

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

**Wisconsin County Forest Program
Managed by Wisconsin DNR**

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

**CERTIFICATION REGISTRATION NUMBER
SCS-FM/COC-00083G**

Submitted to:

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Lead Author: Dave Wager

Date of Field Audit: August 17-24, 2009

Date of Report: October 8, 2009

Certified: December 31, 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 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

FOREWORD

Scientific Certification Systems, a certification body accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), was retained by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to conduct a certification evaluation of the Wisconsin County Forest Program. 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.

From August 17 – 24, 2009, an interdisciplinary team of four natural resource specialists was empanelled by SCS to conduct the evaluation. The team collected and analyzed written materials, conducted interviews and completed a 5 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 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, for the management of the Wisconsin County Forest Program covering County Forests listed in Table 1. 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	Wisconsin County Forest Program
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Certificate Number	SCS-FM/COC-0083G
Certificate/Expiration Date	December 31, 2014
Certificate Type	<i>Group forest management certificate with forest gate chain-of-custody</i>
Forest zone	<i>Temperate</i>
Total forest area in scope of certificate:	
Chemical pesticides used	<i>See section 1.4.8</i>
List of main commercial timber and non-timber species included in scope of certificate (botanical name and common trade name)	The forest is a mosaic of conifer and hardwood cover types, classified by species dominance; e.g., white pine, spruce-fir, northern hardwoods, central hardwoods, oak, aspen, planted pine stands
List of product categories included in scope of joint FM/COC certificate and therefore available for sale as FSC-certified products	Round wood, pulpwood, sawtimber, and firewood, and

Conversion Table English Units to Metric Units

Length Conversion Factors

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

Area Conversion Factors

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

Volume Conversion Factors

Volume

To convert from	to	multiply by
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.

This report addresses the five-year reassessment of the Wisconsin County Forest Program (WCFP) pursuant to the FSC guidelines for forest management certification assessments as well as the forest management certificate awarded by Scientific Certification Systems (SCS-FM/COC-0083G). The WCFP was first awarded certification for the State Forests in March 2005. Annual audits were completed for the County Forests in each subsequent year from 2006–2008. The original public summary of the initial evaluation and subsequent annual audits is available upon request from SCS.

The assessment was conducted with the applicable FSC regional standard, the Lake States-Central Hardwoods Region (USA) Regional Forest Stewardship Standard Version 3.0.

WCFP counties included in the project include approximately 1.63 million acres as shown in the following table:

Table 1: Wisconsin County Forests Seeking FSC Recertification

County	FSC acres
Ashland	40,008
Barron	15,944
Bayfield	169,444
Chippewa	33,107

Clark	132,846
Douglas	272,823
Eau Claire	52,350
Florence	36,709
Forest	10,888
Iron	174,267
Jackson	121,028
Juneau	15,380
Lincoln	100,845
Oconto	43,581
Price	92,236
Sawyer	115,201
Taylor	17,653
Washburn	149,003
Wood	37,593
Total County Forest Certified Acres	1,630,906

1.2 Management Context

The mission statement and the purpose and direction of the County Forest Law as stated in s. 28.11, Wis. Stats:

“...to provide the basis for a permanent program of county forests and to enable and encourage the planned development and management of the County Forests for optimum production of forest products together with recreational opportunities, wildlife, watershed protection and stabilization of stream flow, giving full recognition to the concept of multiple use to assure maximum public benefits; to protect the public rights, interests and investments in such lands; and to compensate the counties for the public uses, benefits and privileges these lands provide; all in a manner which will provide a reasonable revenue to the towns in which such lands lie.”

The following regulations apply to public land management in Wisconsin and have relevancy to the certification assessment:

- The County Forest Law (s 28.11 Wis. Stats.)
- Statutory authority to engage in forest certification (broadly interpreted): §§23.11, 28.01, 28.07, and 77.80
- DNR Manual Codes and Handbooks
- Wisconsin Pesticide Law (Chapter 94, WI Statutes)
- Use of Pesticides on Land and Water Areas of the State of Wisconsin (WI Administrative Code, Chapter NR 80)
- Wild Animals and Plants Law (Chapter 29, WI Statutes) and WI Administrative Code NR 10
- Wisconsin Water Law: UW Booklet
- Wisconsin Groundwater Law (Chapter 160, WI Statutes)

- Navigable Waters (Chapter 30, WI Statutes)
- Water Quality Standards for Wetlands (Chapter NR 103, WI Administrative Code)
- Wisconsin Shoreland Management Program (Chapter NR 115, WI Administrative Code)
- Endangered and Threatened Species (Chapter NR 27, WI Administrative Code)
- Wisconsin Historic Preservation Laws

List of treaties and international agreements at the federal level that are relevant to the operation:

- Clean Water Act (Section 404 wetland protection)
- Occupational Safety and Health Act
- National Historic Preservation Act
- Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- U.S. ratified treaties, including CITES
- Endangered Resources Laws

1.2.1 Environmental Context

The following paragraphs describing the environmental context for the Wisconsin County Forest Program are excerpts from the *County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan- Environmental Assessment*.

Background and History:

At one time, much of Wisconsin was covered with magnificent stands of pine, hemlock, and hardwoods on the highlands, and cedar, spruce, and balsam on its lowlands. From 1860 to about 1910, these forests provided raw material for a thriving lumber industry. The need to supply lumber for a growing nation, and the lack of sound forest management, resulted in overharvest of the forests and degradation of the landscape. Immigrants rushed to these newly cleared lands, hungry for a place to farm and build their lives. But in just a few years, the soils gave out, catastrophic fires occurred, and many people were forced to seek their fortunes elsewhere. The land was left exhausted and tax delinquent. The Wisconsin County Forest program originated with the taking of these tax delinquent lands.

Present:

The pressures being put on the county forests are becoming more diverse. There are more people and they are increasingly looking to our public lands to provide for their forest product and recreation needs. New technologies are creating recreational opportunities that previously weren't a concern. All terrain vehicle use in Wisconsin has increased markedly with over 200,000 machines registered. The number of registered machines in Wisconsin now exceeds snowmobiles. A segment of the population is also more environmentally conscious and not willing to sacrifice the ecological concerns at the expense of recreation or forest products. More and more people are dividing a static land base into smaller parcels and building second homes and cottages. Seasonal home development increased from 250% to over 2500% in all of the County Forest counties since 1980. Wisconsin's forests are being asked to accommodate all uses and needs by a growing population. User conflicts are becoming more commonplace and controversial. Local governments are constantly evaluating the merits of public land ownership. As the largest public landholder in Wisconsin with 15% of the forestland, the county forests are an integral part of these debates. Introduction of invasive exotic plants and animals, forest fragmentation, recreational user conflicts, and adverse environmental impacts are all products of the increased pressure. These impacts make managing our County Forests and all public lands an increasingly difficult challenge. County Forest planning efforts are essential to addressing the varied impacts to the forest. In turn, the County plans need to be coordinated with other planning efforts including Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans, Comprehensive Land Use Planning (e.g. smart growth), Wisconsin State Trails Network Plan, Wisconsin Statewide Forestry Plan, the Land Legacy Study, and the Wisconsin Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan.

Physical Environment (topography, soils, water, air)

The portions of the State encompassed by the County Forests were nearly all shaped by past continental glaciation. The Vernon County Forest is the main exception to this. Twenty-two of the 29 Forests are encompassed within the Laurentian Mixed Forest (province 212) of the National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units (NHFEU). Clark, Eau Claire, Jackson, Juneau, Monroe, Vernon, and Wood counties are included within the Eastern Broadleaf Forest (province 222) (see Figure 2). These two provinces encompass all of Wisconsin. Province 212 includes the northern parts of all the lake states. The Wisconsin portion of province 212 is characterized by glacial geology including tills, moraines, outwash, lakes, and abundant wetlands. Glacial deposits including clay, sand, and gravel cover obscure bedrock almost entirely.

County Forest soils are generally loams and silts in the northern counties with interspersed areas of sandy soils. An area of red clay soils can be found along the northernmost portions of Douglas, Bayfield, Ashland, and extreme northwest Iron County. These soils are particularly challenging for land managers. The Douglas and Bayfield County Forests are the two primary forests with these red clay soils. County Forests in the central parts of the State have primarily sandy soils interspersed with poorly drained wetlands. See Figure 3 for a generalized soil map of Wisconsin.

Biological Environment

The twenty-nine County Forests cover over 2.35 million acres. Over 84% of this area is forested. The remaining 15+ % consists of marshes, grasslands, brush, water, rights-of-way, and developed recreation areas. (see Table 10). Aspen (17%), sugar maple (11%), red maple (11%), red oak (9%), red pine (8%), basswood (6%), and white birch (5%) are the most common individual tree species present. Private in-holdings within the individual County Forest blocking boundaries are relatively common.

The majority of the County Forests are the result of natural regeneration or tree planting that occurred in the early to mid-1900's. Early succession aspen is still a dominant forest type on County Forests. However, mid- to late-successional maple-basswood forests and in some cases white pine forests are replacing early succession aspen-birch and oak forests that dominated the areas from 1940 to 1970. Savannas, barrens, and advanced successional stages are ecosystems that are extremely rare in the State. Management opportunities exist on the County Forests to maintain or restore these components.

Due to fire suppression, forest disturbance patterns have changed dramatically over the past century on the County Forests. Logging, windthrow (and other weather related events (e.g. hail), and disease, are now the main forest disturbance forces. Invasive exotics, like much of the U.S., have or are becoming problematic on County Forests. The gypsy moth, emerald ash borer, garlic mustard, buckthorn, spotted knapweed, and Japanese barberry are some of the exotics that pose a major threat to Wisconsin's forests.

The County Forests play an important role in maintaining large tracts of intact forested lands. Wisconsin forests are being fragmented due to road building, agriculture and urban development. County Forests located in northern Wisconsin, in conjunction with Federal, State, and private land ownerships, make up one of the largest forested tracts in the United States.

1.2.2 Socioeconomic Context

The following paragraphs describing the Socio-economic context for the Wisconsin County Forest Program are excerpts from the *County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan-Environmental Assessment*.

Land use (dominant features and uses including zoning if applicable) The State of Wisconsin is comprised of nearly 35 million acres of which 16 million, or 46%, are forested. Public agencies own and manage nearly 16% of all land, and 29% of the forested acreage in Wisconsin. Nearly 7% of the total land base and 15% of the forested land in Wisconsin is in the County Forest program. Land use in the State varies widely, but less so in those 29 counties containing County Forests. Forestry and recreation are the primary two land uses on the County Forests. When ranked by industrial output, forest industry is the #1, #2, or #3 ranked industry in 16 of the 29 counties. Management for forestry purposes is rooted in the County Forest statute (s. 28.11, Wis. Stats) and has been consistent for a number of years. The County Forests are managed actively but sustainably, and continue to grow more trees than they harvest (see Proposed Physical Changes section, #4). Land use adjacent to the County Forests is primarily forestry and tourism-based in the north. Primary residences are much fewer than in the south but seasonal dwellings are common. Agriculture is secondary in the north although it is of greater importance in the northwest. Incorporated cities and towns are relatively scarce in comparison to the southern half of Wisconsin. Central Wisconsin has a higher permanent population with more urban areas, manufacturing and agriculture. Agriculture tends to be a primary land use in southwestern Wisconsin.

