

2021 Forest Certification Highlights

Summary 2020-21 Accomplishments

- The Michigan DNR Public Summary Audit Report and MDNR Monitoring Reports were updated on the SFI and MDNR websites in response to a SFI Minor Non-Conformance.
- The Management Review Team was restructured to provide for more effective input, oversight, and collaboration.
- A Wildlife Division policy to evaluate State Wildlife Management Area designations with the intent for removal was finalized and number of areas including Lake Dubonett have been evaluated and clarified.
- A process has been initiated to conduct the 5-year review of the Ecological Reference Area and Designated Habitat Area-Core Interior Forest Network.
- Environmental and Social Risk Assessments for priority chemicals were developed and interim measures were implemented in response to a new FSC pesticide policy.
- Several actions were taken to improve compliance with the logger safety standard for MDNR contractors.
- Forest Resources Division has transition to use of the Michigan Learning Centre training record database as a centralized means for tracking employee trainings.

Summary of Significant Changes to Work Instructions

- WI 2.1 – Reforestation
 - Clarified language on requirement for stands with regeneration harvests to be regenerated within 2 planting seasons if regenerated artificially. New language recognizes the delays may be typical for establishment of some species (e.g. red pine).
- WI 2.2 – Use of Pesticides and Other Chemicals
 - Clarified non-DNR chemical use reporting requirements on state lands or public waters within or adjacent to state lands.
 - Added requirement for verification of review and consideration of associated Environmental and Social Risk Assessments for Use Permits and Non-DNR PAPs approval.
 - Clarified instances where chemical use tracking and reporting may not be required. Examples include chemical treatments are on lands or waters for which MDNR does not have full management authority and is not the chemical applicator including chemical treatments by lake associations on lakes which MDNR is only a partial owner and lampricide or other chemical treatments for fisheries on public waters.
- WI 3.1 – Forest Operations
 - Clarified guidance for exclusion from scope of certification for lands with existing signed lease agreements which result in forestlands being converted to other land uses (e.g. solar arrays).
- Replaced multiple references from “Office of State Archaeologist” to “MDNR Staff Archaeologist” to reflect recent staff changes.

Summary of Remaining Open Findings from Internal and External Audits.

- WI 1.1 - Strategic Framework for Sustainable Management of State Forest Land
 - MDNR/CISMA MOUs to clarify priorities, roles, and responsibilities related to invasives species management. **(FRD, PRD, WD)**
- WI 1.2 - Management Review Process for Continual Improvement
 - Need for policy or guidelines for specific prescribed burn follow-up monitoring to assess the success, failure or degree of either with respect to the burn objective(s). **(FRD)**
 - The 2018 Theme Audit focused on two specific areas in need of evaluation - governance including teams and team membership and internal audit format and focus. The audit resulted in several recommendations that could be implemented immediately as well as some that will need further discussion and a recommended course of action from the Resource Bureau before proceeding. Further direction is pending. **(DNR All)**
- WI 1.4 - Biodiversity Management
 - SCA layer should clearly identify areas where FRD field staff need to engage with Fisheries Division staff on proposed treatments or project planning. Further discussion with SCA/HCVA committee also identified the broader need for similar clarification of areas of co-management with PRD (e.g. rail trail corridors and State Forest campgrounds). **(FD, FRD, PRD, WD)**
- WI 2.1 – Reforestation
 - Examples illustrate a lack of understanding on specific guidance related to difficult to regenerate stands and demonstrate that current regeneration guidance may be unclear or that more training may be required. **(FRD)**
- WI 2.2 - Use of Pesticides and Other Chemicals
 - A centralized ArcGIS Online application is being developed to streamline and improve process and tracking related to the application of chemicals on State Forest land with full implementation scheduled for the 2020 field season. **(FD, FRD, PRD, WD)**
- WI 3.1 - Forest Operations
 - NCR 71-2016-05 identified a host of issues with well sites in the area and the lessee has been conducting the necessary fixes to bring the operation into conformance with DEQ and DNR requirements. **(FRD)**
- WI 3.2 – Best Management Practices
 - Will currently adequate, there is a need to improve Resource Damage Report formatting and database. **(FRD)**
- WI 8.1 - Staff Training for State Forest Management
 - The MDNR training team will develop a memo to remind staff of the requirements of reporting training. In addition, the Training Team is participating in a Department-wide initiative to implement the existing Civil Service Training. Implementation date is still uncertain. **(DNR All)**

Audit Schedule

- The 2021 Forest Stewardship Council and Sustainable Forestry Initiative audit was a surveillance audit and was conducted on **October 19, 20, and 21, 2021** in the **Sault Ste. Marie (east), Pigeon River Country, and Cadillac FMUs**.
- The 2022 Forest Stewardship Council and Sustainable Forestry Initiative audit will be a surveillance audit conducted in **mid-October** in the **Baraga, Crystal Falls, and Gwinn FMUs**.