

Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Forest Management Audit Report

Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry Certificate #SCS-SFI/FM-00099N

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

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Client Address | Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, 402 W. Washington, Room W-296, Indianapolis, IN 46204, USA |
| Client Contact | Brenda Huter, Stewardship Coordinator; Jack Seifert, State Forester |
| Client Website | https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/ |

SCS Contact:

Maggie Schwartz

Managing Director, Forestry

Natural Resources Division

mschwartz@scsglobalservices.com



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Public Summary Report

SFI® Forest Management Standard

SECTION A – PUBLIC SUMMARY

Foreword

Organization of the Report

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

Principles of SFI Forest Management

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

The 13 *SFI Principles* for Forest Management are:

- Sustainable Forestry:** To practice sustainable forestry to meet the needs of the present while promoting the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by practicing a land stewardship ethic that integrates reforestation and the managing, growing, nurturing, and harvesting of trees for useful products and ecosystem services such as the conservation of soil, air and water quality, climate change mitigation, biological diversity, wildlife and aquatic habitats, recreation and aesthetics.
- Forest Productivity and Health:** To provide for regeneration after harvest and maintain the productive capacity of the forest land base, and to protect and maintain long-term forest and soil productivity. In addition, to protect forests from economically or environmentally undesirable levels of wildfire, pests, diseases, invasive species and other damaging agents and thus maintain and improve long-term forest health and productivity.
- Protection of Water Resources:** To protect water bodies and riparian areas, and to conform with forestry best management practices to protect water quality, to meet the needs of both human communities and ecological systems.
- Protection of Biological Diversity:** To manage forests in ways that protect and promote biological diversity, including animal and plant species, wildlife habitats, ecologically important species and

native forest cover types.

5. **Aesthetics and Recreation:** To manage the visual impacts of forest operations, and to provide recreational opportunities for the public.
6. **Protection of Special Sites:** To manage lands that are ecologically important, geologically or culturally important in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.
7. **Responsible Fiber Sourcing in North America:** To use and promote among other forest landowners' sustainable forestry that is both scientifically credible and economically, environmentally and socially responsible.
8. **Legal Compliance:** To comply with applicable federal, provincial, state, and local forestry and related environmental laws, statutes, and regulations.
9. **Research:** To support advances in sustainable forest management through forestry research, science and technology.
10. **Training and Education:** To improve the practice of sustainable forestry through training and education programs.
11. **Community Involvement and Social Responsibility:** To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry on all lands through community involvement, socially responsible practices, and through recognition and respect of Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional forest-related knowledge.
12. **Transparency:** To broaden the understanding of forest certification to the Forest Management Standard by documenting certification audits and making the findings publicly available.
13. **Continual Improvement:** To continually improve the practice of forest management, and to monitor, measure and report performance in achieving the commitment to sustainable forestry.

1. General Information

1.1 Name, Contact, and Certificate Information

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Organization Name | Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry |
| Certification Representative | Brenda Huter, Stewardship Coordinator Jack Seifert, State Forester |
| Phone Number | (317) 232-0142 |
| Address | Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry 402 W. Washington, Room W-296 Indianapolis, IN 46204, USA |
| Audit Dates | 16-18 Oct 2023 |
| SFI Certificate Type | <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multi-site. This Audit covered the requirements of the central organization and a subset of sites. These sites were selected based on proximity and length of time since previous audits. See Summary of Audit Itinerary for details of sampling. |

