals, birds, honeybees, fish, and aquatic invertebrates; it is classified as "practically non-toxic" by the EPA. Unintentional secondary effects on habitat, landscape and ecosystem are possible due to changes in vegetation.
aminocyclopyrachlor	Unrestricted	3,23748512 ha	to control invasive species	181,699765632 litres	MN DNR has developed an ESRA based on the FSC US template - Appendix 7 for Aminocyclopyrachlor. As an unrestricted pesticide, there is minimal indication that Aminocyclopyrachlor will negatively impact environmental aspects when applied according to the label instructions for forestry applications. Aminocyclopyrachlor does not pose a risk to mammals, birds, honeybees, fish, and aquatic invertebrates; it is classified as "practically non-toxic" by the EPA. Unintentional secondary effects on habitat, landscape and ecosystem are possible due to changes in vegetation.
imazapic	Unrestricted	5,26091332 ha	to control invasive species	4,61820237648 litres	MN DNR has adopted the ESRA national guidance FSC US- Appendix 3 for Imazapyr. Similar in formulation to Imazapyr as an unrestricted pesticide, there is minimal indication that Amazapic will negatively impact environmental aspects when applied according to the label instructions for forestry applications. Amazapic does not pose a risk to mammals, birds, honeybees, fish, and aquatic invertebrates; it is classified as "practically non-toxic" by the EPA. Unintentional secondary effects on habitat, landscape and ecosystem are possible due to changes in vegetation.

## Pesticide use since previous audit/year

10.01 Active ingredient *	10.02 Restriction	10.03 Applied area *	10.04 Reason for use *	10.05 Quantity of ingredient *	10.06 Summary of ESRA *
clopyralid	Unrestricted	14,649620168 ha	to control competing vegetation; invasive species control	717,63836601072 litres	MN DNR has developed an ESRA based on the FSC US template - Appendix 7 for Clopyralid. As an unrestricted pesticide, there is minimal indication that clopyralid will negatively impact environmental aspects when applied according to the label instructions for forestry applications. Clopyralid does not pose a risk to mammals, birds, honeybees, fish, and aquatic invertebrates; it is classified as "practically non-toxic" by the EPA. Unintentional secondary effects on habitat, landscape and ecosystem are possible due to changes in vegetation.
trichlopyr	Unrestricted	782,66202776 ha	to control competing vegetation; invasive species control	2240,88806789232 litres	MN DNR has adopted the ESRA National Guidance- Appendix 4 for Triclopyr. There is minimal indication that Triclopyr will negatively impact environmental aspects when applied according to the label instructions for forestry applications. However, unintentional habitat/landscape/ecosystem effects are possible, primarily due to changes in vegetation.
hexazinone	Unrestricted	67,7848447 ha	to control competing vegetation	177,08156325552 litres	MN DNR has developed an ESRA based on the FSC US template - Appendix 7 for Hexazinone. As an unrestricted pesticide, there is minimal indication that Hexazinone will negatively impact environmental aspects when applied according to the label instructions for forestry applications. Hexazinone does not pose a risk to mammals, birds, honeybees, fish, and aquatic invertebrates; it is classified as "practically non-toxic" by the EPA. Unintentional secondary effects on habitat, landscape and ecosystem are possible due to changes in vegetation.

## Forest context and management plan

Question	Inputs
11.28 Description of the forest	The MN DNR Forestry Division manages approximately 4.9 million acres of certified forest lands scattered across the state of Minnesota. Those forest lands (FMU) are divided into 15 forestry areas contained within 3 administrative regions. The FMU is located in the temperate forest zone with a total area of 4,997,383 acres. The forest is state-managed and consists of both production, wildlife management and conservation areas.
11.29 Description of the management system	MN DNR has a robust management system. The state's Sustainable Forest Resources Act defines a policy for all forest land in the state. The policy supports forest management "to achieve the state's economic, environmental, and social goals," now and in the future. The Forestry Division works with the other 5 divisions in implementing sustainable forest management through its' policies, procedures, guidelines and directives and adherence to the state and federal laws and regulations related to recreational and public land use. As an example, there are management guidelines for Ash management, directives for invasive species, and voluntary site-level forest management guidelines for protecting the environment. Auditors observed these policies, directives, guidelines and regulations are followed during forest management activity through regular monitoring and during public recreation through enforcement.
11.01 Legislative, administrative and land use context of the forest operation	The MN Sustainable Forest Resources Act (SFRA) guides management of DNR forests. The SFRA was set up to "ensure the sustainable management, use and protection of the state's forest resources to achieve the state's economic, environmental and social goals." Also, the Legislature has specified a "forest resource management policy" for state forest land administered by DNR. Specifically, state law directs DNR to manage those lands according to the forest management principles of multiple use and sustained yield. These principles, as defined in statutes and require the DNR to manage forest resources to meet various forest-related needs of the current generation without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to do the same. Additionally, the Minnesota Sustainable Forest Resources Act (SFRA) (MS § 89) provides guidance for forest-related planning, management, finance, forest development, and research.
11.02 Roles of responsible government agencies involved in aspects of forest management	The MN DNR's Natural Resource Strategic Plan (2020-2022) outlines the 4 main goals in the management of the State's natural resources: 1. Minnesota's waters, natural lands and diverse fish and wildlife habitats are conserved and enhanced; 2. Minnesota's outdoor recreation opportunities meet the needs of new and existing participants so all benefit from nature; 3. Minnesota's natural resources contribute to strong and sustainable job markets, economies and communities, and; 4. MN DNR demonstrates operational excellence and continuous improvement in service to Minnesotans. MN DNR manages all aspects of forest management in the FMU, from enforcement to parks and trails. There are 6 different divisions that work together to achieve the goals of the DNR.
11.03 Ownership and use-rights (both legal and customary) of lands and forest of external parties other than the certificate holder	The FMU is state-owned land and, as such, MN DNR are responsible for it's management. The FMU is divided into three main land statuses: 1. School Trust Land: 2,413,197 acres (57.7%) managed to maximize long-term economic return while adhering to conservation principles. 2. Consolidated Conservation Land: 1,223,854 acres (29.3%) held in trust for conservation purposes. 3. Acquired Land: 516,581 acres (12.3%) purchased for recreational or environmental opportunities. The FMU is public land providing access for outdoor recreation, education and research opportunities.
<b>11.04 Non-forestry activities being undertaken within the area evaluated, whether they are undertaken by the certificate holder or by some other party (e.g. mining, industrial operations, agriculture, hunting, commercial tourism, etc.)</b>	
11.04.1 mining	No
11.04.2 industrial operation	No
11.04.3 agriculture	Yes
11.04.4 hunting	Yes
11.04.5 commercial tourism	No
11.04.6 other, please specify	

