

Appendix II



ATFS Summary Re-Certification Audit Report

The Northeast Region of the ATFS Program has achieved continuing conformance with the AFF Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification of Private Lands, according to the NSF-ISR ATFS Certification Audit Process.

Overview of the American Tree Farm Program

“The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS), a program of the American Forest Foundation’s Center for Family Forests (AFF), is committed to sustaining forests, watershed and healthy habitats through the power of private stewardship. Since 1941, ATFS has educated and recognized the commitment of private forest owners in the United States. Currently, ATFS has 24.3 million acres of privately owned forestland and 91,000 family forest owners who are committed to excellence in forest stewardship, in 46 states.

Family forest landowners share a unique commitment to protect wildlife habitat and watersheds, to conserve soil and to provide recreation for their communities while producing wood for America. These individuals hold the key to the kinds of forests, forest activities, and forest resources future generations of Americans will enjoy.

ATFS is administered through a network of forest landowners, volunteer members of state and local committees and associations, national and state government agencies, inspecting foresters, forestry consultants, natural resource professionals and private industry.”

Source: [://www.forestfoundation.org/cff_atfs.html](http://www.forestfoundation.org/cff_atfs.html)

ATFS Audit Process

The field audit was performed by NSF-ISR between May 13 and June 7, 2013 by an audit team headed by Mike Ferrucci, NSF Lead Auditor and which included Keri Yankus, and Norman Boatwright. These auditors fulfill the qualification criteria for conducting ATFS audits. Audit activities continued after the field audit to clarify the evidence of closure for the 2012 findings and to ensure that the 2013 findings were clear and understood.

The objective of the audit was to assess conformance to the requirements of the American Tree Farm Program and to consider progress in addressing the 2011 Minor Non-conformances.

The scope of the audit included Tree Farms in Vermont, West Virginia, and Maine, three of the 12 states within the Northeast Region. Forest management plans and past and ongoing forestry practices were the focus of field inspections. In addition Tree Farm Inspector training and AFF obligations to administer the program were within the scope of the audit.

NSF-ISR initiated the ATFS surveillance audit process with a series of emails and planning phone calls to confirm the scope of the audit, review the ATFS Indicators and evidence to be used to assess conformance, verify that each state's program was prepared to proceed to the ATFS Certification Audit, and to prepare a detailed audit plan. NSF then conducted the ATFS Surveillance Audit of conformance to the ATFS Standard. A report was prepared and final approval was done by an independent Certification Board Member assigned by NSF.

The actual NSF-ISR ATFS Certification Audit was governed by a detailed Audit Plan designed to enable the audit team to determine conformance with the applicable ATFS requirements. The plan included detailed provisions 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-ISR reviewed a sample of the written documentation assembled to provide objective evidence of ATFS Conformance. NSF-ISR 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-ISR ATFS-SOP. NSF-ISR also selected and interviewed stakeholders such as contract loggers, landowners and other interested parties, and interviewed employees within the organization to confirm that the ATFS Standard was understood and actively implemented.

The possible findings of the audit included Full Conformance, Major Non-conformance, Minor Non-conformance, and Opportunities for Improvement.

Overview of Audit Findings

The organization's ATFS Program was found to be in conformance with the ATFS Standard.

The 2012 Minor Non-conformances were resolved as follows:

1. The 2012 Minor Non-conformance J0249319-1 (Indicator 2.1.1) involving soil deposition in a creek and disturbance to the stream bank was resolved. The site stabilized and re-vegetated naturally.
2. The 2012 Minor Non-conformance J0249319-2 (Indicator 7.1.1) involving planning for cultural/historic sites was resolved. The New Jersey Tree Farm Program and ATFS National Office undertook a process of written and personal communications with the owners of the identified properties. This correspondence

included a copy of the ATFS Management Plan addendum for use in making management plan updates, where appropriate. Management plans or addendums were developed for each of the noted Tree Farms and reviewed for approval by the New Jersey State Tree Farm Program. The program has continued to enhance and expand its use of publications, webinars, on-line tools, and management attention to emphasize management planning that includes the full range of requirements of the standard.

3. The 2012 Minor Non-conformance J0249319-3 (Performance Measure 1.1) requiring a written forest management plan consistent with the size of the forest and the scale and intensity of the forest activities was resolved. One Tree Farm inspected in Pennsylvania did not have a forest management plan. The ATFS National Office coordinated with the Pennsylvania State Tree Farm Programs to undertake a process of written communication to the owner of this Tree Farm with regard to conformance with the ATFS 2010-2015 Standards for Sustainability. Due to inaction, the Tree Farm was decertified.

New Findings

The NSF-ISR ATFS Certification Audit Process determined that there were two new minor non-conformances:

Minor Non-conformance 2003-01: Management plans meeting the Tree Farm requirements are not in place for a significant proportion of the Tree Farms in West Virginia.

West Virginia (WV): 4 TFs did not have a management plan, 10 of the plans had not been updated in at least 10 years and all except 3 plans did not address all of the required elements.

Performance Measure 1.1: Forest owner must have and implement a written forest management plan consistent with the size of the forest and the scale and intensity of the forest activities.

Minor Non-conformance 2003-02: One owner did not make an effort to locate sites with important cultural resources.

Indicator 7.1.1

Forest owner must make a reasonable effort to locate and protect special sites appropriate for the size of the forest and the scale and intensity of forest management activities.

The national Tree Farm Program will develop plans to address these issues, subject to approval by NSF on September 15. Progress in implementing these corrective action plans will be reviewed in subsequent surveillance audits.

2013 Opportunity for Improvement

Three opportunities for improvement (OFI) were also identified:

2003-03 (OFI): There is an opportunity to improve some of the forest management plans to ensure that they fully reflect the landowner's objectives and special resources relevant to the property.

Indicator 1.1.2: Management plans must: clearly state landowner's objectives, describe desired forest condition, include management activities aimed at reaching the desired forest condition and landowner's objectives, document a feasible strategy for activity implementation, and include a tract map accurately depicting significant forest related resources.

2003-04 (OFI): There is an opportunity to improve efforts with respect to integrated forest management, including stocking control.

Performance Measure 4.2: Forest owner must consider integrated pest management to control pests, pathogens and unwanted vegetation.

2003-05 (OFI): There is an opportunity to improve the implementation of BMPs during harvesting.

Indicator 4.1.1: Forest owner must implement specific BMPs that are applicable to the property.

These findings serve to alert the program to areas that could be strengthened or which could merit future attention.

Future Audits

Audits are required annually. The next Surveillance Audit is scheduled for May and June, 2014.

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END OF SUMMARY REPORT