2. Summary Description of the Management Unit(s)

| Description of Ownership | <p>The multi-site certificate covers state forests with overall management through the central office located in Indianapolis, IN. The Division of Forestry (DoF) is a unit of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), a state agency within the executive branch of the Indiana state government. DoF divides the State Forests (Properties) into management units as given in Description of Sites below. Properties are divided into compartments and tracts for purposes of management planning, operations, monitoring, and recordkeeping.</p> <p>https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/properties/</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|-----------------|--------------|---------|---|--------------------|--------------------|--|---|------------------------|---|--|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|---------------------|---------------------|---|---|----------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|------------------------------|--|---|----|----------------------|----------------------|---|----|-------------------------|---|--|
| Total Forest Area (Acres) | 160,251 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Description of Sites under Scope | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Single site description</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SFI: List of all sites/FMUs under scope of the certificate. Full listings, notes, rationale, and acreages are provided in SCS records (SCS Audit Matrix) and on DNR website.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>SCS Internal Number</th> <th>Managing Office</th> <th>State Forest</th> <th>Sampled</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Clark State Forest</td> <td>Clark State Forest</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Ferdinand State Forest</td> <td>Ferdinand State Forest Pike State Forest</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Greene-Sullivan State Forest</td> <td>Greene-Sullivan State Forest</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Harrison-Crawford State Forest</td> <td>Harrison-Crawford State Forest</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Jackson-Washington State Forest</td> <td>Jackson-Washington State Forest</td> <td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>Martin State Forest</td> <td>Martin State Forest</td> <td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>Morgan-Monroe State Forest</td> <td>Morgan-Monroe State Forest, Ravinia State Forest</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td>Owen-Putnam State Forest</td> <td>Owen-Putnam State Forest</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>Salamonie River State Forest</td> <td>Frances Slocum State Forest, Salamonie River State Forest</td> <td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td> <td>Selmier State Forest</td> <td>Selmier State Forest</td> <td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td> <td>Yellowwood State Forest</td> <td>Yellowwood State Forest, Mountain Tea State Forest</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ATFS: Summary of Sites/FMUs under scope of certificate, including acres.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group: Description of group structure.</p> | SCS Internal Number | Managing Office | State Forest | Sampled | 1 | Clark State Forest | Clark State Forest | | 2 | Ferdinand State Forest | Ferdinand State Forest Pike State Forest | | 3 | Greene-Sullivan State Forest | Greene-Sullivan State Forest | | 4 | Harrison-Crawford State Forest | Harrison-Crawford State Forest | | 5 | Jackson-Washington State Forest | Jackson-Washington State Forest | X | 6 | Martin State Forest | Martin State Forest | X | 7 | Morgan-Monroe State Forest | Morgan-Monroe State Forest, Ravinia State Forest | | 8 | Owen-Putnam State Forest | Owen-Putnam State Forest | | 9 | Salamonie River State Forest | Frances Slocum State Forest, Salamonie River State Forest | X | 10 | Selmier State Forest | Selmier State Forest | X | 11 | Yellowwood State Forest | Yellowwood State Forest, Mountain Tea State Forest | |
| SCS Internal Number | Managing Office | State Forest | Sampled | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Clark State Forest | Clark State Forest | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Ferdinand State Forest | Ferdinand State Forest Pike State Forest | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Greene-Sullivan State Forest | Greene-Sullivan State Forest | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Harrison-Crawford State Forest | Harrison-Crawford State Forest | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Jackson-Washington State Forest | Jackson-Washington State Forest | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Martin State Forest | Martin State Forest | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Morgan-Monroe State Forest | Morgan-Monroe State Forest, Ravinia State Forest | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Owen-Putnam State Forest | Owen-Putnam State Forest | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | Salamonie River State Forest | Frances Slocum State Forest, Salamonie River State Forest | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | Selmier State Forest | Selmier State Forest | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Yellowwood State Forest | Yellowwood State Forest, Mountain Tea State Forest | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Management Unit Maps | https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/properties/ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Forest Types and Key Ecological Features | <p>There are at least 9 major cover types across the state properties of Indiana that encompass around 50 species of trees. However, the primary cover may be classified into the following types: Dry Oak-Hickory, Mesic Oak-Hickory, Bottomland Oak-Hickory, Beech-Maple, Pine/Conifer (generally planted), Upland Mixed Hardwoods, and Mixed Bottomland Hardwoods.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Forest Management Planning | <p>State-wide, DNR state forests are guided by a Forest Action Plan (FAP) and 2015-2022 Strategic Plan. The most recent FAP is 2020, found here. Information about the 2015-2022 Strategic Plan and the draft 2023-2027 Strategic plan, currently receiving public comments, are located here. All state forest and forest recreation area properties are organized into compartments and tracts. The forest recreation areas are part of the state forest land</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| | <p>base. Compartments are the largest land administration unit below the state forest property level. Compartments are generally 500 to 1,500 acres of relatively contiguous holdings. Generally, compartments are not used for specific site planning and recordkeeping, but may be used for broader activity planning. For example, compartments are generally the basis for landscape analyses of wildlife habitat assessments, particularly for wider-ranging or more widely distributed species. <i>Tracts</i> are the primary land administration unit for management activity planning, monitoring and recordkeeping. Tracts are subdivisions of compartments. Typically tracts will contain 30 to 120 acres of contiguous holdings. Geographic isolation, distinct community types, identifiable boundaries, or other factors may be the basis for tract separations. Most inventories, activities, planning, and recordkeeping will be based on tracts.</p> |
| Sustainable Harvest Level Assessment | <p>DoF current harvest target is 10 MMBF. Currently, actual harvest levels are well below this target. Current growth is based on a continuous forest inventory (CFI) system with over 4,000 plots. One fifth of the plots on the state forest land base is measured each year. Growth based on a rolling 5-year average CFI data. Based on 2017-2021 CFI, net growth was 12.8 million BdFt and gross growth 22.1 million BdFt.</p> |
| Monitoring Program Description | <p>DOF has developed monitoring protocols that are systematically implemented and replicable. Monitoring protocols are documented to ensure consistency between state forests. Results are published on the DNR website. System-wide inventories follow procedures as described in the Resource Inventory section of the Procedures Manual and as guided by State Regulations. Additionally, DOF is directed by many different planning documents, and each has different monitoring strategies. Of primary interest under SFI is the state forestry BMP monitoring which is done for all timber sales. Additional monitoring includes: Stump audits, Forest Health Protection monitors insect and disease levels annually; Division of Fish and Wildlife has monitoring routines from annual surveys to more periodic surveys, depending on species of interest; Division of Forestry monitoring program includes typical weekly inspections of active timber sales, annual 2nd-party monitoring of BMPs, 20-year monitoring of the inventory, and 5-year statewide permanent plot inventory analysis through FIA; Other inventories/monitoring on DOF properties includes Nature Preserves (FORI), fish population monitoring, and cultural/archaeological resource inventory.</p> |

