

**New York State
Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Lands and Forests**

625 Broadway, 5th Floor
Albany, NY 12233-4255

SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules®
Section 2: Forest Management Standard
Section 9, Appendix 1: Audits of Multi-Site Organizations

4th Surveillance



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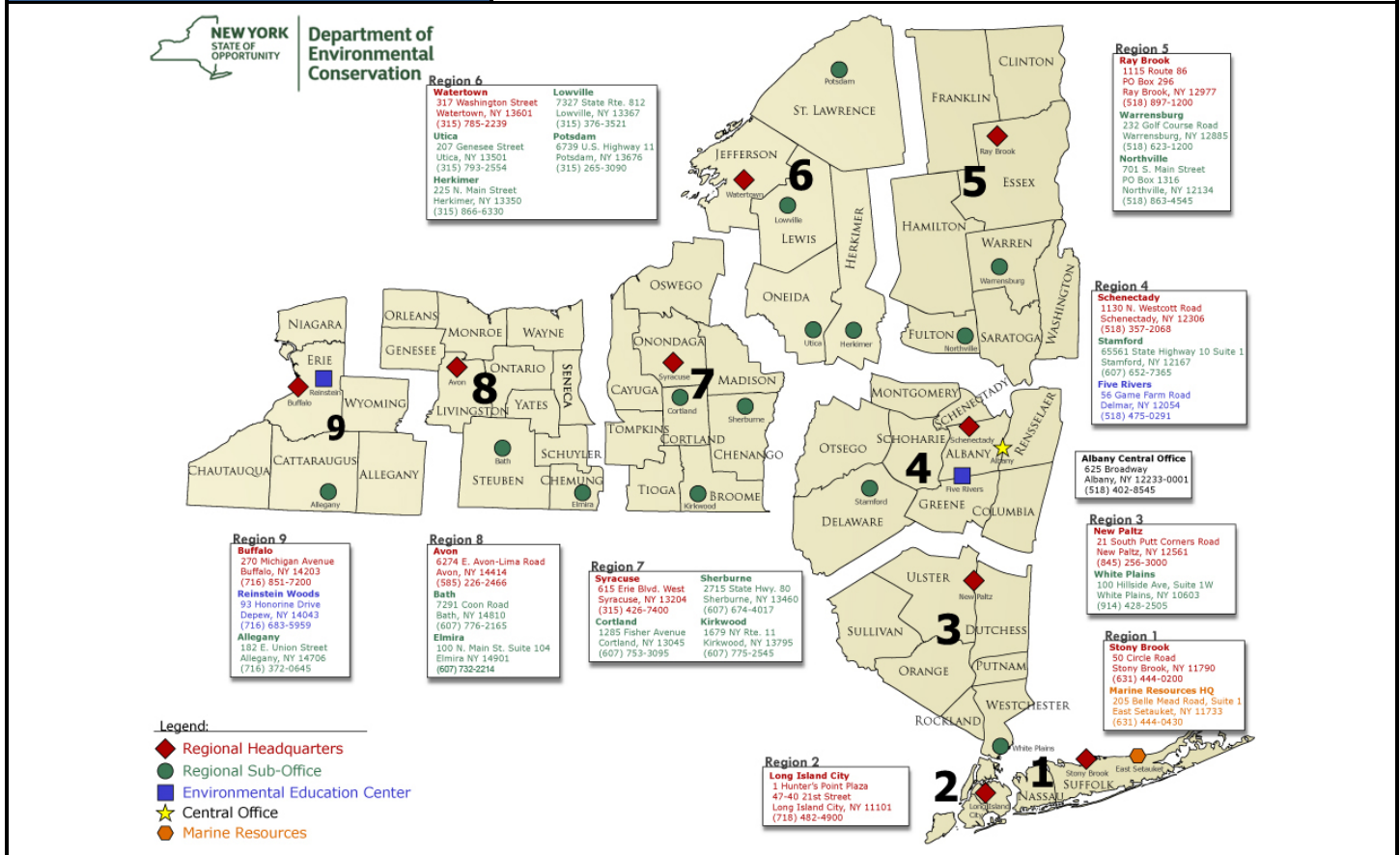
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NSF Forestry Program Audit Report

A. Certificate Holder Information

Certificate Holder	NYSDEC- Forest resources Management Division of Land and Forests
Customer Number	6L741
Contact Information (Name, title, phone & email)	Josh Borst, Forester 2 Forest Resource Management Division of Lands and Forests NY State Department of Environmental Conservation Broadway, 5th Floor, Albany, NY 12233-4255 P: (518) P: (518) 473-9209 F: (518) 402-9028 Email: joshua.borst@dec.ny.gov
Scope of Certification	The management of New York State Forests in Regions 3-9, including Reforestation Areas, Multiple Use Areas and Unique Areas and related activities in support of sustainable forestry. SFI Forest Management code: NSF-SFI-FM-6L741.
Scope is accurate and appropriate, and matches on certificate, FRS and audit plan.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Locations Included in the Certification Note: may be listed as plain text or included in an appendix or a separate file.	The land management activities and forestry offices in NY State Forests in Region 3-9, 2019. See map below of all activities and offices, Regions 1 & 2 excluded from the Green Certification program.



Significant Changes to Operations or to the Standard(s)	No significant changes from last audit.
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B. Audit Team

Lead Auditor	Michelle Matteo
Audit Team Member(s)	Evan Poirson

C. Site Visits

Date and Location of Each Visit	28 September 2021: Region 9 – Dunkirk - 178 Point Drive North, Dunkirk, NY 14048 29 September 2021: Region 7 – Cortland – 1285 Fisher Ave., Cortland, NY 13045 30 September 2021: Central Office: Completed Remotely - 625 Broadway, 5th Floor Albany, NY 12233-4255
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D. Audit Results

Auditor Recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/> Grant, maintain or renew certification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant, maintain or renew certification pending closure of CARs <input type="checkbox"/> Grant, maintain or renew certification pending follow-up assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Do not grant, maintain or renew certification (notify NSF office immediately)
Number and Summary of Findings of “Exceeds the Requirements”	-
Number and Summary of Findings of “Opportunity for Improvement”	<p>- 1 -</p> <p>SFI Performance Measure 4.1.7: Participation in programs and demonstration of activities as appropriate to limit the introduction, spread and impact of invasive exotic plants and animals that directly threaten or are likely to threaten native plant and animal communities.</p> <p>OPI: There is an opportunity to improve the program and demonstration of activities to limit the introduction, spread, and impact of invasive exotic plants and animals. Invasive species were discussed at length during each site visit during the 2021 surveillance audit. NYSDEC contends with a number of invasive species, including knotweed, stiltgrass, swallow-wort, honeysuckle, and many others. Given the intractable nature of invasives within the state, and the extent to which they are already established, the efficacy of NYSDEC’s actions in limiting these species’ spread is limited. NYSDEC personnel routinely monitor invasives’ spread during pre- and post-harvest operations and thereby demonstrate conformance with the requirements of this indicator. However, the audit team concludes that there are opportunities to improve BFRM’s invasive management strategies, including but not limited to implementing a consistent monitoring protocol across all regions of the state and communicating the importance of these efforts to contracted forest workers.</p>
Number and Summary of Findings of “Minor Nonconformity”	<p>- 1 -</p> <p>SFI Multi-site Clause 4.1.1.d: The organization should demonstrate its ability to collect and analyze data (including, but not limited to, the items listed below) from all sites including the central office and its authority and also demonstrate its authority and ability to initiate organizational change if required:</p> <p>i. System documentation and system changes</p> <p>Contracts for timber sales on the NY DEC lands do not include the correct SFI claim or full and complete SFI certificate code. The document that is used to communicate the SFI Claim and NY DEC’s SFI FM certificate code contain errors. The centrally controlled template for “Notice of Sale of Forest Products, Version 2.2020”, notes an incomplete code of SFI Certified Forest Content, rather than the full SFI 100% Certified Forest Content, and the certificate code is incomplete, noting “NSF-SFIS-61741”, rather than the full code of NSF-SFI-FM-6L741.</p>
Number and Summary of Findings of “Major Nonconformity”	-



<p>Summary of review of nonconformities from previous audit(s)</p>	<p>2020.1: 9.1.3. Demonstration of commitment to legal compliance through <i>available regulatory action information</i>. This process is not fully effective. Objective evidence: TRP document is shared with multi agencies and is in the very early stages of the lean process. NYSDEC Lands Forests central office confirmed a draft memo was created however, it is unclear how the central office plans to deploy this memo to all field staff regarding changes to the TRP & changes made to the procedures. EXTENDED MINOR CAR: While a plan to address this is beginning, this has not been implemented. COVID-19 has limited work/travel that NYSDEC employees have been able to accomplish, therefore this is not upgraded, and the Minor CAR is extended. Closed: Since the 2020 audit, NYSDEC reviewed its TRP process and removed boilerplate language that required at least 48 hours' notice for any activity requiring a TRP. Notification periods will still be required for certain activities requiring a TRP, but for many other activities, no formal notification will be required prior to commencement of the permitted activity. This change reduces the risk that a permit holder be out of conformance with the language of the permit, and that NYSDEC fail to ensure that all deadlines required by the permit be met. One recently issued TRP was reviewed during the audit, and it was confirmed that the clause requiring advance notification was removed. This CAR is closed.</p>
<p>Notes from Opening and Closing Meetings</p>	<p>Opening meetings were held on-site at regional field offices. Closing meeting was held remotely via Cisco WebEx during the regular scheduled audit times, due to COVID-19 concerns and State guidance regarding gatherings of people.</p>
<p>All logos and/or labels, including ANSI, ANAB, SFI, PEFC, ATFS, etc. are utilized correctly in accordance with NSF policies.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (a finding of nonconformity should be issued) <input type="checkbox"/> N/A (not using any labels or logos on any marketing materials, website, finished products, etc.)</p>

E. Surveillance Review

<p>Explain how the management system is capable of meeting the applicable requirements and expected outcomes of the audit</p>	
<p>Answer</p>	<p>Capability of the management system is demonstrated by the very low number of nonconformities identified during annual audits and the continued high performance during a time of changing markets and uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 Virus. The company continues to emphasize a strong commitment for the implementation of their SFI® Program.</p>

F. Recertification Review

<p>Consider the performance of the program over the cycle through a review of all audits in the previous certification cycle, internal audits, management reviews, corrective actions and continual improvement. Describe the evidence supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective interaction between all parts of the program and its overall effectiveness, • overall effectiveness of the system in its entirety considering internal and external changes, • demonstrated commitment by top management to maintain the system and maintain continuous improvement, • program contribution to the achievement of the client's policy and objectives, and the intended results. <p>If there were any repeat findings during the audit cycle that indicate systemic issues, explain how they were addressed.</p>	
<p>Answer</p>	<p>N/A – Surveillance Audit</p>



G. Appendices

Appendix 1	Audit Notification Letter & Schedule
Appendix 2	SFI Forest Management Public Summary Report
Appendix 3	SFI Forest Management and SFI Multi-Site Checklists
Appendix 4	Field Notes
Appendix 5	Meeting Attendance
Appendix 6	COVID -19 Appendix



Appendix 1

Audit Notification Letter

26 Aug 2021

Josh Borst, Forester 2
Bureau of Forest Resource Management, Division of Lands and Forests
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway, 5th Floor, Albany, NY 12233-4255

RE: SFI® Forest Management 4th Surveillance Audit, NY-DEC, SFI Forest Management

Dear Mr. Borst,

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

- SFI® 2015-2019 Standards and Rules: Section 2 – Forest Management
- SFI® 2015-2019 Standard and Rules: Section 5, Logo Use
- SFI® 2015-2019 Standards and Rules: Section 9, Multi-site Requirements

Preparing for the Audit

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

- Forest Management Plans for the lands certified *
- Status of Inventory and growth and yield modeling
- Approval for logo usage (if used)
- Verification of Controversial Sources
- Internal Audit records *
- Management Review records *
- Training records, license, certifications (Internal and external)
- Documentation for operation of complaint procedure
- Herbicide and Pesticide listing of chemicals and acreage
- Policies regarding certification, health, and safety (Example Organizations HR Manual)
- Wildlife habitat plans and forestry prescriptions
- BMP monitoring documents
- Documentation for monitoring, non-conformances identified and corrective action
- Any ILO (International Labor Organization) complaints
- Contracts for harvesting and silvicultural activities, loggers/operators/truck drivers, and road building operators
- Listing of State and Regulatory contacts including but not limited to State regulations, SIC /I-800- SFI
- Educational Opportunities for Loggers/landowners/community outreach
- Documentation showing commitment to research and educational opportunities
- Cultural Resources
- Average sizes of clearcuts
- Number of acres planted and burned
- Recreational Leases documents/records and monitoring program
- Verification of Controversial Sources
- Documentation for subcontracting/outsourcing
- Documentation for multisite organization (if applicable).

