

# Sustainable Forestry Initiative®

## Summary Report

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### Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Certificate # SCS-SFI/FM-00088N

SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules® (Extended through December 2021): SFI Section 2

5<sup>th</sup> Surveillance Audit

*SCS Contact:*

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# 1. AUDIT REPORT

## Program Participant

Program Participant	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	
Certificate Number	SCS-SFI/FM-00088N	
Contact Information (Name, Title, Phone, Email)	Tim Beyer, Forest Certification Consultant 500 Lafayette Road St. Paul, MN 55155-4040 USA (651) 259-5256 Tim.Beyer@state.mn.us	
Certificate Type	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Single	<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-site
	<input type="checkbox"/> Group # Group members in group certificate:	

## Scope of Certification

The scope of the certificate includes forest management on Minnesota DNR managed forestry lands, fisheries lands in Lake County, Land Utilization Project (LUP) lands, and wildlife lands except for the Prairie Province, including SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard Objectives 1-15. Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs) and State Parks are excluded. The SFI Forest Management number is NSF-SFI-FM-6Y921.

## Objectives Audited

### 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:**

Not audited in 2020.

### 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:**

Not audited in 2020.

### Objective 3 Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources

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

**Summary of Evidence:**

Field observations of a range of sites were the key evidence. Auditors visited portions of selected field sites that were close to water resources. MFRC Site-Level Forest Management Guidelines (BMPs) are also an important

part of the program to protect water resources. Selected Permit Activity Reports were reviewed, and Timber Sale Administration Foresters were interviewed.

## **Objective 4 Conservation of Biological Diversity**

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

### ***Summary of Evidence:***

Field observations, written plans and policies, use of college-trained field biologists, availability of specialists, and regular staff involvement in conferences and workshops that cover scientific advances were the evidence used to assess the requirements involved biodiversity conservation. The Interdisciplinary Forest Management Coordination Framework ensures that biodiversity issues are considered in forest management planning. Minnesota also has developed a comprehensive system of Representative Sample Areas (RSAs) and High Conservation Value Forests (HCVFs) which are protected and managed to provide for sensitive species and communities.

## **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:***

Not audited in 2020.

## **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:***

Not audited in 2020.

## **Objective 7 Efficient Use of Fiber Resources**

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

### ***Summary of Evidence:***

Not audited in 2020.

## **Objective 8 Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples' Rights**

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

### ***Summary of Evidence:***

Interviews, review of Executive Orders and Operational Orders, documented training program, and review of tracking system provided evidence of conformance.

## **Objective 9 Legal and Regulatory Compliance**

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

### ***Summary of Evidence:***

Field reviews of ongoing and completed operations were the most critical evidence. Regulatory compliance has been very strong.

## **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:**

Not audited in 2020.

**Objective 11 Training and Education**

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

**Summary of Evidence:**

Not audited in 2020.

**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:**

Not audited in 2020.

**Objective 13 Public Land Management Responsibilities**

To participate and implement sustainable forest management on public lands.

**Summary of Evidence:**

Interviews and review of documents and correspondence as well as the Minnesota DNR website were used to confirm the requirements. The Department invites stakeholders and agencies to many of its planning and operational activities efforts, such as Section Forest Resource Management Planning. The Division of Forestry invites stakeholders and agencies to comment on pesticide application projects, forest road construction projects, and harvesting timber from state lands. The DNR also has multiple ways that the people can voice their concerns. It has roundtable sessions, public input sessions, surveys, and websites where people can share their views. Lastly the department maintains a seat on the Minnesota Forest Resources Council.

**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:**

Interviews, copies of Public Summary and Annual Progress Reports filed with SFI Inc. and the SFI Inc. website provided evidence of conformance.

**Objective 15 Management Review and Continual Improvement**

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

**Summary of Evidence:**

Records of program reviews, agendas and notes from management review meetings, and interviews with personnel from all involved levels in the organization were assessed. Follow-up actions for internal audit findings were also reviewed.

Defined Forest Area/ Number of Sites in Scope of Certificate (if applicable)	
N/A	
<b>Audit Team</b>	Tucker Watts – SFI Lead Auditor Brendon Grady – FSC Lead Auditor Stefan Bergman – Team Auditor
<b>Audit Dates</b>	November 30 – December 3, 2020

<b>Significant Changes to Operations or Standard</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No changes <input type="checkbox"/> Changes as described below:	
<b>Certification Recommendation by Audit Team to SCS</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initial or continued certification is recommended, subject to the Organization meeting deadlines for response any findings issued.	<input type="checkbox"/> Initial or continued certification is not recommended ( <i>explain</i> ):

## Audit Results

<b>New Findings Summary</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No nonconformities or Opportunities for Improvement identified <input type="checkbox"/> Identified [Opportunity for Improvement, Minor nonconformity, Major nonconformity].
<b>Existing Findings Summary</b>	<p>Issues identified at previous audits that were reviewed for continued conformance:</p> <p>Interviews with FME staff and review of documentation revealed that there is a lack of systematic monitoring of old growth forests. The audit team understands that there are aspects of old growth forest monitoring that are difficult to accomplish in a robust manner, however, FME identified old growth forests during its initial certification and thus has had some time to implement a complete monitoring system. (SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard, Indicator 4.2.3)</p> <p>During 2020 a Project Team has analyzed and evaluated the DNR's old growth forest network and developed options for providing status information to land managers and decision makers in a timely manner to support management, policy, and land-use decision-making. In December 2020, Old Growth Forest Monitoring Trial Recommendations were presented to the Executive FRIT. Implementation will be on a trial basis during 2021. In December 2021, the Monitoring Coordinator will present an evaluation of the trial to DNR leadership. Leadership will revisit the monitoring process, evaluate the effectiveness and impacts of the monitoring, review lessons learned, and refine the process as needed. Monitoring has been implemented. CAR Closed. Effectiveness of monitoring will be evaluated during the next audit (Re-Certification in 2021).</p>
<b>Logos/labels</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Logo checked and No nonconformities <input type="checkbox"/> Logo checked, and Nonconformities issued <p>Note: Use of the <i>SFI</i> on-product labels and claims shall follow Section 5 - Rules for Use of <i>SFI</i> On-Product Labels and Off-Product Marks as well as ISO 14020:2000.</p>
<b>Audit Program</b>	
<b>Statement on the conformity and effectiveness of the management system together with a summary of the evidence</b>	

Audit reports and management review records were reviewed for *2019-2020* which demonstrate the organization's performance and conformance to the SFI 2015-2019 standard requirements for the central office and all the regions in the scope of the audit. The conclusion determined by SCS auditor is that the SFI system continues to be fully effective.

## 2. APPENDICES

[Appendix 1 – Audit Notification Memo and Audit Agenda](#)

[Appendix 2 – SFI Forest Management Public Summary Report](#)

[Appendix 3 – SFI Standard Detailed Observations Conformity Table](#)

[Appendix 4 – Site Notes and Interviewees](#)

[Appendix 5 – Meeting Attendance](#)

## Appendix 1 – Audit Notification Memo and Audit Agenda

### Remote Audit Plan: FSC/SFI Forest Management

Please review the information below regarding your upcoming audit and alert your audit team leader to any errors or omissions. All proprietary information sent to your auditors in preparation for your assessment will be kept confidential.

This plan includes Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for a remote audit as approved by SCS and in accordance with accreditation requirements.

### Name and Contact Information

Organization name	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, SCS-FM/COC-00088N		
Contact person	Tim Beyer, Forest Certification Consultant		
Address	500 Lafayette Road St. Paul, MN 55155-4040 USA	Telephone	(651) 259-5256
		Fax	
		e-mail	Tim.Beyer@state.mn.us
		Website	<a href="http://dnr.state.mn.us">http://dnr.state.mn.us</a>

### Evaluation Team

Audit team leader name	Brendan Grady (Team leader, FSC Lead)
Auditor phone & email	510-219-2241, <a href="mailto:bgrady@scsglobalservices.com">bgrady@scsglobalservices.com</a>
Team member's name and role	Tucker Watts (SFI Lead)
Auditor phone & email	601-622-6487; <a href="mailto:jtwatts1@gmail.com">jtwatts1@gmail.com</a>
Team member's name and role	Stefan Bergmann (team auditor)
Auditor phone & email	608.216.6753; <a href="mailto:sbergmann@scsglobalservices.com">sbergmann@scsglobalservices.com</a>

### Evaluation Scope

Certificate code	SCS-FM/COC-00088N; SCS-SFI/FM-00088N	
Certificate type	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Single FMU	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple FMU
	<input type="checkbox"/> Group	
SLIMF (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> Small SLIMF certificate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low intensity SLIMF certificate
	<input type="checkbox"/> Group SLIMF certificate	
Standards used <i>NOTE: Please include the full standard name and version number and check all that apply.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forest Stewardship Standard(s), including version FSC-US Forest Management Standard v1.0	
	<input type="checkbox"/> SCS COC indicators for FMEs, V7-0	
	<input type="checkbox"/> FSC Trademark Standard (FSC-STD-50-001 V2-0)	



	<input type="checkbox"/> FSC standard for group entities in forest management groups (FSC-STD-30-005), V1-1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standards and Rules® (Extended through December 2021), Section 2</b>
Type of Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/> Full certification/re-certification (all Principles and Criteria of the applicable standard will be reviewed) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annual surveillance evaluation (a portion of the applicable standard will be reviewed)
Criteria required by FSC to be reviewed every surveillance evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/> Plantations > 10,000 ha (24,710 ac): 2.3, 4.2, 4.4, 6.7, 6.9, 10.6, 10.7, and 10.8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural forests > 50,000 ha (123,553 ac) ('low intensity' SLIMFs exempt): 1.5, 2.3, 3.2, 4.2, 4.4, 5.6, 6.2, 6.3, 8.2, and 9.4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FMUs containing High Conservation Values ('small forest' SLIMFs exempt): 6.2, 6.3, 6.9 and 9.4
Additional criteria selected for review this year	<b>SFI Objectives and Performance Measures: 3, 4.2, 8, 9.2, 13, 14, 15</b>  FSC Additional Criteria: 7.4  Operations will also be assessed against Criteria and Indicators where non-conformances were observed in previous assessments.
Key Staff	Certification Coordinator, forestry staff responsible for each site reviewed, representatives from Wildlife and EcoWaters divisions, staff responsible for tribal outreach, other staff as needed.

