

Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Forest Management Audit Report

Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry -
Bureau of Parks and Lands – Maine (Maine BPL)

Certificate # SCS-SFI/FM-008672

*SFI 2022 Standards and Rules®, Forest Management
2nd Surveillance Audit*

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Client Address | 18 Elkins Lane, Augusta, ME 04333 |
| Client Contact | Michael Pouch, Michael.A.Pouch@maine.gov , 207-215-7824 |
| Client Website | Bureau of Parks and Lands: Maine DACF |

SCS Contact:

Maggie Schwartz

Managing Director, Forestry
Natural Resources Division

mschwartz@scsglobalservices.com



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| SECTION A – PUBLIC SUMMARY | 3 |
| FOREWORD | 3 |
| ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT | 3 |
| PRINCIPLES OF SFI FOREST MANAGEMENT..... | 3 |
| 1. GENERAL INFORMATION | 5 |
| 1.1 NAME, CONTACT, AND CERTIFICATE INFORMATION | 5 |
| 2. SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE MANAGEMENT UNIT(S) | 5 |
| 3. AUDIT PROCESS | 7 |
| 3.1 APPLICABLE STANDARDS AND AUDIT OBJECTIVES..... | 7 |
| 3.2 AUDIT TEAM | 8 |
| 3.3 TOTAL TIME SPENT ON AUDIT..... | 8 |
| 3.4 SUMMARY OF AUDIT ITINERARY AND SITE VISITS | 9 |
| 3.5 EVALUATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS | 9 |
| 3.6. CHANGES TO MANAGEMENT SYSTEM..... | 9 |
| 3.7 CONFIRMATION OF MEETING AUDIT OBJECTIVES..... | 10 |
| 4. RESULTS OF AUDIT | 10 |
| 4.1 GRADING OF POSSIBLE FINDINGS..... | 10 |
| 4.2 TABLE OF AUDIT RESULTS AND HISTORY OF FINDINGS FOR CERTIFICATE PERIOD | 10 |
| 4.3 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF EVIDENCE OF CONFORMITY | 11 |
| 4.4 EXISTING CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUESTS, OFIs, AND EXCEEDS..... | 13 |
| 4.5 NEW CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUESTS, OFIs, AND EXCEEDS | 14 |
| 5. CERTIFICATION DECISION | 15 |

Public Summary Report

SFI® Forest Management Standard

SECTION A – PUBLIC SUMMARY

Foreword

Organization of the Report

This report of the results of your audit assessment is divided into two sections. Section A provides the public summary and background information that is required by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative®. Section A is made available to the public and is intended to provide an overview of the audit process, the management programs and policies applied to the forest, and the results of the audit. Section A will be posted on the SFI website and Section B contains more detailed results and information for required SFI record-keeping or for use by the Certified Organization.

Principles of SFI Forest Management

The SFI 2022 Standards and Rules® for Forest Management promotes sustainable forestry and includes measures to *protect water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, species at risk and Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value.*

The 13 *SFI Principles* for Forest Management are:

1. **Sustainable Forestry:** To practice sustainable forestry to meet the needs of the present while promoting 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, climate change mitigation, 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 species 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, to meet the needs of both human communities and ecological systems.
4. **Protection of Biological Diversity:** To manage forests in ways that protect and promote biological diversity, including animal and plant species, wildlife habitats, ecologically important species and native forest cover 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 important, geologically or culturally important in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.
7. **Responsible Fiber Sourcing in North America:** To use and promote among other forest landowners sustainable forestry that is 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 Forest Management 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.

