

FSC® - Forest Management Digital Audit Report Supplement

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources - State Lands

SCS-FM/COC-00070N

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CERTIFIED	EXPIRATION
31 December 2023	30 December 2028

DATE OF FIELD EVALUATION
13 September 2024
DATE OF REPORT FINALIZATION
November 19, 2024

TYPE OF EVALUATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> Main Evaluation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1st Surveillance
<input type="checkbox"/> Re-Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Surveillance
<input type="checkbox"/> Transfer	<input type="checkbox"/> 3rd Surveillance
<input type="checkbox"/> Expansion of Scope	<input type="checkbox"/> 4th Surveillance
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Surveillance: #

This document contains the conformity tables and certificate tracking information that together with the Digital Audit Report constitute a complete FSC Forest Management Audit Report.

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Appendix 1 – Staff and Stakeholders Consulted

List of FME Staff Consulted

To protect privacy, only FME staff who have expressly provided written permission are listed. **These records are retained by SCS and subject to FSC or ASI examination.**

Opening Meeting – 9/09/2024

Walcisak, Jacob S - DNR	Forest Certification Coordinator
Buys, Rene J - DNR	Facilities and Lands Planner
Van Cleve, Juli K - DNR	Richland Center Forestry Team Leader
Zenz, Eric S - DNR	Southwest District Forestry Leader
Schroeder, Kori K - DNR	Forest Ecology and Economics Section Chief
Bay, Terry H - DNR	Facilities and Lands
Brown, Douglas E - DNR	County Forest and Public Lands Specialist
Reis, Anne H - DNR	Wildlife
Hasz, Justine R - DNR	Fisheries
Berklund, Heather A - DNR	Chief State Forester

Closing Meeting – 09/13/2024

Walcisak, Jacob S - DNR	Forest Certification Coordinator
Reis, Anne H - DNR	Wildlife
Young, Aaron M - DNR	Dodgeville Area Forestry Leader
Herrick, Sarah K - DNR	NHC
Brown, Douglas E - DNR	County Forest and Public Lands Specialist
Zenz, Eric S - DNR	Southwest District Forestry Leader
Hardin, Carmen R - DNR	Applied Forestry Bureau Director
Schroeder, Kori K - DNR	Forest Ecology and Economics Section Chief
Van Cleve, Juli K - DNR	Richland Center Forestry Team Leader
Hasz, Justine R - DNR	Fisheries Bureau Director
Morales, Amy L - DNR	Northeast District Forestry Leader
Finlay, Mike J - DNR	Dodgeville Forestry Team Leader
Lobner, Eric C - DNR	Wildlife Bureau Director
Brown, Brigit E - DNR	Parks
Berklund, Heather A - DNR	Chief State Forester
Vasquez, Rebecca I - DNR	Richland Center Team Forester
Hutnik, Bradley M - DNR	Silviculturalist

Other staff consulted during audit:

Name	Title	Consultation method
Kori Schroeder	FEE Section Chief	In person
Rebecca Mouw	Fitchburg Team leader	In person

Colten Kelly	KMSF-SU Deputy Superintendent	In person
Teague Prichard	State Forest Specialist	In person
Jake Walcisak	Certification Coordinator	In person
Mike Sieger	Forester	In person
Brian Lemke	KMSF-SU Superintendent	In person
Scott Wilhorn	DODA Forestry staff Specialist	In person
Nicholas Koltz	DNR Forester	In person
Brooke Hushagen	DNR Forestry Technician	In person
Drew McComb	DNR Forester	In person
Michael Hillstrom	Forest Invasive Pest Coordinator	In person
Rachel Barker	DNR Wildlife Biologist	In person

List of other Stakeholders Consulted*

To protect privacy, only stakeholders who have expressly provided written permission are listed. **These records are retained by SCS and subject to FSC or ASI examination.**

Appendix 2 – Additional Evaluation Techniques Employed

None.

Appendix 3 – Required Tracking

History of Findings for Certificate Period

FM Principle	Cert/Re-cert Evaluation (2023)	1 st Annual Evaluation (2024)	2 nd Annual Evaluation (year)	3 rd Annual Evaluation (year)	4 th Annual Evaluation (year)
No findings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P1					
P2					
P3					
P4	OBS (4.2.a)				
P5					
P6	OBS	CAR 2024.01			

	(6.7.a)	(6.7.a)			
P7		CAR 2024.02 (7.3.a)			
P8		CAR 2024.03 (8.2.d.1)			
P9					
P10					
COC for FM					
Trademark					
Group					
Other					

Progressive HCVF Assessments

FME does not use partial or progressive HCVF assessments.*

**Note: In the case the FME is not operating in the entire management unit, it is permissible to only complete an HCVF assessment for the portion of the unit in which they are operating under special conditions. In such cases, the HCVF assessment must be extended if new areas are entered without an existing, appropriate HCVF assessment having been completed. An example includes a large forest concession where harvesting is initially limited to a smaller geographic scope.*

Special Instructions or Scoping Notes for Next Regularly Scheduled Annual Audit

Not applicable; no significant issues identified that may impact the next audit.

**Note: information audit team leaders wish to remain confidential may be communicated directly to SCS.*

Requirements Reviewed in Annual Evaluation

Evaluation Year	Requirements Reviewed (FSC P&C Reviewed, FM/COC Indicators, Trademark Indicators, Group Standard Indicators, etc.)
2023	All – (Re)certification Evaluation
2024	FSC-US Forest Management Standard, V1-0: P1 (all criteria); P2 (all criteria); P3 (all criteria); mandatory criteria: 1.5, 2.3, 3.2, 4.2, 4.4, 5.6, 6.2, 6.3, 6.7.a, 7.3.a, 8.2, and 9.4

Appendix 4 – Forest Management Conformance Table

C= Conformance with Criterion or Indicator
 NC= Nonconformance with Criterion or Indicator
 NA = Not Applicable
 NE = Not Evaluated

REQUIREMENT	C/N C	COMMENT/CAR
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<p>Principle #1: Compliance with Laws and FSC Principles: Forest management shall respect all applicable laws of the country in which they occur, and international treaties and agreements to which the country is a signatory, and comply with all FSC Principles and Criteria.</p>		
<p>1.1 Forest management shall respect all national and local laws and administrative requirements.</p>	C	
<p>1.1.a Forest management plans and operations demonstrate compliance with all applicable federal, state, county, municipal, and tribal laws, and <i>administrative requirements</i> (e.g., regulations). Violations, outstanding complaints or investigations are provided to the <i>Certifying Body</i> (CB) during the annual audit.</p>	C	<p>FME conducts internal audits and management review to detect potential violations. No unresolved legal violations were reported.</p> <p>Interview with DNR staff confirmed that DNR has a complaints process in place. There may be county ordinances that affect forestry, though these are few. FME has an integrated system for adhering to federal and state laws.</p> <p>All land classifications follow NR code 44, including public review (variance process).</p>
<p>1.1.b To facilitate legal compliance, the <i>forest owner</i> or <i>manager</i> ensures that employees and contractors, commensurate with their responsibilities, are duly informed about applicable laws and regulations.</p>	C	<p>Contracts reviewed refer to legal requirements. FME employees interviewed receive initial training and on-going training that include an overview of the legal framework, as well as updates thereof. Laws and regulations are available on the State Legislature’s website.</p>
<p>1.2. All applicable and legally prescribed fees, royalties, taxes and other charges shall be paid.</p>	C	
<p>1.2.a The forest owner or manager provides written evidence that all applicable and legally prescribed fees, royalties, taxes and other charges are being paid in a timely manner. If payment is beyond the control of the landowner or manager, then there is evidence that every attempt at payment was made.</p>	C	<p>FME makes payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) to each municipality as state land is not taxed (Sections 70.113 and 70.114 of the Statutes; Statutes separate payments for lands acquired before 1970 from those acquired after, so there are two reports); Per interviews with multiple staff, this is the only legally required payment in the scope.</p>
<p>1.3. In signatory countries, the provisions of all binding international agreements such as CITES, ILO Conventions, ITTA, and Convention on Biological Diversity, shall be respected.</p>	C	
<p>1.3.a. Forest management plans and operations comply with relevant provisions of all applicable binding international agreements.</p>	C	<p>Applicable international treaties in the U.S. are implemented through federal and state laws. FME’s management plans and appendices are prepared to comply with the legal framework. As an example, RTE species are tracked via natural heritage data and management activities are designed and implemented to either assist with recovery or avoid negative impacts, as confirmed through field observation and review of site-specific plans.</p>