# Forest context and management plan

Question	Inputs
11.05 Forest management objectives	<p>The most recent Sustainable Forest Resource Management Plan (SFRMP) for the Northern Minnesota &amp; Ontario Peatlands sets out 7 broad landscape-level objectives or planning outcomes that cover biodiversity, climate change adaptation, conservation of native species, provision of wildlife habitat and ecosystem functions, restoration of native tree species including managing for variation of cover types, limiting damage from native and non-native species, protecting cultural resources, responding to natural disturbance events, and protecting RTE species and their habitat.</p>
11.06 Land use and ownership status of the forest resource	See 11.03.
11.07 Socio-economic conditions of the forest management	See 11.03.
11.08 Brief description of forest composition	<p>Designated cover types by the DNR's Cooperative Stand Assessment include: Ash, Willow, Lowland Hardwoods, Aspen, Birch, Balm of Gilead, Cottonwood, Northern Hardwoods, Walnut, Oak, Central Hardwoods, White Pine, Norway Pine, Jack Pine, Scotch Pine, White Spruce, Balsam Fir, Black Spruce, Tamarack, White Cedar, Black Spruce, and Red Cedar. Individual harvest and species selection take place at the stand level, in accordance with the DNR's silvicultural handbooks and management planning documents (Sustainable Timber Harvest Decision, 10-year stand exam list, and section forest resource management plans).</p>
<b>11.09 Profile of adjacent lands</b>	
11.09.1 urban	Yes
11.09.2 agriculture	Yes
11.09.3 wetland	Yes
11.09.4 mining	No
11.09.5 desert	No
11.09.6 pasture	Yes
11.09.7 orchards	No
11.09.8 other, please specify	
11.10 Management structure of the certificate holder	<p>Certification is managed by MN DNR Forestry Division with assistance from the other Divisions (e.g., Fish &amp; Wildlife, Ecological and Water Resources). The Forestry Division has 3 administrative levels: Central office, regional offices and area offices. The Division is divided into 3 regions (Northeast, Northwest and Central) with associated area offices. Operations Support provides the policy, business and managerial foundation to support DNR's mission including planning and the agency's financial, human and physical resources needed.</p> <p>Division of Ecological and Water Resources (EWR) works to ensure the long-term health of watersheds across the state that support water quality and maintain water quantity, biodiversity, and vital ecosystem services. Division of Fish and Wildlife (F&amp;W) conserves and enhances the state's fish and wildlife populations and their supporting habitats through regulation, restoration, research, monitoring, and education. Division of Lands and Minerals (L&amp;M) manages agency real estate transactions and promotes, regulates, and provides expertise on mineral exploration, mining, and mine land reclamation. Division of Parks and Trails (P&amp;T) operates a system of state park and state forest campgrounds that conserves natural, scenic, and cultural resources; maintains a statewide network of recreational trails; provides public access to lakes, rivers, and streams; and offers education opportunities.</p>

## Forest context and management plan

Question	Inputs
11.11 Division of forest management responsibilities	See 11.10. Also, the Forest Certification Program Consultant is responsible for oversight of conformance to the Standard by DNR working out of the Central office. DNR's operates through an integrated organizational structure, with each division having some role in management of state forests. The Division of Forestry takes the lead. EWR, F&W have staff in Regional and Area offices who review and comment on all timber sales prior to the sale being posted. EWR and F&W also assist in forest management prescriptions where there is a habitat value. L&M and P&T provide information support to ensure that land values are protected (e.g., cultural sites).
<b>11.12 Use of contractors by the certificate holder</b>	
11.12.1 silviculture	Yes
11.12.2 road building	Yes
11.12.3 harvesting	Yes
11.12.4 transportation	Yes
11.12.5 forest protection	Yes
11.12.6 pest and disease control	Yes
11.12.7 other, please specify	
11.13 Training implemented by the certificate holder	MN DNR offers onboarding training to new employees as well as training in wildfire management, driver training (e.g., winter driving, off road) to all employees. Recently MN DNR hired 2 Indigenous persons from the Dakota and Ojibwe tribes to train staff on Indigenous relations. MN DNR provides logger safety training opportunities in addition to a variety of public safety courses that can be found on the MN DNR website.
11.14 Silvicultural system/regime implemented by the certificate holder	DNR provides Silviculture Handbooks to guide management treatments on the major forest cover types in Minnesota. The ecological characteristics and recommended silvicultural practices and regeneration systems for each cover type are described to support operational planning. Cover types with silvicultural handbooks include: aspen, black ash, black walnut, northern hardwoods, oak, paper birch, balsam fir, black spruce, jack pine, red pine, tamarack, white cedar, white pine, and white spruce. Clearcut, shelterwood, group and individual tree selection are all employed with standard forestry field operating equipment and machinery.
<b>11.15 Technique used for harvesting operations of the certificate holder</b>	
11.15.1 mechanized harvesting	Yes
11.15.2 manual harvesting	No
11.15.3 semi-mechanized harvesting	No
11.15.4 animal hauling	No
11.15.5 other, please specify	
11.16 Management strategy for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species	Locations of rare, threatened and endangered (RTE) species and communities are maintained in the Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS). DNR has published a Field Guide to the Native Plant Communities of Minnesota, which describes natural disturbance regimes and successional pathways for NPC classes. Minnesota's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy and the State Wildlife Action Plan provide species distribution maps, habitat relationships, and baseline information including general description, legal status, life history, ecology, reproduction, population trends, distribution and abundance, habitat relationships, special requirements, and site- and landscape-level management. Division of Fish and Wildlife has numerous other plans for individual species or groups of wildlife that require similar habitat types.
<b>11.17 Forest monitoring methods implemented by the certificate holder</b>	
11.17.1 forest inventory	Yes
11.17.2 drone monitoring	
11.17.3 remote sensing	
11.17.4 social survey	Yes
11.17.5 sampling plots	Yes
11.17.6 other, please specify	