Please have this information available for me **during the audit**. For items noted with an *, please provide those in advance of the audit.



Additionally, **prior to the audit**, please ensure you:

- Address any open Corrective Action Requests you may have (see your last report)
- Confirm the scope of your certification (*eg. Scope/number of sites*) / any changes to management system
- Prepare summary records of certified sales
- Prepare summary records of any chemical use.

SFI Objectives and Performance Measure (PM)/Indicators to be Assessed:

This year's assessment will include a review of the following SFI Objectives and Performance Measure (PM)/Indicators:

- Objective 1: Forest Management Planning - PM 1.2, 1.3
- Objective 2: Forest Health & Productivity - PM 2.1, 2.5
- Objective 4: Conservation of Biological Diversity – PM all
- Objective 5: Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits – PM 5.2, 5.3
- Objective 7: Efficient Use of Fiber Resources – PM all
- Objective 8: Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples' Rights – PM all
- Objective 10: Forestry Research, Science & Technology - PM 10.2, 10.3
- Objective 11: Training & Education – PM 11.2
- Objective 12: Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach – PM 12.1, 12.3
- Objective 13: Public Land Management Responsibilities – PM all
- Objective 14: Communications and Public Reporting – PM all
- Objective 15: Management Review & Continual Improvement – PM all

A range of stakeholders may be consulted during the audit.

Scope of Certification: The management of New York State Forests in Regions 3-9, including Reforestation Areas, Multiple Use Areas and Unique Areas and related activities in support of sustainable forestry. SFI Forest Management code: NSF-SFI-FM-6L741. (Regions 1 & 2 excluded from the Green Certification program).

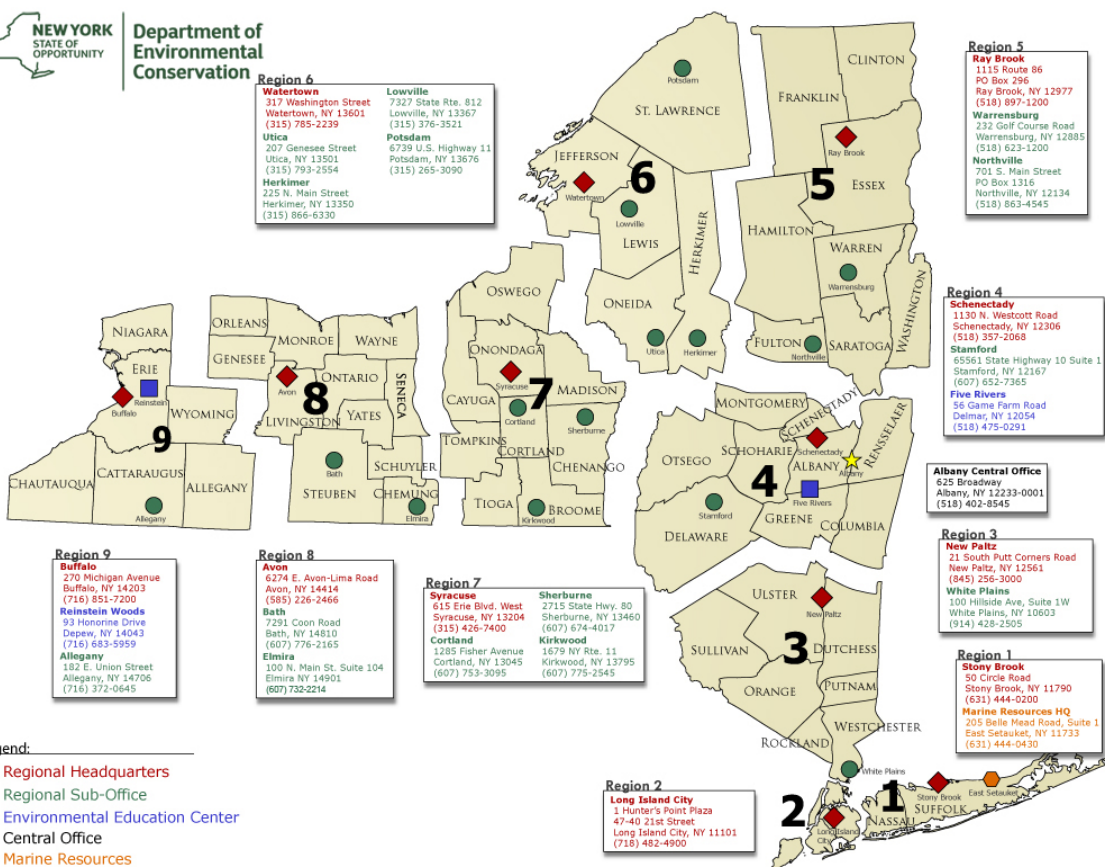
Locations Included in the Certification and Sampling

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

The 2021 audit will include visiting 2 of the 7 certified regions, Regions 7 and 9, see NY-DEC Regions Map below. Forests selected within these Regions include a broad cross-section of activities and sites, and to facilitate travel. Random sampling was not employed in the selection of these State Regions, but is used in the selection of sites to be visited.



Department of Environmental Conservation



Field Site Selection

Preliminary site selections include preparing a candidate site list of forest stands or areas harvested in the past 2 years with associated forestry environmental risk categories including FECV, RT&E, road construction, riparian areas, and other unique/special sites. You have provided a spreadsheet of all currently established but inactive, active, and closed timber sales for regions involved in the 2021 audit. The information contains several columns of data for each timber sale by county.

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

Role of SFI Inc. Office of Label Use and Licensing

As a reminder, your organization is responsible for contacting SFI, Inc. and complying with all requirements before using or changing any SFI label or logo. Your contact is:

Courtney P. Guillen
 Coordinator, Statistics and Label Use
 Sustainable Forestry Initiative
 Phone: 202.719.1391 ext. 338
 Email: Courtney.Guillen@sfiprogram.org



Health and Safety

Please advise the Audit Team of any health and safety requirements, especially PPE required. The audit team will not proceed in any situations which they deem to be unsafe. Please provide hardhats and safety vests to the auditor(s). All other PPE will be provided by the auditor(s).

Audit Logistics

Travel: Auditor flight(s) arrive Monday, Sept 27 to BUF, auditor(s) drive to lodging in Dunkirk, return travel will conclude after the audit finishes.

Rental Car: Auditor(s) will drive separately in rental car to and from the hotel and ride with staff to field sites.

Lodging: Auditor(s) to book lodging in coordination with client.

Meals: Lunches as arranged in coordination with staff. Auditor(s) breakfast and dinner on their own or as arranged with staff.

Meetings & Conference Rooms: If held indoors, mask wearing is required for NSF auditors, as part of NSF's Health and Safety Process. Auditors will be notified of client's COVID-19 policy and we will adhere to your policy.

Document Exchange: We will be using NY DEC's SharePoint drive to share and access files, as discussed during the pre-audit planning call. Please be prepared to upload any requested documents in advance of the audit.

Staff and Stakeholder Interviews: Due to COVID-19 health concerns, we will conduct some interviews remotely or in a setting where adequate social distancing and air flow can be provided.

As this audit is being conducted in tandem with the FSC FM audit, some logistics/scheduling may change.

Audit Team Members and Contact information

Role	Name	Email	Phone Number
Lead Auditor:	Michelle Matteo	mmatteo@nsf.org	413.265.3714

Audit Report Topics and Follow-up Actions

A report will be provided to you following the audit, which includes background information, completed checklist, and any Corrective Action Requests (CARs) raised. It will be necessary to close out any CARs raised within the proposed timescale.

Agenda for Review

Attached for your review is the tentative agenda that will guide the conduct of the audit. Please contact me via email or phone if you would like to recommend changes or have any questions regarding what is needed for the audit.

Thank you for selecting NSF to provide your audit services.

Sincerely,

Michelle Matteo
Senior Lead Auditor, NSF
413.265.3714
mmatteo@nsf.org



Audit Agenda

Type of Audit

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Readiness Review (Stage 1) | <input type="checkbox"/> Registration (Stage 2) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Surveillance 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reassessment | <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer | <input type="checkbox"/> Verification |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

Audit Objectives

Determine if certification should be maintained to the SFI 2015:2019 Standards and Rules®: Section 2, Forest Management.

Schedule

Day/Date	Time *	Activity/Process and Location to be Audited	Auditor
<p>The Audit Agenda will be agreed during the opening meeting at Central/Head Office. However, it may change during the audit, by the Audit Team Leader in response to issues identified during the assessment. A Site/Branch Audit will only require a summary opening meeting. Stakeholders will be consulted during field visits or by appointment.</p>			
Region 9 – Dunkirk SF Sub-Office, 178 Point Drive North, Dunkirk, NY 14048			
Tues. 28 Sept 2021	7:00 am	Opening Meeting/Agenda Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductions, Confirmation of Roles, Audit Objectives, and resources/facilities required by the audit team Review Audit Procedures and Plan, including; timetable, audit objectives, including standards used and selected requirements to be assessed, methods and procedures, including sampling process, determine Interviewees, confirmation of matters relating to confidentiality Formal communication channels between the audit team and auditee Review and discuss changes to the Facility Record Sheet (FRS) (contact information, billing information, review and confirm scope and Product Group List, changes in operations, etc.) Confirm relevant work safety, emergency and security procedures for the audit team Conditions under which audit may be terminated Discussion of corrective action requests / plans, including method of reporting audit findings / grading of CARs Review of findings (CARs-OFIs) raised during previous audits Conducting staff interviews in the absence of (line) management Overview of Logo or Label use Records of any complaints received by Company and Complaints/Appeals system on the conduct or conclusions of an Audit Overview by your staff of program Discuss field site visit provisions and other logistical issues Final site selection and audit route review Client questions 	Michelle Matteo (MM)Evan Poirson (EP)
	8:30 am	Region 9 Site visits	
	4:30 pm	Daily wrap-up	
	5:00 pm	End of day & travel to Cortland region	



Region 7 – Cortland SF Office, 1285 Fisher Ave., Cortland, NY 13045			
Wed. 29 Sept 2021	7:30 am	Abbreviated open meeting, Audit route review	MM EP
	8:30 am	Region 7 Site visits	
	4:00 pm	Daily wrap-up	
	4:30 pm	End of day & return to lodging	
Region 7 – Central Office Audit, completed remotely via WebEx			
Thurs. 30 Sept 2021	8:00 am	<p>Review of Documentation and Evidence, including (but not limited to) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SFI Program - Selected Objectives/PM • Written procedures, training records, trademark approvals, and outsourcing agreements • Management Plans • Overview of SFI Survey forms • Review Logo or Label use and claims on sales documents • Inventory Process and Updates • Annual Work Plans • Heritage Mapping: Biodiversity database • Historic/Cultural Sites • Forest Insect and Disease Program • Invasive Control Program • Management Review • Tax payments • Deed and lease information • OG • Monitoring records • Recent salvage activity/acreage • Multi-site requirements (if multi-site) • Other Issues <p>Main Albany office staff will participate and will be in the field with Auditors and other field NYSDEC foresters.</p> <p>Staff Interviews to confirm key personnel understanding of relevant responsibilities and effectiveness of training received.</p> <p>Auditor shall interview a sufficient variety and number of employees and contractors at each operational site selected for evaluation. If multi-site, employees interviewed at each of the selected sites.</p>	MM EP
	12:00 pm	Closing Meeting Preparation: Auditor(s) take time to consolidate notes and confirm audit findings	
	2:00 pm	<p>Closing Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit review and advising that audit evidence is based on sampling process. • Discussion of preliminary audit findings; CAR grading, normative reference, timeframe for closure and consequences of not meeting closure deadlines. • Audit follow up: NSF Report Review and final audit/certification decision. • Recording of any divergent opinions where they could not be resolved. • NSF Certification Complaints/Appeals system on the conduct or conclusions of an Audit (available on website). 	
	2:30 pm	End	

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



Appendix 2

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) 2021 SFI Forest Management Public Summary Report

Introduction

The Green Certification Program of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Division of Lands and Forests, Bureau of State Land Management (BSLM) has demonstrated conformance with the SFI 2015-2019 Standard and Rules, Section 2 – Forest Management Standard, and multi-site requirements in IAF-MD1 according to the NSF Certification Process.

