Sustainable Forestry Initiative®
Summary Report

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

SFI 2022 Standards and Rules®: SFI Section 2, Forest Management

1st Surveillance Audit

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1. AUDIT REPORT

Program Participant Information

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	☒ Single	☐ Multi-site
	☐ Group # Group members in group certificate:	
Audit Type	☐ Combined ☐ Joined ☐ Integrated	

Scope of 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 2022 Rules and Standards, Section 2- Forest Management Standard Objectives 1-17. Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs) and State Parks are excluded. The SFI Forest Management number is SCS-SFI/FM-00088N.
Objectives Audited
Objectives Audited in 2022: *1, 3, 6, 9, 15, 16, 17*
Forest area (*acres*)/ Number of Sites in Scope of Certificate *(if applicable)*

Audit Team	Shannon Wilks, SFI Lead Auditor/FSC Team Auditor Stefan Bergmann, SFI Team Auditor/FSC Lead Auditor	
Audit Dates	27-28 September 2022	
Significant Changes to Operations or Standard	☐ No changes ☒ Changes as described below: MN DNR transitioned to SFI 2022 Standards and Rules. Adjusted to reflect new standard in certificate scope.	
Deviations from the Audit Plan and Rationale	N/A	
Significant Issues Affecting Audit Program	None	
Unresolved Issues, if any	None	
Certification Recommendation by Audit Team to SCS	☒ Initial or continued certification is recommended, subject to the Organization meeting deadlines for response any findings issued.	☐ Initial or continued certification is not recommended (*explain*):

Audit Results

New Findings Summary	☒ No nonconformities or Opportunities for Improvement identified ☐ Identified [Opportunity for Improvement, Minor nonconformity, Major nonconformity].

Existing Findings Summary	Issues identified at previous audits that were reviewed for continued conformance: Review of website confirms proper use of SFI logo with license code.
Logos/labels	☒ Logo checked and No nonconformities ☐ Logo checked, and Nonconformities issued ☐ Logo checked, Logo is not used, No nonconformities Note: 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.
Fulfillment of Audit Objectives	☒ Audit Objectives Fulfilled ☐ Audit Objectives Not Fulfilled

Audit Program

Statement on the conformity and effectiveness of the management system together with a summary of the evidence (*Stage 2 and Recertification only*)
Audit Team review of procedures, policies, previous audit reports, interviews with personnel and subject matter experts, observation of field sites confirmed compliance to SFI certification requirements. Certificate Holder maintains a detailed internal audit program and Management Review process for evaluation, implementation and continual improvement of SFI certification program. The conclusion determined by SCS auditors 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

Disclaimer: Please note that auditing is based on a sampling process of the available information.

Audit Plan: FSC & SFI Forest Management

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

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	http://dnr.state.mn.us

Evaluation Team

Audit team leader	Stefan Bergmann (FSC Lead Auditor) 608-216-6753 cell sbergmann@scsglobalservices.com
Audit team member	Shannon Wilks (SFI Lead Auditor) 903-278-7766 Dswilks1234@gmail.com

Evaluation Scope

Certificate code	FSC: SCS-FM/COC-00088N SFI: SCS-SFI/FM-00088N	
Certificate type	☒ Single FMU	☐ Multiple FMU
	☐ Group	
SLIMF *(if applicable)*	☐ Small SLIMF certificate	☐ Low intensity SLIMF certificate
	☐ Group SLIMF certificate	
Standards used *NOTE: Please include the full standard name and version number and check all that apply.*	☒ Forest Stewardship Standard(s), including version: • FSC-US Forest Management Standard (V1-0)	
	☒ SCS COC indicators for FMEs, V8-0	
	☒ FSC Trademark Standard (FSC-STD-50-001 V2-0)	

	☒ SFI 2022 Standards and Rules: ▪ Section 2: SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard ▪ Section 6: Rules for Use of SFI On-Product Labels and Off-Product Marks ▪ Section 10-Appendix 1: Audits of Multi-Site Organizations
Type of Evaluation	☐ Full certification/re-certification (all Principles and Criteria of the applicable standard will be reviewed) ☒ Annual surveillance evaluation (a portion of the applicable standard will be reviewed)
*For **new** standards updated to conform to International Generic Indicators FSC-STD-60-004 **V3-0** (P&CV5):* Criteria required by FSC to be reviewed every surveillance evaluation.	☐ Plantations > 10 000 ha: Criteria 1.6; 2.3; 4.4; 4.5; 7.6; 10.2; 10.3; 10.6; 10.7 and 10.12. ☐ Natural forests >50,000 hectares (123,553 ac) ('low intensity' SLIMFs exempt): Criteria 1.4; 1.6; 2.3; 3.2; 3.4; 4.4; 4.5; 5.2; 6.4; 6.6; 7.6; 8.2 and 9.4. ☐ FMUs containing High Conservation Values ('small forest' SLIMFs exempt): Criteria 6.4; 6.6; 9.4 and 10.3
For standards conforming to older version of International Generic Indicators (P&CV4): Criteria required by FSC to be reviewed every surveillance evaluation	☐ Plantations > 10,000 ha (24,710 ac): 2.3, 4.2, 4.4, 6.7, 6.9, 10.6, 10.7, and 10.8 ☒ 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 ☒ FMUs containing High Conservation Values ('small forest' SLIMFs exempt): 6.2, 6.3, 6.9 and 9.4
Requirements selected for review this year:	FSC: This year's assessment will include a review of FSC-US FM Principles 7 and 8; Criterion 1.5, 2.3, 3.2, 4.2, 4.4, 5.6, 6.2, 6.3, 6.5, 6.9, and 9.4; SCS COC indicators for FMEs; and FSC Trademark standard. SFI: Objectives 1, 3, 6, 9, 10, 15, 16, and 17

Evaluation Itinerary and Activities

Evaluation dates	27-28 September 2022
Evaluation logistics	Travel: Auditors will travel to the project site on 26 September and return home on 29 September. MNDNR and auditors will provide transportation to each field location at the start and end of each audit day.
	Lodging: Lodging has been reserved at AmericInn, 5480 Mt. Iron Drive Virginia, MN 55792 (phone 218-741-7839).
	Meals: Plans should be made to have lunch onsite or another acceptable location to ensure timeliness.
	Other: *NA*

Date: Hoyt Lakes (Opening Meeting) and Two Harbors Area – Tuesday, 27 September 2022

FMU/location/ sites visited	Activities/ notes
Formal DNR Opening Meeting Hoyt Lakes Community Building 0800 – 0830	Brief introductions, review scope of evaluations, audit plan, intro/update to FSC and SFI standards, confidentiality and public summary, conformance evaluation methods and tools, emergency and security procedures for evaluation team, and other FSC & SFI required topics.
DNR Overview/Presentation Hoyt Lakes Community Building 0830 – 0930	Commissioners Office and Division Directors provided an overview of Department of Natural Resources, including administrative structure, public input opportunities, pending stakeholder issues (if any), and related topics.
Two Harbors Area Presentation and Field Evaluations 0930 – 1300	**Audit team members remain together.** Site evaluations, as applicable: active harvests, recently closed units, planned harvests, wildlife and fisheries management activities, T&E species protection areas, identified HCV areas, reforestation sites, stream crossings, roadwork, chemical use, silviculture, stakeholder consultation, cultural site protections, etc.
Field evaluations 1300 – 1630	**Audit team splits into two.** Site evaluations, as applicable: active harvests, recently closed units, planned harvests, T&E species protection areas, identified HCV areas, reforestation sites, stream crossings, roadwork, chemical use, silviculture, stakeholder consultation, cultural site protections, etc. Lunches while en route.
Daily debrief 1630 – 1700	Auditor team debrief from field visits for day.

Date: Hibbing and Tower Areas – Wednesday, 28 September 2022

FMU / location / sites visited	Activities / notes
Area Presentation and Logistics Review: Hibbing and Tower Area offices or meeting locations 0800-0830	Area presentation and review logistics for day.
Permit field evaluations 0830 – 1630	**Audit team splits into two.** Site evaluations, as applicable: active harvests, recently closed units, planned harvests, wildlife management activities, T&E species protection areas, identified HCV areas, reforestation sites, stream crossings, roadwork, chemical use, silviculture, stakeholder consultation, cultural site protections, etc.

	Lunches while en route.
Daily debrief 1630 – 1700	Auditor team debrief from field visits for day.

Date: AmericInn - Thursday, 29 September 2022

AmericInn - **Thursday, 29 September 2022**	
FMU / location / sites visited	**Activities / notes**
Closing meeting preparation AmericInn & remote 0700 – 900	Audit team consolidates notes and confirms evaluation findings.

Date: Thursday Sept 30 – Warroad/Bemidji Field Day

Warroad Audit Team 8:00 AM	Abbreviated open meeting, Audit route review
8:30 AM	Site visits
4:30 PM	Daily wrap-up
Bemidji Audit Team 8:00 AM	Abbreviated open meeting, Audit route review
8:30 AM	Site visits
4:30 PM	Daily wrap-up

Date: Friday Oct 1 – Wrap-up Day

8:00 AM	Closing Meeting Preparation: Auditor(s) take time to consolidate notes and confirm evaluation findings
10:00 AM-11:00 AM	Closing Meeting: Brief summary of audit activities, present preliminary findings, confidentiality, SCS/FSC dispute policy, timeline for report, and discuss next steps.
11:00	Auditors depart for travel home (back to MSP)

****Audits may be rescheduled or delayed due to unforeseen circumstances that arise onsite, including, but not limited to, significant changes to the scope, emergencies, extreme weather, unsafe work conditions, strikes, work stoppages, absent staff members, and detection of serious lapses in the forest management or OH&S systems, etc. In such cases, the auditor may recommend stopping and/or rescheduling the audit.****

Document and record review (*required for every evaluation*; can be for sites/ FMUs sampled):

These may be uploaded to the document sharing platform at any time but should be available prior to the audit, by 27 September 2022:

- Training records (e.g., workshops, conferences, safety courses, etc.);
- Recently complete or active timber harvest planning and monitoring documentation;

- Complaints received records;
- Documentation of an operational complaint procedure;
- 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;
- Occupational Health and Safety procedures and records of training, or evidence of compliance with a third-party body such as a certification body or government regulatory agency;
- Management Review records for applicable standards;
- Internal audit procedures and records, including training materials;
- Staff Training records, license, certifications for Little Falls, Park Rapids, and Bemidji offices. Records may include workshops, conferences, safety courses, etc. from the prior 2 years.
    - For each unit visited training records for 2-3 staff including one person with 1 year and less than 5 years-experience and one person with 5-15 years' experience
    - Total of 6-7 forestry staff
- SFI Trained Loggers List (link is acceptable);
- SFI Annual Report, normally provided to SFI in the 1st Quarter;
- Documentation for memberships, SIC;
- Contracts, legal documents related to harvesting and silvicultural activities for sites to be visited;
- Recently complete or active timber harvest planning and monitoring documentation for sites to be visited; and
- For any sites with herbicide or other pesticide application, certifications or licensing that is required documentation must be presented for review.

Appendix 2 – SCS Summary Report

SFI® 2022 Public Summary Report for Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Executive Summary

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) Program of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has achieved continuing conformance with the SFI 2022 Standards and Rules, Section 2 Forest Management Standard according to the SCS audit system. The information that follow provides information about the organization, process and results of the evaluation.

Introduction and Company Profile

Minnesota DNR manages 5.53 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 2022 Standards and Rules, Section 2 Forest Management Standard certificate.

Background: “In 1997, Minnesota DNR and Aitkin County obtained third-party forest certification for about 370,000 acres of forest lands. These were the first public forest lands to be certified in the United States, thereby establishing DNR and Aitkin County as nation-wide leaders in forest certification.

In 2005, DNR obtained dual (FSC and SFI) certification of 4.5 million acres, covering all state forests and most wildlife management areas. In December, 2010, DNR's Forest Certification program grew to 4.96 million acres, covering 90 percent of the total *5.53 million acres managed by DNR. Today, at 4.997 million acres, MN DNR is the largest single FSC-certified land manager in the U.S.

Maintaining forest certification is a sign of DNR's dedication to sustainable and responsible forest management. It provides DNR and Minnesota citizens with many additional benefits.” Source: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Evaluation Process, Scope and Objectives

The SCS Audit Plan process guides the evaluation process for SFI 2022 Standards and Rules, Section 2 Forest Management Standard.

Minnesota DNR qualifies for multi-site sampling as provided within the Requirements for the SFI 2022 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 portions 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 2022 audit included 3 forestry work areas. The audit included a review of the centralized management of the organization. The audit was conducted on-site.

The following Areas are included in the 2022 audit sample:

- Tower Area
- Hibbing Area
- Two Harbors Area

No substitute indicators were used.

This evaluation was conducted by a SCS Lead SFI Auditor, Shannon Wilks, and FSC Lead Auditor/SFI Team Auditor Stefan Bergmann.

Shannon Wilks has over 30 years of professional experience in the forest industry. Roles have included procurement, supply chain management, contract negotiations and environmental management/certification compliance. Experience includes 20 years with a global forest products company, 4 years of industrial site management and 6 years as a forest certification auditor. Mr. Wilks is a Controlled Wood Senior Lead Auditor for FSC® Chain of Custody, FSC Forest Management, FSC Controlled Wood, Lead auditor for Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI®) Chain of Custody, SFI Fiber Sourcing, SFI Forest Management, SFI Certified Sourcing, American Tree Farm System®-Georgia Tree Farm Inspector #165961, Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC™) Chain of Custody Standard and a Lead Auditor for ©Sustainable Biomass Program (SBP). Mr. Wilks is a graduate of Louisiana Tech University with a Bachelor of Science-Forest Management degree. He is also a member of the Texas Forestry Association and holds a Texas Accredited Forester certification #158

Mr. Bergmann has been in the forestry and wood products field for near 20 years, working across the US in forest policy, landowner extension, executive leadership, and forest certification. Prior to joining SCS in 2017, he previously worked for Rainforest Alliance, overseeing its Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) forest management auditing program in the US. Stefan is a lead FSC FM auditor and is qualified for Sustainable Forestry Initiative® auditing. He holds a BS in Wildlife Science and an MS in Forest Resources, both from Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon, USA, and an MBA from University of California Davis.

