



## **Philmont Scout Ranch 2014 SFI Summary Surveillance Audit Report**

The SFI Program of Philmont Scout Ranch of Cimarron New Mexico has achieved conformance with the SFI Standard®, 2010-2014 Edition, according to the NSF-ISR SFIS Certification Audit Process.

NSF initially certified Philmont Scout Ranch the SFIS on November 20th 2008 and recertified them in 2012. This report describes the second Surveillance Audit since the recertification designed to ensure that all of the SFI requirements are being met. The audit included a review of changes in operations, the management review system, and efforts at continuous improvement.

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 surveillance audit was performed by NSF-ISR on November 6-7, 2014 by Tucker Watts, Lead Auditor. NSF's team members fulfill the qualification criteria for conducting SFIS Certification Audits of "Section 9. SFI 2010-2014 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation" contained in Requirements for the SFI 2010-2014 Program: Standards, Rules for Label Use, Procedures, and Guidance.

The objective of the audit was to assess conformance of the firm's SFI Program to the requirements of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Standard, 2010-2014. The scope of the SFIS Audit included land management operations on the Philmont Scout Ranch. Forest practices

that were the focus of field inspections included those that have been conducted since the previous field audit conducted in October 2014. 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 reexamined during the audit. Use of the SFI logo and the requirement to provide a public of audit reports were also reviewed.

As with the initial certification, several of the SFI Performance Measures were outside of the scope of Philmont Scout Camp's SFI program and were excluded from the scope of the SFI Certification Audit as follows:

- Indicator 2.1.4 - Exotic tree species are not planted.
- Indicator 2.1.7 - Afforestation program is not conducted.
- Indicator 3.2.5 - BMPs exist for New Mexico.
- Indicator 4.1.8 - Prescribed fire is not employed in forest management.
- Performance Measure 5.2 - No clearcutting is conducted.
- Performance Measure 5.3 - No clearcutting is conducted.
- Objective 8 - 13 as Philmont does not procure wood.
- Indicator 15.1.2 - Research is not conducted on genetically engineered trees.
- Indicator 16.1.5 - Program for certified logging professionals and qualified logging professionals is not available in New Mexico.
- Indicator 16.2.1 - Wood producer training courses are not available in New Mexico.
- Indicator 16.2.2 - Logger certification programs do not exist in New Mexico.
- Objective 18 as Philmont does not have forest management responsibilities on public lands.

None of the indicators were modified, however alternative evidence was used to show support for regional efforts as there is no SFI Committee in New Mexico.

### **SFIS Surveillance Audit Process**

The review was governed by a detailed audit protocol designed to enable the audit team to 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 also selected and interviewed stakeholders such as 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. Surveillance Audits generally focus on conformance issues and do not generally address exceptional practices.

### **Overview of Audit Findings**

Philmont Scout Ranch's SFI Program was found to be in substantial conformance with the SFIS Standard. One Major Non-conformance was issued:

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 generally, but not fully completed. Philmont Scout Ranch had determined that the plan be completed before the end of January 2014. The deadline has not been met. The deadline for completion has been rescheduled for early December, 2014. SFI Indicator 1.1.1 requires "Forest management planning at a level appropriate to the size and scale of the operation..."

### **Resolution of Audit Findings from the 2014 Audit**

There were two minor non-conformances or corrective action plans from the previous audit.

In 2013, the NSF-ISR SFI Certification Audit Process determined that there were two minor non-conformances that are 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. Philmont Scout Ranch has determined that the plan will be completed before the end of January, 2014. SFI Indicator 1.1.1 requires "Forest management planning at a level appropriate to the size and scale of the operation..."
2. Various programs are reviewed each year, but evidence was not provided of a focused review that was able to determine changes and improvements necessary to continually improve conformance to the SFI 2010-2014 Standard. SFI Indicator 20.1.3 requires "Annual review of progress by management and determination of changes and improvements necessary to continually improve conformance to the SFI 2010-2014 Standard."

For minor non-conformance #1 the management plan for the South Country has not been completed. The minor non-conformance has been raised to a major non-conformance. The management plan for the South Country will be completed by early December 2014. The organization developed and implemented plans to address issue #2. Progress in implementing the corrective action plans was reviewed during the 2014 surveillance audit, and the issue has been addressed. A management review meeting was conducted on October 23, 2014.