Recreational use of the County Forests has experienced far more change over the last several years. From 1993 to 2004 traveler spending increased 155% in those counties with County Forests. This compares to a 114% increase for other Wisconsin counties over that same time frame. This highlights the increased recreational interest in forest-based activities. Forests are more in demand for a variety of uses. The more urbanized areas of Wisconsin rely heavily on the County Forests and other public lands for recreation. Activities such as roller skiing, disc golf, mountain biking, geo-caching and horseback riding were of little consequence 10-15 years ago. Motorized recreation has become more popular, primarily as it relates to all terrain vehicle (ATV) use. There are now more than 200,000 ATVs registered in Wisconsin. Another 10,000 to 15,000 ATVs are sold annually. The number of registered ATVs now exceeds that of snowmobiles and their use on public land is much more controversial. The fact remains that ATVing is a popular recreational activity and the public needs, and at times demands, an opportunity to ride on public lands such as the County Forests. County Forests currently provide approximately 1180 miles of designated ATV trail. This is over 25% of the State-funded total. Additional opportunities on town road routes (connectors) are available. Some Forest policies allow for use on undesignated trails as well.

b. Social/Economic (including ethnic and cultural groups)

Forest industry and tourism, the two primary business sectors impacted by the County Forests, are crucial to Wisconsin. There are over 1800 forest products companies in the State. Forest industry is the largest employer in 28 Wisconsin counties and in the top three of 14 more counties. Over 327 million cubic feet of wood are used in Wisconsin annually. We currently harvest 332 million cubic feet and are the only midwest State that harvests more than they consume. Counties with County Forests are typically more rural, less populated, and have relatively few urbanized areas. The racial makeup of these rural counties is over 90% Caucasian. Incomes are generally less than statewide averages although the more populous counties with County Forests (e.g. Marathon, Eau Claire) approach the norm. The presence of public land and the recreational opportunities it offers are often mentioned as contributing to the appeal of residing in these counties.

c. Archaeological/Historical

Prehistoric human occupation has been documented back to the late Pleistocene era during the retreat of the last glacial ice cover. Numerous cultures have existed in the State over the past 11,000 years. In more recent history, the first signs of a shift from nomadic hunting to a more sedentary lifestyle appeared in 1500 BC to 500 BC. These Indian cultures grew agricultural crops and many also harvested wild rice. From 500 BC to 1000 AD there was an emphasis on agriculture. Many cultural artifacts come from that period. Indian cultures, including the Hopewell Indians, were skillful artisans that created ceremonial objects and textiles. Effigy mound culture left behind numerous ceremonial mounds formed as various animals and shapes. Many of these are still visible today, particularly in southwestern Wisconsin. From 1000 AD to 1600 AD Indian cultures typically set up villages along rivers or wetlands. By 1630, three tribes were residing in Wisconsin. The Winnebago (Ho-Chunk) lived between Green Bay and Lake Winnebago. The Menominee lived along the Menominee River (west of Green Bay). The Santee Dakota inhabited northwest Wisconsin. The first Europeans were arriving in Wisconsin in the form of French fur traders. Tribal wars in the eastern US during this time period resulted in many tribes relocating to Wisconsin. By 1820 overexploitation of northern Wisconsin furbearers caused the fur trade to shift north into Canada. The federal government purchased / bartered Wisconsin lands from tribes by the mid 1800's. Treaties from this era resulted in considerable controversy in the late 1980's and resulted in the retention of many hunting and gathering rights by Chippewa tribes on what are now County Forests. By the middle of the 19th century, reservations housed the bulk of Wisconsin's Native American population. Six major tribes still reside in Wisconsin today, the Ojibwe (Chippewa), Stockbridge-Munsee (Mohican), Oneida, Menominee, Potawatomi, and Ho-Chunk (Winnebago).

Timber and timber-related occupations employed much of the workforce between 1850 and 1920. Agricultural capabilities in northern Wisconsin were promoted late in the 19th century to encourage settlement. In addition, copper and iron ore mining attracted Cornish and Finnish people to the northern third of Wisconsin. Nutrient-poor sandy soils with short growing seasons were not hospitable for traditional row crop farming. These northern farms were generally isolated from one another and were sometimes owned by settlers with little or no farming experience. These isolated settlers were a burden on local services and resulted in some of the first zoning regulations in the State. Lands became tax delinquent and resulted in the creation of the State and County Forest programs in the late 1920's. Twenty-five of the twenty-nine county forests enrolled in the first ten years of the program.

Archaeological or cultural resource locations are confidential and exempt from Freedom of Information Act disclosure so a map of site locations is not provided for review. Cultural records on the State Historical Society database are reviewed for timber sales and other land disturbing activities on the County Forests. See also the individual County Forest Plans for information on local cultural resources.

1.3 Forest Management Enterprise

1.3.1 Land Use

County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2005 reports “the National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units (NHFEU) categorizes Wisconsin into two provinces, the Laurentian Mixed Forest (212) forming the northern half of the State and the Eastern Broadleaf Forest (222). Within each province are sections, subsections and landtype associations that further group land into areas with similar geology, soil types, surface water features, wetlands and historic and potential plant communities.”

1.3.2 Land Outside the Scope of Certification

19 of the 29 County Forests in WCFP are FSC certified. The ten counties not enrolled within FSC are managed according to the same County Forest Law as those certified counties. Adhering to County Forest Law and other DNR requirements assures that these lands outside the scope are being managed in a manner consistent with FSC Partial Certification requirements. Non-certified County Forests include Burnett, Langlade, Marathon, Marinette, Monroe, Oneida, Polk, Rusk, Vernon, Vilas. The WCFP or individual County Forests that are not certified, make no claims that would indicate that these properties are FSC certified. However, some FSC certified counties do have managed forests that are not within the scope of the certified. FSC requires Forest owners or managers to document the reasons for seeking partial certification and ensure that there is no confusion between certified and non-certified lands. Some County Forests, e.g., Juneau, actively manage forests that are not included in the County Forest Program and are not FSC certified. County Forests have not documented reasons for their seeking partial certification. See CAR 2009.8.

1.4 Management Plan

1.4.1 Management Objectives

As detailed in the *County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plans*, “Natural resources, such as those provided by the County Forest, are the base for addressing the ecological and socioeconomic needs of society. The mission of the County Forest is to manage, conserve and protect these resources on a sustainable basis for present and future generations.

County Forest resources should be protected from natural catastrophes such as fire, insect and disease outbreaks, and from human threats such as encroachment, over-utilization, environmental degradation and excessive development. While managed for environmental needs including watershed protection, protection of rare plant and animal communities, and maintenance of plant and animal diversity, these same resources must also be managed and provide for sociological needs, including provisions for recreational opportunities and the production of raw materials for wood-using industries. Management must balance local needs with broader state, national and global concerns through integration of sound forestry, wildlife, fisheries, endangered resources, water quality, soil, and recreational practices. Management will provide this variety of products and amenities for the future through the use of sustainable forest management practices.”

1.4.2 Forest Composition

The following paragraphs describing the forest composition for County Forests is an excerpt from the *County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan- Environmental Assessment*.

Laurentian Mixed Forest (Province 212 -Includes Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Chippewa, Clark, Douglas, Florence, Forest, Iron, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Marinette, Oconto, Oneida, Polk, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, Vilas, and Washburn County Forests). Three major biomes, the eastern deciduous forest, tall grass prairie, and boreal forest all come together in the Wisconsin portion of the Laurentian Mixed Forest (province 212). This meeting of the three major biomes and diverse landforms created by glaciers in Wisconsin results in a rich diversity of plants, animals, and communities. Species such as white spruce, balsam fir, and quaking aspen reach their southernmost range in northern Wisconsin. Hemlock and beech are not found west of Wisconsin. Forested communities found in this Province include Northern Dry forest, Northern Dry-mesic forest, Northern Mesic forest, Pine Barrens, and Boreal forest.¹³ Approximately 30 dominant tree species occur in this area as a whole, although fewer than ten are usually found in any given community. Forest types representing the late seral stages on the more fertile soils (loams and silt loams) are dominated by mixtures of sugar maple, basswood, yellow birch, and white ash. Red maple, hemlock, and red oak are more minor associates. Mixed stands incorporate conifer species consisting mainly of balsam fir and white pine with hemlock being a more minor associate. Sandy and loamy sand soils are generally dominated by pine mixtures (jack, red and white), aspen, white birch, red maple, and red oak. Wetland forests are common in this Province consisting of both conifer swamps (black spruce, tamarack, and white cedar) and hardwood swamps

(black ash, red maple, and elm). On all types, early successional aspen-dominated forests are common. The County Forests were born out of the cut and burned over, tax delinquent land from the 1930's. Much of this acreage was in aspen.

Eastern Broadleaf Forest (Province 222 - Includes Clark, Eau Claire, Jackson, Juneau, Monroe, Vernon and Wood County Forests). The northern boundary of this province approximates the Tension zone in Wisconsin. This is the area where vegetative communities change from the prairie, savanna, oak, and mixed hardwood forests of the south to the mixed deciduous-coniferous forests of the north. Broadleaf deciduous species are predominant with lesser proportions of conifers when compared to the Laurentian Mixed Forest province. About 32 native tree species can be found, the presence of each varying depending on the environmental characteristics and past disturbance. Over 70% of this province is nonforested. Of the forested portions, Oak-Hickory (44% of forested area) occupies the most land area. Red oak, white oak, black oak, bur oak, and shagbark hickory are common with minor components of red maple, aspen, basswood, paper birch, white pine, and black cherry. Sugar maple, red maple, white ash and black cherry are increasing in abundance due to fire infrequency, tolerance to shade, and ability to regenerate after harvesting. Maple-Basswood totals 25% of the forested area with sugar maple, basswood, and white ash predominating. Lowland hardwood with silver maple, red maple, green ash, swamp white oak, river birch, cottonwood, hackberry, and black willow is found on 11% of the forested land. The aspen-birch type also occupies approximately 11%. Red, white and jack pine is limited to 4% of the forested area but much of that can be found in the County Forests in this province. Aspen-birch (3%) makes up the bulk of the remaining forested area.

1.4.3 Silvicultural Systems

Silvicultural systems employed on County Forests are guided by the DNR Silviculture and Forest Aesthetics Handbook (HB 2431.5). The Wisconsin County Forests span a wide biogeographic extent of the State of Wisconsin as well as all of the major forest types found in the State. As a result, the DNR and County Forests employ a broad range of silvicultural systems in the management of the timber resources found on the County Forests. Silvicultural systems include a full array of even-aged and uneven-aged silvicultural systems. With general guidance found in the Handbook, silvicultural systems are defined by forest cover type. Regardless of the specific system employed on any given cover type within any of the County Forests, the following general objectives apply:

Encourage stands containing the greatest quality and quantity of timber; Encourage vigor within all developmental stages of forest stands; Through modification of silvicultural prescriptions and practices, accomplish desired aesthetic management objectives; Under both even-aged and uneven-aged systems, a fundamental goal is to promptly establish new stands or age-class cohorts with every regeneration entry, relying either upon natural or artificial regeneration, as dictated by site conditions, harvesting method and cover type requirements. Reliance on natural regeneration is most prevalent. Likewise, all intermediate treatments (i.e., harvest entries not categorized as regeneration harvests, such as pre-commercial and commercial thins) are aimed at promoting improved stand health and vigor.

Even-aged regeneration harvests (e.g., clearcutting) are further modified to address aesthetic and wildlife management considerations and objectives. These are commonly addressed through retention of patches or individual trees. Boundaries are designed to discourage long sitelines and to provide aesthetic variety. For even-aged systems, the target rotation ages are generally approximate to or beyond culmination of mean annual increment and are often longer than rotation lengths employed on industrial timberlands in the region.

1.4.4 Organization and Scope

The roles of the *group entity* (DNR) are clearly established in Wisconsin Statutes. According to the *Public Forest Lands Handbook* “Section 28.11, Wisconsin Statutes, requires that the Department provide technical assistance to counties having lands entered in the county forest program”. The most prominent role of DNR in the County Forest Program is headed up by the liaison forester, one per County. The liaison forester is responsible for coordinating the state/county partnership from the state standpoint by administering the county forest law (s. 28.11, Wis. Stats.). The *Public Forest Lands Handbook* reports “The liaison forester is expected to have a high level of technical expertise and function as the Department's primary source for technical assistance and provide technology transfer to county forest personnel. The liaison must fully understand the Department's overall capabilities and activities and maintain a good working knowledge of all facets of their county forest program.”

Responsibilities of the liaison forester include but are not limited to (as detailed in the *Public Forest Lands Handbook*):

- Attend all meetings of the county forest committee.
- Personally render or arrange for appropriate Department technical assistance to be provided for county forest administration.
- Coordinate county forest administration contacts from other Department personnel.
- Compile bi-annual county forest accomplishments of contributing foresters and report to the forestry team leader.
- Administer the County Forest Law
- Participate in establishing annual goals for timber sale establishment.
- Help formulate, investigate, and process applications for lands entered or withdrawn.
- Participate in development of project and variable acreage share loan requests.
- Review and approve all timber sale cutting notices/reports.
- Attend all county forestry committee meetings and any county board meetings as requested.
- Provide technical assistance
- Cruise and mark timber
- Timber sale inspections and Timber sale administration
- Continue development and maintenance of compartment reconnaissance on the county forest including data collection and analysis, records, updating, management information systems, i.e. GIS;
- Function as a catalyst for technology transfer.

The following DNR Divisions and Bureaus also provide assistance to the County Forest Program:

Endangered Resources - Bureau of Endangered Resources
Fisheries Management - Local fisheries biologist
Forest Management - Liaison forester - Field silviculturist
Geographic Information Systems - GIS Coordinator, Division of Forestry
Land Acquisition - Regional real estate agent
Protection: Insects and disease - Regional entomologist/forest pathologist
Fire Management - Local forester/ranger
Recreation Management – Bureau of Parks and Recreation
Grants - Community services specialist

Water Regulations and Zoning - Water regulation specialist
Water Resources, Best Management Practices - Forest Hydrologist, Division of Forestry
Wildlife Management - Local wildlife biologist

The County Forests along with DNR cooperate with the Wisconsin County Forests Association, Inc. (WCFA). This association was incorporated on May 15, 1968 under Chapter 181 of the Wisconsin Statutes, without stock and not for profit. The WCFP Board of Directors is composed of ten delegates elected from the County Forestry Committees who are members of the Association. The association provides a forum for consideration of issues and policy that are common to all of the county committees responsible for their respective County Forest programs, including those programs encompassed under s.28.11 and Chapter 77, Wis. Stats. WCFP also provides leadership and counsel to County Forest administrators and forestry committees through regular meetings and active committees on legislative and recreational issues.