The evaluation followed the SCS audit process. The audit was conducted and completed 27-28 September 2022. Field audits observed the following operations: 5 completed harvest operations, 3 active harvest operations, 2 Rare/Threatened/Endangered species projects, 1 habitat project, 1 road construction project, 5 reforestation sites, 1 invasive species treatment area, 1 pre-commercial thinning site, 1 climate adaptation site, 3 planned harvest sites and 1 recreation site.

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

No previous findings were identified in the 2021 Recertification audit.

New Findings

No findings were identified in the 2022 1st Surveillance Audit.

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.

SFI Objective	Summary of Evidence
Objective 1. Forest Management Planning. To ensure forest management plans include long-term sustainable harvest levels and measures to avoid	Auditor review of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources detailed Forest Management planning process includes Ecological Classification System, Sustainable Timber Harvest planning,

forest conversion or afforestation of ecologically important areas.	Growth and Yield modeling, GIS system for mapping of stands/roads/water features, soil mapping and non-timber issues such as wildlife habitat, biodiversity and other aspects. Review of the complex and detailed management system confirms evidence of conformance.
Objective 2. Forest Health and Productivity. To ensure long-term forest productivity and conservation of forest resources through prompt reforestation, afforestation, deploying integrated pest management strategies, minimized chemical use, soil conservation, and protecting forests from damaging agents.	Not Audited in 2022.
Objective 3. Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources. To protect the water quality and water quantity of rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, and other water bodies.	Review of field sites, interviews with personnel and contractors confirmed adequate knowledge of requirements within MFRC Site Level Forest Management Guidelines. All field sites observed contained protection aspects of water resources by use of logging debris, water bars and/or wing ditches and dry/frozen ground requirements. Riparian buffer zones were established meeting/exceeding minimum requirements on field sites.
Objective 4. Conservation of Biological Diversity To maintain or advance the conservation of biological diversity at the stand- and landscape- level and across a diversity of forest and vegetation cover types and successional stages including the conservation of forest plants and animals, aquatic species, threatened and endangered species, Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value, old-growth forests and ecologically important sites.	Not Audited in 2022.
Objective 5. Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits. To manage the visual impact of forest operations and provide recreational opportunities for the public.	Not Audited in 2022.
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.	Review of all field sites with forest management activity contained a detailed review of the rare/threatened/endangered species of flora and fauna. Protections were utilized for management, such as avoidance periods and access during frozen ground periods. Cultural, historical and archaeological reviews were conducted and verified for each field site with forest management activity. MN DNR has a well-defined process and system to identify and protect special sites and species within their land management practices.

Objective 7. Efficient Use of Fiber Resources. To minimize waste and ensure the efficient use of fiber resources.	Not Audited in 2022.
Objective 8. Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples' Rights. To recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples'' rights and traditional knowledge.	Not Audited in 2022.
Objective 9: Climate Smart Forestry To ensure forest management activities address climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has significant resources identified to address adaptation plans for forestry, wildlife, habitat, tree species and other relevant aspects. Mitigation efforts are addressed and documented within numerous resources, plans and policies observed by auditor. Membership within cooperatives, federal agencies and other state natural resource departments confirm regional and landscape level efforts are being assessed for impacts and mitigation efforts.
Objective 10. Fire Resilience and Awareness To limit susceptibility of forests to undesirable impacts of wildfire and to raise community awareness of fire benefits, risks, and minimization measures.	Review of policies and interview with personnel confirms active involvement with Regional Cooperatives and Federal Agencies for the mitigation of wildfire impacts. Reforestation examples were addressed on areas impacted by previous wildfires. On-going monitoring and reforestation efforts were confirmed during audit. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has significant resources available for education and outreach for wildlfire prevention and risk.
Objective 11. Legal and Regulatory Compliance To comply with all applicable laws and regulations including, international, federal, provincial, state, and local.	Not Audited in 2022.
Objective 12. Forestry Research, Science and Technology. To invest in research, science, and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based.	Not Audited in 2022.
Objective 13. Training and Education. To improve the implementation of sustainable forestry through appropriate training and education programs.	Not Audited in 2022.
Objective 14. 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.	Not Audited in 2022.
Objective 15. Public Land Management Responsibilities. To participate and implement sustainable forest management on public lands.	Auditor reviews and observations during audit confirmed multiple avenues of public outreach and system to receive comments during forest management planning. Minnesota Department of

	Natural Resources utilizes advisory groups for planning on management of selected topics. Membership on advisory groups is solicited and requested. Stakeholder input is solicited in multiple forms confirmed during audit.
Objective 16. Communications and Public Reporting To increase transparency and to annually report progress on conformance with the SFI Forest Management Standard.	Confirmation of SFI Public Summary and completion of SFI Annual Progress Reports during audit met all requirements.
Objective 17. Management Review and Continual Improvement: To promote continual improvement in the practice of sustainable forestry by conducting a management review and monitoring performance.	Auditor observation of Management Review conducted in 2022 confirms detailed system to collect, review and develop continual improvement opportunities within forest certification program. Management is conducted by cross-representation of personnel within Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Multi-Site/Group Evaluation

Not applicable.

Substitute Indicators

No substitute indicators were used.

Logo/Label Use

No on-product labels are utilized by Certificate Holder. The SFI logo is used on the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources website. The logo is utilized properly and contains required license code.

Appendix 3 – Standard Conformity Checklist

REQUIREMENT	Evidence/CAR	C/NC/EXC/ OFI/NA/NE
Objective 1. Forest Management Planning To ensure forest management plans include *long-term* sustainable harvest levels and measures to avoid forest conversion or *afforestation* of *ecologically important* areas.		
Performance Measure 1.1. *Certified Organizations* shall ensure that forest management plans include *long-term* harvest levels that are sustainable and consistent with appropriate *growth-and-yield model*s.	**Refer to Indicators for Evidence**	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NE

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 and use of *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. consideration of non-timber issues such as 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.	a. The DNR plans at multiple levels. The statewide Sustainable Timber Harvest Analysis utilizes parameters developed at the ecological section scale to evaluate the effects of various harvest levels on natural resources statewide over the long term (100 years). The Section Forest Resource Management Plans (SFRMPs) provide management guidance for many resource values at the ecological section scale, based on an assessment of the resources in the ecological section. b. The DNR updates its forest inventory continuously, and that dataset is the basis for sustainable timber harvest level and stand exam list modeling at the statewide and ecological section scales. The DNR is revising inventory procedures to utilize the latest technologies and techniques. Inventory accomplishments are tracked as part of the DNR's work planning process. c. The DNR utilizes an ecological classification system (ECS). d. DNR relies on the MN Biologic Survey to provide biodiversity information to forest management planning processes. This information is incorporated at both the landscape (SFRMP) scale and site-level scale. Several policies also address biodiversity at a landscape scale (for example, HCVFs and RSAs). e. The DNR has access to soils maps on GIS layers. Additional soils information is sometimes available from soils surveys done by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). They are used when available. Additionally, soil pit data was collected in support of establishment of the Ecological Classification System and often, soils data are collected when field staff do ECS survey work. The ECS Program in the Division of Forestry maintains these data and are available to all DNR staff. f. DNR regularly completes growth and yield modeling to support to SFRMP	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

	and other statewide analyses. Growth and yield modeling was heavily used during the Sustainable Timber Harvest Analysis. Woodstock with Stanley Analysis is used to develop growth-and-yield modeling. g. GIS is used to produce maps. h. In 2018, the DNR updated the Department's statewide sustainable timber harvest level for areas available for harvest based on many factors. This process was interdisciplinary, included a stakeholder advisory group, and considered the long term effects of harvest levels while making near term decisions. The sustainable harvest level is updated every 10 years. i. Many non-timber issues are reviewed, incorporated and heavily influence the Sustainable Timber Harvest Analysis and SFRMP planning processes. These include wildlife habitat (e.g., forest composition, age-class structure, spatial distributions), conserving biodiversity, climate change adaptation, and water quality. SFRMPs also include sub-landscape level guidance where opportunities are identified to further focus management on a particular non-timber issue (management opportunity areas).	
1.1.2. Documented current harvest trends fall within *long-term* sustainable levels identified in the forest management plan.	The sustainable harvest level from DNR administered forest lands is identified through an interdisciplinary public process. In February 2018, DNR determined that the sustainable harvest level from DNR-managed forestlands for the next 10-years is 870,000 cords annually. Above the 870,000-cord target, DNR will undertake a special initiative to offer up to an additional 30,000 cords of ash and tamarack annually for up to five years. Harvest levels are reviewed as part of periodic implementation monitoring as well as annual reporting. MNDNR 10 Year Average (2013-2022) of Planned vs Harvest is 84%	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
1.1.3. A *forest inventory* system and a method to calculate growth and yield is	DNR has a system in place to conduct forest inventory through a combination of Forest	☒ C ☐ NC

used to determine annual and/or periodic harvest levels.	Inventory and Analysis, remote sensing, lidar, and boots on the ground forest inventory and uses the Woodstock and Stanley computer growth and harvest schedule models, to calculate growth, yield and allowable harvest rates.	☐ EXC ☐ OFI
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*.	DNR recalculates planned harvest levels periodically at the statewide level based on the most up-to-date Cooperative Stand Assessment (CSA) inventory of DNR lands, current growth and yield equations/modeling, and other non-timber values including habitat, water quality, and climate change.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
1.1.5. Documentation of forest management (such as: *planting*, fertilization, and thinning) consistent with assumptions in harvest plans.	DNR documents forest practices in both the Stand Exam Layer (SEL) and Silviculture and Roads Module (SRM) applications. SEL is used to document stand level results (decisions) based on on-site stand examinations and interdisciplinary coordination. SRM documents ongoing management of sites created primarily after the stand examination process is completed. Reports being developed in SEL will allow on-going monitoring of forest practices proposed following stand examinations compared to goals and direction established in the associated SFRMP. The development of an integrated forest management database (4Trees) will connect geospatially silvicultural prescriptions, timber sale activities, and implementation of prescriptions or stand treatment plans. Monitoring and/or inspections were observed for all field sites observed in 2022.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
1.1.6. Assessment of the local or regional social, environmental, and economic effects of forest management operations contained in the forest management plan.	During the development and implementation of components the forest management plan (such as STH modeling and decisions, 10 year stand exam list development, annual timber planning processes, developing department wide guidance documents, and forest management specific technical guidance), internal staff contributions are grounded in local and regional social, environmental, and economic effects. Many of these components of the forest management plan also include opportunities for the public to provide input on social, environmental, and economic effects of forest management operations. Review of MN DNR website confirms public access to Stand Exam Lists.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Performance Measure 1.2. *Certified*	**Refer to Indicators for Evidence**	☒ C

Organizations shall not convert one *forest cover type* to another *forest cover type* unless an assessment has been conducted to determine ecological impacts and provide appropriate justification.		☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NE
1.2.1. *Certified Organizations* shall not convert one *forest cover type* to another *forest cover type*, unless the conversion: a. does not convert *native forest cover types* that are rare, *ecologically important*, or that put any *native forest cover types* at risk of becoming rare; b. does not create significant adverse impacts on *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*, *old growth forests*, forest critical to *threatened and endangered species*, or *special sites* or *ecologically important* non-forest eco-systems; and c. includes objectives for *long-term* outcomes that support maintaining *native forest cover types* and ecological function; and d. is in compliance with relevant national and regional policy and legislation related to land use and forest management.	Conversion is a silvicultural process where a site is changed from one species (forest cover type) to another to meet site management objectives. Our management plans include goals to convert amounts of forest cover types to other forest cover types as a desired change in forest composition (e.g. in response to climate change). Conversions may or may not be appropriate based on the Native Plant Community (NPC) composition. For example, a northern mesic hardwood forest would not be converted from sugar maple to red pine. On the other hand, on many fire dependent communities changing the forest composition from red pine to jack pine or aspen to oak is an ecologically appropriate conversion. Conversions on state forest land are guided by tree species suitability based on the NPC. Field guides and NPC silvicultural strategies describe appropriate tree species for various NPCs. Conversions on state forest land do not remove an ecologically site-appropriate species and replace it with an ecologically site-inappropriate species. Ecologically important sites (e.g. imperiled or rare NPCs) are not considered for conversion. Interviews with MNDNR personnel and observations by auditors during field site reviews confirmed no conversion of forest cover types have been conducted since previous audit.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
1.2.2. A proposed conversion deemed appropriate per 1.2.1, and which has considered impacts relative to scale, may be implemented subject to a landscape assessment that considers: a. a response to address *forest health* issues such as pests or pathogens, or proactive consideration of anticipated impacts of fire or climate change, reforestation challenges, or riparian *protection* needs, provided that such justification is supported by the *best scientific information.* b. site *productivity*, economics, and/or stand quality. c. ecological impacts of the conversion at the site and *landscape* scale, as well as	Any proposed conversion is reviewed at the area and region level for appropriateness for the native plant community and, if the conversion is necessary to meet SFRMP objectives. Division Policy 27. Using ECS Information in Silviculture Prescriptions. Native Plant Community (NPC) classifications will be completed on forest regeneration sites where species composition change is the management objective (increase or convert one or more species), and where silviculture program dollars will be spent; except for winter access-only sites. Department NPC mapping is adequate for site classification where such mapping exists. For these sites	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NA, does not intend to convert

consideration for any appropriate mitigation measures; and d. appropriate consultation with local communities, *Indigenous Peoples*, and other *stakeholders* who could be affected by such activities.	with composition changes or where additional funds for regeneration are being spent, staff should verify NPC mapping in the field when initiating a timber appraisal or reforestation project and correct it, when needed, by submitting a new ECS worksheet. Interviews with MNDNR personnel and observations by auditors during field site reviews confirmed no conversion of forest cover types have been conducted since previous audit.	
Performance Measure 1.3. *Certified Organizations* shall not have within the scope of their certification to this *SFI Standard*, forest lands that have been converted to non-forest land use.	**Refer to Indicators for Evidence**	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NA, no conversion of forest to non-forest use. ☐ NE
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.	Interview with DNR personnel confirms no conversions within certified lands since previous audit. Observations during field sites confirmed. Forest lands that have been converted to other land uses have been excised out of the Forest Management Certificate and include agricultural lands, nurseries, seed orchards, major utility rights of ways, and office locations.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NA, no conversion of forest to non-forest use.
Performance Measure 1.4. *Certified Organizations* shall not afforest in locations which negatively impact *ecologically important natural communities, threatened and endangered species, or native natural communities* which could be at risk of becoming rare. *Definition: afforestation: Establishment of forest through planting and/or deliberate seeding on land that, until then, was under a different land use, implies a transformation of land use from non-forest to forest (source: FAO 2018).*	**Refer to Indicators for Evidence**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NA, no afforestation activities.
1.4.1. Any *afforestation* activity must include an evaluation of the proposed site to determine the presence of: a. *ecologically important natural communities*, or b. *threatened and endangered species, or* c. *native natural communities* that could be at risk of becoming rare.	Interviews with MNDNR personnel confirms no afforestation activities have been conducted in past year. Review of procedures confirms: Staff are required to check NHIS data during development and before implementation of any afforestation activity and contact EWR specialists if rare species are found within project areas to develop avoidance measures. Ecologically	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NA, no afforestation activities.

