

NSF International Forestry Program Philmont Scout Ranch Public Summary Audit Report

SFI Forest Management

The SFI Program of Philmont Scout Ranch of Cimarron, New Mexico has demonstrated conformance with the SFI 2015-2019 Standard and Rules, Section 2 – Forest Management Standard, according to the NSF Certification Process.

Forest management on Philmont Scout Ranch is focused on improving and maintaining long-term forest health and protecting and enhancing Philmont’s watersheds, water quality and wildlife habitats and on maintaining Philmont’s ability to deliver its nationally recognized Scouting and High Adventure Programs. Other objectives include protecting Philmont’s recreational and educational assets and infrastructures from catastrophic forest fires.

Philmont’s forest management program also provides a visible demonstration of sustainable forestry practices for visiting Scouts and Scouting leaders, as well as for neighboring landowners and members of nearby communities. (*Forest Management Policies and Procedures of Philmont Scout Ranch*).

The Philmont Scout Ranch is situated in the Sangre de Cristo (Blood of Christ) Mountain Range of northeastern New Mexico; where the southern Rockies meet the plains. It is the largest high adventure base owned and operated by the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). It is a working cattle ranch with horses, burros, bison and over 250 head of Hereford cows. The ranch covers a portion of the Beaubien and Miranda land grant of Colfax County. It encompasses approximately 215 square miles totaling 147,493 acres with approximately 90,000 acres of forest or woodland. (*Stewardship / Management Plan Philmont Scout Ranch – Central Country*).

The audit was performed by NSF on January 12-13, 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 Philmont Scout Ranch’s SFI program and were excluded from the scope of the SFI Certification Audit as follows:

- Indicator 2.1.5 - Afforestation program is not conducted.
- Performance Measure 5.2 – Clearcut harvests are not conducted.
- Performance Measure 5.3 – Clearcut harvests are not conducted, therefore green-up requirements are not applicable.
- Indicator 10.1.2 – Research on genetically engineered trees is not conducted.
- Indicator 11.1.5 – New Mexico does not have a formal logger training program. There are no qualified loggers or certified loggers.
- Performance Measure 11.2 - New Mexico does not have a SFI Implementation Committee or formal logger training program.
- Indicator 12.1.1 - - New Mexico does not have a SFI Implementation Committee.
- Objective 13 – Philmont Scout Ranch is not responsible for public land management.

Audit Process

NSF conducted the Re-Certification Audit of conformance to the SFI, Section 2. A report was prepared and final approval was done by an independent Certification Board member assigned by NSF. Follow-up or Surveillance Audits are required by SFI, Section 9. The next Surveillance Audit is scheduled for October 2016.

The audit was governed by a detailed audit plan designed to enable the audit team to efficiently determine conformance with the applicable SFI 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 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 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

In the 2014 Surveillance Audit, the NSF-ISR SFI Certification Audit Process determined that there was one minor non-conformance that was upgraded to a major non-conformance. The major non-conformance is described herein:

1. The management plan for the South Country has not been completed. Two of the three areas have complete management plans, with the plan for the third area not fully completed. The management plan for the South Country was completed by early 2015. (SFI 2010-2014 Standard, Indicator 1.1.1)

Philmont Scout Ranch was found to be in conformance with the standard. NSF determined that there was 1 minor non-conformance:

- Written *policy* acknowledging a commitment to recognize and respect the rights of *Indigenous Peoples* has not been developed. (SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard, Indicator 8.1.1)

Philmont Scout Ranch is developing plans to address this issue. Progress in implementing this corrective action plan will be reviewed in subsequent surveillance audits.

No opportunities for improvement were identified.

NSF also identified the following areas where forestry practices and operations of Philmont Scout Ranch exceed the basic requirements of the SFI Standard:

- Through the assistance of various state and federal agencies, universities, and volunteers, Philmont Scout Ranch incorporates the conservation of native biological diversity at the stand and landscape levels. (SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard, Indicator 4.1.1)
- Philmont Scout Ranch works to limit the introduction, spread and impact of invasive exotic plants and animals that directly threaten or are likely to threaten native plant and animal communities on their property and assists local landowners through the Colfax County Noxious Weed Committee. (SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard, Indicator 4.1.7)
- All operations are planned with visual quality management for recreation. Aesthetic considerations are included in the planning and implementation of harvest, road, landing design and management, and other management activities. (SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard, Indicator 5.1.2)

- Philmont Scout Ranch conducts a world-renowned recreation program. Providing a back-country experience is the goal of Philmont Scout Ranch. Hunting opportunities are also provided. (SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard, Indicator 5.4.1)
- Philmont Scout Ranch provides a place for state, federal, and university research to address questions of the benefits and impacts of forest management. (SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard, Indicator 10.1.1)

The next Surveillance Audit is schedule for October, 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 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. Auditors 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. Further maps of recreation sites, combined with field visits, helped confirm 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.

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 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.

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.

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

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