<p>1.4. Conflicts between laws, regulations and the FSC Principles and Criteria shall be evaluated for the purposes of certification, on a case by case basis, by the certifiers and the involved or affected parties.</p>	<p>C</p>	
<p>1.4.a. Situations in which compliance with laws or regulations conflicts with compliance with FSC Principles, Criteria or Indicators are documented and referred to the CB.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>FME has not identified any conflicts between FSC P&C and the legal framework, as confirmed in interviews and review of internal audit reports. Interview with DNR staff attorney and other staff confirms no identified conflicts.</p>
<p>1.5. Forest management areas should be protected from illegal harvesting, settlement and other unauthorized activities.</p>	<p>C</p>	
<p>1.5.a. The forest owner or manager supports or implements measures intended to prevent illegal and unauthorized activities on the <i>Forest Management Unit</i> (FMU).</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>FME employees 120+ law enforcement officers. As observed during field inspection, boundaries are marked blue paint and sometimes with signs. Gates are locked and identified with DNR plates.</p>
<p>1.5.b. If illegal or unauthorized activities occur, the forest owner or manager implements actions designed to curtail such activities and correct the situation to the extent possible for meeting all land management objectives with consideration of available resources.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Staff interviewed stated that they work with law enforcement and real estate divisions to resolve trespass and other unauthorized activities. Common issues include posting no-trespassing signs on state land, buildings that cross property boundaries, hunting/fishing violations, etc. FME reported no significant illegal or unauthorized activities in 2024.</p>
<p>1.6. Forest managers shall demonstrate a long-term commitment to adhere to the FSC Principles and Criteria.</p>	<p>C</p>	
<p>1.6.a. The forest owner or manager demonstrates a long-term commitment to adhere to the FSC Principles and Criteria and FSC and FSC-US policies, including the FSC-US Land Sales Policy, and has a publicly available statement of commitment to manage the FMU in conformance with FSC standards and policies.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>FME’s commitment can be found on its website (https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/timbersales/certification).</p>
<p>1.6.b. If the certificate holder does not certify their entire holdings, then they document, in brief, the reasons for seeking partial certification referencing FSC-POL-20-002 (or subsequent policy revisions), the location of other managed forest units, the natural resources found on the holdings being excluded from certification, and the management activities planned for the holdings being excluded from certification.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>FME has reported lands outside of the scope in the DAR to comply with FSC partial certification disclosure requirements.</p>
<p>1.6.c. The forest owner or manager notifies the Certifying Body of significant changes in ownership and/or significant changes in</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>FME reports any updates to the certification body just prior to each audit, as confirmed in the annual update form.</p>

management planning within 90 days of such change.		
Principle #2: Long-term tenure and use rights to the land and forest resources shall be clearly defined, documented and legally established.		
2.1. Clear evidence of long-term forest use rights to the land (e.g., land title, customary rights, or lease agreements) shall be demonstrated.	C	
2.1.a The forest owner or manager provides clear evidence of <i>long-term</i> rights to use and manage the FMU for the purposes described in the management plan.	C	FME maintains clear title to all property. Past audit team reviewed deeds and other real estate transaction documents. In 2024, publicly available information on ownership and public access rights was reviewed online, including the following websites: DNR’s Public Access Lands and plat books maintained by the University of Wisconsin. These multiple sources show that tenure and use rights are well-established and recognized through a variety of government entities. As part of review of C1.2, payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) demonstrates that county governments and municipalities recognize the DNR’s ownership since they accept payments.
2.1.b The forest owner or manager identifies and documents legally established use and access rights associated with the FMU that are held by other parties.	C	There are third-party easements for access and utilities on most state forests. Where the FME does not control the vegetation management, these areas are not included in management acres.
2.1.c Boundaries of land ownership and use rights are clearly identified on the ground and on maps prior to commencing management activities in the vicinity of the boundaries.	C	Confirmed via review of maps for all field sites visited in the audit and during interviews with staff.
2.2. Local communities with legal or customary tenure or use rights shall maintain control, to the extent necessary to protect their rights or resources, over forest operations unless they delegate control with free and informed consent to other agencies.	C	
2.2.a The forest owner or manager allows the exercise of <i>tenure</i> and <i>use rights</i> allowable by law or regulation.	C	Most recreation on the FMU is open to the public without permit. FME requires permits for some access, such as camping. Permits for NTFPs , small woody material <4”, and firewood are also available. Permitted access is not considered a tenure/use rights as it is temporary.
2.2.b In FMUs where tenure or use rights held by others exist, the forest owner or manager consults with groups that hold such rights so that management activities do not significantly impact the uses or benefits of such rights.	C	FME staff interviewed stated that they contact easement holders if timber sales or other activities may affect easements or rights-of-way. Harvest notification letters were reviewed for sites visited that abutted other ownerships.

<p>2.3. Appropriate mechanisms shall be employed to resolve disputes over tenure claims and use rights. The circumstances and status of any outstanding disputes will be explicitly considered in the certification evaluation. Disputes of substantial magnitude involving a significant number of interests will normally disqualify an operation from being certified.</p>	<p>C</p>	
<p>2.3.a If <i>disputes</i> arise regarding tenure claims or use rights then the forest owner or manager initially attempts to resolve them through open communication, negotiation, and/or mediation. If these good-faith efforts fail, then federal, state, and/or local laws are employed to resolve such disputes.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>FME’s real estate department maintains procedures to manage and settle disputes, and maintains records of all known disputes. Per interviews with staff, common trespasses include buildings that cross from private onto state lands and other forms of encroachment, and installing no-trespassing signs on state land. Negotiation of land swaps or sales of the encroached upon property are common methods used to resolve disputes, and are subject to public consultation and approval. Interviews with DNR staff attorney confirm this. FME reported no new disputes in 2024.</p>
<p>2.3.b The forest owner or manager documents any significant disputes over tenure and use rights.</p>	<p>C</p>	
<p>Principle #3: The legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples to own, use and manage their lands, territories, and resources shall be recognized and respected.</p>		
<p>3.1. Indigenous peoples shall control forest management on their lands and territories unless they delegate control with free and informed consent to other agencies.</p>	<p>NA</p>	
<p>3.1.a Tribal forest management planning and implementation are carried out by authorized tribal representatives in accordance with tribal laws and customs and relevant federal laws.</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>FME does not own or manage any tribal FMUs, as confirmed through documentation reviewed in Principle 2. Under state law, any project that occurs on tribally-held lands does not undergo review by state tribal or archaeological liaisons. The tribes are responsible for their own review in those cases. This supports tribal sovereignty and ensures that the state does not become involved in government-to-government matters that are reserved for federal and tribal governments.</p>
<p>3.1.b The manager of a tribal forest secures, in writing, informed consent regarding forest management activities from the tribe or individual forest owner prior to commencement of those activities.</p>	<p>NA</p>	
<p>3.2. Forest management shall not threaten or diminish, either directly or indirectly, the resources or tenure rights of indigenous peoples.</p>	<p>C</p>	
<p>3.2.a During management planning, the forest owner or manager consults with American Indian groups that have legal rights or other binding agreements to the FMU to avoid harming their resources or rights.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Consultation is undertaken at several levels. FME has a statewide tribal liaison (Ben Cornelius) to consult tribes at a government-to-government level. Other individual staff serve as liaison and contacts for individual tribes. Tribes are formally</p>