1.4.5 Monitoring System

WCFP and DNR have a multi-faceted monitoring system. There is also a citizen-based monitoring network in the state with support from a DNR grant program. The WDNR monitoring system includes monitoring Best Management Practices (BMPs), use of the Forest Recon Data System/WisFIRS, and the well-established Forest Inventory and Analysis Program (FIA). See Principle 8 for more details.

1.4.6 Estimate of Maximum Sustainable Yield

The WCFP uses an area control method for calculating the Annual Allowable Timber Harvest. The system defines the number of acres that can be harvested each year, on a sustained basis, without depleting the resource over time. It is calculated based on inventoried forest data collected by field staff in combination with long range. A property's ecological, economic, and societal constraints are considered in this determination. The land manager uses this information to determine a predicted year of harvest for each stand of trees. The combination of these stands, and their associated treatments, represents the number of acres to be evaluated for harvest in a particular year. The annual allowable timber harvest is a long term monitoring figure. Yearly fluctuations are common due to changing conditions created by storms, insect & disease infestations; changing timber markets, fires, or backlogged workload.

Both Long Term harvest goals and Annual harvest goals are established through the planning procedure in the WisFIRS database. In calculating those figures local harvest constraints may be applied to fine-tune the rotation ages and thinning intervals. Early and late constraints (within silvicultural sideboards) also allow local managers to temper harvest peaks and valleys in scheduled timber sales.

1.4.7 Estimated, Current and Projected Production

Harvest on the County Forests has been stable over a number of years at approximately 76% of net forest growth, according to data in the Environmental Assessment (EA).

In 2006 there was 0.41 net growth 0.31 removals cord equivalents per acre on county forests.

In 1996 there was 0.36 net growth 0.23 removals cord equivalents per acre on county forests

“The County Forests could sustainably harvest approximately 61,000 acres annually. Recon inventory indicates a need to examine approximately 75,000 acres for harvest annually. This includes a backlog, most notably on northern hardwood, aspen and scrub oak types. Historically, upon examination, 14,000 of the acres prove to be not ready for harvest as yet. These forest stands may not have grown as quickly as anticipated or the original stand data may have been erroneous. Of the remaining 61,000 acres, a certain percentage are not harvested because they are in areas unsuitable / unfeasible for harvest (e.g. natural areas, river buffers, difficult logging chance) or foresters cannot ensure regeneration of the type (e.g. cedar). Approximately 12,000 acres on the County Forests are withheld from harvest for such reasons. These are local management decisions. Of the remaining 49,000 acres scheduled for harvest annually, the County Forests are cutting 43,400. The shortfall is due primarily to insufficient staff to set up and administer the timber sales.” Source: Environmental Assessment for the 15-year Land Use Plan.

1.4.8 Chemical Pesticide Use

The DNR has prepared and follows guidance on complying with the FSC policy regarding highly hazardous pesticides. The following chart shows the chemical pesticides used on the County Forests.

Pesticides Used on Wisconsin County Forest Lands (2008-09)

Chemical Name	Active ingredients	Permitted by FSC
Accord	Glyphosate	Yes
Accord XRT II	Glyphosate, isopropylamine salt	Yes
Amine 4 2,4-D weed killer	2-4-d, dimethylamine ester	Yes
Arsenal AC	imazapyr, isopropylamine salt	Yes
Buccaneer Plus	Glyphosate	Yes
Chopper 2 herbicide	Imazapyr, isopropylamine salt	Yes
Cornerstone Plus	Glyphosate	Yes
Element 4	triclopyr	Yes
Garlon 4	triclopyr	Yes
Garlon XRT	Triclopyr, butoxyethyl ester	Yes
Killz All	Glyphosate	Yes
Milestone	aminopyralid	Yes
Oust Extra	Sulforeturon methyl, metsulfuron-methyl	Yes
Oust XP	Sulforeturon methyl	Yes
Pathway		Yes
Plateau	imazapic	Yes
Quik Pro	Glyphosate	Yes
Raid Wasp Killer	Imidcloprid	Yes
Rodeo	Glyphosate	Yes
Roundup	Glyphosate	Yes
Roundup Ultra Max	Glyphosate	Yes
Spike 80DF	Tebuthiuron	Yes
Stalker	Imazapyr, isopropylamine salt	Yes
Tordon K	Picloram, potassium salt	Yes
Transline	Clopyralid	Yes

2.0 GUIDELINES/STANDARDS EMPLOYED

As the applicant is located in Wisconsin, the certification evaluation that is the subject of this report was conducted against the duly-endorsed Lake States-Central Hardwoods Region Version 3.0 (Feb. 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 in August 2009 with the field assessment occurring from August 17 – 24, 2009.

Main Evaluation:

3.2 Assessment Team

Dave Wager – FSC Lead Auditor

Mr. Wager is Director of Forest Management Certification for SCS. During his 9 years as Director, Mr. Wager has administered the program and led Forest Management and Chain-of-Custody evaluations throughout the world. Mr. Wager has led assessments of 30 forest management operations worldwide including Minnesota DNR, Pennsylvania State Forests, Massachusetts State Forests, Potlatch Corporation's Idaho Forestlands and Oregon Poplar Tree Farm, Wisconsin County Forests, Collins Pine Company, Department of Defense-Fort Lewis Installation, and operations in Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Japan, and Malaysia.

In his role as Program Director, Mr. Wager oversees all first-time certification evaluations, annual audits, and contract renewal certifications on approximately 85 active certificate holders covering 30 million acres. In other natural resources work, Mr. Wager played a key role in the development of Starbucks CAFE Practices- a program to ensure procurement of sustainably grown and processed coffee. Mr. Wager has expertise in business and forest ecology (B.S. business, Skidmore College; M.S. Forest Resources, Utah State University) and utilizes both in his position with SCS. While studying forest ecology at Utah State University, Mr. Wager was awarded a NASA Graduate Student Research Fellowship to develop dendrochronological techniques to assess Douglas-fir growth in Utah's Central Wasatch Mountains.

Michael Ferrucci, SFI Lead Auditor

Michael Ferrucci is a founding partner and President of Interforest, LLC, and a partner in Ferrucci & Walicki, LLC, a land management company that has served private landowners in southern New England for 18 years. Its clients include private citizens, land trusts, municipalities, corporations, private water companies, and non-profit organizations. He has a B.Sc. degree in forestry from the University of Maine and a Master of Forestry degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

Mr. Ferrucci's primary expertise is in management of watershed forests to provide timber, drinking water, and the protection of other values; in forest inventory and timber appraisal; hardwood forest silviculture and marketing; and the ecology and silviculture of natural forests of the eastern United States. He also lectures on private sector forestry, leadership, and forest resource management at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

Gary Zimmer, Audit Team Member; Wildlife Biology Specialist

Gary Zimmer is the Western Great Lakes Regional Biologist for the Ruffed Grouse Society and resides in Laona, Wisconsin. Gary has extensive certification experience in Wisconsin having participated on the initial FSC and SFI main assessments for the Wisconsin County Forest Program and the DNR State Forests. In March of this year, Gary participated as an auditor in the FSC recertification assessment for the Menominee Tribe.

Gary joined the Ruffed Grouse Society in December of 2000 after 18 years with the US Forest Service, working as a District Biologist on the Lakewood/Laona Ranger District. He received his

B.S. degree in wildlife management in 1976 and received a M.S. degree in natural resources in 1979 from the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point. His M.S. thesis was entitled “The Status and Distribution of the Common Loon in Wisconsin”. An avid outdoorsman, Gary enjoys hunting, fishing, camping, outdoor photography and is a licensed bird bander. Gary is a Certified Wildlife Biologist and recently completed a two year term as Secretary/Treasurer for the Wisconsin Chapter of the Wildlife Society. Gary currently is the chairman of the Habitat Assessment and Management Committee for the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative.

Gary has a significant background in forest management having worked throughout his career in planning and implementing a variety of wildlife and fish habitat projects. He has participated on a variety of forest management reviews in Wisconsin and has received numerous Special Achievement Awards throughout his career. Gary is especially proficient in the management of forest bird habitat both in his professional and private life.

JoAnn Hanowski, M.Sc., Audit Team Member; Biology/Ecology Specialist-

JoAnn M. Hanowski was a senior research fellow at the University of Minnesota-Duluth’s Natural Resources Research Institute. She has considerable expertise evaluating the effects of forest management on wildlife habitat, and is currently working on research projects involving the response of birds to various forest management practices in stream and seasonal pond buffers and the development of indicators of forest and water health and sustainability in Minnesota and across the Great Lakes. She was a member of the forest bird technical team for the original GEIS and participated on the wildlife technical team that wrote forest management guidelines for Minnesota. She is a participant in a 14-year project for monitoring avian populations on the Chequamegon National Forest. She is currently a member of the riparian science technical committee that is investigating the effectiveness of Minnesota’s current guidelines for forest management in riparian systems. She has published 64 peer-reviewed journal articles and over 75 reports in her 21 year tenure with the University of Minnesota. In 2005 JoAnn participated in the largest forest certification project ever conducted in the United States, the joint FSC/SFI certification of Minnesota’s state lands. In 2006 and 2006 JoAnn contributed regional ecological expertise to the annual surveillance audits of the MN DNR’s FSC and SFI certificates.

Kathryn Fernholz, Audit Team Member; Stakeholder Consultation

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 been working with family forest owners and related forest management interests since 1999. Her work has included projects throughout the Upper Midwest and has ranged from assisting with the development of forestry cooperatives and the growth and development of landowner associations to supporting a variety of family forest certification efforts. Kathryn has been a leader within the forestry community in the Upper Midwest through her service as Chair of the Minnesota Society of American Foresters and her appointment to the Minnesota Forest Resources Council. Kathryn is a member of the Advisory Board for the Blandin Foundation's Vital Forests/Vital Communities Initiative, and she is also a member of the Board of Directors for the Minnesota Environmental Partnership and the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences Alumni Society. Kathryn has a B.S. in Forest Resources from the University of Minnesota, College of Natural Resources and also

studied at the College of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph, MN and Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka, Alaska.

3.3 Assessment Process

The scope of the assessment included: document review, auditors spending time in the field and office, interviewing management personnel and, as appropriate, interacting with outside stakeholders. To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the assessment, the audit team was divided into two two-person teams that traveled to different counties. Stakeholder consultation was done by Katie Fernholz and took place separate from the field assessment. The use of two teams allowed the assessment to view more diverse and geographically dispersed field sites. The audit teams inspected a variety of field sites across 8 FSC certified counties. During the assessment planning the Lead Auditor and the WCFP representatives reviewed the range of field activities and formulated a sampling plan. The Lead Auditor and WCFP representatives first determined appropriate sample areas or geographic strata within which to sample field sites. The Lead Auditor then used randomized selection methods to select a subset of all available sales and assigned a priority number to each site. WCFP staff members worked with the lead auditor to designate the final selection list from this prioritized list and final adjustments were made during the audit to ensure flexibility and allow for additional samples as needed. Local foresters assisted with scheduling appropriate field site visits in a manner that balances efficiency of travel routes, the priority number for sites, and factors designed to assure coverage of key issues under the certification requirements.

3.3.1 Itinerary

Field sites and schedule of site visits:

Monday August 17 *

Chippewa County, 33,107 acres, FSC only – 12:30 – 5 PM

Site 1: Sale 1134

Site 2: Hickory Ridge Trail – co-use county forest road and ATV trail, significant erosion and sedimentation into wetlands including two Kettle Lakes

Site 3: Deer Fly Swamp, proposed State Natural Area within 706-acre Bass Lake Complex, plan (page 900-42) recommends long rotation management.

Site 4: Bass Lake #3 ATV Parking Lot

Site 5: Bass Lake #2 Boat Ramp – erosion from road going into dry portion of kettle lake bed; boat ramp eroding significantly

Site 6: Active Sale, no logger on site

Site 7: Sale 1135 – thinning from below with patches, completed

Site 8: Sale 1133 – Third entry thinning in 48-year old red pine – active harvest

Site 9: Sale 1142-08 – Active harvest including 10 acres of selection and 12 acres nearly completed regeneration harvest for Aspen; Aspen clearcut area has no retention trees and no retained trees around the kettle hole depression wetland (vernal pond)

Tuesday August 18, 8 am to 5 pm *

Northern Team: Price County 93,236 acres, both

Field Tour– Mike Ferrucci and Gary Zimmer, Auditors

- Site 1: Holy Cross Ruffed Grouse Management Area – Timber sold but not harvested, planned aspen clearcut, seed tree harvest in tamarack, and swamp hardwood selection harvest.
- Site 2: Access road into Site 1 – Road is gated and only used as a hunter walking access. Surface is fully vegetated (grassy) and has proper drainage including culverts at one small stream crossing with twin culverts which will need replacing soon.
- Site 3: Solberg Lake County Park – Pine stands have been thinning two times and are due soon; campground and day use area; not ADA compliant but other areas are
- Site 4: Georgetown ATV Trail and Bridge – Significant investment in new ATV trail built with sub-base, running surface, cross-drains, bridges as needed. Impressive bridge and causeway over stream and wetlands.
- Site 5: East Georgetown Stub Road – Newer all-season road that is ditched, crowned, surfaced with crushed rock to meet BMPs.
- Site 6: Informal reserve at end of East Georgetown Stub Road – Hemlock-Pine stand and wetland/vernal pool reserved from harvest but not yet formally designated as a HCVF.