The DEC Division of Lands and Forests is responsible for New York's extensive system of forest preserves, support for good management of private lands, real property services including handling property conveyances for varied categories of lands (fee and easement), and the management of State Forests. The DEC Green Certification Program is managed by Josh Borst, Green Certification Coordinator. The Division and Bureau are incorporated within the DEC, run by an appointed DEC Commissioner. Appointees with direct line authority over the implementation of land management programs also include two Deputy Commissioners and 7 Regional Directors.

Under the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos, the main offices with decision making responsibility, planning and direction for the management of State Forests within the scope of this review are outlined below:

- 1) Office of Natural Resources – Katie Petronis, Deputy Commissioner
 - a. Division of Lands and Forests – Robert Davies, Director
 - i. Bureau of Forest Resource Management – Robert Messenger, Chief
 1. State Forest Section – Barbara Lucas, Section Chief
 - a. Green Certification Coordinator – Josh Borst

Additional resources and administrative assistance for State Forest management may also come from the following Offices, Divisions and Bureaus as listed and explained below:
- 2) Office of Natural Resources – Katie Petronis, Deputy Commissioner
 - a. Division of Lands and Forests – Robert Davies, Director
 - i. Bureau of Real Property – Robert A. Burgher, Superintendent (Responsible for land acquisition program and conducting land surveys)
 - a. Natural Resources 3-9 – Natural Resource Supervisors
 - i. Bureau of Forest Resource Management
 1. Forestry 3-9 – Regional Forester
 - a) State Land Foresters (Regional supervision of State Land Foresters)
 - b. Division of Fish and Wildlife – Jim Farquhar, Acting Director (State Foresters rely on this Divisions expertise when developing policy and management decisions)
 - 3) Public Protection– Steve Smith, Deputy Commissioner
 - a. Region 3-9 – Regional Directors
 - i. Natural Resources 3-9 – Natural Resource Supervisors
 1. Forestry 3-9 – Regional Forester
 - a. State Land Foresters (Regional supervision of State Land Foresters)
 - b. Division of Forest Protection – John Solan, Director
 - i. Forest Rangers by Region (Responsible for enforcement of the Environmental Conservation Law on State Forests)
 - 5) Office of Administration – Jeffrey Stefanko, Deputy Commissioner
 - a. Division of Operations – Doug Bernhard Director
 - i. Bureau of Maintenance & Technical Services – Andrew Niles, Chief (Perform construction and maintenance on State Forests as requested by the State Land Foresters and develop policy/technical specifications for bridges, and dams.)

“The Division’s other three bureaus manage and protect the 2.7 million acre Adirondack Forest Preserve and the 288,000-acre Catskill Forest Preserve; monitor the ecological health and function of forestland statewide; provide expertise, assistance and action where invasive species are a threat; and handle all land conveyance transactions for the Department.” Source: DEC Web site.



The BSLM has primary responsibility for the management of the resources on State Forests, including the harvesting and sale of State-owned timber. The BSLM manages approximately 807,000 acres of land. Certification pertains to 788,222 acres of State Forests in Regions 3-9.

Lands classified as State Forests include lands purchased under legislative authority that set up three broad programs: reforestation lands, multiple-use lands, and unique areas. Reforestation lands make up most of the state forest system. They are described as “properties are to be forever devoted to ‘reforestation and the establishment and maintenance thereon of forests for watershed protection, the production of timber, and for recreation and kindred purposes.’ This broad program is authorized under Article 9, Title 5 of the Environmental Conservation Law.” Source: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4982.html>

Multiple-use lands were purchased for conservation and development of natural resources, including preservation of scenic areas, watershed protection, forestry, and recreation under authority of the “Park and Recreation Land Acquisition Act of 1960” and the “Environmental Quality Bond Acts” of 1972 and 1986. Unique areas were purchased under the same authority, but are designated for management to preserve their special features, and not likely to receive timber management beyond measures to preserve important vegetation communities

The audit was performed by NSF on 28-30 September 2021 by an audit team headed by Michelle Matteo, SFI Lead Auditor. The audit was conducted in conjunction with an FSC FM audit and the FSC audit team members included Evan Poirson, FSC Lead Auditor. Audit team members fulfill the qualification criteria for conducting audits contained in SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules, Section 9 - Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation. The NYSDEC Forest Certification Coordinator is Josh Borst.

Audit Process

The objective of the audit was to assess conformance of the firm’s SFI Program to the requirements of the SFI 2015-2019 Standard and Rules, Section 2 – Forest Management. The scope of the audit included forest management operations. Forest practices that were the focus of field inspections included those that have been under active management over the planning period of the past year. In addition, practices conducted earlier were also reviewed as appropriate (regeneration and BMP issues, for example), SFI obligations to promote sustainable forestry practices, to seek legal compliance, and to incorporate continual improvement systems were also within the scope of the audit.

Several of the SFI Section 2 requirements were outside of the scope of NYSDEC SFI program and were excluded from the scope of the SFI Certification Audit as follows: Performance Measures Excluded: 1.2, 2.1.5, and 8.3. No indicators were modified.

The audit was governed by a detailed audit plan designed to enable the audit team to efficiently determine conformance with the applicable SFI requirements. The plan provided for the assembly and review of audit evidence consisting of documents, interviews, and on-site inspections of ongoing or completed forest practices. NSF used a formal planning process to confirm the scope of the audit, review the SFI Indicators and evidence to be used to assess conformance, verify that NYSDEC was prepared to proceed to Surveillance Audit, and to prepare a detailed audit plan. NSF then conducted the Certification Audit of conformance to the SFI, Section 2. A report was prepared, and final approval was done by an independent Certification Board member assigned by NSF. Follow-up or Surveillance Audits are required by SFI, Section 9. The Re-certification Audit is scheduled for September 2022.

The multi-site certificate covers 7 different regions: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 9, including the central office located in downtown Albany, NY. The 2021 audit included office reviews in the following: Region 7, Region 9, and the central office located in Albany, NY. Field visits were conducted in 2 out of a total of 7 regions. This sample size was determined using the guidelines set forth in IAF-MD1. The regions were selected based on a date rotation of total 7 regions. Approximately half of the field sites visited were randomly sampled. Within the 2 selected regions NSF’s lead auditor selected field sites for inspection based upon the risk of environmental impact, likelihood of occurrence, special features, and other criteria outlined in NSF’s protocols and procedures. 2 field offices, 1 central office and 9 field sites were visited. The 9 field sites consisting of the 1 active timber harvests (hardwood & softwood thinning), 1 thinnings, 2 patch cuts, 2 recently closed sale with wildlife considerations, 4 with herbicide application with invasive species, 2 natural regeneration, 3 recreation sites, 1 inactive harvest, 1 cultural resource, 1 TRP and 1 HCVF. There were also several areas of infrastructure work, with roads, several smaller road-trail/stream crossings with cross drains and BMPs being applied. The Strategic Plan and UMP for NYSDEC associated inventory and growth data as well as harvest-related planning documents are used to ensure that plans (Unit Management Plans) include long term harvest level and consistent with the growth and yield model generated (Sept 2015) PAI report from SUNY ESF.

During the audit NSF reviewed a sample of the written documentation assembled to provide objective evidence of conformance. NSF also selected and interviewed stakeholders such as contract loggers, landowners and other interested parties, and interviewed employees within the organization to confirm that the SFI Standard was understood and actively implemented.

The possible findings of the audit included Full Conformance, Major Non-conformance, Minor Non-conformance, Opportunities for Improvement, and Practices that Exceeded the Basic Requirements of the Standard.



2021 Audit Findings

NYSDEC was found to be in conformance with the standard, as NSF determined that there was one minor non-conformance.

Minor nonconformance(s):

SFI Multi-site Clause 4.1.1.d: The organization should demonstrate its ability to collect and analyze data (including, but not limited to, the items listed below) from all sites including the central office and its authority and also demonstrate its authority and ability to initiate organizational change if required:

- i. System documentation and system changes

Contracts for timber sales on the NY DEC lands do not include the correct SFI claim or full and complete SFI certificate code. The document that is used to communicate the SFI Claim and NY DEC's SFI FM certificate code contain errors. The centrally controlled template for "**Notice of Sale of Forest Products, Version 2.2020**", notes an incomplete code of SFI Certified Forest Content, rather than the full SFI 100% Certified Forest Content, and the certificate code is incomplete, noting "NSF-SFIS-61741", rather than the full code of NSF-SFI-FM-6L741.

There was one opportunity for improvement. This finding does not indicate a current deficiency but served to alert New York DEC to an area that could be strengthened, or which could merit future attention.

Opportunity for Improvement(s):

SFI Performance Measure 4.1.7: Participation in programs and demonstration of activities as appropriate to limit the introduction, spread and impact of invasive exotic plants and animals that directly threaten or are likely to threaten native plant and animal communities.

OPI: There is an opportunity to improve the program and demonstration of activities to limit the introduction, spread, and impact of invasive exotic plants and animals.

Invasive species were discussed at length during each site visit during the 2021 surveillance audit. NYSDEC contends with a number of invasive species, including knotweed, stiltgrass, swallow-wort, honeysuckle, and many others. Given the intractable nature of invasives within the state, and the extent to which they are already established, the efficacy of NYSDEC's actions in limiting these species' spread is limited. NYSDEC personnel routinely monitor invasives' spread during pre- and post-harvest operations and thereby demonstrate conformance with the requirements of this indicator. However, the audit team concludes that there are opportunities to improve BFRM's invasive management strategies, including but not limited to implementing a consistent monitoring protocol across all regions of the state and communicating the importance of these efforts to contracted forest workers.

2020 Audit Findings and Resolution

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

Objective evidence: TRP document is shared with multi agencies and is in the early stages of the lean process. NYSDEC Lands Forests central office confirmed a draft memo was created however, it is unclear how the central office plans to deploy this memo to all field staff regarding changes to the TRP & changes made to the procedures.

Closed: Since the 2020 audit, NYSDEC reviewed its TRP process and removed boilerplate language that required at least 48 hours' notice for any activity requiring a TRP. Notification periods will still be required for certain activities requiring a TRP, but for many other activities, no formal notification will be required prior to commencement of the permitted activity. This change reduces the risk that a permit holder be out of conformance with the language of the permit, and that NYSDEC fail to ensure that all deadlines required by the permit be met. One recently issued TRP was reviewed during the audit, and it was confirmed that the clause requiring advance notification was removed. This CAR is closed.

