

SFI 2015-2019 – Public Summary Report

Blandin Paper Company dba UPM Blandin

DESCRIPTION OF COMPANY

UPM Blandin forest lands are located near Grand Rapids in northern Minnesota. Privately managed forest land totals approximately 188,000 acres. This land, along with 200,000 cords of wood per year from private, county, and state/provincial land from a large area including the Lake States, Manitoba, and Ontario, feeds the UPM Blandin Mill.

The company SFI representative is Cheryl Adams.

AUDIT

During the period of June 5th to 9th 2017 UPM Blandin underwent a re-registration audit to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) 2015-2019 Forest Management (FM) Standard and the SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing (FS) Standards.

The registration cycle is over three years with surveillance audits conducted annually. The audit assessed active and/or completed harvest operations through interviews with the company staff and contractors. The audit also assessed the SFI documentation and records at the company’s office including stakeholder and First Nations communication.

The SFI program third-party audit was undertaken by SAI Global. SAI Global is an independent third party registrar that is accredited by the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB) Standard ensuring the integrity and credibility of the audit process.

THE AUDIT TEAM

The SAI Global audit team who performed the audit consisted of Cindy Hutchison, Registered Professional Forester (RPF, British Columbia), audit team leader, and Dave Barker, RPF, audit team member. The auditors are Professional Foresters and certified auditors.

The audit was observed by Angela Yuska, from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources who have been tasked with monitoring the terms of the UPM Blandin Conservation Easement.

REGISTRATION TYPE

Certificate Type	SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard	SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard
Single site	X	X

MULTI-SITE / GROUP EVALUATION

Not applicable.

SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard

FOREST LAND AND MANGEMENT PLAN INCLUDED IN THE AUDIT SCOPE

UPM Blandin forest lands are located near Grand Rapids in northern Minnesota. Total ownership is approximately 188,000 acres. UPM's property lies principally in the Aitkin, Itasca, Koochiching and St. Louis State Counties. Major highways intersecting the forestlands include US highways 2, 71 and 169; State highways 1, 6, 38, 46, 65, 73, and 200; and numerous county and township roads. UPM Blandin has constructed and maintains approximately 140 miles of private forestry roads on its lands, plus numerous un-maintained skid trails. UPM Blandin land is open to public access under a conservation easement.

UPM Blandin land lies within four sub-sections of the National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units

- Chippewa Plains
- Nashwauk Uplands
- St. Louis Moraines
- Tamarack Lowlands

UPM's timber-productive forest land is currently composed of 28% softwood and 72% hardwood types. As with Minnesota overall, Aspen is by far the dominating tree covering 54% of the forest cover types on UPM Blandin's property.

The UPM Blandin approach is ecosystem based management which requires a number of ecologically adapted silviculture systems, hardwood and softwood management, natural regeneration and planting.

Forest land owned by UPM, Blandin is a valued resource where forest management decisions are informed by these principles and purposes:

- Optimizing timber production for the Blandin pulp and paper operations and other wood markets
- Protecting conservation values while maintaining a working forest
- Encouraging long-term, professional management of the forest resources
- Providing opportunities for public recreation in a manner consistent with the other purposes
- In a regional context
 - Landscape capability and the surrounding matrix of different ownerships
 - Ecologically based site level prescriptions, including fine scale inputs of plant communities, knowledge of soil organisms, animal population trends, and
 - Economic and social frameworks
- Cooperating with neighboring and regional landowners in an organized fashion, to contribute to regional biodiversity and site level species richness, and encouraging our Private Forest Management clients to join the effort.

SCOPE OF CERTIFICATION

Forest management activities- planning harvesting, transportation and silviculture on Blandin feeland. There has been no modification to the scope since the last public summary report.

AUDIT PROCESS

During this audit, the audit team evaluated the company against the objectives listed in Table 1 of this section. The evidence of compliance observed is listed in Table 2 of this section.

A sample of field review sites were chosen from a list of active sites and sites where forest management activities occurred since the last audit. The site choice also considered activity type, and risk factors, related to the audit objectives selected for review, as well as the opportunity to verify implementation of corrective actions for previous non-conformities.

SUBSTITUTE INDICATORS

No substitute indicators were evaluated during this audit.

COMPLAINTS

No complaints have been received; therefore the complaint handling process could not be verified.