## Evaluation Itinerary and Activities

Evaluation dates	Oct 26, Nov 30 - Dec3
Evaluation logistics	Audit to be undertaken as a remote audit

## Date: Oct 26 (Date & Time flexible, all times Central)

Time/Tech	Activities/ notes
10:00 – 12:00	Pre-audit meeting, review methodologies for MN DNR staff to gather field data

**Date: November 30 (Date & Time flexible, all times Central)**

<b>Time/Tech</b>	<b>Activities/ notes</b>
9:30-10:00	ICT testing with technical on-site contact. Test communications for on-site meeting room
10:00-12:00 Central	Opening Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introductions (meeting attendance list done by certificate holder and copy sent to auditor)</li> <li>▪ Review scope of evaluation</li> <li>▪ Review, adjust and approve Audit Plan               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ ICT Plan for audit including if problems</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Intro/update to Scheme and SCS standards</li> <li>▪ Conformance evaluation methods – Introduce ICT plan for the rest of the audit</li> <li>▪ Confidentiality and public summary – including ICT</li> <li>▪ Review of open CARs/OBS</li> <li>▪ Emergency and security procedures for team on-site</li> <li>▪ Additional documentation requests</li> </ul>
	Break
12:00-3:00	Documentation and record review, review of field sites recordings, interviews with DNR staff, exact schedule to be determined
3:00-3:30	Prepare for daily briefing, document inventory, additional doc requests, receive site-records
3:30-4:00	Give daily debriefing on audit day progress and next day plans/requests

**Date: December 1**

<b>Time/Tech</b>	<b>Activities/ notes</b>
10:00-3:00	Documentation and record review, review of field sites recordings, interviews with DNR staff, exact schedule to be determined
3:00-3:30	Prepare for daily briefing, document inventory, additional doc requests, receive site-records
3:30-4:00	Give daily debriefing on audit day progress and next day plans/requests

**Date: December 2**

<b>Time/Tech</b>	<b>Activities/ notes</b>
10:00-3:00	Documentation and record review, review of field sites recordings, interviews with DNR staff, exact schedule to be determined
3:00-3:30	Prepare for daily briefing, document inventory, additional doc requests, receive site-records
3:30-4:00	Give daily debriefing on audit day progress and next day plans/requests

**Date: December 3**

<b>Time/Tech</b>	<b>Activities/ notes</b>
10:00-12:00	Prepare for morning briefing – review of doc/records request, new doc/records requests;

1:00-2:00	Closing Meeting Preparation: Auditor(s) take time to consolidate notes and confirm evaluation findings
2:00-3:00	Closing Meeting: Review preliminary findings (potential non-conformities and observations) and discuss next steps

## Document and record review:

These may be loaded at any time but should be available prior to the audit, by November 16:

- Training records (e.g., workshops, conferences, safety courses, etc.);
- Recently complete or active timber harvest planning and monitoring documentation;
- Complaints received records;
- Controversial issues records (stakeholder input);
- Accident records;
- Operational plan(s) for the next 12 months;
- Inventory records summary/review;
- Chemical use records (including quantitative data on the use of pesticides, any chemical use forms, target pests);
- Records of sales of certified products; this includes copies of invoices, bills, shipping documents, as well as log load/trip tickets, timber sale contracts, and relevant bill payment documents; and
- Records of logo use approvals by SCS given in any prior year.
- Internal Audit and Management Review records

## Appendix 2 – SCS Summary Report

### SFI® 2015-2019 Public Summary Report for Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

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#### Executive Summary

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) Program of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has achieved continuing conformance with the SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules® (Extended through December 2021), Section 2 Forest Management Standard, and Section 5, Rules for Use of SFI On-Product Labels and Off-Product Marks according to the SCS audit system. The information that follows provides information about the organization, process and results of the evaluation.

#### Introduction and Company Profile

Minnesota DNR manages 5 million acres of state lands throughout Minnesota, following an interdisciplinary approach designed to integrate the harvesting of forest products, management of wildlife habitat, the protection of special sites, and the provision of extensive recreational opportunities. These lands encompass a variety of forest types, including aspen, white, red, and jack pine, mixed lowland conifers, oak-hickory, and northern hardwoods. Forest products produced include timber, pulpwood, firewood, cabin logs, poles, and other specialty products. Nearly 5 million acres are within the scope of the SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard certificate.

Background: “The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) sought and obtained dual forest management certificates on December 31, 2005 under two internationally recognized, independent, credible forest management certification systems: The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). MN DNR’s certificates have since grown to almost 5 million acres. MN DNR is one of the largest single certificate holders in the country. Along with its counterparts in Wisconsin and Michigan, MN DNR has been a leader in forest certification. Currently, there are over 15 million acres of forestland in these states certified under FSC and/or the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) program.

Forest management certification is consistent with MN DNR’s mission and responsibility ‘to work with citizens to conserve and manage the state’s natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life.’ Therefore, MN DNR is looking to continue with its forest management certification efforts.” Source: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources certification system is managed by Tim Beyer, Forest Certification Consultant.

## Evaluation Process, Scope and Objectives

The SCS Audit Plan process guides the evaluation process for SFI *Forest management*

Minnesota DNR qualifies for multi-site sampling as provided within the Requirements for the SFI 2015-2019 Program: Standards, Rules for Label Use, Procedures, and Guidance, Section 9 Auditing Requirements. The program has 15 forestry work areas that are considered sites. (Note: Lands administered by the Division of Fish and Wildlife, fish and wildlife activities, and fish and wildlife work areas within the certified portion of the state are also within the scope of the audit; because these generally overlap geographically with forestry work areas sampling is based on the Forestry Division's work areas.)

The 2020 audit includes 3 forestry work areas. The audit will include a review the centralized management of the organization. The entire audit was conducted remotely using videos of selected sites and Skype for document review.

The following Areas are included in the 2020 audit sample:

- Backus Area
- Aitkin Area
- Deer River Area

A spreadsheet of (since 1/1/2018) currently established but unsold, currently sold and active, and closed timber sales for areas involved in the 2020 Audit was used for the selection of remote site visits. The identified sample included a total of 30 harvesting sites, 3 areas managed for wildlife habitat, 2 regeneration sites, and 2 sites for discussing silvicultural operations.

No substitute indicators were used.

This evaluation was conducted by a SCS Lead Auditor, Tucker Watts, Brendan Grady, FSC Lead Auditor, and Stefan Bergman, Team auditor.

Mr. Watts is a partner in Watts Consulting LLC. His primary focus is forest certification through auditing. Since 2008, Watts has been involved with SFI Forest Management, Fiber Sourcing, Certified Sourcing, and Chain of Custody auditing, FSC Forest Management and Chain of Custody auditing, Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Chain of Custody auditing, auditing of the American Tree Farm System's Group certification, auditing of the Responsible Procurement Program of the National Wood Flooring Association and auditing of the Sustainable Biomass Partnership. Watts has 30-year experience in forest management with a large forest products corporation involved in the manufacturing of paper, lumber, and plywood. For 10 years Watts was a system manager for the forest certification system.

Mr. Bergmann has been in the forestry and wood products field for nearly 20 years, working across the US on forest policy, landowner extension, and forest certification. He also has senior staff executive experience with two forestry non-profits in the Midwest. Prior to joining SCS in 2017, he worked for

Rainforest Alliance, overseeing the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) Forest Management auditing program in the US. He has successfully completed FSC Forest Management Lead Auditor training, ISO 9001 Lead Auditor training, and is qualified to be an SFI team auditor. He has served as lead and team auditors on numerous FSC FM audits around the country. He holds a BS in Wildlife Science and an MS in Forest Resources, both from Oregon State University, and recently completed an MBA at the University of California Davis.

Mr. Grady is the Director, Forest Management Certification for SCS. In that role, he provides daily management and quality control for the program. He participated as a team member and lead auditor in forest certification audits throughout the United States, Europe, and South East Asia. Brendan has a B.S. in Forestry from the University of California, Berkeley, and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Washington School of Law. Brendan is a member of the State Bar of California and was an attorney in private practice focusing on environmental law before returning to SCS.

The audit was conducted and completed by remote auditing during November 30 – December 3, 2020. Prior to the audit, sites had been selected and videos made of the operation on the sites. Videos of the sites were reviewed by the auditors prior to the audit. During the audit, the videos, as well as the operations, and documentation were discussed and reviewed. A total of 12 auditor days were used for the audit. Audit time was allocated between the SFI Forest Management Audit and the FSC Forest Management Audit. During the audit, remote site visits included a total of 30 harvesting sites, 3 areas managed for wildlife habitat, 2 regeneration sites, and 2 sites for discussing silvicultural operations.

Several of the SFI Section 2 requirements were outside of the scope of the Company's SFI program and were excluded from the scope of the SFI Certification Audit as follows:

- Indicator 2.1.4 involving planting exotic species
- Performance Measure 8.3 relating to private lands
- Indicator 10.1.2 because there is no research on genetically engineered trees via forest tree biotechnology

## Monitoring Program

The DNR contracted with Mason, Bruce & Girard (MB&G) to complete a new sustainable timber harvest analysis.

*"In March 2018, DNR set a new 10-year sustainable timber target of 870,000 cords (does not include reoffered volume) offered for sale annually from DNR-managed forest lands. The decision came after more than a year of rigorous scientific analysis, discussions with key partners, including conservation organizations and forest industry, and public input. Under the sustainable timber harvest target of 870,000 cords offered annually, DNR-managed forest lands will continue to sustain Minnesota's rich biodiversity, provide healthy, thriving wildlife habitat, support the state economy, contribute to clean air through carbon storage, and keep water clean.*

Beyond the 870,000 cords, DNR also launched a special five-year initiative that could offer up to 30,000 additional cords of ash and tamarack annually in response to the threat posed by emerald ash borer and eastern larch beetle, two invasive species that kill ash and tamarack trees.

