



**BUREAU  
VERITAS**

**Bureau Veritas Certification  
North America, Inc.  
SFI Forest Management Audit Report**

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Phone / Fax	(803) 896-8800
PQC Code	E01E
Contract Number	US.2188661

Certification Audit:		Re-Certification Audit:		Surveillance Audit:	#1	Scope extension audit:	
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**Audit Summary**

**Introduction**

This report summarizes the results of the surveillance audit conducted on the South Carolina Forestry Commission's (SCFC) SFI program for forest and land management. Steve Tomlin, Bureau Veritas Certification Lead Auditor, conducted the audit on August 2-4 on-site, plus off-site planning, document review and report writing time. Tomlin has 37 years' experience working in forest industry in the fields of forest management, forestry certification, and environment, health and safety.

**Audit Scope, Objectives and Process**

The scope is "Management of State owned forestland across the state of South Carolina". The audit was conducted to the SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard. Specifically, the two objectives of the audit were to verify that the Program Participant's SFI Program is in conformance with the SFI Objectives, Performance Measures, and Indicators, and any additional indicators that the Program Participant chooses, and verify whether the Program Participant has effectively implemented its SFI Standard program requirements on the ground. Standard Bureau Veritas Certification protocols and forms were applied throughout the audit as provided by the most recent version of the Bureau Veritas Certification SFI Auditor Handbook available on the auditor access website.

**Audit Plan**

**Wednesday, August 2, 2017 – Columbia, SC**

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>BVC Repr.</u>	<u>Company Repr.</u>
08:00 AM	Opening Meeting	Tomlin	Shealy
08:30 AM	ATFS Program Review – documents & records	Tomlin	Shealy
09:30 AM	SFI Program Review – documents and records	Tomlin	Shealy
12:00 PM	LUNCH		
01:00 PM	Continue documents review and interviews	Tomlin	Shealy
04:30 PM	Daily debrief	Tomlin	Shealy
05:00 PM	Depart site		

**Thursday, August 3, 2017 – Sand Hills State Forest**

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>BVC Repr.</u>	<u>Company Repr.</u>
08:00 AM	Daily Update	Tomlin	Shealy
08:30 AM	Field audit	Tomlin	Shealy
12:00 PM	Lunch		
01:00 PM	Field audit continued	Tomlin	Shealy
04:30 PM	Daily debrief	Tomlin	Shealy

05:00 PM Depart site  
**Friday, August 4, 2015 – Poe Creek State Forest**

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>BVC Repr.</u>	<u>Company Repr.</u>
08:00 AM	Daily Update	Tomlin	Shealy
08:30 AM	Field audit	Tomlin	Shealy
11:00 AM	Prepare for Closing Meeting	Tomlin	
11:30 AM	Closing Meeting	Tomlin	Shealy
12:00 Noon	Depart site		

The audit plan is maintained on file by Bureau Veritas Certification.

### Company Information

The South Carolina Forestry Commission (SCFC) manages 84,712 acres of state owned forestland across the state of South Carolina. The land is managed to provide revenue, education, research, recreation, landscape level multi-use forests, and wildlife and protected species habitat. Timber is managed and harvested to produce income. The Forests are self-funded, and 25% of all gross revenue goes directly for education to the counties the Forests reside in. The state forests contain natural pine and hardwood stands along with plantations of primarily longleaf and loblolly pine. A small amount of slash pine is present on some state forests, but these sites are being converted back to native species. Each state forest has somewhat different management objectives as indicated in their respective forest management plans. Forest management activities are not highly intensive. The property is open to the public for recreational activities, although access is controlled in certain circumstances.

### Multi-Site Requirements

This certificate covers the five state forests managed by the South Carolina Forestry Commission located throughout the state of South Carolina. The central office is the SCFC headquarters located in Columbia, SC, providing overall guidance and direction to all of forests, including management review and internal auditing. Site selection was performed by BVC in accordance with the multi-site instructions in the BVC SFI PEFC Supplemental Handbook with a sample size for this audit based on surveillance audit guidance and assessment of risk, plus the headquarters site which must be covered at every audit.

The Headquarters site and the five State Forests are listed below.

Multi-Site	X	Group Certification	
Sites		Sites Audited During this Event	
SCFC Headquarters, Columbia, SC (Central Office)		X	
Wee Tee State Forest			
Manchester State Forest			
Sand Hills State Forest		X	
Poe Creek State Forest		X	
Harbison State Forest			

### Audit Results

The renewal audit was conducted to determine if SCFC’s system documentation continues to meet the requirements of the SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard. No non-conformances were issued. Two opportunities for improvement were issued during the audit.