Field Tour– Mike Ferrucci, Auditor

- Site 7: Active Harvest Tract 15-07 – Stand improvement thinning visible from roads and ATV trail. Some incidental gaps, some release of oak. Logger interview confirmed FISTA training and good awareness of BMPs and site protection measures designed into the harvest.
- Site 8: Tract 14-07 – Competed regeneration harvest originally set up in 2003 but not cut until winter 2008-09. Discussion of wildlife retention guidelines; snags and some live trees retained.
- Site9: Steve Creek Waterfowl Flowage – Managed by DNR for wild rice and for waterfowl habitat.
- Site 10: Tract 2-07 – Completed 138 acres selection in northern hardwoods and 17 acres in swamp hardwoods. Canopy gaps observed were all smaller than thirty feet diameter, but were ‘cleaned’. Regeneration abundant including red oak and much sugar maple. Deer populations in this area are very close to goal.
- Site 11: Sculpture Park – Cultural landmark managed by Price County Forestry Department, although not enrolled in the county lands program.

Field Tour– Gary Zimmer, Auditor

Site12: Tract 3-04, Aspen Regeneration Cut, Sale Closed October 17, 2007

Aspen regeneration approximately 10 feet tall, well stocked. All oak, conifer and thornapple reserved. Only a few reserve trees visible, some blowdown of conifers has occurred according to forester. Discussed need to tally and record residual reserve trees, possibly in sale completion report for monitoring and future audits. Viewed recent road closure that has been controversial to some users. Reason for closure is to protect wet road surface.

- Site13: 1989 Spruce Plantation along Green Creek Firelane, Area scraped and planted to spruce after poor regeneration occurred. Spruce has been released at least twice including by prison crews. Good growth but not fully stocked with pockets of dense alder present. Original planting was intended to improve aesthetics by increasing conifers in predominant aspen area.
- Site14: Tract 12-08, Large, 151 acre aspen regeneration harvest has been marked and sold but not harvested. Area has low stocking level, approx. 50 basal area with high shrub component. Few reserve trees, narrative highlights harvest of all aspen to promote better regeneration. Discussed potential conflicts with new retention guides and possibility of reserving small pockets of aspen to better meet guides.
- Small, 10 acre, hardwood selection harvest of inclusion within aspen area. Current basal area 120 with after harvest target of 80 – 85 basal area. Emphasis on marking of basswood poles and sawlogs noted.
- Site15: Tamarack/black spruce regeneration harvest. Strip cut around 2000. Good stocking throughout stand of tamarack and black spruce seedlings. Remaining strips to be harvested in near future with black spruce seedlings already visible in understory. Question if some tamarack seed trees are needed to be retained in remaining strips to seed in last strips to be cut.

Southern Team: Eau Claire County 52,530 acres, SFI and FSC

Field Tour– Dave Wager and JoAnn Hanowski, Auditors

- Site 1: Tower Ridge Recreation Area. High use recreation area close to Eau Claire; Ski trails, disc golf, horse back- very little management; fee area- with chalet
- Site 2: Timber Sale 28-06. 34-acre thinning and regeneration adjacent to rifle club shooting range; clearcut red pine- scarify, seed jack pine; goal of mixed oak jack pine site.
- Site 3: Timber Sale 20-08- similar stand to 28-06, snags pushed over with dozer for safety consideration
- Site 5: Timber Sale 1561. Harvest of mature jack pine, oak and aspen. Aesthetic buffer left along the roadside.
- Site 6: Timber Sale 1601. White pine with access through private land; cut heavy so don't need to return for some time; most stands had 50-60 ba retention; excellent protection of red shouldered hawk nest; wetland area had seasonal restriction. Well done.
- Site 7: Timber Sale 1533. 33-acre oak jack pine clearcut; steep slope retained trees kept operator out; small amount of fuel wood harvest (though site not overly clean)
- Site 8: Timber Sale 1590. 15-acre clearcut of oak. Objective to regenerate oak. Scarify and bull doze maple; No retention- question on how future sites would meet new guidelines for wildlife tree retention.
- Site 9: Canoe Landing State Natural Area; Barren/prairie was budworm salvage harvested and tried unsuccessfully to plant red pine. Decided to make it an SNA and barren/prairies; monitor for KBB and small mammals.
- Site 11: Tract 5-08; 58-acre oak and mixed hardwood regeneration. Seed tree patches and wetland buffered out of sale. Logger interview John Nelson.

Site 12: Barrens Area SNA- Coon Fork. Excellent work on maintaining enhancing barrens.

Wednesday August 19, 8 am to 5 pm *

Southern Team: Clark County 132,531 acres, FSC only

- Site 1: Chemical storage facility- chemicals in locked cabinet, MSDS sheets, no FSC prohibited chemicals
- Site 2: Whole tree chip sale with islands and leave all oak.
- Site 3: Timber Sale 476. 30-acre even-aged regeneration of aspen, oak, mixed hardwood. Whole tree chipping job.
- Site 4: Timber Sale 1226. 31-acre Northern Hardwood thinning/gap opening and aspen thinning. Objective maintain as NH stand. Only 600 acres of this type on Clark Forests- and efforts are made to perpetuate this type.
- Site 5: Firewood plots that required intensive site preparation to regenerate because it had converted to brush. Site sprayed with arsenal and glyphosate.
- Site 6: Bald Peak Road. Intensive ATV area to concentrate use.
- Site 7: County I Burn. Good example of using fire to encourage oak regeneration. Excellent kill of competing red maple.
- Site 8: Timber sale contract 1122. Low quality oak thinning / maintenance. Off trail ATV damage
- Site 9: Timber Sale 1-09. 131-acre intermediate thinning and 16-acre shelterwood. Active harvesting site; interview with logging contractor John Denfeld.
- Site 10: Timber Sale 1331. 118-acre regeneration harvest to perpetuate oak and white pine.
- Site 11: Wildcat Lane. County Forest Road with heavy ATV traffic. Excessive berms from ATV traffic despite the road being graded on a frequent basis. Several renegade ATV trails impacting forests along edge of stand.
- Site 12: Timber Sale 1175. 155-acre selective harvest in high use recreation area along lower slopes of Levis Trow Mound. Care taken to avoid steep slopes and minimize recreation impacts. HCVF area on higher slopes not harvested.
- Site 13: Jack pine release. Appeared to be effective release of jack pine using herbicides.
- Site 14: Tract 21-04. Active sale but logger not on-site. Effective oak retention with 20" rule. Minor rutting in one area of the sale as logger crossed a swale.

Thursday August 20, 8 am to 5 pm *

Northern Team: Wood County 37,592 acres, both

- Site #1 – Wood County ATV Area, Seneca Unit of Wood County Forest
600 Acre ATV Area that includes 12 miles of Designated ATV Trail. Only ATV use area on Wood County Forest. Location chosen due to its sandy soils with few wetlands. Much of forested area is red pine plantations that are being managed. Large parking lot present with restroom facilities. Heavily used area by ATV's with some illegal off

- trail use. Little effective law enforcement efforts occurring to prevent illegal activities. Some policing being done by local ATV club, county has no funding or staff to do enforcement. Most of management left to local club that is able to use state ATV registration funds for maintenance.
- Site #2 – Sale 621, Sale is combination of red pine thinning (8 acres) and aspen/oak regeneration harvest (21 acres). Red pine is being thinned for the third time with emphasis to release developing white pine. Regeneration harvest resulted in heavy regeneration of aspen with some sapling white pine and scattered oak and white pine seedlings evident. Deer browsing is limited and wildlife manager Wayne Hall reports current deer populations at goal levels (25 deer/square mile) after years above goal. Note: No BMP statement in sale contract!
- Site #3 – Sale 641, 10 acre Partial overstory removal harvest of large declining red and white oak. Harvested by hand crew in December, 2008. Left some poor quality, high wildlife potential trees as potential seed sources and to promote potential cavities, snags and downed woody debris. Good mixed regeneration of oak/maple and some aspen clones. Liaison forester is monitoring stand yearly. Decking area was developed off road to minimize conflict with adjacent snowmobile trail.
- Site #4 – Sale 633, Selection harvest of 55 acres in red pine, oak and bottomland hardwoods. Site included newly found red shouldered hawk nest. Hawk expert Gene Jacobs along with DNR wildlife manager Wayne Hall brought in for recommendations. No cut zone established around nest site and harvest restrictions put in place during breeding, nesting and fledging period. RMZ established on both sides of Yellow River and forester worked with Ho Chunk archeologist on location of potential Native American settlement.
- Site #5 – Sale 584, Unit B close to Park Road. Aspen regeneration harvest with conifer reserves. High level of retention observed including oak and red/white pine. Unit was 26 acres but entire sale was 59 acres. A buffer strip was established adjacent to Park Road. Aspen, oak, cherry and white pine seedlings observed in good numbers.
- Site #6 – Sale 628, Regeneration harvest of black and white oak. White pine was left along county highway X, in Aesthetic Zone B. Some mature oaks were marked for retention. Harvest released sapling white pine. Aspen and red maple were designated for harvest and oaks marked. A rubber mat was used to cross a wetland to the west of this unit to assist with harvest of an additional unit. Mat was pulled out after harvest completion and no impact to wetland occurred. Berm was put in place after the harvest to reduce motorized vehicle use.
- Site #7 – Sale 590, Southern Unit, Large white pine 50% shelterwood harvest designed to release white pine and oak regeneration. West boundary of stand is along Hiles Wetlands State Natural Area. Limited residual damage occurred on saplings during harvest.
- Site #8 – Hiles Wetlands State Natural Area, large sedge meadow with water control structure on road/dike. Part of complex that includes Skunk Creek Woods SNA and Lyman Marsh.
- Site #9 – Skunk Creek Woods State Natural Area, part of complex that includes Hiles Wetlands SNA and Lyman Marsh. Management plan calls for extended rotation of white pine in this area.

Site #10 – Sale 590, Northern Unit, Oak Shelterwood, Heavy shrub and sapling regeneration that currently favors maple over oak. Regeneration survey has been done by liaison forester. Overstory scheduled for removal but mature oaks are showing more mortality than expected.

Southern Team: Jackson County 120,886 acres, both

Field Tour: Auditor JoAnn Hanowski

Site #1: Timber Sale 11-08: Active sale, oak clearcut. Water quality BMP's were addressed including a stream crossing and an RMZ. Retention was left in the form of islands around pocket wetlands. Little or no snag or green tree retention on other parts of the sale area.

Site #2: Timber Sale 2098. Thinning of 60 year old red pine stand. Row thinning except in area where there was pocket decline. Some oak is regenerating in the plantation rows. Discussed habitat types that occur in Jackson County. They are not recorded on the form.

Site #3: Timber Sale 1999. Clearcut of "overmature" oak/aspen. Very little green tree retention in the sale area. Left a retention island around one wet area.

Site #4: Timber Sale 2111. Clearcut of mature oak stand with some islands of retention.

Site #5: Planting site. Site was planted twice, once to red pine that did not do very well. The second planting was of jack pine and has had better rates of survival than the red pine.

Site #6 Timber Sale 2169. Interviewed skidder operator. Had a first aid kit, but not a spill kit. The harvest description in this site called for retention of all snags, but no greens were left in the sale area.

Site #7 Timber Sale 1994. Aspen clearcut was set to be done on frozen soils. Logger was given approval to enter stand under dry soil conditions. Rain occurred and significant rutting was done to the main skid trail. The logger was asked to fix the trail. A few green trees and snags were left in the sale area.

Field Tour: Auditor Dave Wager

Site #8: Bauer Brockway Barrens- State Natural Area. Burning every 8 years. Undertaking invasive control for spotted knapweed

Site 9: Lake Wazee Recreation Areas- Open Pit Mine Restoration. County maintains infrastructure at this popular recreation site.

Site 10: Timber Sale 2071- Road improvement project- culverts installed; road gated; 36-acre regeneration harvest of aspen and red maple.

Site 11: Timber Sale 2136 and Adjacent Stand: Salvage operation due to 2-lined chestnut borer; numerous snags left; approx 1% of area in island retention

Site 12: Timber Sale 2174: 64-acre oak salvage from 2-lined chestnut borer mortality; Areas of sale without borer mortality were retained.

- Site 13: Timber Sale 2157: 33-acre regeneration harvest. Excellent oak regeneration with a diversity of oak species origination from both stumps and acorns.
- Site 14: Timber Sale 2114: 74-acre acre sale, predominantly pine and spruce thinning with 9-acres of Jack Pine regeneration. Observed two areas of 2114 with excessive rutting. Sale was designated as winter harvest only, but was cut in September.
- Site 15: Knutes Forest Road- Oak thinning/shelterwood sale marked but not cut. Den and cavity trees left.
- Site 16: Jack pine seeding following an arson fire. Seeded 2007. Very good regeneration.