## Evaluation Summary of Findings

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources was found to be in basic conformance with the standard. The number and types of findings are summarized below:

Finding	Number
Major	0
Minor	0
Opportunity for Improvement	0
Exceeds	0

The descriptions of findings are below:

### Previous Findings

#### Minor

Interviews with FME staff and review of documentation revealed that there is a lack of systematic monitoring of old growth forests. The audit team understands that there are aspects of old growth forest monitoring that are difficult to accomplish in a robust manner, however, FME identified old growth forests during its initial certification and thus has had some time to implement a complete monitoring system. (SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard, Indicator 4.2.3)

During 2020 a Project Team has analyzed and evaluated the DNR's old growth forest network and developed options for providing status information to land managers and decision makers in a timely manner to support management, policy, and land-use decision-making. In December 2020, Old Growth Forest Monitoring Trial Recommendations were presented to the Executive FRIT. Implementation will be on a trial basis during 2021. In December 2021, the Monitoring Coordinator will present an evaluation of the trial to DNR leadership. Leadership will revisit the monitoring process, evaluate the effectiveness and impacts of the monitoring, review lessons learned, and refine the process as needed. Monitoring has been implemented. **CAR Closed.** Effectiveness of monitoring will be evaluated during the next audit (Re-Certification in 2021).

### New Findings

*- There were no new findings resulting from this evaluation.*

### General Description of Evidence of Conformity

Objectives, Performance Measures and Indicators for evaluation were selected prior to the audit. Evidence of conformity to was evaluated to the indicator level and a summary of those findings are presented below, organized by Objectives.

## 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:**

Not audited in 2020.

## Objective 2 Forest Health and Productivity

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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:**

Not audited in 2020.

## Objective 3 Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources

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

**Summary of Evidence:**

Field observations of a range of sites were the key evidence. Auditors visited portions of selected field sites that were close to water resources. MFRC Site-Level Forest Management Guidelines (BMPs) are also an important part of the program to protect water resources. Selected Permit Activity Reports were reviewed, and Timber Sale Administration Foresters were interviewed.

## Objective 4 Conservation of Biological Diversity

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

**Summary of Evidence:**

Field observations, written plans and policies, use of college-trained field biologists, availability of specialists, and regular staff involvement in conferences and workshops that cover scientific advances were the evidence used to assess the requirements involved biodiversity conservation. The Interdisciplinary Forest Management Coordination Framework ensures that biodiversity issues are considered in forest management planning. Minnesota also has developed a comprehensive system of Representative Sample Areas (RSAs) and High Conservation Value Forests (HCVFs) which are protected and managed to provide for sensitive species and communities.

## Objective 5 Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits

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

**Summary of Evidence:**

Not audited in 2020.

## Objective 6 Protection of Special Sites

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



***Summary of Evidence:***

Not audited in 2020.

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**Objective 7    Efficient Use of Fiber Resources**

---

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

***Summary of Evidence:***

Not audited in 2020.

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**Objective 8    Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples' Rights**

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

***Summary of Evidence:***

Interviews, review of Executive Orders and Operational Orders, documented training program, and review of tracking system provided evidence of conformance.

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**Objective 9    Legal and Regulatory Compliance**

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

***Summary of Evidence:***

Field reviews of ongoing and completed operations were the most critical evidence. Regulatory compliance has been very strong.

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**Objective 10    Forestry Research, Science and Technology**

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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:***

Not audited in 2020.

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**Objective 11    Training and Education**

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

***Summary of Evidence:***

Not audited in 2020.

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**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:***

Not audited in 2020.

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**Objective 13    Public Land Management Responsibilities**

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To participate and implement sustainable forest management on public lands.

***Summary of Evidence:***

Interviews and review of documents and correspondence as well as the Minnesota DNR website were used to confirm the requirements. The Department invites stakeholders and agencies to many of its planning and

operational activities efforts, such as Section Forest Resource Management Planning. The Division of Forestry invites stakeholders and agencies to comment on pesticide application projects, forest road construction projects, and harvesting timber from state lands. The DNR also has multiple ways that the people can voice their concerns. It has roundtable sessions, public input sessions, surveys, and websites where people can share their views. Lastly the department maintains a seat on the Minnesota Forest Resources Council.

## **Objective 14 Communications and Public Reporting**

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

### ***Summary of Evidence:***

Interviews, copies of Public Summary and Annual Progress Reports filed with SFI Inc. and the SFI Inc. website provided evidence of conformance.

## **Objective 15 Management Review and Continual Improvement**

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

### ***Summary of Evidence:***

*Records of program reviews, agendas and notes from management review meetings, and interviews with personnel from all involved levels in the organization were assessed. Follow-up actions for internal audit findings were also reviewed.*

## **Multi-Site/Group Evaluation**

Not applicable.

## **Substitute Indicators**

No substitute indicators were used.

## **Logo/Label Use**

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources uses the SFI logo on their website. Company understands approvals remain in effect for one year. Company does not use the SCS logo.

## Appendix 3 – Standard Conformity Checklist

### SCS Checklist for Forest Management Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Standard

This checklist includes the general requirements, criteria and associated indicators, guidance notes, interpretations, and directives for SFI 2015-2019, Section 2. Group certification requirements are covered in a separate checklist.

#### 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.

☒ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC  
 Audit Notes: SFI on-product label is not used. SFI logo is used on website. Witnessed email approval dated 11/23/20.

#### 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*.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC  
 Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

**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).

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC  
Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC  
Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC  
Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC  
Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC  
Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**Performance Measure 1.2. Program Participants shall not convert one forest cover type to another forest cover type, unless in justified circumstances.**

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☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC  
Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

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

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

**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.c.

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

**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:**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

**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.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

## 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.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

**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.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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*.**

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.***

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☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**2.2.4. The World Health Organization (WHO) type 1A and 1B pesticides shall be prohibited, except where no other viable alternative is available.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**2.2.6. Use of *integrated pest management* where feasible.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**Performance Measure 2.3. *Program Participants* shall implement forest management practices to protect and maintain forest and soil *productivity*.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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*.**

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☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**2.4.1. *Program* to protect forests from damaging agents.**

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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



☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC  
 Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**Performance Measure 2.5. *Program Participants* that deploy improved planting stock, including varietal seedlings, shall use best scientific methods.**

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☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC  
 Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**2.5.1. *Program* for appropriate research, testing, evaluation and deployment of improved planting stock, including varietal seedlings.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC  
 Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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### 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.**

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☐ NA      ☒ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC  
 Audit Notes: See Indicators below.

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

☐ NA      ☒ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC  
 Audit Notes: DNR has been committed to implementing the “Forestry Water Quality BMPs in Minnesota” since 1987, which are currently included with the MFRC Site-Level Forest Management Guidelines. The Division of Forestry maintains a BMP/Guideline Implementation Monitoring program which monitors and reports on the level of implementation of water quality BMPs as well as the MFRC Site-Level Forest Management guidelines. Statewide monitoring is completed over a 5-year period, with interim reports produced every other year (<https://mn.gov/frc/site-level-forest-management-reports.html>). Remote site visits did not identify any BMP or water quality issues.

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

☐ NA      ☒ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC  
 Audit Notes: The basic reference is Permit Condition #20 on DNR permit documents. Those conditions read as follows:

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**#20. SITE-LEVEL FOREST MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES** - The persons affected by this permit shall comply with specific site-level forest management guidelines, biomass harvest guidelines and invasive species guidelines, as indicated on the permit form under special conditions, as indicated on supplemental page(s) titled Permit To Cut Timber Supplemental Terms and Conditions, if any, and as indicated on the attached Timber Appraisal Report. [M.S. § 89A.05, 103G.2212, 103G.2241(7)]

This incorporates by reference both the MFRC site-level guidelines and the Wetlands Conservation Act (WCA). The specifics for any permit are found in the timber sale appraisal and cutting block which are custom-worded for each Area and custom-selected for each permit (as needed) because they are situation specific. The reference to "persons affected" refers to Condition Number 1 of DNR permit documents, which makes the permit terms and conditions apply to the permittee, the permittee's corporate officers, employees, agents, successors, and assigns (basically every party except the state and federal courts that can get involved in one of our permits).

Witnessed a sample of permits during remote site visit document review.

### 3.1.3. Monitoring of overall *best management practices* implementation.

☐ NA    ☒ Conformance    ☐ Exceeds    ☐ O.F.I.    ☐ Major NC    ☐ Minor NC

Monitoring consists of 3 levels:

- Audit Notes:
- 1) The Sustainable Forest Resources Act requires the DNR to monitor the implementation of the site-level forest management guidelines (which include water quality BMPs) on all forest ownerships in Minnesota. The results of this monitoring are reported to the MFRC and the legislature. Copies of past monitoring reports are available on the MFRC Website. Confirmed by review of the *Timber Harvesting and Forest Management Guidelines on Public and Private Forest Land in Various Watersheds in Minnesota: 2016 and 2017 Monitoring Implementation Results* February 2018.
  - 2) DNR's timber sale program uses an inspection form to evaluate application of guidelines. Individual areas are responsible for inspecting 10% of sales per year or one inspection for each appraiser (whichever is higher), regions are to inspect two sales per area per year, and St. Paul is to inspect two sites (different areas) per region per year. Confirmed by review of the Timber Sale Inspection report for permit #B014220.
  - 3) The "Permit Supervision Record" (NA-02136C) form allows a forester to track activities and communication with the operator on the timber sale site. The forester can document conditions and conversation with the operator about activities that would cause the timber sale to fail a BMP inspection. Confirmed by review of Permit Supervision Record for X015973.

**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.**

☐ NA    ☒ Conformance    ☐ Exceeds    ☐ O.F.I.    ☐ Major NC    ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: See Indicators below.

**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.**

☐ NA      ☒ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Minnesota DNR has a comprehensive program for the protection of wetlands and watercourses. Foresters plan all harvests and treatments. These plans are reviewed by other specialists. Such protections are the first priority during planning and implementation of operations. All foresters are trained to follow Minnesota's Site Level Guidelines. Specialists are available for consultation as needed. All activities are subject to interdisciplinary review.