General Description of Evidence of Conformity

NSF's audit team used a variety of evidence to determine conformance. A general description of this evidence is provided below, organized by SFI Objective.

Objective 1 Forest Management Planning

To ensure forest management plans include long-term sustainable harvest levels and measures to avoid forest conversion.

Summary of Evidence: *The Strategic Plan and UMP for NYSDEC and supporting documentation and the associated inventory and growth data as well as harvest-related planning documents were the key evidence of conformance.*



Objective 2 Forest Health and Productivity

To ensure long-term forest productivity, carbon storage and conservation of forest resources through prompt reforestation, afforestation, minimized chemical use, soil conservation, and protecting forests from damaging agents.

Summary of Evidence: Field observations and associated records were used to confirm practices. NYSDEC has programs for reforestation, for protection against common insects and diseases and wildfire, and for careful management of activities which could potentially impact soil and long-term productivity. Harvests are carefully planned, with winter logging or processor systems used on sensitive soils.

Objective 3 Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources

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

Summary of Evidence: Field observations of a range of sites were the key evidence. During inspections of completed harvests auditors reviewed measures implemented to protect water resources. Compliance with NY BMPs for the protection of these features provided additional evidence.

Objective 4 Conservation of Biological Diversity

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

Summary of Evidence: Field observations, written plans and policies, and regular staff involvement in conferences and workshops that cover scientific advances were the evidence used to assess the requirements involved biodiversity conservation.

Objective 5 Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits

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

Summary of Evidence: Field observations of completed operations and policies/procedures for visual quality were assessed during the evaluation. Further involvement with the multi user recreational groups helped confirm a strong recreation program.

Objective 6 Protection of Special Sites

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

Summary of Evidence: Records of special sites and management and harvest plans were all assessed during the evaluation.

Objective 7 Efficient Use of Fiber Resources

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

Summary of Evidence: Field observations of completed operations, contract clauses, and discussions with supervising field foresters and with loggers provided the key evidence.

Objective 8 Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples' Rights

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

Summary of Evidence: Field review and ongoing updated documents for operations.

Objective 9 Legal and Regulatory Compliance

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

Summary of Evidence: Field reviews of ongoing and completed operations were the most critical evidence.

Objective 10 Forestry Research, Science and Technology

To invest in forestry research, science and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based and broaden the awareness of climate change impacts on forests, wildlife and biological diversity.

Summary of Evidence: Financial support was confirmed by contacting the recipients of research support or via websites listing supporting members.



Objective 11 Training and Education

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

Summary of Evidence: Training records of selected personnel, records associated with harvest sites audited, and interviews were the key evidence for this objective.

Objective 12 Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach

To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry through public outreach, education, and involvement, and to support the efforts of SFI Implementation Committees.

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

Objective 13 Public Land Management Responsibilities

To participate and implement sustainable forest management on public lands.

Summary of Evidence: Unit Management Planning (UMP) process confirms the involvement with the public inputs.

Objective 14 Communications and Public Reporting

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

Summary of Evidence: Most of this objective relates to actions to be taken after certification; NYSDEC is prepared to complete the required public reporting activities.

Objective 15 Management Review and Continual Improvement

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

Summary of Evidence: Records of program reviews, agendas and notes from management review meetings, and interviews with personnel from all involved levels in the organization were assessed.

Relevance of Forestry Certification

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

1. Sustainable Forestry

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

2. Forest Productivity and Health

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

3. Protection of Water Resources

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

4. Protection of Biological Diversity

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

5. Aesthetics and Recreation

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

6. Protection of Special Sites

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



7. Responsible Fiber Sourcing Practices in North America

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

8. Legal Compliance

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

9. Research

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

10. Training and Education

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

11. Community Involvement and Social Responsibility

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

12. Transparency

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

13. Continual Improvement

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

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

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

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

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

For Additional Information Contact

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Appendix 3

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

6L741, NYSDEC

Date of audit(s): Sept.28-29, 2021 (On-site) and Sept. 30, 2021 (Remote)

One Auditor on Project: Lead Auditor, Michelle Matteo (MM)

1.2 Additional Requirements

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

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

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

Notes: NYSDEC doesn't operate a fiber sourcing program.

Objective 1 Forest Management Planning

To ensure forest management plans include *long-term* sustainable harvest levels and measures to avoid forest conversion.

Performance Measure 1.1

Program Participants shall ensure that forest management plans include *long-term* harvest levels that are sustainable and consistent with appropriate *growth-and-yield models*.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

1.1.1 Forest management planning at a level appropriate to the size and scale of the operation, including:

- a. a *long-term* resources analysis;
- b. a periodic or ongoing *forest inventory*;
- c. a land classification system;
- d. biodiversity at *landscape* scales;
- e. soils inventory and maps, where available;
- f. access to *growth-and-yield modeling* capabilities;
- g. up-to-date maps or a geographic information system (GIS);
- h. recommended sustainable harvest levels for areas available for harvest; and
- i. a review of non-timber issues (e.g., recreation, tourism, pilot projects and economic incentive *programs* to promote water *protection*, carbon storage, *bioenergy feedstock* production, or *biological diversity conservation*, or to address climate-induced ecosystem change).

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

Notes: Reviewed management plans (Regions 7 & 9). Management plans for NYSDEC include extensive sections a. thru i. Reviewed the "Strategic Plan for State Forest Management."

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.



1.1.4 Periodic updates of *forest inventory* and recalculation of planned harvests to account for changes in growth due to *productivity* increases or decreases, including but not limited to: improved data, *long-term* drought, fertilization, *climate change*, changes in forest land ownership and tenure, or *forest health*.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

Performance Measure 1.2

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

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

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

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

Notes: The current forest types of Pine Plantation from CCC are being converted back to the natural hardwood cover types. No other conversion occurs. See notes.

1.2.2 Where a *Program Participant* intends to convert another *forest cover type*, an assessment considers:

- a. *Productivity* and *stand* quality conditions and impacts which may include social and economic values;
- b. Specific ecosystem issues related to the site such as invasive species, insect or disease issues, riparian *protection* needs and others as appropriate to site including regeneration challenges; and
- c. Ecological impacts of the conversion including a review at the site and *landscape* scale as well as consideration for any appropriate mitigation measures.

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

Notes: Reviewed harvesting prescriptions that intended to convert from softwood cover type to a hardwood cover type, site conditions were reviewed and this was in alignment with current ecological impacts and the landscape. See notes.

Old red pine stand that was planted off-site and regenerated a portion of it using patch cuts and will rely on natural hardwood and pine regen.

Performance Measure 1.3

Program Participants shall not have within the scope of their certification to this *SFI Standard*, forest lands that have been converted to non-forest land use. Indicator:

1.3.1 Forest lands converted to other land uses shall not be certified to this *SFI Standard*. This does not apply to forest lands used for forest and *wildlife* management such as *wildlife* food plots or infrastructure such as forest roads, log processing areas, trails etc.

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

Notes: NYSDEC forest lands are not converted to other land uses. ROWs were pulled from the certified acres.



Objective 2 Forest Health and Productivity

To ensure *long-term* forest *productivity*, carbon storage and *conservation* of forest resources through prompt *reforestation*, *afforestation*, *minimized* chemical use, *soil conservation*, and protecting forests from damaging agents.

Performance Measure 2.1

Program Participants shall promptly reforest after final harvest. Indicators:

2.1.1 Documented *reforestation* plans, including designation of all harvest areas for either natural, planted or direct seeded regeneration and prompt *reforestation*, unless delayed for site-specific environmental or *forest health* considerations or legal requirements, through *planting* within two years or two *planting* seasons, or by planned *natural regeneration* methods within five years.

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

Notes: UMPs provide direction, harvest prescriptions contain information regarding reforestation- organization normally all harvest areas for natural regeneration but the organization monitors and if needed planting does occur. Annual State Forest and Tree Planting Report FY 2020 Reviewed.

Viewed records for planting completed in Bear Swamp State Forest, planted in the summer of 2019.

2.1.2 Clear criteria to judge adequate regeneration and appropriate actions to correct understocked areas and achieve acceptable species composition and stocking rates for *planting*, *direct seeding* and *natural regeneration*.

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

Notes: Individual stand prescriptions, visual walk through 3 years and prior to 5 years; if not enough natural regeneration observed then a plan is formulated with appropriate actions taken with planting of local nursery tree stock. Viewed the policy and samples for planted and regenerated stands.

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

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

Notes: Confirmed in 2021 that the organization didn't plant any exotic tree species. Species planted are naturalized non-natives. Naturalized non-natives have been part of the landscape for almost the past 100 years.

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

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

Notes: Observed on one active harvest and several closed harvests in regions Region 7 & 9 that contractor and NYSDEC foresters protected desirable or planned natural hardwood regeneration during the active harvests.

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

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

Notes: No afforestation is being conducted, per interview and site visits.

Performance Measure 2.2

Program Participants shall *minimize* chemical use required to achieve management *objectives* while protecting employees, neighbors, the public and the environment, including *wildlife* and *aquatic habitats*. Indicators:

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.



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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

2.2.6 Use of *integrated pest management* where feasible.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Confirmed NYSDEC foresters' current certifications as certified applicator in Regions 7 & 9. Confirmed documented paperwork in forester field files. Confirmed foresters' state licensure is current.

2.2.8 Use of management practices appropriate to the situation, for example:

- a. notification of adjoining landowners or nearby residents concerning applications and chemicals used;
- b. appropriate multilingual signs or oral warnings;
- c. control of public road access during and immediately after applications;
- d. designation of streamside and other needed buffer strips;
- e. use of positive shutoff and minimal-drift spray valves;
- f. aerial application of forest chemicals parallel to buffer zones to *minimize* drift;
- g. monitoring of water quality or safeguards to ensure proper equipment use and *protection* of streams, lakes and other water bodies;
- h. appropriate transportation and storage of chemicals;
- i. filing of required state or provincial reports; and/or
- j. use of methods to ensure *protection of threatened and endangered species*.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

Performance Measure 2.3

Program Participants shall implement forest management practices to protect and maintain forest and soil *productivity*. Indicators:

2.3.1 Process to identify soils vulnerable to compaction, and use of appropriate methods, including the use of soil maps where available, to avoid excessive soil disturbance.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.



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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

Performance Measure 2.4

Program Participants shall manage so as to protect forests from damaging agents, such as environmentally or economically undesirable wildfire, pests, diseases and *invasive exotic plants and animals*, to maintain and improve *long-term forest health, productivity and economic viability*. Indicators:

2.4.1 Program to protect forests from damaging agents.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

Performance Measure 2.5

Program Participants that deploy improved planting stock, including varietal seedlings, shall use best scientific methods. Indicator:

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

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

Notes: State tree nursery provides the seedlings.



Objective 3 **Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources**

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

Performance Measure 3.1

Program Participants shall meet or exceed all applicable federal, provincial, state and local water quality laws, and meet or exceed *best management practices* developed under Canadian or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency–approved water quality *programs*.

Indicators:

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

3.1.3 Monitoring of overall *best management practices* implementation.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

Performance Measure 3.2

Program Participants shall implement water, *wetland* and *riparian protection* measures based on soil type, terrain, vegetation, ecological function, harvesting system, state *best management practices (BMPs)*, provincial guidelines and other applicable factors.

Indicators:

3.2.1 *Program* addressing management and *protection* of rivers, streams, lakes, *wetlands*, other water bodies and *riparian areas* during all phases of management, including the layout and construction of roads and *skid trails* to maintain water reach, flow and quality.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

3.2.2 Mapping of rivers, streams, lakes, *wetlands* and other water bodies as specified in state or provincial *best management practices* and, where appropriate, identification on the ground.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

3.2.4 Plans that address wet-weather events in order to maintain water quality (e.g., *forest inventory* systems, wet-weather tracts, definitions of acceptable operating conditions).

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.