## Forest context and management plan

Question	Inputs
<p>11.18 Elaboration of Monitoring of growth, yield and forest dynamics including change of fauna and flora</p>	<p>DNR maintains an inventory system with several complementary components. Primarily data is collected through the Cooperative Stand Assessment process, which inventories stands on a rotational basis. DNR also relies on Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) plots managed by the US Forest Service, and, soon, on lidar based forest inventory. Yield of harvested forest products is monitored through routine timber sale administration and calculated each year. DNR's inventory system also monitors changes in forest dynamics. There are dedicated programs within the DNR for monitoring these changes, including the Minnesota Biological Survey which conducts surveys of flora, fauna, and native plant communities throughout the state. DNR's Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS) is the repository for data on rare plants and NPCs, and is updated on an ongoing basis.</p>
<p>11.19 Environmental and social impacts, and costs, productivity, and efficiency</p>	<p>MN DNR Forestry is responsible for management of 60 state forests, school trust acres and other forested lands. Their goal is to ensure clean water and natural resources for future generations. As part of this is sustainability into all forest work - from the trees planted, areas harvested and areas preserved. MN DNR has a variety of public advisory groups and task forces to further its mission. Examples include Deer advisory committee, Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grant Program Advisory Council, and Fish &amp; Wildlife Advisory Committee. These committees are each tasked with reviewing expenditures related to the committee's purpose, reviewing outcomes from research, monitoring and restoration to enhance (e.g., fish &amp; wildlife habitat). MN DNR also provides opportunities for the public to comment on forest management planning and those comments are considered in timber supply analysis as verified in audit document review. MN DNR also manages a public webpage "Engage with DNR" (<a href="https://engage.dnr.state.mn.us/">https://engage.dnr.state.mn.us/</a>) where the public can volunteer, provide feedback and comments on DNR projects.</p>
<p>11.20 Explanation of the assumptions (e.g. silvicultural) on estimate of the maximum sustainable yield for the main commercial species</p>	<p>The dataset used to develop the 10-year stand exam list is derived from the sustainable timber harvest (STH) analysis dataset and the forest inventory module (FIM) data that reflects changes in FIM data due to management actions and outcomes. DNR uses Woodstock to estimate harvest volumes under a series of model parameters. The model uses accepted yield tables for those species with defined yield tables and growth rates that are specific to the ecological section, forest cover type and, in some cases, productivity classes within a cover type. The final modeling assumptions/constraints are determined by DNR management with stakeholder and staff priorities. The most recent 10-year stand exam list reviewed by auditors included 8 assumptions that were incorporated into the model to produce a sustainable timber harvest area.</p>
<p>11.21 Reference to the source of data (e.g. inventory data, permanent sample plots, yield tables) on which estimates are based</p>	<p>See 11.20</p>
<p>11.22 Investments and measures taken for the prevention and control of natural hazards (fires, storm, flood, disease, pests, pathogens etc.) during the last calendar year</p>	<p>In addition to its responsibilities in land management, MN DNR is the primary fire suppression agency in the state. The DNR statewide prescribed fire committee provides support and services to operations managers, Minnesota Interagency Coordination Center and Incident Command agencies. During the audit period MN DNR fire carried out 51,045 acres of prescribed burns as preventive measures to reduce fire risk to communities and state lands. As part of their climate change mitigation, DNR partners with local counties and communities for preparation, response and recovery for natural disasters. DNR's has comprehensive forest health program that includes publicly available information and reports on forest diseases, pests and pathogens (<a href="https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/treecare/forest_health/index.html">https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/treecare/forest_health/index.html</a>). The MN DNR forest health unit is responsible for surveys, evaluations and impact assessments of natural and invasive forest pests and diseases across the state on both public and private lands. The audit team reviewed the 2025 Forest Health Annual Report that summarizes the state of forest health including damage by insects and diseases, levels of decline and abiotic issues and other tree health outlooks for 2026.</p>

## Forest context and management plan

Question	Inputs
<p>11.23 The risk of products from non-certified sources (including any areas specifically excluded from the scope of the certificate) being mixed with products from the forest area evaluated</p>	<p>MN DNR Timber Appraisal report, Notice of Sale, harvest permit and load tickets are the mechanisms use to transfer claims to purchasers. Each of these documents includes a link to the certificate code but there is no clear claim (FSC 100%) on these documents. A minor non-conformance under FSC-STD-50-001 has been issued to correct this compliance issue. Load tickets observed in the field were correctly issued and interviews with DNR foresters confirm they monitor load books to ensure the correct tickets are used. MN DNR timber sales are from the certified forest lands except when a private sale is included with a DNR timber sale, then non-FSC load tickets are used for all wood harvested on that sale, reducing the risk of mixing non-certified with certified. The audit team did not observe any of these types of sales.</p>
<p>11.23.1 Description of segregation controls implemented</p>	<p>See 11.23.</p>
<p>11.24 Explanation of the control (tracking and tracing) systems in place that address the risk identified</p>	<p>See 11.23.</p>
<p><b>11.25 The documentation or marking system that allows products from the certified forest area to be reliably identified</b></p>	
<p>11.25.1 documents with transportation</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>11.25.2 tree mark</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>11.25.3 bar code or quadratic code</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>11.25.4 other, please specify</p>	
<p>11.26 Elaboration of the chain of custody documentation or marking system</p>	<p>MN DNR has an adequate system for ensuring there is no risk of mixing non-certified with certified products. Auditors reviewed notice of timber sales and corresponding trip tickets where MN DNR had included adjacent landowner timber sale as part of MN DNR Notice of Sale and found they did not include any reference to FSC when the adjacent landowner property is not FSC certified. See also 11.23.</p>
<p><b>11.27 The final point or forest gate of the certified product</b></p>	
<p>11.27.1 log yard</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>11.27.2 road side</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>11.27.3 other, please specify</p>	

## Stakeholder comment(s)

12.01 Stakeholder group	12.02 Stakeholder description	12.03 Stakeholder's comment	12.04 Notified before audit?	12.05 Interviewed during this audit?	12.06 CB's follow up
FME personnel	MN DNR staff	generally, all employees enjoy working for DNR; one staff interviewed expressed some concern about DNR priorities re: agreement with Feds and RTE protection of habitat	Yes	Yes	None. Stakeholders thanked for their input/comments, their interview is confidential and all comments are considered as part of the evidence in the audit. Auditors investigated concern but found no evidence to support the issue. An observation (OBS002) is issued to address confusion regarding DNR memo re: EWR workload. A note is also included in the audit checklist for the next audit to investigate whether this issue has been resolved.
Forest workers, contractors	forestry contractors; equipment operators; truck drivers;	positive about working with DNR; no issues noted	Yes	Yes	None. Stakeholders thanked for their input/comments, their interview is confidential and all comments are considered as part of the evidence in the audit. No further follow up required.
Indigenous Peoples	all Indigenous Tribes identified by the CH	none	No	No	Efforts to interview Indigenous Tribes were unsuccessful after efforts through phone and email. Emails and phone calls were not responded to during the audit period.
Local communities, residents	local resident	written comments re: MN DNR	No	No	Efforts to interview the individual were unsuccessful after efforts through phone and email. The email for individual was forwarded to audit team by MN DNR staff member and that individual was interviewed. See additional comments above under FME personnel.
Local communities, residents	local resident	very positive regarding interaction with DNR staff foresters	Yes	Yes	Interviewee was thanked for his input/comments, told their input is confidential and all comments are considered as part of the evidence in the audit. No further follow up required.

