

## SFI Forest Management Public Report

The SFI Program of Pingree Associates, Lands managed by Seven Islands Land Company of Bangor, Maine has demonstrated conformance with the SFI 2015-2019 Standard and Rules, Section 2 – Forest Management Standard, according to the NSF Certification Process.

Pingree Lands managed by Seven Islands Land Company were initially certified to the SFIS in 1999 and recertified on December 21, 2002. The certification was transferred to NSF in 2006. Annual surveillance or recertification audits have occurred since, including a Re-Certification Audit to the SFI Standard 2010-2014 in 2014. This report describes the 2015 surveillance audit that included review of the requirements of SFI 2015-2019 Standard and Rules, Section 2 – Forest Management Standard as an upgrade audit.

Seven Islands Land Company manages 775,779 acres of Pingree family lands located in northern Maine. These lands consist of northern hardwoods and spruce-fir forests within the Acadian forest region of northwestern Maine. Stands are managed using uneven-aged or shelter wood silvicultural methods, and nearly all are regenerated naturally (without planting). The lands are open to the public for recreation, with a portion within the North Maine Woods system of private logging roads open to the public for a small fee. Seven Islands Land Company’s SFI Program is managed by Christopher Nichols, Vice President and the SFI program is managed by Nick J. Baser, Northern Maine Regional Manager.

The audit was performed by NSF on September 14-16, 2015 by an audit team headed by Mike Ferrucci, Lead Auditor, supported by Anne Marie Kittredge, Forester and Team 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 new the requirements of the SFI 2015-2019 Standard and Rules, Section 2 – Forest Management and a sample of the other existing requirements.

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.

The SFI Standard was used without modifying any requirements.

The following indicators are not applicable:

Requirement Number	Brief Description
Performance Measure 8.2	The company does not have forest management responsibilities on public lands
Objective 13	The company has no Public Land Management Responsibilities.

### Audit Process

NSF initiated the audit process with a Readiness Review to confirm the scope of the audit, review the SFI Indicators and evidence to be used to assess conformance, verify that the company was prepared to proceed with the upgrade audit, and to prepare a detailed written audit plan. NSF then conducted the 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 September 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

Pingree Lands managed by Seven Islands Land Company were found to be in conformance with the SFI 2015-2019 Standard for Forest Management. NSF determined that there were no minor non-conformances against the existing requirements, two transitional minor non-conformances, two opportunities for improvement, and two areas where forestry practices and operations exceed the basic requirements of the SFI Standard.

### Transitional Minor Non-Conformances:

Indicator 8.1.1 requires that “Program Participants will provide a written policy acknowledging a commitment to recognize and respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples.” Transitional Minor Non-conformance: Seven Islands does not have a written policy acknowledging a commitment to recognize and respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Indicator 11.1.5 requires that “Program Participants shall have written agreements for the use of qualified logging professionals and/or certified logging professionals (where available) and/or wood producers that have completed training programs and are recognized as qualified logging professionals.

Transitional Minor Non-conformance: The “Harvesting Agreement” between Seven Islands and Edmund Roy and Sons does not include a written agreement for the use of Maine Certified Logging Professional (CLP) loggers. The company has developed plans to address these issues according to the deadlines established by the standard.

### Opportunities for Improvement

Eligibility Requirements for Multi-site Sampling Programs require an internal audit program that includes all sites.

Indicator 4.4.1.d: Many aspects of internal auditing are in place at the site level, and the overall program is assessed at the central office level, but there is an opportunity to improve the process for internal audits at the site-level.

There is an Opportunity for Improvement in the internal audit program to include site-level review of the SFI requirements implemented at the site-level.

Indicator 11.1.3 requires “Staff education and training sufficient to their roles and responsibilities.”

There is an Opportunity for Improvement in the system for ensuring that all employees have current training in all areas required in their job duties.

The organization’s foresters have high levels of professional education, and on-going training opportunities regularly occur. Many foresters have new positions (either in terms of duties or locations) and there is much to be learned.

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

### Exceeds the Standard:

Indicator 3.1.3 specifies “Monitoring of overall best management practices implementation.” Seven Islands Land Company exceeds the standard for monitoring of overall *best management practices* implementation with a robust program of harvest monitoring.

Indicator 5.4.1 requires the company to “Provide recreational opportunities for the public, where consistent with forest management objectives.” Seven Islands Land Company exceeds the standard by allowing recreational access to most lands and by providing, through North Maine Woods, a managed system of recreational access and facilities.

## 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 Strategic Management Plan, Five Year Operating Plans, and the Seven Islands Forest Policy Handbook 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 records associated with each timber harvest were used to confirm practices. The company has programs for reforestation, for protection against insects, diseases, and wildfire, and for careful management of activities which could potentially impact soil and long-term productivity.*

### 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 close to water resources, based on a field sample that was oriented heavily towards such sites.*

### 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, and regular staff involvement in conferences and workshops that cover scientific advances 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. Recreational use and esthetics were priority concerns where appropriate.*

### 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, harvest inspection reports and discussions with supervising field foresters and with loggers 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:** Foresters are aware of native people's traditional uses of the lands under its management.

#### **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 were the most critical evidence, coupled with a strong regulatory record of compliance.

#### **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:** Financial records and other evidence of support and involvement in science and in climate change issues were confirmed. Foresters are aware of predictions and the potential impacts on forests, wildlife and biological diversity.

#### **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 selected personnel, records associated with harvest sites audited, and logger and stakeholder interviews were the key evidence for this objective.

#### **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:** The Company showed evidence of support for several organizations that are leaders in Maine in promoting forestry through public outreach, education, and involvement, including support for the efforts of SFI Implementation Committees.

#### **Objective 13 Public Land Management Responsibilities**

To participate and implement sustainable forest management on public lands.

**Summary of Evidence:** Not Applicable- The organization does not manage 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 from all involved levels in the organization were assessed. Minutes of meetings supplemented by interviews served to confirm compliance.

## 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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