

APPENDIX III

Public SFI Surveillance Audit Report

The SFI Program of the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands has demonstrated continuing conformance and up-graded with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard ®, 2010-2014 Edition (SFIS), according to the NSF-ISR SFIS Certification Audit Process.

NSF-ISR re-certified the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands to the SFIS on January 10, 2005. This report describes the continual annual follow-up Surveillance Audit designed to focus on changes in the standard, changes in operations, the management review system, and efforts at continuous improvement. In addition, a subset of SFI requirements were selected for detailed review. **This report describes surveillance audit upgrade to the SFI Standard 2010-2014.**

Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands manages 580,000 acres of forestland subject to certification.

“Maine's Public Reserved Lands ... are managed for a variety of resource values including recreation, wildlife, and timber. Recreational opportunities include visiting some of Maine's most outstanding natural features. Camping, hiking, hunting and fishing in secluded locations bring a closer understanding of our outdoor heritage...

... The Public Reserved Lands are managed for multiple-uses under a "dominant use" system which ensures that sensitive resources such as rare plants and backcountry recreation areas are not disturbed by more intensive management activities. The scope change of acres is this reflects an addition of 5,500 acres acquired by the Bureau in Amherst.

Source Maine BPL web site <http://www.maine.gov/doc/parks/programs/prl.html>

The certified forests are primarily “reserved” lands that are managed for the benefit of all Maine citizens. These lands are managed without state general fund appropriations, but are funded solely from sales of timber and leases. Nearly one-third of these lands are withdrawn from regular timber harvests, including lands protected as ecological reserves.

These lands are managed by a dedicated professional staff headquartered in Augusta with regional offices in Farmington, Bangor, and Ashland. The SFI Program of the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands is managed by Tom Charles, Chief of Silviculture.

SFIS Surveillance Audit Process

The surveillance audit was performed by NSF-ISR on September 9-10, 2010 by an audit team headed by Keri Yankus, Lead Auditor and including Dr. David Capen, Technical Specialist. Audit team members fulfill the qualification criteria for conducting SFIS Certification Audits contained in the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Audit Procedures and Qualifications (SFI APQ).

The scope of the SFIS Audit included the public lands administered by the Bureau of Parks and Lands throughout Maine. Forest practices that were the focus of field inspections included those within the Ashland Region that have been underway or completed since the previous field audit in that region, with a focus on operations that have taken place since last year's surveillance audit. In addition, a subset of SFI obligations to promote sustainable forestry practices, to seek legal compliance, and to incorporate continual improvement systems were reexamined during the audit. Use of the SFI logo and the requirement to provide a public of audit reports were also reviewed.

The objective of the audit was to assess continuing conformance and upgrade of the firm's SFI Program to the requirements of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Standard, 2010-2014 Edition. The published indicators of the 2010-2014 Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard were the basis for the certification review. No indicators were modified.

All of the SFI Performance Measures within Objective 8, 9,10,11,12 & 13 involving procurement of wood were outside of the scope of the Maine BPL's SFI program and were excluded from the scope of the SFI up-graded Audit. The following requirements were also deemed to be not applicable:

- Indicator 2.1.5, because planting is rarely done, and only on a very small scale, not to change composition;
- Performance Measure 2.5 and Indicator 2.5.1., because planting is rarely done; and
- Indicator 3.2.5, because Maine has published Best Management Practices (BMPs).

The review was governed by a detailed audit protocol designed to enable the audit team determine conformance with the applicable SFI requirements. The process included the assembly and review of audit evidence consisting of documents, interviews, and on-site inspections of ongoing or completed forest practices. Documents describing these activities were provided to the auditor in advance, and a sample of the available audit evidence was designated by the auditor for review.

The possible findings for specific SFI requirements included Full Conformance, Major Non-conformance, Minor Non-conformance, Opportunities for Improvement, and Practices that exceeded the Basic Requirements of the SFIS. Surveillance Audits generally focus on conformance issues and do not generally address exceptional practices.

Overview of Audit Findings

Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands' SFI Program was found to be in conformance and upgrade with the SFIS Standard at the time of the Surveillance Audit. The NSF-ISR SFI Certification Team issued one new non-conformances.

Minor Nonconformance 2010-01 Indicator 4.2.2 requires "A methodology to incorporate research results and field applications of biodiversity and ecosystem research into forest management decisions." The documentation of the wildlife program is weak; guidelines are somewhat out of date.