1. General Information

1.1 Name, Contact, and Certificate Information

| | |
|--|--|
| Organization Name | Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry - Bureau of Parks and Lands – Maine (Maine BPL) |
| Contact Information (Name, Title, Phone, Email) | Michael Pouch 18 Elkins Lane, Augusta, ME 04333 207-215-7824 Michael.A.Pouch@maine.gov |
| Audit Dates | 19-21 Sep 2023 (Tue-Thu) |
| SFI Certificate Type | <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multi-site. This Audit covered the requirements of the central organization and a subset of sites. These sites were selected based on proximity and length of time since previous audits. See Summary of Audit Itinerary for details of sampling. |

2. Summary Description of the Management Unit(s)

| Description of Ownership | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SFI: List of all sites/FMUs under scope of the certificate, including certified acres. <input type="checkbox"/> ATFS: List of all sites/FMUs under scope of the certificate, including certified acres. If a Group certificate provide a description of the group structure | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|-------|-------|------|----------------|--|---|-----|-------|--|-----|-------|--|-----|-------|--|-----|-------|--|-----|-------|--|-----|---------|--|-----|-------|--|-----|-------|--|-----|-------|-------|-----|-------|--|-----|-------|--|-----|-------|--|-----|------|-------|-----|-------|--|
| Total Forest Area (Acres) | 624361 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Description of Sites and Group Membership under Scope | <input type="checkbox"/> Single site description <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SFI: List of all sites/FMUs under scope of the certificate, including certified acres. <table border="1" data-bbox="527 1144 933 1774"> <thead> <tr> <th>Zone</th> <th>Acres</th> <th>2023</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Central Office</td> <td></td> <td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ZE1</td> <td>52475</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>ZE2</td> <td>37894</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>ZE3</td> <td>55865</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>ZE4</td> <td>47899</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>ZN1</td> <td>49116</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>ZN2</td> <td>35592.1</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>ZN3</td> <td>37676</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>ZN4</td> <td>35911</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>ZW1</td> <td>71846</td> <td>X (s)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ZW2</td> <td>66191</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>ZW3</td> <td>41236</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>ZW4</td> <td>37974</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>ZW5</td> <td>8981</td> <td>X (s)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ZW6</td> <td>45705</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <input type="checkbox"/> ATFS: Summary of Sites/FMUs under scope of certificate, including acres. <input type="checkbox"/> Group: Description of group structure. | Zone | Acres | 2023 | Central Office | | X | ZE1 | 52475 | | ZE2 | 37894 | | ZE3 | 55865 | | ZE4 | 47899 | | ZN1 | 49116 | | ZN2 | 35592.1 | | ZN3 | 37676 | | ZN4 | 35911 | | ZW1 | 71846 | X (s) | ZW2 | 66191 | | ZW3 | 41236 | | ZW4 | 37974 | | ZW5 | 8981 | X (s) | ZW6 | 45705 | |
| Zone | Acres | 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Central Office | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZE1 | 52475 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZE2 | 37894 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZE3 | 55865 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZE4 | 47899 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZN1 | 49116 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZN2 | 35592.1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZN3 | 37676 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZN4 | 35911 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZW1 | 71846 | X (s) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZW2 | 66191 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZW3 | 41236 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZW4 | 37974 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZW5 | 8981 | X (s) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ZW6 | 45705 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Management Unit Maps | See state website which provides publicly available maps. |
| Forest Types and Key Ecological Features | <p><i>General description of major timber types with a general characterization of management approaches used (natural regeneration vs. planting, thinning regimes, even-aged vs. uneven-aged silvicultural).</i></p> <p>The forests managed by the Bureau of Parks and Lands are distributed throughout the state and reflect most of Maine's physiographic conditions and forest cover types. The acres under BPL's management are distributed primarily throughout the northern two-thirds of Maine, and most have been acquired since 1975 in trades with industrial and large private nonindustrial landowners. The state of Maine organizes these lands under Ecoregions described here, Maine Natural Areas Program Ecoregions, and then into Natural Communities and Ecosystems with approximately 104 natural communities and 24 ecosystems, Natural Communities and Ecosystems.