	important sites (e.g. imperiled or rare NPCs) are not considered for afforestation. Afforestation occurs with species appropriate to NPC if that can be determined.	
1.4.2. *Afforestation* shall not occur on that location if the evaluation determines a negative impact to: a. *ecologically important natural communities*, or b. *threatened and endangered species, or* c. *native natural communities* which could be at risk of becoming rare.	Review of procedures confirms: Staff are required to check NHIS data during development and before implementation of any afforestation activity and contact EWR specialists if rare species are found within project areas to develop avoidance measures. Ecologically important sites (e.g. imperiled or rare NPCs) are not considered for afforestation. Afforestation occurs with species appropriate to NPC if that can be determined.	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NA, no afforestation activities.
Objective 2. Forest Health and Productivity To ensure *long-term* forest *productivity, forest health* and *conservation* of forest resources through prompt *reforestation*, *afforestation*, deploying *integrated pest management* strategies, *minimized* chemical use, soil *conservation*, and protecting forests from damaging agents.		
Performance Measure 2.1. *Certified Organizations* shall promptly reforest after final harvest.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
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.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
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*.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
2.1.3. *Plantings* of *native* or non-*invasive* naturalized *tree species* are preferred. In exceptional circumstances where *exotic tree species* are being planted, they should not increase risk to *native* ecosystems.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
2.1.4. *Protection* of desirable or planned advanced *natural regeneration* during		☐ C ☐ NC

harvest.		☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Performance Measure 2.2. *Certified Organizations* shall have a *program* to *minimize* chemical use required to achieve management *objectives* while protecting employees, neighbors, the public and the environment, including *wildlife* and *aquatic habitats*.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NA, no use of chemicals
2.2.1. Pest management shall be implemented through the use of *integrated pest management*.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
2.2.2. *Minimized* chemical use required to achieve management *objectives.*		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
2.2.3. Use of *least-toxic and narrowest-spectrum pesticides* necessary to achieve management objectives.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
2.2.4. Use of pesticides registered for the intended use and applied in accordance with label requirements.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
2.2.5. The World Health Organization (WHO) type 1A and 1B pesticides shall be prohibited, except where no other viable alternative is available.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
2.2.6. Use of pesticides banned under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (2001) shall be prohibited.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
2.2.7. Supervision of forest chemical applications by state- or provincially trained or certified applicators. 8. Use of management practices appropriate to the situation, such as: 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		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

needed buffer strips; e. use of positive shutoff and minimal-drift spray valves; f. aerial application of forest chemicals parallel to buffer zones to limit 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. use of spill response plans and chemical spill kits; j. filing of required state or provincial reports; and/or k. use of methods to ensure *protection* of *threatened and endangered* species.		
Performance Measure 2.3. *Certified Organizations* shall implement practices that *protect* and maintain forest and soil *productivity* and *soil health.*	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
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.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
2.3.2. Use of erosion control measures to *minimize* the loss of soil and impacts to site *productivity*.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
2.3.3. Post-harvest conditions conducive to maintaining site *productivity* (such as: retained down woody debris and *minimized skid trails*).		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
2.3.4. Retention of vigorous trees during partial harvesting, consistent with scientific silvicultural standards for the area.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
2.3.5. *Practices* that address harvesting and site preparation to *protect* soil *productivity* and *soil health*.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
2.3.6. Road construction, skidding layout, and harvest plans designed to *minimize* impacts to soil *productivity* and *soil health*.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

Performance Measure 2.4. *Certified Organizations* shall manage to *protect* forests from damaging agents, such as environmentally or economically undesirable levels of wildfire, pests, diseases, and *invasive species*, to maintain and improve *long-term forest health*, *productivity,* and *economic viability*.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
2.4.1. *Program* to *protect* forests from damaging agents.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
2.4.2. Management to promote healthy and productive forest conditions to reduce susceptibility to damaging agents.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
2.4.3. Participation in, and support of, fire and pest prevention and control *programs*.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Performance Measure 2.5. *Certified Organizations* that deploy *improved planting stock*, including *varietal seedlings,* shall use best scientific methods.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NA, does not plant (natural regeneration only) ☒ NE
2.5.1. *Program* for appropriate research, testing, evaluation, and deployment of *improved planting stock*, including *varietal seedlings*.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Objective 3. Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources **To *protect* the water quality and water quantity of rivers, streams, lakes, *wetlands,* and other water bodies.**		
Performance Measure 3.1. *Certified Organizations* shall meet or exceed all applicable federal, provincial, state, and local water quality laws and meet or exceed *best management practices.*	**Refer to Indicators for Evidence**	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NE
3.1.1. *Program* to implement federal, state, or provincial water quality *best management practices* during all phases of management activities.	a. 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	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC

	Management Guidelines. DNR commitment to implementing these guidelines is summarized in the memo from Brad Moore titled "Direction on Application of Statewide Guidelines in Forest Management Planning" for DNR's Best Management Practices (BMP) guidelines. b. DNR commitment to implementing water quality BMPs is identified in the excerpt from Minnesota Supreme Court rules on the DNR's commitment to use FRC site-level guidelines as minimum standards. c. 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.	☐ OFI
3.1.2. Contract provisions that specify conformance to *best management practices*.	Reference is Permit Condition #20 on DNR permit documents. Those conditions read as follows: **#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)] Auditor observation of permits for all harvest field sites observed in 2022.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
3.1.3. Monitoring of overall *best management practices* implementation.	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 Guideline Monitoring Program currently uses a watershed sample unit (WSU) approach to monitor approximately 20-30 harvests per WSU on a six-year cycle (in the sixth year, compilation of results and reporting on a statewide basis is completed). Three WSUs are monitored each year with the sample distributed approximately according to timber harvest ownership. Over the course of a monitoring	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

	cycle, each major watershed (HUC8) in the state with greater than 20% forest cover (NLCD) is assessed for BMP implementation. The results of this monitoring are reported to the MFRC and the legislature on a biennial basis. Copies of past monitoring reports are available on the MFRC Website. Additionally, 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. 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. Review of inspection reports for permit #B014590, #F011997 and #B015233 confirmed BMP monitoring was conducted.	
Performance Measure 3.2. *Certified Organizations* shall implement water, *wetland,* and *riparian protection programs* based on climate, soil type, terrain, vegetation, ecological function, harvesting system, state *best management practices (BMPs)*, provincial guidelines and other applicable factors.	**Refer to Indicators for Evidence**	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NE
3.2.1. *Program* addressing management and *protection* of water quality of rivers, streams, lakes, *wetlands*, other water bodies and *riparian areas* during all phases of management.	a. 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. b. 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. c. For each timber permit a form called the Landowner Statement and Contractor	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

	Responsibility for Work in Wetlands or Public Waters is completed. This outlines who to contact and what is expected for work in wetlands. No issues were identified during site visits.	
3.2.2. *Program* to *protect* water quantity during all phases of management.	The Site –Level Forest Management Guidelines (FMGs) outline best management practices to maintain water quality and what to do during wet weather events. Examples include maintenance of vegetated filter strips around wetlands, avoidance of wetlands and filter strips with regards to roads, landings, and skid trails, use of erosion control practices where needed (e.g., steep slopes and approaches to waterbody crossings), and cessation of operations when weather and site conditions become problematic. The FMGs recommend including the guidelines appropriate for each site as the operating standards for each project. The ECS program produced a chart outlining acceptable operating seasons to minimize compaction and rutting that is found online. 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. 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. 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	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

	length of the timber sale to accommodate such weather events.	
3.2.3. *Programs* that address wet-weather events in order to maintain water quality such as: *forest inventory* systems, identification of wet-weather tracts and definitions of acceptable operating conditions.	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. Timber Appraisal Report (revision 20210421, Appraisal ID 15194-0) form is where foresters are allowed to add harvesting restrictions relating to wetness, steep slopes, and a host of other topics. Review of Appraisal Reports for all field sites in 2022 confirmed. Timber sale administrator has responsibility 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. Interview with DNR personnel confirms use and knowledge of requirements. 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. 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. No issues were observed at any sites audited in 2022.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Objective 4. Conservation of Biological Diversity **To maintain or advance the *conservation***		

of *biological diversity* at the *stand*- and *landscape*-level and across a diversity of forest and vegetation cover types and successional stages including the *conservation* of forest plants and animals, *aquatic species, threatened and endangered* species, *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*, *old-growth forests,* and *ecologically important* sites.		
Performance Measure 4.1. Certified Organizations shall conserve biological diversity.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
4.1.1. *Program* to incorporate the *conservation* of *biological diversity*, including *native* species, *wildlife habitats* and ecological community types at *stand* and *landscape* levels, through the use of *best scientific information* including the incorporation of research results.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
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.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
4.1.3. *Program* to individually and/or through cooperative efforts such as *SFI Implementation Committees*, support diversity of *native forest cover types* and age or size classes that enhance *biological diversity,* by incorporating the results of analysis of documented diversity at *landscape* and ownership/tenure levels, to ensure the contribution of the managed area to the diversity of conditions that promote *biodiversity*.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
4.1.4. *Certified Organizations* shall individually and/or through cooperative efforts such as *SFI Implementation Committees,* participate in or incorporate the results of credible, relevant state, provincial, or regional *conservation* planning and priority-setting efforts to conserve biological diversity and incorporate the results of these efforts in forest management planning. Credible priority-setting efforts include state and		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

provincial *wildlife* action plans, state forest action plans, relevant *habitat conservation* plans, provincial *wildlife* recovery plans, Indigenous planning processes or ecoregional plans.		
4.1.5. *Program* to address *conservation* of *ecologically important* species and *natural communities*.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
4.1.6. Identification and *protection* of *non-forested wetlands*, including bogs, peatlands, fens and marshes, and *vernal pools* that are *ecologically important*.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
4.1.7. Participation in *programs* and demonstration of activities as appropriate to limit the introduction, spread and impact of *invasive species* that directly threaten or are likely to threaten *native* plant and animal communities.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
4.1.8. Consider the role of natural disturbances, including opening size, structural retention, the use of prescribed or natural fire where appropriate, and *forest health* threats in relation to *biological diversity* when developing forest management plans.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Performance Measure 4.2. *Certified Organizations* shall *protect threatened and endangered* species, *critically imperiled* and *imperiled* species, and *natural communities* (*Forests with Exceptional Conservation Values*), and *old-growth forests*.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
4.2.1. *Program* to *protect threatened and endangered* species.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
4.2.2. *Program* to locate and *protect* known sites flora and fauna associated with viable occurrences of *critically imperiled* and *imperiled* species and ecological communities, defined as *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*. *Programs* for *protection* may be developed independently and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees* and may include *Certified Organization* managers of *SFI-certified organizations*, cooperation with other *stakeholders*, or use of easements,		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

conservation land sales, exchanges, or other *conservation* strategies.		
4.2.3. Support of and participation in *programs* for the *conservation* of *old-growth forests* in the region of ownership or forest tenure.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Performance Measure 4.3. *Certified Organizations* shall manage to *protect ecologically important* sites in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
4.3.1. Use of information such as existing NatureServe or natural heritage data or expert advice in identifying or selecting *ecologically important* sites for *protection*.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
4.3.2. Appropriate mapping, cataloging and management of identified *ecologically important* sites.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Performance Measure 4.4. *Certified Organizations* shall apply knowledge gained through research, science, technology, field experience and the results of monitoring of the effectiveness of conservation-related programs to manage *wildlife habitat* and contribute to the *conservation* of *biological diversity*.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
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 reputable organizations. Such participation may include providing non-proprietary scientific information, time, and assistance by staff, or in-kind or direct financial support.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
4.4.2. A *program to* incorporate data collected, research results and field applications of *biodiversity* and ecosystem research into forest management decisions.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
4.4.3. Individually or collaboratively participate in or support research that demonstrates the *conservation* outcomes resulting from management strategies.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