3. Audit Process

3.1 Applicable Standards and Audit Objectives

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Certificate Code | SCS-SFI/FM-00099N | |
| Audit Type | <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 1, Preliminary Review Audit | <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 2, Certification Audit |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Re-Certification | <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 Additional Surveillance |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 st , <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 nd , <input type="checkbox"/> 3 rd or <input type="checkbox"/> 4 th Surveillance | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer | <input type="checkbox"/> Expansion of Scope |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>describe</i>): | |
| Applicable Standards | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SFI: 2022 Forest Management. <i>Objectives 1-17: 3, 5, 6, 11, 13, 14, 15</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SFI: Rules for Use of SFI On-Product Labels and Off-Product Marks <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SFI: Audits of Multi-Sites <input type="checkbox"/> ATFS: Forest Management, 2021. Standards 1-8 <input type="checkbox"/> ATFS: AFF 2021 Standards for Independently Managed Groups. Sections 1-4 <input type="checkbox"/> ATFS: ATFS 2021 Logo Use Guidelines | |

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|--|--|---|---|
| Multiple Standards | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A, this is not a multi-standard nor a multi-CB audit. | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Combined | <input type="checkbox"/> Joint | <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated |
| | <i>A combined audit is when a client is being audited against the requirements of two or more</i> | <i>A joint audit is when two or more auditing organizations cooperate to audit a single client.</i> | <i>An integrated audit is when a client has integrated the application of requirements of two or more management systems standards into a single management system and is being audited against more than one standard.</i> |
| SFI Substitute or Modified Indicators | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None, <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Substitute or Modified Indicators used and justification: | | |
| Certificate Scope/ Statement | This certification includes land management operations on approximately 160,251 acres of Indiana State Forests and related sustainable forestry activities including SFI Objectives 1-17. The scope of the certificate includes all forest management activities associated with the Organization's sustainable forest management system with defined forest lands located in Indiana and including the harvest, transport, and sale or trade of forest products, and other forest management system activities for the Audit Objectives. The Organization has sufficient control over any contracting or outsourcing of forest management planning and activities to ensure conformance to applicable certification requirements. | | |
| Description of Sampling Approach | Properties sampled: Jackson-Washington, Martin, Selmier, Salamonie River and Frances Slocum State Forests. DoF staff provided lists of all management activities from which auditors selected active and inactive sites (see Audit Plan for descriptions). Selections were designed to maintain objectivity and efficiency. | | |
| Deviations from the Audit Plan | Were there any significant deviations from the Audit Plan? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. If yes, provide a description and explanation. | | |