The DNR is committed to the implementation of MFRC site-level forest management guidelines as the basis for protecting wetlands, lakes, streams and other water bodies as well as riparian areas during all phases of management.

The DNR is required to comply with all state, federal and local water quality regulations including but not limited to: MN DNR Protected Waters program, US Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit program, MN Wetlands Conservation Act (WCA), and MN PCA Storm Water Permit program. These regulations are implemented through any program that is sponsoring an activity potentially affecting these wetlands or waterbodies.

No issues were identified during remote site visits.

**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.**

☐ NA      ☒ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Identification & mapping of streams, lakes wetlands and other water bodies is conducted as needed on timber harvest or project maps as part of timber permits or project contracts. On the ground identification of these features is conducted during the pre-harvest review or pre-contract review on an as needed basis. Various sources of GIS data are used to identify the location of these features including: DNR public waters, National Wetlands Inventory, MN Trout streams layer etc. GIS data for these themes is readily available to all offices on DNR Quicklayers.

The DNR uses the Forest Resources Council's FRC's site-level guidelines as the basis for protecting and managing lands in and around these wetlands and waterbodies including riparian zones. Confirmed mapping of rivers, streams, lakes, and other water bodies in GIS databases and for timber sale maps for sites visited during remote site visits.

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

☐ NA      ☒ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: The DNR is committed to the implementation of MFRC site-level forest management guidelines as the basis for protecting wetlands, lakes, streams, and other water bodies as well as riparian areas during all phases of management.

The DNR is required to comply with all state, federal and local water quality regulations including but not limited to: MN DNR Protected Waters program, US Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit program, MN Wetlands Conservation Act (WCA), and MN PCA Storm Water Permit program. These regulations are implemented through any program that is sponsoring an activity potentially affecting these wetlands or waterbodies.

Documentation of the implementation of these plans can be found throughout various timber sale documents including project maps, timber sale regulations, the FRC Guidelines tab in TSM, as well as formal permit documents when water quality regulation permits are acquired. The Guideline Monitoring Program completes representative statewide monitoring of timber harvests occurring on

all ownerships on a watershed unit basis over a 5-year period, with interim reports produced every other year (<https://mn.gov/frc/site-level-forest-management-reports.html> ).

No issues identified during remote site visits.

### 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*).

☐ NA      ☒ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

The Site –Level Forest Management Guideline outline what to do during wet weather events. It does recommend including the guidelines appropriate for each site as the operating standards for each project.

The Forest Information System (FORIST) program includes a menu of standardized statements that can be inserted in timber permits or project contracts. The project manager can also enter statements to address unique site-specific situations the standardized items do not fit. Ultimately, it's up to the forester to determine when and where harvesting can take place so as to remain within the forest management guidelines.

The "Timber Appraisal Report" (S121) form is where foresters are allowed to add harvesting restrictions relating to wetness, steep slopes, and a host of other topics. Provided to auditor for sites remotely visited during remote site visits.

**Audit Notes:** It is the responsibility of timber sale administrator to monitor site conditions on timber sales. Ongoing, frequent sale supervision is a key requirement for all DNR timber sales. If conditions occur during the course of the sale that result, or may result, in damage to the site that exceeds guidelines, the appraiser has the authority to shut down all activity on the sale until conditions improve. Confirmed during remote site visits that appraiser's utilize authority as necessary.

To minimize possible economic hardship to loggers as a result of enforcing these regulations, provisions exist within state statutes 90.041 and 90.193 to extend the length of the timber sale to accommodate such weather events. Discussed during remote site visits.

Timber Permits also include language related to a rutting policy to protect soil and water quality. #21. RUTTING METRIC - All harvest operations, including skidding and forwarding trails, will comply with the DNR Forest Land

Rutting Guidelines - Posted at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/timbersales/notices.html>  
Rutting issues were not identified during remote site visits.

## 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.**

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☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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*.**

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.**

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**Performance Measure 4.2. *Program Participants* shall protect threatened and endangered species, Forests with Exceptional Conservation Values (FECV) and old-growth forests.**

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☐ NA ☒ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: See Indicators below.

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**4.2.1. Program to protect threatened and endangered species.**

☐ NA ☒ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Environmental Management and Protection Services Section in EWR includes the Endangered Species Coordinator, Nongame Wildlife Program, Regional Ecologists, and statewide Forest Ecologist. EWR Strategic Information Service Section maintains the Natural Heritage Information System, with significant guidance from supervisors of the MBS Program and Conservation Management and Rare Resources Unit. This information is available to all DNR staff involved in forest management who receive training.

Audit Notes: All field staff who appraise and administer timber sales and who submit silvicultural projects for contract work receive this training.

Interviews confirm DNR is working to develop a bat HCP. MN and WI have 3 bat species. Stakeholder comments have been received during the past year. F&W will publish final plan in federal registrar. Northern Long Eared Bat has federal guidance for foresters in Section 4D of the Endangered Species Act. HCP will include a landowner enrollment program. 10,000 acres are required to qualify for a take. Consultants are drafting and monitoring plan. Permit will be for the state. HCP will be for an area.

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**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*.**

☐ NA ☒ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Minnesota Biological Survey locates sites of biological significance, rare species, and rare native plant communities.

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It is the responsibility of any staff who encounter a potential old growth forest occurrence to nominate it for designation consideration. Regional Old Growth Teams evaluate and manage adjustments to the Old Growth Forest network. Evaluation processes for Old Growth nominations on Trust lands are currently being reviewed by department leadership.

Department-wide mapping efforts to identify native plant communities (MBS Program, ECS Program and field foresters, Fish & Wildlife division, Parks and Trails division)

Protection of rare species and rare native plant communities is a primary objective of SNAs, State Parks, High Conservation Value Forests, Representative Sample Areas, and Old Growth Forest sites.

On-going training is provided for the use of the Natural Heritage database. Database includes recommendations for timing and activity.

Stand records and map layer includes habitats and species identified in the Natural Heritage database.

During the planning process the database is reviewed and EWR will review the plans. Habitat management recommendations may be added for the modification of the plan. Pre-Sale meeting with contractor includes notification and practices for working in the area.

#### **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.**

☐ NA ☒ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Old Growth Forest Policy, including a network of OG sites, Special Management Zones and Old Forest Management Complexes around OG sites.

Regional Old Growth Teams manage adjustments to the OG network.

Ecologically Important Lowland Conifers (EILC) identified, with the intention of being replaced by Lowland Conifer Old Growth sites identified as part of SFRMP revisions

Audit Notes:

During 2020 a Project Team has analyzed and evaluated the DNR's old growth forest network and developed options for providing status information to land managers and decision makers in a timely manner to support management, policy, and land-use decision-making. In December 2020, Old Growth Forest Monitoring Trial Recommendations were presented to the Executive FRIT. Implementation will be on a trial basis during 2021. In December 2021, the Monitoring Coordinator will present an evaluation of the trial to DNR leadership. Leadership will revisit the monitoring process, evaluate the effectiveness and impacts of the monitoring, review lessons learned, and refine the process as needed. Monitoring has been implemented. Effectiveness of monitoring will be evaluated during the next audit (Re-Certification in 2021).

#### **Performance Measure 4.3. Program Participants shall manage ecologically important sites in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.**

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

#### **4.3.1. Use of information such as existing natural heritage data or expert advice in identifying or selecting ecologically important sites for protection.**

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

**4.3.2. Appropriate mapping, cataloging and management of identified ecologically important sites.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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*.**

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☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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## **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*.**

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☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**5.1.1. Program to address visual quality management.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**Performance Measure 5.2. *Program Participants* shall manage the size, shape and placement of clearcut harvests.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

**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.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

**Performance Measure 5.3. *Program Participants* shall adopt a *green-up requirement* or alternative methods that provide for *visual quality*.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

**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*.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

**Performance Measure 5.4. *Program Participants* shall support and promote recreational opportunities for the public.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**5.4.1. Provide recreational opportunities for the public, where consistent with forest management objectives.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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## 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.**

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☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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## 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*.**

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☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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## 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.

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☐ NA      ☒ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: See Indicator below.

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#### 8.1.1. *Program Participants* will provide a written *policy* acknowledging a commitment to recognize and respect the rights of *Indigenous Peoples*.

☐ NA      ☒ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

The Department has two written policies in place that recognize and respect the rights of *Indigenous Peoples*:

- Executive Order 19-24 Affirms the Government-to-Government relationship between the State of Minnesota and the Minnesota Tribal Nations; Providing for Consultation, Coordination, and Cooperation.
- DNR Operational Order 129 Tribal Nations, provides for procedures for communication, 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.

Audit Notes:

Policies are discussed during Tribal Cultural Landscape & Natural Resource Management Training. Witnessed introduction to training.

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### 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.

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☐ NA      ☒ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: See evidence below.

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#### 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.

☐ NA      ☒ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

The Department, through Operational Order 129, sets forth annual coordination frameworks for the various divisions that identifies the action or product, the expected meeting participants, and who the primary contacts are for both the state and the tribes.

The Department has required all program managers to attend Tribal State Relations Training which is developed by Minnesota Indian Affairs Council. To date over 50 DNR managers have taken the training.

The Divisions of Forestry and Fish and Wildlife contracts with the Minnesota Historical Society for one FTE archaeologist meeting the Secretary of Interior's professional qualification standards. The DNR archaeologist ensures that the DNR is in compliance with the Minnesota Statute 138.40, which requires state agencies to consider cultural resources in their operations and development planning. The Department works with tribes on a local level for the permitting of collection of non-timber products such as ash and birch bark and lodge poles.

Audit Notes: The Department employs a Tribal Contact Tracking system to record contacts with tribes and to document emerging tribal issues, questions, or concerns.

DNR strategic plan includes working with tribes.

Tribal outreach goes outside of existing stakeholder contact. A specific program has been developed that exceeds stakeholders and public comments.

During 2020 the position of Tribal Liaison was created, and the Tribal Resource Team formed.

Annual meetings are scheduled. Virtual meeting has been held. Covid has restricted the working of this team. Interviewed Bradley Harrington, Tribal Liaison.