SITES INSPECTED AND ASSESSMENT TIME

Audit Activity	Duration in days
Onsite	2.5
Sites	Number inspected
Roads	7
Harvesting Sites	7
Silviculture Sites	2
Operations visited: UPM Blandin feeland	

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Areas of non-conformance

NC#	Type	Performance Measure #	Description	Corrective Action Plans
2017-01	Minor	FM 3.1.1	Program to implement water quality best management practices	Training; Consistent messaging from SIC on BMP; Continued monitoring of BMP compliance; and Contractor auditing.
2017-02	Minor	FM Section 5, 4.2	Rules for use of SFI off-product marks.	Revise documentation; Communicate requirements; Monitoring of requirements.

Opportunities for improvement

Consider

- holstering tank hose nozzles.
- communicating the herbicides used on seedlings and the associated risks and/or suggested PPE to tree planters (including landowners using Blandin supplied stock).
- completing inspections no more than one year after the activity for more immediate feedback to contractors.
- reviewing the SmartFor Harvest Acres Summary vs. The Regen Acres Summary to determine the differences in area (acres).
- specifying in chemical spray contracts to use least-toxic and narrowest-spectrum pesticides necessary to achieve management objectives.
- better communication on closing blocks to be included in the SFI annual report.

Good practices

- Ability to use SmartFor technology for live updates of maps.
- Simplification of documentation.
- Very careful thinning practices in a young pine stand which resulted in very little damage to the residual stand.
- Placing extensive rip-rap on the approaches to an ATV recreational bridge over Smith Creek.

Status of previous audit non-compliances

The status of previous audit non-conformances is as follows:

NC#	Type	Performance Measure #	Status (closed/upgraded to major)
2016-01	Minor	3.1.1	Closed

CERTIFICATION DECISION SFI 2015-2019 FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD

Re-registration Audit

Based on the results of this re-registration audit it has been determined that the management system is effectively implemented and meets the requirements relative to the scope of registration and audit criteria. The action plans related to the non-conformances has have been reviewed and considered acceptable. As applicable, any major non-conformance has been closed and implementation of action plan for minor non-conformance will be reviewed at the next surveillance audit. Therefore, a recommendation for registration is made to SAI Global.

EVIDENCE OF CONFORMITY TO THE SFI 2015-2019 FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD

Table 1 Objectives Audited

Objective 1	Forest Management Planning	X
Objective 2	Forest Health and Productivity	X
Objective 3	Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources	X
Objective 4	Conservation of Biological Diversity	X
Objective 5	Management of Visual and Recreational Benefits	X
Objective 6	Protection of Special Sites	X
Objective 7	Efficient Use of Forest Resources	X
Objective 8	Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples' Rights	X
Objective 9	Legal and Regulatory Compliance	X
Objective 10	Forestry Research, Science and Technology	X
Objective 11	Training and Education	X
Objective 12	Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach	X
Objective 13	Public Land Management Responsibilities	N/A
Objective 14	Communications and Public Reporting	X
Objective 15	Management Review and Continual Improvement	X

Table 2 Evidence Observed

Environmental management system (EMS) Manual	X	Cut block size calculations	X
Written policies	X	Employee observation forms (species at risk, invasive plants, other values)	
Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for best management practices	X	Pre-work discussions/meeting records	X
EMS and SFI field handbook	X	Monitoring records for non-timber values	
Training records (staff and contractors)	X	Utilization records	X
SFI/EMS training agenda		Laws, legislation, regulations records	X
Health and safety manual and/or employee policy manual		Annual management review records	X
Timber supply review	X	Internal audit records	X
Maps (pre-harvest, harvest, post-harvest, and silviculture)	X	Corrective action logs	X
Timber development standards		Education/community involvement records	X
Non-timber values impact assessments (riparian, visual, recreation, biodiversity, cultural heritage, other:)		Records of public inquiries and complaints	X
GIS inventories (soils, forest, land classification, non-timber values)	X	Stakeholder communications records	X
Long term management plans and sustainable harvest level calculation	X	Agreements and communications with Indigenous communities	
Cutting/harvesting permits	X	Multi-licensee and/or government meeting minutes	
Operational plans (annual, cut block level)	X	Logging agreements and/or contracts	X
Wet/adverse weather plans or guidelines	X	Wood producer training programs	X
Reforestation plans	X	Wood producer information package	X
Pest management plan		SFI Annual Report	X
Fire preparedness plan	X	SFI and company websites	X
Spill prevention and response plan	X	SFI brochure	X
Silviculture surveys and reports	X	SFI Implementation committee (participation/support)	X
Standards for seed use		Climate change information and/or meeting minutes	X
Chemical use/spray records and applicator certification	X	Research and discussion papers	
Tree improvement reports		Support for research and science	X
Green-up records		External audit field inspections	X
Free to grow records		External audit interviews (office and field)	X
Planting program records	X	Pre-harvest inspection records	
Harvest inspection records	X	Post-harvest inspection records	
Road and bridge inspection records	X	Government compliance records	

SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard*

**This report does not include the review of Appendix 1 Rules for Use of SFI Certified Sourcing Label*

PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S FIBER PROCUREMENT AND/OR MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS

UPM Blandin Paper Mill situated in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, needs about 50% of total demand as procured wood. During 2015 the mill consumed about 207,000 cords of which 102,000 cords were purchased under controlled stumpage.

UPM has a purchased stumpage program. There are two categories of log inputs- A and B. All A wood comes from fee lands, or lands upon which UPM owns the stumpage. On B lands, UPM buys the wood mostly from regulated sources, such as County lands, which have a land department and inspect for logger conformance.

The majority of purchased wood is field assessed by UPM, and the loggers have a harvest plan map, showing requirements. For County and State purchased wood, a plan map is prepared by that agency. All purchase contracts have clauses allowing UPM to monitor conformance to Best Management Practices both shown on the plan and required by contract. For private wood, about 5% of UPM's total requirements comes from operations where the logger is well known to Blandin, and 5% where the owner chooses the logger. UPM has an inspection system that includes both and is risk based. It also conducts logger quality analyses year by year to show trends. Rights of inspection are in all purchase contracts. Minnesota Logger Education Program audits Master Loggers. The State of Minnesota and Counties are certified to a recognized forestry standard.

The location of the vast majority of the purchased wood comes from Minnesota, and very minor amounts come from Wisconsin and Canada. All wood from Canada is PEFC certified. Wisconsin has a master logger program. The audit focused on the highest risk procurement areas, which are private, uncertified lands, in the state of Minnesota

SCOPE OF CERTIFICATION

Sourcing of fiber from the Lake States, Manitoba, and Ontario.

There has been no modification to the scope since the last public summary report.

AUDIT PROCESS

During this audit, the audit team evaluated the company against the objectives listed in Table 1 of this section. The evidence of compliance observed is listed in Table 2 of this section.

A sample of field review sites were chosen from a list of active sites and sites where activities were completed since the last audit. The site choice also considered activity type, and risk factors, related to the audit objectives selected for review, as well as the opportunity to verify implementation of corrective actions for previous non-conformities.

SUBSTITUTE INDICATORS

No substitute indicators were evaluated during this audit.

COMPLAINTS

No complaints have been received; therefore the complaint handling process could not be verified.

MANUFACTURING UNITS SUPPLIED AND ASSESSMENT TIME

Audit Activity	Duration in days
Off-site preparation and on-site office review:	1.5
Field review:	1
Sites	Number inspected
Roads	7
Harvesting Blocks	7
Silviculture Sites	2
Manufacturing units supplied from the sites visited: UPM Blandin Paper Mill, Grand Rapids.	

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Definitions for findings can be found in the definitions section.

Areas of non-conformance

NC#	Type	Performance Measure #	Description	Corrective Action Plans
2017-01	Minor	FS 2.2.2	Use of information from the verifiable monitoring system	Revise the Wood Procurement Plan; Develop process for additional monitoring; Retain monitoring records.

Opportunities for improvement

Consider

- holstering tank hose nozzles.
- communicating the herbicides used on seedlings and the associated risks and/or suggested PPE to tree planters (including landowners using Blandin supplied stock).
- completing inspections no more than one year after the activity for more immediate feedback to contractors.
- reviewing the SmartFor Harvest Acres Summary vs. The Regen Acres Summary to determine the differences in area (acres).
- specifying in chemical spray contracts to use least-toxic and narrowest-spectrum pesticides necessary to achieve management objectives.
- better communication on closing blocks to be included in the SFI annual report.

Good practices

- Ability to use SmartFor technology for live updates of maps.
- Procurement communication with landowners gets “rave reviews” (examples: St. Louis County, Miedtke).
- Simplification of documentation.

Status of previous audit non-compliances

No non-conformities were raised during the previous audit.