3.2 Audit Team

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|----------------------|------------------|
| Auditor name: | Daniel Simonds | Auditor role: | Lead Auditor |
| Qualifications: | Dan is a forester and management systems consultant, trained at the UMaine College of Forestry (BS 1982), and a Maine-licensed Professional Forester (Maine #884) with 40 years of practical experience in the forest products industry. A qualified lead auditor for FSC, SFI, & PEFC Forest Management and Chain of Custody systems, he has 20 years of full-time experience in third party certification systems. | | |
| Auditor name: | Evan Poirson | Auditor role: | Team Auditor |
| Qualifications: | Evan is the Senior Program Associate for the Forest Management program at SCS and has worked in the program since 2015. He has been a Lead FSC Forest Management auditor since 2018, and a Lead FSC COC auditor since 2020. He has conducted Forest Management, COC, and Salvaged Wood audits in Argentina, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Spain, South Korea, and in several regions of the United States. In addition to auditing, his duties include managing the administrative and quality-related aspects of forest management operations at SCS headquarters in California. He holds degrees in Biology (conservation emphasis) from Occidental College (B.A., 2009) and Environmental Management from Duke University (M.E.M., 2014). In 2010-12, he served as an environmental volunteer of the United States Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic. | | |
| Auditor name: | Stirling Griffin | Auditor role: | Technical Expert |
| Qualifications: | Sterling is a California Registered Professional Forester living in Corvallis, Oregon. He is a graduate of Purdue University with a degree in Forest Management. His career began with the U.S. Forest Service where he participated in long-term ecosystem productivity research in the Pacific Northwest. He later founded a consulting firm serving private landowners managing timber, water, recreation, fire protection, and biodiversity. In 2007, he helped SCS establish its GHG verification program and later founded one of the largest U.S. developers of forest carbon credits. He is | | |

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| | passionate about sustainability, personal health and fitness, and enjoys exploring wild places around the world. |
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3.3 Total Time Spent on Audit

| | |
|--|-----------|
| A. Number of days spent on-site for the Audit | 3 |
| B. Number of auditors participating in on-site audit | 2 |
| C. Number of days spent by any technical experts (in addition to amount in line A) | 3 |
| D. Additional days spent on preparation, stakeholder consultation, and follow-up | 3 |
| E. Total number of person days used in audit | 11 |

3.4 Summary of Audit Itinerary and Site Visits

| | |
|--|---|
| Location(s) sampled | Jackson-Washington, Martin, Selmier, Salamonie River, and Frances Slocum State Forests |
| Number of field sites | 11 |
| Summary of Cover Types visited | Central or mixed upland hardwoods, with occasional included wetland and riparian types. Edge communities (between forest & agricultural clearings) are common. |
| Summary Description /Number of Silviculture Activities inspected | Intermediate and improvement cuttings are the dominant management activity observed, followed by invasive vegetation control. Specific details of site visits are noted below in Site Notes. Auditors selected field visits from a summary of recent activity provided before the audit. Adaptive changes to the audit plan were included in the field. |
| Summary Description /Number of Harvest Areas inspected | Ten timber sales visited during the audit. See Site Notes for detailed observations. |
| Summary Description of Road infrastructure inspections | Road systems were examined throughout the course of the audit with road maintenance, culverts and other drainage structures. Recreational trails, campgrounds, and kiosks were also observed throughout the audit. See Site Notes for detailed observations. |

3.5 Evaluation of Management Systems

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

3.6 Changes to Management System

- There were no significant changes in the management and/or harvesting methods that affect the FME's conformance to the SFI standards, rules, and policies.

- Significant changes that affect the management system occurred since the last audit described as follows (describe):

3.7 Confirmation of Meeting Audit Objectives

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

The objectives for this audit included:

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

4. Results of Audit

4.1 Grading of Possible Findings

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

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

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

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

| SFI Objective | Cert/Re-cert Evaluation (2021) | 1 st Annual Evaluation (2022) | 2 nd Annual Evaluation (2023) | 3 rd Annual Evaluation (2024) | 4 th Annual Evaluation (2025) |
|---------------|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| No findings | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1 | | Minor 1.1.2 | | | |
| 2 | OFI 2.1.1 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | |

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|-----------|--|--------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| 4 | | Minor 4.1.5 | | | |
| 5 | | | | | |
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| 8 | | | | | |
| 9 | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | |
| 11 | | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | |
| 13 | | Minor 13.1.3 | | | |
| 14 | | Minor 14.3.2 | Minor 14.1.1 (closed) | | |
| 15 | | | | | |
| 16 | | | | | |
| 17 | | | | | |
| COC | | | | | |
| Trademark | | | | | |
| Group | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | |

4.3 General Description of Evidence of Conformity

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

| SFI Objective | Summary of Evidence |
|--|--|
| Objective 1. Forest Management Planning. To ensure forest management plans include long-term sustainable harvest levels and measures to avoid forest conversion or afforestation of ecologically important areas. | A comprehensive, fully documented, and highly transparent set of management plans is reviewed. The system includes inventory, strategic, and operational planning documents which can be reviewed online and commented on by the public. An active tree planting program is also noted. finding 2022.1 closed. |
| Objective 2. Forest Health and Productivity. To ensure long-term forest productivity and conservation of forest resources through prompt reforestation, afforestation, deploying integrated pest management strategies, minimized chemical use, soil conservation, and protecting forests from damaging agents. | Not evaluated in 2023. |
| Objective 3. Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources. To protect the water quality and water quantity of rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, and other water bodies. | Field review included verification of mapped streams, rivers, wetlands, and associated riparian features. Adaptation of land management activities to these features is also confirmed. Implementation of BMP guidance is observed. |
| Objective 4. Conservation of Biological Diversity To maintain or advance the conservation of biological diversity at the stand- and landscape- level and across a diversity of forest and vegetation cover types and successional stages including the conservation of | Not evaluated in 2023. |

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| forest plants and animals, aquatic species, threatened and endangered species, Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value, old-growth forests and ecologically important sites. | |
| Objective 5. Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits. To manage the visual impact of forest operations and provide recreational opportunities for the public. | Not Evaluated 2023. |
| Objective 6. Protection of Special Sites. To manage lands that are geologically or culturally important in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities. | Indiana DoF has a well-defined, robust process and system to identify and protect special sites and species within their land management practices. Implementation of site review and mitigation activities was confirmed during field visits. |
| Objective 7. Efficient Use of Fiber Resources. To minimize waste and ensure the efficient use of fiber resources. | Utilization standards conform to regional norms. Appropriate implementation is confirmed by field observations. |
| Objective 8. Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples' Rights. To recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional knowledge. | Appropriate policy, outreach and communication, and sensitive site mitigation is confirmed. |
| Objective 9: Climate Smart Forestry To ensure forest management activities address climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. | Appropriate policy, assessment, and mitigation plans for Climate adaptation is confirmed. Programs are well documented and transparent. |
| Objective 10. Fire Resilience and Awareness To limit susceptibility of forests to undesirable impacts of wildfire and to raise community awareness of fire benefits, risks, and minimization measures. | Not evaluated in 2023. |
| Objective 11. Legal and Regulatory Compliance To comply with all applicable laws and regulations including, international, federal, provincial, state, and local. | Organization maintains access to relevant regulations and laws for personnel and contractors. Regulatory postings were observed within office and posted in public viewing areas of State Forest Offices. Review of contracts for harvesting, site preparation, chemical application and reforestation confirmed "compliance to all regulations" language was listed. Appropriate respect for legal compliance is observed during field review. |
| Objective 12. Forestry Research, Science and Technology. To invest in research, science, and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based. | Financial and in-kind support for appropriate, regionally significant research is confirmed. |
| Objective 13. Training and Education. To improve the implementation of sustainable forestry through appropriate training and education programs. | Organization maintains training records and annual review for forestry staff. Personnel are professional foresters, maintain membership within various forestry associations, and those with relevant responsibilities held valid chemical applicator licenses. Contractors were verified to have valid qualified logger training records. |

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| Objective 14. Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach. To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry through public outreach, education, and involvement, and to support the efforts of SFI Implementation Committees. | Public Summary Audit Reports observed on SFI, Inc. website . Review of Annual Progress Report confirms record keeping is adequate and that reports are submitted within designated time requirements. See finding 2023.1. |
| Objective 15. Public Land Management Responsibilities. To participate and implement sustainable forest management on public lands. | Not evaluated 2023. |
| Objective 16. Communications and Public Reporting To increase transparency and to annually report progress on conformance with the SFI Forest Management Standard. | Required reporting and survey response is verified. |
| Objective 17. Management Review and Continual Improvement: To promote continual improvement in the practice of sustainable forestry by conducting a management review and monitoring performance. | A comprehensive and transparent Audit & Management Review process is confirmed. |

