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NSF International Forestry Program Public Summary Audit Report

SFI Fiber Sourcing

The SFI Program of Portage Wood Products, LLC of Portage Lake ME has demonstrated conformance with the SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules, Section 3 – Fiber Sourcing, according to the NSF Certification Process.

Portage Wood Products, LLC is a forest products company with corporate headquarters located in Bangor ME, that operates a chip mill in Portage Lake ME. Portage Wood Products, LLC procures wood primarily from the USA states of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont and the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Quebec. The facility purchases hardwood and softwood pulpwood that originates from SFI and FSC certified land and company-verified controlled wood from other suppliers. This company does not purchase stumpage.

The audit was performed by NSF on 9 May 2016 by Anne Marie Kittredge, Lead Auditor. Audit team members fulfill the qualification criteria for conducting audits contained in SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules, Section 9 – Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation.

The scope of the audit included procurement operations. Procurement operations occurring in the past 12 months were reviewed to ensure that SFI Procurement Standards were met, in addition to SFI obligations to promote sustainable forestry practices, to seek legal compliance, and to incorporate continual improvement systems were within the scope of the audit.

Several of the SFI Section 3 requirements were outside of the scope of Portage Wood Product, LLC’s SFI program and were excluded from the scope of the Audit as follows:

- Summarize

The following indicators were modified:

Requirement Number	Brief Description	Reason for Change <i>(Note: see Matrix for full text of modified requirement)</i>
SFI Standard Objectives 1.1.2 & 2.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program to address Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value in harvests of purchased stumpage • Program to require that harvests of purchased stumpage comply with best management practices 	This company does not purchase stumpage, therefore SFI Indicators 1.1.2 & 2.1.1 are not applicable.
SFI Standard Objectives 5.2.2	Research on genetically engineered trees via <i>forest tree biotechnology</i> shall adhere to all applicable federal, state, and provincial regulations and international protocols ratified by the U.S. or Canada depending on jurisdiction of management.	There is no research on genetically engineered trees in the procurement areas, therefore SFI Indicator 5.2.2 is not applicable.
SFI Standard Objectives 8	To participate and implement sustainable forest management on <i>public lands</i> .	This company does not own or manage forestland on public lands, therefore the SFI Standard Objective 8 is not applicable.
SFI Standard Objectives 11-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Conservation of Biological Diversity, Biodiversity Hotspots and High-Biodiversity 	This company does not procure wood from outside of the U.S. and Canada, therefore, SFI Standard Objectives 11-13 are not applicable.

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	<p>Wilderness Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance of <i>Controversial Sources</i> including <i>Illegal Logging</i> • Avoidance of Controversial Sources including Fiber Sourced from Areas without Effective Social Laws 	
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Audit Process

NSF initiated the audit process with a readiness review to confirm the scope of the audit, review the SFI Indicators and evidence to be used to assess conformance, verify that Portage Wood Products, LLC was prepared to proceed to the audit, and to prepare a detailed audit plan. NSF then conducted the audit of conformance. A report was prepared and approved by an independent certification board member assigned by NSF. Follow-up or surveillance audits are required by SFI, Section 9. The initial surveillance audit is scheduled for July 2017.

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 SFI Standard was understood and actively implemented.

The possible findings of the audit included Full Conformance, Major Non-conformance, Minor Non-conformance, Opportunities for Improvement, and Practices that exceeded the Basic Requirements of the standard.

Overview of Audit Findings

Portage Wood Products, LLC was found to be in conformance with the standard. NSF determined that there were zero minor non-conformances.

General Description of Evidence of Conformity

NSF's audit team used a variety of evidence to determine conformance. A general description of this evidence is provided below, organized by SFI Objective.

Objective 1 Biodiversity in Fiber Sourcing

To address the practice of *sustainable forestry* by conserving *biological diversity*.

Summary of Evidence: *Review of records, interviews with loggers and participation in the ME SIC.*

Objective 2 Adherence to Best Management Practices

To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry through the use of best management practices to protect water quality.

Summary of Evidence: *Field observations and review of BMP monitoring records, review of the company's internal BMP monitoring program that is supplemented by information from BMP surveys conducted by the Maine Forest Service.*

Objective 3 Use of Qualified Resource and Qualified Logging Professionals

To encourage forest landowners to utilize the services of *qualified logging professionals, certified logging professionals* (where available) and *qualified resource professionals*.

Summary of Evidence: *Review of training records, records associated with harvest sites audited and interviews with timber harvest operators and foresters.*

Objective 4 Legal and Regulatory Compliance

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Compliance with applicable federal, provincial, state and local laws and regulations.

Summary of Evidence: *Field observations, interviews and web-based search did not reveal issues.*

Objective 5 Forestry Research, Science, and Technology

To support forestry research, science, and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based.

Summary of Evidence: *Review of financial records including support for research through membership for example in the Maine Cooperative Forest Research Unit (CFRU).*

Objective 6 Training and Education

To improve the implementation of *sustainable forestry* practices through appropriate training and education *programs*.

Summary of Evidence: *Review of training records, records associated with harvest sites visited during the on-site audit, lists of trained loggers and foresters and interviews with timber harvest operators and foresters. Suppliers and timber harvest operators receive training through the Maine Certified Logging Professional (CLP) program.*

Objective 7 Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach

To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* through public outreach, education, and involvement and to support the efforts of *SFI Implementation Committees*.

Summary of Evidence: *Interviews with staff employees, timber harvest operators and foresters, review of extensive records of outreach and support for key organizations, review of evidence of involvement for example with the Forest Products Associations of Maine and activities by the Maine SFI Implementation Committee, as well as support for SWOAM and the Maine Tree Foundation.*

Objective 9 Communications and Public Reporting

To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry by documenting progress and opportunities for improvement.

Summary of Evidence: *Interviews with staff employees confirmed understanding and readiness to file reports with SFI Inc. and the SFI Inc. website.*

Objective 10 Management Review and Continual Improvement

To promote continual improvement in the practice of sustainable forestry, and to monitor, measure, and report performance in achieving the commitment to sustainable forestry.

Summary of Evidence: *Review of records of program reviews, agendas and notes from management review meetings and interviews with personnel.*

Relevance of Forestry Certification

Third-party certification provides assurance that forests are being managed under the principles of sustainable forestry, which are described in the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard as:

1. Sustainable Forestry

To practice *sustainable forestry* to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by practicing a land stewardship ethic that integrates *reforestation* and the managing, growing, nurturing and harvesting of trees for useful products and *ecosystem services* such as the *conservation* of soil, air and water quality, carbon, *biological diversity, wildlife and aquatic habitats*, recreation and aesthetics.

2. Forest Productivity and Health

To provide for regeneration after harvest and maintain the productive capacity of the forest land base, and to protect and maintain *long-term* forest and soil *productivity*. In addition, to protect forests from economically or environmentally undesirable levels of wildfire, pests, diseases, *invasive exotic plants and animals* and other damaging agents and thus maintain and improve *long-term forest health and productivity*.

3. Protection of Water Resources

To protect water bodies and *riparian areas* and to conform with forestry *best management practices* to protect water quality.

4. Protection of Biological Diversity

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To manage forests in ways that protect and promote *biological diversity*, including animal and plant species, *wildlife habitats*, and ecological or natural community types.

5. Aesthetics and Recreation

To manage the visual impacts of forest operations, and to provide recreational opportunities for the public.

6. Protection of Special Sites

To manage lands that are ecologically, geologically or *culturally important* in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.

7. Responsible Fiber Sourcing Practices in North America

To use and promote among other forest landowners *sustainable forestry* practices that are both scientifically credible and economically, environmentally and socially responsible.

8. Legal Compliance

To comply with applicable federal, provincial, state, and local *forestry* and related environmental laws, statutes, and regulations.

9. Research

To support advances in sustainable forest management through *forestry* research, science and technology.

10. Training and Education

To improve the practice of *sustainable forestry* through training and education *programs*.

11. Community Involvement and Social Responsibility

To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* on all lands through community involvement, socially responsible practices, and through recognition and respect of *Indigenous Peoples' rights* and *traditional forest-related knowledge*.

12. Transparency

To broaden the understanding of forest certification to the *Fiber Sourcing* Standard by documenting certification audits and making the findings publicly available.

13. Continual Improvement

To continually improve the practice of forest management, and to monitor, measure and report performance in achieving the commitment to *sustainable forestry*.

14. Avoidance of Controversial Sources including Illegal Logging in Offshore Fiber Sourcing

To avoid wood fiber from *illegally logged* forests when procuring fiber outside of North America, and to avoid sourcing *fiber from countries without effective social laws*.

Source: Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) Standard, 2015-2019 Edition

For Additional Information Contact:

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End of Public Report