CERTIFICATION DECISION SFI 2015-2019 FIBER SOURCING STANDARD

Re-registration Audit

Based on the results of this re-registration audit it has been determined that the management system is effectively implemented and meets the requirements relative to the scope of registration and audit criteria. The action plans related to the non-conformances have been reviewed and considered acceptable. As applicable, any major non-conformance have been closed and implementation of action plans for minor non-conformances will be reviewed at the next surveillance audit. Therefore, a recommendation for registration is made to SAI Global.

EVIDENCE OF CONFORMITY TO SFI 2015-2019 FIBER SOURCING STANDARD

Table 1 Objectives Audited

Fiber Sourcing Within the United States and Canada		
Objective 1	Biodiversity in Fiber Sourcing	X
Objective 2	Adherence to Best Management Practices	X
Objective 3	Use of Qualified Resource and Qualified Logging Professionals	X
Objective 4	Legal and Regulatory Compliance	X
Objective 5	Forestry Research, Science, and Technology	X
Objective 6	Training and Education	X
Objective 7	Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach	X
Objective 8	Public Land Management Responsibilities	X
Objective 9	Communications and Public Reporting	X
Objective 10	Management Review and Continual Improvement	X

Fiber Sourcing Outside the United States and Canada		
Objective 11	Promote Conservation of Biological Diversity, Biodiversity Hotspots and High-Biodiversity Wilderness Areas	N/A
Objective 12	Avoidance of Controversial Sources including Illegal Logging	N/A
Objective 13	Avoidance of Controversial Sources including Fiber Sourced from Areas without Effective Social Laws	N/A

Table 2 Evidence Observed

Environmental management system (EMS) Manual	X	SFI Annual Report	X
Written policies	X	SFI and company websites	X
Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for best management practices	X	SFI brochure	X
EMS and SFI field handbook	X	SFI Implementation committee (participation/support)	X
Training records (staff and contractors)	X	External audit field inspections	X
SFI/EMS training agenda	X	External audit interviews (office and field)	X
Cutting/harvesting permits		Education/community involvement records	X
Operational plans (annual, cutblock level)	X	Records of public inquiries and complaints	X
Wet/adverse weather plans or guidelines	X	Stakeholder communications records	X
Reforestation plans		Logging agreements and/or contracts	X
Best management practices monitoring records	X	Wood producer training programs	X
Evaluation of best management practices	X	Wood producer information package	X
Government compliance records		Policies provided to wood producers	X
Pre-work discussions/meeting records	X	Education and outreach to forest landowners	X
Monitoring records for non-timber values	X	List of qualified logging professional/certified logging professional	X
Utilization records	X	Agreements for purchased stumpage	X
Laws, legislation, regulations records	X	Program to assess and address risk of Illegal logging	
Corrective action logs		Research and discussion papers	
Support for research and science	X	Climate change information and/or meeting minutes	X

DEFINITIONS

Major Non-Conformances

Pervasive or critical to the achievement of the SFI objectives

All major non-conformances require an action plan to be implemented by the auditee within 90 days of an initial audit or registration cannot be achieved. Subsequently for surveillance audits, an action plan shall be implemented by the auditee within 60 days for the registration to be maintained.

Minor Non-Conformances

Isolated incidents that are non-critical but must be addressed before the next surveillance audit to maintain compliance to the SFI standard. Non resolved minor non-conformance will be escalated to a major non-conformance.

Opportunity for Improvement

Are not non-conformances but are comments on specific areas where improvements can be made.

Good practices

Areas that are deemed to be mentioned

MULTI-SITE / GROUP SAMPLING APPROACH

This multi-site / group organization maintains an internal audit program determined to be reliable, in this case SAI Global sampling approach is as follow where n = number of sites:

- i. $\sqrt{(n)}$ for initial certification audits
- ii. $0.6 \sqrt{(n)}$ for surveillance audits
- iii. $0.8 \sqrt{(n)}$ for re-registration audits

The central office function is audited annually.

OR

This multi-site / group organization did not maintain its internal audit program. SAI Global applies the following sampling where n = number of sites:

$\sqrt{(n)}$

The central office function is audited annually.



SAI Global forestry specialist group registers/certifies forest companies to ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001, CSA Z809 and CSA Z804 SFM, SFI Forest Management, SFI CoC, SFI Fiber Sourcing, SFI Certified Sourcing Label, PEFC CoC, FSC® Forest Management, FSC® CoC.

The group, led by Sylvain Frappier, Technical Manager - Forestry, consists of a highly qualified team of professional foresters, technical and industry experts.

Contact certification.americas@saiglobal.com for more information.

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