## Complaint(s) received

13.01 Received date *	13.02 First received by *	13.03 Complainant *	13.04 Complaint detail *	13.05 Open/Closed *	13.06 Actions *	13.07 Close date *	Validation
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## Nonconformities/Observations raised

14.01 Unique Finding number *	14.02 CB Non-conformity Ref	14.06 Grading *	14.07 Open / Closed *	14.08 Standard *	14.09 Clause *	14.03 Issue date *	14.04 Due date *	14.05 Close date *	14.10 Requirement *	14.11 Description of audit finding *	14.12 Corrective action taken by the auditee	14.13 CB's review of corrective actions
2024-C020394-1	2024.1	Minor	Closed	NFSS	6.1.c	2024-11-27	2025-11-26	2025-10-08	Using the findings of the impact assessment (Indicator 6.1.b), management approaches and field prescriptions are developed and implemented that: 1) avoid or minimize negative short-term and long-term impacts; and, 2) maintain and/or enhance the long-term ecological viability of the forest.	DNR Direction Memo updated September 9, 2024 does not require the project initiator to contact the requesting division to notify them the matter has been considered closed and thereby afford the requesting division the opportunity to utilize dispute resolution procedures in a timely manner. The Dispute resolution procedure is a documented component of the DNR Interdisciplinary approach to completing field prescriptions and harvest prescriptions. Therefore, without adequate provisions within the Direction Memo for the resolution procedures to be utilized in a timely manner, the actual prescriptions develop by DNR staff do not fully comply with stated Interdisciplinary approach resulting in a non-conformance with FSC indicator 6.1.c.	Forestry Direction Memo 2022-1 was updated to include a point of contact that informed a partner that a determination had been made on management action. This is done at a point to allow for utilization of the Dispute Resolution Process if there is disagreement. This will also allow for staff to know when each of the partners considers the consultation complete.	Auditor has confirmed the revised Memo 2022-1, effective October 8, 2025, has been distributed to appropriate staff via email along with implementation instructions and a link to the sharepoint site where it is housed.
2024-C020394-2	2024.2	Obs	Closed	NFSS	7.3.a	2024-11-27	2025-11-26	2025-10-08	Workers are qualified to properly implement the management plan; all forest workers are provided with sufficient guidance and supervision to adequately implement their respective components of the plan.	During a site visit to harvest operation in the Norris Camp Old Forest Management Complex (Permit XO16269), it was observed that a key component of the harvest prescription documented in the SEL was not carried forward to the Timber Appraisal Form or Cutting permit. Auditors did not find written procedures or training records indicating that staff is properly carrying prescriptions developed under the Interdisciplinary Framework used to complete the SEL are being incorporated into the final harvest specifications.	The issues identified in this topic area relate to follow through on the requirements of Forestry Direction Memo 2022-1. As stated in the previous topic area this memo has been updated. It has been communicated through the DNR's intranet page and via email. An additional email was sent to forestry supervisors to remind them of this memo and encourage them to bring it up in discussions and perform spot checks for compliance with the requirements. The requirements of this memo will continue to be a topic of reminders going forward.	Auditor has confirmed the revised Memo 2022-1, effective October 8, 2025, has been distributed to appropriate staff via email along with implementation instructions and a link to the sharepoint site where it is housed.
2025-C020394-3	NC001/25	Minor	Open	Trademark standard FSC-STD-50-001	5.1.g	2025-12-04	2026-12-03		The organization shall ensure that sales documents (physical or electronic) issued for products sold with FSC claims include the following information: 1.A clear indication of the FSC claim for each product item	The statements and links found on Timber Appraisal Report, Notice of Sale, Cutting permit and load ticket had a link to MN DNR certification page, however, the text on that page does not meet FSC-STD-50-001 as required.		
2025-C020394-4	NC002/25	Minor	Open	NFSS	6.4.d	2025-12-04	2026-12-03		RSA Assessment should be reviewed (and revised as needed) at least every 10 years.	All RSA documents available on CH internal website are dated in year 2010. The CH did not provide any evidence of completing a review of RSA portfolio as required by the Standard. CH Management Representative was unaware of any review or revision since the original document dated 2010. As this is BV's first audit of this client, and this deficiency was not identified by the previous CB, the audit team classified this non-conformance a minor.		
2025-C020394-5	OBS003/25	Obs	Open	NFSS	7.2.a	2025-12-04	2026-12-03		The management plan is kept up to date. It is reviewed on an ongoing basis and is updated whenever necessary to incorporate the results of monitoring or new scientific and technical information, as well as to respond to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances. At a minimum, a full revision occurs every 10 years.	The CH provided evidence that the management plans have been revised but are not yet approved and, the dates on the old management plans is more than 10 years old. This is OPI since the work has been completed and is being technically implemented but the formal document requires the Commissioner's signature to be publicly posted as final.		
2025-C020394-6	OBS001/25	Obs	Open	NFSS	3.2.b	2025-12-04	2026-12-03		Demonstrable actions are taken so that forest management does not adversely affect tribal resources. When applicable, evidence of, and measures for, protecting tribal resources are incorporated in the management plan	The CH complaint log shows some tribal members have been expressing concerns regarding forest management activities. The log does not include how these complaints have been addressed and auditors were unable to speak with tribal representatives to verify that complaints are being addressed. Auditors were provided evidence that the CH had responded to each of the complaints, however, they did not close the evidence "loop" by including how and when these complaints were responded to and whether the issue was resolved to everyone's satisfaction in the complaint log.		
2025-C020394-7	OBS002/25	Obs	Open	NFSS	6.2.a	2025-12-04	2026-12-03		If there is a likely presence of RTE species as identified in indicator 6.1.a then either a field survey to verify the species' presence or absence is conducted prior to site-disturbing management activities, or management occurs with the assumption that potential RTE species are present.	During the audit it was found that the understanding of the DNR Commissioner's memo Re: Ecological and Water Resources (EWR) workload related to the review of Timber Sales(TS) in School Trust lands is not clear or consistent within EWR employees interviewed during the audit.		

