

**Forest Management and Stump-to-Forest Gate Chain-of-Custody
Certification Evaluation Report for the:**

Saint John's Abbey, Order of Saint Benedict

**Conducted under auspices of the SCS Forest Conservation Program
SCS is an FSC Accredited Certification Body**

**CERTIFICATION REGISTRATION NUMBER
SCS-FM/COC-00100N**

Submitted to:

Saint John's Abbey, Order of Saint Benedict

Lead Author: Dr. Dennis Becker

Date of Field Audit: June 12, 2007

Date of Report: July 19, 2007

Certified: July 19, 2007

Updated: June 3, 2009

By:

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Organization of the Report

This report of the results of our evaluation is divided into two sections. Section A provides the public summary and background information that is required by the Forest Stewardship Council. This section is made available to the general public and is intended to provide an overview of the evaluation process, the management programs and policies applied to the forest, and the results of the evaluation. Section A will be posted on the SCS website (www.scs-certified.com) no less than 30 days after issue of the certificate. Section B contains more detailed results and information for the use of the Saint John's Abbey.

FOREWORD

Scientific Certification Systems, a certification body accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), was retained by Saint John's Abbey (SJA) to conduct a certification evaluation of its forest estate. Under the FSC/SCS certification system, forest management operations meeting international standards of forest stewardship can be certified as "well managed", thereby enabling use of the FSC endorsement and logo in the marketplace.

On June 12th, 2007, an interdisciplinary team of natural resource specialists was empanelled by SCS to conduct the evaluation. The team collected and analyzed written materials, conducted interviews and completed a 1 day field and office audit of the subject property as part of the certification evaluation. Upon completion of the fact-finding phase of the evaluation, the team determined conformance to the 56 FSC Criteria in order to determine whether award of certification was warranted.

This report is issued in support of a recommendation to award FSC-endorsed certification to Saint John's Abbey, for the management of its 1,484 acre forest estate. In the event that a certificate is awarded, Scientific Certification Systems will post this public summary of the report on its web site (www.scscertified.com).

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SECTION A- PUBLIC SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 FSC Data Request

Applicant entity	Saint John's Abbey, Order of Saint Benedict
Contact person	Thomas Kroll
Address	Saint John's Abbey and University, New Science Building 108, Collegeville, MN 56321-3000
Telephone	320-363-3126
Fax	320-363-3202
E-mail	tkroll@csbsju.edu
Certificate Number	SCS-FM/COC-00100N
Certificate/Expiration Date	July 19, 2007 – July 19, 2012
Certificate Type	single FMU
SLIMF <i>if applicable</i>	i) a small SLIMF certificate
Group Members <i>if applicable</i>	Not applicable
Number of FMU's <i>if applicable</i>	1
Number of FMUs in scope that are	
less than 100 ha in area	0
100 - 1000 ha in area	1
1000 - 10 000 ha in area	0
more than 10 000 ha in area	0
Location of certified forest area	
Latitude	W 94 degrees 23 minutes
Longitude	N 45 degrees 35 minutes
Forest zone	Temperate
Total forest area in scope of certificate which is included in FMUs that:	
are less than 100 ha in area	
are between 100 ha and 1000 ha in area	1,484 ac
meet the eligibility criteria as <i>low intensity</i> SLIMF FMUs	
Total forest area in scope of certificate which is:	
privately managed ¹	1,484 ac
state managed	
community managed ²	
Number of forest workers (including contractors) working in forest within scope of certificate	4 (2 full time; 2 part time) Also have a full time student during the summer and two to three work-study students during the winter.
Area of forest and non-forest land protected from commercial harvesting of timber and managed primarily for conservation objectives	Upland grass/shrub 204 ac; Restored prairie 56 ac; Restored oak savannah 11 ac; Marsh 200 ac; Shrub marsh 15 Total: 486 ac
Area of forest protected from commercial harvesting of timber and managed primarily for the	Sugarbush for maple syrup production, 29 ac

¹ The category of 'private management' includes state owned forests that are leased to private companies for management, e.g. through a concession system.

² A community managed forest management unit is one in which the management and use of the forest and tree resources is controlled by local communities.

production of NTFPs or services	
Area of forest classified as 'high conservation value forest'	1,484 ac
List of high conservation values present ³	HCVF a, b, and d from P9: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Forest area containing globally, regionally, or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity.</i> • <i>Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems.</i> • <i>Forest areas fundamental to meeting the basic need of local communities and/or critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity.</i>
Chemical pesticides used	Round-up, Stinger, Tordon RTU, Bitrex, Accord, Rodeo, Curtail, Escort, Plateau (Note: pesticides used primarily for invasive species control and in prairie management areas)
Total area of production forest (i.e. forest from which timber may be harvested)	1,484 ac
Area of production forest classified as 'plantation' for the purpose of calculating the Annual Accreditation Fee (AAF)	0 ac
Area of production forest regenerated primarily by replanting ⁴	Approximately 10% of ownership
Area of production forest regenerated primarily by natural regeneration	At least 90% of ownership
List of main commercial timber and non-timber species included in scope of certificate (botanical name and common trade name)	Red oak (<i>Quercus borealis</i>), white oak (<i>Quercus alba</i>), basswood (<i>Tilia Americana</i>), ash (<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>), maple (<i>Acer saccharum</i>), aspen (<i>Populus tremuloides</i> and <i>Populus grandidentata</i>), birch (<i>Betula papyrifera</i>), white pine (<i>Pinus strobus</i>)
Approximate annual allowable cut (AAC) of commercial timber	Oak: 26,130 cu ft Upland Hardwoods 15,884 cu ft Aspen 3,384 cu ft Lowland Hardwoods 2,040 cu ft Sugar Bush 1,102 cu ft Conifers 5,143 Total: 53,683 cu ft
Approximate annual commercial production of non-timber forest products included in the scope of the certificate, by product type	116 gallons of Maple Syrup (from 3,675 gallons of sap)
List of product categories included in scope of joint FM/COC certificate and therefore available for sale as FSC-certified products (include basic description of product - e.g. round wood, pulp wood, sawn timber, kiln-dried sawn timber, chips, resin, non-timber forest products, etc.)	Round wood, pulpwood, sawn timber, kiln-dried sawn timber, firewood, maple syrup

³ High conservation values should be classified following the numbering system given in the ProForest High Conservation Value Forest Toolkit (2003) available at www.ProForest.net

⁴ The area is the *total* area being regenerated primarily by planting, *not* the area which is replanted annually. NB this area may be different to the area defined as a 'plantation' for the purpose of calculating the Annual Accreditation Fee (AAF) or for other purposes.