	<p>consulted during master planning and interim management planning processes to make sure that their resource rights are preserved (confirmed via review of management plans and public comment period). Each state forest has a forester in charge of outreach to tribes. A forester may put tribes in touch with a logging contractor if a specific timber sale is expected to have alternative forest products (e.g., bark, plants, bows, hunting, wild rice, firewood, etc.).</p> <p>The state has eleven federally recognized tribes and a twelfth that is not recognized (Brothertown Tribe). This twelfth tribe was originally from what is now New England and has no treaty rights in Wisconsin.</p> <p>There are six bands of Ojibwe that have off-reservation treaty rights managed through the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC). These tribes would like to have more power to self-regulate on state lands, similar to what they have on federal lands within the ceded territory, according to interviews with former DNR Tribal Liaison Shelly Allness. The current process for working with the Ojibwe bands still allows for them to exercise their treaty rights on state lands per interview with the state tribal liaison.</p> <p>FME has been working via government-to-government discussion to work with the Ho Chunk nation on establishing an MOU for gathering rights that includes a restoration component. Interviews with state tribal liaison reveal that no progress has been made recently on this topic. Per interviews with the DNR Historic Preservation Office (DHPO), the Ho Chunk tribal historic preservation office wants hands-on opportunities to collaborate on management of cultural resources, especially on human burial mounds and effigy mounds (animal or spiritual shapes).</p> <p>Examples of invitation to consult are available via review of email records between DNR staff and tribal representatives. Some invitations are made publicly (e.g., wolf management) and some comments from tribes are made available publicly (e.g., wild rice strategic analysis).</p>
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		<p>Annual Operation meetings and the Master Planning Process along with the Department’s consultation policy, allow for input from Native American bands and tribes on all aspects of state forest management. Additionally, the six federally recognized Chippewa Bands in Wisconsin are currently engaged in a six-year study for a self-reporting system for non-timber forest products on state lands in the ceded territory (roughly the northern 1/3 of Wisconsin). The pilot trial has been completed and the wildland policy committee has met, though the permanency of this issue is still being worked out per interview with tribal liaison.</p> <p>Interview with the DNR Archaeologist confirms that their primary job is to help DNR comply with historic preservation regulations for all departmental undertakings. Part of this process includes coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office, a non-DNR agency. These processes address historic preservation compliance requirements across all DNR internal lands (forests, parks, MLF, counties) for any management activities with potential to impact cultural and historic sites (timber harvest, habitat restoration, etc.).</p> <p>DNR sends any "hits" from special site databases to DHPO staff who then make recommendations after review and/or searching for additional information. Harvest prescriptions can be modified, including through seasonal and other restrictions, buffer areas, etc.</p>
<p>3.2.b Demonstrable actions are taken so that forest management does not adversely affect tribal resources. When applicable, evidence of, and measures for, protecting tribal resources are incorporated in the management plan.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Known archeological and cultural sites are protected. DNR works cooperatively with tribes on managing tribal resources (jointly setting spearing limits, for example). The tribal liaison stated that cultural sensitivity training was conducted for DNR staff who work with tribes, which was confirmed via independent interviews with other DNR staff during the field portions of the audit.</p> <p>Unit managers interviewed all demonstrated an understanding of the treaty rights of the Chippewa Tribes. Managers of land units within the treaty rights area indicated that they regularly work with tribal members to allow for gathering rights, and</p>

		many reach out to tribal leaders regularly to seek consultation.
3.3. Sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance to indigenous peoples shall be clearly identified in cooperation with such peoples, and recognized and protected by forest managers.	C	
3.3.a. The forest owner or manager invites consultation with tribal representatives in identifying sites of current or traditional cultural, archeological, ecological, economic or religious significance.	C	Master planning and interim processes go through archeological review, etc. Confirmed via interviews with staff and review of FMPs.
3.3.b In consultation with tribal representatives, the forest owner or manager develops measures to protect or enhance areas of special significance (see also Criterion 9.1).	C	Through master planning and interim processes some special protection measures are identified. However, many special sites are kept confidential for their protection and only known by each tribe, as confirmed in interviews with FME staff.
3.4. Indigenous peoples shall be compensated for the application of their traditional knowledge regarding the use of forest species or management systems in forest operations. This compensation shall be formally agreed upon with their free and informed consent before forest operations commence.	NA	
3.4.a The forest owner or manager identifies whether <i>traditional knowledge</i> in forest management is being used.	NA	As confirmed through review of FMPs and observation of management activities, the FME does not use any protected traditional knowledge in forest management, processing or commercialization.
3.4.b When traditional knowledge is used, written protocols are jointly developed prior to such use and signed by local tribes or tribal members to protect and fairly compensate them for such use.	NA	
3.4.c The forest owner or manager respects the confidentiality of tribal traditional knowledge and assists in the protection of such knowledge.	NA	
4.2. Forest management should meet or exceed all applicable laws and/or regulations covering health and safety of employees and their families.	C	
4.2.a The forest owner or manager meets or exceeds all applicable laws and/or regulations covering health and safety of employees and their families (also see Criterion 1.1).	C	FME has a training program for new employees through HR and an employee handbook that covers laws and regulations. There are specific training program requirements for foresters and forestry technicians that cover timber sale administration, inventory, and other specialized topics.

		<p>All Wisconsin DNR timber harvesting contracts include the following language. The Purchaser is responsible to comply with, and assure compliance by all employees or subcontractors with, all Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) requirements for the health and safety of Purchaser’s employees. The Purchaser agrees to notify, and obtain agreement from, the Seller if the Purchaser intends to modify performance required under the contract for the purpose of compliance with OSHA requirements. All new foresters and forestry technicians receive training on how to interact safely with equipment. This includes safe approach angles and safe distances to active equipment. DNR staff do not interact with inactive logging equipment owned by others.</p>
<p>4.2.b The forest owner or manager and their employees and contractors demonstrate a safe work environment. Contracts or other written agreements include safety requirements.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>The timber sale contract template, items 24, 33, and 35 cover relevant safety requirements.</p> <p>Other contracts reviewed include requirements for insurance and adherence to applicable laws, which includes safety requirements.</p>
<p>4.2.c The forest owner or manager hires well-qualified service providers to safely implement the management plan.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Per interviews with onsite contractor, loggers are FISTA-trained and have several years of experience working in the forests of the region.</p>
<p>4.4. Management planning and operations shall incorporate the results of evaluations of social impact. Consultations shall be maintained with people and groups (both men and women) directly affected by management operations.</p>	<p>C</p>	
<p>4.4.a The forest owner or manager understands the likely social impacts of management activities, and incorporates this understanding into management planning and operations. Social impacts include effects on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archeological sites and sites of cultural, historical and community significance (on and off the FMU); • Public resources, including air, water and food (hunting, fishing, collecting); • Aesthetics; • Community goals for forest and natural resource use and protection such as 	<p>C</p>	<p>As the entire FMP and associated documents are available to the public (e.g., https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestManagement/guidelines.html), the general FMP, master plans, and interim management plans meet this requirement. Chapter 6 of the general FMP covers cultural resources, public resources are covered in several chapters (e.g., 18), aesthetics in Chapters 4 and 18, community goals and economic opportunities in several places (e.g., Chapters 9, 10, and master plans), and other people affected (e.g., indigenous people).</p> <p>Individual master plans include discussion of social impacts as part of a regional property analysis.</p>

<p>employment, subsistence, recreation and health;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community economic opportunities; • Other people who may be affected by management operations. <p>A summary is available to the CB.</p>		<p>In 2023, the Ecological Landscape master plan process, including assessment of social elements and inclusion of public involvement in planning process. Several statewide assessments and plans include social impacts. E.g., SCORP, Annual property implementation plans, and WI Forest Action Plan.</p>
<p>4.4.b The forest owner or manager seeks and considers input in management planning from people who would likely be affected by management activities.</p>	C	<p>Public input can be provided at any time per interviews with staff. The website includes who may be contacted in public comment periods are closed (e.g., https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/ifmp.html). FME provided some recent examples of public comment for the Superior Coastal Plain Ecological Landscape Master Planning process and interim forest management plans for Baraboo Hills State Recreation Area in Sauk County and Nelson-Dewey State Park in Grant County.</p>
<p>4.4.c People who are subject to direct adverse effects of management operations are apprised of relevant activities in advance of the action so that they may express concern.</p>	C	<p>Per interviews with FME staff and review of site-specific planning documentation, letters are sent to adjacent landowners if it is expected that a timber harvest will abut a property boundary. Direct contact is also attempted at times. At the state-level, there is a government email distribution list that allows for interested parties to opt into notifications on certain topics and properties.</p>
<p>4.4.d For public forests, consultation shall include the following components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clearly defined and accessible methods for public participation are provided in both long and short-term planning processes, including harvest plans and operational plans; 2. Public notification is sufficient to allow interested stakeholders the chance to learn of upcoming opportunities for public review and/or comment on the proposed management; 3. An accessible and affordable appeals process to planning decisions is available. <p>Planning decisions incorporate the results of public consultation. All draft and final planning documents, and their supporting data, are made readily available to the public.</p>	C	<p>Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 44 outlines public consultation processes for master plans.</p> <p>Government email distribution list that allows for interested parties to opt into notifications on certain topics (e.g. wolf management) and properties (e.g. X state forest).</p> <p>WEPA process provides opportunity for public input. Issues on a site-level basis happen more informally. Harvest planning is done annually and all plans are open for a comment period. All planning activities are presented on the FME’s website for comment.</p> <p>Parties can avail themselves of administrative hearing process. Any decision by the department can be appealed (a decision being defined as any plan or permit). The aggrieved party has the</p>