4.4 Existing Corrective Action Requests, OFIs, and Exceeds

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| Finding Number: SFI Minor 2022.1 | |
| Finding and Deadline | <input type="checkbox"/> Major: Pre-condition to certification <input type="checkbox"/> Major: 3 months from Closing Meeting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor: Next audit (surveillance or re-evaluation) or 12 months from closing <input type="checkbox"/> OFI: no deadline <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds: no deadline <input type="checkbox"/> Other deadline (specify): |
| SFI Indicator: | 1.1.2 Actions undertaken on the FMU should be consistent with the management plan and be consistent towards achieving the stated goals and prescribed objectives of the plan. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Conformity <input type="checkbox"/> Background/ Justification in the case of OFI or Exceeds Intense stakeholder interest at Yellowwood and Morgan-Monroe state forests in recent years has led to the suspension of active harvesting operations at those forests since approximately 2018. This has created a gap between the desired conditions and management objectives as stated in those forests' management plans and the forests' present conditions. Rates and methods of timber harvest are used to lead to achieving desired conditions and improve or maintain health and quality across the certified forest areas. Stands that have <i>not</i> been actively managed shall be returned to desired composition at the earliest practicable time as justified in management objectives. Certified Organizations are expected to ensure that forest management plans are implemented and activities are completed in a timely manner. The management plans at Yellowwood and Morgan-Monroe specifically must be updated to reflect the short- and long-term management objectives at these forests are in sync with actual management activities carried out on the ground. | |
| Action Plan and Root Cause Analysis (to be prepared by Organization) | The Division was limited in its fiscal ability to hire forester replacements as well as the lack of a new marketing plan, both Morgan-Monroe and Yellowwood State Forests fell behind on the implementation of plans already approved. The Division will begin the process of reanalyzing those management plans that have exceeded the newly implemented 5-year completion timeline and update them where |

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| | needed. Once they are updated, plans will be reposted for public comment. This process would take up to 12 months to complete. After review of comments received and any possible modifications, finalized plans will be implemented in 2024. | |
| SCS Review of Action Plan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted | <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected (<i>explain</i>): |
| | SCS representative: Beth Jacqmain | Date: 1/20/23 |
| Evidence and Actions Implemented by Organization | <p>On 17 October 2023, the SCS audit team spoke with DNR Deputy Director, Land Management Team. Smith discussed progress to bring management activities at Yellowwood and Morgan-Monroe into agreement with IDOF's stated objectives of six MM-YW RMGs that are pending publication for public comment. Prior to this step, and in the near future, the Land Management Team will launch a communications strategy / outreach plan that aims to address the primary stakeholder concerns regarding the resumption of active harvesting at these state forests. The audit team has reviewed the outreach plan (a 24-slide PowerPoint entitled "Forestry Outreach Plan 2023 V5") and confirmed rough timelines associated with both its launch and the publication of the RMGs.</p> <p>To address one stated stakeholder concern regarding private profit from harvesting of these public forests, IDOF plans to conduct its own logging operations at these state forests. Auditors discussed IDOF's active identification and provision of funding for this purpose. This arrangement will also allow IDOF to have more direct control over using harvests as an opportunity for public education.</p> | |
| SCS Review of Implemented Actions | The 2023 audit team considers these actions to be sufficient to close this finding. The 2024 audit team will verify that the plan was enacted as planned and that sufficient progress has been made to bring operations at Yellowwood and Morgan-Monroe in line with IDOF's stated objectives for these forests. | |
| Status of Finding: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed <input type="checkbox"/> Upgraded to Major <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other decision (refer to description above)</i> | |

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| Finding Number: SFI Minor 2022.2 | |
| Finding and Deadline | <input type="checkbox"/> Major: Pre-condition to certification <input type="checkbox"/> Major: 3 months from Closing Meeting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor: Next audit (surveillance or re-evaluation) or 12 months from closing <input type="checkbox"/> OFI: no deadline <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds: no deadline <input type="checkbox"/> Other deadline (specify): |
| SFI Indicator: | 4.1.5. Program to address conservation of ecologically important species and natural communities. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Conformity <input type="checkbox"/> Background/ Justification in the case of OFI or Exceeds IDOF allows stakeholders to submit proposals for HCVFs, as reviewed via an online letter (published 1 June 2018) located at https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/files/fo-HighConservationValueForests.pdf . After proposals are made, a 30-day, online public comment period is initiated. However, DOF is not currently conforming to its statement that the entire designation process will "generally last up to 6 months." For example, the proposal for HCV designation of the Back Country Area at Morgan-Monroe State Forest (https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/files/fo-MMSF-BCA.pdf) was submitted for public comment on 1 September 2021, but no determination of whether the proposed area is forest of exceptional value by IDOF. Certified Organizations shall conserve biological diversity and this is met, in part by | |