Conversion Table English Units to Metric Units

Length Conversion Factors

<u>To convert from</u>	<u>to</u>	<u>multiply by</u>
mile (US Statute)	kilometer (km)	1.609347
foot (ft)	meter (m)	0.3048
yard (yd)	meter (m)	0.9144

Area Conversion Factors

<u>To convert from</u>	<u>to</u>	<u>multiply by</u>
square foot (sq ft)	square meter (sq m)	0.09290304
acre (ac)	hectare (ha)	0.4047

Volume Conversion Factors

Volume

<u>To convert from</u>	<u>to</u>	<u>multiply by</u>
cubic foot (cu ft)	cubic meter (cu m)	0.02831685
gallon (gal)	liter	4.546

1 acre	= 0.404686 hectares
1,000 acres	= 404.686 hectares
1 board foot	= 0.00348 cubic meters
1,000 board feet	= 3.48 cubic meters
1 cubic foot	= 0.028317 cubic meters
1,000 cubic feet	= 28.317 cubic meters

Breast height = 1.4 meters, or 4 1/2 feet, above ground level

Although 1,000 board feet is theoretically equivalent to 2.36 cubic meters, this is true only when a board foot is actually a piece of wood with a volume 1/12 of cubic foot. The conversion given here, 3.48 cubic meters, is based on the cubic volume of a log 16 feet long and 15 inches in diameter inside bark at the small end.

1.2.1 Environmental Context

The Saint John's Abbey (SJA) is located in central Minnesota and the temperate deciduous forest region. The forest is dominated by red oak (53% of 1997 inventory) with white oak, maple, basswood, ash, and aspen as additional component species. Saint John's Abbey is privately owned and operated by the Order of Saint Benedict.

The Saint John's Abbey was first recognized with FSC certification in April 2002 and in 2003 SJA transitioned from having its own individual certificate to being a member of a certified pool of lands managed through an FSC group certificate. In 2007, SJA applied to re-establish its own individual certificate.

The total land base for SJA is 2,445 acres. The forested portion of this ownership is 1,484 acres. SJA qualifies for the Small Low-Intensity Managed Forest (SLIMF) classification because the forest ownership is less than 1,000 hectares.

Over half of SJA's land is forested. The remaining open areas include restored prairie and oak savannah, marsh, and upland grass and shrub lands. The property also includes eight (8) lakes and ponds. The campus of Saint John's University is included in the Abbey's ownership. The Abbey's forest lies within the Hardwood Hills ecological subsection of

Minnesota as defined by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Ecological Classification System. SJA provides a block of contiguous forest within a landscape that is dominated by private agricultural ownership. The Abbey represents one of the largest forested areas in Stearns County, Minnesota.

The Minnesota Natural Heritage Database lists the Red-shouldered hawk, Cerulean warbler, and American ginseng as special concern species on the property. The Ram's-head lady's slipper is included in the herbarium collection at SJA, but field searches for the species have not found it on the property. Records of unusual species on the property include the bullfrog and the Humped bladderwort (an aquatic plant). Both of these species are generally not found in the region of SJA. The Abbey has incorporated management considerations for these species into its planning and practices and coordinates with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on reporting the discovery of any new occurrences.

1.2.2 Socioeconomic Context

The Saint John's Abbey, Order of Saint Benedict is a Benedictine monastery that was established in 1856. Since that time, the Abbey has utilized and managed the forest in the Benedictine tradition.

In addition to supporting the monastic community, SJA's forests also support the local and regional economy by providing employment and contracting opportunities for foresters, loggers, truckers, sawyers, and others. SJA also produces timber and non-timber products, including round wood, pulpwood, lumber, and maple syrup. SJA has a number of well-established relationships with local service providers as well as partnerships with other land managers and conservation groups. SJA offers its land for educational events for the public and natural resource professionals. There are forest trails available for public recreational use.

In 2005, the Abbey completed a review of the historic Native American land use of the property. The review included personal interviews and consultation with the Minnesota Historical Society. There are no known records of archaeological sites on the property. It is believed that Native Americans used the property for various purposes including as a place to collect maple syrup. The land was referred to as the "Indianbush" during the first years SJA was being established.

1.3 Forest Management Enterprise

1.3.1 Land Use

The Saint John's Abbey was established in 1856 and the land use includes forestlands as well as restored wetlands, oak savannah, prairie, and lakes. Over half of the land is forested. The campus of Saint John's University also lies within the Abbey's ownership. Some of the first forestry activities on the property included the planting of conifers, beginning in 1894. In 1933, SJA was classified as a state game refuge. SJA retains ownership of the lake

shorelines and has authority to restrict public use and to disallow motorized boats and motors of any kind on the lakes.

The first forest inventory and management plan for the property was done in 1949. The plan recommended an annual cut of 55,000 board feet and the use of individual tree selection. The 1976 plan recommended thinning of stands less than 70 years old and clearcutting or shelterwood cuts to regenerate older stands. In 1979, the *Land Use Task Force Committee Report* set forth principles for managing the land and policies for recreational use, reserve areas, agricultural uses and other activities. In 1985 a plan and inventory was completed to address the conifer planting on the property. The current *Land Management Plan for St. John's Abbey* was approved by the Abbot in 2003 and is updated annually with current harvesting and monitoring data.

Activities occurring on the property and addressed in the current management plan include timber harvesting, tree planting, maple syrup production, prescribed burning, prairie and oak savannah management, wildlife management, educational activities, non-motorized recreation, hunting and fishing.

1.3.2 Land Outside Scope of Certification

In addition to the 1,484 acres of forestland in Stearns County, SJA also owns residential parcels of 54 acres in Beltrami County and less than 1 acre in Crow Wing County, Minnesota. These properties are not included in the assessment as they are lakeshore lots used as residential retreats and are not part of SJA's current forest management activities and planning. SJA recently purchased a conservation easement on property adjacent to the University forest to prevent residential development from encroaching upon forestlands and to preserve the current land use on the property. The terms of the conservation easement do not convey any forest management rights or authority to SJA.

1.4 Management Plan

The current *Land Management Plan for St. John's Abbey* was approved by the Abbot in 2003 and is updated annually with current harvesting and monitoring data. The plan is available in its entirety at:

http://www.csbsju.edu/arboretum/land_steward/land_steward_plansprojectsandrecords.htm

1.4.1 Management Objectives

Since 1857, the management objectives for SJA have included managing for solitude, recreation, natural beauty, forest products, a beautiful setting for the monastic and education institutions, and as a teaching resource for environmental education. The current management plan includes 17 specific goals. The goals include providing a sustainable harvest of forest products, attaining green certification to validate Benedictine stewardship values, incorporating education objectives, regenerating oak stands, managing the deer herd and other wildlife, monitoring growth and other indicators, having a skilled land management crew, and being prepared to respond to natural disasters such as insect infestations, diseases,

fire and windstorms. The management plan also states that the Order of Saint Benedict “endorses the principles and criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council and intends to use these principles and criteria in conjunction with our goals to assure that the Order’s lands continue to be well managed long into the future.”

1.4.2 Forest Composition

The forests at SJA were most recently inventoried in 1997. Previous inventories were completed in 1949 and 1987. The 1997 inventory found that red oak sawtimber constituted 53% of the volume, white oak 13%, maple 12%, aspen 7%, basswood 6%, ash 4%, and other species 4% of the volume. This inventory information indicates a decline in red oak volume from 58% of the total volume in 1987, declines in aspen and birch, stable white oak and basswood volumes, and an increase in ash. The Abbey’s oak forest is mature with most stands 100-130 years old, and a successional transition to northern hardwoods is occurring. Oak management efforts and the promotion of oak regeneration are intended to manage the pace of this trend.