Four Regional Directors and Tribal Liaison work with tribes.

Local contacts have been provided to tribes to work on local issues. DNR staff works with tribal staff on local issues. Discussed specific issues that have occurred demonstrating commitment to improving communication and working relationship with tribes.

**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.**

☒ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes:

**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.**

☒ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes:

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

☒ NA    ☐ Conformance    ☐ Exceeds    ☐ O.F.I.    ☐ Major NC    ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes:

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## 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.

☐ NA    ☐ Conformance    ☐ Exceeds    ☐ O.F.I.    ☐ Major NC    ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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#### 9.1.1. Access to relevant laws and regulations in appropriate locations.

☐ NA    ☐ Conformance    ☐ Exceeds    ☐ O.F.I.    ☐ Major NC    ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA    ☐ Conformance    ☐ Exceeds    ☐ O.F.I.    ☐ Major NC    ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA    ☐ Conformance    ☐ Exceeds    ☐ O.F.I.    ☐ Major NC    ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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### 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.

☐ NA    ☒ Conformance    ☐ Exceeds    ☐ O.F.I.    ☐ Major NC    ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: See Indicators below.

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#### 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.

☐ NA    ☒ Conformance    ☐ Exceeds    ☐ O.F.I.    ☐ Major NC    ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Witnessed on-line Human Resources Policies (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021).  
Reviewed and discussed that Minnesota DNR has adopted the following written policy statements addressing these issues, based on a list provided in response to a request:  
1. MNDNR Commissioner's and Deputy Commissioners Statement of Commitment.

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2. MNDNR Policy prohibiting discrimination and harassment.
3. MNDNR Reasonable Accommodation Policy
4. MNDNR Workplace Behaviors Policy.
5. MNDNR Equal Opportunity, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Alternative Format Policy Statements for MNDNR publications.
6. MNDNR Public Notice of Non-Discrimination and Complaint/Request Procedures under Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title II of the ADA, and the Minnesota Human Rights Act.
7. State of Minnesota Zero Tolerance for Sexual Harassment Policy.
8. Operational Order 96 – DNR Safety program
9. DNR Safety Manual covers the rules and regulations of the DNR Safety Program (it is currently being revised to include internal controls of the procedures)
10. Workers Compensation is carried out by the direction of the Department of Administration.

Minnesota DNR is also subject to state-wide human resources and labor relations policies addressing the identified topics.

New employees receive training on these policies immediately upon starting employment.

Reviewed and discussed operation of the safety program and safety training for employees, and contractors.

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**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.**

☐ NA      ☒ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Minnesota DNR Response to request for evidence: “The DNR has not received information from outside stakeholders with regards to concerns or conformance pertaining to their employee relations with regards to ILO Core conventions 87, 98, and 111. Public employee labor relations are governed by the Public Employee Labor Relations Act (“PELRA”), Minn. Stat. §§ 179A.01-.25.”

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## **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.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.**

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.**

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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*.**

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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*.**

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**10.3.1. Where available, monitor information generated from regional climate models on *long-term forest health, productivity and economic viability*.**

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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*.

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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## 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*.

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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*.

☐ NA ☐ Conformance ☐ Exceeds ☐ O.F.I. ☐ Major NC ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.***

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

**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.

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

**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*.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

**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.

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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## 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.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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### 12.1.1. Support, including financial, for efforts of *SFI Implementation Committees*.

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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### 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.

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.**

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☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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:**

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**12.3.1. Support for *SFI Implementation Committees* (e.g., toll-free numbers and other efforts) to address concerns about apparent nonconforming practices.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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**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.**

☐ NA      ☐ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Not audited in 2020.

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## 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.***

☐ NA      ☒ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: See Indicators below.

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

☐ NA      ☒ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Interview confirms that DNR is a large public agency and its mission, policies, and statutes require input from stakeholders, tribes, other agencies, and customers. The Department invites stakeholders and agencies to many of its planning and operational activities efforts, such as Section Forest Resource Management Planning. The Division of Forestry invites stakeholders and agencies to comment on pesticide application projects, forest road construction projects, and harvesting timber from state lands. The DNR also has multiple ways that the people can voice their concerns.

Interviews confirm roundtable sessions, public input sessions, surveys, and websites where people can share their views. DNR website is used for receiving comments on a number of plans.

Audit Notes:

- Sustainable Timber Harvest Plan receives many comments from public. Stakeholders have shown interest in the implementation. Plans are for review of accomplishments after year 5.
- Annual harvest plans by stand are posted on the DNR website for comments. Comments are forwarded to the Area to respond directly to the comments. Neighbors ask about plans for adjacent stands. Local persons ask about property they use for recreation. Witnessed example of receipt of comment and response.
- Forest View portal is use to guide the public to comment on individual stands.
- Major policy development has a 30 day stakeholder review period. Examples include HCVF guideline management and old growth designation and management.
- Minnesota DNR has a stakeholder advisory group composed of representatives from all user groups and major stakeholders. Meetings to discuss and analyze Forest Management Plan, projects of public significance, leadership to design stakeholder approach to gain optimal comments, and HCV for bats.
- GovDelivery Platform is used for communication and stakeholder engagement. Communication is based on a list of subscribers. Witnessed site.

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

☐ NA      ☒ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Interviews confirm that the DNR participates in a number of collaborative efforts such as the Minnesota Forest Resources Council, Minnesota Forest Resources Partnership, Great Lakes Fire

Compact (which includes the Canadian Province of Ontario), National Association of State Foresters, Midwest-Northeastern Area Alliance of State Foresters, Minnesota Logger Education Program, Minnesota Master Logger Program, Natural Resources Conservation Service State Technical Team, just to name a few. The DNR also meets with customer and user groups like Minnesota Forest Industries, Minnesota Soil and Water Conservation District Forestry Association, Forest Stewardship Committee, Grand Rapids and Bemidji Forestry Affairs Councils, Minnesota Association of County Land Commissioners, Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee, environmental groups, and many others. The DNR also works closely with the University of Minnesota and the Extension Service. DNR has also taken opportunities when available to provide technical review and input to County and USFS forest management plans. DNR also participates with a number of non-timber groups such as the National Wild Turkey Federation, and Ruffed Grouse Society, Specific programs are in place for tribal outreach. Confirmed and discussed during interview.

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## 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*.**

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☐ NA      ☒ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: See Indicator below.

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**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](http://www.sfiprogram.org)) for public review.

☐ NA      ☒ Conformance      ☐ Exceeds      ☐ O.F.I.      ☐ Major NC      ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes:

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Witnessed 2015 Recertification and 2019 Surveillance Audits Public Summary Reports on SFI, Inc. website and contain required information.

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**Performance Measure 14.2. *Program Participants* shall report annually to SFI Inc. on their conformance with the SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard.**

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☐ NA    ☒ Conformance    ☐ Exceeds    ☐ O.F.I.    ☐ Major NC    ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: See Indicators below.

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

☐ NA    ☒ Conformance    ☐ Exceeds    ☐ O.F.I.    ☐ Major NC    ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Witnessed 2019 Annual Progress Report. Verified that report was submitted promptly.

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

☐ NA    ☒ Conformance    ☐ Exceeds    ☐ O.F.I.    ☐ Major NC    ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Review of the 2019 Annual Progress Report confirms record keeping is adequate and the data is correctly entered.

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**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*.**

☐ NA    ☒ Conformance    ☐ Exceeds    ☐ O.F.I.    ☐ Major NC    ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: Interview and document review confirm that the Department maintains digital copies of past survey reports to document progress and improvements.

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## 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.**

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☐ NA    ☒ Conformance    ☐ Exceeds    ☐ O.F.I.    ☐ Major NC    ☐ Minor NC

Audit Notes: See Indicators below.

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

☐ NA    ☒ Conformance    ☐ Exceeds    ☐ O.F.I.    ☐ Major NC    ☐ Minor NC

Systems to review commitments, programs, and procedures include:

- Audit Notes:
- Continuation of a Forest Certification Implementation Team (FCIT) to review commitments to the SFI Standard and Department Policies and respond to audits.
  - An Internal Program Review team to assess conformance to the SFI and FSC Standards.
-

- A Forest Resources Issues Team (FRIT).
- Division Management Teams, including program, policy and procedure reviews.
- DNR Conservation Agenda and Governor's Department Results Performance Indicators.
- Annual or periodic program workshops (Timber Sales, Forest Development, Timber Appraisal, CFM, Wildlife Training Session and Meeting, etc.).
- Area and regional field, and central office program reviews.
- A DNR process (via Statewide Interdisciplinary Review Service) to review and update operational orders.
- A Division of Forestry process to review and update division circular letters and manuals.
- A Forestry/Wildlife/Ecological Services coordination policy.

**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*.**

☐ NA    ☒ Conformance    ☐ Exceeds    ☐ O.F.I.    ☐ Major NC    ☐ Minor NC

Systems for collecting, reviewing, and reporting information include:

- Audit Notes:
- The Internal Program Review team annually presents findings from its internal audits to departments leadership.
  - Division of Forestry annual work planning and accomplishment reporting process
  - The monitoring program under M.S.§89A.07, subd.1. Forest resource trends and conditions (FIA, FIM, pest surveys, etc.)
  - The monitoring program under M.S.§89A.07, subd.2 and 3. Practices, compliance and effectiveness monitoring (i.e., FRC site-level guidelines implementation monitoring, including field audit reports)
  - FORIST development and implementation (FIM, SRM, site management documentation and objective reporting, forest development project tracking, forest inventory update tracking)
  - Monitoring SFRMP implementation (progress towards SFRMP goals/targets, using FORIST SRM objectives, SEL, and other means)
  - DNR timber sales reporting system
  - Timber sale inspections, regeneration survival checks, etc.
  - Electronic 121 checkoffs of FRC guideline application
  - Division training records (ECS training, FRC guidelines, timber sale design, etc.).

The Forest Certification Implementation Team (FCIT) also maintains an annual process to evaluate our conformance to the SFI Standard, to review commitments, identify strengths, weaknesses, and gaps and to report findings to management.