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. *Certified Organizations* shall manage the impact of harvesting on *visual quality*.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
5.1.1. *Program* to address *visual quality management*.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
5.1.2. Incorporation of aesthetic considerations in harvesting, road, landing design and management, and other management activities where visual impacts are a concern.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Performance Measure 5.2. *Certified Organizations* shall manage the size, shape, and placement of clearcut harvests.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NE
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.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
5.2.2. Documentation through internal records of clearcut size and the process for calculating average size.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Performance Measure 5.3. *Certified Organizations* shall adopt a *green-up requirement* or alternative methods that provide for *visual quality*.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NE
5.3.1. *Program* implementing the *green-up requirement* or alternative methods.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
5.3.2. Harvest area tracking system to demonstrate conformance with the *green-*		☐ C ☐ NC

up requirement or alternative methods.		☐ EXC ☐ OFI
5.3.3. Trees in clearcut harvest areas are at least three years old or five 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 *Certified Organization*		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Performance Measure 5.4. *Certified Organizations* shall support and promote recreational opportunities for the public.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
5.4.1. Provide recreational opportunities for the public, where consistent with forest management objectives.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
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. *Certified Organizations* shall have a *program* to identify *special sites* and manage and protect them in a manner appropriate for their unique features.	**Refer to Indicators for Evidence**	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NE
6.1.1. Use of information such as existing natural heritage data, expert advice or *stakeholder* consultation, or consultation with *Indigenous Peoples* in identifying or selecting *special sites* for *protection*.	The Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) conducts surveys, county-by-county, to search for rare plants, animals, and communities. Interview with DNR personnel confirms Heritage databases are checked during preparation and prior to harvests and land altering treatments. Auditor review of all field sites audited in 2022 confirmed.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
6.1.2. Appropriate mapping, cataloging and management of identified *special sites*.	The DNR-Forestry archaeologist typically resolves conflicts between timber management and recorded or potential cultural resource sites through field investigations designed to inventory and define such resources. Recommendations for managing specific cultural resource sites are submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office for comment and concurrence. All identified cultural heritage sites are registered with the Office of the State	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

	Archaeologist. A report describing all field investigations conducted by the DNR-Forestry archaeologist is submitted annually to the Office of the State Archaeologist, the State Historic Preservation Office, and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council. No special sites were observed on field sites observed. Interviews with personnel confirm knowledge and awareness of requirements for protection.	
Objective 7. Efficient Use of Fiber Resources To *minimize* waste and ensure the efficient use of fiber resources.		
Performance Measure 7.1. *Certified Organizations* shall employ appropriate forest harvesting technology and in-woods manufacturing processes to *minimize* waste and ensure efficient utilization of forest resources where consistent with other *SFI Standard objectives*.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
7.1.1. *Program* or monitoring system to ensure efficient utilization, using provisions such as: a. management of harvest residue (such as slash, limbs, tops) considers economic, social and environmental factors (such as 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 (such as bioenergy markets); or d. periodic inspections and reports noting utilization and product separation.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Objective 8. Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples' Rights To recognize and respect *Indigenous Peoples'* rights and traditional knowledge.		
Performance Measure 8.1. *Certified Organizations* shall recognize and respect *Indigenous Peoples'* rights.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
8.1.1. *Certified Organizations* shall develop and implement a written *policy* acknowledging a commitment to recognize and respect the rights of *Indigenous*		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC

Peoples. This *policy* shall provide reference to a *program* that includes: a. use of available resources and information to identify the *Indigenous Peoples* whose rights may be affected by the *Certified Organization's* forest management activities. b. recognition of the established framework of legal, customary, and traditional rights such as outlined in: i. the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; ii. federal, provincial, and state laws and regulations; iii. treaties, agreements or other constructive arrangements among governments and *Indigenous Peoples*. c. appropriate training of personnel and contractors so that the *Certified Organization* is competent to fulfill their responsibilities under Objective 8 of the Forest Management Standard.		☐ OFI
8.1.2. The written *policy* shall be publicly available.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Performance Measure 8.2. *Certified Organizations* with forest *management responsibilities on public lands* shall confer with *Indigenous Peoples* whose rights may be affected by the *Certified Organization's* forest management practices.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE ☐ NA, private lands
8.2. 1. *Program* that includes communicating with affected *Indigenous Peoples* to enable *Certified Organizations* 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; d. communicate through processes that respect their representative institutions, using appropriate protocols; e. provide opportunities to review forest management plans and forest management practices; and		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

f. respond to inquiries and concerns received.		
Performance Measure 8.3. *Certified Organizations* are encouraged to communicate with and shall respond to *Indigenous Peoples* whose rights may be affected by forest management practices on the *Certified Organization's* private lands.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
8.3.1. *Certified Organizations* 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.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
8.3.2. Respond to *Indigenous Peoples*' inquiries and concerns received.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Objective 9. Climate Smart Forestry To ensure forest management activities address climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.		
Performance Measure 9.1. *Certified Organizations* shall individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees* or other partners identify and address the climate change risks to forests and forest operations and develop appropriate adaptation objectives and strategies. Strategies are based on *best scientific information*.	**Refer to Indicators for Evidence**	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NE
9.1.1. Based on *best scientific information*, *Certified Organizations* shall identify climate change risks and prioritize them based on the likelihood, nature, severity of their expected impact to their forest lands or forest tenures.	Review of documentation confirms MN DNR identifies climate change risks by using data and information from partner organizations and other sources as opportunities arise then prioritizes them based on the likelihood, nature, and severity of their expected impact to forested lands. The Department also works towards climate change risk mitigation and adaptation through internal policies, work groups, collaboration with partner organizations, and operational strategies. For example: • DNR works with partner organization to better understand climate risks to forests, including participating in the 2014 "Minnesota Forest Ecosystem Vulnerability	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

	Assessment and Synthesis" developed by the Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science (NIACS) to assess the vulnerability of Minnesota's northern forests to anticipated changes in climate, and using NIACS' Tree Atlas to understand projected impacts to species in different forest ecoregions. • DNR staff participate in statewide climate change planning efforts to adapt to and mitigate climate risks, including the Minnesota Climate Action Framework. • DNR has a policy (Operational Order 131: Climate Adaptation and Mitigation and Natural Resource Management) that directs all staff to enhance ecosystem (including forests) resilience and reduce the negative impacts of climate change on the state's natural and cultural resources, outdoor recreation opportunities, and commercial uses of natural resources. • Ecological and Water Resources Division's Climatology Program (also known as the State Climatology Office) gathers, archives, manages, and disseminates historical climate data to address questions involving the impact of climate on Minnesota and its citizens. DNR staff can access the department's Minnesota Climate Explorer tool to assess and visualize historical and projects changes in temperature and precipitation in different regions across the state. • DNR staff have Silvicultural Strategies available for each forested/woodland NPCs which includes a section on individual tree species response within a community to a changing climate.	
9.1.2. *Certified Organizations* shall develop an adaptation plan to address priority climate change risks, via effective implementation of the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* requirements for potential adaptive management including: a. periodic updates of forest inventory and recalculation of planned harvests as appropriate to account for changes in growth due to productivity increases or decreases, including improved data, *long-term* drought, fertilization, climate change, or *forest health*; b. access to *growth and yield modeling* capabilities;	The MNDNR utilizes a multi-faceted approach to address priority climate change risks including periodic updates of forest inventory, access to growth and yield modeling, documented harvest trends within sustainable timber harvest allocations, and tree improvement work. MNDNR illustrates Adaptation plans on website (Refer to 9.1.3 for additional evidence). a. MNDNR is instituting two forms of forest inventory. A plot based system coupled with remote sensing (RS-inventory) to update large swaths of the state to a single temporal time frame, while continuing a more stand-	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

c. documented harvest trends within *long-term* sustainable levels identified in the forest management plan, and d. appropriate research, testing, evaluation, and deployment of *improved planting stock*, including *varietal seedlings*.	oriented inventory system for use between major RS-inventory efforts. Recalculation of planned harvests happens on a decadal basis, with temporally relevant forest inventory and reevaluated growth and yield models based on the most recent inventory data, such that any significant increase or decrease in productivity can be accounted for. In addition to decadal forest management planning, intra-year monitoring of harvest schedules is conducted as planned harvests are adjusted to ensure that goals are being met and constraints are being honored as plans made at the local level are adjusted. b. The MNDNR has a robust history of growth and yield modeling. The DNR currently utilizes whole stand growth and yield models which is most appropriate for the data available. The DNR will be able to begin leveraging other growth and yield projection capabilities as tree list data is available with improved inventory as described above. c. The DNR has a long history of establishing possible harvest targets in cooperation with a diverse stakeholder group through its Forest Resource Planning framework. Starting in 2018, the MNDNR entered into decadal planning, with input and agreement on annual sustainable harvest targets amongst the DNR divisions and a diverse external stakeholder group, with midpoint (after 5 years) evaluation of harvest activity and reevaluation of targets every decade. Since 2018 the MNDNR monitors these volume-based targets, and works within the boundaries of the estimated annual target to ensure that the stated target is achieved and not grossly exceeded during timber auctions and operations. The MNDNR timber program monitors scaled timber and has extensive records on actual harvest going back decades. This information is critical to monitoring our activities statewide, as well as by ecological sections and allows the MNDNR to closely monitor adherence to stakeholder and division agreed harvests. d. The MNDNR currently has a program for improving tree planting stock and testing different varieties under the Tree Improvement program. The stated purpose is	

	mainly to improve growth and disease resistance. The MNDNR participates in the University of Minnesota led Tree Improvement Cooperative as well, helping to advance research in this area. Refer to field site notes for examples of species adaptation and reforestation examples.	
9.1.3. *Certified Organizations* shall document how their adaptation plan objectives and strategies fit within broader regional climate adaptation strategies and plans, where they exist.	MNDNR seeks opportunities to fit its climate change adaptation work into regional strategies and plans as opportunities arise. Examples include: The Department maintains a webpage to show the use of strategies to both prepare for climate change and to reduce carbon footprint. Regional landscape planning efforts such as DNR's SFRMP and MFRC Landscape Plans contains climate change considerations and strategies within landscapes. DNR works with partner organization to better understand climate risks to forests, including participating in the 2014 "Minnesota Forest Ecosystem Vulnerability Assessment and Synthesis" developed by the Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science (NIACS) to assess the vulnerability of Minnesota's northern forests to anticipated changes in climate, and using NIACS' Tree Atlas to understand projected impacts to species in different forest ecoregions.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☒ OFI
9.1.4. *Certified Organizations* shall report annually to SFI Inc. their progress towards achieving climate change adaptation strategies and plans.	N/A-Organizations first annual audit to SFI 2022 Standards and Rules, Section 2.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Performance Measure 9.2. *Certified Organizations* shall individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees* or other partners identify and address opportunities to mitigate the effects associated with its forest operations on climate change.	**Refer to Indicators for Evidence**	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NE
9.2.1. Based on *best scientific information, Certified Organizations* shall identify and address opportunities to enhance the climate benefits associated with forest management operations on the forests they own or manage via effective implementation of the *SFI 2022 Forest*	The Department identifies and addresses opportunities to enhance climate benefits associated with forest management operations. For instance: • DNR policy (Operational Order 131), provides department-wide direction for	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

Management Standard requirements such as: a. Objective 2 – Forest Health and Productivity; Objective 10 – Fire Smart Forestry; and/or other silvicultural or operational *practices* to enhance the climate benefits associated with the forest operations.	managing public lands to mitigate climate change and adapt to future conditions and requires divisions to maintain guidelines to inform implementation of strategies for managing natural resources for climate adaptation and mitigation needs. Division of Forestry guidelines includes strategies to identify and address opportunities to enhance climate mitigation benefits through sustainable forest management practices, retaining forest cover, and forestation. • The division continues to build foundational knowledge on opportunities to implement forest-based climate mitigation strategies on public and private forests in Minnesota	
9.2.2. Based on *best scientific information, Certified Organizations* shall identify and address opportunities to enhance ecosystem resilience for the forests they own or manage via effective implementation of the *SFI 2022 Forest Management* Standard requirements including: a. prompt *reforestation* or planned *natural reforestation* as per Indicator 2.2.1; b. adequate regeneration and appropriate actions to correct understocked areas, and c. evaluation for *afforestation* of areas that are not *ecologically important*, and d. protection of desirable or planned advanced regeneration during harvest and the retention of vigorous trees during partial harvest.	MNDNR identifies and addresses opportunities to enhance ecosystem resilience for department-managed forests through statutorily required reforestation. Per State Statute 89.002 Subd.2., MN DNR is required to revegetate (through planting, seeding, or natural regeneration) all harvested acres of state-managed forest. Reforestation or afforestation objectives and targets include site assessment, annual planting, seeding, tending, regeneration survey, and seedling protection work on thousands of acres of state forest land as indicated in indicators 1.4.1, 1.4.2 and 2.1.1. MN DNR continues to seek ways to incorporate climate adaptation and resilience strategies into existing sustainable forest management activities through policy, staff trainings, NPC-based product development such silviculture strategy field guides, pilot projects, and publication of climate adaptation-focused case studies. A. Auditor confirmed adequate regeneration on all field sites observed. Regeneration was planned in compliance with SFI requirements, with exceptions for forest health (invasive species treatment) noted. B. Monitoring is scheduled for all sites planted and naturally regenerated. If targets are not achieved, inter-planting is scheduled. C. MN DNR has a process for afforestation meeting SFI	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