</p> <p>The Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) has classified and distinguished 104 different natural community types that collectively cover the state's landscape. These include habitats such as floodplain forests, coastal bogs, alpine summits, and others. Each type is assigned a rarity rank of 1 (rare) through 5 (common) both within Maine (state rank) and globally (global rank). MNAP has focus on natural community types ranked S1, S2, or S3, and outstanding examples (e.g., large, old growth stands) of S4 and S5 types. Natural Landscapes of Maine describes the composition, rarity, and distribution of each of the 104 natural community types, as well as the methods used to classify them. It also describes the 24 broader ecosystem types within which these natural communities typically occur, and it provides cross-walks to other classification systems, including those used by the National Vegetation Classification System and Society of American Foresters.</p> |
| Forest Management Planning | <p><i>The management plan outlining forest management policies and objectives:</i></p> <p>The system of resource management for lands is comprised of three basic elements: (1) The development of resource management plans by Unit, Park, or Historic Site; (2) the implementation of actions and recommendations set forth within such plans, and; (3) the monitoring and evaluation of both the ongoing and completed work. Each step is important in ensuring that the programs developed to achieve resource management objectives are consistent with the character of the land base and its intended use.</p> <p>The State of Maine BPL uses a compendium of documents that generally follow geographic scale from state-wide strategic planning down to individual stand prescriptions. The BPL provides management planning polices, Integrated Resource Policy (IRP) (PDF 678KB), silviculture guides and forestry handbooks to implementation of plans.</p> <p>The forestry management planning process is detailed for public access through the following website, Management Plans: Planning and Acquisition Process: State Parks and Public Lands: Maine ACF. All BPL management plans may be found here, Bureau of Parks and Lands Management Plans.</p> |
| Sustainable Harvest Level Assessment | <p><i>Public Summary of how long-term harvest levels are determined, maintained, and monitored. Note: Details supporting this description are provided with evidence under Performance Measure 1.1, when evaluated.</i></p> <p>The Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) provides a public summary of sustainable harvest level assessments and management planning, Microsoft Word - IRP 2000.doc (maine.gov)</p> <p>The sustainable harvest is calculated separately on about 15 segments (sustainable harvest units, see Glossary of IRP) of the overall land base, with groupings made to combine nearby parcels with similar biophysical conditions and growth patterns. These groupings are done using the results of the inventory. The base calculations include only regulated forest acres, defined as those areas where timber is either the dominant use or where timber harvesting is a regular though secondary part of the management. These secondary areas may require modification of sustainable harvest calculations to reflect the dominant use. During unit planning, unregulated acres are generally identified, and a sustainable harvest calculated for them at a rate lower than used for the base calculations.</p> |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Monitoring Program Description | <p>- Overall responsibility for the timber management program on Bureau lands resides with the regional managers, acting under the authority of the Director. They participate in all planning, review, and inspection activities and hold primary responsibilities for the conduct of annual compartment examinations and implementation of program activities. Staff specialists provide such technical assistance as may be necessary and participate in the review of ongoing and completed projects, planning and development efforts, and compliance with standards, policies, and applicable Federal, State and local ordinances. Included among the means for monitoring program performance: Inspections, Compartment Exams, Silviculture Advisory Committee, 3rd Party audits.</p> <p>- Where management plans exist, commitments are monitored in order to gauge progress for each area and to plan upcoming activities. The Bureau also employs general measures of performance to monitor progress relative to overall program objectives, including management activities on lands where plans have not yet been developed.</p> <p>- Ecological Reserves are areas established by statute (Title 12, Section 1801) to mean "an area owned or leased by the State and under the jurisdiction of the Bureau, designated by the Director, for the purpose of maintaining one or more natural community types or native ecosystem types in a natural condition and range of variation and contributing to the protection of Maine's biological diversity, and managed: A) as a benchmark against which biological and environmental change can be measured, B) to protect sufficient habitat for those species whose habitat needs are unlikely to be met on lands managed for other purposes; or C) as a site for ongoing scientific research, long-term environmental monitoring, and education." Most ecological reserves will encompass more than 1,000 contiguous acres.</p> |
|---------------------------------------|--|