		<p>opportunity to have appeal heard in front of hearing examiner.</p> <p>Documents open for public review can be found here: https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/forestplanning/publiccomment and https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/news/input/Guidance/FWP. The public input provides the document in question and summarizes comments received. When the comment period and input process has been completed, the final document is published on the comment webpage.</p> <p>Public involvement is considered to be crucial to the development of Master Plans for each property. For example, the reviewed North Central Forest regional master plan. The final plan describes how a variety of tools were used to provide information on the planning process and to solicit public input. DNR tracks input and methods of collecting stakeholder contributions to the planning process as confirmed by interviews with forestry staff and reviews of records in property folders. A summary of the stakeholder comments received is available in this document: https://widnr.widen.net/s/vtsdxgs5lb/fl_mp_ncf_initalpublicinputperiod_summary</p> <p>No major public comments submitted as part of property master plans.</p>
<p>5.6. The rate of harvest of forest products shall not exceed levels which can be permanently sustained.</p>	<p>C</p>	
<p>5.6.a In FMUs where products are being harvested, the landowner or manager calculates the sustained yield harvest level for each sustained yield planning unit, and provides clear rationale for determining the size and layout of the planning unit. The sustained yield harvest level calculation is documented in the Management Plan.</p> <p>The sustained yield harvest level calculation for each planning unit is based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> documented growth rates for particular sites, and/or acreage of forest types, age-classes and species distributions; 	<p>C</p>	<p>Section 7, page 110-03, of the State Department of Natural Resources, Public Forest Lands Handbook, HB2460.5, Public Forest Lands Handbook 24605 (wisconsin.gov) provides information regarding annual planning include sustained yield harvest. Section 7 includes the following: “Section 28.025 (2) Wis. Stats., requires that the Department establish annual allowable harvest levels on Department lands and s. 28.025 (3) Wis. Stats., requires that the Department report biannually on the timber harvests established, providing justification for any cases where the timber harvest on a property was more than 10% above or below the allowable harvest level. The</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mortality and decay and other factors that affect net growth; • areas reserved from harvest or subject to harvest restrictions to meet other management goals; • silvicultural practices that will be employed on the FMU; • management objectives and desired future conditions. <p>The calculation is made by considering the effects of repeated prescribed harvests on the product/species and its ecosystem, as well as planned management treatments and projections of subsequent regrowth beyond single rotation and multiple re-entries.</p>	<p>Department utilizes WisFIRS to generate an annual and a long-term harvest schedule and goals to meet the needs of both Department work planning and the statutorily required reporting of annual allowable harvest to the legislature. Annual harvest calculations for DNR lands are determined using an acreage-based control method for sustainable harvest levels. The creation of harvest schedules and goals by property is accomplished by utilizing the WisFIRS Planning features.</p> <p>WisFIRS Planning functionality attempts to more evenly distribute timber harvest practices over a 15-year period by cover type and treatment type (e.g. aspen clear-cuts) for each property. It does this by utilizing early and late harvest constraints (when applied), along with estimated average harvest intervals by cover and treatment type for each property. For example, if the typical harvest interval for aspen on a property is 48 years, with an early constraint of three years and a late constraint of seven years, WisFIRS will recommend a harvest schedule that levels out natural peaks and valleys in the schedule by re-scheduling aspen stands as early as age 45 and as late as age 55. WisFIRS will maintain both the scheduled year and recommended year for each stand; however, the annual and long-term harvest schedules and goals will be a reflection of the scheduled year. Planning functions at the property level and the smoothing of harvest levels only occurs when there are at least 400 acres of a particular cover and harvest type combination on a property. In cases where there are less than 400 acres of a particular cover and harvest type, the WisFIRS planning schedule will simply utilize the recommended year without redistributing based upon constraints.”</p> <p>The sustained yield harvest in an output of the Wisconsin Forest Inventory and Reporting System (WisFIRS), and is routinely projected for 15 years. At present, growth rates are not used in projections, although a CFI system is being implemented that will allow calculation of growth for some state forests. Instead, forest stands are visited on a 20-year cycle (or less) for reconnaissance, which includes measurements of volume. Recon data are considered in the annual update of 15-year harvest projections.</p>
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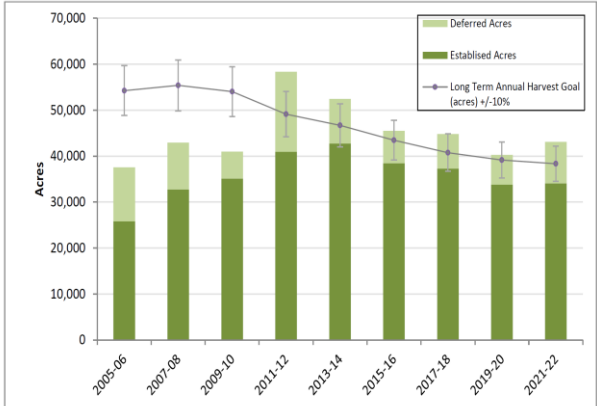
		<p>The FME is operating under an area-control system, which sets an annual amount of acres to harvest each year. The system includes assumptions based on forest stand types and their growth rates, mortality, and silvicultural practices. Protected areas under passive management or otherwise under no-harvest restrictions are not included in AAH calculations.</p> <p>Inventory methods, area-based harvests, State Forest Plans and other relevant documents may be found here, Wisconsin's Continuous Forest Inventory (WisCFI) Wisconsin DNR (last accessed 9/18/2023).</p>																																								
<p>5.6.b Average annual harvest levels, over rolling periods of no more than 10 years, do not exceed the calculated sustained yield harvest level.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Each team confirmed annual harvests do not exceed the AAC. WisFIRS tracks annual harvest amounts allowing direct tracking of annual harvest acres.</p> <p>Figure 1. Long Term Harvest Goal compared with acres evaluated and established or deferred.</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Figure 1: Long Term Harvest Goal compared with acres evaluated and established or deferred.</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Established Acres</th> <th>Deferred Acres</th> <th>Long Term Annual Harvest Goal (acres) +/-10%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2005-06</td> <td>25,000</td> <td>12,000</td> <td>55,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2007-08</td> <td>32,000</td> <td>11,000</td> <td>56,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2009-10</td> <td>35,000</td> <td>6,000</td> <td>55,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011-12</td> <td>40,000</td> <td>18,000</td> <td>52,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2013-14</td> <td>43,000</td> <td>9,000</td> <td>50,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015-16</td> <td>38,000</td> <td>7,000</td> <td>48,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2017-18</td> <td>36,000</td> <td>8,000</td> <td>46,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019-20</td> <td>34,000</td> <td>6,000</td> <td>44,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021-22</td> <td>33,000</td> <td>10,000</td> <td>43,000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Established Acres	Deferred Acres	Long Term Annual Harvest Goal (acres) +/-10%	2005-06	25,000	12,000	55,000	2007-08	32,000	11,000	56,000	2009-10	35,000	6,000	55,000	2011-12	40,000	18,000	52,000	2013-14	43,000	9,000	50,000	2015-16	38,000	7,000	48,000	2017-18	36,000	8,000	46,000	2019-20	34,000	6,000	44,000	2021-22	33,000	10,000	43,000
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<p>5.6.c Rates and methods of timber harvest lead to achieving desired conditions, and improve or maintain health and quality across the FMU. Overstocked stands and stands that have been depleted or rendered to be below productive potential due to natural events, past management, or lack of management, are returned to desired stocking levels and composition at the earliest practicable time as justified in management objectives.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>FME is required to report to the Governor’s Council on Forestry and be within +/- 10% of goal. Starting in 2019, DNR implemented a department alignment process that codified the Division of Forestry’s role in providing professional forest management services to all DNR lands. Forestry provides forest inventory, silvicultural options and recommendations, timber sale establishment and administration and forest regeneration expertise.</p>																																								