Friday August 21, Audits 7 am-2 pm only *

Northern Team (Ferrucci only): Taylor County 17,000 acres, both

- Site 1: Gerstberger Pines, 20 acre unique tract acquired with forestry funds in 2006 that is a 180 – 200 year old forest of large white pine, red oak, Eastern hemlock, basswood and yellow birch. Tract includes a hiking trail with benches to encourage public use of the site and a parking lot/trailhead adjacent to the tract. No management has been prescribed for this stand.
- Site 2: Sale 561, Tract 3-06, Unit was a 59 acre harvest to promote aspen regeneration. Harvest unit includes a small spruce plantation that was thinned through and a black spruce/tamarack wetland that was worked around. Snags were retained as well as a few long lived conifers and oak.
- Site 3: Sale 566, Tract 5-05. Unit was a 44 acre white spruce plantation that was planted in 1966 on the site of a former farmstead. Harvest was the second thinning of the stand. No sign of disease problem in remnant white spruce.
- Site 4a: Sale 588, Tract 8-08 - 15 acre selection northern hardwood harvest and 100 acre aspen regeneration harvest. Aspen harvest included RMZ protections along stream along west side of stand and red lined buffers around vernal ponds.
- Site 4b: Trout Avenue Count Forest Road: Superb road – crowned, surfaced with crushed gravel, ditched.
- Site 5: Sale 586, Tract 6-08 - Harvest was two step shelterwood with target to regenerate paper birch. Overstory removed early due to decline. Tree length skidding required by operator to prepare site for birch seeding. Regenerated paper birch, maple, ash, oak, and aspen.
- Site 6a: Sale 577, Tract 7-07 - Pocket big tooth aspen regeneration harvest with retention of red oak. Designated ATV Trail goes thru sale, logging ahead warning signs visible on trail. Trail maintained by local club and state ATV funds.
- Site 6b: Sale 577, Tract 7-07 - Active selection harvest in northern hardwoods, trees being felled with processor by a trained logger. Canopy gaps are smaller and less frequent than handbook.
- Site 7: Sale off Bear Avenue. Small stream crossing used to access selection harvest unit. Access restricted to one site and brush used to bridge wetland. Brush removed after sale completion. No visible impact from logging operation to soils but recent ATV use left rut in wetland.

- Site 8: Bear Avenue Hemlock Patch. 8 – 10 acre mixed hemlock/white pine/yellow birch stand with vernal pools. Some regeneration of hemlock scattered on area. Stand not “z” d out of Recon. Light harvest on edges to remove competitive maple and aspen. Other team viewed other small hemlock and/or conifer patches held in reserve.
- Site 9: Camp 8 Campground, Picnic Area, and Boat Launch
- Site 10: Loop Road – Various older treatments; road is well-maintained and meets BMP requirements for roads, including surface, crown, ditches, and cross-drains as needed.
- Site 11: Horse Camp – Former gravel pit developed for camping and used extensively by horse riders to access Taylor County’s horse trails.
- Site 12: Ice Age Trail – Trail visually buffered from surrounding harvests. ATV are bypassing gate and using trail despite signs and regulations.

Southern Team: Juneau County 15,186 acres, both

- Site 1: Bass Hollow Recreation Area. Salvage harvest of blow down in HCVF area- but was consistent with goals to maintain the unit as late successional hardwoods. Salvage was restricted to what could be reached from the road.
- Site 2: Timber Sale 425. Mix of red pine plantation thinnings and oak/jack pine regeneration blocks with oak wilt. Regeneration of one small jack pine site left to natural seed in, but there was no scheduled follow-up to monitor success.
- Site 3: Timber Sale 407. Regeneration of bottomland hardwood/oak stand with stump sprouts. Boundaries well marked, winter logging, stream protected with buffer and crossing. Regeneration spotty in some areas.
- Site 4. 10th Rd 150-acre Aspen clearcut with minimal retention. Harvested in winter of 2006.
- Site 5. Timber Sale 436. 55-acre red pine thinning. Oaks retained for diversity and wildlife. Some salvage pockets provided diversity of structure.
- Site 6. Kennedy Park. 240-acre older forest area. Managed for recreation and late successional habitat.

Attendees:

Opening Meeting

Northern team: Mike Ferrucci, Gary Zimmer, Auditors; Paul Pingrey, DNR Certification Coordinator

% Southern Team: Dave Wager, JoAnn Hanowski, Auditors; Jeff Barkley, DNR County Forest Program Administrator

Jane Severt, Executive Director, Wisconsin County Forests Association

Monday August 17

Chippewa County #, %

Doyle Richards, Chippewa County Forest Admin
Jim Skorczewski, DNR Cty Forest Liaison
David Staudacher, Chippewa County Forester
John Dunn, DNR Wildlife Manager
Michelle Woodford, DNR Wildlife Biologist
Paul Westegaard, Area Staff Specialist
Steve Edge, Forestry Team Leader
Jane Severt – WCFP Executive Director

Tuesday August 18

Eau Claire County %

John Staszczuk, County Forest Admin
Brooke Ludwig, DNR Liaison
Mike Torud, Parks and Forest Supervisor
Jody Gindt, County Forester
Paul Lokken, Eau Claire Parks and Forestry Committee
John Dunn, DNR Wildlife Supervisor
Paul Westegaard, Area Forest Staff Specialist
Randy Schott, Area Forestry Leader- Black River Falls
Loren Ayers, DNR Endangered Resources
Steve Edge, DNR Forestry Team Leader

Price County #:

Pete Bartelt, Price County Forest Admin
Kyle Schmidt, DNR Cty Forest Liaison
Pat Beringer, DNR Wildlife Manager
Eric Holm, Assistant County Forest Administrator
Corey Verdegan, Price County Forester
Mike Luedeke, DNR Northern Regional Forester
Tom Duke, DNR Northern Region Staff Specialist
Greg Mitchell, DNR Forestry Team Leader
Steve Lorenz, Price County Project Forester

Wednesday August 19

Clark County %

Mark Heil, Cty Forest Admin
Dan Clough, DNR Liaison
Michelle Windsor, DNR Wildlife Manager
Chris Schmitz, DNR forester
Rick Dailey, Clark County Forest Assistant Admin
Jon Holger, Clark County Forestry Technician
Andy Sorenson, Clark County Forestry Technician
Paul Westegaard, Area Forest Staff Specialist

Randy Schott, Area Forestry Leader- Black River Falls
Loren Ayers, DNR Endangered Resources
Steve Edge, DNR Forestry Team Leader

Marathon County #:

Tom Lovlien, Marathon Co Forest Admin
Chad Keranen, DNR Cty Forest Liaison
Cortney Schaefer, DNR Wildlife Manager
Elroy Zemke , Chair Forestry and Recreation County Board, President of WCFP Bd. of Directors
Doug Brown, Assistant County Forest Administrator
Shirley Bargander, DNR Forestry Team Leader

Thursday August 20

Jackson County %

James Zahasky, Cty. Forest Admin
Russell Kind, DNR Cty. Forest Liaison
Michelle Windsor, DNR Wildlife Manager
Dave Spaude, Jackson County Forester
Randy Schott, Area Forestry Leader- Black River Falls
Paul Westegaard – DNR Area Forestry Staff
Gary Schluter – DNR Team Leader
Jane Severt – WCFP Executive Director
Jim Warren – DNR Lands Section Chief - Madison

Wood County #:

Fritz Schubert, Wood County Forest Admin
Steven Grant, DNR Cty Forest Liaison
Wayne Hall, DNR Wildlife Manager
Cliff Randal, Dexter Park Lead Maintenance

Friday August 21

Juneau County%

Brian Loyd, County Forest Admin
Jon Robaidek, DNR Wildlife Manager
Monty Brink, Assistant County Forest Administrator
Mike Warnke, DNR Forestry Team Leader, Juneau
Doug King, Juneau Cty. Forestry Technician
Steve Courtney – DNR Area Forestry Leader

Taylor County #:

Brad Ruesch, Taylor County Forest Admin
Russ Aszmann, Taylor County Forest Assistant Admin

Scott Lindow, DNR Cty Forest Liaison
Mike Luedeke, DNR Northern Region Forester
Tom Duke, Northern Region Forestry Specialist
Mark Berglund, Star News
Larry Glodoski, DNR Area Forestry Supervisor

3.3.5 Stakeholder Consultation

Pursuant to SCS protocols, consultations with key stakeholders were an integral component of the evaluation process. Consultation took place prior to, concurrent with, and following the field evaluation. The following were distinct purposes to the consultations:

- To solicit input from affected parties as to the strengths and weaknesses of the Wisconsin County Forests Program, relative to the standard, and the nature of the interaction between the county forests and the surrounding communities; and
- To solicit input on whether the forest management operation has consulted with stakeholders regarding identifying any high conservation value forests.

Principal stakeholder groups of relevance to this evaluation were identified based upon lists of stakeholders from the county forests and additional stakeholder contacts from other sources (e.g., members of the regional FSC working group). The following types of groups and individuals were determined to be principal stakeholders:

- County forestry agency employees and contractors,
- Adjacent property owners;
- Pertinent Tribal members and or representatives;
- Members of the Regional FSC Working Group/National Initiative;
- Local and regionally-based environmental organizations and conservationists;
- Local and regionally-based social interest organizations;
- Forest industry groups and organizations;
- Purchasers of logs harvested on forestlands enrolled in the program;
- Local, State, and Federal regulatory agency personnel;
- User groups, such as hikers, hunters, ATV users, and others; and
- Other relevant groups.

Prior to, during, and following the site evaluation, a wide range of stakeholders were consulted in regard to their relationship with the Wisconsin County Forestry Program and their views on the management of the county forests. Stakeholders included FSC contact persons, government and non-government organizations involved in forest management, local citizens and groups, employees, contractors, and others. Stakeholders were contacted with notification mailings soliciting comments and inviting participation in the public meeting. Notifications were distributed via email as well as a hard copy mailing. Phone contacts were also made. Stakeholders representing diverse environmental, social and economic interests were contacted during the process and invited to provide comments. Comments were received via meetings and personal interviews “face-to-face”, phone interviews (“Interview”), and through written responses. Individuals contacted but providing no comments and those who did not respond to the request for input are indicated as “No Response” (NR). Individuals providing comments

were asked to provide permission to be listed in the report and additional comments were received from individuals not wishing to reveal their identities and/or requesting that their names not be listed in the report.

Name	Affiliation	Consultation
Greg Bunker	Mohican Nation Stockbridge-Munsee Band	Interview
Ray Burgess	Citizen	Written
Stan Druckenmiller	Madison Audubon Society	Interview
Earl Gustafson	WI Paper Council	Interview
Jon Harris	Douglas Co Forest Admin	Interview
Don Heimke	Florence ATV Club	Written
Barbara Henderson	Henderson Forestry Consulting	Interview
Rachel Jordan	Private Woodland Owner	Interview
Tom Lovlien	Marathon Co Forest Admin	Interview
Dan Meyer	Governor's Council on Forestry	Interview
Ray Perry	Perry Forestry Consulting	Interview
Mark Peters	Florence Co Snowmobile Club	Written
Charly Ray	Living Forest Cooperative	Interview
George Sheppard	Sheppard Forestry Service	Interview
Pat Smith	Florence Co Forest Admin	Interview
Michael Strigel	Gathering Waters Conservancy	Interview
Don Thompson	Don Thompson Forestry Consulting	Interview
Richard Valigura	Integrated Forest Management	Interview
John Withers	Riverside Sawmill, Inc.	Interview

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

The following tables provide a summary of the comments received from stakeholders related to the standards as well as major perspectives and concerns.