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| recognizing areas of exceptional value (HCV). DoF has a procedure for considering proposed HCVs in a timely manner, which they must follow, particular when timelines are established within the certified organization's own procedures. | |
| Action Plan and Root Cause Analysis <i>(to be prepared by Organization)</i> | The Division was again limited by fiscal issues to hire new and support current staff to review HCVF's proposals. Individuals petitioning HCVF's status were notified both in emails and directly that the Division was working on a solution to get appropriate staff on board to address the HCVF requests. Staff has been hired and the necessary requirements to address the petitions are proceeding. It is expected that both petitions will be addressed by the end of 2023. |
| SCS Review of Action Plan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <i>(explain)</i> : SCS representative: Beth Jacqmain Date: 1/20/23 |
| Evidence and Actions Implemented by Organization | The 2023 audit team revised the HCV nomination process as amended by Ecologist/Botanist (hired directly prior to the 2022 audit and now the sole IDOF employee with direct oversight over the HCV nomination process). The nomination process was amended in spring 2023. Important Changes to process include: 1.) Stakeholders/proposers must be clear and specific about the attributes, species, or areas that they are nominating for HCV designation (e.g., they may not suggest that entire forests be set aside as HCV). 2.) IDOF review time has been amended to be 12 months , rather than 6 months. This allows IDOF personnel to consider greater seasonal attributes of proposed HCV areas. The 2023 audit team reviewed the document "Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources-Division of Forestry State Forest Certification High Conservation Value Forests" (https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/files/fo-HighConservationValueForests.pdf), which was published in early 2023 on IDOF website and includes instructions for the nomination process and designation decision. Since the 2022 audit, HCV proposals have been made for Morgan-Monroe, Owen-Putnam (Jordan Creek), and Cucumber Magnolia (<i>Magnolia acuminata</i>) occurrences at Clark SF. The final of these has not been completed, while the first two have been decided upon by DOF but are awaiting final approval by the DNR director. |
| SCS Review of Implemented Actions | See above. The audit team determines that the above evidence is sufficient to close this finding. |
| Status of Finding: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed <input type="checkbox"/> Upgraded to Major <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other decision (refer to description above)</i> |

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| Finding Number: SFI Minor 2022.3 | |
| Finding and Deadline | <input type="checkbox"/> Major: Pre-condition to certification <input type="checkbox"/> Major: 3 months from Closing Meeting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor: Next audit (surveillance or re-evaluation) or 12 months from closing <input type="checkbox"/> OFI: no deadline <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds: no deadline <input type="checkbox"/> Other deadline (specify): |
| SFI Indicator: | 13.1.3. Staff education and training sufficient is to their roles and responsibilities. |

was difficult to understand and find the link between the **timber sale number** and the corresponding Resource Management Guides. Certified Organizations shall establish, at the state, or other appropriate levels, procedures to address concerns raised by stakeholders, the public or other Certified Organizations regarding management that appears inconsistent with the SFI standards principles and objectives. As noted during previous audits, Indiana Division of Forestry has a number of avenues to receive stakeholder feedback; these mechanisms include open houses, website portal submissions, and direct emails to IDOF staff. The IDOF website includes a [page detailing how to submit comments](#), and on separate pages includes information on archived comments received at [past open houses](#) and a [compendium](#) of archived public comment summaries at the state forest level. However, in the face of continued stakeholder complaints that have persisted for many years, IDOF is unable to demonstrate that it relies on appropriate dispute resolution procedures to resolve grievances in a timely manner. Particularly in public land management, the certified organization must provide known and accessible means for interested stakeholders to voice grievances and have them resolved; IDOF must develop and follow appropriate dispute or conflict resolution, or reasonable alternative resolution procedures. At a minimum, IDOF must maintain open communications, respond to stakeholder grievances in a timely manner, and demonstrate ongoing good faith efforts to resolve them. See <https://forests.org/inconsistentpractices/> for an example of time-bound responses, and see also https://forests.org/wp-content/uploads/2022_SFI_StandardsandRules_section12.pdf.

