

Weaber Lumber Public SFI Surveillance Audit Report

The SFI Program of Weaber Inc. of Lebanon, Pennsylvania has demonstrated continuing conformance with the SFI Standard®, 2010-2014 Edition, according to the NSF-ISR SFIS Certification Audit Process.

NSF-ISR initially certified Weaber, Inc. to the SFIS on September 24, 2004 with periodic Surveillance Audits since then and a Recertification Audit in 2012. This report describes the 2014 Re-assessment Audit designed to review selected requirements of the SFI program. As with all audits there was a focus on changes in the standard, changes in operations, the management review system, and efforts at continuous improvement.

Weaber, Inc. operates a saw mill, flooring mill, and secondary processing facilities in Lebanon, PA that utilize wood procured primarily from Pennsylvania and Maryland in an approximate 100 mile radius of Weaber's mill. The primary species produced include yellow poplar, red oak and white oak. Weaber's SFI Program is managed by Dennis Brehm and Sandy Schera.

The surveillance audit was performed by NSF on July 28-29, 2015 by Michelle Matteo, Lead Auditor. Ms. Matteo meets the qualification criteria for conducting SFIS Certification Audits contained in the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Audit Procedures and Qualifications (SFI APQ). The scope of the SFIS Audit included procurement operations, as Weaber, Inc. does not manage forestland.

The objective of the audit was to assess continuing conformance of the firm's SFI Program to the requirements of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard, 2010-2014 Edition. All of the procurement operations since the previous audit were reviewed to ensure that SFI Procurement Standards were met. In addition, a subset of SFI obligations to promote sustainable forestry practices, to seek legal compliance, and to incorporate continual improvement systems were reexamined during the audit.

The requirements of the 2010-2014 Edition were used in the audit; no indicators were modified. As with the initial certification, several of the SFI Performance Measures were outside of the scope of Weaber's SFI program and were excluded from the scope of the SFI Certification Audit as follows:

- Objectives 1 - 7 Land Management
- Objectives 11 - 13 Fiber Sourcing outside Canada and the US
- Core Indicator 14.2.2 Forestry enterprises
- Core Indicator 15.1.2 Research on genetically engineered trees
- Core Indicator 16.1.5 Forestry Enterprises
- Objective 18 Public land management responsibilities

SFIS Surveillance Audit Process

The review was governed by a detailed audit protocol designed to enable the audit team determine conformance with the applicable SFI requirements. The process included the assembly and review of audit evidence consisting of documents, interviews, and on-site inspections of ongoing or completed forest practices. Documents describing these activities were provided to the auditor in advance, and a sample of the available audit evidence was designated by the auditor for review.

During the audit NSF-ISR reviewed a sample of the written documentation assembled to provide objective evidence of SFIS Conformance. NSF-ISR 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-ISR SFI-SOP. NSF-ISR also 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 for specific SFI requirements included Full Conformance, Major Non-conformance, Minor Non-conformance, Opportunities for Improvement, and Practices that exceeded the Basic Requirements of the SFIS.

Overview of Audit Findings

Weaber Lumber's SFI Program was found to be in substantial conformance with the SFIS Standard. There was one previous minor non-conformance that was reviewed and closed.

The NSF-ISR SFI Certification Audit Process determined that two (2) minor non-conformances were identified:

- Procedures are not up-to-date. Company has undergone personnel changes in the past year and these changes have not been reflected in the written procedures.
- Promotional logo use was not submitted for approval, nor approved.

Two (2) opportunities for improvement were identified:

- BMPs were in compliance, but there is an opportunity for improvement with a focus on limiting skidder damage to the residual stand on one site by one logger.
- Over the past few years, Weaber has undergone multiple changes in personnel who manage the SFI program, with varying time commitments per role. Additional involvement by dedicated senior staff would ensure continuity and strengthen the program.

These findings do not indicate a current deficiency, but served to alert Weaber Lumber to areas that could be strengthened or which could merit future attention.

One practice exceeds the requirements of the Standard:

- Program to promote the use of certified logging professionals, qualified resource professionals and qualified logging professionals. Company pays for its contract loggers to attend annual trainings.

The next surveillance audit is scheduled for July 28, 2016.

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 8. Landowner Outreach - To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry by forest landowners through fiber sourcing programs.

Summary of Evidence – Interviews with staff and landowners and review of programs offered. Samples of the landowner handout material was used to confirm these requirements.

Objective 9. Use of Qualified Resource and Qualified Logging Professionals - To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry by encouraging forest landowners to utilize the services of forest management and harvesting professionals.

Summary of Evidence – Weaber requires that all direct purchase stumpage logging contractors have up-to-date SFI training. Training records of selected personnel, records associated with harvest sites audited, and stakeholder interviews were the key evidence for this objective.

Objective 10. 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 on four (4) tracts and review of BMP monitoring records were the primary evidence used to assess adherence to BMPs.

Objective 15. Forestry Research, Science, and Technology - To support forestry research, science, and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based.

Summary of Evidence – Financial records and in-kind support letters were the primary evidence used for this objective.

Objective 16. Training and Education -To improve the implementation of sustainable forestry practices through appropriate training and education programs.

Summary of Evidence – Training records of the procurement organization and records associated with harvest sites audited were the key evidence to assess the requirements.

Objective 20. 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 with the conservation of soil, air and water quality, biological diversity, wildlife and aquatic habitat, recreation, and aesthetics.

2. Responsible Practices

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

3. Reforestation and Productive Capacity

To provide for regeneration after harvest and maintain the productive capacity of the forestland base.

4. Forest Health and Productivity

To protect forests from uncharacteristic and economically or environmentally undesirable wildfire, pests, diseases, and other damaging agents and thus maintain and improve long-term forest health and productivity.

5. Long-Term Forest and Soil Productivity

To protect and maintain long-term forest and soil productivity.

6. Protection of Water Resources

To protect water bodies and riparian zones.

7. Protection of Special Sites and Biological Diversity

To manage forests and lands of special significance (biologically, geologically, historically or culturally important) in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities and to promote a diversity of wildlife habitats, forest types, and ecological or natural community types.

8. Legal Compliance

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

9. Continual Improvement

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

Source: Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) Standard, 2010–2014 Edition

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