**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*.**

☐ NA    ☒ Conformance    ☐ Exceeds    ☐ O.F.I.    ☐ Major NC    ☐ Minor NC

- Audit Notes:
- Beginning in 2015, FCIT structure was modified to create a FCIT Core Team made up of Section level managers from the Divisions of Forestry, Fish and Wildlife, and Ecological and Water Resources. The assigned staff have a direct connection to their respective Division Management Teams. The Core team is involved in the annual review of compliance to the standard and joins the Certification Consultant in presenting the findings to the Division Directors and Commissioners Office, as well as back to their DMT's.

The annual management review consisted of the meetings and activities of the Internal Audit and drafting a memo to upper management that addresses the issues identified and the internal and external audit findings. Topics discussed included 2019 External FSC and SFI Findings and the 2019 Internal Program Review Findings. Witnessed Internal Memo dated 10/29/20 for 2020 Annual Management Review of the DNR Implementation of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Forest Management Standards. Script for Internal Program Review – Closing Meeting was also provided to the auditor and discussed.

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***END OF CHECKLIST***



## Appendix 4 –Site Notes and Interviewees

For all timber sales the following documents were provided to the auditors. Documents were reviewed and discussed during the review of video footage of the sale.

- Permit to Cut Timber (FSC and SFI Claim and Certification # stated)
- Timber Appraisal Report
- Site maps
- Cutting Block Report
- SEL Stand Data Summary

A sample of the following were reviewed for each Management Area:

- Single Permit Activity Report
- Permit Supervision Record

### Tuesday, December 1, 2020: Aitkin Area

FMU / location / sites visited	Activities / notes
X015495, completed harvest	<p>90-year-old, mesic soil type northern mixed hard stand. Site index is 70 with advanced regen. Hardwood shelterwood thinning occurred in September 2017 using cut-to-length operation. Harvest targeted basswood, maple, aspen, and balsam while reserving red oak, yellow birch, and orange painted trees; primary goal was to capture value (for example, basswood was in decline). Aimed to also prevent damage to advanced regeneration. Intent to capture value (basswood was declining). Orange painted trees were distributed across the site in clumps and scattered to maintain even spacing and were focused on large diameter sugar maple and basswood.</p> <p>Logger harvested only one-third of the timber (primarily basswood) before the permit expired and closed. No residual stand damage or sign of erosion observed along logging trails or elsewhere in unit. Completely untouched/reserve areas on steeper ground had been excluded from the prescription. Property boundary line marked with blue paint. Snowmobile trail cuts across the northern tip of the stand; trail was not impacted due to how the operator accessed the stand. Trust land.</p>
F011855	<p>Aspen Clearcut, April 2018 harvest. All maple, conifer and other species reserved from harvest.</p> <p>Access to the site was through private land, frozen ground harvesting only. Sale was only 2 acres, offered as an informal sale. Blue paint line marked out reserve area. Retention strategy was to keep a clump on the perimeter and then scattered reserved trees throughout the stand. Aspen regen was 12-15 ft after two growing seasons.</p>

X016538	<p>Thinning of Northern Hardwood and Oak. Gaps in less productive areas to create age class diversity. There was an optional timber sale area of low BA and low-quality trees associated with this sale. Leave trees were marked. Goal was to create regeneration opportunities. Intermediate Auction Sale sold to [Logging Company, name removed for privacy]. SFI and FSC Claim and CoC # stated in Permit. Harvesting by conventional equipment. Goal to reduce BA to 90-100. Due to snow, not all of site was harvested. Residual stand well protected. Sale boundary clearly identified. Wildlife trees selected included den trees, and snags. Access controlled by gate. Harvest is associated with HCVF on some parts. Aspen and Birch is being removed to create age class diversity and increase oak stand composition. No issues identified during remote observation of sale.</p>
X016077, planned harvest	<p>Unit abuts State Highway 200 and also crosses Split Hand Forest Road. Single tree selection unit marked to cut with orange paint. Goal is to release crop trees, increase quality of stand, and promote oak and yellow birch regen. Post-harvest BA will be 90 to 100 sq-ft/ac. Oak, birch, well-formed sugar maple and basswood, and legacy conifers and other wildlife trees will be retained. Sale boundary marked with blue paint. A visual buffer along the state highway is planned.</p> <p>SMZ old growth stand abuts the north edge of the stand. Stand is considered HCVF and management is intended to maintain older growth stages on the landscape and canopy closure for red-shouldered hawks. Recently harvested aspen clearcut adjacent to stand to the west. Unit will likely be harvested with cut-to-length operation, as no whole tree skidding is allowed in order to protect advanced regen of oak.</p>
Prescribed fire for oak regeneration	<p>Reviewed the document, <i>Aitkin Forestry Rx Fire for Oak Regeneration (Internal Audit Discussion 5/18/20)</i> and had conversation with DNR personnel involved in these projects.</p> <p>To regenerate oak on DNR land in Aitkin County, the agency has implemented prescribed fire projects. As oak forests on these lands were established post white settlement, they are considered mature at 80+ years old and nearing the end of the age class curve. Prescribed burning has been used to provide a more suitable seedbed for oak and to remove some of the understory and mid-story shade tolerant competition such as sugar maple and ironwood. This will increase light levels in the understory such that acorn crops can survive beyond the first growing season (a germinant needs at least 8% of available light).</p> <p>In the past three years, the DNR has completed five burns for covering approximately 112 acres in total. Burn site prep includes brushing out control lines, dropping snags, and creating a fuel-free</p>

	<p>fire break with a leaf blower. Control lines are located to take advantage of natural fire breaks and to complete the most acres with the least amount of line needed. Burns have been funded from the agency's fire and silviculture funds.</p> <p>Little formal monitoring has been completed on the burned areas, anecdotal examination shows that after just one burn, much more light reaches the understory. Research suggests that the effects of a burn can last up to ten years.</p> <p>Having a 10-year management plan allows the DNR to target oak stands to be harvested down the road. By burning these targeted stands now, they will be in a condition to begin regeneration when they come up on the stand exam list in the future. Over the next three years, the DNR is planning to conduct 18 prescribed fires that will cover 810 acres total.</p>
X017007, completed harvest	<p>Aspen clear cut harvested in July 2020. Unit was sold as an intermediate sale for a smaller operator. Stand also included maple, paper birch, and basswood. This is an HCVF; the identification of a red shouldered hawk led to two or three 10-in DBH basswood and one of two maple per acre. The goal was to maintain as much canopy closure as possible to support the reserved oak and scattered maple and basswood along with all conifers. Also retained were snags and den trees for wildlife. Logger used conventional equipment and a track buncher. Slash was clean chipped. Regen already evident from harvest.</p> <p>Skid trails in good condition with no sign of rutting or residual stand damage. Haul road for unit is properly ditched to control overland flow. Road is not blocked off because it comes across adjacent private land. Landing used for the harvest was also in good condition. Logger had used slash to protect soil at a crossing of an Intermittent stream. No evidence of compaction, rutting, or erosion found at the crossing nor elsewhere in the unit.</p> <p>Reviewed Revised Permit to Cut dated 9 January 2020 with expiration of 31 May 2022; Timber Appraisal Report, reappraised 8 July 2020; site maps; Sealed Bid Award Form; Cutting Block Report, and Stand Data Summary.</p>
B014220, completed harvest	<p>Aspen clear cut divided into two blocks. Block 1 included clump reserves with retention of snags. Prescription for this block was to harvest all aspen, red maple, sugar maple, paper birch, basswood, and burr oak. Landing with clean chips spread across it in good condition. As this was a winter harvest, the wood was stockpiled with some hauled during the winter and the remaining hauled after spring breakup. Block was harvested in February and March of 2020, with the southern portion harvested in November and December of 2019. This block is also in a WMA. Block includes a</p>

	<p>hunter walking trail, and special effort was made to not impact the trail with skid trails.</p> <p>Block 2 had no reserves. Harvested all aspen, ash, burr oak, paper birch, and tamarack. No reserves because it was harvested in order to benefit ruffed grouse. The harvest is also in a WMA. All standing trees were harvested, and snags cut down (for the benefit of grouse). Harvested in February and March of 2020 with conventional equipment, including a track buncher. It was clean chipped. High stem density and suckering across the site is evident. Boundary of unit marked with blue paint and flagged with pink ribbon.</p> <p>Skid trails in good condition with no evidence of rutting or erosion on either block.</p> <p>Reviewed Revised Permit to Cut dated 20 May 2019 with expiration of 31 May 2022; Timber Appraisal Report; and Cutting Block Report.</p>
X015965	<p>Hardwood shelterwood harvest, favoring oak. 85 acre total sale. Scattered individual trees maintained as reserves. Natural origin red pine was favored for retention legacy trees in order to provide diversity. Disc trenching done in November 2020 in order to improve regeneration in areas that did not have strong oak regeneration. Recreational ATV trail runs through the harvest block, kept free of slash. Aesthetic buffers of red pine along the county roads bordering the sale.</p>
Grayling Marsh WMA	<p>Majority of the WMA is lowland brush/grass, big sedge meadow, smattering of spruce and hardwood. Main purpose of the WMA is to manage for ruffed grouse, bear, deer, waterfowl, also provide public recreation for hunting and non-motorized use. Still a remnant sharp-tailed grouse population in the WMA (more of a prairie species that is uncommon in this part of the state).</p> <p>Reviewed prescribed fire conducted in spring 2019, objective to reduce shade tolerant tree species, reduce duff and fuels, and facilitate red oak and conifer regeneration.</p>
X016296	<p>Aspen clearcut sale (32.4 acres) with mixed hardwoods, reserved red oak, tamarack and ash less than 8-inch dbh. Wanted to maintain smaller ash in order to maintain hydrology on wetter areas of the sale. Harvested using conventional equipment; no visible issues or soil damage associated with the harvest. Prescription was a diameter level cut rather than individual marking. Neighboring landowner is Mille Lacs Ojibwe, discussed the DNR's notification process.</p>
X016687	<p>Oak Shelterwood Harvest (Active). Intermediate Auction Sale sold to Rice River Logging Inc. SFI and FSC Claim and CoC # stated in</p>