		Table 1. State Land Harvest Goals and Accomplishments, calendar year 2005 through 2022.								
		2005-06	2007-08	2009-10	2011-12	2013-14	2015-16	2017-18	2019-20	2021-22
		54,250	55,400	54,050	49,117	46,711	43,474	40,761	39,135	38,346
Long Term Harvest Goal (acres)										
Actual Establishment Acres		25,818	32,771	35,105	40,949	42,733	38,446	37,266	33,807	34,092
Acres Deferred		11,716	10,150	5,878	17,393	9,700	7,030	7,564	6,456	9,005
Total Acres Evaluated for Management		37,534	42,921	40,983	58,342	52,433	45,476	44,830	40,263	43,097
Percentage of Long-Term Harvest Goal		69%	78%	76%	119%	112%	105%	110%	103%	112%

<p>5.6.d For NTFPs, calculation of quantitative sustained yield harvest levels is required only in cases where products are harvested in significant commercial operations or where traditional or customary use rights may be impacted by such harvests. In other situations, the forest owner or manager utilizes available information, and new information that can be reasonably gathered, to set harvesting levels that will not result in a depletion of the non-timber growing stocks or other adverse effects to the forest ecosystem.</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>No NTFPs are gathered commercially on the FMU. Permits are required for collection of NTFPs by the general public. Tribal members within the ceded territory covered by the Voight Decision are allowed to collect NTFPs and some timber products through tribal permits and, in some cases, permits from DNR.</p>
<p>6.2 Safeguards shall exist which protect rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitats (e.g., nesting and feeding areas). Conservation zones and protection areas shall be established, appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management and the uniqueness of the affected resources. Inappropriate hunting, fishing, trapping, and collecting shall be controlled.</p>	<p>C</p>	
<p>6.2.a If there is a likely presence of RTE species as identified in Indicator 6.1.a then either a field survey to verify the species' presence or absence is conducted prior to site-disturbing management activities, or management occurs with the assumption that potential RTE species are present.</p> <p>Surveys are conducted by biologists with the appropriate expertise in the species of interest and with appropriate qualifications to conduct the surveys. If a species is determined to be present, its location should be reported to the manager of the appropriate database.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>As part of the sale development process and filling out the 2460 Form, the forester runs a search of the Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) database. If an element occurrence is identified then the forester consults the species guidance documents and implements applicable avoidance measures. In some cases the forester has further questions and works with a district ecologist to develop appropriate measures. Surveys are only conducted in limited cases such as bald eagle nest surveys. In most cases, the species is considered to be present if there is appropriate habitat and the corresponding avoidance measures are applied. In most cases avoidance measures are timing</p>

		<p>restrictions. In a few instances buffers are applied (e.g. for nesting raptors).</p> <p>Each Ecological landscape master plan completes a Rapid Ecological Assessment. New areas are identified in the master plan (refer to master plan updates).</p>
<p>6.2.b When RTE species are present or assumed to be present, modifications in management are made in order to maintain, restore or enhance the extent, quality and viability of the species and their habitats. Conservation zones and/or protected areas are established for RTE species, including those S3 species that are considered rare, where they are necessary to maintain or improve the short and long-term viability of the species. Conservation measures are based on relevant science, guidelines and/or consultation with relevant, independent experts as necessary to achieve the conservation goal of the Indicator.</p>	C	<p>As part of the sale development process and filling out the 2460 Form, the forester runs a search of the NHI database. If an element occurrence is identified then the forester consults the species guidance documents and implements applicable avoidance measures. In some cases the forester has further questions and works with a district ecologist to develop appropriate measures. Surveys are only conducted in limited cases such as bald eagle nest surveys. In most cases, the species is considered to be present if there is appropriate habitat and the corresponding avoidance measures are applied. In most cases avoidance measures are timing restrictions. In a few instances buffers are applied (e.g. for nesting raptors).</p>
<p>6.2.c For medium and large public forests (e.g. state forests), forest management plans and operations are designed to meet species' recovery goals, as well as landscape level biodiversity conservation goals.</p>	C	<p>These priorities are evident when reviewing the 2460 Forms for each site visit in combination with the Master Plan implementation.</p>
<p>6.2.d Within the capacity of the forest owner or manager, hunting, fishing, trapping, collecting and other activities are controlled to avoid the risk of impacts to vulnerable species and communities (See Criterion 1.5).</p>	C	<p>All activities funded, conducted, or approved by the department are screened for potential impacts to rare species using the Natural Heritage Inventory Portal. Standard guidance and other tools are available for a large number of species, and foresters and other land managers routinely consult with wildlife and Natural Heritage Conservation staff.</p> <p>In addition, Conservation Wardens and Recreation Officers enforce laws related to this topic.</p>
<p>6.3. Ecological functions and values shall be maintained intact, enhanced, or restored, including: a) Forest regeneration and succession. b) Genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity. c) Natural cycles that affect the productivity of the forest ecosystem.</p>	C	
<p>6.3.a.1 The forest owner or manager maintains, enhances, and/or restores under-represented successional stages in the FMU that would</p>	C	<p>Auditors visited numerous sites where management activities were designed to maintain or restore under-represented forest types or age</p>

<p>naturally occur on the types of sites found on the FMU. Where old growth of different community types that would naturally occur on the forest are under-represented in the landscape relative to natural conditions, a portion of the forest is managed to enhance and/or restore old growth characteristics.</p>		<p>classes. Active burning programs are implemented to maintain open wetland and barrens type habitats. WIDNR also has an intranet resource for Priority Habitat Management Guides. These guides and tools direct staff in managing high priority resources such as barrens, wetlands, grasslands, oak forests and young forests.</p> <p>Under-represented, naturally occurring successional stages are assessed during the master planning processes. Specific property goals for management of these areas are described in the master plan and in annual work plans. Planned and completed land management activities are captured during the annual Integrated Property Management meetings.</p> <p>Ecological master plans identify unique and under representative species and successional stages. That regional and property assessment is used to classify areas with objectives and prescriptions to maintain and enhance.</p>
<p>6.3.a.2 When a rare ecological community is present, modifications are made in both the management plan and its implementation in order to maintain, restore or enhance the viability of the community. Based on the vulnerability of the existing community, conservation zones and/or protected areas are established where warranted.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>If a rare ecological community is present it is identified in the state’s NHI database, at which point the land manager consults with an ecologist in the Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation to develop appropriate management options. More commonly, rare communities are already identified and may be part of an SNA and/or labeled as a rare community with a management plan developed to feature a viable community.</p>
<p>6.3.a.3 When they are present, management maintains the area, structure, composition, and processes of all Type 1 and Type 2 old growth. Type 1 and 2 old growth are also protected and buffered as necessary with conservation zones, unless an alternative plan is developed that provides greater overall protection of old growth values.</p> <p>Type 1 Old Growth is protected from harvesting and road construction. Type 1 old growth is also protected from other timber management activities, except as needed to maintain the ecological values associated with the stand, including old growth attributes (e.g., remove exotic species, conduct controlled burning, and thinning from below in dry forest</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>DNR has developed an Old-Growth and Old Forest Handbook to assist in the assessment, classification, and management of old forests. Systematic reconnaissance of all forest stands on state lands uses three codes to designate different levels of late successional forests: relict forest, old-growth forest, and old forest. The relict forest designation corresponds to FSC Type 1 old growth; these forests are also coded as reserved. In short, the Department is demonstrating exemplary efforts to protect and promote old-growth forest stands in a range of forest types. Master plans identify areas for old growth management and silviculture guides the management prescriptions.</p> <p>The Managed Old-growth Silvicultural Study (MOSS) is considering forest management</p>