## Principles & Criteria Summary

Version		V4		
Display	Index	18.01 Standard Requirement	18.02 Num CARs	18.03 Summary Assessment
	<b>P1</b>	<b>Forest management shall respect all applicable laws of the country in which they occur, and international treaties and agreements to which the country is a signatory, and comply with all FSC Principles and Criteria.</b>	<b>0</b>	
	C1.01	Forest management shall respect all national and local laws and administrative requirements.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C1.02	All applicable and legally prescribed fees, royalties, taxes and other charges shall be paid.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C1.03	In signatory countries, the provisions of all binding international agreements such as CITES, ILO Conventions, ITTA, and Convention on Biological Diversity, shall be respected.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C1.04	Conflicts between laws, regulations and the FSC Principles and Criteria shall be evaluated for the purposes of certification, on a case by case basis, by the certifiers and the involved or affected parties.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C1.05	Forest management areas should be protected from illegal harvesting, settlement and other unauthorized activities.	0	<p>The Minnesota DNR has authority to enforce laws on the FMU. They have a dedicated staff of Conservation Officers that enforce fish and game laws. Some forestry staff are also Forest Officers with authority to address some laws. For example, a Forest Officer cited and fined an operator that was in violation of soil rutting specifications in a timber sale permit.</p> <p>DNR staff are routinely observing activities in the FMU as part of their regular work activities including timber cruising, stand inspections, timber sale preparation, pre-operational meetings with permittees and inspections of on-going harvest operations.</p>
	C1.06	Forest managers shall demonstrate a long-term commitment to adhere to the FSC Principles and Criteria.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C1.07		0	
	C1.08		0	
	<b>P2</b>	<b>Long-term tenure and use rights to the land and forest resources shall be clearly defined, documented and legally established.</b>	<b>0</b>	
	C2.01	Clear evidence of long-term forest use rights to the land (e.g. land title, customary rights, or lease agreements) shall be demonstrated.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C2.02	Local communities with legal or customary tenure or use rights shall maintain control, to the extent necessary to protect their rights or resources, over forest operations unless they delegate control with free and informed consent to other agencies.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C2.03	Appropriate mechanisms shall be employed to resolve disputes over tenure claims and use rights. The circumstances and status of any outstanding disputes will be explicitly considered in the certification evaluation. Disputes of substantial magnitude involving a significant number of interests will normally disqualify an operation from being certified.	0	There were no significant disputes over tenure or use rights were detected during the audit as MN DNR is a state agency and the certified lands are owned by the State. During virtual field visits and review of maps, timber sale and property boundaries were clearly marked.
	C2.04		0	
	C2.05		0	
	C2.06		0	

# Principles & Criteria Summary

Version		V4		
Display	Index	18.01 Standard Requirement	18.02 Num CARs	18.03 Summary Assessment
	P3	<b>The legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples to own, use and manage their lands, territories, and resources shall be recognized and respected.</b>	0	
	C3.01	Indigenous peoples shall control forest management on their lands and territories unless they delegate control with free and informed consent to other agencies.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C3.02	Forest management shall not threaten or diminish, either directly or indirectly, the resources or tenure rights of indigenous peoples.	0	<p>MN DNR lands are not owned or controlled by indigenous peoples. In 2014, the MN NDR issued Operational Order 129, which covers procedures for communications, coordination, and documentation of work between the DNR and Minnesota's 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations on coordinated conservation, resource protection, and land management activities.</p> <p>The DNR provides tribes with the annual stand exam list. The department works with the 1854 Treaty Authority and the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Council, Minnesota Indian Affairs Council of the State of Minnesota, established in 1963, serves as a liaison between Indian tribes and the state of Minnesota. It promotes inter-governmental cooperation on fish and game regulations, forestry, mining, and other natural resources and cultural issues.</p> <p>The MN DNR maintains a database to record contacts between staff and tribal representatives. It includes thousands of records compiled since the 2014 Operational Order.</p> <p>The MN DNR has reported no known locations where management activities have affected resources or tenure rights of indigenous peoples in the last year. Field staff interviewed confirmed that there were no special sites that required additional protections from management activities.</p> <p>The MN DNR has dedicated archeological staff to protect cultural resources. The State Archaeologist publishes an annual Forest Heritage Program Report. The program conducts reviews of timber sales and other division activities that were considered to have the potential to affect known or previously undocumented heritage resources. Archival and field research is conducted for Division of Forestry and Division of Fish and Wildlife projects. Archeological sites or other potentially significant properties are identified.</p>
	C3.02 Ext1			In the audit review of the complaints log, there were some concerns by Tribal members regarding the advance of harvesting in an area of high conservation value. It was not possible to verify whether these actions are effectively being addressed by the MN DNR as auditors were unable to speak with Tribal representatives or DNR Tribal Relations staff. An observation (OBS-001) is issued to MN DNR to provide written evidence as to how these complaints have been addressed. A note for the next audit team is included to reach out to Tribal representatives prior to arriving on site to arrange an onsite interview. Also, the note includes asking to meet with MN DNR Tribal Relations staff.
	C3.03	Sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance to indigenous peoples shall be clearly identified in cooperation with such peoples, and recognized and protected by forest managers.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C3.04	Indigenous peoples shall be compensated for the application of their traditional knowledge regarding the use of forest species or management systems in forest operations. This compensation shall be formally agreed upon with their free and informed consent before forest operations commence.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C3.05		0	

# Principles & Criteria Summary

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	C3.06		0	
<b>P4</b>		<b>Forest management operations shall maintain or enhance the long-term social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities.</b>	<b>0</b>	
	C4.01	The communities within, or adjacent to, the forest management area should be given opportunities for employment, training, and other services.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C4.02	Forest management should meet or exceed all applicable laws and/or regulations covering health and safety of employees and their families.	0	MN DNR maintains a robust health and safety program for its employees. Auditors observed MN DNR employee bulletin boards with information beyond required OSHA, State employment standards and benefits information. Auditors noted Worker Injury Nurses Line, MN Employee Assistance Program, MN Work Well program, and Stay Well program. No violations of safety regulations were viewed during the audit. MN DNR Permit to Cut Timber includes requirement for loggers to have completed a logger education program such as MN Logger Education Program (MLEP) or Forest Industry Safety Training Alliance (FISTA). Also, the permit requires all loggers on site to have current Logger Safety Training (LogSafe OSHA/CPR/First Aid). During harvesting activities carried out by contractors, a checklist verifying the condition of equipment is recorded in the field. The loggers have operational training, as required by law.
	C4.03	The rights of workers to organize and voluntarily negotiate with their employers shall be guaranteed as outlined in Conventions 87 and 98 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C4.04	Management planning and operations shall incorporate the results of evaluations of social impact. Consultations shall be maintained with people and groups (both men and women) directly affected by management operations.	0	DNR annually distributes for public review the Annual Stand Exam List, which is a primary opportunity for public input on specific proposed harvests. As part of ongoing forest management planning, the agency also sends the Annual Plan Additions for review. Additionally, the MN DNR utilizes advisory groups for planning on management of selected topics. For example, the DNR Sustainable Timber Harvest Analysis stakeholder advisory group provides input to the Governor-directed analysis of sustainable timber harvest levels on the FMU. The DNR seeks and considers input on management planning annually. For example, the "Summary of NMOP SFRMP Comments and Responses". All management planning documents are posted on the FME's website prior to the commencement of operations so that the public may comment ( <a href="https://engage.dnr.state.mn.us/">https://engage.dnr.state.mn.us/</a> )
	C4.05	Appropriate mechanisms shall be employed for resolving grievances and for providing fair compensation in the case of loss or damage affecting the legal or customary rights, property, resources, or livelihoods of local peoples. Measures shall be taken to avoid such loss or damage.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C4.06		0	
	C4.07		0	