	<p>Permit. Noted that during search of Natural Heritage database that bats habitat was identified to the east of the tract. Plan for leaving snags will meet any habitat needs. Trees marked in orange are leave trees. Cavity trees, den trees, and snags maintained for wildlife. Large tops lopped where felled to protect advanced regeneration. Slash scattered for stabilization and addition of nutrients to site. No damage to residual stand observed. Minimal skinning observed. Patches of White Pine and oak regeneration observed being protected. Noted that there is a good acorn crop. Goal is to reduce BA from 100-120 to 70-80. Landing clean. Access is State Forest Road. Road is being well maintained. Good access to sale area. Minor rutting observed at deck. No water quality or soil issue. MN DNR has a Rutting Policy. Discussed metric for guideline and implementation during operations. Skid trails are well maintained with no issues. Good soil scarification on skid trails. Observed vernal pool buffered. No entrance into area.</p>
B013604	<p>White Spruce Plantation Final Harvest by Clearcut with reserves. Regular Auction Sale sold to UPM-Blandin Paper. SFI and FSC Claim and CoC # stated in Permit. Reserves of oak trees and patches identified with blue paint. Winter logging conditions. Conventional logging equipment used during January-February, 2020. During harvesting, the job did not work some days due to ground conditions. Slash is piled to burn. Will replant with Conifer-Spruce mixture. Oak, Aspen, and Maple regeneration observed. No damage to residual stand observed. Chemical site preparation will be used to control Aspen. Access to sight has been controlled using root wads.</p> <p>Discussed site preparation, seed source, and monitoring of planting and survival. Regeneration release was also discussed.</p>
Oak Shelterwood Case Study, Summer vs Winter	<p>Case study conducted for the regeneration of oak. Similar sites in soil type, pre-harvest overstory and understory conditions, and Native Plant Communities were selected to compare regeneration from Winter harvest to Summer harvest. Variability between sites was season of harvest and degree of soil scarification during harvest. Shelterwood cut was conducted to reduce the BA to 40. The Summer harvested site emulates a fire disturbance, while the Winter harvested site emulates a wind-storm disturbance. Findings are timing of harvest and equipment used are crucial for oak regeneration of site.</p> <p>Published by Great Lakes Silviculture Library.</p>

### Wednesday, December 2, 2020: Backus Area

FMU / location / sites visited	Activities / notes
Wildlife Presentation	<p>Overview of Meadowbrook Wildlife Management Area. 5772 acres, largest WMA in the work area. Popular hunting location for deer, grouse, and other species. Mix of aspen to oak/northern hardwoods; Aspen on west, Oak on east; Some legacy agricultural</p>

	<p>leases that are slowly converting back to prairie restoration or reforestation.</p> <p>Habitat management projects include prairie restoration, brush mowing, other early successional habitat projects for golden wing warbler. Partner with Ruffed Grouse Society on red and bur oak planting in timber harvest areas where oak regen was poor.</p>
B014444	<p>59.9 acre sale divided into 7 different harvest blocks, different blocks include clearcut with reserves and commercial thinnings, both marked, and logger select in red pine areas. Primarily harvesting aspen, pine, spruce, and mixed northern hardwoods.</p> <p>Stand 6 bordering on open water wetland, limited harvest in RMZ down to 60 BA. Large pines were retained in the RMZ in order to promote long lived species. 50 ft' buffer to the water's edge was not harvested.</p> <p>Whole permit area was along a public road. Caution logging signs were used on the roads. Tops and slash placement were used to deter ATV use in the harvest area.</p>
X015777	<p>Clearcut with reserves, aspen dominant with limited hardwoods; harvested with dry/frozen ground only; 53.5 acres. Cut Nov-Dec 2018. Designated ATV trail through the unit. Scattered snags, pine, oak throughout the harvest site. One harvest block bordered Anna Lake, 120 ft RMZ was used. Buffer around the lake was extended after discussions with Wildlife division for habitat purpose. Also, the lake is in a High Phosphorus Sensitivity Areas, identified by EcoWaters division as being sensitive because of agricultural activity in the area contributed to water pollution concern. Goal in these areas is to favor longer lived species in the RMZs.</p>
X015979	<p>Clearcut with reserves; 52.2 acre sale. Primarily harvesting oak, aspen, birch, maple ash; extensive reserve and no harvest area due to RMZ or areas too steep to operate. 120 ft no harvest RMZ was used. Also, visual buffer put in place along State Highway 87, a high traffic road bordering the sale. Main skid trail access was blocked after the sale was complete in order to reduce ATV use. Harvest equipment was a wheeled buncher and wheeled skidder, and slasher on the landing.</p>
X015973	<p>Aspen/birch harvest with minor red oak/ash, prescription is clearcut with reserves. Reserves composed of pockets, as well as individual red oak reserved throughout the harvest area; 25 acre sale. Wetland complexes in the harvest unit were excluded, verified paint lines around these areas. Goal is to regenerate the site back to original species, primarily aspen.</p>
B013777	<p>Regeneration harvest, Clearcut with reserves. 27 acres total. Eagle nest present as shown on the harvesting map, outside of the cut block. 660 ft buffer placed around eagle nest, and a reserve area</p>

	<p>was placed where the buffer overlapped with the cut block. Thinning would be permitted in the outer buffer of the nest, but it was kept as a reserve in this case. Reserve area excluded with blue paint.</p> <p>2 cutting areas, one northern hardwood, one aspen. Harvested on frozen ground only, in winter 2018.</p>
B014474	<p>Clearcut with reserves; 56 acre total; harvested March 2020, seasonal restrictions to avoid Blanding's turtle, stand was located within one mile of a turtle observation; 120 ft RMZ buffer around pond. Primary harvest species was Norway pine, also aspen, balsam fir and other minor species.</p> <p>Jack pine was favored to retain on the site, as an under-represented pine species on the landscape</p>
X015508	<p>Regeneration harvest, 16 acres, clearcut with reserves; mature Norway pine harvested with minor hardwoods (aspen, red oak, mixed hardwoods) harvested June 2017;</p> <p>White pine was retained across the site to provide seed source and structure; site was planted after regeneration check indicated the need for additional regeneration to occupy the site.</p> <p>50 ft RMZ around wetland, A pre-existing truck road was used for the harvest, berms placed at the end of the sale in order to prevent unauthorized ATV access. Designated ATV trails exist nearby.</p>
B013915	<p>Commercial Thinning, harvest primarily aspen and maple. 30.6 acres. Oak stand retained and thinned down to 80 basal ft, maintaining a closed canopy. Commercial thin was chosen in order to provide cover for northern red shouldered hawk and prevent competition from other hawk species.</p> <p>RMZ placed adjacent to wetland, no harvest within the RMZ; Slash was spread on hillside in order to control runoff</p> <p>Harvested Dec 2018, using a full tree skid in order to encourage acorn establishment. Stand is being set up for a later overstory removal harvest.</p>
X015510	<p>Clearcut with reserves, using conventional harvesting. Harvested winter 2020. 76 acres, primarily aspen with some white and mixed hardwoods. Bur oak reserved for mast production. Harvest took place on frozen ground only.</p> <p>Two large reserve islands in the middle of the cut block, slash was scattered throughout the sale.</p> <p>Reviewed flagging along a property boundary, it was originally a natural harvest line due to different age classes, but they flagged it in order to be certain of the property line.</p>
B013780	<p>Clearcut with reserves, mature aspen with minor hardwood species. 18 acres, dry or frozen ground only. Planned for natural</p>

	regeneration, clumped reserves. Natural boundary line with alder swamp on the south block.
Silviculture Presentation	Discussed two silviculture research projects focused on recruitment of oak. The first was a planting project using scarification and then plant with an organic animal repellent on acorns. Acorns were spread over 18 acres, with the treated half showing significantly higher germination. The second project was mesh sleeves as a form of browse protection on oak saplings. Found to be more effective than paper sleeves.

### Wednesday, December 2, 2020: Deer River Area

FMU / location / sites visited	Activities / notes
X015550	Clearcut aerial seeded in 2020. Wetlands and reserve Tamarack islands protected. No entrance. Winter logging. Snowmobile access into state property was posted by signs and on MN DNR website. CTL for harvesting. Communicated with Parks & Trails during harvest. No issues identified.
X016083	Clearcut with reserves (3 stands). Goal is to remove large Ash and reduce BA to 60. Harvesting will create canopy gaps. Individual trees and clusters will be reserved. Ash removal is in avoidance of the Emerald Ash Bore. Winter harvesting only. Frozen ground is specified in Permit. Ground is very wet. CTL job used for harvesting. Aerial seeding will be used for regeneration. Local cones are collected. Mix of seed will be used with aerial seeding. Black Spruce will be primary specie. Shape file will be provided to contractor. No issues observed during review of video or identified during discussion.
B013555	4 stands in sale. #1 Final harvest uneven aged mixed Conifer with advanced regeneration; #2 2 <sup>nd</sup> thinning to remove 1/3 of volume (BA 140); #3 Clearcut with reserves; #4 1 <sup>st</sup> thinning of Norway Pine (BA 130). Harvesting by CTL. Debris spread on skid trails. No skinning or rutting observed. Residual stands well protected. No water features in stands. In #2 the 3 <sup>rd</sup> row is removed. In #4 the 3 <sup>rd</sup> row and between. Equipment was well matched to stand and soil conditions. No issues identified.
F011904	Aspen clearcut with reserves. Removal of Ash greater than 8". Others reserved along with 2 Aspen/Acre marked. Reserve area designated with blue paint. Snags and wildlife trees retained. Goal is to add diversity to stand. Winter harvesting using CTL. Well stocked with regeneration. Observed regeneration is well protected during harvesting. No issue with skid trail. Well stabilized. Harvesting was also occurring on lands of the adjoining landowner. The logger requested to purchase the adjacent State timber informally. It is land locked with private access. Good job of



