



## 2015 SFI Public Summary Report

### Fruit Growers Supply Company Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) Standard [2010-2014]

#### **Project Scope and Objectives**

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (“PwC”) completed a SFI Surveillance Assessment for the Fruit Growers Supply Company (“Fruit Growers” or “the Company”). The Lead Assessor was James Lucas, RPF, EMS (LA) and a second on-site assessor was Colin Campbell, RPF.

The primary objective of the assessment was to assess Fruit Growers’ SFI management system and to evaluate the Company’s implementation of the SFI Standard in the office and the field.

#### **Description of Forest Lands**

Fruit Growers is a multi-site organization with a central office in Hilt, California. Fruit Growers manages timberlands in California (277,064 acres), Oregon (17,258 acres) and Washington (26,303 acres).

#### **Indicators**

All of the indicators in the SFI Standard were within the scope of the assessment, except for Objectives 8-13, since the Group does not procure fiber, and Objective 18, since none of the land in the Group is public land. There were no substitute indicators.

#### **Assessment Process**

The assessment team conducted interviews and reviewed appropriate documentation to assess policies and procedures, and tested implementation of SFI program requirements. The report was dated December 9, 2015.

For multi-site certifications, PwC uses a rotational audit approach where the central office is audited annually and the sites are sampled on a rotating schedule. In 2015, field assessment was conducted on Fruit Growers’ Hoh River timberlands in Washington State managed by their Montesano, Washington office. The head office assessment was conducted remotely from their Montesano, Washington office.

#### **Summary of Conformance and Good Management Practices**

Fruit Growers uses a forest estate model to evaluate timber supply. Growth and yield models are calibrated using data from permanent sample plots located on their lands. Inventory updates are completed continuously following harvesting and government soils information and PSP plots are used to determine site index information. Fruit Growers conducts a maximum sustained yield analysis for all of their operating areas.

Timber harvesting planning includes the identification and management of special sites, visual quality objectives and protection of other resource values. Locations of resource features, including roads, water features, wildlife and other special sites are maintained in a GIS inventory and used in the development of harvest plans. Timber harvesting plans are approved by State Agencies.

In Washington, Fruit Growers manages on an even-age basis and all units are promptly replanted. Reforestation is conducted in the late winter or early spring. Units are site prepped and piled by an experienced and certified logger. Documented planting inspections are conducted by a planting contractor and a 1-2 year formal survival survey is conducted by Fruit Growers' foresters.

Erosion control methods are employed on roads and in harvest blocks and were observed to be effective at minimizing erosion. All logging contracts include a winter operations plan which addresses requirements for wet weather events. State Agencies and Fruit Growers' foresters work collaboratively at the planning stage to ensure best management practices are in place and inspections are conducted frequently during operations to ensure compliance. Fruit Growers requires that all of their loggers are certified logging professionals.

Fruit Growers conducts an annual internal audit of its sites, where all site managers deliver a report to the central office to assess their conformance to the SFI Standard and the results are reviewed by upper management. Some deficiencies were noted in the internal audit process and are discussed below.

Specific good management practices are noted below:

- The quality of roads and crossings maintenance including Road Maintenance and Abandonment Planning (RMAP) on the Fruit Growers' Hoh River timberlands in Washington State was high and showed a high level of due diligence and professionalism.
- Fruit Growers' Washington State full-time employees recently attended Washington Contract Loggers Association (WCLA) four day training workshops to become accredited Master Loggers in the State.

### **Summary of Findings**

Nonconformities were identified in the following areas:

- Fruit Grower's staff at their California operations have been active in supporting public outreach, but the Oregon and Washington State offices have not participated in any significant public outreach efforts to date. Fruit Growers has committed to looking for opportunities to participate in public outreach programs and will discuss the issue further at their next management meeting. PwC will review the status of this finding again in 2016.
- Fruit Growers is an active member of the Oregon and California SICs, but had not joined the Washington State SIC. Fruit Growers has now joined the Washington SIC and PwC has closed this finding.

An opportunity for improvement was identified with regard to Fruit Growers not using research produced by the organizations to which it subscribes in order to address SFI Objectives related to Wildlife, Biodiversity and Climate Change.

**Conclusion**

Fruit Growers Supply Company has maintained conformance with the requirements of the SFI Standard. The Certificate can be obtained by contacting Mr. Jay Powell of Fruit Growers Supply Company, Inc. at 530-475-3453 or on the company website, [www.fruitgrowers.com](http://www.fruitgrowers.com).