	requirements. D. Auditor confirmed professional harvest operations observed and protection of regeneration and dominate retention trees. No issues identified.	
9.2.3. Based on *best scientific information*, *Certified Organizations* shall develop a program to identify and address greenhouse gas emissions within their operational control.	MNDNR has a program to identify and address greenhouse gas emissions. The State of Minnesota, as an enterprise, and the Department defines goals, strategies, and projects to address greenhouse gas emissions. 1. Office of Sustainability website 2. Energy Smart website 3. Action Teams website 4. Climate-smart lands website 5. Minnesota Climate website	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
9.2.4. Certified Organizations shall report annually to SFI Inc. their measures to mitigate climate change associated with forest operations.	N/A-Organizations first annual audit to SFI 2022 Standards and Rules, Section 2.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Objective 10. Fire Resilience and Awareness **To limit susceptibility of forests to undesirable impacts of wildfire and to raise community awareness of fire benefits, risks, and minimization measures.**		
Performance Measure 10.1. On the forests they own or manage, *Certified Organizations* shall limit susceptibility to undesirable impacts of wildfire, promote healthy and resilient forest conditions through management techniques, actions and/or policies, and support restoration of forests following wildfire damage.	**Refer to Indicators for Evidence**	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NE
10.1.1. *Program* to evaluate the risk of undesirable impacts of wildfire and the role of fire on the forests they own or manage.	MNDNR is participant in the NE Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal, which increases access to and understanding of wildfire risk in Minnesota. MNDNR also participates actively in many interagency organizations promoting fire science in the state and regionally. MNICS Prescribed Fire and Fuels Working Team, MN Prescribed Fire Council, Great Lakes Forest Fire Compact Prescribed Fire Committee. Detailed information is available on MNDNR website.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
10.1.2. Use of *stand* and *landscape* level management techniques, actions and/or policies to promote *forest health* and	County level Community Wildfire Protection Plans, supported by MNDNR Firewise and USFS Cohesive Strategy Wildfire Risk	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC

resilience, and to mitigate the likelihood of undesirable impacts of wildfire, such as, prescribed fire, cultural burning, thinning, or hazardous fuel reduction where appropriate based on risk.	Reduction grants address landscape-scale wildfire risk through planning and mitigation. Resources are available on MNDNR website.	☐ OFI
10.1.3. Use of management techniques to address wildfire damage, mitigate negative impacts to water and soils, and to promote forest restoration and future forest resilience.	MNDNR collaborates across the wildfire and silviculture programs to mitigate wildfire impacts on state administered lands to support natural or artificial recovery. Field staff conduct aerial and ground assessments to determine silvicultural objectives for site recovery and a timeframe for achieving acceptable stocking levels. Reforestation project proposals are submitted identifying the proposed treatments, species composition, desired future condition, and prescription rationale. Interview with DNR personnel described example: 2021 Greenwood Fire approximately 30,000 acres. Aerial reforestation with application of Black Spruce, White Pine and other site suited species. Planting of upland species included. Planned aerial reconnaissance in October (22) for monitoring in conjunction with Federal authorities. Historical issues with weather and fire events to help facilitate responses and funding sources.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Performance Measure 10.2. *Certified Organizations* shall individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving government agencies, *SFI Implementation Committees*, Project Learning Tree, or other partners, engage in efforts to raise awareness of and take action towards benefits of fire management and minimization of undesirable impacts of wildfire.	**Refer to Indicators for Evidence**	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NE
10.2.1. Participation in, or support of, local, state, provincial, federal, or Indigenous fire management and prevention programs.	MNDNR Wildfire Prevention program is involved with the MNICS Prevention Working Team, and GLFFC Prevention Committee, both of which includes a variety of fire prevention officials to collaborate on wildfire issues across administrative boundaries. Wildfire collaborations are identified within Forest Action Plan.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
10.2.2. Participation in, or support of, programs to promote benefits of fire management, and raise awareness about the environmental, economic, and social risks of undesirable impacts of wildfire to values such as carbon emissions, water quality and quantity, air quality, species	MNDNR is a signatory to the Minnesota Smoke Management plan. The processes and considerations with in the plan are followed by MNDNR staff on all lands that are under operational control of the DNR during a prescribed fire. Resources for prescribed fire are publicly available on DNR website.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

habitat, public safety, and human health.	MNDNR also assisted EPA with peat soil study. Research projects with the University of MN and others on fire management. Additional information is documented within Forest Action Plan.	
Objective 11. Legal and Regulatory Compliance To comply with all applicable laws and regulations including, international, federal, provincial, state, and *local.*		
Performance Measure 11.1. *Certified Organizations* shall comply with applicable federal, provincial, state, and local *forestry* and environmental laws and regulations.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
11.1.1. Access to relevant laws and regulations.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
11.1.2. System to achieve compliance with applicable federal, provincial, state, or local laws, and regulations.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
11.1.3. Demonstration of commitment to legal compliance through *available regulatory action information*.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Performance Measure 11.2. *Certified Organizations* shall comply with all applicable social laws at the federal, provincial, state, and local levels in the country in which the *Certified Organization* operates.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
11.2.1. Written *policy* demonstrating commitment to comply with social laws, such as those covering civil rights, equal employment opportunities, gender equality, diversity inclusion, 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.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
11.2.2. *Forestry enterprises* will respect the rights of workers and labor representatives in a manner that encompasses the intent of the		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

International Labor Organization (ILO) core conventions.		
Objective 12. *Forestry* Research, Science and Technology **To invest in research, science, and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based.**		
Performance Measure 12.1. *Certified Organizations* 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 sustainable management of forest resources, and the environmental benefits and performance of forest products.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
12.1.1. Financial or in-kind support of research, collaboratives, or knowledge transfer to address key themes of relevance in the region of operations as identified by *Certified Organizations,* local *stakeholders*, communities and/or *Indigenous Peoples*. Examples could include, but are not limited to, the following topics: a. climate change adaptation and mitigation; b. water quality and quantity; c. biodiversity, *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value,* and species maintenance and recovery; d. *landscape* ecology; e. Indigenous *traditional forest-related knowledge*; f. *ecosystem services* or *non-timber forest products*; g. community engagement; h. *forest health* and *productivity*; i. support for Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA); j. SFI sponsored conservation research; k. the role of forests in the bioeconomy, and l. or similar themes which build broader understanding of the benefits and effects of sustainable forest management or sustainable supply chains.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
12.1.2. Ensure that knowledge gained through research is shared, to the extent possible, to positively influence sustainable forest management.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

Performance Measure 12.2. *Certified Organizations* shall individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees*, associations or other partners develop, contribute to, or use national, state, provincial or regional analyses in support of their *sustainable forestry programs.*	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
12.2.1. 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 of information such as: a. regeneration assessments; b. *growth and drain* assessments; c. *best management practices* implementation and conformance; d. *biodiversity conservation* information for family forest owners; e. social, cultural, or economic benefit assessments; and f. *landscape*-scale *biodiversity* assessments which clarify the contributory role of sustainable forest management.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Objective 13. Training and Education **To improve the implementation of *sustainable forestry* through appropriate training and education *programs*.**		
Performance Measure 13.1. *Certified Organizations* shall require appropriate training of personnel and contractors so that they are competent to fulfill their responsibilities under the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
13.1.1. Written statement of commitment to the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* communicated throughout the organization, particularly to facility and woodland managers, and field foresters.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
13.1.2. Assignment and understanding of roles and responsibilities for achieving *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard objectives*.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
13.1.3. Staff education and training sufficient to their roles and responsibilities.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
13.1.4. Contractor education and training		☐ C

sufficient to their roles and responsibilities.		☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
13.1.5. *Certified Organizations* shall have written agreements for the use of *qualified logging professionals,* or *wood producers* that have completed training *programs* and are recognized as *qualified logging professionals and/or certified logging companies.*		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Performance Measure 13.2. *Certified Organizations* shall work individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *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* specific to *qualified logging professionals*.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
13.1.1. Participation in or support of *SFI Implementation Committees* to establish criteria and identify delivery mechanisms for *wood producer* core training courses that allow individuals to attain *qualified logging professional status*. These criteria shall address at least the following: a. awareness of *sustainable forestry principles* and SFI's work across four pillars: standards, conservation, community, and education; b. *best management practices*, including streamside management and road construction, maintenance, and retirement; c. awareness of responsibilities under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, the Canadian Species at Risk Act, Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value (critically imperiled and imperiled species and ecological communities), and other measures to protect biodiversity and wildlife habitat; d. logging safety; e. 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, and f. other topics identified by *Certified Organizations* and/or *SFI Implementation Committees* that improve their		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

responsibilities in meeting the SFI 2022 standards.		
13.1.2. Participation in or support of *SFI Implementation Committees* to establish criteria and identify delivery mechanisms for *wood producer* continuing education training courses that shall be taken by *qualified logging professionals* at least once every two years to maintain their status. The continuing education training course(s) shall address one or more of the following topics: a. awareness of *sustainable forestry principles* and SFI's work across four pillars: standards, conservation, community, and education; b. *best management practices*, including streamside management and road construction, maintenance, and retirement; c. *reforestation*, *invasive species* management, forest resource *conservation*, aesthetics and *special sites*; d. awareness of rare forested *natural communities* as identified by provincial or state agencies, or by credible organizations such as NatureServe and The Nature Conservancy; e. transportation issues; f. business management; g. public policy and outreach; h. awareness of emerging technologies; i. logging safety; or j. other topics identified by Certified Organization and/or SFI Implementation Committees that improve their responsibilities in meeting the SFI 2022 Standards.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Objective 14. 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 14.1. *Certified Organizations* 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	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE

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.		
14.1.1. Support, including financial, for efforts of *SFI Implementation Committees*.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
14.1.2. Support, individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees*, 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 species*; g. characteristics of *special sites*; and h. reduction of wildfire risk; i. use of *qualified logging professionals*, *qualified resource professionals* and/or *certified logging companies;* j. awareness of SFI, and k. reporting of inconsistent practices.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
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, conservation* easements federal, state, or provincial cost share programs, or SFI Conservation Grants.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Performance Measure 14.2. *Certified Organizations* shall individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees* support and promote, at the state, provincial or other appropriate levels, mechanisms for public	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE

outreach, education and involvement related to sustainable forest management.		
14.2.1. Periodic educational opportunities for the public 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 national, state, provincial, and local *forestry* organizations and soil and water *conservation* districts. f. engagement and support of teachers and/or students though programs such as Project Learning Tree.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Performance Measure 14.3. *Certified Organizations* shall, individually and/or through cooperative efforts including *SFI Implementation Committees*, establish, at the state, provincial, or other appropriate levels, procedures to address concerns raised by loggers, consulting foresters, employees, unions, *stakeholders,* the public or other *Certified Organizations* regarding management that appears inconsistent with the SFI standards principles and objectives.	**Not Audited in 2022.**	☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☒ NE
14.3.1. Support for *SFI Implementation Committees* (e.g., toll-free numbers and other efforts) to address concerns about apparent nonconformance.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
14.3.2. Process to receive and respond to public inquiries. *SFI Implementation Committees* shall submit data annually to *SFI Inc.* regarding concerns received and responses.		☐ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Objective 15: *Public Land* Management Responsibilities **To participate and implement sustainable forest management on *public lands.***		☐ N/A, private lands
Performance Measure 15.1. *Certified Organizations* with forest *management responsibilities on public lands* shall participate in the development of *public land* planning and management processes.	**Refer to Indicators for Evidence**	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NE
15.1.1. Involvement in *public land* planning and management activities with appropriate governmental entities and the	Minnesota DNR is a large public agency, and its mission, policies, and statutes require input from stakeholders, tribes, other	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC

public.	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. Auditor observation confirmed significant opportunities for contact within DNR website. Interviews confirm roundtable sessions, public input sessions, surveys, and websites for stakeholder inputs are utilized. DNR website is used for receiving comments on various forest management plans. • 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 Inventory Viewer portal is used for public to identify individual stands. • Major policy development has a 30-day stakeholder review period. Examples include HCVF guideline management and old growth designation and management. • The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) uses a variety of external advisory groups and task forces as one way to work with Minnesotans for the department's mission. Some are open-ended and others are limited in duration. Membership design differs according	☐ OFI

	to the purpose and sometimes provisions in an enabling authority. Participation in one of these appointed roles is one way that Minnesotans can contribute ideas and perspectives. • GovDelivery Platform is used for communication and stakeholder engagement. Communication is based on a list of subscribers.	
15.1.2. Appropriate contact with local *stakeholders* over forest management issues through state, provincial, federal, or independent collaboration.	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 Providence of Ontario), National Association of State Foresters, Midwest-Northeastern Area Alliance of State Foresters, Minnesota Logger Education Program, Minnesota Master Logger Program and Natural Resources Conservation Service State Technical Team. 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 during interview with Forest Certification Program Consultant and review of selected Management Plans confirm Tribal inclusion.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Objective 16. Communications and Public Reporting		

To increase transparency and to annually report progress on conformance with the *SFI Forest Management Standard*.		
Performance Measure 16.1. A *Certified Organization* 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 2022 Forest Management Standard.*	**Refer to Indicators for Evidence**	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NE
16.1.1. The summary audit report submitted by the *Certified Organizations* (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 *Certified Organization* that was audited, including its SFI representative; d. a general description of the *Certified Organization'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 *Certified Organization*); 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 management; and h. the certification decision. The summary audit report will be posted on the SFI Inc. website for public review.	Review of SFI website confirms 2021 Public Summary Report has been posted and publicly available. All requirements of a-h are documented within report.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Performance Measure 16.2. *Certified Organizations* shall report annually to *SFI Inc.* on their conformance with the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*.	**Refer to Indicators for Evidence**	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NE
16.2.1. Prompt response to the SFI annual progress report survey.	Auditor review of the SFI Annual Progress Report was submitted on 8/26/22. Survey was delayed by SFI due to transition to 2022 Standards and Rules.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