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Display	Index	18.01 Standard Requirement	18.02 Num CARs	18.03 Summary Assessment
	C4.08		0	
	<b>P5</b>	<b>Forest management operations shall encourage the efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and a wide range of environmental and social benefits.</b>	<b>0</b>	
	C5.01	Forest management should strive toward economic viability, while taking into account the full environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and ensuring the investments necessary to maintain the ecological productivity of the forest.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C5.02	Forest management and marketing operations should encourage the optimal use and local processing of the forest's diversity of products.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C5.03	Forest management should minimize waste associated with harvesting and on-site processing operations and avoid damage to other forest resources.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C5.04	Forest management should strive to strengthen and diversify the local economy, avoiding dependence on a single forest product.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C5.05	Forest management operations shall recognize, maintain, and, where appropriate, enhance the value of forest services and resources such as watersheds and fisheries.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C5.06	The rate of harvest of forest products shall not exceed levels which can be permanently sustained.	0	Auditors reviewed the spreadsheet SFRMP Species Group. Xls that summarizes the volume scaled of timber products harvested for the period Fiscal Year 2016 to 2025. Harvested volumes for 2024 and 2025 are well below the SYHL of 870,000 cords.
	<b>P6</b>	<b>Forest management shall conserve biological diversity and its associated values, water resources, soils, and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes, and, by so doing, maintain the ecological functions and the integrity of the forest.</b>	<b>0</b>	
	C6.01	Assessment of environmental impacts shall be completed - appropriate to the scale, intensity of forest management and the uniqueness of the affected resources - and adequately integrated into management systems. Assessments shall include landscape level considerations as well as the impacts of on-site processing facilities. Environmental impacts shall be assessed prior to commencement of site-disturbing operations.	0	The audit found many of these qualitative requirements are addressed in the Management Plans developed for the different eco regions in the ownership, including forest community types, size classes and successional stages, RTE species and habitats and other habitats and species of concern, water resources and associate riparian habitat protection, soil resources and historic conditions on the FMU vs. the current condition. These requirements are largely met through the Stand Review process that occurs in advance of any timber harvest. In this process the GIS and inventory data are screened for information within the stand or in close proximity to the stand (for example, bald eagle nest in an adjacent stand). Both Forestry staff and Environment and Water Resources staff participate in the Stand Review process. Where appropriate, Environment and Water Resources staff provide recommendations on modifications or restrictions on the site activities (for example, restricting the calendar dates for harvesting due to RTS species nesting periods).
	C6.02	Safeguards shall exist which protect rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitats (e.g., nesting and feeding areas). Conservation zones and protection areas shall be established, appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management and the uniqueness of the affected resources. Inappropriate hunting, fishing, trapping and collecting shall be controlled.	0	Forestry staff consult with Environment and Water Resources staff when RTE species may be present. Environment and Water Resources staff provide direction to Forestry staff to address these requirements as needed depending upon the exact management action. Environment and Water Resources staff would conduct surveys at their discretion. Results of surveys are recorded in the management records and GIS data is updated as appropriate.

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	C6.03	<p>Ecological functions and values shall be maintained intact, enhanced, or restored, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Forest regeneration and succession.</li> <li>b) Genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity.</li> <li>c) Natural cycles that affect the productivity of the forest ecosystem.</li> </ul>	0	<p>These requirements are addressed in the Forest Management Plans developed for each eco-region. Also, Forestry staff consult with Environment and Water Resources staff when rare ecological communities may be present. Environment and Water Resources staff provide direction to Forestry staff to address these requirements as needed depending upon the exact management action. Site-specific plans reviewed during the audit demonstrate that Forestry staff try to match plans to ecology of site and condition of the forest with recommendations from Environment and Water Resources staff. There is no Type 1 on the property. Type 2 has been identified as well as potential future Type 2. Management actions in these stands are restricted as verified in observations during field site visits during the audit. Management in riparian zones generally follows Minnesota Forest Management Guidelines but may be more restrictive if warranted by site conditions as observed during audit site visits. The MN DNR has an active program to manage exotic and invasive species. One site visited during the audit was a specific management action to re-establish native vegetation on abandoned hay fields. Tree retention guidelines were met at all sites visited in the audit. Also, where deer management is important, mast trees such as oaks are favored for retention. Minnesota Forest Management Guidelines are designed to meet the items in this Criterion. Also, opening size requirements are being met as required by FSC Standard 6.3.g.1 and Appendix C.</p>
	C6.04	<p>Representative samples of existing ecosystems within the landscape shall be protected in their natural state and recorded on maps, appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations and the uniqueness of the affected resources.</p>	1	<p>Minnesota DNR manages a portfolio of RSA consistent with this Criterion. Their ownership contains both scattered parcels and large blocks. Large blocks allow representative ecosystems to exist without special efforts. . Any management activity would be done in consultation with Environment and Water Resources staff. Road building is a very small program and is generally limited to site specific segments within harvest units and therefore does not affect RSAs. However, in reviewing the RSA assessment and interviews with DNR Certification Consultant, there is no objective evidence that the RSA portfolio has been reviewed in the last 10 years. A minor non-conformance (NC002) is issued to address this issue.</p>
	C6.05	<p>Written guidelines shall be prepared and implemented to: control erosion; minimize forest damage during harvesting, road construction, and all other mechanical disturbances; and protect water resources.</p>	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C6.06	<p>Management systems shall promote the development and adoption of environmentally friendly non-chemical methods of pest management and strive to avoid the use of chemical pesticides. World Health Organization Type 1A and 1B and chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides; pesticides that are persistent, toxic or whose derivatives remain biologically active and accumulate in the food chain beyond their intended use; as well as any pesticides banned by international agreement, shall be prohibited. If chemicals are used, proper equipment and training shall be provided to minimize health and environmental risks.</p>	0	<p>The MN DNR certification pesticide public-facing website includes a statement that meets the intent of this Indicator and includes a statement that the goal is to reduce reliance on pesticides (Pesticide Use   Minnesota DNR). Auditors reviewed the list of chemicals used by MN DNR and found there are no pesticides listed on the FSC-POL-30-001 used on the FMU. All pesticides used include an ESRA. Audit review of pesticides used in the past year indicator the chemicals and application rates are selected based on the most-effective, and least risk to non-target species and are assessed for risk to humans. All pesticide applicators must be licensed in the state of Minnesota through the pesticide applicator (Pesticide Applicator Licensing   Minnesota Department of Agriculture). All contracts/permits reviewed in the audit contain clauses requiring licensing.</p>