1.4.3 Silvicultural Systems

The Saint John’s Abbey has been actively managing the forest since 1857. Beginning in 1949, the silvicultural system transitioned from the use of clear cutting methods to selective harvesting. Shelterwood systems are being used to regenerate oak and began in earnest in 1991. The prescription for this treatment is to retain 60 square feet of basal area per acre as a seed source. Group selection may also be used where appropriate. It is expected to take 5 to 20 years to establish a well-stocked oak stand using this method. Prescribed fire and other treatments are used as needed to reduce understory competition, and planting may be used to supplement natural regeneration. The management plan indicates a rotation age for oak of 100 years and the objective is to regenerate at least 10 acres of oak per year for the next 60 years to maintain the oak cover type. Sugar maple and basswood stands are managed through selection or group selection. Intermediate cuttings and timber stand improvements are also used in immature stands. A 100 year rotation is used for red oak-sugar maple-basswood stands. Aspen is managed through clear cutting, and stands are cut when they are mature at 40 to 60 years. Lowland hardwoods including black ash dominated stands are managed on an 80 year rotation for high quality sawtimber when site quality is sufficient. There are some conifer cover types including planted stands established from 1894 to 1980. These stands are managed for winter cover for deer and through thinning, pruning and release. Harvesting at Saint John’s Abbey is conducted during the winter to protect soil resources and minimize oak wilt.

1.4.4 Management Systems

The forest is managed on a system of six compartments with three major vegetation classes and approximately 200 individual stands. There are two full time SJA employees including the Forest Manager and a Forestry Technician. Two part-time employees are added in the winter to assist with logging operations. Graduate and undergraduate students are employed throughout the year to conduct trail maintenance, sensitive species and forest monitoring, and

other related projects as needed. The Abbey also contracts with consulting foresters and other natural resource professionals for specific projects such as inventory work, resource evaluations, ecological studies, and planning.

1.4.5 Monitoring System

The monitoring system for the SJA includes records for timber growth, stocking, regeneration, overstory and understory composition, non-timber forest products, non-forested habitats and wetlands, soil characteristics, and pest conditions. Harvesting volumes, deer harvests and tree seed crops are monitored annually and the results are reported in the publicly available management plan posted on the web. Records are also kept of annual maple sap and syrup production.

1.4.6 Estimate of Maximum Sustainable Yield

The allowable harvest calculation is based upon the average site index of the respective cover type and the estimated expected annual growth. Publications referenced for these calculations include the *USFS General Technical Report NC-36, Manager's Handbook for Aspen*, and *Managing Hardwoods in the Northern Lake States Region* (Thomas Crow). Acreage subtractions are made for buffer areas.

1.4.7 Estimated, Current and Projected Production

The SJA forests are divided into three major vegetation classes with associated allowable annual harvest calculations based on site index and regional appropriate publications for estimating annual growth. Harvest volumes are tracked for these vegetation classes and can be compared to the allowable cut calculations for evaluation of harvesting levels.

Table 1. Annual Harvest Calculations

Vegetation Class	Description	Allowable annual harvest	Actual Annual Harvest (average 2001-2006)	% of allowable annual harvest (average (2001-2006))
Hardwoods with usual harvest restrictions	Usual restrictions include water quality and forest health considerations	40,311 cu ft	30,740 cu ft	76%
Hardwoods with special harvest restrictions	Special restrictions include scenic buffers, teaching areas, and restoration sites.	8,229 cu ft	0	0%
Conifers with usual harvest restrictions	(see above)	5,143 cu ft	1,003 cu ft	20%
Total Averages:		53,683 cu ft	31,743 cu ft	60%

From 2004 -2006, the annual harvest has stabilized between 18,000 and 20,000 cu ft and about 35% of the allowable annual harvest. This harvesting level is expect to remain relatively stable with the management plan providing guidance for short-term salvage for events such as wind storms or insect outbreaks. The management plan directs that if the allowable harvest is exceeded because of short term needs it would then be recalculated to a lower level to allow the growth the rebound.

1.4.8 Chemical Pesticide Use

The Abbey has a pesticide use policy that includes minimizing the use of herbicides and insecticides, favoring individual target stem applications, and integrated pest management. Pesticides must be used only under the direction of qualified applicators and according to label instructions with approved safety practices. The Land Management Committee is involved with approving pesticide usage. The following table includes a list of chemical pesticides used by SJA. None of the pesticides used by SJA are included on the FSC’s list of “highly hazardous” pesticides.

Table 2. Pesticide Use

Name	Use	FSC Guidance
Round-up	Site-prep and invasive species control	None
Stinger	Invasive species and noxious weed control	None
Tordon RTU	Invasive species control	None
Bitrex	Deer browse control	None
Accord	Invasive species control	None
Rodeo	Prairie Management	None
Curtail	Prairie Management	None
Escort	Prairie Management	None
Plateau	Prairie Management	None

1.5 SLIMF Qualifications

The Forest Management Unit is less than 1,000 hectares in size and thereby meets the qualification as a small forest.

2.0 GUIDELINES/STANDARDS EMPLOYED

As the applicant forest property is located in central Minnesota, the certification evaluation that is the subject of this report was conducted against the duly-endorsed Lake States-Central Hardwoods Region Version 3 (Accredited August 5, 2002 and last modified February 10, 2005). The standard is available at the FSC-US web site (www.fscus.org) or is available, upon request, from Scientific Certification Systems (www.scscertified.com).

3.0 THE CERTIFICATION ASSESSMENT PROCESS

3.1 Assessment Dates

The assessment was completed June 11th – 13th, 2007 with the field assessment occurring on June 12th, 2007.

Preliminary Evaluation:

See Appendix 1 of the Full Report for the Preliminary Evaluation Audit Report

Main Evaluation:

3.2 Assessment Team

Dr. Dennis Becker, Team Leader: Dr. Becker is an Assistant Professor of Environment & Natural Resource Policy at the University of Minnesota in the Department of Forest Resources. He is a social scientist with training and professional experience in the field of social impacts of forestry in the rural U.S. Dr. Becker served as the FSC team social scientist on the evaluations of the Minnesota DNR (4.5 million acres), Washington State DNR (2.1 million acres), Potlatch Hybrid Poplar Plantation (17,000 acres), and White Mountain Apache Tribe Timberlands (1.8 million acres). Dr. Becker is a recognized expert at interpreting the socio-economic aspects of the FSC standard and applying it to rural U.S. communities. Dr. Becker received his Ph.D. in 2001 from the University of Idaho.

Kathryn Fernholz, Team Member: Kathryn Fernholz is Executive Director of Dovetail Partners, a non-profit organization based in Minneapolis that works on issues related to sustainable forestry and responsible trade. Kathryn is a forester with training and experience in silviculture, forest management in the Lake States region, and private lands forestry. Kathryn has worked with forest certification since 1999, including as a team member for assessments in Oregon and New York and as the project manager for a group certification program in Minnesota. Kathryn is an authority on forest certification for small, non-industrial properties. Kathryn has a B.S. in Forest Resources from the University of Minnesota, College of Natural Resources.