3. Audit Process

3.1 Applicable Standards and Audit Objectives

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Certificate Code | SFI: SCS-SFI/FM-008672 | |
| Audit Type | <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 1, Preliminary Review Audit | <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 2, Certification Audit |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Re-Certification | <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 Additional Surveillance |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 st , <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 nd , <input type="checkbox"/> 3 rd or <input type="checkbox"/> 4 th Surveillance | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer | <input type="checkbox"/> Expansion of Scope |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>describe</i>): | |
| Applicable Standards | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SFI: 2022 Forest Management. <i>Objectives 1-17. Objectives 1, 3, 6, 7, 11, 13, 16, and 17</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SFI: Rules for Use of SFI On-Product Labels and Off-Product Marks <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SFI: Audits of Multi-Sites <input type="checkbox"/> ATFS: Forest Management, 2021. Standards 1-8 <input type="checkbox"/> ATFS: AFF 2021 Standards for Independently Managed Groups. Sections 1-4 <input type="checkbox"/> ATFS: ATFS 2021 Logo Use Guidelines | |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Multiple Standards | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, this is not a multi-standard nor a multi-CB audit. BPL is also certified to the FSC® Forest Management Standard which completed as a combined audit simultaneous with SFI. | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Combined | <input type="checkbox"/> Joint | <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated |
| | <i>A combined audit is when a client is being audited against the requirements of two or more standards</i> | <i>A joint audit is when two or more auditing organizations cooperate to audit a single client.</i> | <i>An integrated audit is when a client has integrated the application of requirements of two or more management systems standards into a single management system and is being audited against more than one standard.</i> |
| SFI Substitute or Modified Indicators | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None, <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Substitute or Modified Indicators used and justification: | | |
| Certificate Scope/ Statement | The scope of the certificate includes all forest management activities associated with the Organization's sustainable forest management system with defined forest lands located in [location] and including the harvest, transport, and sale or trade of forest products, and other forest management system activities for the Audit Objectives. The Organization has sufficient control over any contracting or outsourcing of forest management planning and activities to ensure conformance to applicable certification requirements. | | |
| Description of Sampling Approach | Maine BPL is organized into 3 Regions: Eastern, Western (1/2), and Northern zones. The Western Lot, due to size and geographic spread, is split into 2 sublots for sampling. 2023 will sample one half of the Western Region. Below the region level, individual properties are scattered throughout the state, divided into units of varying size for management purposes. Units in similar areas are grouped together under management plans, or have their own plan for larger units. Overall management planning and growth and yield projections are done at the level of the entire ownership. Zones are further subdivided into Lots. The 2023 audit sampled Western Lots as presented in the itinerary. | | |
| Deviations from the Audit Plan | Were there any significant deviations from the Audit Plan? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. If yes, provide a description and explanation. | | |

3.2 Audit Team

| | | | |
|------------------------|--|----------------------|--------------|
| Auditor name: | Beth Jacqumain | Auditor role: | Lead Auditor |
| Qualifications: | Beth is a qualified Forest Management/Chain of Custody Lead Auditor to SFI and audit team leader for FSC. Beth is Principal and Owner of American Nature Solutions forest certification and management consultancy. Beth has over 18 years' experience as a forest management practitioner including private consulting, public land management, and private corporate forest management working with landowners and harvest crews. She is a member of the Forest Guild, Society of American Foresters, Society for Conservation Biology, and Ecological Society of America. SAF Certified Forester #1467, MS Forest Biology/Ecology, Auburn University, BS Michigan State University. Qualified ANSI RAB accredited ISO 14001 EMS Lead, ISO 19011, and 17021 QMS. | | |
| Auditor name: | Dan Simonds | Auditor role: | Team Auditor |
| Qualifications: | A qualified lead auditor, for FSC, SFI, & PEFC Forest Management and Chain of Custody systems with 18 years of experience in third party certification. A graduate of UMaine College of Forestry and Maine-licensed Professional Forester (Maine #884) & Certified Forester, with 40 years of practical experience in the region. | | |

3.3 Total Time Spent on Audit

| | |
|--|---|
| A. Number of days spent on-site for the Audit | 3 |
| B. Number of auditors participating in on-site audit | 2 |

| | |
|--|----------|
| C. Number of days spent by any technical experts (in addition to amount in line A) | 0 |
| D. Additional days spent on preparation, stakeholder consultation, and follow-up | 1 |
| E. Total number of person days used in audit | 7 |