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	C6.07	Chemicals, containers, liquid and solid non-organic wastes including fuel and oil shall be disposed of in an environmentally appropriate manner at off-site locations.	0	Logging contractors interviewed during the audit had spill kits, fire extinguishers and training through the Minnesota Loggers Education Program (MLEP) and knew what to do in case of spill. Records of training verified in document review. Timber sale permits require adherence to all legislative requirements and the MN Sustaining Minnesota Forests Resources Voluntary Site Guidelines/BMPs including spill response. Interviews with logging contractors and MN DNR foresters confirm they have received appropriate training in spill response and all interviewed were correctly aware of a reportable spill. No reportable spills logged during the audit period. Logging equipment observed during the audit met the requirements described in this Indicator. No evidence of equipment leaks were observed on active operations. Interviews with MN DNR staff and logging contractors confirmed fuel is stored away from water (i.e., riparian reserves). Also, MN DNR BMPs requirements related to fuel management specifies a designated area for machine maintenance and fuel storage away from open water and outside the filter strip or riparian zone (whichever is wider) and on upland site is preferred, waste containers and collection & disposal of liquid and solid waste material.
	C6.08	Use of biological control agents shall be documented, minimized, monitored and strictly controlled in accordance with national laws and internationally accepted scientific protocols. Use of genetically modified organisms shall be prohibited.	0	MN DNR uses biological controls for loosestrife, Eurasian water milfoil, emerald ash borer, spotted knapweed, leafy spurge, common tansy, gypsy moth and other pests as part of an integrated pest management program. Use is approved by USDA and MN Dept. of Agriculture. DNR does not use GMOs on the certified lands as verified in interview with DNR staff.
	C6.09	The use of exotic species shall be carefully controlled and actively monitored to avoid adverse ecological impacts.	0	MN DNR does not use exotic species.
	C6.10	Forest conversion to plantations or non-forest land uses shall not occur, except in circumstances where conversion: a) entails a very limited portion of the forest management unit; and b) does not occur on high conservation value forest areas; and c) will enable clear, substantial, additional, secure, long term conservation benefits across the forest management unit.	0	Generally, MN DNR does not do conversions of forest to non-forest. The only exception would be for leases which are small in size (less than 1% of total ownership).
	P7	<b>A management plan - appropriate to the scale and intensity of the operations - shall be written, implemented, and kept up to date. The long term objectives of management, and the means of achieving them, shall be clearly stated.</b>	0	
	C7.01	The management plan and supporting documents shall provide: a) Management objectives. b) Description of the forest resources to be managed, environmental limitations, land use and ownership status, socio-economic conditions, and a profile of adjacent lands. c) Description of silvicultural and/or other management system, based on the ecology of the forest in question and information gathered through resource inventories. d) Rationale for rate of annual harvest and species selection. e) Provisions for monitoring of forest growth and dynamics. f) Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments. g) Plans for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species. h) Maps describing the forest resource base including protected areas, planned management activities and land ownership. i) Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C7.02	The management plan shall be periodically revised to incorporate the results of monitoring or new scientific and technical information, as well as to respond to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances.	0	Auditors were provided evidence of the final FMPs for the Regions, but they have not yet been signed by the State Commissioner. The CH was unable to provide evidence that the full revisions to the plan were occurring in the 10 year timeframe as required for this Indicator and an observation (OBS-002) is issued to have the final draft plans approved to be in full compliance.
	C7.03	Forest workers shall receive adequate training and supervision to ensure proper implementation of the management plan.	0	not audited in this surveillance

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	C7.04	While respecting the confidentiality of information, forest managers shall make publicly available a summary of the primary elements of the management plan, including those listed in Criterion 7.1.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C7.05		0	
	C7.06		0	
	<b>P8</b>	<b>Monitoring shall be conducted - appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management - to assess the condition of the forest, yields of forest products, chain of custody, management activities and their social and environmental impacts.</b>	<b>0</b>	
	C8.01	The frequency and intensity of monitoring should be determined by the scale and intensity of forest management operations as well as the relative complexity and fragility of the affected environment. Monitoring procedures should be consistent and replicable over time to allow comparison of results and assessment of change.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C8.02	<p>Forest management should include the research and data collection needed to monitor, at a minimum, the following indicators:</p> <p>a) Yield of all forest products harvested.</p> <p>b) Growth rates, regeneration and condition of the forest.</p> <p>c) Composition and observed changes in the flora and fauna.</p> <p>d) Environmental and social impacts of harvesting and other operations.</p> <p>e) Costs, productivity, and efficiency of forest management.</p>	0	<p>Staff within EWR (Minnesota Biological Survey, Regional Nongame Wildlife Specialists, Regional Ecologists) participate in a range of monitoring activities related to RTE species &amp; habitats, species of special concern &amp; their habitats, rare flora, High Conservation Value features. Examples visited during the audit include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ongoing monitoring of rare plants and native plant communities in HCVF sites in southeast Minnesota.</li> <li>•Research projects to study habitat for species of special concern (e.g., Northern Goshawk)</li> <li>•Management Opportunity Area (MOA) Ruffed Grouse Management Area (RGMA) in Moose Willow WMA</li> <li>•Bowstring Deer Yard WMA to improve deer browse, habitat for woodcock and monarch butterfly (RTE species) on F&amp;W/school trust lands within the reservation boundary of Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.</li> </ul>
	C8.03	Documentation shall be provided by the forest manager to enable monitoring and certifying organizations to trace each forest product from its origin, a process known as the "chain of custody".	0	MN DNR has an adequate system for ensuring there is no risk of mixing non-certified with certified products. Auditors reviewed notice of timber sales, timber permits and corresponding trip tickets where MN DNR had included adjacent landowner timber sale as part of MN DNR Notice of Sale and found they did not include any reference to FSC when the adjacent landowner property is not FSC certified. These documents allow tracing of all harvested material. Auditors also reviewed the FY16-25 volumes scaled by SFRMP species group.xlsx report that tracks all volumes harvested from mill reports back to cutting permit (CP) numbers.
	C8.04	The results of monitoring shall be incorporated into the implementation and revision of the management plan.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	C8.05	While respecting the confidentiality of information, forest managers shall make publicly available a summary of the results of monitoring indicators, including those listed in Criterion 8.2.	0	not audited in this surveillance
	<b>P9</b>	<b>Management activities in high conservation value forests shall maintain or enhance the attributes which define such forests. Decisions regarding high conservation value forests shall always be considered in the context of a precautionary approach.</b>	<b>0</b>	