3.3 Assessment Process

3.3.1 Itinerary

June 11th – Pre-assessment team meeting

June 12th – Field assessment at Saint John's Abbey

June 13th – Complete stakeholder consultation and post-assessment team meeting

3.3.4 Sites Visited

See sections 3.3.1

3.3.5 Stakeholder Consultation

Pursuant to SCS and FSC protocols, consultation with a broad cross-section of stakeholders was an integral component of the evaluation process throughout the Full Evaluation process in June, 2007. Consultation took place prior to, concurrent with, and following the field evaluation. The following were distinct purposes of the consultations undertaken:

- To solicit input from affected parties as to the strengths and weaknesses of SJA's management of its forests relative to the FSC Lake States-Central Hardwoods Regional Standard, and the nature of the interactions between SJA forest managers and the surrounding communities.
- To solicit input on whether SJA has consulted with stakeholders regarding identifying any high conservation value forests.

Principal stakeholder groups of relevance to this evaluation were identified based upon results from previous assessments, lists of stakeholders provided by SJA forest managers, and additional stakeholder contacts from other sources (e.g., chair of the regional FSC working group). The following types of groups and individuals were determined to be principal stakeholders based on the private nature and small size of the forest lands:

- SJA employees engaged in forest management operations, including monks and temporary employees.
- Contractors
- Adjacent property owners
- Tribal representatives if applicable
- Members of the FSC Lake States Working Group who developed the standard
- Local and regionally-based environmental organizations and conservationists
- Forest industry groups and organizations
- Purchasers of SJA FSC-endorsed products
- Local jurisdictional bodies such as County Commissioners
- Local, State and Federal regulatory agency personnel
- Other relevant groups

The following stakeholder consultation activities were undertaken:

- Public notification of the FSC audit was sent to all members of the FSC Lake States Work Group. The public notice was sent May 16, 2007, that announced the timing of the field component of the full evaluation. The notice solicited comments and informed interested parties as to the availability of the FSC dispute resolution process. It also solicited comments on matters related to FSC Principle 9, High Conservation Value Forests.
- A second public notice was sent to a smaller designated group of individuals identified as particularly relevant stakeholders. The notice was sent on June 5, 2007 again announcing the timing of the field audit and asking for feedback directly to the

- During the one day field component, the audit team conducted stakeholder consultations with available employees. The audit team also conducted phone interviews with additional stakeholders after completion of the field component.
- No written comments were received.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Consultation</u>
Danny Vogel	Neighbor; SJA Forest Technician	Interviewed
Gary Pflueger	Neighbor; Head person for SJA Grounds; part-time logging crew member	Not available, notification sent
Marcia Rapatz and Greg Nolan	Snowy Pines Reforestation contractor	Not available, notification sent
Rich Froehle	SJA Grounds Dept; fuel wood buyer	Interviewed
Peter Bundy	Consulting Forester; previous FSC certificate holder	Interviewed
Tom Haeg	Judge; volunteer chair of the Arboretum Advisory Council's Land Committee	Interviewed
Derek Larson	Chair, Saint John's University Environmental Studies Dept	Interviewed
Fr. Bruce Wollmering	Chair, SJA Forest and Lands Committee; Arboretum Advisory Council Member	Interviewed
Matt Norton	Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy	Interviewed
Gordon Bailey	Arboretum Advisory Council	Notification sent
Steve Saupe	Neighbor; Arboretum Advisory Council; Saint John's University botany professor	Notification sent
Tom Wicks	Neighbor; Arboretum Advisory Council; MN Deer Hunters Association	Notification sent
Greg Haeg and Megan McNair	Neighbors	Notification sent
Tim and Kelly Haeg	Neighbors	Notification sent

3.3.5.1 Summary of Stakeholder Concerns and Perspectives and Responses from the Team Where Applicable

A summary of the comments on the standard (where applicable) and major perspectives and concerns expressed by the stakeholders that were consulted during the course of this evaluation includes:

Economic and Social Concerns

Comment/Concern	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arboretum uses too many volunteers when it can afford to pay in assisting with management of the University forest. 	Comment noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerned that the Arboretum could become too philanthropic and active in land development tied to building construction and conversion of forest to non-productive uses. 	Comment noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abbeys have been very good neighbors with strong local connection to communities 	Comment noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage increased efforts to purchase the "Well's" property between the Order of Saint Benedictine and Saint John's Abbey in order to retain critical landscape features. 	Comment noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal ownership of the Abbey forest lands is questioned to the degree that the original Homesteader claim made to the property in 1857 was accomplished by squatting on lands owned at the time by the State of Minnesota. 	No documentation was provided to the audit team to confirm; MN became a state in 1858, after the Abbey was established. Abbey first moved to the current site in 1864. The 1856-1864 location on the Mississippi River in what is not St Cloud was given up due to clouded title.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The forest is an outstanding resource for the University as a living classroom, for historical purposes, and personal use. 	Comment noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The forest is a "defining feature" of the University with numerous students educated through the curriculum, research, internships, etc. 	Comment noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursuit of FSC certification is demonstration of the SJA/OSB land ethic. 	Comment noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SJA Forest and Lands Committee does a good job coordinating forest-related activities and keeping abreast of overall actions. The committee is comfortable delegating day-to-day operations to the forest manager. 	Comment noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some neighbors are concerned about the aesthetics and siting of a wind power generation facility. In response, two public meetings have been conducted to solicit feedback and will play a large role in deciding whether and how to proceed with the project. 	Comment noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Past OSHA violations occurred regarding harvesting operations and equipment. Through inspections since the last audit, actions have been taken to mitigate problems 	Comment noted.

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Environmental Concerns

Comment/Concern	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerned that forest reforestation efforts may conflict with a dense deer herd, including deer harvesting policies. 	Comment noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would like to see retention of old growth stands in years past with recruitment now. 	Comment noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would like to see the recent 100 acres donated to the SJA turned into an organic farm instead of conversion of all the acres back to natural forests. 	Comment noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a very deliberate effort to manage for the future and the forest manager continues a tradition of very careful management. 	Comment noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management continuity has been especially strong with the current forest manager with intentional and clear objectives for future forests. 	Comment noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The annual deer harvest has been cancelled the past two years to appease local concerns, though only about 25 deer per year are harvested; neighbors perceive too many deer being killed contributing to declining hunting experiences outside the SJA forest. 	SJA Deer Harvest Records indicate between 18 and 45 deer killed by hunters annually between 1997 and 2005, excepting the years of cancelled hunts in 2003 and 2006.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuity of forest management has improved substantially since the previous audit. Forest management practices have become professionalized. 	Comment noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SJA is one of the only land managers with sites where they have done and are doing gypsy moth management. 	Comment noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have observed good management practices over the years. 	Comment noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forest management is very transparent and in line with the University ethic. 	Comment noted.

3.4 Total Time Spent on audit

Approximately 2 total auditor days was expended in field work, 2 auditor days in document review prior to the field work, 1 auditor days in advanced stakeholder consultation, and 2 auditor days in writing the draft report. The total time spend on the audit was 7 auditor days.