16.2.2. Record keeping for all the categories of information needed for SFI annual progress report surveys.	Auditor review of procedures, policies, technical infrastructure and trained/qualified certification administrative personnel confirms electronic and hardcopy records are maintained for compliance.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
16.2.3. Maintenance of copies of past survey reports to document progress and improvements to demonstrate conformance to the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*.	Interview with Certification Manager confirms digital copies of historical reports are maintained.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
Objective 17. 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 17.1. *Certified Organizations* shall establish a management review system to examine findings and progress in implementing the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*, to make appropriate improvements in *programs*, and to inform their employees of changes.	**Refer to Indicators for Evidence**	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI ☐ NE
17.1.1. System to review commitments, *programs,* and procedures to evaluate effectiveness.	Systems to review commitments, programs, and procedures include: • 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.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI

	• A Division of Forestry process to review and update division circular letters and manuals. • A Forestry/Wildlife/Ecological Services coordination policy.	
17.1.2. System for collecting, reviewing, and reporting information to management regarding progress in achieving *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard objectives* and *performance measures*, including measures to reduce the negative impacts from forest management operations.	Systems for collecting, reviewing, and reporting information include: • 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) maintains an annual process to evaluate conformance to the SFI Standard, to review commitments, identify strengths, weaknesses, and gaps and to report findings to management.	☒ C ☐ NC ☐ EXC ☐ OFI
17.1.3. Annual review of progress by management and determination of changes and improvements necessary to	Review of 2022 Annual Management Review of SFI/FSC Forest Management Standards conducted on 8/22/2022. Forest	☒ C ☐ NC

continually improve conformance to the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*.	Certification Implementation Team (FCIT) and Corrective Action sub-teams periodic meetings responding to corrective actions identified in 2021 external audits. Internal Assessment conducted by FCIT Team for three Forestry Administrative Field Areas- Tower, Hibbing and Two Harbors. Attendance included: Acting Forestry Director, Fish and Wildlife Director, Ecological and Waters Resources Director and Forest Certification Program Consultant/Forest Certification Oversight Team.	☐ EXC ☐ OFI

Appendix 4 –Site Notes and Interviewees

2022 MN DNR SFI FM Audit-Day 1

9/27/2022-Shannon Wilks

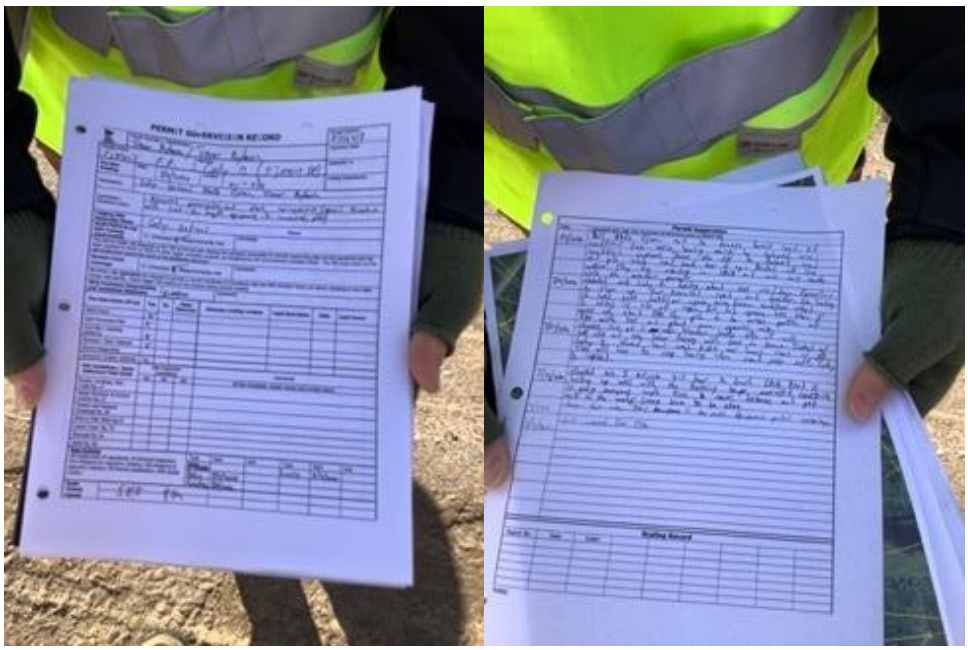
Attendees:
Stefan Bergmann, FSC Lead Auditor
Tim Beyer, MN DNR Certification Manager
Ted Dick, MN DNR Wildlife Biologist
Emily Peters, DNR Ecologist
Jon Drimel, MN DNR Timber Program Supervisor
Lindsey Shartell, Wildlife Regional Manager-Acting
Lonnie Lilly, Forestry Regional Manager
Aaron Mielke Ast. Area Forester
Anna Heruth, Two Harbors Silviculture Forester
Glenn Ristow, Forester
Cory Holden, Owner Holden Logging, LLC
Additional attendance documented on official attendance list

All sites observed had completed Stand Exam List (SEL) process, Appraisal documents, public bid notices and contracts for sold stands. Surveys are conducted during SEL process for rare/threatened/endangered species of plants and animals. SEL list reviewed by staff from DNR Fish and Wildlife and Ecological and Water Resources Divisions as well as the Forestry and Fish and Wildlife Divisions Archaeologist for cultural, historical and archaeological features.

Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and Aquatic Management Areas (AMA) managed by Fish and Wildlife Division. Foresters are timber sale administrators on WMA/AMA. Monitoring of forest management activities is identified by role/activity.
State Forests managed by MNDNR. Units of designation-Recreation, research and State Parks have different objectives. State Natural Areas- managed by Ecological division-outside of certification scope. Acquisition Aspect: guidance based on statutes. Example School Trust Lands; LUP Lands (Land Utilization Project). Lands granted to state by federal government. 36k acres of 2.7 MM Acres
DNR acquired lands.
School Trust-50%;
Conservation Lands-old farms/tax forfeited-Split revenues with Counties/State

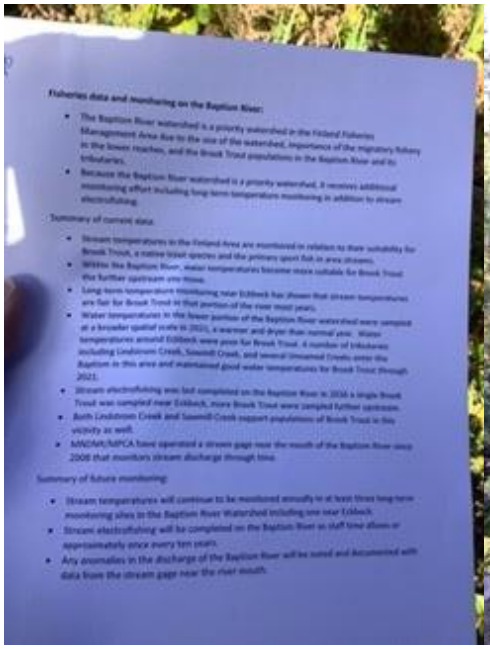
1. X016418-Timber sale-completed in Spring 2020; white spruce/white pine-Planted in 60's. Spruce budworm-added as additional plan addition (APA). Notification to other divisions for forest health. Comments through Forest Planning band distributed back to local level. Addressed at local if possible.-Public comments none, comments from fisheries for retaining of diversity. Stands met goals of internal stakeholders. Stand partially completed in Spring 2020; Remainder turned in 2021-Timber Relief due to closure of markets/facilities. Refund for permits. Check for qualified logger training conducted on each. Contractor must be qualified and installed before permit system is active. Utilized for logger training and insurance. Next activity is site

preparation for planting. Competition of non-desirable species. Chemical and possible trenching. Planting of mixed conifers to be determined. Some delays due to relief. Potential for site to be out of production for 5+ years for artificial regeneration. Natural regeneration is monitored to ensure species composition meets requirements. Site has been ground surveyed and does not meet desired state. Natural regeneration monitoring is conducted within 3 years. No water crossings or water features on parcel. Heavily used site by moose. Wildlife requested retention of conifer pockets for snow shelter post-harvest. Smaller pockets of thermal cover observed post-harvest. Conifers within stands observed. Positive habitat provided from harvesting and cover.



2. Wood Turtle Project-The Wood Turtle is a state threatened species in Minnesota. The Nongame Wildlife Program is working on a project on Wood Turtles with 4 main goals: 1) increase nest success, 2) reduce adult mortality, 3) conduct surveys and monitoring, and 4) conduct research to better understand habitat requirements. Habitat Sandy gravely surfaces. Terrestrial migration after nesting. This project is a collaboration between the IA, MI, MN, and WI DNR's, with MN DNR's Nongame Wildlife Program as the lead on the project. The project has been funded by three USFWS Competitive State Wildlife Grants, which began in 2014 and the current grant ends in 2024. 5% of nests hatching successfully in study; mitigation and protection from predators and public highways. Highway mitigation not successful and barriers removed. Nest success increased to 50%. Additional sites are being incorporated into study. Survey of additional sites for populations. Monitoring of long term trends developed and implemented on 5 year basis. Gauge of success from management activities. Telemetry on 30 turtles for data analysis-habitat, movement patterns, etc. Early study-attracted to Forest stands with large canopy gaps. Modeling for current population indicates decline. Need 95% adult survival to maintain current populations; current estimate is 89% based on limited research project. Seasonal restrictions are in place to increase buffer size from 1/4 mile and harvesting periods. Exemptions for management activities are allowed for detailed survey for occurrences. Potential impacts-habitat decline, contaminants and increased traffic/human population impacts. Additional rivers to be surveyed for population occurrences.

3. TNC RMZ Gap Project-Baptism Site: Parcel on Baptism River AMA, Riparian Restoration project of long-lived species of trees to help maintain habitat strongholds for brook trout and other cold-water fish in the face of climate change. In 2018 The Nature Conservancy (TNC) applied and received funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for Restoring Riparian Forest Resilience in Minnesota's North Shore Watersheds. The project goals are to restore forest cover, diversity, and resilience along 55 miles of priority riparian forests in North Shore watersheds within 400 feet of river. Planting of white pines, white spruce, white cedar, yellow birch, and other long-lived species. Plantings conducted in protected cages to protect from browse. Harvested in 2016. Buffer established for riparian zone. TNC utilizes brush cutting for planting of long lived species within project.
   Separate Conservation Partners Legacy project-Cages observed for expansion of diversity within river corridor. Planted 2 years-2022 replacement of drought impacted trees. Minimum buffer on trout stream in MN is 165 feet. Lake County has own MOA-Management Opportunity Area. Not aware of any public complaints regarding site confirmed by personnel. Natural regeneration observed with variety of species. Conifers noted and retained within buffer protection. Buffer observed met/exceeded guidelines. No trash, trespass or hydrocarbon spills observed.



4. X017038-Active Harvest Site: County owned property adjacent to state lands. County land harvested by same contractor prior to moving onto state land. Shared loading deck with county. Harvest operation completed on county first. Active job containing 26.6 acres with 2 harvest prescriptions. Final Harvest designated area with reserves of white pine, white spruce and diameter limits of (6-16 inches) sugar maples. Harvest boundaries clearly defined and illustrated on sale map. Shelterwood harvest area- native plant community/Forest cover type. Sugar Maples retained. Confirmed 4 species identified on NHI. Management of harvest operation presents no impacts based on interview with DNR personnel. Procedures to check NHI during establishment and prior to harvesting activities, given sometimes multiple years between sale establishment and harvest operations. Significant natural regeneration of sugar maples

observed within final harvest area of site. Harvest operations have not begun in Shelterwood prescription at time of field audit. No observation of hydrocarbon spills observed.

Interview with contractor on field site #4 confirms no knowledge of public complaints on harvest operation. Process of sale confirmed by contractor-Open market bids; pre-sale conference and routine monitoring multiple times per week by DNR personnel. Maps and GPS boundaries utilized by contractor. Confirmed knowledge of prescription. 2 man crew on site. No one under 18 on job. First aid kit, spill kit and fire extinguishers on job and machines. Minnesota Logger Education training confirmed by contractor.

Discussion but no site visit:

1. Little Marais WMA Project-30 acre site with treatment plan for 70 acres. 12 year project: Timber sold butlogger returned and site subsequently went unsold; Birch decline stand. Funding from Ruffed Grouse Society and The Nature Conservancyfor site prep and replanting. Weather impacts prevented site preparation. Historical deer wintering area. Large browse component with caged planting of long-lived conifer seedlings. Planting of species appropriate for native plant community.

Sites eliminated due to time constraints

1. F012060-Eliminated
2. Culvert Replacement -Eliminated

2022 MN DNR SFI FM Audit-Day 1

9/27/2022-Stefan Bergmann

Permit B014313, Two Harbors	Access to the unit is on Story Grade Road, an old railroad grade in exceptional condition. As a state managed road, the State of Minnesota completes maintenance, while Lake County completes road repairs. Mixed hardwood stands with conifer component in two clearcut blocks (118 acres and 88 acres). Only one block has been cut to date. The silvicultural goals are to, in part, increase the conifer component while addressing spruce budworm damage. The uncut portion of the permit was turned back under the Timber Relief package. Ground-based site prep spraying occurred this summer in the cut block. Per DNR policy, the spray boundary is 100 feet from adjoining property lines. It will be planted in spring 2025 following mechanical scarification to expose mineral soil. Species to be planted include white pine, jack pine, and/or red pine. Good aspen regeneration observed during the audit. Cedar patches were reserved in the block for thermal cover for wildlife. The permit is located in the designated core lynx area. Harvests in this area leave scattered slash and reserves.
Permit B015233, Two Harbors	Harvest split into two blocks (111 acres and 78 acres). Harvest includes both clearcut and thinning units. The permit has been approved and sold but is not cut. Norway pine mixed with a white spruce and balsam fir planted stand. The thinning units are in the planted stand; this is the first thin and will be harvested in strips (remove 20 feet, leave 40 feet). It is operator-select, although all roads, landings, and some skid trails must be approved by the DNR. The natural stands will be clearcut with reserves. The units include areas with spruce budworm defoliation. The reserves in the clearcut units will include both pockets and individual trees. The blocks include “summer chance” harvest areas, meaning that the harvests may include summer ground, depending on conditions at the time. As verified by the harvest map, Cutting Block 1 includes a designated 165-foot RMZ buffer along a trout stream. The buffer is in an area comprised primarily of birch. At the request of EWR, the forester is ensuring that a hardwood component is retained. The permit is located in a moose management area, which requires variable density thinning, retention of thermal cover, and maintenance of a hardwood component.