3.4 Summary of Audit Itinerary and Site Visits

| | |
|--|---|
| Location(s) sampled | Dallas, Richardson, Mahoosics, Bald Mountain Areas within Western Sustainable Harvest Units. |
| Number of field sites | 15 |
| Summary of Cover Types visited | Mixed hardwood and Mixed conifer-hardwood sites with native tree species common to northern Maine. |
| Summary Description /Number of Silviculture Activities inspected | Seven silvicultural and harvest sites were inspected over the two days. Also included inactive (monitoring) of ecoreserves, wildlife openings, and one emergency helipad establishment. |
| Summary Description /Number of Harvest Areas inspected | Three harvest sites were inspected over the two days. |
| Summary Description of Road infrastructure inspections | Roads were inspected throughout. 6 specific road and culvert stops were included in notes and infrastructure was examined throughout with no issues identified. |

3.5 Evaluation of Management Systems

SCS deploys teams with expertise in forestry and other relevant fields to assess the certified organization's conformance to SFI standards and policies. Audit methods include reviewing documents and records, interviewing personnel and contractors, implementing sampling strategies to visit a broad number of forest cover and harvest prescription types, observing implementation of management plans and policies in the field, and collecting and analyzing relevant stakeholder input. When there is more than one team member, each member may review parts of the standards based on their background and expertise. Applicable aspects of the Management System under evaluation, such as Management System Review and other relevant Objectives, Performance Measures, and Indicators will also inform the audit team. On the final day of an evaluation, team members convene to deliberate the findings of the audit jointly. This involves an analysis of all relevant field observations, interviews, reviewed documents and records, and relevant stakeholder input. Where consensus among team members cannot be achieved due to lack of evidence, conflicting evidence or differences of interpretation of the standards, the team is instructed to report these in the certification decision section and/or in observations.

3.6. Changes to Management System

- There were no significant changes in the management and/or harvesting methods that affect the FME's conformance to the SFI standards, rules, and policies.
- Significant changes that affect the management system occurred since the last audit described as follows (describe):

3.7 Confirmation of Meeting Audit Objectives

The objectives for this audit included:

- a. Determination of the conformity of the client's management system, or parts of it, with audit criteria (Selected Objectives, Performance Measures, and/or Indicators).
- b. Determination of the ability of the management system to ensure the client meets applicable statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements.
- c. Determination of the effectiveness of the management system to ensure the client can reasonably expect to achieve specified objectives.
- d. As applicable, identification of areas for potential improvement of the management system.

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Audit Objectives were met | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If no, provide an explanation: |
|---------------------------|--|

4. Results of Audit

4.1 Grading of Possible Findings

Once a consensus is reached by the audit team, determinations of grading are made as to the level of findings. Grading of findings may occur as follows:

- *Major CARs:* Major Corrective Action Requests (CARs) occur when one or more of the SFI 2022 Standard(s) performance measures or indicators has not been addressed or has not been implemented to the extent that a systematic failure of a Certified Organization's SFI system to meet an SFI objective, performance measure or indicator occurs.
- *Minor CARs:* An isolated lapse in SFI 2022 Standard(s) implementation which does not indicate a systematic failure to consistently meet an SFI objective, performance measure or indicator.
- *Opportunities for Improvement:* Opportunities for Improvement (OFIs) are identified by audit team members where the client is in conformance, but there is a risk to conformance in the future. Nonconformance with the standard requirements cannot be recorded as OFIs.
- *Exceeds:* Practices that exceed the basic requirements of the SFI 2022 Standards and Rules for Forest Management or Fiber Sourcing.

4.2 Table of Audit Results and History of Findings for Certificate Period

This table lists Findings to the Performance Measure and/or Indicator level for each year of the certificate period and is updated annually.

| SFI Objective | Cert/Re-cert Evaluation (2021) <i>2015-2019 Std</i> | 1 st Annual Evaluation (2022) <i>2015-2019 Std</i> | 2 nd Annual Evaluation (2023) <i>2022 Std</i> | 3 rd Annual Evaluation (2023) | 4 th Annual Evaluation (year) |
|---------------|--|--|---|--|--|
| | Minor 2.3.4 | OFI 15.1.3 | Minor 3.1.1 | | |

| | | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| No findings | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1 | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | |
| 3 | | | Minor 3.1.1 | | |
| 4 | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | |
| 9 | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | |
| 11 | | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | |
| 16 | | | | | |
| 17 | | | | | |
| COC | | | | | |
| Trademark | | | | | |
| Group | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | |

4.3 General Description of Evidence of Conformity

This section summarizes the general evidence found to verify conformity that is detailed in Appendix 5.

| SFI Objective | Summary of Evidence |
|--|---|
| Objective 1. Forest Management Planning. To ensure forest management plans include long-term sustainable harvest levels and measures to avoid forest conversion or afforestation of ecologically important areas. | The forest management plan and supporting documentation and the associated inventory data and growth models were the key evidence of conformance. |
| Objective 2. Forest Health and Productivity. To ensure long-term forest productivity and conservation of forest resources through prompt reforestation, afforestation, deploying integrated pest management strategies, minimized chemical use, soil conservation, and protecting forests from damaging agents. | Not evaluated during this audit |
| Objective 3. Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources. To protect the water quality and water quantity of rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, and other water bodies. | Field observations of a range of sites were the key evidence. Auditors visited portions of selected field sites that were close to water resources. BMPs are an important part of the program to protect water resources. |
| Objective 4. Conservation of Biological Diversity To maintain or advance the conservation of biological diversity at the stand- and landscape- level and across | Not evaluated during this audit |

| | |
|---|---|
| a diversity of forest and vegetation cover types and successional stages including the conservation of forest plants and animals, aquatic species, threatened and endangered species, Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value, old-growth forests and ecologically important sites. | |
| Objective 5. Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits. To manage the visual impact of forest operations and provide recreational opportunities for the public. | Not evaluated during this audit |
| 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. | Identification of special sites through periodic database searches and interviews with local experts and stakeholders, cataloging and documenting sites, development of written plans for protection and management, and training for protection and management were witnessed. |
| Objective 7. Efficient Use of Fiber Resources. To minimize waste and ensure the efficient use of fiber resources. | Field reviews and interviews with staff demonstrated efficient use of resources. |
| Objective 8. Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples' Rights. To recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional knowledge. | Not evaluated during this audit |
| Objective 9: Climate Smart Forestry To ensure forest management activities address climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. | Not evaluated during this audit |
| Objective 10. Fire Resilience and Awareness To limit susceptibility of forests to undesirable impacts of wildfire and to raise community awareness of fire benefits, risks, and minimization measures. | Not evaluated during this audit |
| Objective 11. Legal and Regulatory Compliance To comply with all applicable laws and regulations including, international, federal, provincial, state, and local. | Field reviews of ongoing and completed operations were the most critical evidence. Regulatory compliance has been very strong. |
| Objective 12. Forestry Research, Science and Technology. To invest in research, science, and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based. | Not evaluated during this audit |
| Objective 13. Training and Education. To improve the implementation of sustainable forestry through appropriate training and education programs. | Review of BPL involvement with SIC, support of logger education and training programs |
| Objective 14. Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach. To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry through public outreach, education, and involvement, and to support the efforts of SFI Implementation Committees. | Not evaluated during this audit |

| | |
|--|---|
| Objective 15. Public Land Management Responsibilities. To participate and implement sustainable forest management on public lands. | Not evaluated during this audit |
| Objective 16. Communications and Public Reporting To increase transparency and to annually report progress on conformance with the SFI Forest Management Standard. | Review of SFI website confirms that all past public summaries have been posted. |
| Objective 17. Management Review and Continual Improvement: To promote continual improvement in the practice of sustainable forestry by conducting a management review and monitoring performance. | Review of 2022 SFI Progress Report, review of past copies of annual internal progress review. |