3.5 Process of Determining Conformance

Consistent with SCS Forest Conservation Program evaluation protocols, for scoring purposes the team collectively assigned weights of relative importance to the Criteria within each of

the ten Principles. Scores were assigned to each Criterion at the completion of the field phase and importance-weighted means (average scores) were calculated for each Principle. Scoring takes place on a 100-point scale, using a consensus process amongst all members of the evaluation team. Scores less than 80 points connote performance in which there is discernible non-conformance to the breadth of a Criterion. For any Criterion for which the team assigns a score below 80 points, the team is required to specify one or more Corrective Action Requests (CARs), also known as “conditions.” If the weighted average score of any Principle is less than 80, certification cannot be awarded and, instead, the evaluation team must stipulate one or more Major Corrective Action Requests (Major CARs), also known as “pre-conditions.” The evaluation team also retains the option to specify “discretionary CARs” even when the score for the pertinent Criterion is above 80 points. This may occur when, overall, the Criterion was highly scored but there are issues within the scope of an Criterion where important improvements are, in the judgment of the team, necessary even though these deficiencies are not severe enough to move the score below 80 for the totality of the Criterion. For certification to be awarded, the importance-weighted average score for each of the 10 FSC Principles must be 80 points or higher.

Interpretations of Preconditions (Major CARs), CARs and Recommendations

Preconditions/Major CARs: These are corrective actions that must be resolved or closed out prior to award of the certificate. These arise when the importance-weighted average score for a Principle is less than 80 points or where there is observed non-compliance with a “pre-emptive” indicator (e.g., use of GMOs is a “fatal flaw” that precludes award of certification regardless of the strength of the overall management program).

CARs: Corrective actions must be closed out within a specified time period of award of the certificate. Certification is contingent on the certified operations response to the CAR within the stipulated time frame.

Recommendations: These are suggestions that the audit team concludes would help the company move even further towards exemplary status. Action on the recommendations is voluntary and does not affect the maintenance of the certificate. Recommendations can be changed to CARs if performance with respect to the criterion triggering the recommendation falls into non-compliance.

4.0 RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION

Table 4.1 below, contains the evaluation team’s findings as to the strengths and weaknesses of the subject forest management operation relative to the FSC Principles of forest stewardship. The table also presents the corrective action request (car) numbers related to each principle.

Table 4.1 Notable strengths and weaknesses of the forest management enterprise relative to the P&C

Principle/Subject Area	Strengths Relative to the Standard	Weaknesses Relative to the Standard	CAR/REC #s
P1: FSC Commitment and Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SJA has been involved with FSC certification since their first forest management assessment in 2001. The forest manager has participated in the regional working group. Management planning and harvesting indicate compliance with the FSC standard. No evidence of legal non-compliance was found. SJA has been participating in FSC certification since 2001 and has demonstrated a commitment to the FSC's Principles and Criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SJA's continued participation in FSC certification has been debated due to concerns over costs and a lack of clearly demonstrated benefits. SJA has a unique opportunity to communicate the benefits of FSC certification through their extensive use of timber and non-timber forest products derived from their forest (e.g., furniture, construction, maple syrup, pottery). 	<p>REC 2007.1 <i>To explore additional opportunities to enhance awareness, understanding and support of the FSC commitment at the Abbey and among stakeholders and interested parties. SJA could consider alternative forms of communication on campus, use of marketing materials, and gain clarification on permissible activities pertaining to the chain of custody process.</i></p>
P2: Tenure & Use Rights & Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SJA has open communications with the adjacent landowners and community stakeholders and no disputes currently exist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There exists no documentation of the informal dispute resolution process to prevent complications and provide guidance. 	<p>REC 2007.2 <i>Adopt an informal dispute resolution process that could be documented in the management plan or related materials and be used in the event of community/neighbor disputes and in advance of more formal legal mechanisms of resolving disputes.</i></p>

<p>P3: Indigenous Peoples' Rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The 140 year history of land use by Saint John's Abbey is an important part of the history of the forest. The forest manager has made efforts to gather the written records of this history and document it in the management plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional benefit could be gained by mapping the known historic and/or cultural sites in the forest, tracking harvest operations relative to such sites, protecting sites of special concerns, and/or incorporation into existing educational programs. 	<p>REC 2007.3 <i>Map known historic or cultural sites in the forest such as old roads, former building locations, or other special sites. This data could be included in the GIS and protected as sensitive information as necessary.</i></p>
<p>P4: Community Relations & Workers' Rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SJA has demonstrated a commitment to supporting the local community through its contracting and hiring practices and the public benefits of providing recreational opportunities and the ecological services of wildlife habitat and water quality protections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The quantifiable economic benefits to the local community of the forest and associated products are not readily known. 	<p>REC 2007.4 <i>Evaluate the economic impact of forest operations and associated product manufacturing to the region and community in terms of jobs created, wood products, recreational opportunities and/or other indicators. This information could be communicated to stakeholders and interested parties. The evaluation may also identify opportunities for SJA to further its engagement in the local economy.</i></p>

<p>P5: Benefits from the Forest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SJA has been cutting below the annual allowable cut in recent years and is working to regenerate oak stands to address the age class imbalance and to retain the oak cover type on the property. Since 1991, shelterwood cuts have been the silviculture system that has been used. SJA has also implemented a deer hunting season. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The shelterwood cuts have resulted in high numbers of oak seedlings, but it has been challenging to retain the oak and to have it reach sufficient height. Research indicates that it may take 30 years for a shelterwood treatment to result in the establishment of the new stand, thus actions taken today are considered critical and must be clearly documented to identify relevant alternative or additional actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ REC 2007.5 <i>Explore the use of shearing (or brush cutting) of the understory to promote vigorous resprouting of oak regeneration. Consider increased use of understory planting of oak, and deer exclosures using economical means (e.g., plastic fencing) as a way to reduce mortality. A strategic plan could be developed to prioritize sites and their treatments, and to identify opportunities to replicate treatments and set targets for results.</i> ▪ REC 2007.6 <i>SJA may also consider documenting more clearly in management plans thresholds of acceptable regeneration along with contingency plans for lack of progress in meeting goals.</i>
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<p>P6: Environmental Impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SJA is a partner on the Avon Hills Initiative to conserve the working landscape of the region through conservation easements and land purchases. SJA has completed an ecological assessment and uses the Ecological Classification System developed by the DNR. The property has been periodically evaluated for RTE species and the management plan records information about red shouldered hawks and cerulean warblers. The plan and management activities address common and rare habitats, wetlands and water resources, and soil resources. There are two natural areas at SJA that are reserved from active management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None noted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪
<p>P7: Management Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The SJA management plan comprehensively addresses the requirements P7. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None noted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪

P8: Monitoring & Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The management plan outlines monitoring and record keeping. Deer harvests, maple syrup production, oak regeneration, and seed crops are monitored annually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring of economic performance and budget planning is not formalized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪
P9: Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In 2006, SJA completed an assessment of HCVEs and the requirements of Principle 9. The assessment included consultation and the result is that the entire forest ownership constitutes an HCVE on the basis of being a regionally rare habitat that has been identified on the Natural Heritage Database, as an intact forest block within a predominantly agricultural landscape (refugia), and for the social values associated with the forest's connections to the monastic religious traditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None noted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪

4.2 Preconditions

Preconditions are major corrective action requests that are placed on a forest management operation after the initial evaluation and before the operation is certified. Certification cannot be awarded if open preconditions exist.

No preconditions were placed on Saint John’s Abbey during the initial evaluation.