Social Concerns

Comment/Concern	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County forestry personnel participate in land protection training events and conferences. 	Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County forestry personnel collaborate on statewide policy interests with stakeholders and land protection activities. 	Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grassroots citizen involvement in county management lands is a good thing. 	Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Florence County provides opportunities for public input, but they don't follow through on a lot of the input or requests. 	Although we did not visit Florence County on this assessment, we did not see any evidence of counties facility failing to follow-through.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are good partnerships between the counties and the state. 	Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More forestry education is needed for the general public. 	County Forests and DNR are currently contributing to public education at levels that meet or exceed the standard.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is appropriate for public lands to be certified; it provides an assurance and auditor verification of public commitment to sustainable forestry practices. 	Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSC's new draft standards may not be good for the region. The social aspects of the standards are a concern. 	Not pertinent to this assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSC's new draft standards could be difficult to accomplish with limited staff and resources. 	Not pertinent to this assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSC's pesticide restrictions could create problems for nurseries. 	Agreed- but outside the scope of this assessment

Economic Concerns

Comment/Concern	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If all county land is not certified it may be hard to compete in the future with lands that are certified. 	Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certification information for chain-of-custody is not incorporated into harvest system with sale tickets or for lump sum sales. 	Team found WCFP to be meeting CoC requirements for sales.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vernon County should become FSC certified 	This decision is entirely up to Vernon County.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There isn't a downside to having county lands certified. 	Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There should be more ATV trails and activities in the Eau Claire County Forests. 	Audit team found the opportunities for recreation across Eau Claire to meet or exceed the standard.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Florence County should make more ATV trails available and open up more existing logging roads. 	Audit team found the opportunities for recreation across WCFP to meet or exceed the standard.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certification has allowed county to maintain and expand timber markets; certification raises the bar of forest management. 	Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County boards are a barrier to certification and don't see the benefits. 	County boards of FSC enrolled County Forests have passed Resolutions permitting FSC certification.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glad to see more mills moving towards certification in Wisconsin. 	Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certification creates too much paperwork and not much benefit in price or markets. 	Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wisconsin is wise to be on front end of certification with Managed Forest Law (MFL), state and county lands. 	Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certification's time has not come. There are no pricing benefits and no market preference. 	Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The counties should disclose the minimum bid. It's 	Timber sales across

not appropriate to base the minimum on average stumpage values when they are putting up lower quality material.	WCFP have multiple bidders, which is common for most every sale. Thus we did not see evidence of a flawed process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County management is a huge part of the forest base in the state and they are doing a good job. Cut over lands are now providing important income and recreational opportunities. 	Noted

Environmental Concerns

Comment/Concern	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shawano County lands are not well managed. 	Not Applicable- County not included in the scope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waukesha County has good management plans. 	Not Applicable- County not included in the scope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marinette County lands are well managed. 	Outside the scope of this audit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oneida County, Burnett County, and Long Lake (in Washington County) do great work. 	Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Juneau and Wood County Forests are protecting rare, threatened and endangered species and follow BMPS; they could do more to address invasive species. 	Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Juneau and Wood County Forests are not doing enough to address insect and disease threats, fire risk and fuel loading. 	Team found acceptable levels of activities to address insect and disease threats- see Criterion 6.6.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iron County management should be improved. 	Discussed Iron County performance with DNR- and understand that improvements have been made in the last year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Auditors focus too much on the harvest site without considering the diversity of management and objectives at a landscape scale. 	Auditors reviewed full aspects of management as related to FSC

	standard.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clark, Eau Claire, Jackson, Lincoln, Sawyer and Washburn County Forests are managed in accordance with laws for multiple use. 	Noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oconto and Marinette County Forests do a good job with multiple use management. Sales are well executed and address sustainable forestry principles. 	Noted

3.4 Total Time Spent on Audit

The assessment was completed using approximately 36 auditor days. Activities included reviewing documents and records, interviewing stakeholders, and carrying out field work, analysis, and reporting.

3.5 Process of Determining Conformance

FSC accredited forest stewardship standards consist of a three-level hierarchy, principle, then the criteria that make up that principle, then indicators that make up each criteria. Consistent with SCS Forest Conservation Program evaluation protocols, the team collectively determines whether or not the subject forest management operation is in conformance with every applicable indicator of the relevant forest stewardship standard. Each non-conformance must be evaluated to determine whether it constitutes a major or minor non-conformance at the level of the associated criterion or sub-criterion. Not all indicators are equally important, and there is no simple numerical formula to determine whether an operation is in non-conformance. The team must use their collective judgment to assess each criterion and determine if it is in conformance. If the forest management operation is determined to be in non-conformance at the criterion level, then at least one of the indicators must be in major non-conformance.

Corrective action requests (CAR's) are issued for every instance of non-conformance. Major non-conformances trigger Major CAR's and minor non-conformances trigger Minor CAR's

Interpretations of Major CAR's (Preconditions), Minor CARs and Recommendations

Major CARs/Preconditions: Major non-conformances, either alone or in combination with non-conformances of other indicators, result (or are likely to result) in a fundamental failure to achieve the objectives of the relevant FSC Criterion given the uniqueness and fragility of each forest resource. These are corrective actions that must be resolved or closed out prior to award of the certificate. If major CAR's arise after an operation is certified, the timeframe for correcting these non-conformances is typically shorter than for minor CAR's. Certification is contingent on the certified operations response to the CAR within the stipulated time frame.

Minor CARs: These are corrective action requests in response to minor non-conformances, which are typically limited in scale or can be characterized as an unusual lapse in the system. Corrective actions must be closed out within a specified time period of award of the certificate.

Observations (OBS): These are suggestions that the audit team concludes would help the Department move even further towards exemplary status. Action on the recommendations is voluntary and does not affect the maintenance of the certificate. Recommendations/observations can be subsequently changed to CARs if performance with respect to the criterion triggering the recommendation/observation falls into non-conformance.

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	Gaps Relative to the Standard (CARs and Obs)
P1: FSC Commitment and Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SCS audit team observed excellent conformance with applicable government forest management guidelines (including BMP's) ▪ Payments are routinely paid and paid in a timely fashion ▪ DNR carries out financial audits of Counties helping to ensure payments are made. Results of 3-year Financial Audits showed that All Counties are meeting payment obligations. ▪ All Counties take considerable actions to limit illegal and unauthorized activities in the forest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some Counties, e.g., Juneau, actively manage forests that are not included in the County Forest Program, and thus not all managed forests within a County are enrolled in FSC. Counties have not been documented reasons for their seeking partial certification (CAR 2009.8)
P2: Tenure & Use Rights & Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All legal rights associated with lands managed by the WCFP are appropriately documented ▪ All County Forests offer exceptional public use opportunities for a large variety of activities. 15-year plans and County Forest websites describe these activities. ▪ Observed that All Counties mark perimeters of harvest units in the field prior to operations. It was clear that the managers were diligent in defining property boundaries prior to any management activities. 	None noted
P3: Indigenous Peoples' Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WCFP sent letters to 11 Tribes (as well as Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission GLFWC) deemed to be potentially interested in management of the County Forests. The letters provided contact information for the County Administrators, described the County Forests, the County Forest planning process, and invited participation on identifying archaeological and cultural resources. ▪ DNR conducts consultations with 	None noted

	<p>tribal groups in an ongoing manner, including formal, periodic meetings as well as in-formal conversations and open communications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ County Forests are required to check cultural database for all timber sales and that such information be included on the Timber Sale narrative (Form 2460-1A). 	
<p>P4: Community Relations & Workers' Rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ County Forests have stable relationships with contractors and employees indicate satisfaction with the work. ▪ Employment opportunities at DNR and County Forests are non-discriminatory, including with respect to place of residence. ▪ DNR Liaisons and County Forest staff support a large number and wide range of environmental education activities ▪ Public input occurs through the 15 year planning process and during the monthly Forestry Committee meetings. Additionally, as key issues arise, e.g., access planning, public input is sought through different mechanisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None noted
<p>P5: Benefits from the Forest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ County Forests have a multi-decade long-track record of continued support of long-term forest management. ▪ Investment and or reinvestment remains at an acceptable level. ▪ WCFP has demonstrated a commitment to the long term management of County forests for diverse environmental and social benefits and economic viability. ▪ County Forests permit non-timber forest product contracts such as sphagnum moss, boughs, tag alder, etc, which primarily benefit small businesses. ▪ County Forests are managed and used for varied recreation uses. Facilities and programs are first-rate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DNR staff time contributions to County Forestry are being more carefully controlled, which will result in less staff contributions to County Forestry. ▪ Additionally, a statewide hiring freeze is preventing the DNR from filling positions related to County Forestry. ▪ The audit team is concerned about the sustainability of sphagnum moss harvesting, due to its very slow growth.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FIA data shows that across the whole County Forest system harvests are approximately 75% of net growth. Considering that overall harvest levels are at 75% of net growth, and the number of acres of special sites is modest- County Forests are still harvesting less than growth. 	
<p>P6: Environmental Impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All County Forests completed a comprehensive Environmental Analysis as part of the process to develop 15-year Land Use plans. For site/project level environmental impacts, a variety of tools are used to assess and mitigate environmental impacts. ▪ Numerous surveys are completed by the Wisconsin DNR including Karner Blue, wolf surveys, red shouldered hawk, goshawk, osprey, bald eagles, relevé plots on county forests. ▪ All County Forests predominantly utilize natural regeneration, and encourage species that are best suited to the site. All County Forests are managing at the stand level in a manner that is consistent with stated desired future conditions. ▪ Excellent work being done on maintaining and increasing barrens and jack pine on the landscape. ▪ County Forests actively cooperate with the State DNR to protect and manage for native plant and animal communities. ▪ All foresters interviewed knew the primary pests of the forest types under their management and the silvicultural methods needed to maintain vigorous stands as well as needed treatments when pests appear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In some cases, the lists of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) relevant to each County Forest are too general. More significantly there is a lack of specific management for SGCN - CAR 2009.1¹ ▪ Ecological Management Unit planning approaches (e.g, Clark County) or a comparable approach to better accomplish landscape-level planning should be implemented at Counties where such planning approaches are suitable (e.g., sufficient size, diversity of types, etc). Observation 2009.1) ▪ At least one county was not coding regeneration sites to follow-up monitor despite some apparent regeneration challenges (Observation 2009.2) ▪ In Northern Hardwoods some counties are missing the emulation of small gap disturbance. Observation 2009.3 ▪ Green tree retention guidelines have been added to the Silvicultural Handbook, but they have yet to be implemented. See Major CAR 2009.2.

¹ SGCN lists were compiled and provided to WDNR-FR and WCFA in 2007. This information is available at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/wwap/explore/property>.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This is a conservation action in the new Wildlife Action Plan that will lead to Conservation Opportunity Areas providing habitat connectivity. ▪ RMZ's are systematically implemented. ▪ BMP's are in place and utilized to reduce soil impacts. Rutting guidelines have been incorporated into all timber sale contracts. ▪ All County Forests visited during this audit either use no chemicals or use them on only a small portion (or none) of their lands each year. ▪ All County Forests use native tree species and local genotypes in reforestation efforts. ▪ There is a clear process in place to discourage/limit County Forests from selling off lands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WCFP should continue its efforts toward encouraging the legislature to develop new programs to reduce deer population densities. Observation 2008.1 ▪ Guidelines for vernal pools and pocket wetlands are being developed, however, in the interim these resources must still be protected. (CAR 2009.3) ▪ Several non-conformances related to BMPs were observed (CAR 2009.4).
P7: Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 15-year Land Use Plans are completed for All Counties and cover all necessary requirements of Principle 7. ▪ Sale contracts are standardized and include harvest prescriptions and maps. Each sale has a contract that includes prescriptions and detailed specifications of how operations are to be conducted. ▪ plans are active documents and amended periodically (often annually) as necessary ▪ Training records are kept for all employees. Numerous opportunities for a wide array of training through DNR, WCFP, and other organizations. ▪ All 15-year plans are publically available. All DNR guides, procedures, monitoring reports, and other relevant documents are publically available. 	None noted
P8: Monitoring & Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The WISFIRS system provides excellent data collection and monitoring opportunities ▪ RECON is the core of the monitoring activities on County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional steps to monitor changes in occurrences/habitat for rare spp are needed CAR 2009.1

	<p>Forests and the frequency of data collection under Recon follows a schedule not to exceed 20 years. Program-wide, RECON >20 years old has been reduced by over 222,500 acres in last 2 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DNR has a research bureau that addresses a wide range of ecological issues. 	
P9: Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Natural Areas Program conducted a coarse level survey of the County Forest system for HCVF. County Forests have also identified their own special sites that they have become familiar with through the long history of surveying (RECON). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HCVF- that is to be maintained with passive management, is not consistently being removed from the harvest schedule (i.e. zzzz out of Recon) (CAR 2009.6)

4.2 Preconditions

Preconditions are major corrective action requests that are issued to the certification applicant after the initial or recertification evaluation and before the forest management operation is certified. Certification cannot be awarded if open preconditions exist.

Non-Conformance: 6.3(a)3, 6.3(a)5, 6.3(b)1, 6.3(c)3	
Guidelines for wildlife tree retention have not been implemented- See CAR 2008.2	
Major CAR 2009.2	WCFP must implement the Wildlife retention guidelines as well as implement ways to monitor whether they are being implemented.
Deadline	3 months from finalization of 2009 report
Reference	<i>FSC Indicators</i> 6.3(a)3, 6.3(a)5, 6.3(b)1, 6.3(c)3
Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments	
<p>County Forest Program Response The following actions have been taken/planned to correct the problem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Marking & Tree retention training as a part of our Biomass Training sessions</u> - Completed 4 of 5 sessions (Woodruff, Green Bay, Fitchburg, Minong) with Neillsville scheduled for 12/3. Including those scheduled to appear in Neillsville - 365 DNR and County staff received the training. • <u>Identification of local staff to coordinate Area field sessions - Oct. 2009-</u> (Completed - 22 people have been identified as Area tree retention contacts) • <u>Train-the-Trainer session for Area contacts identified above</u> (Completed 11/17/09) • <u>Revised Timber Sale narrative adding tree retention</u> (Completed 11/09) 	

STEPS ABOVE HAVE BEEN COMPLETED, THOSE BELOW ARE PLANNED

- Live Meeting tree retention training - Not completed - Feedback from field indicates that indoor training on tree retention has been effective and is reaching all the foresters. We are reserving this delivery method to address follow up questions that may be generated from Area level training
- Area-wide field sessions - Sessions led by Area contacts are scheduled for 12/1/2009 - 7/15/2010. None completed as yet. A few local sessions were held this fall prior to certification findings
- Review of Marking Guideline Chapter by Silviculture Team -Awaiting feedback from Area-wide training sessions - 2010 and on-going

In addition, our NOR Region Forest Health coordinator developed some feedback and guidance on even-aged retention considerations in some of our primary even-aged forest types.