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| <p>Action Plan and Root Cause Analysis (to be prepared by Organization)</p> | <p>Currently, all timber sales entered on Forestry Exchange display the compartment and tract(s) in which that timber sale is occurring. The public can then use that information to locate and view the related resource management guides in Archived Management Guides and HCVF on the division's webpage.</p> <p>To improve this connection the division of forestry will engage MIS/programming staff in 2023 to discuss options for directly linking timber sales to the associated resource management guides. This will require build and test time as well as budgeting to make the modifications to Forestry Exchange. The target for completion will be by the end of 2023.</p> <p>The division of forestry has a process for public input regarding public land management on the division's webpage https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/state-forest-management/public-comment/submitting-a-public-comment/. The following statement is listed on the webpage: <i>A summary of comments received and how those comments were addressed will be posted before management plans are implemented. If you feel your comment is not given proper consideration, submit your comment to the State Forester. Management actions related to your comment will be delayed until the State Forester issues a decision.</i></p> <p>This same guidance appears in the procedure manual available to the public on the division's webpage https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/state-forest-management/procedures-and-regulations/ in Appendix I J-1: Opportunity for Public Input.</p> <p>All comments received through the division's comment portal are addressed in a timely manner. All comments submitted through the portal receive an acknowledgment statement/notice and further acknowledge by a separate email from the assistant state forester acknowledging receipt. Each comment is logged and retained as a PDF. Some comments may be addressed in the initial response while others in a more formal process (i.e., comment summary) such as with RMG, program guides, and HCVF proposals.</p> | |
| <p>SCS Review of Action Plan</p> | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted</p> <p>SCS representative: Beth Jacqumain Note: Key to approval is adding the ability, through MIS, to search for timber sales from the known tract location which would make it easier for citizen-owners of Indiana State Forests to search for sales in areas or tracts of</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Rejected (<i>explain</i>):</p> <p>Date: 1/20/23</p> |

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| | specific interest. | |
| Evidence and Actions Implemented by Organization | The Indiana State Forest Procedure Manual (revised October 2023), Appendix I J-1: "Opportunities for Public Input" contains information on the 30-day comment period for draft RMGs and recourse for stakeholders who feel their comment has not been properly considered (referral to the state forester, at which stage management actions will be delayed until the state forester issues a decision). Stakeholder comments regarding RMGs are "generally responded to within 30 days" (there is no strict time requirement written within the procedures; it is simply noted that comments will be published on the IDOF Public Comments page at the end of the comment period). This appendix serves as IDOF's stated procedure for dispute resolution procedures and resolving grievances regarding proposed management activities. | |
| SCS Review of Implemented Actions | In light of these facts and the evidence presented to close findings 2022.01 and 2022.03, the audit team judges that IDOF has made good-faith efforts to improve and clarify its dispute protocols, and that this finding may be closed. | |
| Status of Finding: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed <input type="checkbox"/> Upgraded to Major <input type="checkbox"/> Other decision (refer to description above) | |

4.5 New Corrective Action Requests, OFIs, and Exceeds

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| Finding Number: | | |
| Finding and Deadline | <input type="checkbox"/> Major: Pre-condition to certification <input type="checkbox"/> Major: 3 months from Closing Meeting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor: Next audit (surveillance or re-evaluation) or 12 months from closing <input type="checkbox"/> OFI: no deadline <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds: no deadline <input type="checkbox"/> Other deadline (specify): | |
| SFI Indicator: | SFI 2022 Section 2: 14.1.1 and SFI 2022 Section 7, Part 6 | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Conformity <input type="checkbox"/> Background/ Justification in the case of OFI or Exceeds The organization does not provide support for efforts of SFI Implementation Committees. | | |
| Action Plan and Root Cause Analysis (to be prepared by Organization) | Request clarification from SFI staff regarding SIC participation. Determine whether indicator 14.1.1 and guidance in SFI 2022 Section 7, Part 6 applies to Indiana DoF. | |
| SCS Review of Action Plan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted | <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected (explain): |
| | SCS representative: Daniel Simonds | Date: 18 October 2023 |
| Evidence and Actions Implemented by Organization | Review & verification of prior audit trails which indicated this indicator as 'not applicable' due to the lack of an organized SIC in Indiana (NSF recertification reports 2021, 2016). Request for clarification from SFI staff. | |
| SCS Review of Implemented Actions | Upon request, SFI Inc. staff provided email guidance to the Lead Auditor confirming, in effect, that this indicator is not applicable in Indiana: "email trail (Mouw) – no SIC (15-23 Oct 2023)" | |
| Status of Finding: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed <input type="checkbox"/> Upgraded to Major <input type="checkbox"/> Other decision (refer to description above) | |

5. Certification Decision

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| The certificate holder has demonstrated continued overall conformance to the applicable Sustainable Forestry Initiative standards. The SCS annual audit team recommends that the certificate be sustained, subject to subsequent annual audits and the Certified Organization's response to any open CARs. | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comments: None | |