5.0 CERTIFICATION DECISION

5.1 Certification Recommendation

As determined by the full and proper execution of the SCS *Forest Conservation Program* evaluation protocols, the evaluation team hereby recommends that Saint John’s Abbey be awarded FSC certification as a “Well-Managed Forest”. Saint John’s Abbey has demonstrated that their system of management is capable of ensuring that all of the requirements of the FSC Lake States-Central Hardwood Regional Standard are met over the forest area covered by the scope of the evaluation. Saint John’s Abbey has also demonstrated that the described system of management is being implemented consistently over the forest area covered by the scope of the certificate.

5.2 Initial Corrective Action Requests and Recommendations

Background/Justification: SJA has been participating in FSC certification since 2001 and has demonstrated a commitment to the FSC’s Principles and Criteria. SJA has a unique opportunity to communicate the benefits of FSC certification through their extensive use of timber and non-timber forest products derived from their forest (e.g., furniture, construction, maple syrup, pottery). To further communicate the impacts and benefits and to secure this commitment, SJA could enhance the use of signs, posters, brochures, inclusion in the annual report or other methods of communicating about FSC to campus visitors, students, alumni, and others.	
REC 2007.1	<i>To explore additional opportunities to enhance awareness, understanding and support of the FSC commitment at the Abbey and among stakeholders and interested parties. SJA could consider alternative forms of communication on campus, use of marketing materials, and gain clarification on permissible activities pertaining to the chain of custody process.</i>
Reference	<i>FSC Criterion 1.6</i>

Background/Justification: SJA has open communications with the adjacent landowners and community stakeholders, and no disputes currently exist. There exists no documentation of the informal dispute resolution process to prevent complications and provide guidance.	
REC 2007.2	<i>Adopt an informal dispute resolution process that could be</i>

	<i>documented in the management plan or related materials and be used in the event of community/neighbor disputes and in advance of more formal legal mechanisms of resolving disputes.</i>
Reference	<i>FSC Criterion 2.3</i>

Background/Justification: The 140 year history of land use by Saint John’s Abbey is an important part of the history of the forest. The forest manager has made efforts to gather the written records of this history and document it in the management plan. Additional benefit could be gained by mapping the known historic and/or cultural sites in the forest, tracking harvest operations relative to such sites, protecting sites of special concerns, and/or incorporation into existing educational programs.	
REC 2007.3	<i>Map known historic or cultural sites in the forest such as old roads, former building locations, or other special sites. This data could be included in the GIS and protected as sensitive information, as necessary.</i>
Reference	<i>FSC Criterion 3.3a</i>

Background/Justification: SJA has demonstrated a commitment to supporting the local community through its contracting and hiring practices and the public benefits of providing recreational opportunities and the ecological services of wildlife habitat and water quality protections. However, the quantifiable economic benefit to the local community of the forest and associated products is not readily known.	
REC 2007.4	<i>Evaluate the economic impact of forest operations and associated product manufacturing to the region and community in terms of jobs created, wood products, recreational opportunities and/or other indicators. This information could be communicated to stakeholders and interested parties. The evaluation may also identify opportunities for SJA to further its engagement in the local economy.</i>
Reference	<i>FSC Indicator 4.1.d</i>

Background/Justification: SJA has been cutting below the annual allowable cut in recent years and is working to regenerate oak stands to address the age class imbalance and to retain the oak cover type on the property. Since 1991, shelterwood cuts have been the silviculture system that has been used. SJA has also implemented a deer hunting season. The shelterwood cuts have resulted in high numbers of oak seedlings, but it has been challenging to retain the oak and to have it reach sufficient height. Research indicates that it may take 30 years for a shelterwood treatment to result in the establishment of the new stand, thus actions taken today are considered critical and must be clearly documented to identify relevant alternative or additional actions. To increase the opportunities for successful oak regeneration, SJA could consider additional understory treatments, establishing research or monitoring studies, and/or additional deer control methods.	
REC 2007.5	<i>Explore the use of shearing (or brush cutting) of the understory to</i>

	<i>promote vigorous resprouting of oak regeneration. Consider increased use of understory planting of oak, and deer exclosures using economical means (e.g., plastic fencing) as a way to reduce mortality. A strategic plan could be developed to prioritize sites and their treatments, and to identify opportunities to replicate treatments and set targets for results.</i>
REC 2007.6	<i>SJA may also consider documenting more clearly in management plans thresholds of acceptable regeneration along with contingency plans for lack of progress in meeting goals.</i>
Reference	<i>FSC Criterion 5.6a</i>

6.0 SURVEILLANCE EVALUATIONS

6.1 2009 ANNUAL AUDIT

6.1.1 Assessment Dates

The annual audit occurred on June 3, 2009. Approximately 1.5 person days were spent on the surveillance evaluation, including time spent on auditing documents and records, interviewing stakeholders, and carrying out field work.

6.1.2 Assessment Personnel

Kyle Meister, M.F. – Lead auditor and Certification Forester with Scientific Certification Systems. Recent audits include the Mendocino Redwood Company’s Resource Manager Program, Michigan DNR, Trout Mountain Forestry, Collins-Lakeview, Humboldt Redwood Company, Los Olivos y Otros, Fort Lewis, and the Minnesota Wood Education Project. He holds a B.S. in Natural Resource Ecology and Management and a B.A. in Spanish from the University of Michigan. He recently completed a Master of Forestry degree at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. He has experience as an environmental educator and natural resource consultant in the U.S., Mexico, Ecuador, Costa Rica, and Colombia.

6.1.3 Assessment Process

The auditor reviewed documents, interviewed SJA personnel and third-party stakeholders, and visited several field locations with the SJA forester in order to assess SJA’s conformance with the FSC Principles and Criteria.

The sites visited within SJA’s single FMU include:

Individual Tree Selection System site – Maple, Basswood, Ash, Red elm, declining oaks

- Site close to road – managed for aesthetics
- Several old oaks dying, some gaps created that are large enough for oak and shade tolerant hardwoods to regenerate.

White Pine – Red Pine and mixed hardwood thinning

- Thin to favor healthy pines, hardwoods removed incidentally for safety and firewood
- SJA uses handfelling and owns a John Deer 648D Turbo Skidder equipped with a grapple.
- Skidder has been stored on landing site since April and was leaking (See CAR 2009.1).

Sugarbush

- <30 acres in size
- Two sites, alternate between sites each year
- Monks, SJU students, arboretum staff, and professors participate in management
- Grade school students and other community members

Oak thinning

- Was site of 75 year old clearcut that grew back

Oak Shelterwood – mesic site

- Testing understory management strategies
 - Prescribed brush burning
 - Ironwood and *Rubus* spp. competition
 - Tubed seedlings
 - Fencing
 - SJA is considering more fencing and using rotochopping Ironwood
 - Selection of cut trees based on basal area target and seed trees

6.1.4 Status of open Corrective Action Requests and Recommendations

SJA had no open CARs at the time of the 2009 annual audit. There were 6 open recommendations from the 2007 recertification audit. SCS and SJA spent much of the office time reviewing SJA's response to these recommendations.