WDNR will also include an assessment of the understanding and implementation as part of the internal Group monitoring that is built into the regular County Forest audits (3 yr. intervals) as well as the annual County Forest / DNR partnership meetings. Implementation will be monitored through timber sale approval and documentation on the Timber Sale Notice & Cutting Report narrative. This will be completed throughout FY2010 (7/1/09 – 6/30/10).

SCS Findings:

SCS reviewed the verified that the above actions have occurred. With the revised silvicultural Handbook and Timber Sale Narrative form; training activities undertaken; and implementation of monitoring, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that implementation of the wildlife tree retention guidelines is occurring. During the 2010 audit, SCS will look closely at the effectiveness of implementation.

CAR: Closed

Note CARs are issued with sequential numbers. Major CAR 2009.2 is the only major CAR, CAR 2009.1 is minor CAR.

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 the Wisconsin County Forest Program retain FSC certification as a “Well-Managed Forest” subject to the corrective action requests stated in Section 5.2. The WCFP has demonstrated that their system of management is capable of ensuring that all of the requirements of the Lake States-Central Hardwoods Region (USA) Regional Forest Stewardship Standard Version 3.0 are met over the forest area covered by the scope of the evaluation.

5.2 Corrective Action Requests

Corrective Actions Open At the Start of the 2009 Audit

CAR 2007.3	<p>Develop and implement guidelines for woody debris retention/recruitment that address both woody debris for wildlife and nutrient cycling/soil productivity.</p> <p>Note: per the existing recommendation 2004.5- County Forests are encouraged to also establish criteria for retention of the other aspects (beyond woody debris) of stand-level wildlife habitat elements (e.g., green tree retention, mast trees, den trees, and nest trees).</p>
Deadline	<p>Due to the highly technical nature and the numerous parties involved with this assignment, the CAR timeline is divided into the following phases and milestones (as proposed by WI DNR):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. March 2008: DNR will conduct a literature search and draft language. 2. June 2008: Council representatives and DNR established teams (such as the Silviculture and Public Lands Specialist Teams) will review draft materials. 3. June 2008 – June 2009: Stakeholder input on draft biomass guidelines and possible stakeholder review and input on Forest Management Guideline update. 4. June 2009: Council adopts Forestland Biomass Harvesting Guidelines. Biomass guidelines may be incorporated into an update of the Wisconsin Forest Management Guidelines.
Reference	<i>Indicators 5.3.a, 6.3.b, and 6.3.c</i>
Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments (2007-2009)	
<p>County Forest Program Response Progress / Completion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept. 2007 – Council on Forestry sponsors / charges DNR Division of Forestry to coordinate development of Woody Biomass Harvesting guidelines • Fall / Winter 2007-08: Research and development of draft guidelines by Technical Team (Eunice Padley, Joe Kovach, Carmen Wagner, Sarah Herrick) • Winter 2007-08: Development of Scoping document framing out process for guideline development • Feb. 2008: Formation of Advisory Committee for Woody Biomass guidelines • March 2008: Selection of list of expert reviewers for DRAFT guidelines • April 2008: Distribution of DRAFT Woody Biomass Guidelines and associated white paper to expert reviewers. *Expert Reviewers include the WCFP Certification / Legislative Committee. • Summer/Fall 2008: Biomass Advisory Committee works with Tech. Team and infuses public feedback into draft guidelines • 12/3/08: Biomass Advisory Committee approves BHG • 12/16/08: Council on Forestry approves BHG 	

- Jan. 2009: Draft BHG Monitoring Options Plan completed
- 3/17/09: Council on Forestry approves BHG Implementation Plan
- Incorporate biomass guidelines into Timber Sale Notice & Cutting Report narrative (Form 2460-001A) and Harvest Inspection Record (Form 2460-002) – Draft narrative completed 6-09.

SCS Findings:

SCS verified that the above actions have occurred. WCFP met the timeline for developing the guidelines and a process for implementation by Spring 2010 is underway. A series of 5 training sessions is occurring between August and December. Harvest sites visited during the 2009 audit did not show a scarcity of biomass related to soil productivity issues. The coarse woody debris component of this CAR is also being addressed in the retention guidelines- See CAR 2008.2.

Status August 2009: CAR Closed.

Background/Justification: Indicator 6.2.b states that *if scientific data indicates the likely presence of state and/or Federally listed as threatened, endangered, of special concern, or sensitive populations, either new surveys are carried out before field-management activities begin or the forest owner or manager assumes their presence and makes appropriate modifications in forest management.*

SCS Observation from Florence County contract 695- block 4: a red shouldered hawk nest was listed in the NHI database. No surveys for red shouldered hawks were done prior to the sale, and the logging contractor identified two trees marked to be cut that had hawk nests in them. Although these trees were not felled, the majority of trees around them were. The nests were not active at the time of the audit, and it remained uncertain what species of hawk had occupied these nests.

American Marten have been identified throughout Iron County (including one timber sale during the 2006 audit), however, stands are not being surveyed for Marten prior to harvest or being managed as if they were present.

Knowledge and utilization of the Wildlife Action Plan and related resources must be further incorporated into timber management. A primary goal of the Wildlife Action Plan is to increase awareness of, and protective measures for, species of greatest conservation need.

CAR 2008.1	WCFP must take actions to ensure conformance with Indicator 6.2.b by utilizing the “Endangered Resources Screening Guidance for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources” and by incorporating the Wildlife Action Plan and related resources into management of the County Forests.
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Deadline	Re-certification evaluation- scheduled for 3 rd quarter 2009
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Reference	<i>Indicator 6.2.b</i>
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Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments (2007-2009):

Corrective Action

Enhance field level understanding of the Wildlife Action Plan, where to find it, what information is available specific to their County, and how they can utilize that information to implement conservation actions on timber sales and other ground-disturbing management activities.

- Identify Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) for each County Forest
- Identify Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs) for each County Forest
- Landscape scale – Identify which COAs have a high % of County Forest and can thereby be impacted the most by County Forest management
- Provide introductory training to foresters on WAP use
- Incorporate DNR Bureau of Wildlife Management and Regional Ecologists into implementation of WAP on County Forests
- Document existing actions on County Forests that already dovetail with WAP
- Incorporate WAP review as part of timber sale establishment process

Progress / Completion

- SGCN lists completed for each County Forest - 2008
- Prepared State Wildlife Grant preproposal (1st round) – *Implementing Priority Conservation Actions on 1.63 million acres in Wisconsin*. (unsuccessful – ranked in middle)- Jan. 2009
- Prepared State Wildlife Grant proposal (2nd round) – WAP Implementation – Eau Claire & Clark County Barrens Restoration Area – Feb. 2009 (decided not to submit)
- COAs mapped for each County Forest and provided to County Forests along with GIS data – Feb. 2009
- Completed broad review of both terrestrial and aquatic COAs and their abundance on County Forests (both in total and FSC-only) – Feb. 2009
- Communication with Bureau of Wildlife Management on WAP implementation on County Forests – Feb. 2009
- Prepared WAP Implementation Plan-County Forests – April 2009
- Training: *WAP Information for Timber Sales and Cutting Reports*: Loren Ayers DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources – March 2009 (Spring County Forest Administrators Conference)
- Training: *WAP and the Clark County Forest 15-Yr. Plan*: Armund Bartz DNR West Central Region Ecologist – May 2009 (Bureau of Endangered Resources workshop)
- Wildlife Action Plan review incorporated into Timber Sale Narrative – June 2009 (DRAFT, not finalized yet)
- Training: *WAP and the Clark County Forest 15-Yr. Plan*: Armund Bartz DNR West Central Region Ecologist – June 2009 (WCFP Summer Tour Bd. of Directors meeting)
- Training: *WAP Implementation on the County Forests*: Jeff Barkley DNR County Forest Specialist – July 2009 (NOR, WCR & NER Liaison meetings)
- Initiated Citizen-based monitoring for biotic inventory work on Eau Claire County Forest – 2009.
- Review of 15 year plans to better document management consistency with WAP – July – ongoing

SCS Findings:

SCS confirmed that the Natural Heritage screening process is properly functioning across the WCFP as a whole. Evidence of conformance gathered during the 2009 audit included documentation in the 2460 form, confirmation from DNR wildlife biologists, records of NHI training for County and DNR foresters.

As detailed above in the WCFP response, actions are underway to better incorporate the use of

<p>WAP information for protecting Species of Concern.</p> <p>However, work on WAP has not progressed to the necessary point that provides silvicultural/management recommendations for species of greatest conservation need (SGCN). Awareness of WAP and COA's at county forests was variable. As such Minor CAR 2009.1 is issued to ensure continued progress.</p> <p>Status: CAR Closed. See CAR 2009.1</p>

2008 Observations:
Retention of trees for wildlife considerations (specifically mast, nest, and den trees) has been an inclusion in the Silvicultural and Aesthetics Handbook (HB2431.5 – pages 24-5 and 24-6 Marking Guidelines) for several years. However, current guidance does not address the green tree retention requirements for even-aged management as specified in Indicator 6.3.a.5. Additionally, the retention guidance has been subject to varied interpretation and inconsistent implementation. The statewide Silviculture Committee is in the process of reviewing and updating guidelines relating to stand-level wildlife habitat elements.

CAR 2008.2	Complete the process of updating reserve/retention guidelines, implement these guidelines, and begin to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation.
Deadline	Re-certification evaluation- scheduled for 3 rd quarter 2009
Reference	6.3(a)3, 6.3(a)5, 6.3(b)1, 6.3(c)3

Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments (2007-2009):
Progress / Completion

- Draft retention guidelines included in early drafts of Biomass Harvesting guidelines – June 2008
- Decision made to reference the retention guidelines in Biomass Harvesting guidelines but to retain them in the Silviculture Hbk.
- Joe Kovach – DNR Silviculture presents draft retention guidelines to WCFP Spring Administrators Conference – 3-08
- Silviculture committee completes revisions to Chapter 24 in Silviculture Hbk. (Tree Marking & Retention Guidelines) –Jan. 2009

SCS Response:
SCS auditors verified that the above actions occurred. CAR 2008.2 required implementation and a system to monitor the effectiveness of implementation. During the 2009 audit, foresters did not yet comprehend how these new guidelines would be implemented, as such CAR 2008.2 is replaced with Major CAR 2009.2.

Status: Replaced with Major CAR 2009.2

CAR 2008.2	DNR must take action(s) to correct Iron County's repeated non-conformances. DNR's actions must be consistent with their " <i>Involuntary Departure From Group</i> " procedures as described in the Public Forest Lands Handbook.
Deadline	3 months from finalization of 2008 report
Reference	<i>Indicator 1.1.a., 1.5.a, 6.5.a, C.1.6, and Group Criteria D.1.5</i>

Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments (2007-2009):

Progress / Completion

- WCFP’s Executive Director, Chair of Certification committee, President of County Forest Administrators, and WDNR County Forest Specialist appear before Iron County Forestry (ICF) Committee on August 21, 2008 to impress upon ICF the need for compliance.
- WDNR, as Group Certification manager, hand carries letter to ICF on 8/21/08 serving as a written warning that ICF must improve its compliance to its own policies and certification standards if they are to remain a part of the FSC County Forest Certification group.
- WCFP, on recommendation from its Bd. of Directors and Certification committee, hand carries letter to ICF on 8/21/08 impressing upon the need for ICF to improve its compliance with certification standards.
- On 8/25/2008 WDNR assesses a double stumpage penalty of \$1000.00 for the timber harvested without approval from ICF timber sales #2273, #2279, and #2300.
- ICF pays double stumpage penalty on 9/17/2008.
- Iron County Forestry Dept. implements the following measures to address ongoing problems.
 - Presale evaluations are completed using the form jointly developed by Iron Cty. and WDNR.
 - Iron Cty’s timber sale inspection form is used to evaluate active timber sales.
 - All staff are kept up-to-date on the findings from timber sale inspections.
 - Communication with ICF staff about the certification issues and the importance of upholding all of ICF policies on timber sales.
 - Communication with loggers about contract specifications such as marking and the rutting policy.

SCS Response:

SCS confirmed that the above actions have occurred, and thus closes this CAR.

Status: Closed

2008 Observation: WCFP has yet to receive funding for the floral and faunal monitoring, and therefore needs to take additional actions.

8.2.c.1. Forest owners or managers periodically monitor the forest for changes in major habitat elements and in the occurrence of sensitive, rare, threatened, or endangered species or communities.

CAR 2008.4

Find a way to fund the work outlined in the proposed monitoring program “Implementing the Wildlife Action Plan” or develop an alternate approach to improve flora and fauna monitoring. See recommendation 2008.2 for the components of a possible approach.

The following multi-stepped process could be used to improve flora and fauna monitoring.