In 2013, an opportunity to improve road maintenance regarding road drainage provisions in some locations was identified and has been addressed since the 2013 audit. Portions of the extensive road system on the Philmont Scout Ranch (there are 300 miles of roads) associated with current harvest operations, recreational and overall land management activities were witnessed. Road maintenance by the ranch's crews was witnessed and discussed. The ranch's crews make continuing efforts to

maintain roads and drainage, but are hampered by legacy conditions and heavy use of the roads through much of the year. As areas are identified for maintenance they are prioritized and scheduled for work.

### **Exceptional Practices**

The program exceeds the SFI 2010-2014 Standard requirements in three areas:

Philmont Scour Ranch conducts timber harvesting and timber stand improvement in high use recreation areas with minimal visual impact. SFI Indicator 5.2.1 states “Incorporation of aesthetic considerations in harvesting, road, landing design and management, and other management activities where visual impacts are a concern.”

Philmont Scout Ranch conducts a world-renowned back-country recreation program. SFI Indicator 5.4.1 states “Provide recreational opportunities for the public, where consistent with forest management activities.”

The Philmont Scout Ranch works with state and federal agencies, along with universities to address issues of forestry, wildlife, and recreation in the region. SFI Indicator 15.1.1 requires “Financial or in-kind support of research to address questions of relevance in the region of operation.”

The next recertification audit is scheduled for fall of 2015.

### **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 broaden the implementation of sustainable forestry by ensuring long-term forest productivity and yield based on the use of the best scientific information available.

**Summary of Evidence** – The forest management plan for Philmont and supporting documentation and the associated inventory data and growth estimates were the key evidence of conformance.

**Objective 2. Forest Productivity** - To ensure long-term forest productivity, carbon storage and conservation of forest resources through prompt reforestation, soil conservation, afforestation and other measures.

**Summary of Evidence** – Field observations and associated records were used to confirm practices. Philmont has programs for reforestation, for protection against insects, diseases, invasive species 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 water quality in streams, lakes and other water bodies.

**Summary of Evidence** – Field observations of a range of sites were the key evidence. Auditors visited the field sites that were close to water resources and reviewed procedures.

**Objective 4. Conservation of Biological Diversity including Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value** 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 habitat diversity and the conservation of forest plants and animals, including aquatic species.

**Summary of Evidence** - Field observations, written plans and policies, use of college-trained field biologists, availability of specialists, cooperation with NM Forestry Department and regular staff involvement in conferences and workshops that cover scientific advances were the evidence used to assess the requirements involved biodiversity conservation. Philmont cooperates with academic institutions, as well as NM Forestry Dept.

**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 ecologically, 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. Philmont cooperates with academic institutions as well as NM Forestry Dept.

**Objective 7. Efficient Use of Forest Resources** - To promote the efficient use of forest resources.

**Summary of Evidence** – Field observations of completed operations provided the key evidence.

**Objectives 8 through 13 are not applicable.**

**Objective 14. Legal and Regulatory Compliance** -

Compliance 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.

**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** – Research reports and grants from US F&W, state agencies and universities were witnessed.

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

**Summary of Evidence** – Not reviewed during 2014 Surveillance Audit.

**Objective 17. Community Involvement in the Practice of Sustainable Forestry** -

To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry by encouraging the public and forestry community to participate in the commitment to sustainable forestry, and publicly report progress.

**Summary of Evidence** – Not reviewed during 2014 Surveillance Audit.

**Objective 18 is not applicable.**

**Objective 19. Communications and Public Reporting** - To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry by documenting progress and opportunities for improvement.

**Summary of Evidence** – Reports filed with SFI Inc. and the SFI Inc. website provided the key evidence.

**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 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 zones, and to conform with 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 forests and lands of special significance (ecologically, geologically or culturally important) in a manner that protects their integrity and 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. Avoidance of Controversial Sources including Illegal Logging in Offshore Fiber Sourcing**

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.

**9. Legal Compliance**

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

**10. Research**

To support advances in sustainable forest management through forestry research, science and technology.

**11. Training and Education**

To improve the practice of sustainable forestry through training and education programs.

**12. Public Involvement**

To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry on public lands through community involvement.

**14. Transparency**

To broaden the understanding of forest certification to the SFI 2010-2014 Standard by documenting certification audits and making the findings publicly available.

**14. Continual Improvement**

To continually improve the practice of forest management, and 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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