Background/Justification: SJA has been participating in FSC certification since 2001 and has demonstrated a commitment to the FSC's Principles and Criteria. SJA has a unique opportunity to communicate the benefits of FSC certification through their extensive use of timber and non-timber forest products derived from their forest (e.g., furniture, construction, maple syrup, pottery). To further communicate the impacts and benefits and to secure this commitment, SJA could enhance the use of signs, posters, brochures, inclusion in the annual report or other methods of communicating about FSC to campus visitors, students, alumni, and others.

REC 2007.1	<i>To explore additional opportunities to enhance awareness, understanding and support of the FSC commitment at the Abbey and among stakeholders and interested parties. SJA could consider alternative forms of communication on campus, use of marketing materials, and gain clarification on permissible activities pertaining to the chain of custody process.</i>
Reference	<i>FSC Criterion 1.6</i>
SJU Response: SJA has an annual report on the Arboretum with information on its FSC certification, as well as a section on its website devoted to its certification. The SJA Forest manager is a guest lecturer at SJU and mentions the FSC certification process during his talks. In field days at the sugarbush, SJA discusses FSC certification. SJA's educational programs reach nearly 10,000 people per year, most of whom receive some piece of information on SJA's certification.	
Disposition of REC: SJA includes much information on its FSC certification in its educational outreach activities, which can be considered an effective marketing tool. This REC can be closed.	

Background/Justification: SJA has open communications with the adjacent landowners and community stakeholders, and no disputes currently exist. There exists no documentation of the informal dispute resolution process to prevent complications and provide guidance.	
REC 2007.2	<i>Adopt an informal dispute resolution process that could be documented in the management plan or related materials and be used in the event of community/neighbor disputes and in advance of more formal legal mechanisms of resolving disputes.</i>
Reference	<i>FSC Criterion 2.3</i>
SJU Response: SJA has not prepared any formal response to this recommendation. The property is well surveyed and boundaries are marked. Zoning could be an issue in the future, for which a legal process already exists in the county. SJA/SJU has been buying conservation easements on some of the surrounding properties in an effort to conserve the rural nature of the area. There is also an existing formal dispute process through the SJU council, which handles many landuse issues on the campus. SJA holds many neighborhood dinners for outreach, sometimes during which current land management issues, such as allowing hunting, are discussed. Disputes are all different by nature and a case by case basis works better for SJA. For example, with the deer hunting issues, SJA consults with MN DNR scientists, who monitor local deer populations and provide advice on herd management based on science.	
Disposition of REC: This REC can be closed.	

Background/Justification: The 140 year history of land use by Saint John's Abbey is an important part of the history of the forest. The forest manager has made efforts to gather the written records of this history and document it in the management plan. Additional benefit could be gained by mapping the known historic and/or cultural sites in the forest, tracking harvest operations relative to such sites, protecting sites of special concerns, and/or incorporation into existing educational programs.	
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REC 2007.3	<i>Map known historic or cultural sites in the forest such as old roads, former building locations, or other special sites. This data could be included in the GIS and protected as sensitive information, as necessary.</i>
Reference	<i>FSC Criterion 3.3a</i>
SJU Response: SJA has found evidence of old roads, has GPS'd some of them and maintains them as trails. One old shack and an arch have been documented, but not GPS'd and included in a GIS layer. There are many historical records at SJU and in Colledgeville on geography, neighbors, Indians, plants, buildings, and other attributes.	
Disposition of REC: This REC remains OPEN.	

Background/Justification: SJA has demonstrated a commitment to supporting the local community through its contracting and hiring practices and the public benefits of providing recreational opportunities and the ecological services of wildlife habitat and water quality protections. However, the quantifiable economic benefit to the local community of the forest and associated products is not readily known.	
REC 2007.4	<i>Evaluate the economic impact of forest operations and associated product manufacturing to the region and community in terms of jobs created, wood products, recreational opportunities and/or other indicators. This information could be communicated to stakeholders and interested parties. The evaluation may also identify opportunities for SJA to further its engagement in the local economy.</i>
Reference	<i>FSC Indicator 4.1.d</i>
SJU Response: SJA has not taken any action on pursuing an evaluation of the forest and processing operations. However, the forest manager suggested that he would ask one of the economics professors for a student to work on this as a senior project.	
On the other hand, SJA has been investigating woody biomass alternatives both on campus and locally.	
Disposition of REC: SJA has identified an opportunity in woody biomass locally. However, a broader scale economic evaluation as identified in the REC has yet to be realized. This REC remains OPEN.	

Background/Justification: SJA has been cutting below the annual allowable cut in recent years and is working to regenerate oak stands to address the age class imbalance and to retain the oak cover type on the property. Since 1991, shelterwood cuts have been the silviculture system that has been used. SJA has also implemented a deer hunting season. The shelterwood cuts have resulted in high numbers of oak seedlings, but it has been challenging to retain the oak and to have it reach sufficient height. Research indicates that it may take 30 years for a shelterwood treatment to result in the establishment of the new stand, thus actions taken today are considered critical and must be clearly documented to identify relevant alternative or additional actions. To increase the opportunities for successful oak regeneration, SJA could consider additional understory treatments, establishing research or monitoring studies, and/or additional deer control methods.	
REC 2007.5	<i>Explore the use of shearing (or brush cutting) of the understory to promote vigorous resprouting of oak regeneration. Consider increased use of understory planting of oak, and deer exclosures using economical means (e.g., plastic fencing) as a way to reduce mortality. A strategic plan could be</i>

	<i>developed to prioritize sites and their treatments, and to identify opportunities to replicate treatments and set targets for results.</i>
SJU Response: SJA has been exploring many alternatives for controlling competing understory vegetation and promoting oak regeneration, including controlled understory brush fires, deer exclosures, seedling tubes, planting a few large (4' tall) oak seedlings rather than several small seedlings from SJA seed stock. SJA has planned to work with The Nature Conservancy on renting a rotochopper to do some understory vegetation treatments. At this point, SJA just needs to schedule a time and an operator.	
Disposition of REC: This REC can be closed. However, see REC 2009.3.	

REC 2007.6	<i>SJA may also consider documenting more clearly in management plans thresholds of acceptable regeneration along with contingency plans for lack of progress in meeting goals.</i>
Reference	<i>FSC Criterion 5.6a</i>
SJU Response: In the deer exclosures, especially those that have received a prescribed underbrush fire, the oak regeneration is doing well. The latest deer survey shows that the population is down to 11-14 per square mile, which is optimal for oak regeneration. Controlling deer and protecting individual seedlings with tubes (at \$3/tube) has been the contingency plan so far. SJA has started planting taller oak stock at lower densities (50 trees per acre). SJA collects its own acorns, has them raised in a nursery, and then plants them. However, deer control is the main part of the solution in promoting oak regeneration. Rather than create a contingency plan at this point, SJA prefers to do all within its power to promote oak regeneration when the causes of oak regeneration problems are well known.	
Disposition of REC: This REC can be closed.	

6.1.5 General Observations

Saint John University, Saint Benet College and Saint John's Abbey have a unique history of managing the land. Since the Abbey's founding in 1856, the Benedictine monks have tended to its forests, fields, and pastures producing wood and food for their own use and for sharing with the local community. Indeed, most monks assigned to SJA stay for life and learn the value of taking care of land. SJU and SJA use much of the wood from the forests in the campus' structures and furniture. SJU/SJA also uses firewood from the forests in its pottery kiln. As an educational institution, SJU/SJA has provided many opportunities for university students and the local community in woodland management and wood utilization, in addition to serving as a source for spiritual guidance and healing. SJU/SJA is a place where the phrase "teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime" is put into practice daily.