A. Identify key flora and fauna monitoring questions, issues, and goals for County Forests, for example impacts of deer browse may be a key

	<p>issue for County Forests;</p> <p>B. Summarize all of the existing monitoring programs and studies which provide information on the questions, issues, and goals defined in step A;</p> <p>C. Describe management actions/changes that can be implemented on County Forests as a result of the existing monitoring results;</p> <p>D. Develop an initial list of monitoring gaps, i.e., questions, issues, goals where information is lacking, and begin steps to monitor these areas.</p>
Deadline	Re-certification evaluation- scheduled for 3 rd quarter 2009
Reference	<i>Criterion 8.1, 8.2</i>
<p>Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments (2007-2009):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCFP Certification committee opted to try the recommended alternative approach (see FSC recommendation 2008.2) to address this CAR. - 2009 • Identify Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs) based on the species of greatest conservation need in the Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) to best identify key flora and fauna monitoring needs for each County Forest. • Communicate COA information and use of WAP to individual counties • Summarize existing research and monitoring being undertaken on floral and faunal monitoring • Identify information gaps where additional monitoring efforts would enhance current management • Continue to run FIA and Recon frequency information for County Forests and stay abreast of other monitoring results on County Forests (BMPs, Karner Blue HCP, Species specific information) • Continue to seek funding for various monitoring initiatives • Continue establishment of relevé' plots on HCVF areas to provide baseline floral information on these unique areas <p>Progress / Completion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed mapping of Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs) on each County Forest. CDs of maps provided to all counties – March 2009. • Training associated with COAs and Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) use provided at Spring Administrator's conference by Loren Ayers – March 2009 and also at DNR Liaison meetings – July 2009. • Recon frequency & status information available to counties (WisFIRS Reports 114 & 115) and also an audit item on DNR audits of County Forests (every 3 years). Program-wide, RECON >20 years old has been reduced by over 222,500 acres in last 2 years. • Applied for State Wildlife Grant, USDA Forest Service State & Pvt. Forestry Grant, and Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant to develop a statewide ephemeral (vernal) pond management plan including mapping, classification and inventory of ephemeral ponds. Carmen Wagner – DNR Hydrologist (one application unsuccessful, two pending). • Applied for Federal Stimulus funding for County Forest Monitoring pilot in Lincoln, Price, Sawyer and Taylor counties - 2009 • Prepared a State Wildlife Grant proposal for Eau Claire & Clark County Barrens Restoration COA to establish a methodology in order to develop collective conservation goals and actions for COAs on the County Forests and how best to monitor the impacts of those actions. (unsuccessful) 	

- Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFP) received a County Forest Sustainable grant to monitor HCVF areas on County Forests (follow through on FSC CAR 2004.11). One field season completed (Bayfield, Sawyer, Taylor and part of Iron Cty.). Second field season in progress (2009). This effort will provide baseline information on HCVFs which are often tied to the same COAs identified in the WAP. Additional grant application completed for 2009.
- BMP for Water Quality Advisory and Field Manual subcommittees formed to initiate revision to BMP for Water Quality (first broadscale revision since 1995).
- Completed crosswalk tying NHI Community types to Natural Communities - 2009 <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/communities/habitats.asp>
- Compiled sources summarizing existing research & monitoring being undertaken on floral and faunal monitoring. Identified major issues and monitoring gaps pertinent to public land forestry - 2009

SCS 2009 Response:

Upon review of the compilation of forest management monitoring as it relates to Criterion 8.2, - the auditors conclude that the only remaining gap is fauna monitoring required under 8.2.c.1: *Forest owners or managers periodically monitor the forest for changes in major habitat elements and in the occurrence of sensitive, rare, threatened, or endangered species or communities.* While some monitoring covering 8.2.c.1 does occur, it is not being done in a manner that will provide feedback to County Forest programs on habitat for or occurrence of fauna. Current monitoring is statewide and does not reflect the unique way that County Forests are managed relative to other ownerships in the State- e.g, more early successional habitat.

The process that WCVFP outlined for first developing/implementing concrete silvicultural recommendations for SGCN species- and then monitoring the effects of those approaches appears to be an efficient way to address this requirement. See CAR 2009.1 related to management recommendation for SGCN.

Status: Closed- see CAR 2009.1

New Corrective Action Requests- CARs as Result of 2009 Audit

Non-Conformance: *Insufficient conformance with Indicator 6.2.b. If scientific data indicate the likely presence of state and/or Federally listed as threatened, endangered, of special concern, or sensitive populations, either new surveys are carried out before field-management activities begin or the forest owner or manager assumes their presence and makes appropriate modifications in forest management.*

The Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) does not yet provide silvicultural/management recommendations for species of greatest conservation need (SGCN). Awareness of WAP and Conservation Opportunity Areas (COA's) among County Forest staff was variable. As such Minor CAR 2009.1 is issued to ensure continued progress.

Despite the proper utilization of NHI- there is still insufficient use of other methods to ensure species of special concern are not being impacted. Many of the County Forests have not

undergone a comprehensive biotic inventory- suggesting that NHI may be insufficient. The WAP has identified COA's on County Forests for possible occurrences of GCN species. Other than the barrens communities, County Forests have not made consistent efforts to modify forest management in these areas. There is a need for DNR to develop management guidelines for SGCN species.	
CAR 2009.1	WCFP (with DNR taking the lead) must provide participating FSC counties with relevant information on SGCN species for each County along with management guidelines for focalspecies.
Deadline	2010 Surveillance Audit
Reference	<i>FSC Indicators 6.2.b; 5.1.c</i>

<p>Non-Conformance: 6.3.c.3. Forest management practices maintain or restore aquatic ecosystems, wetlands (including peatlands, bogs, and vernal pools), and forested riparian areas (see also Criterion 6.5). While most Counties are exceeding their own BMP requirements (which don't require vernal pool and pocket wetland protection) by protecting these vernal pools and small wetlands, there is no required systematic protection for these aquatic resources across the County forests.</p> <p>In Chippewa County we observed a vernal pool that had been crossed with the skidder and had tops in it. Also observed no retention on one pocket wetland.</p>	
CAR 2009.3	Ensure forest management practices maintain or restore aquatic ecosystems, wetlands (including peatlands, bogs, and vernal pools).
Deadline	2010 audit
Reference	<i>FSC Indicator 6.3.c.3.</i>

<p>Non-Conformance: 6.5.b. At a minimum, implementation of BMPs and other resource protection measures will result in the following:</p> <p>(italics are relevant clauses from Indicator 6.5.b.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Logging operations and construction of roads and skid trails are conducted only during periods of weather when soil is least susceptible to compaction, surface erosion, or sediment transport into streams and other bodies of water.</i> -Jackson County- Sales 2114 and 1994. Both sales were required winter harvest only, but were cut in September with County approval. Observed two areas of 2114 with excessive rutting. There was no note of the rutting in timber sale inspection or sale close-out. • <i>The transportation system is designed, constructed, maintained, and/or reconstructed to minimize the extent of the road network and its potential cumulative adverse effects.</i> • <i>Access to temporary and permanent roads is controlled to minimize significant adverse impacts to soil and biota while allowing legitimate access, as addressed by Principles 3 and 4 and identified in the management plan.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clark County maverick ATV trails are having cumulative impacts as trails creep into forest. Restoration is necessary. - Clark County Wildcat Road is a County Forest road where ATV traffic results in excessive berms and unsafe travel. - Chippewa Forest County Road- ATV and other traffic was causing the road to unravel and some sedimentation into adjacent water was observed. 	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Failed drainage structures or other areas of active erosion caused by roads and skid trails are identified, and measures are taken to correct the drainage problems and stabilize erosion.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - - Chippewa Forest County Road and boat landings. Chippewa Forest County Road-ATV and other traffic was causing the road to unravel and some sedimentation into adjacent water was observed. 	
CAR 2009.4	Applicable WCFP Counties must take action to correct BMP violations noted in the non-conformance section above (where mitigation is appropriate- i.e., repairing ruts is often not pragmatic) and take measures to improve monitoring of road and harvest conditions to avoid future occurrences and/or more timely correction/mitigation of problems.
Deadline	2010 audit
Reference	<i>FSC Indicators 6.5.b</i>

<p>Non Conformance: Summary of monitoring results is not easily accessible- <i>8.5.b. Managers of public forests make information related to monitoring easily accessible (e.g., available on websites) for public review.</i> A list of monitoring activities has been summarized and provided to the certification team. The public can obtain some monitoring results from annual reports from County websites. However, a complete summary of results has not been produced or made easily accessible.</p>	
CAR 2009.5	Counties and or DNR must make available a public summary of monitoring results that covers the topics listed in Criterion 8.2 readily available.
Deadline	2010 annual audit
Reference	<i>FSC Indicator 8.5. b</i>

<p>Non Conformance: <i>9.3.a. Forest management plans and activities are appropriate for maintaining, enhancing and/or restoring attributes that make the area an HC VF.</i> HC VF- that is to be maintained with passive management is not consistently being removed from the harvest schedule (i.e. zzzz out of WisFIRS). Thus, operational protection is dependent upon institutional memory. Some counties have considerable turnover- thus making this a tenuous situation.</p>	
CAR 2009.6	County Forests must develop improved methods of ensuring that HC VF is not inadvertently harvested due to a WisFIRS harvest trigger.
Deadline	2010 annual audit
Reference	<i>FSC Indicator 9.3.a,</i>

<p>Non Conformance: There are non-conformances with FSC Group Criteria: <i>1.c. The group entity shall be contractually responsible to the certification body for ensuring that the FSC P&C are fully implemented by all members of the group.</i> and <i>1.d The group entity shall be responsible for ensuring that any conditions on which certification</i></p>	
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is dependent, and any corrective actions issued by the certification body thereafter, are fully implemented.

During the 2009 audit team concluded that the Group Manager (WI DNR) has missed identifying some significant non-conformances with FSC standards and open or past CARs at Chippewa County.

FSC STD-30-005 (which goes into effect Jan 1, 2010) will have new requirements for group member monitoring)

*7.1 The group entity shall implement a documented monitoring and control system that includes at least the following: ii.Regular (at least annual) monitoring visits to a sample of group members to confirm continued compliance with **all the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard**, and with any additional requirements for membership of the group.*

DNR's current internal monitoring is only reviewing open CARs and does not include a field component.

Given the non-conformance with existing group standards, and very likely non-conformance with the pending changes to group certification requirements described in 30-005, improvements to the internal control of the group program are necessary.

CAR 2009.7	WCFP must develop new or improve/expand on existing internal control mechanisms to ensure that all group members are conforming to the FSC standards.
Deadline	2010 annual audit
Reference	<i>FSC Group Criteria C1-1c,1d</i>

Non Conformance: 1.6.b Forest owners or managers document the reasons for seeking partial certification. Some Counties, e.g., Juneau, actively manage forests that are not included in the County Forest Program, and thus not all managed forests within a County are enrolled in FSC. Counties have not been documented reasons for their seeking partial certification.

CAR 2009.8	All FSC certified County Forests with at least 2500 acres of non-certified managed forest must document reasons for seeking partial certification.
Deadline	2010 annual audit
Reference	<i>FSC Indicator 1.6.b</i>

Observations

Observation 2008.1: (reissued) The WCFP in cooperation with DNR and the State of Wisconsin as a whole should take additional measures to reduce the deer population to levels where ecosystem health is not compromised by deer browse.

Observation 2009.1: Clark County (and to a lesser degree Eau Claire) have implemented Ecological Management Unit planning with long-term desired future conditions within a landscape planning context. Other County Forests have not implemented this approach.

County Forests that are conducive to landscape scale planning (e.g., larger counties with variability in timber types) should adopt an EMU approach or a something similar to better accomplish landscape-level planning.

Observation 2009.2: At least one county was not coding regeneration sites to ensure follow-up monitoring of natural regeneration- where successful regeneration was uncertain.

Observation 2009.3: Most stands managed under selection methods are currently even-aged and are being gradually converted to uneven-aged structure. Most current selection-system harvest entries are not being designed to aggressively seek regeneration, and gaps have been smaller and less frequent than recommended in the Silviculture Handbook. Harvests that do include “gaps” to release existing regeneration or to encourage additional regeneration are often easy to assess for regeneration status; but systems to document the regeneration are more informal and less timely (RECON done some years later) than they could be.

Observation 2009.4: While amounts of harvesting of sphagnum moss are small relative to the overall inventory of it on County Forests- the rates of its growth are extremely slow. County Forests harvesting sphagnum moss should carefully review the overall sustainability of this harvesting activity.

6.0 SURVEILLANCE EVALUATIONS

If certification is awarded, surveillance evaluations will take place at least annually to monitor the status of any open corrective action requests and review the continued conformance of the WCFP to the applicable FSC standard. The applicable standard is currently the Lake States-Central Hardwoods Region (USA) Regional Forest Stewardship Standard Version 3.0. The FSC-US is undergoing a standards revision process and future surveillance audits will be conducted under the applicable standard which may be different from the current standard. Public summaries of surveillance evaluations will be posted separately on the SCS website (www.scs-certified.com).

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: rhrubes@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.