<p>types when and where restoration is appropriate).</p> <p>Type 2 Old Growth is protected from harvesting to the extent necessary to maintain the area, structures, and functions of the stand. Timber harvest in Type 2 old growth must maintain old growth structures, functions, and components including individual trees that function as refugia (see Indicator 6.3.g).</p> <p>On public lands, old growth is protected from harvesting, as well as from other timber management activities, except if needed to maintain the values associated with the stand (e.g., remove exotic species, conduct controlled burning, and thinning from below in forest types when and where restoration is appropriate).</p> <p>On American Indian lands, timber harvest may be permitted in Type 1 and Type 2 old growth in recognition of their sovereignty and unique ownership. Timber harvest is permitted in situations where:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Old growth forests comprise a significant portion of the tribal ownership. 2. A history of forest stewardship by the tribe exists. 3. High Conservation Value Forest attributes are maintained. 4. Old-growth structures are maintained. 5. Conservation zones representative of old growth stands are established. 6. Landscape level considerations are addressed. 7. Rare species are protected. 		<p>techniques in creating some of the attributes of old-growth forests. 2022 was a remeasurement year for the MOSS project.</p> <p>Silviculture Trials are being conducted to see if a new approach works better than others used in the past. There is also an Adaptive Silviculture for Climate Change in the Driftless Area (ASCC), and DREAM research project.</p>
<p>6.3.b To the extent feasible within the size of the ownership, particularly on larger ownerships (generally tens of thousands or more acres), management maintains, enhances, or restores habitat conditions suitable for well-distributed populations of animal species that are characteristic of forest ecosystems within the landscape.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>A variety of habitat restoration and enhancement projects are conducted annually on department lands including (but not limited to) barrens restoration, native prairie restoration, wetland restoration/enhancement, and young forest management. These activities are primarily guided by the WI Wildlife Action Plan, Joint Venture Waterfowl Plan, the Young Forest Initiative, and the various WI species management plans (turkey, etc.).</p>

		<p>Property Master Plans identify the specific priority habitat types for each property. Department staff often conduct habitat work in close partnership with habitat organizations (e.g. Ruffed Grouse Society, Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, etc.).</p> <p>DNR’s forest management goals are ecologically oriented, and management is conducted to maintain ecological habitat conditions that are suited to each site. These decisions are aided by the habitat classification that is done as a component of reconnaissance surveys for each site. Sites visited by auditors routinely had prescriptions that would allow natural regeneration and succession to occur on the site.</p>
<p>6.3.c Management maintains, enhances and/or restores the plant and wildlife habitat of Riparian Management Zones (RMZs) to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) habitat for aquatic species that breed in surrounding uplands; b) habitat for predominantly terrestrial species that breed in adjacent aquatic habitats; c) habitat for species that use riparian areas for feeding, cover, and travel; d) habitat for plant species associated with riparian areas; and, e) stream shading and inputs of wood and leaf litter into the adjacent aquatic ecosystem. 	<p>C</p>	<p>The document Wisconsin’s Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality provides guidance on RMZ management with respect to these features.</p> <p>Sale and/or harvest unit boundaries are designed to avoid or buffer wetlands, stream, lakes, and other water bodies. Riparian buffers associated with harvests are shown on maps and marked on the ground. Field audit in 2018 confirmed that foresters are knowledgeable of BMP requirements to protect riparian zones and are doing an excellent job of implementing them on harvest sites.</p> <p>All management activities include a section for riparian management considerations. A special report evaluated timber sales with RMZ in 2021 Review of 2460 Timber Sale Narratives (wisconsin.gov).</p>
<p>Stand-scale Indicators 6.3.d Management practices maintain or enhance plant species composition, distribution and frequency of occurrence similar to those that would naturally occur on the site.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Management prescriptions for sites visited in 2024 were consistently written to enhance or maintain current or desired composition of plant species on the site. Management techniques such as controlled burning and use of herbicides are used in select areas. Often this was explicitly included in the stand level prescription on the 2460 Form.</p>
<p>6.3.e When planting is required, a local source of known provenance is used when available and when the local source is equivalent in terms of quality, price and productivity. The use of non-local sources shall be justified, such as in situations where other management objectives (e.g. disease resistance or adapting</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Planting source comes from the state’s nursery in Boscobel through the Division’s tree improvement program. Many native species are grown, including some range-limited ones. However, many of these species are not planted on state lands. Currently, some species are being tested for climate change adaptation as part of the DREAM study. In the</p>

<p>to climate change) are best served by non-local sources. Native species suited to the site are normally selected for regeneration.</p>		<p>southern part of Wisconsin, American sycamore is being planted as a replacement for ash species.</p>
<p>6.3.f Management maintains, enhances, or restores habitat components and associated stand structures, in abundance and distribution that could be expected from naturally occurring processes. These components include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) large live trees, live trees with decay or declining health, snags, and well-distributed coarse down and dead woody material. Legacy trees where present are not harvested; and b) vertical and horizontal complexity. <p>Trees selected for retention are generally representative of the dominant species found on the site.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Foresters use written silvicultural guidelines for retaining structural diversity in even-aged management systems. The Silviculture Handbook has been replaced with Wisconsin Silviculture Guide – New edition. Chapter 24 covers retention guidelines, including legacy trees. Foresters routinely retain green trees in a harvest by prescription as well as by marking individual wildlife trees. In addition, native vegetation is retained in riparian buffers and in retention islands. Legacy trees may be identified in the 2460 Form narrative and then indicated in the WisFIRS database.</p>
<p>6.3.g.1 In the Southeast, Appalachia, Ozark-Ouachita, Mississippi Alluvial Valley, and Pacific Coast Regions, when even-aged systems are employed, and during salvage harvests, live trees and other native vegetation are retained within the harvest unit as described in Appendix C for the applicable region.</p> <p>In the Lake States Northeast, Rocky Mountain and Southwest Regions, when even-aged silvicultural systems are employed, and during salvage harvests, live trees and other native vegetation are retained within the harvest unit in a proportion and configuration that is consistent with the characteristic natural disturbance regime unless retention at a lower level is necessary for the purposes of restoration or rehabilitation. See Appendix C for additional regional requirements and guidance.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Foresters use written silvicultural guidelines for retaining structural diversity in even-aged management systems. The Silviculture Handbook has been replaced with Wisconsin Silviculture Guide – New edition. Chapter 24 covers retention guidelines, including legacy trees. Foresters routinely retain green trees in a harvest by prescription as well as by marking individual wildlife trees. In addition, native vegetation is retained in riparian buffers and in retention islands. The Silviculture Guide describes legacy trees in Chapter 24, part 8 and in Chapter 61 (big tree silviculture). Legacy trees may be identified in the 2460 Form narrative and then indicated in the WisFIRS database. There were no difficulties reaching the Green Tree retention standards or biomass standards.</p>
<p>6.3.g.2 Under very limited situations, the landowner or manager has the option to develop a qualified plan to allow minor departure from the opening size limits described in Indicator 6.3.g.1. A qualified plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is developed by qualified experts in ecological and/or related fields (wildlife biology, hydrology, landscape ecology, forestry/silviculture). 	<p>C</p>	<p>There are no opening-size limits for the Lake States-Central Hardwoods region.</p>