The field audit visited twelve sites which covered a pine variant research site, a wetlands mitigation area, two thinning harvests, a recreational park site, an FECV protection site, a shortleaf restoration

planting, a pine straw harvest, an understory prescribed burn for RCW habitat, a RCW cluster, a road maintenance culvert replacement, a RCW/pine straw enhancement release using herbicide and hand clearing, and a chemical site prep/reforestation site following a salvage harvest. Field inspections indicate the organization is doing an excellent job of managing its forest.

Results of the surveillance audit by objective are outlined below.

**Objective 1-Forest Management Planning:** SCFC has inventory and resource management processes in place for the Sand Hills and Poe Creek State Forests. An annual allowable cut is determined for Sand Hills, but not for Poe Creek as minimal harvesting is done on that Forest, which is maintained for education, recreation and forest preservation at the landscape level, with minimal management activities. No harvesting was completed on Poe Creek since the last audit. The harvesting rate for Sand Hills remains well below the sustainable cut level, and removals are designed primarily for Red Cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) habitat creation and maintenance. Almost all harvesting on Sand Hills consist of long-term multiple thinnings of longleaf stands, with each proposed harvest site submitted for review and approval from by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The entire Sand Hills State Forest is being managed for RCW restoration. Soils are mapped, and a land classification system is in place.

**Objective 2-Forest Health and Productivity:** No recent harvesting has taken place on Poe Creek. Sand Hills has only done thinnings, with the exception one small replant of a salvage cut which was audited for herbicide application and planting. All Sand Hills harvesting must be submitted to and approved by USFW to ensure the success of their RCW recovery program. SCFC does not convert lands to other forest types except to restore native species, as in the case of RCW habitat in longleaf stands and a planting of shortleaf on a site at Poe Creek containing failed white pine. The two thinned stands field audited had minimal residual damage. Chemicals used on two sites visited were applied at rates below allowable label rates and according to label requirements. Chemicals used (Accord, glysofate (Accord), imazypyr (Arsenal), metsulfuron methyl (Escort) are not World Health Organization (WHO) type 1A and 1B pesticides or banned under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (2001). State Forests will prescribe burn stands when possible, especially on Sand Hills for RCW management. Field audited two pesticide applications. One was performed by a licensed SCFC forester, and the other by a licensed contractor. SCFC uses ground application, only. The GIS system contained soils information that identifies soils compaction potential. No on-site issues were documented or discovered. Erosion control measures were in place where needed for all sites visited, and post-harvest conditions were conducive to site productivity on the thinning sites field audited. The road systems are established and mature, and mapped as a GIS layer. One road maintenance culvert replacement was audited, and no negative impacts were observed. State Forest Management Plans describe detailed procedures that address potential damaging agents to state forests. Additionally, SCFC participates in beetle trapping and monitoring programs, fire line plowing, maintains road gates, and performs both regular on-ground and aerial monitoring. SCFC is the lead agency in the state for fire and pest prevention and control. State Forest lands purchase planting stock from its own seedling nurseries. The SCFC supports seedling research and has two trial sites on Poe Creek and one on Sand Hills.

**Objective 3-Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources:** Forest Management Plans stated activities will be conducted in compliance of BMPs, and this was confirmed on all sites field audited. The SCFC is the lead agency in SC for BMP development and monitoring. No temporary stream crossings were observed. On-the-ground results were good. Contracts reviewed contained clauses requiring BMP compliance. The GIS system has a layer mapping rivers, streams, lakes and other water bodies. BMP compliance and the protection of water quality is a high priority.