2022 MN DNR SFI FM Audit-Day 2

9/28/2022-Shannon Wilks

Attendees:
Jon Drimel, MN DNR Timber Program Supervisor
Brian Feldt, Area Forest Supervisor-DNR 10 years
Krista Roth, Timber Program Tower Area
Penny Backman, Assistant Area Wildlife Manager
Shelly Patten, Regional Director
Lindsey Shartell, Wildlife Regional Manager-Acting
Lonnie Lilly, Forestry Regional Manager
Dave Sopoci, Assistant Area Forester-25 years DNR
Gaea Crozier, Non-Game Specialist EWR
Terry Bergstrom, Retired DNR Forest Technician

All harvest sites observed had completed Stand Exam List (SEL) process, Appraisal documents, public bid notices and contracts for sold stands. Surveys are conducted during SEL process for rare/threatened/endangered species of plants and animals. SEL list reviewed by DNR Fish and Wildlife, EWR, and Forestry Archaeologist for cultural, historical and archaeological features prior to ground disturbing activities. Formal process utilized within DNR systems to validate MN qualified logging professionals, insurance requirements and other specific requirements prior to bidding on state contracts.

Tower Area: Private landowner requests-high visibility in community.
Silviculture: Maintaining contracts, mentoring foresters in site descriptions and
Vendor tours for site prescriptions.
Approximately 80-85% of sites offered are sold.
PCA largest market- (Uncoated Free sheet): significant consumer of aspen tamarack and wide range of species. Limited markets on eastern side of area- limited pine market
Fragmentation of ownership on adjacent stands increases amount of time to prepare.
Fire season in late spring-balance of responsibilities. Personnel have 2-25 years of experience in area. Mentoring and institutional knowledge transfer process to new personnel. Select group on eastern side of area-(Ely area) fields more complaints on management activities. Educational sessions with other groups (TNC-NGO), individual members of community, county fairs and booths. Western side of area-seasonal hunting and forest community worker population. Less questions and complaints regarding management activities. Pilot Project: All Lands Approach to Forest Management- Landscape Management. Groups include MNDNR, Federal USFS, BIA, The Nature Conservancy, MN Timber Producers Association, Soil Conservative District. Interdisciplinary Agency collaboration. LiDAR study on Wetland Research Group to evaluate habitat usage by species. 2 years in wood ducks.

Positive aspects of coordination and communication between interdisciplinary agencies; major Issue between groups is policy impacts conflicting goal management. Example of coordination between Forestry/Wildlife- Stand 115 Joint Site Visit for harvest with multiple prescriptions and movement of

harvest periods for retaining of conifers, thermal cover and met trust policy of 5% reserves. Achieve objectives of MOA, Trust Land Policy.
Difficult to achieve in Eastern area (Ely). Host of issues- markets, stands, topography, land ownership.

1. B014590 Timber Harvest:-2004/2005 aspen thinning-removed 1/3. Site prep of white spruce and white pine planting. Protected white pine from browse with spray and bud capping. White pine declined in stand due to browse and bluster rust. Highest deer population in recent history (20-25 deer/sq mile). Lower population today 6/ sq mile). 2016 monitoring of species survival. Observation confirms part of site with conifer growth and no conifers in part of stand without planting. 2020 stand exam list (evaluation for harvest) 10 year planning period to identify harvest. Cover type, site index, age and other aspects within model to identify stands for review. Review with public, assigned forester for ground review. Joint site visits scheduled with appropriate groups. Site selected for aspen over story removal. No comments from interagency confirmed. Interagency wildlife and EWR pleased with diversity and species composition for habitat. 185 acres sold in 2020/ 2 major blocks. Harvested in winter 2020 and completed in 2021. Dry or frozen ground. No NHI, cultural or historical occurrences on site during. Significant aspen regeneration observed. Reserves of conifer and non-hazardous snags. Biomass- optional but was scheduled across site. Note for access in dry conditions. Trained MLEP contractor verified for harvest. Site scheduled for routine monitoring for aspen/spruce component. Early successional species habitat for many years. Goal and confirmed stand will transition to higher quality stand for habitat. Beaver flowage on southern end of site. RMZ established on water features. No crossings on site. Snags and clumps/retention islands observed.

2. Forest Roads: Smith Forest Road- rebuilt in 2004. 3.6 miles- previous winter only. Built for forest management. Graded 2-3 times per year. Mow right of ways; intermittent woody control through contractor. No treatment in past year. Road is currently all season-increased Stumpage. No trespass issues noted. Private hunting lodges. Recreational activities allowed, except no off trail ATV use. Permission for off trail for game pickup. Gate with signage for managed Forest. State road classification with GIS layer for identification. Maintenance and historical records are maintained. Tower area has +70 miles of state forest roads.

3. 36-64-21 #293 NP12: Silviculture site-Norway/Red Pine & White Spruce: Historical Harvested in 2003; planted 45-20 acres white spruce, 25 acres red/white pine. White spruce planted on heavy soils. Planted after trenching in 2005. Monitoring done for 10 years. 5 and 10 year monitoring- trees per area declined by half from competition of aspen, maple and birch. Brush decreased over time. Spruce release for over-story opening for establishment. Joint project for treatment with Wildlife. Diversity and thermal cover for wildlife-deer and moose. Significant diversity of species, spruce dominant position in canopy. Meets climate change recommendations for species diversity and long-lived conifers. Next entry for intermediate treatment in 20+/- years.

4. 36-64-21 #286/287: Silviculture-2003 salvage for spruce (61 planted). Spruce bud worm in 1990's. Residual basal area after salvage was 25-50. 2005 white pine planted heavier 1000/1200

trees per acre for anticipation of high browse. Protection of browser with repellent and bud capping. High harvest limits for deer with high winter mortality. Increase predators caused mortality decline. Currently below recommended population for deer. Third year of monitoring- poorly stocked acres; inter-planted tamarack. Five year monitoring- white spruce interplanted. Not a designated deer wintering area. Population modeling of deer based on buck harvesting, field checks and predator kills. Site provides cover, habitat for grouse with aspen components. Wildlife personnel confirms ideal site for habitat and diversity.

5. B014259 Timber Harvest: Stand appraisal in 2019, mature aspen with other species. Final harvest-Sold in 2019 to major Forest products company. Winter harvest only due to access and soils. Total sake 51 acres in 3 harvest blocks. Irregular stand observed-Eastern most block. Reserved pines, black ash, basswood, non-merchantable balsam, large limb aspens and cedar. No EAB at this point. Stands adjoin beaver flow age. No biomass harvesting, slash retained on site. Ice-bridge crossing utilized to cross beaver dam/pond. Restrictions do apply if biomass removed for retaining 20%. Harvest operations completed in 2021 winter. Future plan is aspen regeneration. Observation confirms significant aspen regeneration. Reserve of cedar retained. Blue painted stand boundaries. Observation of ash retention stand. No BMP or utilization of fiber issues. Clean professional harvest operation. No evidence of hydrocarbon, trash or trespass issues. Ash retained to maintain water intake from ground. No private landownership adjacent to stand for concerns regarding EAB.

6. X017444 Timber Harvest: Active harvest with operations completed last week-34 acres; 2 harvest prescriptions. No equipment on site at time of audit-decked wood only. Row thinning of red pine; harvest cut on birch stand. Added timber of thinning due to location of birch. Old industry land acquired through exchange. Leave 40 foot between rows. Logging slash utilized on bumper trees for protection. Stand set up for multiple entries for thinning in between rows. Tree density, live crowns and utilization. Target is to maintain 90 BA. Good protection of residual stand, minimal damage and impacts to crowns. Wood decked to be delivered during frozen ground or dry conditions. Harvested by MLEP, verification within TSM-TOPS system for maintenance of contractor records. Auction bidders must be pre-qualified prior to bid on sales. No NHI or historical/cultural/archaeological occurrences on site. Reserve areas of balsam fir, white pines and conifers within final harvest area. No water features on site. Regeneration in final harvest is birch and aspen. Scattered conifers observed in stand. Boundaries defined and no evidence of trespass, hydrocarbon spills or trash. Slash scattered within sale area. Professional harvest operation observed. Wildlife confirmed prescription and diversity within stand. Row thinning not ideal for wildlife but understand equipment availability-conventional equipment utilized. EWR commented desire to increase stand diversity in future harvest operations. Monitoring by DNR personnel confirmed during operations. Site will be naturally regenerated after harvest operations.

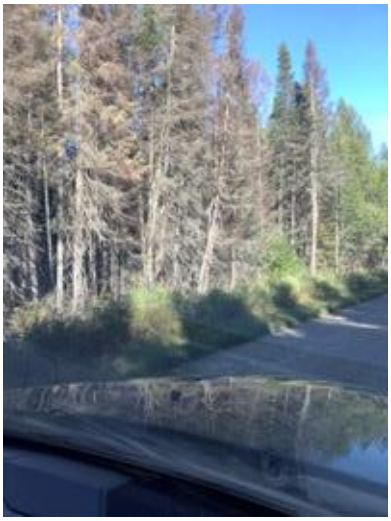
7. B015352 Invasive Species, Wildlife: 17 acre Timber harvest completed in July 2022. Red pine, aspen, spruce and Jack pine final harvest with retention islands. Retention around non-operational fire tower. Stand boundaries defined. Adjacent to private landowner and power line running through stand. Notice to adjoining users-of harvest operation. Response of safety and harvest debris kept off power line row from powerline company. Slash was piled and scheduled for burning in winter. Site scheduled to be planted with red pine. Invasive species treatment will impact reforestation until potential 2025. Treatment of invasive (Siberian Pea Shrub)with Garlon by stump spray in 2018. Follow up ground treatment in 2022 by contractor-MN Commercial Applicator # 20220237 valid expiration. Historical use as ornamental and hedge rows. No NHI or historical/cultural/archaeological occurrences on site. Hunter walking trail with game opening. Forestry and wildlife coordination on planning. Managed recreational hunting for non-motorized traffic. Verbal communication with contractor for avoidance of invasive species area to minimize spread. No water or crossings. Observed wildlife opening and retention islands. Professional harvest operation observed. Gated access. Trails were maintained and protected during harvest operations.

8. B014675 Spruce Top Harvest: Completed in 2020- 3500 stems per acre to reduce 1500 stems on pre commercial thinning. Clear around dominant spruce and remove tops from co-dominant trees. Removal of birch, tamarack, aspen and birch for competition removal. Wet site with low flat topography. Spruce tops were protected in stand prior to scaling by DNR with contractor to prevent theft. Random monitoring to ensure compliance with contract requirements and protect soils. Low ground pressure equipment requirements to prevent damage to site. Market for tops not available; pre commercial thinning would not have been performed due to cost. Operation is able to accomplish stand improvement, generate income and eliminate cost for timber stand improvement.

9. Climate Adaptation Site: Strategy for assisted migration for species more prevalent in southern part of state/region to plant species-Bur Oak as test site for survival, vigor and competition with

native vegetation. Bur oak planted in 2019 at 800 trees per acre. Test plot is 1 acre in size. Monitoring in year 1 for survival. Next planned check is 2024 for survival and assessment. Bur oak was present on site prior to test, but not a common wide-spread species. Suitability tables within ECS (Ecological Classification System) reviewed and Bur Oak was favorable species. Estimated cursory at time of audit by experienced DNR personnel around 20% survival. Diversity within stand of aspen regeneration. Potential for pre commercial release if funding becomes available.

10. X017021: 22 acre harvest cut of black spruce adjacent to public roads. Stand is long and narrow adjacent to county road. Mature stand to allow sunlight for increased growth potential of younger adjacent stand. Evidence of blow-down mature stems within stand observed. Lowland black spruce stand with smaller pocket of mature aspens. Retention of mature island/clumps of aspen. Boundaries defined and no evidence harvesting. Sale has been established and sold-no harvest activity at time of audit.



11. B014135 -Non-Game Stop Discussion with Non-Game EWR Specialist- Time prevented site visit: The Northern Goshawk is a state special concern species in Minnesota. It requires mature and older forest and is sensitive to habitat fragmentation. The Nongame Wildlife Program started a project in 2022 using case studies to examine the impacts of timber harvest on Goshawks. Monitoring 18 Goshawk territories that are projected to have DNR timber harvests over the next 10 years. Pre and post-harvest monitoring will be conducted in each territory. Information will be collected on territory occupancy, location of the active nest, and nest success. Individuals will be identified using DNA from molted Goshawk feathers. Case studies will be utilized to understand how Goshawks respond to timber harvest in their territory. The results will help MNDNR manage for Goshawks and potentially update forest management guidelines for Goshawk. Project is funded for pre-harvest monitoring; post-harvest monitoring will need to be secured. Current USFWS grant is 3 year project.

Interview with Retired DNR Forest technician for 39 years. Concern about lack of flexibility for decisions on ground being replaced with technology and modeling. No complaints and confirmed conflicts with policy for forestry and wildlife goals.