<p>2. Is based on the totality of the best available information including peer-reviewed science regarding natural disturbance regimes for the FMU.</p> <p>3. Is spatially and temporally explicit and includes maps of proposed openings or areas.</p> <p>4. Demonstrates that the variations will result in equal or greater benefit to wildlife, water quality, and other values compared to the normal opening size limits, including for sensitive and rare species.</p> <p>5. Is reviewed by independent experts in wildlife biology, hydrology, and landscape ecology, to confirm the preceding findings.</p>		
<p>6.3.h The forest owner or manager assesses the risk of, prioritizes, and, as warranted, develops and implements a strategy to prevent or control invasive species, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a method to determine the extent of invasive species and the degree of threat to native species and ecosystems; 2. implementation of management practices that minimize the risk of invasive establishment, growth, and spread; 3. eradication or control of established invasive populations when feasible: and, 4. monitoring of control measures and management practices to assess their effectiveness in preventing or controlling invasive species. 	C	<p>A team called the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources’ Department Invasive Species Team (DIST) meets to develop tools to assist land managers in addressing invasive species. They have generated a rapid response protocol called the Wisconsin DNR’s Response Framework for Invasive Species. The team also works with an advisory committee and conducts education and outreach on invasive species topics.</p> <p>Several thousand acres were treated for invasives species, primarily for the purposes of site prep and release, as reported by FME staff. Refer to site notes for examples (e.g., buckthorn treatment). Annual invasive species inventories are updated as well as Forest RECON updates include invasive species inventories.</p>
<p>6.3.i In applicable situations, the forest owner or manager identifies and applies site-specific fuels management practices, based on: (1) natural fire regimes, (2) risk of wildfire, (3) potential economic losses, (4) public safety, and (5) applicable laws and regulations.</p>	C	<p>DNR uses prescribed fire in wildlife management work to maintain open habitat characteristics of lowland and upland habitat. Prescribed fires are planned and controlled to meet safety and risk requirements. Many DNR personnel are certified fire fighters, and respond to wildfires when necessary, as part of multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional teams. For example, DNR has an agreement with the BIA, MTE, and Ho-Chunk on prescribed burning and wildfires on tribal lands. Both natural fires have occurred as well prescribed fire.</p>
<p>6.7.a The forest owner or manager, and employees and contractors, have the equipment and training necessary to respond to hazardous spills</p>	C	<p><u>2023 audit:</u> Pre-harvest inspection forms were reviewed by auditors during site visits. No harvest sites visited were active during the audit. The state requirement is to maintain an accessible spill containment and clean-up kit appropriate for the material on the operation. There was no evidence</p>

		<p>of violations of this requirement during onsite inspection of idle equipment; no spills or persistent leaks on equipment were observed. It was not possible to inspect inside the cab or in compartments to verify if spill kits were available on harvest equipment. It is also possible that operators could keep spill kits in trailers or transport vehicles onsite. Given that spill kits must be accessible, and not necessarily located on harvest equipment, there is an opportunity to review best practices for back-up options, such as recommending that oil absorbent sheets be available on harvest equipment. See OBS 2023.2</p> <p><u>2024 audit:</u> The Potter Tract was an active timber sale with Hackaway Forest Products. The contractors onsite were interviewed. The foreman of the crew was not onsite but was interviewed via phone call. There was no complete spill kit onsite during the active harvesting that was occurring while the auditor was onsite. The truck driver indicated that a kit was in the foreman’s truck but not currently there. Therefore, there is a non-conformance with indicator 6.7.a. OBS 2023.2 has been elevated to a Corrective Action Request (CAR 2024.1).</p>
<p>7.3.a Workers are qualified to properly implement the management plan; All forest workers are provided with sufficient guidance and supervision to adequately implement their respective components of the plan.</p>	<p>NC</p>	<p>Logging contractors are FISTA trained. FISTA requires continuing education. DNR staff training is documented in the Cornerstone enterprise training database for State employees. Numerous staff training records were provided during the audit and a sample of qualifications and training records were reviewed.</p> <p>However, management system procedures were not properly implemented on the Lodi Dodi timber sale. A new forester found that 65 acres were harvested with zero loads of timber accounted for in the pre-paid ticket system. DNR did receive three mill slips but none included the required DNR haul ticket. Documents indicate the mandatory pre-sale meeting with the logging contractor and DNR staff was not done onsite and signed, as is required in the Timber Sale Handbook, and there were only 3 harvest inspections done with the first being done 6-weeks after cutting began. The logging contract breach has been properly forwarded to legal and</p>

		<p>upper management for investigation and resolution. Therefore, a minor Corrective Action Request is issued to provide forest workers with sufficient guidance and supervision to adequately implement their respective components of the plan (management system), as required by the indicator. See CAR 2024.2</p>
<p>8.2. Forest management should include the research and data collection needed to monitor, at a minimum, the following indicators: a) yield of all forest products harvested, b) growth rates, regeneration, and condition of the forest, c) composition and observed changes in the flora and fauna, d) environmental and social impacts of harvesting and other operations, and e) cost, productivity, and efficiency of forest management.</p>	<p>C</p>	
<p>8.2.a.1 For all commercially harvested products, an inventory system is maintained. The inventory system includes at a minimum: a) species, b) volumes, c) stocking, d) regeneration, and e) stand and forest composition and structure; and f) timber quality.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Refer to C5.6. Reconnaissance data is collected pre-harvest and as part of the CFI system. See https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestPlanning/forestInventory.html for more information. See also Wisconsin Forest Inventory Reporting System (WisFIRS), Public Lands Handbook chapter 100. Forest RECON is update at 5% per year. Forest Regeneration Metric (FRM) is completed on all harvested stands. CFI is updated on State Forests. Annual reporting requirements include parts a) and b) with other portions covered in WisFIRS and alterations updating done by foresters including stand condition observations during recon activities.</p>
<p>8.2.a.2 Significant, unanticipated removal or loss or increased vulnerability of forest resources is monitored and recorded. Recorded information shall include date and location of occurrence, description of disturbance, extent and severity of loss, and may be both quantitative and qualitative.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Recon is conducted after large-scale loss events to reassess timber volumes according to interviews with staff. Salvage harvests are often arranged to harvest material from blow-down events. Through interviews with staff, each area is regularly inspected to detect potential thefts or damage to other resources.</p>
<p>8.2.b The forest owner or manager maintains records of harvested timber and NTFPs (volume and product and/or grade). Records must adequately ensure that the requirements under Criterion 5.6 are met.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>FME also maintains harvest volume records in 2460 forms and invoices. Post-harvest reports in the WisFIRS system capture records of harvested material. NTFP records are maintained in the form of permits applied for since NTFPs are not commercially harvested.</p>

<p>8.2.c The forest owner or manager periodically obtains data needed to monitor presence on the FMU of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Rare, threatened and endangered species and/or their habitats; 2) Common and rare plant communities and/or habitat; 3) Location, presence and abundance of invasive species; 4) Condition of protected areas, set-asides and buffer zones; 5) High Conservation Value Forests (see Criterion 9.4). 	<p>C</p>	<p>CFI captures data on plant communities. Invasive species monitoring currently done as part of recon. Recommendations in the statewide strategic plan for invasives call for a more all-encompassing approach that would incorporate monitoring from members of the public.</p> <p>State Natural areas are monitored through inspection reports, thus addressing RSAs and HCVs. FME staff are ready to update GAP analyses, but are going to wait for the new FSC standard to avoid duplicative work.</p>
<p>8.2.d.1 Monitoring is conducted to ensure that site specific plans and operations are properly implemented, environmental impacts of site disturbing operations are minimized, and that harvest prescriptions and guidelines are effective.</p>	<p>NC</p>	<p>Review of WisFIRs records indicate that only 4 of 15 completed harvest operations visited had the next treatment scheduled in WisFIRs. Next scheduled treatments can include regeneration monitoring following operations, thinning, or harvesting and is required stand data to be updated in WisFIRs according to the Public Forest Lands Handbook. Therefore, a minor Corrective Action Request is issued to address the non-conformance.</p> <p>See CAR 2024.03</p>
<p>8.2.d.2 A monitoring program is in place to assess the condition and environmental impacts of the forest-road system.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Interviews with facilities managers indicate that road monitoring is an ongoing process. FME completed a formal review of roads and parking lots and identified areas for improvement.</p>
<p>8.2.d.3 The landowner or manager monitors relevant socio-economic issues (see Indicator 4.4.a), including the social impacts of harvesting, participation in local economic opportunities (see Indicator 4.1.g), the creation and/or maintenance of quality job opportunities (see Indicator 4.1.b), and local purchasing opportunities (see Indicator 4.1.e).</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Statewide forest action plan looks into detail of effects of timber on state economy, updated every 5 years, looking at state of forest products industry, salaries of foresters, etc. DNR has daily interaction with state forest products sector. Three EL master plans completed with assessments on social and impact analysis. BMP monitoring and assessment. Statewide BMP monitoring for state lands last conducted in 2023.</p>
<p>8.2.d.4 Stakeholder responses to management activities are monitored and recorded as necessary.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Stakeholder responses are reviewed on a property-level as part of annual management planning process, as confirmed in interviews with staff. At the state-level, comments are considered and changes made to plans if warranted.</p>
<p>8.2.d.5 Where sites of cultural significance exist, the opportunity to jointly monitor sites of cultural significance is offered to tribal representatives (see Principle 3).</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Opportunities for joint monitoring are provided to local tribes. The Chippewa Flowage Joint FMP is multi-agency and includes specific opportunities for monitoring by tribal representatives.</p>