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	C9.01	Assessment to determine the presence of the attributes consistent with High Conservation Value Forests will be completed, appropriate to scale and intensity of forest management.	0	SV4 Auditor Comments: The initial identification of the HCVFs were composed primarily of the all Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) sites of outstanding and high biodiversity significance. The DNR maintains a shapefile of all sites specifically identified as designated or managed HCVF, including the currently identified 82 HCVFs, on 262,000 acres. These layers are used by staff in the Stand Exam process and all stands within these areas are tagged for a joint site visit. The layer is also available for viewing by the general public on our external website, and available upon request. However, only 174,000 of those acres were officially designated, that portion of the total that does not involve school trust lands (letter from Commissioner to staff and stakeholders, 18 May 2015). Note that, at least for now, the HCVF acres on school trust lands will be managed as HCVF unless there are conflicts between objectives of school trust lands and individual management issues on a given HCVF site. A Project Team has been formed that will identify a process for reviewing and revising the HCV network after the MBS Program completes its first statewide survey. This process will include re-evaluating the HCVF shapefiles to identify their accuracy and alignment with stands possessing HCV's. HCV 4's were identified and mapped in 2016 through consultation with MN DNR, MN Department of Health (MDH), and Minnesota Department of Agriculture. HCV 4's utilize three existing shapefiles managed by DOH; Wellhead Protection Areas, Source Water Assessment Areas, and Drinking Water Supply Management Areas. Management recommendations for areas surrounding wellheads have been developed, including presence of spill kits, avoidance of high risk chemicals on the site.
	C9.01 Ext1			The department has a process for identifying HCV 6's through the contractual work of a state Archeologist who annually evaluates areas scheduled for management. The DNR is currently undergoing a revision of their HCV 1-3 classifications in advance of the new FSC-US forest management standard. The DNR web site includes a fact sheet for HCVFs and the process of designation. An additional feature is that a map and a fact sheet for each HCVF also are available on the web site.
	C9.02	The consultative portion of the certification process must place emphasis on the identified conservation attributes, and options for the maintenance thereof.	0	A public review process has been conducted for the HCVF sites proposed for designation in 2014. HCVF Designations are open for public comment on the MN DNR website, particularly as the department reviews their HCV system in preparation for the new FSC-US standard.
	C9.03	The management plan shall include and implement specific measures that ensure the maintenance and/or enhancement of the applicable conservation attributes consistent with the precautionary approach. These measures shall be specifically included in the publicly available management plan summary.	0	Management guidelines for HCVs have been developed, available for review on the DNR website: <a href="https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/certification/hcvf.html">https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/certification/hcvf.html</a> The guidelines clearly take a precautionary approach for management, either avoidance of management or active management designed to maintain the designated features. For example, management guidelines for Goblin Fern require buffers around identified occurrences and reduced impact logging techniques in the surrounding stands.
	C9.04	Annual monitoring shall be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the measures employed to maintain or enhance the applicable conservation attributes.	0	Staff within EWR (Minnesota Biological Survey, Regional Nongame Wildlife Specialists, Regional Ecologists) participate in a range of monitoring activities related to High Conservation Value features. Examples include in the last year include: Ongoing monitoring of rare plants and native plant communities in HCVF sites in southeast Minnesota.
	P10	<b>Plantations shall be planned and managed in accordance with Principles and Criteria 1-9, and Principle 10 and its Criteria. While plantations can provide an array of social and economic benefits, and can contribute to satisfying the world's needs for forest products, they should complement the management of, reduce pressures on, and promote the restoration and conservation of natural forests.</b>	0	<b>not audited in this surveillance</b>
	C10.01	The management objectives of the plantation, including natural forest conservation and restoration objectives, shall be explicitly stated in the management plan, and clearly demonstrated in the implementation of the plan.	0	
	C10.02	The design and layout of plantations should promote the protection, restoration and conservation of natural forests, and not increase pressures on natural forests. Wildlife corridors, streamside zones and a mosaic of stands of different ages and rotation periods, shall be used in the layout of the plantation, consistent with the scale of the operation. The scale and layout of plantation blocks shall be consistent with the patterns of forest stands found within the natural landscape.	0	

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	C10.03	Diversity in the composition of plantations is preferred, so as to enhance economic, ecological and social stability. Such diversity may include the size and spatial distribution of management units within the landscape, number and genetic composition of species, age classes and structures.	0	
	C10.04	The selection of species for planting shall be based on their overall suitability for the site and their appropriateness to the management objectives. In order to enhance the conservation of biological diversity, native species are preferred over exotic species in the establishment of plantations and the restoration of degraded ecosystems. Exotic species, which shall be used only when their performance is greater than that of native species, shall be carefully monitored to detect unusual mortality, disease, or insect outbreaks and adverse ecological impacts.	0	
	C10.05	A proportion of the overall forest management area, appropriate to the scale of the plantation and to be determined in regional standards, shall be managed so as to restore the site to a natural forest cover.	0	
	C10.06	Measures shall be taken to maintain or improve soil structure, fertility, and biological activity. The techniques and rate of harvesting, road and trail construction and maintenance, and the choice of species shall not result in long term soil degradation or adverse impacts on water quality, quantity or substantial deviation from stream course drainage patterns.	0	
	C10.07	Measures shall be taken to prevent and minimize outbreaks of pests, diseases, fire and invasive plant introductions. Integrated pest management shall form an essential part of the management plan, with primary reliance on prevention and biological control methods rather than chemical pesticides and fertilizers. Plantation management should make every effort to move away from chemical pesticides and fertilizers, including their use in nurseries. The use of chemicals is also covered in Criteria 6.6 and 6.7.	0	
	C10.08	Appropriate to the scale and diversity of the operation, monitoring of plantations shall include regular assessment of potential on-site and off-site ecological and social impacts, (e.g. natural regeneration, effects on water resources and soil fertility, and impacts on local welfare and social well-being), in addition to those elements addressed in principles 8, 6 and 4. No species should be planted on a large scale until local trials and/or experience have shown that they are ecologically well-adapted to the site, are not invasive, and do not have significant negative ecological impacts on other ecosystems. Special attention will be paid to social issues of land acquisition for plantations, especially the protection of local rights of ownership, use or access.	0	
	C10.09	Plantations established in areas converted from natural forests after November 1994 normally shall not qualify for certification. Certification may be allowed in circumstances where sufficient evidence is submitted to the certification body that the manager/owner is not responsible directly or indirectly of such conversion.	0	
	C10.10		0	
	C10.11		0	
	C10.12		0	