	marking property line and keeping timber separate. No issues identified or discussed with ownership or mixing of timber. The private timber was cut before the state timber.
B014420	207 acre Aspen Clearcut with reserves/8 acre Northern Hardwood Thinning (Aspen, Birch, low quality hardwood) (Active). Goal is to create diversity and promote Conifers in the stand. Currently trucking. Site can be logged dry or frozen. Began during September. Conventional logging used. Observed spreading of debris to stabilize skid trails. No damage observed to reserves. Deck is clean. Debris scattered and tops lopped. There are several seeps on the tract. Mats are used for crossing. These will be removed, and the area mitigated. Whole tree logging was used to scarify the site for regeneration. Aerial seeding will be used for regeneration.
F011960	Two stands: #1 - Select thinning of Red Pine, and #2 – clearcut with no reserves of Black Spruce. Winter logging only. CTL used for harvesting. Debris spread to stabilize skid trails. Eagles nest has been identified in the area. Harvesting guidelines are established for operating in area with seasonal restriction. Witnessed on sale map and reviewed during interview. Permit was added to adjacent Permit at the loggers request due to accessibility and economics of harvesting in conjunction with adjoining Permit purchased by logger. Area will have aerial seeding with Black Spruce in conjunction with adjoining tract.
X016282	28 acre oak release. Row thinning with debris scattered of stability of soil. Goal is to reduce BA from 180 to 120. Oak retained for wildlife. Harvesting using CTL. Logger moved from sale due to poor market. Adjacent landowner has private easement on access to tract. Road maintenance is critical issue on this tract due to adjacent landowner. Deck was placed on each side of road to maintain road. On-going communication with landowner was discussed. Good relationship has been maintained. Road has been maintained well during sale. No issues identified.
X016284	Clearcut with reserves. Stand is mixed Aspen-Conifer. Reserve will be Conifer. Prescription will create diversity on tract. Wildlife reserves for uplands. Eagle was identified on adjoining USFS land after this sale was set-up. Sale was removed from annual plan, buffer established, and area remarked. Sale repackaged and sold next year. Harvesting restricted with seasonal requirements for Eagles. Observed retention of upland islands. No issues identified.
B013638	21 acre 1 <sup>st</sup> Thinning (Active). Row thinning of Red Pine to reduce BA from 120 to 90. Retain oak and Birch. Harvesting mimics natural patterns of land transition. Harvested using CTL. No rutting observed. Deck is well established and clean. No skinning observed. Good tree selection. Regeneration has been protected. No damage to residual trees. Road is shaped and crowned. Buffer of 50' along wetlands. No entrance. Shoreland development has

	no impact on sale. Observed sign for Shoreland & Lake of Biodiversity. GIS has layer of scenic and visual concerns for sale. No issues identified.
F011733	Road betterment. Project to daylight Blueberry Forestry Road. Road is maintained by county and is major access to MN DNR property. Harvesting was 30' on each side of road. Goal was to increase air and sunlight on roadbed for drying when conditions are wet – improve public image, and forestry issue. County will mow 4' on each side of road in the future. No skinning of residual stand. No felling into residual stand. Sides clean. No water features. Debris is slash, lop, and scatter. Debris is less than 3' of ground. No skidding or deck on road surface. No issues identified.
Silviculture Presentation	<p>Herbicide Use Project</p> <p>Site was planted to red and white pine. Herbicide was used to release the pine from raspberry competition. Contract includes application prescription and conditions of application. Shapefile provides area of application. Buffer is removed from Shapefile. Shapefile is for area of application. Chemical application is turn-key. Chemicals are ordered and handled by contractor – Future Forest Inc. Monitor during handling, mixing, and application. Checklist of chemical use is completed during monitoring. Application Report and application map is provided when Invoiced. Applicator must be licensed applicator. Each year, 1-2 projects are conducted. Additional chemical work is contracted to control invasive species and for roadsides. No issues observed in process or application.</p> <p>Prescribed Fire</p> <p>Prescription to improve Conifer stands. Used in Shelterwood harvests during Spring, 2019. Goal is to mimic natural disturbance practice for natural regeneration. Witnessed and discussed guidelines for use of prescribed burning, Burn Plan, implementation of burn, and monitoring of burn results. Prescribed burns require multi-agency cooperation. No issues identified. No issues have occurred during burns.</p>
Wildlife Presentation	<p>Mud Goose WMP</p> <p>Management includes the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interagency Prescribed Burning Partnership – Wet Meadow Prescribed Burn</li> <li>• Woodcock Habitat Enhancement Project – Strip brush mowing</li> <li>• Deer Yards – Brush mowing</li> <li>• Public use of area (ATVs not allowed)</li> <li>• Production of wild rice – Tribes, public, waterfowl</li> <li>• Timber harvesting is used as a tool to improve wildlife habitat</li> <li>• Camping areas are available</li> <li>• Waterfowl hunting is provided</li> </ul>

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## Appendix 5 – Meeting Attendance

Meeting Attendance: Minnesota DNR

Date: November 30 – December 3, 2020

Surveillance Audit: The Objective is to determine if certification should be continued to the SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules, Section 2: Forest Management. Objectives to be reviewed include Objective 3, 8, 13,14, 15, and Indicators 4.2, and 9.2 of the SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard.

Name	Position Title	Phone OR Email	Open	Field	Close
Sarah Strommen	Commissioner		X		
Barb Naramore	Deputy Commissioner		X		X
Shannon Lotthammer	Assistant Commissioner		X		X
Bob Meier	Assistant Commissioner		X		X
Jess Richards	Assistant Commissioner		X		X
Patty Thielen	NE Regional Director		X		X
Theresa Ebbenga	NW Regional Director		X	X	X
Bradley Harrington	Tribal Liaison		X		X
Forrest Boe	Director - Forestry		X		X
Dave Olfelt	Director – Fish and Wildlife		X		X

Name	Position Title	Phone OR Email	Open	Field	Close
Steve Colvin	Director – Ecological and Water Resources		X		X
Craig Schmid	Deputy Director - Forestry		X		X
Pat Rivers	Deputy Director – Fish and Wildlife		X		X
Ann Pierce	Deputy Director – Ecological and Water Resources				X
Jan Shaw Wolff	Section Chief – Ecosystem Management and Protection & Certification Oversight Team (COT)		X		X
Mike Larson	Section Chief – Wildlife & COT		X		X
Lonnie Lilly	NE Region Forestry Manager		X	X	X
Adam Munstenteiger	NW Region Forestry Manager		X	X	X
John Williams	NW Region Wildlife Manager		X	X	X
Angela Aarhus-Ward	NE Region Wildlife Manager		X	X	X
Darrell Schindler	NE Region EWR Manager		X		X
Andrew Arends	Section Chief – State Forest Lands		X		X
Aaron VandeLinde	Director, Office of School Trust Lands (non-DNR staff)		X		X
Trina Zieman	Land Asset and School Trust Administrator (DNR)		X		X
Amber Ellering	Forest Policy and Planning Supervisor		X		X

Name	Position Title	Phone OR Email	Open	Field	Close
Emily Peters	Forest Ecology and Policy Program Consultant (EWR)		X	X	X
Lacy Levine	Forest Policy Analyst & Forest Certification Implementation Team (FCIT)		X		X
Jon Drimel	Timber Program Supervisor & FCIT		X	X	X
Tim Quincer	Forest Wildlife Habitat Specialist & FCIT		X		X
Bruce Carlson	Minnesota Biological Survey Supervisor		X		X
Nick Jensen	NW Regional Ecologist & FCIT		X	X	X
Ashlee Lehner	Ecological Classification System Program Consultant & FCIT		X		X
Dave Larson	NE Regional Silviculturist & FCIT		X		X
Tim Beyer	Forest Certification Program Consultant & FCIT lead	tim.beyer@state.mn.us	X	X	X
Doug Tillma	Section Chief – Forestry Planning and Policy & (COT)		X		
Nathan Kestner	NW Region EWR Manager		X		
Ted Dick	Forest Wildlife Habitat Supervisor		X	X	
David Wilson	BMP Monitoring Program Consultant & FCIT		X		

### Aitkin Area Remote Field Visits

Brian Leitinger	Area Forest Supervisor
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Matt Huseby	Field Forester
Troy Holcomb	Forestry Specialist Senior – Silviculture Program
Maddy Masucci	Forestry Specialist Intermediate
Nick Lyytinen	Forestry Specialist Intermediate
Derek Wagner	Field Forester
Russ Reisz	Area Wildlife Manager
Jake Wermerskirchen	Forestry Technician
Glendon Nyberg	Assistant Area Forest Supervisor
Steve Sovinski	Forestry Specialist Senior – Timber Program
Brooke Haworth	NE Regional Plant Ecologist
Andrew Herberg	NE Regional Non-game Specialist

### Deer River Area Remote Field Visits

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Wes Belanger	<b>Area Forest Supervisor</b>
Ryan Brubaker	Forestry Specialist Senior – Timber Program
Josh Tomlin	Forestry Technician
Chris Bergquist	Forestry Specialist Intermediate
Matt Pollard	Forestry Specialist Senior

Mike Shearen	Forestry Specialist Intermediate
Josh Donatell	Forestry Specialist Senior – CFM Program
John Segari	Forestry Specialist Intermediate
Ben Mattsen	Forestry Technician
Trevor Adams	Forestry Specialist
Mark Spoden	Area Wildlife Manager
Gaea Crozier	NE Regional Non-Game Specialist
Brooke Haworth	NE Regional Plant Ecologist
Nate Haskins	Assistant Area Forest Supervisor
Jessica Holmes	Assistant Area Wildlife Manager

### Backus Area Remote Field Visits

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Curt Westerman	<b>Area Forest Supervisor</b>
Rob Rabasco	Assistant Area Wildlife Manager
Elena Wiley	Forestry Specialist Intermediate
Cody Crawford	Forestry Technician
Brody Geiselman	Forestry Specialist



Bill Salo	Forestry Technician
Craig Schultz	Forestry Specialist Senior – Fire Program
Darren Bundy	Forestry Specialist Senior – Timber Program
Karla Sandstrom	Forestry Specialist Intermediate
Amy Westmark	NW Regional Non-game Specialist
Andrew Herberg	NE Regional Non-Game Specialist
Dawn Plattner	Assistant Area Wildlife Manager
Jacob Corty	Forestry Specialist Intermediate
Christine Reisz	Area Wildlife Manager