The staff and monks of SJU/SJA are constantly learning and teaching in the community. Perhaps one of the reasons for this constant exchange of learning and teaching in the area around Collegeville begins within the halls of SJU and the grounds of the Abbey. The forest manager, Abbot, and chair of the Environmental Studies department work in a cooperative manner to examine various strategies and opportunities in forest management, wood utilization, and forestry and environmental education while considering the mission and history of SJU/SJA.

6.1.6 New Corrective Action Requests and Recommendations

Background/Justification: SJA's skidder was left outside in an upland area of the landing for at least two months post-harvest. The auditor observed evidence of fluid leakage underneath it.	
CAR 2009.1	SJA shall develop an appropriate timeframe for returning logging equipment to storage areas as well as follow best management practices for preventing and cleaning up spills during times when logging equipment must be left outside for longer periods.
Deadline	Annual audit 2010
Reference	FSC indicators 6.7.a and 6.7.c.

Recommendations:

Background/Justification: SJA has begun research into woody biomass utilization both on campus and locally. It is considering planting hybrid poplar species on marginal agricultural lands and using some of its own forest for supply. There are other factors in addition to species selection and biomass utilization technology that SJA could research.	
REC 2009.1	SJA should consider researching species that are currently under utilized in its forests and new woody biomass harvesting technology that may make use of these species more economical. SJA should stay up-to-date on retention guidelines for biomass production forests developed by the MNDNR and review FSC principal 10 before beginning any experimental plantings of hybrid poplars.
Reference	FSC Indicator 5.2.c., Criterion 5.3, and Principle 10

Background/Justification: SJA essentially has divided its sugarbush into two management areas. SJA alternates between the two areas each year, allowing one site to fallow, while tapping trees in the other. This good practice is not described in the management plan.	
REC 2009.2	SJA should describe this practice and its rationale in the Management Plan.
Reference	FSC Indicators 5.2.d. and 7.1.d.1.

Background/Justification: SJA has researched and started experimental and control plots for understory treatments to promote oak regeneration in oak shelterwood systems as recommended in REC 2007.5. Much of the guidance on oak shelterwood systems, although edited and adapted for	
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Minnesota, was taken from geographical areas of high oak productivity, such as Pennsylvania and Arkansas. Due to its lower precipitation, shorter growing season and different mix of species, not all techniques from these more productive areas may be appropriate for Minnesota.	
REC 2009.3	In addition to the understory treatments that SJA is currently researching, SJA should consider other important factors in shelterwood systems, such as crop tree spacing, the amount of cuts (i.e., 1, 2 or 3 cut shelterwood systems) and irregular shelterwoods. Information on oak shelterwood systems of New England (e.g., Kittredge, D.B.), particularly on marginal sites, and other areas of eastern North America with species mixtures similar to Minnesota might be helpful.
Reference	FSC Indicators 6.3.a.1, 6.3.a.2, and 7.1.c.1

Background/Justification: A non-native invasive wood boring beetle, the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB; <i>Agilus planipennis</i>), was recently discovered in Minnesota. EAB feeds exclusively on species of Ash in North America. EAB spreads to wooded areas mainly through the movement of ash firewood from infested areas, however, individual adults can fly as far as 5 miles away from where they emerged.	
REC 2009.4	SJA should research BMPs for keeping EAB out of its forests, including cooperating with grounds staff on any ashes planted as street trees. SJA should also research silvicultural and biological control strategies for maintaining and protecting healthy populations of ash species.
Reference	FSC indicator 6.8.a.

Background/Justification: The area between the SJU campus and the Arboretum can be considered a type of wildland urban interface. There are some exotic tree and shrub species planted on the campus that have the potential to become invasive and threaten the Arboretum’s management. For example, Norway maple (<i>Acer platanoides</i>) uses an allopathic chemical to deter sugar maple growth and regeneration.	
REC 2009.5	SJA forestry staff should consider working closely with SJU grounds to evaluate species used in landscaping for invasive qualities and develop a list of landscaping plants to be used that are least likely to become invasive in the forest.
Reference	FSC Criterion 6.9

6.1.7 General Conclusions of the Annual Audit

Based upon information gathered through site visits, interviews, and document reviews, the SCS audit team concludes that SLA’s management of its forestland in Collegeville, Minnesota continues to be in strong overall compliance with the FSC Principles and Criteria as detailed in the Lake States-Central Hardwoods Region Regional Forest Stewardship Standard. While there remains an aspect of the management program that is deficient relative to the standard of certification, the SCS audit team has concluded from this annual audit that SLA’s forest management program is in general conformance with FSC Principles 1 through 9 (Principle 10 is not applicable as SLA’s operations are classified as “natural forest management” under the FSC definitions). As such, continuation of the certification is warranted, subject to ongoing progress in closing the one new CAR and subject to subsequent annual audits.

7.0 SUMMARY OF SCS COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

The following is a summary of the SCS Complaint and Appeal Investigation Procedures, the full versions of the procedures are available from SCS upon request. The SCS Complaint and Appeal Investigation Procedures are designed for and available to any individual or organization that perceives a stake in the affairs of the SCS Forest Conservation Program and that/who has reason to question either the actions of SCS itself or the actions of a SCS certificate holder.

A **complaint** is a written expression of dissatisfaction, other than **appeal**, by any person or organization, to a certification body, relating to the activities of staff of the SCS Forest Conservation Program and/or representatives of a company or entity holding either a forest management (FM) or chain-of-custody (CoC) certificate issued by SCS and duly endorsed by FSC, where a response is expected (ISO/IEC 17011:2004 (E)). The SCS Complaint Investigation Procedure functions as a first-stage mechanism for resolving complaints and avoiding the need to involve FSC.

An “**appeal**” is a request by a certificate holder or a certification applicant for formal reconsideration of any adverse decision made by the certification body related to its desired certification status. A certificate holder or applicant may formally lodge an appeal with SCS against any adverse certification decision taken by SCS, within thirty (30) days after notification of the decision.

The written Complaint or Appeal must:

- Identify and provide contact information for the complainant or appellant
- Clearly identify the basis of the aggrieved action (date, place, nature of action) and which parties or individuals are associated with the action
- Explain how the action is alleged to violate an SCS or FSC requirement, being as specific as possible with respect to the applicable SCS or FSC requirement
- In the case of complaints against the actions of a certificate holder, rather than SCS itself, the complainant must also describe efforts taken to resolve the matter directly with the certificate holder
- Propose what actions would, in the opinion of the complainant or appellant, rectify the matter.

Written complaints and appeals should be submitted to:

Dr. Robert J. Hrubes
Senior Vice-President
Scientific Certification Systems

2200 Powell Street, Suite 725
Emeryville, California, USA94608
Email: rhru@scscertified.com

As detailed in the *SCS-FCP Certification Manual*, investigation of the complaint or appeal will be confidentially conducted in a timely manner. As appropriate, corrective and preventive action and resolution of any deficiencies found in products or services shall be taken and documented.