Objective 4 Conservation of Biological Diversity

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

Performance Measure 4.1

Program Participants shall conserve biological diversity. Indicators:

4.1.1 Program to incorporate the *conservation of native biological diversity*, including species, *wildlife habitats* and ecological community types at *stand* and *landscape* levels.

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

Notes: Observations from field sites visited confirm that foresters incorporate wildlife habitats recognized on the Natural Heritage data base, and including for example Coal Skink Habitat or Northern Long-eared Bat.

4.1.2 Development of criteria and implementation of practices, as guided by regionally based *best scientific information*, to retain *stand-level wildlife habitat* elements such as snags, stumps, mast trees, down woody debris, den trees and nest trees.

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

Notes: Active and inactive field sites visited in multiple regions; observed that snags, stumps, mast trees, down woody debris, and den trees were being left and implementing the state criteria.

4.1.3 Document diversity of *forest cover types* and age or size classes at the individual ownership or forest tenure level, and where credible data are available, at the *landscape* scale. Working individually or collaboratively to support diversity of *native forest cover types* and age or size classes that enhance *biological diversity* at the *landscape* scale.

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

Notes: SPSFM and UMPs. Confirmed some RSAs are present in the regions visited. The NE cottontail has been documented as a species present at landscape scale and is dependent on the distribution of early successional habitat.

4.1.4 Program Participants shall participate in or incorporate the results of state, provincial, or regional *conservation* planning and priority-setting efforts to conserve biological diversity and consider these efforts in forest management planning. Examples of credible priority-setting efforts include state *wildlife* action plans, state forest action plans, relevant *habitat conservation* plans or provincial *wildlife* recovery plans.

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

Notes: State Wide Master Plan. Foresters are starting to incorporate the results of State Wildlife Action Plan information (such as the species assessments) into the initial phases of the UMP process and also in the field across several regions.

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

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

Notes: A database that predicts sites that may include rare species and communities (PRO) is being used during the planning process. DEC staff described training they received in using the natural heritage and PROs layers. Foresters described process for investigating occurrences:

- Checked for and found occurrence on GIS Pros layer.
- Look up guidance and descriptions.
- Analyzed and evaluated site potential for actual occurrences.
- Field technicians communicated in the field that they had field training to help with visual identification of significant species of concern.



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

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

Notes: NYSDEC foresters identify non-forested areas including bogs and fens of ecological significance in the field. NYSDEC foresters also identify non-forested areas including vernal pools of ecological significance in the field. This information is noted in the GIS data layers. Some field information is also captured in the field file folders. Walked a skid trail to a non-forest wetland that was protected on a closed harvest.

4.1.7 Participation in *programs* and demonstration of activities as appropriate to limit the introduction, spread and impact of *invasive exotic plants and animals* that directly threaten or are likely to threaten *native* plant and animal communities.

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

Notes: Demonstrated management of an invasive species such as EAB and HWA.

OFI: There is an opportunity to improve the program and demonstration of activities to limit the introduction, spread, and impact of invasive exotic plants and animals.

Invasive species were discussed at length during each site visit during the 2021 surveillance audit. NYSDEC contends with a number of invasive species, including knotweed, stiltgrass, swallow-wort, honeysuckle, and many others. Given the intractable nature of invasives within the state, and the extent to which they are already established, the efficacy of NYSDEC's actions in limiting these species' spread is limited. NYSDEC personnel routinely monitor invasives' spread during pre- and post-harvest operations and thereby demonstrate conformance with the requirements of this indicator. However, the audit team concludes that there are opportunities to improve BFRM's invasive management strategies, including but not limited to implementing a consistent monitoring protocol across all regions of the state and communicating the importance of these efforts to contracted forest workers.

For example, it was noted that there are multiple ways that the SFs track and document invasives across the Regions of NY DEC. Additionally, one operator had parked his skidder in the roadside knotweed patch, at the active sale.

4.1.8 Consider the role of natural disturbances, including the use of prescribed or natural fire where appropriate, and *forest health* threats in relation to *biological diversity* when developing forest management plans.

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

Notes: No prescribed fire in field sites visited.

Historically, Region 8's use of prescribed fire observed as noted in UMPs. Rush Oak Openings Prescribed Burns FY 4/27/15 27.4 acres and 4/28/16 43.8 acres burned.

Performance Measure 4.2

Program Participants shall protect threatened and endangered species, Forests with Exceptional Conservation Values (FECV) and old-growth forests. Indicators:

4.2.1 Program to protect threatened and endangered species.

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

Notes: UMPs. NYSDEC Foresters check the Natural Heritage database and protect threatened and endangered species.

Confirmed in field site visit. Documented information: Classification and Management of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) and Representative Sample Areas (RSA) On State Forests Regions 7 & 9.

4.2.2 Program to locate and protect known sites flora and fauna associated with viable occurrences of *critically imperiled* and *imperiled* species and communities also known as *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*. Plans for *protection* may be developed independently or collaboratively, and may include *Program Participant* management, cooperation with other stakeholders, or use of easements, *conservation* land sales, exchanges, or other *conservation* strategies.

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

Notes: UMPs. NYSDEC Foresters check the Natural Heritage data base and protect threatened and endangered species.



4.2.3 Support of and participation in plans or *programs* for the *conservation of old-growth forests* in the region of ownership or forest tenure.

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

Notes: Confirmed with observations and documents that some regions have now generated a separate map or listing capturing possible old growth forests within the state land ownership.

Performance Measure 4.3

Program Participants shall manage ecologically important sites in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities. Indicators:

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

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

Notes: Foresters interviewed reported the systematic use of the heritage database and consultation with Natural Heritage staff. Natural Heritage staff in the central office also confirmed that foresters will submit possible field observations for consideration. Foresters interviewed confirmed previous field training and future scheduled trainings.

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

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

Notes: Field visit confirmed that the forester identified and took GIS data points of the ecologically important site. Observed it was protected and mapped in Region 9.

Performance Measure 4.4

Program Participants shall apply knowledge gained through research, science, technology and field experience to manage *wildlife habitat* and contribute to the *conservation of biological diversity*. Indicators:

4.4.1 Collection of information on *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value* and other *biodiversity*-related data through *forest inventory* processes, mapping or participation in external *programs*, such as NatureServe, state or provincial heritage *programs*, or other credible systems. Such participation may include providing non-proprietary scientific information, time and assistance by staff, or in-kind or direct financial support.

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

Notes: FECV and biodiversity are now itemized in an inventory system by different categories in a natural heritage database. Staff is now providing field input. The HCVF types (Rare Community, Special Treatment Area, and Watershed Protection Areas). This symbolization is defined by the individual user and can be changed. Rare Community is in red. Special Treatment Area is in purple. Watershed Protection Areas are in blue hatched pattern.

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

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

Notes: UMP process has been improving over time and this information is brought into the UMP documents.



Objective 5 *Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits*

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

Performance Measure 5.1

Program Participants shall manage the impact of harvesting on *visual quality*. Indicators:

5.1.1 Program to address visual quality management.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

Performance Measure 5.2

Program Participants shall manage the size, shape and placement of clearcut harvests. Indicators:

5.2.1 Average size of clearcut harvest areas does not exceed 120 acres (50 hectares), except when necessary to meet regulatory requirements, achieve ecological *objectives* or to respond to *forest health* emergencies or other natural catastrophes.

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

Notes: Checked with Albany office with GIS & SFID. SPSFM and SEQR thresholds for clearcut is (40 acres). No clearcuts visited this audit cycle. See field notes. Acreage of CC has to be 2 acres or greater in order to be deemed a CC.

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

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

Notes: All sales are entered into SFID. Clearcut acreage and size figures are compiled and calculated by querying the data from SFID in Central Office. Reviewed the spreadsheet for FY 2020-2021. Average CC size is 11.6 ac, none exceeded 40 acres.

Performance Measure 5.3

Program Participants shall adopt a *green-up requirement* or alternative methods that provide for *visual quality*. Indicators:

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

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

Notes: Documented in sale completion reports. Viewed for all completed harvests visited.

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

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

Notes: Field offices check after harvest year(s) 1/3/5 to see how green-up requirements are being met. Will be followed during the 5-year audit cycle certificate. Confirmed by paperwork review of an older harvest that these records are maintained.

5.3.3 Trees in clearcut harvest areas are at least 3 years old or 5 feet (1.5 meters) high at the desired level of stocking before adjacent areas are clearcut, or as appropriate to address operational and economic considerations, alternative methods to reach the *performance measure* are utilized by the *Program Participant*.

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

Notes: SFID. NYSDEC foresters can plan and implement < 40acre clearcuts. If clearcut is > 40 acres then approval is obtained. Confirmed this process via interview.



Performance Measure 5.4

Program Participants shall support and promote recreational opportunities for the public. Indicator:

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.



Objective 6 *Protection of Special Sites*

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

Performance Measure 6.1

Program Participants shall identify *special sites* and manage them in a manner appropriate for their unique features. Indicators:

6.1.1 Use of information such as existing natural heritage data, expert advice or stakeholder consultation in identifying or selecting *special sites* for *protection*.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.



Objective 7 Efficient Use of Fiber Resources

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

Performance Measure 7.1

Program Participants shall employ appropriate forest harvesting technology and in-woods manufacturing processes and practices to *minimize* waste and ensure efficient utilization of harvested trees, where consistent with other *SFI Standard objectives*. Indicator:

7.1.1 *Program* or monitoring system to ensure efficient utilization, which may include provisions to ensure:

- a. management of harvest residue (e.g., slash, limbs, tops) considers economic, social and environmental factors (e.g., organic and nutrient value to future forests and the potential of increased fuels build-up) and other utilization needs;
- b. training or incentives to encourage loggers to enhance utilization;
- c. exploration of markets for underutilized species and low-grade wood and alternative markets (e.g., bioenergy markets); or
- d. periodic inspections and reports noting utilization and product separation.

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

Notes: Confirmed by field site observations of active harvest that utilization is generally good, including efforts to separate saw logs, pulpwood, firewood, and chips done by the contractor. The lump-sum sale method is exclusively employed; this method ensures that the timber purchaser has strong incentives to utilize the harvested trees fully and removes the need for the NYSDEC to monitor wood utilization. Some regions do not have the necessary markets; thus, it makes it challenging for the contractor at times to get full utilization.



Objective 8 Recognize and Respect *Indigenous Peoples'* Rights

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

Performance Measure 8.1

Program Participants shall recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples' rights. Indicator:

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

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

Notes: Reviewed the written documented policy CP-42 "Contact, Cooperation, and consultation with Indian Nations". Commissioner Policy-42 outlines the Departments obligations and responsibilities as they relate to Indian Nation consultations and involvement in the UMP planning process and this policy is available on NYSDEC internal website called In-Site.

Interviewed **David Witt, Indian Affairs Coordinator**, Office of Environmental Justice, NYSDEC Division of Lands and Forests, Tribal Liaison (Outreach program).

Reviewed Memorandum dated 11/15/2017 RE: UMP Development and Department Consultation with Indian Nations. "Communication between the Department and Indian Nations should be direct and involve two-way dialogue and feedback. Regional staff should contact the appropriate tribal representatives in the UMP planning area at the same time that a public scoping session is scheduled. When possible and where appropriate, staff should facilitate an in-person meeting with tribal representatives to involve them in the planning unit management planning process. Where an in-person meeting is not feasible, the preferred method of engaging the Indian Nations is via a phone call. **Letters and emails are not preferred communication methods"**

Prior OFI and response: Statewide: Although the system is conforming, there may be an opportunity to re-check current wording expectations as stated in the Memorandum to how organization is currently communicating with Indian Nations. CH Response: The Division has a clear protocol for field staff to facilitate communication with interested Indian Nations during the development of our Unit Management Plans (UMPs). The involvement of both our UMP Coordinator and our Indian Affairs Coordinator (IAC) ensures that appropriate communication methods are employed. With input from our IAC, the Division has developed a letter template to be sent to Indian Nations that are potentially affected by, or interested in, our planned management activities early in the UMP development process. The letter includes a brief description of the unit and any potentially controversial planned management activities and offers the opportunity for an in-person meeting. The language in that template states, in part, "We would like to offer a government-to-government meeting or conference call to consult with you on any interests you may have in XXXX UMP area. We would also like to offer site visits to these State Forests based upon lands or resources of interest to you." Guidance contained in that template also instructs staff to include 3 future meeting dates and request an RSVP as our IAC has indicated this is the best way to illicit a response if a tribe intends to make one.