**Objective 4-Conservation of Biological Diversity:** SC Natural Heritage information for state lands is

incorporated into a GIS system. Information was updated recently by the SCFC biologist. Biological diversity is a priority at Poe Creek and Sand Hills, though heavily driven by the RCW recovery effort at Sand Hills. RCW management is controlled by a documented USFW RCW Recovery Guide and the Forest Management Plan. All activities must be reviewed and approved by the SCFC RCW technician and USFWS. The GIS mapping system documents forest cover types and age classes. Poe Creek provides significant benefit to landscape level attributes in western SC, with a diversity of forest types and slowly aging forests due to its minimal harvesting regime. Sand Hills is dedicated to the development and protection of RCW habitat, but also contributes to landscape level diversity due to its protection of upland and bottomland hardwood with no intent to harvest. Two other FECV sites have been located and protected. All potential sites based on polygons mapped in the GIS are monitored for the potential species prior to and during operations. The GIS system has river, stream lakes and other waterbodies mapped. All are protected and no harvesting occurs in them, or in adjoining SMZs where applicable. The SCFC does not currently harvest any hardwood from Sand Hills, and no harvesting activities take place at Poe Creek. Employees interviewed were aware of existing invasive species present on state lands, and there are currently no significant threats. Kudzu control has taken place at Poe Creek, where two locations have been identified. Sand Hills does as much prescribed burning as possible, using state employees and equipment. All are trained and under the direction of at least one SC Certified Prescribed Fire Manager. Old growth is being developed throughout Sand Hills as designed by the RCW recovery plan, with no current intention of clearcutting the longleaf habitat at any time in the future. Poe Creek, through its minimal harvesting and focus on protection, education and recreation, is slowly moving towards climax forests, though there are none identified at this time. Although they have different management objectives, both add to the development and support of old-growth within their region of the state.

**Objective 5-Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits:** Management plans provide general guidance in addressing visual quality. Lands are not located in high traffic areas, though Poe Creek and certain portions of Sand Hills get a lot of recreational use. Visual quality was good everywhere field audited. No harvesting was done on Poe Creek, and only carefully controlled harvesting at Sand Hills. Sand Hills roads are under an ongoing maintenance program by SCFC employees and are in good condition. Forest Management Plans indicate a 50 acre maximum clearcut size unless justified and approved for up to 100 acres. One Opportunity for Improvement was issued: General green-up requirements for stands adjacent to reforested stands is addressed in each State Forest Management Plans and was specifically identified as 5 years old or 15 high feet in the Long Range Plan for the SCFC State Lands. It is recommended that this specific information be stated in each Management Plan.

**Objective 6-Protection of Special Sites:** SCFC has identified and mapped a number of special sites based on ecological, historical, or cultural uniqueness. These sites are part of a layer within the GIS system. Field audited four special sites at Poe Creek.

**Objective 7-Efficient Use of Fiber Resources:** Inspection reports reviewed for harvest sites address wood utilization. No active sites were field audited. Loggers are required to maintain current training. Only pine thinnings have been harvested, limiting market choice.

**Objective 8: Recognize and Respect Indigenous People's Rights:** The SCFC has a written policy acknowledging a commitment to recognize and respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples in each Forest Management Plan, including communication procedures, but no recognized tribes have been identified on or near the State Forests.

**Objective 9-Legal and Regulatory Compliance:** SCFC has access to applicable legal requirements. The agency has developed and implemented an Activity Flow Chart and the Management Activity Inspection Record to ensure regulatory compliance and the organization's own requirements are

being followed. All contracts reviewed contained requirements for compliance with applicable laws and regulations. No adverse regulatory action information was identified. The company has received no information from interested parties relative to its or any of its contractors' conformance with ILO core conventions. One Opportunity for Improvement was issued recommending employee access to applicable laws and regulations could be enhanced by adding links to the State Forest Certification Documentation and Forms website.

**Objective 10-Forestry Research, Science and Technology:** One of the focuses of the State Forests is to facilitate research, so there was ample evidence of a wide variety of research activities. Employees interviewed demonstrated knowledge of climate change impact on forest health and productivity, and wildlife and wildlife habitat.

**Objective 11-Training and Education:** Roles, responsibilities and training requirements are defined. Training for both contractors and employees was confirmed. Wood producers used during the previous year met the requirements of the South Carolina SIC TOP Logger training program. Herbicide applicators had applicator licenses, planting was done by an SC Certified Tree planter, and prescribed burning was done under the direction of a SC Certified Prescribed Fire Manager. The agency is a full voting member of the South Carolina SIC, which includes participation in the development and delivery of logger training.

**Objective 12-Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach:** The SCFC is an active member of the South Carolina SIC. Financial support of the SIC is being paid by the agency. The SIC has developed an excellent landowner brochure that contains information on a number of topics, including the conservation of biological diversity and protection of special sites. The network of state forests exists as demonstration areas, providing information to landowners encouraging their continued management of forestland. There was ample evidence of educational efforts, given it is one of the primary uses of the Forests. Additionally, the SCFC participates in Project Learning Tree, an annual Teacher's Tour, and numerous other activities.

