



Forest Management Certification Review

Salisbury, MD
October 22, 2010

ATTENDANCE

MD DNR Forest Service

Steve Koehn, Kip Powers, Mike Schofield, Rob Feldt, Kenneth Jolly, Jack Perdue, Alex Clark, Anne Hairston-Strang.

Vision Forestry

Larry Walton, Bill Cheesman

AGENDA

2010 Audit Corrective Action Requests

1. FSC CARS

- All 2009 CARs are closed
- Two 2009 RECs are open

REC 2009.10 The MFS and Vision Forestry make decisions on harvesting contractors - and their equipment - based on the specific harvest prescriptions made in the management plan. As noted above, the team recognizes that managers have a justification for harvest techniques and equipment, although the thought process is not always written down. The MFS and Vision Forestry are still considering how best to document decisions made regarding harvesting techniques and equipment to be used and will report on these discussions at the next annual audit.

Discussion: The thought process in equipment selection for silvicultural activities has been documented in the Policy and Procedures Handbook for the Chesapeake Forest Lands & Pocomoke State Forest. It is believed that the timber sale contract sufficiently addresses silvicultural expectations for each harvest.

REC 2009.13 The MFS and Vision Forestry are still considering how best to monitor regeneration in mixed stands and will report on the results of these discussions at the next annual audit.

Discussion: Policy and Procedures Handbook for the Chesapeake Forest Lands & Pocomoke State Forest has been revised to include Monitoring Mixed Stand Regeneration (page 8.)

CAR 2010.1 The Forest Service must investigate and report on the circumstances surrounding the failure to notify the Heritage Program of controlled burn activities, assess whether such failure was due to a systematic break-down in communication, and develop - as warranted - procedures for ensuring full compliance with ESA management protocols.

Discussion: A 4-step policy was created to address this communication issue has been addressed by the request and the receiving of a procedure list from the Natural Heritage Restoration Ecologist.

Also, the MD DNR Forest Service has revised the Operation Order for Prescribed Fire (Operation Order 2010-204). The section Ecologically Significant Areas (ESA) states:

“Prescribed Burns conducted for ESA management on state lands require a written objective provided by the WHS State Restoration Ecologist. The State Restoration Ecologist then must review and approve the Prescribed Burn Plan before submission to the Fire Manager.”

OTHER ISSUES

Logo use policy statement – a Forest Service Operations Order will be drafted stating that the State Forester or designee will assume responsibility for use of the SFI and FSC logos according to each principal’s guidance.

Vernal pool protocols – the vernal pool guidance prepared by Smith and Knapp (MD DNR Natural Heritage) has been finalized for use on Chesapeake Forest and Pocomoke State Forest land management. On the western Maryland state forests, vernal pools are more easily identifiable. They are identified and protected within the Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA) established for each state forest.

Climate change awareness network – a series of climate change documents have been distributed and are made available on the MD DNR website, including:

Fighting Climate Change to Secure a Sustainable Future for Maryland
<http://dnr.maryland.gov/climatechange/>

Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Maryland’s Vulnerability to Climate Change
http://dnr.maryland.gov/coastsmart/pdfs/comprehensive_strategy.pdf

Shortleaf pine expertise – to expand the managers knowledge of shortleaf pine species several articles by know authorities have been reviewed and distributed to Forest Service and Natural Heritage managers, including:

Shortleaf Pine: A Species at Risk? Charles G. Tauer, Shiqin Xu, C. Dana Nelson and James M. Guildin (2007) .

Shortleaf Pine Seed Dispersal – Herbert A. Yocom, Southern Forest Experiment Station (1968).

Also, Restoring the Shortleaf Pine/Oak Savanna Ecosystem—A Working Group Symposium, Raleigh Clarion State Capital, Raleigh, North Carolina, September 22-23, 2010, was attended by MD DNR Forest Service and Vision Forestry staff (Powers, Schofield and Walton).

Shortleaf pine seedlings are now available at the Ayton Forest Tree Nursery. A historical range map for shortleaf has been distributed to managers.

2. SFI CARS

- All 2009 CARs are closed
- One 2010 CAR

CAR SFI-2010-01

Description: There is inconsistent implementation of the process for notifying the Heritage Program’s Botanist prior to implementation of planned prescribed burns in Ecologically Significant Areas (ESAs).

Discussion: See discussion under FSC CAR 2010.1 (page 1).

3. New SFI and FSC standards review

Both SFI and FSC approved updated standards in 2010. FSC has new guidelines for plantations we will need to be aware of. The Appalachia regional guidelines in Appendix C limits clearcut size. SFI has a new visual quality guideline we will need to keep in mind when drafting and reviewing work plans. There also is utilization monitoring requirement which we handle with the current BMP checklist.

There is a FSC checklist which we will take an initial review and have the forest managers complete as appropriate.

4. Western MD forest management certification efforts

The Governor has announced that our Western Maryland state forests will seek forest management certification in April 2011. It is estimated it will cost \$400k which will come from the State Forest & Park Reserve Fund. We will be doing some research to use the SFI standard for Tree Farm to be forest certification on private lands. Will also look at possible avenues for private land FSC certification, possibly through the FCMA. Work is progressing on growth & yield model for Western Maryland state forests.

5. DNR Forest Reports

Shortleaf pine training in North Carolina was attended by Maryland Forest Service staff. Also, shortleaf pine seedlings are now available at the state tree nursery as the result of taking 12 trees as a seed source. This was a cooperative effort with Natural Heritage Program.

ORV trails are closed. They were recently reopened to hunters only. We now have 3-4 geocache sites at Chesapeake Forest.

Sam Bennett, Pocomoke State Forest manager, will be retiring soon due to medical issues. Mike Schofield will take over management responsibilities for PSF as well.

November 9 will be the Citizens Advisory Committee meeting. It will include review of the annual work plans and the Pocomoke management plan.

6. Vision Forestry Reports

There still are concerns over markets. Last year they moved 83,000 tons of wood off Chesapeake Forest. Recently Vision Forestry lost two major logging contractors working at Chesapeake Forest – Marhan and Stevie Stevenson. Another market would be useful in the management of CF. Vision has been considering New Page in Allegany County. Solid wood markets have been extremely poor, too.

Fiber supply agreements may make sense now on the Eastern Shore.

There is still talk about an ethanol plant on the Shore. This will have big water supply issues. It will require up to 100k tons/yr. There probably is enough wood to source this new market. Smurfit Stone is no longer sourcing on the Shore.