Our "Indian Nation UMP Consultation" memo, distributed to staff on August 18, 2018, does state that "Letters and emails are not preferred communication methods". However, taken with the guidance given to staff (re: the UMP letter template instructing staff to offer an opportunity for in person meetings) it is clear to staff that the above statement ("Letters and emails are not preferred communication methods") applies to potential collaboration with Indian Nations after the initial contact and that, after the initial contact, "letters and emails are not preferred communication methods".



Performance Measure 8.2

Program Participants with forest management responsibilities on public lands shall confer with affected *Indigenous Peoples* with respect to sustainable forest management practices. Indicator:

8.2.1 *Program* that includes communicating with affected *Indigenous Peoples* to enable *Program Participants* to:

- a. understand and respect traditional forest-related knowledge;
- b. identify and protect spiritually, historically, or culturally important sites;
- c. address the use of non-timber forest products of value to *Indigenous Peoples* in areas where *Program Participants* have management responsibilities on public lands; and
- d. respond to *Indigenous Peoples'* inquiries and concerns received.

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

Notes: NYSDEC policy, *Contact, Cooperation, and Consultation with Indian Nations (CP-42)*, requires that the NY DEC undertake good faith efforts to consult with *Indigenous Peoples* on any Department decision or action which could foreseeably have *Indigenous Peoples'* implications. Auditors reviewed the documents provided. Interviews with staff confirmed new procedures were understood and being implemented at the field level. Interviewed new UMP coordinator who serves as initial point of contact for field staff (POC) for pursuing *Indigenous Peoples'* consultations. Confirmed several examples of contacts already made by local UMP planners for this purpose. POC then confirms with NYSDEC staff Indian Affairs Coordinator for additional guidance, as needed. NYSDEC attended a training with local indigenous people to better understand and respect traditional forest-related knowledge. Confirmed through interviews.

Interviewed & reviewed email from Indian Affairs Coordinator, Office of Environmental Justice- NYSDEC located in Buffalo NY. Confirmed with email that the Onondaga Indian Nation was notified about the Tug Hill East Unit UMP. Additional letters to the Oneida Indian Nation and Haudenosaunee confirmed outreach letters are sent. NYSDEC regional staff communicate by letters being sent out to tribes in their regions 7 & 9. Reviewed the UMP outreach files. Interview with Mr. Witt confirms that there are no outstanding issues regarding inquiries and concerns, more the broader issue of documenting what they would like to do and their historic rights.

Performance Measure 8.3

Program Participants are encouraged to communicate with and shall respond to local *Indigenous Peoples* with respect to sustainable forest management practices on their private lands. Indicators:

8.3.1 *Program Participants* are aware of *traditional forest-related knowledge*, such as known cultural heritage sites, the use of wood in traditional buildings and crafts, and flora that may be used in cultural practices for food, ceremonies or medicine.

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

Notes: NYSDEC is a state land agency and doesn't own or manage private lands.

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

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

Notes: David E. Witt, Ph.D., Indian Nations Affairs Coordinator, Office of Environmental Justice manages, responds to inquiries and concerns received. This was confirmed through email and interview with Mr. Witt.

With respect to the idea of co-management of public lands, the opportunity that is most easily implemented is in the comment period of the UMP, prior to opening it to public comment. Other examples of communication outside the UMP process were confirmed.



Objective 9 Legal and Regulatory Compliance

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

Performance Measure 9.1

Program Participants shall comply with applicable federal, provincial, state and local *forestry* and related social and environmental laws and regulations. Indicators:

9.1.1 Access to relevant laws and regulations in appropriate locations.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: **2020 Minor CAR closed:**

TRP document is shared with multi agencies and is in the early stages of the lean process. NYSDEC Lands Forests central office confirmed a draft memo was created however, it is unclear how the central office plans to deploy this memo to all field staff regarding changes to the TRP & changes made to the procedures.

Closed: Since the 2020 audit, NYSDEC reviewed its TRP process and removed boilerplate language that required at least 48 hours' notice for any activity requiring a TRP. Notification periods will still be required for certain activities requiring a TRP, but for many other activities, no formal notification will be required prior to commencement of the permitted activity. This change reduces the risk that a permit holder be out of conformance with the language of the permit, and that NYSDEC fail to ensure that all deadlines required by the permit be met. One recently issued TRP was reviewed during the audit, and it was confirmed that the clause requiring advance notification was removed. This CAR is closed.

Performance Measure 9.2

Program Participants shall take appropriate steps to comply with all applicable social laws at the federal, provincial, state and local levels in the country in which the *Program Participant* operates. Indicators:

9.2.1 Written *policy* demonstrating commitment to comply with social laws, such as those covering civil rights, equal employment opportunities, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment measures, workers' compensation, *Indigenous Peoples'* rights, workers' and communities' right to know, prevailing wages, workers' right to organize, and occupational health and safety.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

9.2.2 *Forestry enterprises* will respect the rights of workers and labor representatives in a manner that encompasses the intent of the International Labor Organization (ILO) core conventions.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.



Objective 10 Forestry Research, Science and Technology

To invest in *forestry* research, science and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based and broaden the awareness of *climate change* impacts on forests, *wildlife* and *biological diversity*.

Performance Measure 10.1

Program Participants shall individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees*, associations or other partners provide in-kind support or funding for forest research to improve *forest health*, *productivity* and sustainable management of forest resources, and the environmental benefits and performance of forest products. Indicators:

10.1.1 Financial or in-kind support of research to address questions of relevance in the region of operations. Examples could include, but are not limited to, areas of forest *productivity*, water quality, biodiversity, community issues, or similar areas which build broader understanding of the benefits and impacts of forest management.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

10.1.2 Research on genetically engineered trees via *forest tree biotechnology* shall adhere to all applicable federal, state, and provincial regulations and international protocols ratified by the United States and/or Canada depending on jurisdiction of management.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

Performance Measure 10.2

Program Participants shall individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees*, associations or other partners develop or use state, provincial or regional analyses in support of their *sustainable forestry programs*. Indicator:

10.2.1 Participation, individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees* and/or associations at the national, state, provincial or regional level, in the development or use of some of the following:

- a. regeneration assessments;
- b. growth and drain assessments;
- c. *best management practices* implementation and conformance;
- d. *biodiversity conservation* information for family forest owners; and
- e. social, cultural or economic benefit assessments.

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

Notes: Strategic Plan for State Forest Management.

Confirmed involvement in the State SIC. Reviewed dues paid and meeting minutes confirming involvement from June 2020, February 2021, and July 2021.

Performance Measure 10.3

Program Participants shall individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees*, associations or other partners broaden the awareness of *climate change* impacts on forests, *wildlife* and *biological diversity*. Indicators:

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

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

Notes: NYSDEC is involved in the SFI State Implementation Committee.

10.3.2 *Program Participants* are knowledgeable about *climate change* impacts on *wildlife*, *wildlife habitats* and *conservation of biological diversity* through international, national, regional or local *programs*.

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

Notes: NYSDEC is involved in the SFI State Implementation Committee. Forester interviewed were knowledgeable and the State SIC has this on its agenda.



Objective 11 Training and Education

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

Performance Measure 11.1

Program Participants shall require appropriate training of personnel and contractors so that they are competent to fulfill their responsibilities under the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard*. Indicators:

11.1.1 Written statement of commitment to the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* communicated throughout the organization, particularly to facility and woodland managers, and field foresters.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

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

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.

11.1.5 *Program Participants* shall have written agreements for the use of *qualified logging professionals* and/or *certified logging professionals* (where available) and/or *wood producers* that have completed training *programs* and are recognized as *qualified logging professionals*.

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

Notes: Not evaluated this audit year.



Performance Measure 11.2

Program Participants shall work individually and/or with *SFI Implementation Committees*, logging or forestry associations, or appropriate agencies or others in the *forestry* community to foster improvement in the professionalism of *wood producers*.
Indicators:

- 11.2.1 Participation in or support of *SFI Implementation Committees* to establish criteria and identify delivery mechanisms for *wood producer* training courses and periodic continuing education that address:
- a. awareness of sustainable forestry principles and the SFI program;
 - b. best management practices, including streamside management and road construction, maintenance and retirement;
 - c. reforestation, invasive exotic plants and animals, forest resource conservation, aesthetics and special sites;
 - d. awareness of responsibilities under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, the Canadian Species at Risk Act, and other measures to protect wildlife habitat (e.g., Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value);
 - e. awareness of rare forested natural communities as identified by provincial or state agencies, or by credible organizations such as NatureServe, The Nature Conservancy, etc.
 - f. logging safety;
 - g. U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) regulations, wage and hour rules, and other provincial, state and local employment laws;
 - h. transportation issues;
 - i. business management;
 - j. public policy and outreach; and
 - k. awareness of emerging technologies.

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

Notes: Confirmed involvement in the New York SFI Implementation Committee.

- 11.2.2 The *SIC*-approved *wood producer* training programs shall have a continuing education component with coursework that supports the current training programs, safety and the principles of sustainable forestry.

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

Notes: NYLT TLC requirements in Notice of Sale. Confirmed language change FY 2018, FY 2019, FY 2020, & FY 2021.

- 11.2.3 Participation in or support of *SFI Implementation Committees* to establish criteria for recognition of logger certification programs, where they exist, that include:
- a. completion of *SFI Implementation Committee* recognized logger training programs and meeting continuing education requirements of the training program;
 - b. independent in-the-forest verification of conformance with the logger certification program standards;
 - c. compliance with all applicable laws and regulations including responsibilities under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, the Canadian Species at Risk Act and other measures to protect wildlife habitat;
 - d. use of best management practices to protect water quality;
 - e. logging safety;
 - f. compliance with acceptable silviculture and utilization standards;
 - g. aesthetic management techniques employed where applicable; and
 - h. adherence to a management or harvest plan that is site specific and agreed to by the forest landowner.

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

Notes: NYSDEC participates in the New York SFI Implementation Committee meetings that are generally held quarterly. Reviewed meeting minutes from the following dates, confirming involvement: June 2020, February 2021, and July 2021.



Objective 12 Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach

To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* through public outreach, education, and involvement, and to support the efforts of *SFI Implementation Committees*.

Performance Measure 12.1

Program Participants shall support and promote efforts by consulting foresters, state, provincial and federal agencies, state or local groups, professional societies, *conservation* organizations, *Indigenous Peoples* and governments, community groups, sporting organizations, labor, universities, extension agencies, the *American Tree Farm System*® and/or other landowner cooperative *programs* to apply *principles* of sustainable forest management. Indicators:

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

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

Notes: Confirmed active and financial support in the SFI implantation committee.

12.1.2 Support, individually or collaboratively, education and outreach to forest landowners describing the importance and providing implementation guidance on:

- a. best management practices;
- b. reforestation and afforestation;
- c. visual quality management;
- d. conservation objectives, such as critical wildlife habitat elements, biodiversity, threatened and endangered species, and Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value;
- e. management of harvest residue (e.g., slash, limbs, tops) considers economic, social, environmental factors (e.g., organic and nutrient value to future forests) and other utilization needs;
- f. control of invasive exotic plants and animals;
- g. characteristics of *special sites*; and
- h. reduction of wildfire risk.

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

Notes: Confirmed through TRPs and each region's Foresters' participate in education and outreach.