The NSF-ISR Audit team also issued one opportunity for improvement. This finding does not indicate a current deficiency, but served to alert Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands to an area that could be strengthened or which could merit future attention.

Opportunity for Improvement 2010-01: Indicator 16.1.1 Written statement of commitment to the SFI 2010-2014 Standard communicated through out the organization, particularly to facility and wood land managers, fiber sourcing staff and field foresters. There is an opportunity to improve the program to specify how the new standard is communicated with in the Integrated Resource Policy.

The audit team found that the SFI Standard is exceeded in the following areas:

- providing recreation and education opportunities for the public;
- Involvement in public land planning and management activities with appropriate governmental entities and the public.
- The visual management practices used to manage the impact of harvesting on visual quality are exceptional.

NSF's audit team used a variety of evidence to determine conformance. A general description of this evidence is provided below, organized by SFI 2010-2014 Objective.

Objective 1. Forest Management Planning - To broaden the implementation of sustainable forestry by ensuring long-term forest productivity and yield based on the use of the best scientific information available.

Summary of Evidence – The forest management plan for MEBPL and supporting documentation and the associated inventory data and growth models were the key evidence of conformance

Objective 2. Forest Productivity - To ensure long-term forest productivity, carbon storage and conservation of forest resources through prompt reforestation, soil conservation, afforestation and other measures.

Summary of Evidence – Field observations and records associated with each timber harvest were used to confirm practices. MEBPL has certain programs in these areas, for protection against insects, diseases, and for careful management of activities which could potentially impact soil and long-term productivity.

Objective 3. Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources - To protect water quality in streams, lakes and other water bodies.

Summary of Evidence – Field observations of a range of sites were the key evidence. Auditors visited the portions of many field sites that were close to water resources, based on a field sample that was oriented heavily towards such sites.

Objective 4. Conservation of Biological Diversity including Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value 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 habitat diversity and the conservation of forest plants and animals, including aquatic species.

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. Recreational use and esthetics were priority concerns where appropriate.

Objective 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.

Summary of Evidence – Field observations of completed operations, records of special sites, training records, and written protection plans were all assessed during the evaluation.

Objective 7. Efficient Use of Forest Resources - To promote the efficient use of forest resources.

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

Objective 14. Legal and Regulatory Compliance -

Compliance 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 15. Forestry Research, Science, and Technology - To support forestry research, science, and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based.

Summary of Evidence – Financial records were confirmed, and field sites were visited.

Objective 16. 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 logger and stakeholder interviews were the key evidence for this objective.

Objective 17. Community Involvement in the Practice of Sustainable Forestry -

To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry by encouraging the public and forestry community to participate in the commitment to sustainable forestry, and publicly report progress.

Summary of Evidence – Mailing lists, agendas for meetings, and selected summaries of comments were sufficient to assess the requirements.

Objective 18: Public Land Management Responsibilities -

To support and implement sustainable forest management on public lands.

Summary of Evidence – Interviews, review of policies and procedures, and review of correspondence were used to confirm the requirements.

Objective 19. Communications and Public Reporting - To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry by documenting progress and opportunities for improvement.

Summary of Evidence – Reports filed with SFI Inc. and the SFI Inc. website provided the key evidence.

Objective 20. Management Review and Continual Improvement - To promote continual improvement in the practice of sustainable forestry, and to monitor, measure, and report performance in achieving the commitment to sustainable forestry.

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. The SFI Team provided components of management review; minutes of meetings supplemented by interviews served to confirm compliance.

The next surveillance audit is scheduled for August 2011.

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 with the conservation of soil, air and water quality, biological diversity, wildlife and aquatic habitat, recreation, and aesthetics.

2. Responsible Practices

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

3. Reforestation and Productive Capacity

To provide for regeneration after harvest and maintain the productive capacity of the forestland base.

4. Forest Health and Productivity

To protect forests from uncharacteristic and economically or environmentally undesirable wildfire, pests, diseases, and other damaging agents and thus maintain and improve long-term forest health and productivity.

5. Long-Term Forest and Soil Productivity

To protect and maintain long-term forest and soil productivity.

6. Protection of Water Resources

To protect water bodies and riparian zones.

7. Protection of Special Sites and Biological Diversity

To manage forests and lands of special significance (biologically, geologically, historically or culturally important) in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities and to promote a diversity of wildlife habitats, forest types, and ecological or natural community types.

8. Legal Compliance

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

9. Continual Improvement

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

Source: Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) Standard, 2005–2009 Edition

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