

Only those documents viewed through the AESOP system are officially controlled. All other copies, whether viewed through another computer program or a printed version, are not controlled and therefore NSF assumes no responsibility for accuracy of the document

---

## **NSF International Forestry Program Public Summary Audit Report The Westervelt Company**

### **SFI Forest Management**

The SFI Program of The Westervelt Company of Tuscaloosa, AL has demonstrated conformance with the SFI 2015-2019 Standard and Rules, Section 2 – Forest Management Standard, according to the NSF certification process.

NSF initially certified Gulf States Paper Corporation (GSPC) to the SFIS in July 2004. GSPC has since changed its name to The Westervelt Company and was recertified in 2007, 2012, and 2015. This report describes the first surveillance audit for the third re-certification designed to focus on changes in the standard, changes in operations, the management review system, and efforts at continuous improvement. This audit included a detailed review of a sample of the SFI requirements.

The Westervelt Company manages approximately five hundred five thousand one hundred seventy-two acres (505,172) of fee and long term lease land in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina and Virginia. The Westervelt Company operates a large pine sawmill and a cantor wood mill in Moundville, Alabama and a pellet mill in Aliceville, Alabama and typically procures wood within a ninety mile radius of these facilities. Pine is the primary species utilized. The Westervelt Company's SFI FM Program is managed by Jonathan Lowery.

The audit was performed by NSF on April 18-21, 2016 by an audit team headed 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 - Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation.

The objective of the audit was to assess conformance of the firm's SFI Program to the requirements of the SFI 2015-2019 Standard and Rules, Section 2 – Forest Management.

The scope of the audit included forest management operations. Forest practices that were the focus of field inspections included those that have been under active management over the planning period of the past 3 years. In addition practices conducted earlier were also reviewed as appropriate (regeneration and BMP issues, for example); SFI obligations to promote sustainable forestry practices, to seek legal compliance, and to incorporate continual improvement systems were also within the scope of the audit.

Several of the SFI Section 2 requirements were outside of the scope of The Westervelt Company's SFI program and were excluded from the scope of the SFI Certification Audit as follows:

- Indicator 1.2.2 – The Westervelt Company does not convert to another forest cover type.
- Indicator 1.2.3 – The Westervelt Company does not convert to another forest cover type.
- Indicator 2.1.3 – The Westervelt Company does not plant exotic tree species.
- Indicator 2.1.5 – The Westervelt Company is not involved in afforestation.
- Indicator 8.2.1 – The Westervelt Company does not have management responsibility on public land.
- Indicator 10.1.2 – The Westervelt Company is not involved with research on genetically engineered trees.
- Indicator 11.2.3 – There are no logger certification programs in the states where The Westervelt Company owns land.
- Objective 13 is not applicable because The Westervelt Company does not manage public land.

Only those documents viewed through the AESOP system are officially controlled. All other copies, whether viewed through another computer program or a printed version, are not controlled and therefore NSF assumes no responsibility for accuracy of the document

---

## 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 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

The Westervelt Company was found to be in conformance with the standard. NSF determined that there was 1 minor non-conformance:

- Indicator 1.3.1 Forest *lands converted to other land uses shall not be certified to this SFI Standard*. The Company had not removed all non-forest lands from the audit scope.

The Westervelt Company has developed plans to address this issue. The minor-non-conformance has already been resolved.

No opportunities for improvement were identified.

The next Surveillance Audit is schedule for the week of April 24, 2017.

Only those documents viewed through the AESOP system are officially controlled. All other copies, whether viewed through another computer program or a printed version, are not controlled and therefore NSF assumes no responsibility for accuracy of the document

---

## 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 Forest Management Planning

To ensure forest management plans include long-term sustainable harvest levels and measures to avoid forest conversion.

*Summary of Evidence:* The forest management plan and supporting documentation and the associated inventory data and growth models were the key evidence of conformance.

### Objective 2 Forest Health and Productivity

To ensure long-term forest productivity, carbon storage and conservation of forest resources through prompt reforestation, afforestation, minimized chemical use, soil conservation, and protecting forests from damaging agents.

*Summary of Evidence:* Field observations and associated records were used to confirm practices. Programs for reforestation, for protection against insects and diseases and wildfire, and for careful management of activities which could potentially impact soil and long-term productivity, were all observed.