<p>8.2.e The forest owner or manager monitors the costs and revenues of management in order to assess productivity and efficiency.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Although financial return is not the primary motivation of the state agency, revenue and costs are tracked and detailed as part of standard financial record keeping. Work planning metrics are established each year for public lands including time standards for timber sale establishment, administration, inventory and cultural treatments.</p>
<p>9.4 Annual monitoring shall be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the measures employed to maintain or enhance the applicable conservation attributes.</p>	<p>C</p>	
<p>9.4.a The forest owner or manager monitors, or participates in a program to annually monitor, the status of the specific HCV attributes, including the effectiveness of the measures employed for their maintenance or enhancement. The monitoring program is designed and implemented consistent with the requirements of Principle 8.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Site inspections and photo points are employed on many State Natural Areas. Each of the District Ecologists visits the SNAs in their area at least once per year to evaluate any threats to the conservation value and to evaluate the effectiveness of any past management efforts.</p> <p>On a more informal level, virtually all SNA sites are visited by DNR personnel or cooperators capable of reporting any significant changes in the attributes of the SNA. Also, members of the public using State Natural Areas often inform DNR staff of issues they identify while on the property (e.g., serious invasion of unwanted plants or animals, storm damage, or unauthorized site disturbance).</p> <p>The SNA program has standardized methods for conducting long-term monitoring of ecosystems.</p>
<p>9.4.b When monitoring results indicate increasing risk to a specific HCV attribute, the forest owner/manager re-evaluates the measures taken to maintain or enhance that attribute, and adjusts the management measures in an effort to reverse the trend.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>SNA inspection reports identify risks to the HCVF attributes (e.g. presence of invasives) and appropriate measures are taken to control the risks to the HCVF attributes on the site. SNA crews across the state address these issues.</p>

Appendix 5 – Chain of Custody Indicators for FMEs Conformance Table

Chain of Custody indicators were not evaluated during this evaluation.

Appendix 6 – Trademark Standard Conformance Table

1. General Requirements for Use of the FSC Trademarks
 (FSC “checkmark-and-tree” logo, initials “FSC,” and/or name “Forest Stewardship Council”)

Trademark uses reviewed:		
Trademark Application (on-product/promotional)	Case Approval #, or Email (include approver name & date), or other appropriate documentation	Are all elements correct? (e.g., trademark symbol, color scheme, size, etc.) If not, describe in Nonconformities below.
Forest Products Services teacher presentation slide	315478	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
State Forest APIP template	244661	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
State master plan template language revised	236668	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> All known uses reviewed. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sample reviewed. Rationale that sample choice is sufficient to confirm requirements are met: <i>There have been no new uses requested since 2020 and no unauthorized uses were detected during the audit or communicated in interviews with staff.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Trademark uses detected include those grandfathered in under prior FSC trademark rules (e.g., FSC-TMK-50-201). Place the initials "GF" by the specific Trademark Applications above. <i>Note: This only applies to printed items or physical promotional materials (e.g., hats, load tickets) in stock. New printings, items, and websites must be updated per FSC-STD-50-001 requirements. If the organization only has GF uses and no new uses, the rest of this checklist is NA.</i>		
1.2 Trademark License Agreement and valid certificate In order to use these FSC trademarks, the FME shall have a valid FSC trademark license agreement and hold a valid certificate. <i>Note: Consultations for certification Organizations applying for forest management certification or conducting activities related to the implementation of controlled wood requirements, may refer to FSC by name and initials for stakeholder consultation.</i>		Maintained on file by SCS Main Office
Evidence 1.2: Maintained on file by SCS Main Office.		
1.6 Product Group List The products intended to be labeled or promoted as FSC certified have been included in the organization's certified product group list.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> NC <input type="checkbox"/> C w/ OBS
Evidence 1.6: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Refer to Product Groups List in Public Summary Report; <input type="checkbox"/> The following nonconformance(s) were detected in Product Groups: ; or <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to OBS related to Product Groups:		
1.3 Trademark License Code The FSC trademark license code assigned by FSC to the organization accompanies any use of the FSC trademarks. It is sufficient to show the code once per product or promotional material.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> NC <input type="checkbox"/> C w/ OBS
1.4 Trademark Symbol The FSC logo and the 'Forests For All Forever' marks shall include the trademark symbol ® in the upper right corner when used on products or materials to be distributed in a country where the relevant trademark is registered. For use in a country where the trademark is not yet registered, use of the symbol ™ is recommended. The Trademark Registration List document is available in the FSC trade-mark portal and marketing toolkit. The symbol ® shall also be added to 'FSC' and 'Forest Steward-ship		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> NC <input type="checkbox"/> C w/ OBS <input type="checkbox"/> NA, one or more of noted exceptions applies

<p>Council’ at the first or most prominent use in any text; one use per material is sufficient (e.g. website or brochure). <i>NOTE: The use of the trademark symbol is not required for FSC claims in sales and delivery documents, or for the disclaimer statement specified in requirement 6.2.</i></p>	
<p>2.1 Restrictions on using FSC trademarks The organization has not used the FSC trademarks in the following ways: a) in a way that could cause confusion, misinterpretation, or loss of credibility to the FSC certification scheme; b) in a way that implies that FSC endorses, participates in, or is responsible for activities performed by the organization, outside the scope of certification; c) to promote product quality aspects not covered by FSC certification; d) in product brand or company names, such as ‘FSC Golden Timber’ or website domain names; e) in connection with FSC controlled wood or controlled material – they shall not be used for labelling products or in any promotion of sales or sourcing of controlled material or FSC controlled wood; the initials FSC shall only be used to pass on FSC controlled wood claims in sales and de-livery documentation, in conformity with FSC chain of custody requirements.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> NC <input type="checkbox"/> C w/ OBS</p>
<p>2.2 Translations The name ‘Forest Stewardship Council’ has not been replaced with a translation. A translation may be included in brackets after the name, for example: Forest Stewardship Council® (translation)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> NC <input type="checkbox"/> C w/ OBS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA, no translations</p>
<p>Evidence 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, and 2.2: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Refer to Trademark uses reviewed above; <input type="checkbox"/> The following nonconformance(s) were detected ; or <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to OBS:</p>	
<p>Sections 8 and 9 Graphic Rules The organization has only used FSC logos that conform to the standard requirements governing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • color and font (8.1-8.3); • format and size (8.4-8.9); • label placement (8.10); and • ‘Forests For All Forever’ marks (9.1-9.7). </p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> NC <input type="checkbox"/> C w/ OBS</p>
<p>1.5 Trademark Use Approval The organization has submitted all intended uses of the FSC trademarks to SCS for approval. OR The organization has an approved trademark use management system in place. (If the organization has a trademark use management system, complete Annex A.)</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> NC <input type="checkbox"/> C w/ OBS</p>
<p>4.6 FSC trademarks may be used to identify FSC-certified materials in the chain of custody before the products are finished. It is not necessary to submit such segregation marks for approval. All segregation marks shall be removed before the products go to the final point of sale or are delivered to uncertified organizations.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> NC <input type="checkbox"/> C w/ OBS <input type="checkbox"/> NA, trademarks no used for segregation marks</p>
<p>Evidence Graphic Rules, 1.5, and 4.6: <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to Trademark uses reviewed above; <input type="checkbox"/> The following nonconformance(s) were detected ; or <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to OBS:</p>	

Appendix 7 – Group Management Program

This is not a group certificate, so this appendix is not applicable.

Appendix 8 – Additional Checklists

No additional checklists, so this appendix is not applicable.