



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Managed Forest Law Program 2022 AFF® Standards of Sustainability Public Summary Audit

Introduction

The ATFS program of Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Tree Farm Group has demonstrated conformance to AFF® 2021 Standards of Sustainability in accordance with the NSF certification process.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Tree Farm Group was initially certified in 2004, recertified in 2011, 2015-which involved an upgrade to the 2015-2020 Standard and upgrade to 2021 ATFS Standards of Sustainability in 2022. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources manages a Group Certification program for non-industrial forestland enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program. MFL Group Certification focuses on DNR's administration of the group and quality of management on member lands. There are approximately 44,297/Tree Farms included in this certification that total approximately 2,514,861 acres (as of June 2022). These tree farms are located across the state of Wisconsin.

This program was formed to assist in the certification of Tree Farmers by integrating with the American Tree Farm System® (ATFS) and using the American Forest Foundation (AFF) Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification of Private Lands as the basis for certification.

The audit was performed by NSF on August 22-26, 2022 by an audit team headed by Shannon Wilks, Lead Auditor, Tucker Watts, Team Auditor and Beth Jacqumain, Team Auditor. Audit team members fulfill the qualification criteria for conducting audits contained in AFF Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation.

The scope of the audit included land management practices of all program members within the AFF requirements. Forest practices that were the focus of field inspections included those that have been under active management over the past year. In addition, practices conducted earlier were also reviewed as appropriate including regeneration and BMP issues, promotion of sustainable forestry practices, legal compliance, and incorporation of continual improvement systems.

The AFF Standards were modified based on waiver granted regarding the contiguity of lands within the scope of Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Tree Farm Group certificate.

Audit Process

The audit was governed by a detailed audit plan designed to enable the audit team to efficiently determine conformance with the applicable requirements. The plan provided for the assembly and review of audit evidence consisting of documents, interviews, and on-site inspections of ongoing or completed forest practices.

During the audit NSF reviewed a sample of the written documentation assembled to provide objective evidence of conformance. NSF also selected field sites for inspection based upon the risk of environmental impact, likelihood of occurrence, special features, and other criteria outlined in the NSF protocols. NSF selected and interviewed stakeholders such as contract loggers, landowners and other interested parties, and interviewed employees within the organization to confirm that the AFF Standards were understood and actively implemented.

The possible findings of the audit included conformance, major non-conformance, minor non-conformance, opportunities for improvement, and practices that exceeded the requirements of the standard.

Overview of Audit Findings

Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Tree Farm Group was found to be in conformance with the standard. NSF determined that there were no non-conformances or opportunities for improvement identified.