Most of the outreach is completed by private land foresters; For Region 7, there are college groups that confirm that outreach is completed. COVID has limited much of this outreach over the past 2 years.

12.1.3 Participation in efforts to support or promote *conservation* of managed forests through voluntary market-based incentive *programs* such as current-use taxation *programs*, *Forest Legacy Program* or *conservation* easements.

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

Notes: Private Forest Reserves and 900,000 acres of DEC conservation easements. Interviews in regions visited confirmed protection of about 100,000 acres in conservation easements. One conservation easement is adjacent to the SF on Region 7.



Performance Measure 12.2

Program Participants shall support and promote, at the state, provincial or other appropriate levels, mechanisms for public outreach, education and involvement related to sustainable forest management. Indicator:

12.2.1 Periodic educational opportunities promoting *sustainable forestry*, such as

- a. field tours, seminars, websites, webinars or workshops;
- b. educational trips;
- c. self-guided forest management trails;
- d. publication of articles, educational pamphlets or newsletters; or
- e. support for state, provincial, and local *forestry* organizations and soil and water *conservation* districts.

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

Notes: Different Forestry staff cover a) b) and d) throughout the year. C) Visited self-guided trail head kiosk during the audit. Intra agency collaboration on kiosks is with the office of communications central office outreach which encourages foresters to check website of each state forest which is linked to the Unit Management Plan (UMP). Viewed kiosk trail maps and weblinks. See site notes.

Performance Measure 12.3

Program Participants shall establish, at the state, provincial, or other appropriate levels, procedures to address concerns raised by loggers, consulting foresters, employees, unions, the public or other *Program Participants* regarding practices that appear inconsistent with the *SFI Standard principles* and *objectives*. Indicators:

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

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

Notes: Checked and no known 1-800 complaints on the NYSDEC. Confirmed support of the NY SIC.

12.3.2 Process to receive and respond to public inquiries. *SFI Implementation Committees* shall submit data annually to *SFI Inc.* regarding concerns received and responses.

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

Notes: This support is provided through the NY SFI Implementation Committee.



Objective 13 *Public Land Management Responsibilities*

To participate and implement sustainable forest management on *public lands*.

Performance Measure 13.1

Program Participants with forest management responsibilities on *public lands* shall participate in the development of *public land* planning and management processes. Indicators:

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

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

Notes: The UMP process includes opportunities for the public to comment.

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

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

Notes: 2021: Visited TRP in Region 9, see field notes. Appropriate contact and implementation of the TRPs with independent collaborators needs to occur in order to prevent unauthorized activities occurring on the Forest Management Units.



Objective 14 Communications and Public Reporting

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

Performance Measure 14.1

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

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

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

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

Notes: Included in the template for NSF's audit report; NSF provides the summary report within the audit report; report must be sent to SFI, Inc.

Performance Measure 14.2

Program Participants shall report annually to SFI Inc. on their conformance with the SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard. Indicators:

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

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

Notes: Confirmed that the SFI progress report survey was completed for 2020.

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

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

Notes: Most of the information for the categories of information needed for SFI annual progress reports is contained in the NYSDEC GIS and spreadsheets.

- 14.2.3 Maintenance of copies of past survey reports to document progress and improvements to demonstrate conformance to the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard*.

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

Notes: Reviewed the SFI 2017, 2018, 2019 & 2020 SFI annual progress report.



Objective 15 Management Review and Continual Improvement

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

Performance Measure 15.1

Program Participants shall establish a management review system to examine findings and progress in implementing the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard*, to make appropriate improvements in *programs*, and to inform their employees of changes.

Indicators:

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

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

Notes: The system consists of day-to-day work by the Certification Coordinator, monthly reports to the Bureau Chief, discussions during conference calls with the regions, annual reports, and various meetings with managers.

15.1.2 System for collecting, reviewing, and reporting information to management regarding progress in achieving *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard objectives and performance measures*.

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

Notes: Draft internal audit report reviewed:

“The 2021 Bureau of Forest Resource Management Internal Audit (IA) occurred between June 21 – 23, in the Region 5 Northville sub-office (Crew 2) and July 13 - 15, in the Region 9 Allegany sub-office (Crew 1). IA Crew 1 and Crew 2 audited each Region and sub-office to predetermined criteria and indicators, with a concentration of those areas of greatest concern revealed during the 2020 external audit to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) and Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) standards. Areas of greatest concern included BMP monitoring and timber sale site visit documentation.”

Region 9: 4 OBS and 1 comment noted in report.

Region 5: 2 OBS, 1 OFI, and 1 comment noted in report.

Region-wide meetings occurred on the following:

Region 9: Completed 06/04/2021

Region 7: Completed 03/09/2021

Regions 3, 4, 5, 6, & 8 all had similar records reviewed during Q1-Q2 2021.

15.1.3 Annual review of progress by management and determination of changes and improvements necessary to continually improve conformance to the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard*.

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

Notes: Annual review of progress by management and determination of changes and improvements was completed in the 2017-2018-2019-2020-2021 statewide internal review.

(End SFI Forest Management Checklist)



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

3. Terms and Definitions

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

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

Note: Communicate with NSF Project Manager to confirm.

Yes No N/A

Notes: Confirmed with the NSF Project Manager that this is a multi-site client.

4.1 Eligibility Criteria / Method of Sampling (choose 1)

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

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

Applicable Not Applicable

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

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

Yes No N/A

Notes: All sites are wholly owned by NYSDEC which is a state agency. All the sites operated to similar methods and procedures.

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

Yes No N/A

Notes: Albany office oversees the Forest Certification Program. This central office conducts an annual management review of all relative sites. Reviewed the recent drafted internal audits for FY 2021. The Albany office was included in the sampling for multisite requirements in 2020.



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

Yes No N/A

Notes: NYSDEC demonstrated that the central office (Albany) has established a management system to meet the requirements of the SFI Standard. The regions visited in the sampling are as follows: Regions 3 & 5 for 2017, Regions 7 & 9 for 2018, Regions 3, 4 & 7 for 2019, Central Office- Albany & Region-7 & 6 for 2020, and Regions 7 & 9 for 2021.

- d. The organization should demonstrate its ability to collect and analyze data (including, but not limited to, the items listed below) from all sites including the central office and its authority and also demonstrate its authority and ability to initiate organizational change if required:
- i. System documentation and system changes;
 - ii. Management review;
 - iii. Complaints;
 - iv. Evaluation of corrective actions;
 - v. Internal audit planning and evaluation of the results;
 - vi. Changes to aspects and associated impacts for environmental management systems and
 - vii. Different legal requirements.

Yes No N/A

Notes: Multi-site criteria IAF=MDI 4.4.1 d) IV as it relates to "Internal Audit Team Charter and Internal Audit report". Confirmed that the organization now considers previous topics and includes in current year review. CH complies with the majority of the requirements, however the document that is used to communicate the SFI Claim and NY DEC's SFI FM certificate code contain errors. The centrally controlled template for "Notice of Sale of Forest Products, Version 2.2020", notes an incomplete code of SFI Certified Forest Content, rather than the full SFI 100% Certified Forest Content, and the certificate code is incomplete, noting "NSF-SFIS-61741", rather than the full code of NSF-SFI-FM-6L741.

5.1 Sampling Approaches

- 5.1.1 Certification bodies auditing multi-site organizations using IAF -MD1 as the basis for sampling shall meet the sample selection and intensity criteria established in IAF -MD1. (Note: The Sampling requirements under IAF-MD1 are provided below in italics and using the numbering system from IAF-MD1)

Yes No N/A

Notes: Based on a review of the applicable Sampling Requirements under IAF-MD1 as detailed below, the organization meets the sample selection and intensity criteria for MD1. Albany (central office) and various regions are audited each year.

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



Appendix 4

Field Notes

Tuesday, 28 September 2021: Region 9 (Dunkirk area)	
Location/ sites visited	Activities/ notes
	<p>For all sales noted - the following were reviewed and complete: Natural Heritage reviews completed, BMP inspection forms, snag retention, adequate regeneration present, buffers of wetlands and streams marked and respected, regeneration protected, slash low, no conversion, green tree retention, prescription noted followed correctly, trails buffered, contracts include: logger training requirement and BMP requirements, safety requirements, and EAB quarantine notification.</p>
Chautauqua Gorge State Forest	<p>Site 1: Sale #X011967 (active sale during winter 2020-21) - Chautauqua Gorge Sale</p> <p>132 acres, 64 treated acres. Harvest is Forester lays out the main tails and landing, all sales are mark to cut. Herbicide application on approximately 16 acres (stiltgrass, knotweed, multiflora rose). Logger holds NYLT as required. Cable skidder and mechanical faller. Herbicide spray by contractor for the beech control. Slash low, very little residual damage, BMP inspections note no major issues - one area had wet spots that were addressed, SMZs buffered and respected. Basal area reduced to approx. 70 ba.</p> <p>Other herbicide spraying was for invasives and done with Environmental Protection Fund money.</p> <p>Hiking trail runs through the middle of the sale, trail protected and clear for pedestrian use, post-harvest.</p> <p>Wildlife surveys done in advance include Northern long eared bat and Arrowhead spiketail dragonfly, Rx takes this into account with modifications of timing, and protection of hibernacula, foresters knowledgeable of sensitive species present.</p> <p>Discussion of Ash salvage harvesting and monitoring (including pesticides management)</p> <p>Gas line present and protected, machines did cross and adequately protected the below ground lines. Detail provided for the need to apply geotextile fabric and gravel, prior to harvest to protect the gas lines.</p> <p>Discussion of process for Environmental Protection Fund money application and allocation. Funding approved and allocated through Barbara's office at the CO. A ranking occurs and the dollars are given to the State Forest for invasives control work.</p> <p>This area is HCV for watershed of primary drinking water. Policy to not CC more than 30% of the watershed HCVFs over any 10-year period. Actual cut is running at approx. about 0.5% acres CC.</p> <p>Contract does not note correct SFI claim or correct forest management certification code, see Minor CAR.</p>
Chautauqua Gorge State Forest	<p>Site 2: Adjacent Recreation Area</p> <p>Recreational (camping use), including ADA trail maintenance, viewed ADA trail around the day use area.</p> <p>Car camping is typical, some issues with damage at the campground, discussing making a parking area, then needing to walk to the camp site vs. a straight pull in.</p> <p>Landing of above sale has rounds and some round wood available for firewood.</p>



Figure: State Forest signage

Camping permits controlled by State, can camp for 3 days, without permit. Sale design buffered the trails; designated campsites were buffered with the sale boundary.

ADA trail is maintained, in part with stewardship funding that the SF can draw from, work plan developed that includes infrastructure, including roads and trails, like this ADA trail.

Discussion of nearby Adirondack Park, whose Blue Line denotes a reserve, and is an RSA & HCVF.

North
Harmony
State Forest

Site 3: Sale #X009768

Even edged commercial thinning (EACT), 52 ac. Norway spruce removal with small amounts of Scotch pine and other softwood pulp. West side of the SMZ looked like a traditional EACT; other side of sale was more like an OSR due to the trees' health and vigor.



Figure: Stream crossing

Site closed on Oct 2019.

Norway spruce row thinning was cut so that rows would run along with the prevailing wind to protect desirable trees from wind throw. Inspection sheets dated 8/21/17, pulled off job in Oct because it was wet, restarted Feb 2018. Some rutting in March 2018, cutting completed Oct 2018, logs remained roadside and hauling mostly done in Feb 2019.

Blue herons observed by forester fishing in the pools of water created by the wind-thrown upturned root systems in June 2019. Aug 2019 still logs roadside, Closed Oct 2019.

SMZ Waiver Request was approved, stream crossing permitted,

mapped, and adequately protected.

Herbicide used to control the fern present to the South and West of the stream, skid steer used with foliar application of Oust XP. No application on the eastern portion across the SMZ. Region 7 uses a formal herbicide application plan, all herbicide application documents reviewed, along with contracted applicator docs, and wetlands buffered appropriately.