4.4 Existing Corrective Action Requests, OFIs, and Exceeds

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Finding Number: OFI 2022.1 | | |
| Finding and Deadline | <input type="checkbox"/> Major: Pre-condition to certification <input type="checkbox"/> Major: 3 months from Closing Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Minor: Next audit (surveillance or re-evaluation) or 12 months from closing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OFI: no deadline <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds: no deadline <input type="checkbox"/> Other deadline (specify): | |
| SFI Indicator: | 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 Standard. (See also 17.1 of the 2022 SFI Forest Management Standard). | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Conformity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Background/ Justification in the case of OFI or Exceeds State of Maine BPL's continuous improvement process meets the requirements for management to conduct annual reviews of progress and determine changes and improvements that may be necessary. Although the pieces are in place for the state's program, it could be improved with a more formal framework relative to specific expectations for SFI multi-site certificates around internal auditing to support the management review process. (See also 17.1 of the 2022 SFI Forest Management Standard.) | | |
| Action Plan and Root Cause Analysis (to be prepared by Organization) | OFI's do not require an action plan or a root cause analysis be submitted. | |
| SCS Review of Action Plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Accepted | <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected (<i>explain</i>): |
| | SCS representative: | Date: |
| Evidence and Actions Implemented by Organization | | |
| SCS Review of Implemented Actions | | |

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Status of Finding: | <input type="checkbox"/> Closed <input type="checkbox"/> Upgraded to Major <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other decision (refer to description above)</i> |
|---------------------------|--|

4.5 New Corrective Action Requests, OFIs, and Exceeds

| | |
|--|--|
| Finding Number: 2023.1 | |
| Finding and Deadline | <input type="checkbox"/> Major: Pre-condition to certification <input type="checkbox"/> Major: 3 months from Closing Meeting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor: Next audit (surveillance or re-evaluation) or 12 months from closing <input type="checkbox"/> OFI: no deadline <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds: no deadline <input type="checkbox"/> Other deadline (specify): |
| SFI Indicator: | 3.1.1. Program to implement federal, state, or provincial water quality best management practices during all phases of management activities. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Conformity <input type="checkbox"/> Background/ Justification in the case of OFI or Exceeds The organization’s implementation of water quality BMP’s may not be fully effective. Evidence from field observations includes some recent harvests which lacked effective skid trail stabilization measures. | |
| Action Plan and Root Cause Analysis (to be prepared by Organization) | <p>Root Cause Analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BPL continuously experiences staff turnover, with 2-3 new foresters hired each year, which requires an ongoing training process for new and veteran foresters alike. - BPL is observing varying “levels of acceptability” when it comes to site impacts and when to apply BMP’s (water bar, shut down operations, remediate ruts, etc). The adoption in 2020 of a BPL requirement to complete a peer-reviewed BMP plan for all harvest activity has bolstered BMP planning, however, the direct application is still up to individual foresters which leaves opportunity for inconsistency in BMP application. - Timberland managers in Maine, including BPL, are currently experiencing extreme challenges due to increased frequency of high intensity precipitation events and unreliable winter freeze/thaw regimes. The 2023 Winter and Summer leading up to the BPL audit was by all accounts and records an entirely unprecedented year of rain and warm winter weather. While applied BMP’s were highly effective in most cases even in the face of extreme weather, inconsistencies lead to observed problems including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Applied BMP’s (water bars and seeding) that were observed to be grossly overwhelmed by erosion from early thaws (ruts) and 6 months of extreme rainfall leading to soil erosion. o Omission of BMP’s (lack of waterbar installation) on a long-standing skid trail that historically had been stable and continued to be stable when observed on the audit but by definition, should have been treated with water bars as a preventative measure. <p>Action Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document BMP training for all staff since 2020. Determine what basic and higher-level training is needed for forestry staff. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop guidance documents and standard operating procedures in order to develop uniform “level of acceptability”. Determine most effective way of delivering these materials (stand-alone policies v. contractual inclusions v. incorporation in BPL’s BMP plans). - Implement BMP training plans as developed for each calendar year(s). | |
| SCS Review of Action Plan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted | <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected (<i>explain</i>): |
| | SCS representative: Brendan Grady | Date: 3/28/24 |
| Evidence and Actions Implemented by Organization | | |
| SCS Review of Implemented Actions | | |
| Status of Finding: | <input type="checkbox"/> Closed <input type="checkbox"/> Upgraded to Major <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other decision (refer to description above)</i> | |

5. Certification Decision

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>The certificate holder has demonstrated continued overall conformance to the applicable Sustainable Forestry Initiative standards. The SCS annual audit team recommends that the certificate be sustained, subject to subsequent annual audits and the Certified Organization’s response to any open CARs.</p> | <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> |
| <p>Comments:</p> | |