**Objective 13: Public Land Management Responsibilities:** SCFC provides many opportunities for public and stakeholder input. This input is considered when the agency develops plans and conducts activities.

**Objective 14-Communications and Public Reporting:** The 2016 surveillance audit report is posted on the SFI website. The agency's 2016 SFI Annual Progress Report was submitted on 3/31/2017 and was reviewed during the audit. SCFC has the reporting capabilities to provide information for the annual report.

**Objective 15-Management Review:** Management of the state forest's certification program is managed by the State Lands Coordinator, who reports to the SCFC Forest Management Director. Management review uses three methods: Ongoing management review on an ad hoc basis; detailed management review and internal auditing at least once each year done by the State Lands Coordinator and the Forest Directors; and senior management review at least once each year to review results and implement change and continuous improvement as needed.

## **Findings**

### **Previous non-conformances:**

None

### **Non-conformances:**

None.

**Opportunities for Improvement:**

Two Opportunities for improvement were issued:

1. PM 5.3, Ind. 1: General green-up requirements for stands adjacent to reforested stands is addressed in each State Forest Management Plans and was specifically identified as 5 years old or 15 high feet in the Long Range Plan for the SCFC State Lands. It is recommended that this specific information be stated in each Management Plan.
2. PM 9.1 Ind. 1: Employee access to applicable laws and regulations could be enhanced by adding links to SC Forest Law, Clean Water Act, SC BMPs, etc. to the State Forest Certification Documentation and Forms website.

**Notable Practices:**

None

**Logo/label use:**

No SFI logos or labels are used. SCFC does not intend to use the Bureau Veritas Certification logo.

**SFI reporting:**

Last year's audit report was posted on the SFI website. SCFC submitted their 2016 SFI Progress Report in a timely manner this spring.

**Conclusions**

The closing meeting was held on August 4, 2017. Results of the surveillance audit indicate that the South Carolina Forestry Commission has an effective forest management program that meets the requirements of the SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard. Continued certification is recommended.

**SEE SF61 FOR AUDIT NOTES**

<b>Summary of Audit Findings:</b>									
Audit Date(s):		From: August 2, 2017				To: August 4, 2017			
Number of SF02's Raised:			Major:		0		Minor:		0
Is a follow up visit required:		Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Date(s) of follow up visit:			
Follow-up visit remarks:									
<b>Team Leader Recommendation:</b>									
Corrective Action Plan(s) Accepted		Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Date:	
Proceed to/Continue Certification		Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>	Date:	8/4/2017
All NCR's Closed		Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Date:	
Standard audit conducted against:									
1)	SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management			3)					
2)				4)					
Team Leader (1):		Team Members (2,3,4...)							
Steve Tomlin CF, RF, LA (ISO 14001)		2) None							
		3)							
		4)							
		5)							
Scope of Supply: (scope statement must be verified and appear in the space below)									
Management of state owned forestland across the state of South Carolina									
Accreditation's		ANAB							
Number of Certificates		1							
Proposed Date for Next Audit Event									
Date	July 31 – August 2, 2018								
Audit Report Distribution									
SCFC - Mike Shealy - <a href="mailto:mshealy@scfc.gov">mshealy@scfc.gov</a>									
Bureau Veritas – Liliana Ramirez - <a href="mailto:liliana.ramirez.ext@us.bureauveritas.com">liliana.ramirez.ext@us.bureauveritas.com</a>									

Clause	Audit Report
Opening Meeting	Participants: Mike Shealy, Paul Blessing Discussions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Introductions</li> <li>➤ Scope of the audit</li> <li>➤ Audit schedule/plan</li> <li>➤ Nonconformance types – Major / Minor</li> <li>➤ Review of previous nonconformances - 0.</li> <li>➤ Process approach to auditing and audit sampling</li> <li>➤ Confidentiality agreement</li> <li>➤ Termination of the audit</li> <li>➤ Appeals process</li> <li>➤ Closing meeting timing</li> </ul>
Closing Meeting	Participants: Mike Shealy, Nicole Hickman, Brian Davis, Trip Miller. James Douglas, Justin Smith, Jacob Morrell Discussions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Introductions and appreciation for selecting Bureau Veritas Certification.</li> <li>➤ Review of audit process - process approach and sampling.</li> <li>➤ Review of OFIs and System Strengths</li> <li>➤ Nonconformances - 0</li> <li>➤ Date for next audit.</li> <li>➤ Reporting protocol and timing</li> </ul>