### Objective 3 Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources

To protect the water quality of rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands and other water bodies through meeting or exceeding best management practices.

*Summary of Evidence:* Field observations of a range of sites were the key evidence. Auditor visited the portions of many field sites that were closest to water resources.

### Objective 4 Conservation of Biological Diversity

To manage the quality and distribution of wildlife habitats and contribute to the conservation of biological diversity by developing and implementing stand- and landscape-level measures that promote a diversity of types of habitat and successional stages, and the conservation of forest plants and animals, including aquatic species, as well as threatened and endangered species, Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value, old-growth forests and ecologically important sites.

*Summary of Evidence:* Field observations, written plans and policies, use of college-trained field biologists, availability of specialists, and regular staff involvement were the evidence used to assess the requirements involved biodiversity conservation.

### Objective 5 Management of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits

To manage the visual impact of forest operations and provide recreational opportunities for the public.

*Summary of Evidence:* Field observations of completed operations and policies/procedures for visual quality were assessed during the evaluation. Maps of recreation sites, combined with field visits and interviews, confirmed a strong recreation program.

### Objective 6 Protection of Special Sites

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

*Summary of Evidence:* Field observations of completed operations, records of special sites, training records, and written protection plans were all assessed during the evaluation.

### Objective 7 Efficient Use of Fiber Resources

To minimize waste and ensure the efficient use of fiber resources.

*Summary of Evidence:* Field observations of completed operations, contract clauses, and discussions with supervising foresters provided the key evidence.

Only those documents viewed through the AESOP system are officially controlled. All other copies, whether viewed through another computer program or a printed version, are not controlled and therefore NSF assumes no responsibility for accuracy of the document

---

**Objective 8 Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples' Rights**

To recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional knowledge.

*Summary of Evidence: Communication and response to affected Indigenous People were witnessed as evidence.*

**Objective 9 Legal and Regulatory Compliance**

To comply with applicable federal, provincial, state and local laws and regulations.

*Summary of Evidence: Field reviews of ongoing and completed operations and interviews with state agencies were the most critical evidence.*

**Objective 10 Forestry Research, Science and Technology**

To invest in forestry research, science and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based and broaden the awareness of climate change impacts on forests, wildlife and biological diversity.

*Summary of Evidence: Research records and reports were confirmed.*

**Objective 11 Training and Education**

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

*Summary of Evidence: Training records of personnel, and records associated with harvest sites and silviculture operations audited provided confirmation of participation in training programs.*

**Objective 12 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: Agendas for meetings and selected summaries of comments were sufficient to assess the requirements.*

**Objective 13 Public Land Management Responsibilities**

To participate and implement sustainable forest management on public lands.

*Summary of Evidence: N.A. The Company does not have management responsibilities for public lands.*

**Objective 14 Communications and Public Reporting**

To increase transparency and to annually report progress on conformance with the SFI Forest Management Standard.

*Summary of Evidence: Reports filed with SFI Inc. and the SFI Inc. website provided the key evidence.*

**Objective 15. Management Review and Continual Improvement**

To promote continual improvement in the practice of sustainable forestry by conducting a management review and monitoring performance.

*Summary of Evidence: Records of program reviews, agendas and notes from management review meetings, and interviews with personnel involved in management review were assessed.*

Only those documents viewed through the AESOP system are officially controlled. All other copies, whether viewed through another computer program or a printed version, are not controlled and therefore NSF assumes no responsibility for accuracy of the document

---

## 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 SFI 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.

Only those documents viewed through the AESOP system are officially controlled. All other copies, whether viewed through another computer program or a printed version, are not controlled and therefore NSF assumes no responsibility for accuracy of the document

---

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

*(Applies only to the SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard)*

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:**

Norman Boatwright  
NSF Forestry Program Manager  
PO Box 4021  
Florence, SC 29502  
843-229-1851  
nboatwright12@gmail.com

Daniel Freeman  
NSF Project Manager  
789 N. Dixboro Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105  
734-214-6228  
dfreeman@nsf.org

Jonathan Lowery  
Forest Sustainability & Policy Manager  
P. O. Box 48999  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35404-8999  
205-562-5454  
jlowery@westervelt.com