2022 MN DNR SFI FM Audit-Day 2

9/28/2022-Stefan Bergmann

Regeneration of CCC planted stand, Section 16-T60-R21w, Hibbing Area	Regeneration project following a completed final harvest of CCC-planted red pine on School Trust land. Original stand had been stablished in the early 1930s. Objective of harvest was to regenerate a healthy and fully stocked mixed red pine stand. The unit was harvested in June 2015 and contains scattered and clumped reserves of red pine, white pine, white spruce, aspen, paper birch, and red oak. The operator also retained advanced conifer and hardwood regeneration. Logged using broadcast full tree skidding during dry, non-frozen soil conditions to set back the brush competition and scarify for regeneration. Slash was piled and then chipped or burned. Disc trenching following harvest to break up root system of competition and reduce compaction. Site was disc trenched in October 2015, planted with red pine in spring 2016, and brush saw released in May 2020. 2022 regeneration survey found full stocking of planted red pine, 80% stocking of naturally seeded red pine, 80% stocking of oak, and 10% stocking of white and jack pines. The survey found that stocking levels of competition was greatest for raspberry, hazel, and willow.

	The DNR is planning on one more release before the stand will be considered free growing. To date, no herbicides have been used in the stand.
Reforestation project, Section 16-T60-R21se, Hibbing Area	Reforestation project of a completed final harvest of a CCC planting. Logging occurred in May 2021 using whole tree skidding to scarify for regeneration. Slash piles were burned last winter. Ground-based herbicide application occurred in June of this year. The application did not occur within a flagged 100-ft area from the sale boundary, and the boundary was well above the minimum 120-ft RMZ in the Minnesota Forest Management Guidelines for a wetland of its size. Mechanical scarification of the harvest site in preparation for planting will occur in October. The unit will be planted with red and jack pine at 700 TPA in spring 2023. The RMZ has been planted with extra planting stock that was available. The plantings will be hand released in the RMZ. The project is located close to community, with hikers, ATV users, hunters, and other recreationist regularly using the area. Per DNR policy, homeowners within 1/8 mile of the herbicide application were notified in writing of the application. No stakeholders have expressed concern with the harvest nor reforestation project.
Permit B014570, Hibbing Area	30-acre active harvest unit, although the crew was not onsite during the audit. Completed load tickets were reviewed, verifying the presence of the required certificate code on the destination stub. The book, destination, and lockbox stubs are all linked through a unique ticket number. The permit is comprised of one cutting block. Most of the unit had been felled, with much of the material skidded and in decks on the landing. No residual damage was noted. The forester pointed out that stump height has been identified a concern, and the operator has been making improvements to reduce the stump height in order to maximize log quality. The landing clean and well organized. All logs were clearly sorted. Among the merchandised products are “hurricane poles,” which are wood utility poles used in hurricane prone areas because of their flexibility and strength. All equipment onsite was in excellent condition with no sign of leaks nor breakdowns. This particular permit had been internally reviewed as part of the area’s compliance audits. Approximately 11 compliance audits occur per year in the area. No issues were identified for this permit during the compliance audit, as verified through an interview with the compliance auditor and review of the report.

	A goshawk nest site is known to exist on adjoining county land, although the EWR did not dispute the permit. Presently, the state has informational guidance for goshawk applicable to non-Trust Lands and is in the process of developing formal policy for goshawks on School Trust Lands, which will help to clarify pathways when similar situations occur in the future.
Nass Old Forest Management Complex (OFMC) & Old Growth Special Management Zone (SMZ), Hibbing Area (discussion; only no site visit)	Planned harvest in the vicinity of an OFMC and SMZ. The OFMC and SMZ are centered around an elongated, narrow old growth white pine stand. The stand was stablished in 1921 and designated as old growth in 1990. OFMCs are intended to enhance the conservation value of designated old growth by managing additional stands adjacent to SMZs for older growth stage characteristics over time, and extending the buffering capacity of the area around old growth. SMZs are within 330 feet of designated old growth and intended to minimize exposing the old growth forest to edge effects. The old growth stand is surrounded by a single 56-acre mixed-species stand dominated by aspen established in 1964. The 56-acre stand was identified on the FY21 Stand Exam List, and a regeneration harvest is planned. The OFMC and SMZ, and the harvest unit, is on School Trust lands. Planning for the harvest is an example of cross-departmental collaboration. It is an unusual case with limited management options given the shape of the stand. The agreed-to SMZ implemented for the permit will be variable width with the greatest retention levels closest to the old growth. DNR staff agreed to reserve all cedar in the harvest unit, a long-lived species with wildlife benefits. Staff also agreed to reserve 6 TPA to support species diversity and habitat in the OFMC, as well as reserve spots of advanced regeneration of white pine, white spruce, balsam fir, and aspen. Niche habitats and old growth features will also be protected, including rock outcrops with long-lived lichen and mosses. The permit has been sold but not cut.
Sand Creek Hunter Walking Trail (HWT), Leander Road, Hibbing Area	Located in the Bear River Ruffed Grouse Management Area, this 3-mile trail is part of a network of DNR-operated HWTs that provide hunting opportunities to hunters who wish to avoid interference from motorized vehicles. Most HWTs provide easy access to areas managed for grouse and woodcock. Many of the trails, including this one, are gated to prevent OHV access. There was no sign of unauthorized access at the Sand Creek HTW.

	The area has 82 miles of HWTs. In most years, the majority of those trails are mowed semi-annually or annually in order to maintain access, usually supported by Conservation Partner Legacy Grants. Some are maintained by local volunteers. A 42-acre even-aged harvest in 3 blocks occurred in May 2021 in along the Sand Creek HWT. The cuts are intended to promote habitat required by grouse and woodcock. The trail travels through stands representing multiple age classes from previous harvests. Block 1 of the harvest includes a 4-acre reserve along Sand Creek. There is also a 200-ft lowland hardwood buffer. Scattered retention in the unit, including conifer clumps for thermal cover. Presently, DNR Region 2 is undertaking a 2-year study of trail use of HWTs by recreationists. By using trail cameras to monitor use, the objectives of the study are to quantify the rates and range of uses of trails, determine the proportion of hunter vs. non-hunter use, and understand how the use may vary throughout the year. Signs are posted at each trailhead to notify users of the study and to provide local wildlife office contact information; a sign was verified as being present during the FSC audit.
Blueberry Hill Natural Origin Red Pine (NORP) artificial & natural regeneration, Section 17-T61-R21w, Hibbing Area	NORP site is estimated to have been established in 1906. The stand has been thinned several times, most recently in 2000. The final harvest took place in June 2017. Species present at harvest were red pine, white pine, jack pine, paper birch, aspen, balsam fir, and white spruce. There was also patchy advanced regeneration of white pine, red pine, balsam fir and birch, with a heavy hazel brush understory. Significant signs of *Diplodia spp.* on red pine regeneration. Broadcast full tree skidding occurred during dry, non-frozen soil conditions to set back the hazel brush and scarify the site for regeneration. Slash was piled, followed by chipping and burning. In July 2017, the site was hand seeded with a rotary seeder using a mix of conifers. In spring 2018, the site was planted with 1-0 red pine container seedlings at 400 TPA; variable density was incorporated into spacing after the site was covered. In December 2020, the site was release using brush saws. Regeneration surveys occurred in October 2018 and May 2020. Planted red pine was fully stocked by 2018. In 2020, natural red pine, jack pine and white pine were stocked at 31%, 31% and 15%, respectively. The surveys found that competition was primarily from hazel, but also raspberry, willow, red maple, and aspen. To date, several lessons have been learned from the regeneration project: (1) summertime harvest helped to set back competition;

	(2) sufficient soil disturbance (70-80% scarification) from harvest was key to prepare the site for planting, provide a seedbed for natural seeding, and to control competition; (3) container seedlings enabled the prescription to work without the use of herbicides; and (4) early brush saw release to control competition allowed development of crop trees along with germination and development of conifers from seed.
Permit X016885, Hibbing Area	28-acre completed clearcut. The permit is comprised of one block distributed across two locations. The permit was cut in February 2020. Aspen, jack pine, and spruce pulp and bolts were harvested, as well as balsam fir pulpwood. The sale included minimal biomass. Conifer clumps were reserved in the harvested areas for wildlife, as verified through the audit. No residual damage was observed. The harvest borders an adjoining private parcel; property lines were verified as being painted.

Appendix 5 – Meeting Attendance

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY – THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE SCANNED

Name	Position Title	Phone OR Email	Open	Field	Close
Shannon Wilks	SFI Lead Auditor	Dswilks1234@gmail.com 903-278-7766	X	X	X
Stefan Bergmann	FSC Lead Auditor	sbergmann@scsglobalservices.com 608-216-6753	X	X	X
Tim Beyer	Forest Certification Program Consultant	Tim.beyer@state.mn.us	X	X	X
Ted Dick	Forest Wildlife Habitat Supervisor		X	X	X
Jon Drimel	Timber Program Supervisor & Forest Certification Implementation Team (FCIT)		X	X	X
Emily Peters	Forest Ecology and Policy Program Consultant		X	X	X
Barb Naramore	Deputy Commissioner				X
Shannon Lotthammer	Assistant Commissioner		X		X
Jess Richards	Assistant Commissioner		X		X

Name	Position Title	Phone OR Email	Open	Field	Close
Shelly Patten	Northeast Regional Director – R2		X	X	X
Lonnie Lilly	Forestry Regional Manager – R2		X	X	X
Lindsey Shartell	Regional Wildlife Manager -R2 (Acting)		X	X	X
Angela Aarhus-Ward	Assistant Regional Wildlife Manager – R2				X
Darrell Schindler	Regional EWR Manager – R2		X		X
Greg Root	Assistant Regional EWR Manager – R2		X		X
Bradley Harrington	Director of Tribal Relations		X		
Patty Thielen	Director – Forestry Division (FOR)		X		X
Dave Olfelt	Director – Fish and Wildlife Division (FAW)		X		X
Katie Smith	Director – Ecological and Water Resources Division (EWR)		X		X
Doug Tillma	Section Manager - Forestry Planning and Policy (FOR) & Certification Oversight Team (COT)		X		X
Kelly Straka	Section manager – Wildlife (FAW) & COT		X		X
Jan Shaw Wolff	Section Manager – Ecosystem Management and Protection (EWR) & COT		X		X
Andrew Arends	Section Manager – State Forest Lands (FOR)		X		X
Aaron VandeLinde	Director, Office of School Trust Lands (non-DNR staff)		X		X
Lacy Levine	Forest Policy Analyst & FCIT		X		X

Name	Position Title	Phone OR Email	Open	Field	Close
Lori Knosalla	Timber Sales Administration Coordinator & FCIT		X		X
Tim Quincer	Forest Wildlife Habitat Specialist (FAW) & FCIT		X		X
Paul Dubuque	Forestry Silviculture Consultant & FCIT		X		X
David Wilson	Site Level Guidelines Monitoring Consultant & FCIT		X		X
Nick Jensen	NW Regional Ecologist & FCIT		X		X
Tavis Westbrook	Resource Program Coordinator (Parks & Trails) & FCIT		X		
Aaron Mielke	Two Harbors (TH) Area Assistant Area Forester			X	
Jason Bushmaker	Two Harbors Timber Program Forester			X	
Anna Heruth	Two Harbors Silviculture Program Forester			X	
Glen Ristow	Forester (TH)			X	
Brian Schiller	Forest Technician (TH)			X	
Simon Cain	Forester (TH)			X	
Trevor Poyhonen	Good Neighbor Authority Program Forester (TH)			X	
Nancy Hansen	Two Harbors Area Wildlife Manager			X	
Bailey Petersen	Two Harbors Assistant Area Wildlife Manager			X	
Dawn Plattner	Two Harbors Assistant Area Wildlife Manager			X	
Sarah Pennington	Aquatic Management Area Habitat Specialist			X	
Heather Baird	Forest Fisheries Landscape Coordinator			X	

Name	Position Title	Phone OR Email	Open	Field	Close
Brooke Haworth	EWR Regional Plant Ecologist – R2			X	
Gaea Crozier	EWR Non-Game Specialist – R2			X	
Cory Holden	Holden Logging, LLC-Owner			X	
Brian Feldt	Tower (T) Area Forest Supervisor			X	
Dave Sopoci	Tower Area Assistant Area Supervisor			X	
Krista Roth	Tower Area Timber Program Forester			X	
Terry Bergstrom	Forest Technician (retired)			X	
Penny Backman	Tower Assistant Area Wildlife Manager			X	
Nate Eiding	Hibbing (H) Area Assistant Supervisor			X	
Kirby Budrow	Hibbing Area Timber Program Forester			X	
Jon Splinter	Hibbing Area Silviculture Area Forester			X	
Andy Carlson	Forester (H)			X	
Jeff Sirjord	Forest Technician (H)			X	
Jess Holmes	Tower Area Wildlife Manager			X	

Appendix 6 – Schedule and Focus Areas for Next Audit

Proposed Audit Dates for Next Audit

Proposed Audit Dates	September 2023
Rationale for Dates (if applicable)	N/A

Special Instructions or Scoping Notes for Next Regularly Scheduled Annual Audit

☒	Not applicable; no significant issues identified that may impact the next audit.
Some issues were identified during this audit that the next audit team could consider in the next audit, such as:	
☐	Scope of certificate:
☐	Audit sampling:
☐	Audit time:
☐	Audit season:
☐	Travel time between sites or FMUs:
☐	Audit frequency:
☐	Suggested audit team competency for next audit:
☐	Suggested requirements to include during the next audit:
☐	Suggested issues investigate during the next audit:
☐	Suggested sites for inspection:
☐	Stakeholders to be consulted:
☐	Other(s) – please describe: