

Sonoco Products Company

Forest Products Division

Forest Products Division – E-32
1 North Second Street
Hartsville, SC 29550

SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules®, Section 3 – Fiber Sourcing

Surveillance Audit



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Sonoco Products Company

2017 SFI Fiber Sourcing Public Summary Audit Report

Introduction

The SFI Program of Sonoco Products Company - Forest Products Division of Hartsville, South Carolina has demonstrated conformance with the SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules, Section 3 – Fiber Sourcing, according to the NSF Certification Process. Sonoco Products Company - Forest Products Division does not use the SFI label and make claims, therefore SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules, Section 3 – Fiber Sourcing, Appendix 1: Certified Sourcing Standard is not applicable. Sonoco Products Company - Forest Products Division has specifically demonstrated conformance to the monitoring of the use of best management practices requirement (Performance Measure 2.2).

Sonoco Products Company owns and manages approximately 55,080 acres of timberland located in South Carolina. These Company-owned forests are primarily hardwoods and provide a fiber source used to produce corrugated paper at Sonoco's Hartsville-based paper mill. Sonoco also procures fiber from private landowners and assists them with forest management decisions. The Company ensures maximum utilization of the trees harvested by using "in-woods" whole tree chippers. High grade hardwood logs and pine timber are merchandised to local markets.

Sonoco Products Company - Forest Products Division maintains a verifiable monitoring system for the use of best management practices by wood producers supplying raw material to their mill. Implementation of Best Management Practices is monitored by Sonoco Products Company - Forest Products Division during the harvesting of fee property and short term timber purchases. This information is supplemented by monitoring by the South Carolina Forestry Commission. Monitoring reports by the South Carolina Forestry Commission are produced quarterly and at year end. Monitoring information is also received from the Inconsistent Practices Sub-committee of State Implementation Committee.

The audit was performed by NSF on May 16-17, 2017 by Tucker Watts, 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, 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 Sonoco Products Company - Forest Products Division's SFI program and were excluded from the scope of the Audit as follows:

- Indicator 5.1.2 - Sonoco Products Company does not conduct research on genetically engineered trees.
- Indicator 6.2.3 – South Carolina does not have a logger certification program.
- Objective 8 – Sonoco Products Company does not have public land management responsibilities.
- Objectives 11 - 13 Sonoco Products Company does not source fiber outside Canada and the US

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 SFI Standard was understood and actively implemented.

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



Overview of Audit Findings

Sonoco Products Company - Forest Products Division was found to be in conformance with the standard. NSF determined that there were no minor non-conformances.

No opportunities for improvement were also identified.

The next Surveillance Audit is scheduled for the week of May 7, 2018.



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: *The Company actively supports and participates in the state SICs which have developed a landowner brochure that addresses the importance of maintaining biodiversity. The Company is also involved with local conservation efforts by supporting the establishment of conservation easements. Databases are checked prior to stumpage purchases.*

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: *Adherence to BMPs is addressed through written agreements with BMP clauses for wood producers, planning for adverse weather conditions, and monitoring state BMP implementation data. Results of BMP implementation is communicated to wood producers during one-on-one conversations and through logger training classes.*

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: *Not reviewed in 2017 Surveillance Audit.*

Objective 4 Legal and Regulatory Compliance

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

Summary of Evidence: *The Company's SFI Policy specifies a commitment to achieving compliance with applicable environmental, forestry, and social laws and regulations. The company has a system to encourage its wood suppliers to comply with such laws and regulations.*

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: *The Company financially supports NCASI in its research projects.*

Objective 6 Training and Education

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

Summary of Evidence: *Not reviewed in 2017 Surveillance Audit.*

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: *Not reviewed in 2017 Surveillance Audit.*

Objective 9 Communications and Public Reporting

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

Summary of Evidence: *Summary Audit Report witnessed on SFI, Inc. website. Review of Annual Progress Report confirms record keeping is adequate and that reports are submitted on time.*

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: *Records of program reviews, agendas, and notes from management review meetings and interviews with personnel from all involved levels in the organization were assessed.*

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

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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