Buffer of SMZ to be maintained, logs pushed up for a detention pond of sorts, not true water bar, but functioning and protecting the SMZ. Wet areas adjacent to the SMZ were buffered, observed wetland species (cattails) growing on the other side of the cut, potentially due to the subsurface changes in hydrology after the sale. Will return in 2 to 5 years to check the regen.


Wetland observed on the other side of the sale.

New York logger training sale template is on Insight and is accessed by foresters on the website - Contract has same SFI claim and Cert. code issue.

Discussed included: Pesticide application, Fluid leak management, Indigenous consultation, natural regeneration of former plantation areas, and monitoring.





Figure: Wetland species appearing post-harvest.

<p>North Harmony State Forest</p>	<p>Site 4: Bailey Hill Road thinning Viewed from the road, not walked. Harvest is marked not yet sold. Marked thinning heavier towards the road due the potential targets on the road. Marking is clear, Rx is thin from below to improve stand health.</p>
<p>Whalen Memorial State Forest</p>	<p>Site 5: Infrastructure Culvert repair & installation and road management. 140' pipe going down the road from a previous contract was not suitable for current flows and had multiple erosion issues from prior storms. Upgrades to alleviate issues. Added an 18" culvert near the beginning of the 140' pipe, culvert is high on both sides, starting to potentially undercut the uphill side of the culvert, downhill side is also slightly perched, and some scour is starting to occur. Staff will be remediating this in the near future. 2 other 24" uphill cross-road culverts were installed.</p> <div>  </div> <p><i>Figure: Culvert installation.</i></p>
<p>Brokenstraw State Forest</p>	<p>Site 6: Sale X012171 Active harvest / open job, along Brownell Road. Rx – Hardwood thinning: remove declining ash from stand before it dies, thin maple to encourage regeneration, release hemlock, thin Japanese larch and encourage hardwood regeneration. Single tree and group selection, 75 ac. Hardwood thinning completed, larch thinning in progress. Wet areas in the old road were avoided and a new landing roadside was used. Old road had water bars pushed up with the dozer, crude but effective to protect and close the road. Operators have moved some equipment to their next sale. Machine for the larch portion still on-site. Herbicide applied in June 2021, inspection forms from June 2021 through current time. Inspection forms note exemption to the 25' in length of logs, for this traditional crew. Spring seeps and intermittent streams flagged, buffered and protected. No understory to speak of, now enough light will reach the Forest floor and with the hunting pressure, deer will likely be controlled. Larch stand: As operator is not currently on site, forester will have them put the skid trails to bed if not returning to site soon, harvest will restart when operator able. Equipment inspection of old cable skidder, small leak under the skidder. Skidder parked roadside in the knotweed, potential for spread into the sale. Discussion of species planted: receive naturalized exotics from the state nursery (Norway spruce, Japanese larch, scotch pine, European larch), these are the only non-native species planted. Herbicide application to control American beech occurred in the hardwood thinning unit, covering 33 ac. All herbicide docs reviewed and in order. Discussion of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sale inspections • PPE requirements • Hemlock Woolly Adelgid management and hemlock management • Road close-out procedures and water bars • Landing areas • Larch plantation
<p>Wednesday, 29 September 2021: Region 7 (Cortland area)</p>	
<p>Cortland Regional Office</p>	<p>Bear Swamp SF - Review of GIS for Sale X010643. Discussion and review of how changes are made to the data layers after harvests and when monitoring occurs. Multiple data sets viewed and the process for setting up a sale was discussed.</p>



<p>Shindagin Hollow State Forest</p>	<p>Site 7: Tioga 1 - Herbicide Treatment, 13 ac treated</p> <p>Patch cut winter of 2016 (sale #X010163), filling in with aspen and has had a few growing seasons, snags retained. Achieving goals. Herbicide applied in Fall 2018 to Fall 2019 – Hack & squirt or cut stump application of Rodeo first, followed by foliar application of Garlon 4, with seasonal timings needing to be met.</p> <p>Closed out site in Dec 2019, Herbicide unit looks good, some possible residual spray damage to retained stems, could have been stress from opening up the canopy or FTC. If knotweed or swallowwort on sale, will get treated before next sale.</p> <p>Viewed full packet of herbicide documents.</p> <p>Discussion of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PPE requirements, spill kits, and first-aid• Marking, flagging and boundaries• Equipment use• Culverts
<p>Shindagin Hollow State Forest</p>	<p>Site 8: Sale #TX09609</p> <p>Red pine-larch thinning and patch cut, total of 5.9 ac.</p> <p>PROs review noted Virginia False Gromwell, which was not identified in the field.</p> <p>3 stands, one of which was taking the trees from the roadside to daylight the road for the town. The other 2 stands were thinning with patch cuts.</p> <p>Mechanized one man job, FB with processing head and forwarder.</p> <p>Regen is getting hit hard by deer, browse evident on pokeweed and brambles.</p> <p>Will give it 10 years to grow before the next decision is made to plant/herbicide/thin again, depending on the browse and regen.</p> <p>Discussion of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Road close-out procedures• Herbicide applications and contracts• Invasive treatments• UMP development and applicability

<p>Hammond Hill State Forest</p>	<p>Site 9: Recreational Trail Project/Infrastructure</p> <p>Viewed a recreation and trail maintenance project, with culvert installation and resurfacing of the aggregate trail.</p> <p>TRP application reviewed for this trails project.</p> <p>Volunteer group - Friends of Hammond Hill (FOHH), privately raised funds to complete trail resurfacing and drainage. Group is not a non-profit, so gave the money to be held by the Finger Lakes Running Club, a non-profit entity, to be paid to the contractor for the trail work.</p> <p>Work was completed in 3 locations of the existing trail where the condition of the trail was in poor repair. Area had lots of exposed roots, trail was becoming braided, with multiple wet boggy areas. Geotextile placed under the surface. Contractor used a tracked skid steer to move the gravel. Trail widened where needed and broad-based dips installed to slow water movement and eliminate erosion.</p>  <p><i>Figure: Broad Based Dip</i></p> <p>Signage and interpretive trail maps observed. Map has QR code for rec users to download trail map and other SF information.</p> <p>Discussed and reviewed the TRP process. Discussion about UMP development and applicability. Upgraded trail is in excellent shape and will allow multi-use recreation users to enjoy this area.</p>	
<p>Thursday, 30 September 2021: Albany (Central Office) – completed remotely</p>		
<p>Interviews completed via WebEx</p>	<p>Staff interviews as follows:</p> <p>Ecologist, NY Natural Heritage Program - This program is responsible for surveying, documenting and monitoring Rare Communities and Special Treatment Areas (HCVFs).</p> <p>Environmental Program Specialist (GIS database manager, State Forest Inventory Database (SFID) manager)</p> <p>Director, NYSDEC Division of Lands and Forests</p> <p>Chief, Bureau of Forest Resources Management (BFRM), NYSDEC Division of Lands and Forests; Indian Affairs Coordinator, Office of Environmental Justice, NYSDEC</p>	



Appendix 5

Sustainability Audit Attendance Sheet

Company Name NY DEC

Location Region 7, Region 9, and Central Office in Albany, NY

Type of Audit SFI 2015:2019 Standards and Rules, Forest Management Audit – 4th Surveillance

Opening Meeting Date 28 September 2021 Closing Meeting Date 30 September 2021

Name		Position	Attended Opening Meeting?	Attended Closing Meeting?
28 September Attendees:				
Name	Job Title	Phone OR Email	X	
PATRICK MARREN	REG. FORESTER	PATRICK.MARREN@DEC.NY.GOV	X	
Barbara Lucas-Wilson	FOR. 3	Barbara.lucas-wilson@dec.ny.gov	X	
Ian Crisman	UMP Coord.	ian.crisman@dec.ny.gov	X	
JOSH BARST	FOR 2	joshua.barst@dec.ny.gov	X	
Keith Carrow	FOR 1	Keith.carrow@DEC.NY.GOV	X	
JEFF BRACKELBANK	FOR 2	jeffrey.brackelbank@dec.ny.gov	X	
Richard Silvestro	FOR 1	richard.silvestro@dec.ny.gov	X	
Theresa Draves	FOR 1	Theresa.Draves@dec.ny.gov	X	
GREGORY MULLER	FOR 2	gregory.muller@dec.ny.gov	X	
Michelle Matteo		NSF – SFI Lead Auditor	X	
Evan Poirson		SCS – FSC Lead Auditor & SFI Team Auditor	X	



29 September 2021 Attendees:				
Name	Job Title	Phone OR Email		
Timothy Day	Forester 1	t.timothy.day@dec.ny.gov		
Christine Elliott	Forestry Tech 2	christine.elliott+@dec.ny.gov		
Matt Swayze	Forester 1	matthew.swayze@dec.ny.gov		
Josh Borst	FOR 2	joshua.borst@dec.ny.gov		
Barbara Lucas-Wilson	FOR. 3	Barbara.Lucas-Wilson@dec.ny.us		
Ian Crisman	UMP coord	ian.crisman@dec.ny.gov		
Dan Little	Forester 1	daniel.little@dec.ny.gov		
Julie Buss	Forestry Tech 1	julie.buss@dec.ny.gov		
ANDY GOENER	FORESTER 3	ANDREW.GOELLER@DEC.NY.GOV		
Aaron Bowman	owner	64Aaron@gmail.com		
Michelle Matteo		NSF – SFI Lead Auditor		
Evan Poirson		SCS – FSC Lead Auditor & SFI Team Auditor		

30 September 2021 Attendees:				
Elizabeth Spencer		Ecologist, NY Natural Heritage Program		
Stephanie Schmid		Environmental Program Specialist (GIS database manager, State Forest Inventory Database (SFID) manager)		
Rob Davies		Director, NYSDEC Division of Lands and Forests		
Rob Messenger		Chief, Bureau of Forest Resources Management (BFRM), NYSDEC Division of Lands and Forests		
David Witt		Indian Affairs Coordinator, Office of Environmental Justice, NYSDEC Division of Lands and Forests		
Michelle Matteo		NSF – SFI Lead Auditor		X
Evan Poirson		SCS – FSC Lead Auditor & SFI Team Auditor		X
Josh Borst		Forester 2		X
Barbara Lucas		Forester 3		X
Ian Crisman		UMP Coordinator		X



Appendix 6

Forestry Program COVID-19 Report Appendix

Client Name: NY DEC

FRS: 6L741

Is this a fully remote special audit? YES NO Justification: Field visits were conducted from 28-30 September 2021, Opening Meeting was held at the start of the audit with social distancing allowed in the conference room. Part of the document review and the closing meeting were held remotely on 30 September 2021.

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

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

Was this remote audit able to be effectively completed using remote audit methods? YES NO If no, why? State reason if "no" is selected: N/A On-site audit.

Are there specific portions of the audit that could not be effectively evaluated? YES NO Portion of the audit that could not be audited: N/A On-site audit.

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

Remote audit methods used: Remote method/tool Used for On-line conference call and video Cisco WebEx Interview with NYSDEC staff and partners. Partial document review and closing meeting.



Additional questions

When is it expected that the organization will be able to function normally?

State employees are primarily back to full working schedules.

Is the organization able to ship products or perform the service defined within the current scope of certification? If not, when is it expected to be able to do so?

Yes

Does the organization need to use alternative manufacturing and/or distribution sites? If so, are these currently covered under the current certification or will they need to be evaluated?

No.

Will some of the processes and/or services performed, or products shipped be subcontracted to other organizations? If so, how will the other organizations' activities be controlled by the certified organization?

No.

To what extent has operation of the management system been affected?

Management systems are not currently affected.

Has the certified organization conducted an impact assessment regarding COVID-19?

Yes, at the State of NY level & NYSDEC State Agency.
