



NSF-ISR, LTD
SURVEILLANCE AUDIT REPORT
May 5, 2009; Revised July 27, 2009

A. Program Participant's Name: Maryland DNR Forest Service

FRS #: 0Y301

B. Scope:

The SFI Program of the Maryland DNR Forest Service including land management operations and related sustainable forestry activities on approximately 60,548 acres of the Chesapeake Forest Project (CFP) and 14,753 acres of Pocomoke State Forest in Maryland.

- No Change
 Changed

C. NSF Audit Team:

Lead Auditor: Mike Ferrucci

Auditor: Michael Thompson

D. Audit Date(s): March 23-26, 2009

E. Reference Documentation:

Sustainable Forest Management Plan for Chesapeake Forest Lands, Maryland DNR Forest Service
May 2, 2007; Revised March 17, 2009

F. Audit Results: Based on the results at this visit, the auditor concluded

- Acceptable with no nonconformances; or
 Acceptable with minor nonconformances that should be corrected before the next regularly scheduled surveillance visit;
 Not acceptable with one or two major nonconformances - corrective action required;
 Several major nonconformances - the certification may be canceled unless immediate action is taken

G. Changes to Operations or to the SFI Standard:

Are there any significant changes in operations, procedures, specifications, FRS, etc. from the previous visit? Yes No If yes, provide brief description of the changes:

Scope expansion to the Pocomoke State Forest (PSF) which has one major difference with the previously-certified lands: PSF manages its own timber sale program without support from an outside consultant (Vision Forestry).

H. Other Issues Reviewed:

- Yes No Public report from previous audit(s) is posted on SFB web site.
- Yes No N.A. SFI and other relevant logos or labels are utilized correctly.
If no, document on CAR forms.

I. Corrective Action Requests: (see also Appendix IV)

Correct Action Requests issued this visit: None.

- Corrective Action Plan is not required.
- Corrective Action Plan is required within sixty days of this visit (for Minor Nonconformances).
CARs will be verified during the next Surveillance Audit.
- Corrective Action Plan is required within thirty days of this visit (for Major Nonconformances).
The auditor will make arrangements to verify the corrective action has been effectively implemented. All major nonconformance(s) must be closed by the auditor prior to the next scheduled surveillance audit by a special verification visit or by desk review, if possible.

Any Corrective Action Plans should be mailed to
Mike Ferrucci, 26 Commerce Drive
North Branford, CT 06471
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At the conclusion of this Surveillance Audit visit three Minor CARs remain open.
In addition, 4 Opportunities for Improvement (OFI) were identified.

Appendices:

- Appendix I: Surveillance Notification Letter and Audit Schedule
Appendix II: Corrective Action Requests
Appendix III: Public Surveillance Audit Report
Appendix IV: Audit Matrix
Appendix V: SFI Reporting Form

APPENDIX I



**Surveillance Notification Letter
and Audit Schedule**



February 25, 2009; Revisions March 5, 2009

Re: Confirmation of SFI and FSC Surveillance Audits, Chesapeake Forest Project

Michael Schofield
Chesapeake Forest Project Manager
Maryland DNR Forest Service
6095 Sixty-Foot Road
Parsonburg, MD 21849

Dear Mr. Schofield:

We are scheduled to conduct the Annual FSC and SFI Audits of the Chesapeake Forest Project on March 23-26 commencing in your offices at 8 am. The audits will assess the expanded scope and include the 4700 acre recent acquisition and the 15,000 acre Pocomoke State Forest in Worcester County. The audit team will consist of Mike Ferrucci, NSF-ISR Lead Auditor and Mike Thompson, SCS Lead Auditor.

The two audits will diverge somewhat in objectives. For SFI the objective is a partial review of your program to confirm conformance with the requirements across the expanded scope. For FSC a complete recertification audit is required, addressing all requirements across the expanded scope. During the audit we will work on the following:

SFI Program:

- Review components of your SFI program, with an emphasis on SFI Objectives 4, 5, 6, 7, and 11;
- Review progress on achieving SFI objectives and performance measures and the results of the management review of your SFI Program (Objective 13); and
- Evaluate ability of your SFI Program to manage effectively the expanded scope.

FSC Program:

- An opening meeting where comments received from stakeholders, if any, will be discussed;
- A review of management programs with an emphasis on any changes since the last annual audit in 2008;
- A review of the management plan for the Pocomoke Forest;
- Assess management of selected sites against the FSC Southeast Regional Standard;
- Stakeholder interviews and meetings, where appropriate;
- Audit team assessment of compliance with all criteria and indicators in the FSC Southeast Regional Standard;
- A closing meeting providing the preliminary results of the audit team's assessment

Logistics

- As during the certification audit we should plan to have lunch in the field to expedite the visit.
- We will make our own motel reservations in Salisbury for both lead auditors.
- We will travel in your vehicles, but have our own transportation to and from your offices.
- We ask that you provide hardhats if required.

Field Site Selections

Your organization has provided lists of harvests or activities as follows:

- CFP harvests with sales that were established, sold, or closed since the first quarter of 2008.
- Other management activities (PCT and Herbicide Release) on the Chesapeake Forest FY 2009
- Pocomoke Harvests completed since July 2007 as well as active and planned harvests

We have attached (dark and light green on Excel spreadsheets) our initial selection of audit field sites. We request additional information on these, including their accessibility, the likelihood of site activity during the visit, and their locations on county maps. Once we receive this information (or other guidance as appropriate) we will select a number of sites that we hope to visit, and then ask you to build in stops for other management issues, including recreation, restoration, and ecological protection measures (planning, protection, change in protected status). On the first day of the audit we would ask you to tell us about any sales that are being worked at that time, and we would add one or two of these if possible.

Documentation Requested

When we arrive each day please provide documentation for the selected sites similar to that provided in the past (maps, project descriptions, and contracts). We would also need any other information that would help us determine conformance to the certification requirements.

The enclosed tentative schedule should be reviewed by all participants. This schedule can be adapted either in advance or on-site to accommodate any special circumstances.

If you have any questions regarding this planned audit, please contact either of us.

Sincerely yours,



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Office: 207-653-2452 Cell: 207-798-1509

Enclosure: Draft Agenda for Surveillance Audit

DRAFT Agenda for 2008 Surveillance Audit

Each day activities will commence and conclude at the offices of the Maryland DNR Forest Service at 6095 Sixty-Foot Road, Parsonburg, MD 21849 unless noted otherwise (Tuesday).

Monday, March 23 8:15 am to 6:30- pm

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>
8:00 am	Auditors arrive at CSF Forestry Offices
8:15 am	Opening Meeting and Office Discussions Changes to the CFP forest management program Overview of the Pocomoke State Forest Harvest planning (Pocomoke Forest mainly; also CFP) Ecological Protections (all lands) Adaptive Management Summary (what you've learned thus far)
Noon	Review Selected Sales and Finalize Field Visit (1 tour)
12:30 to 5 pm	Field Site Visits, Pocomoke State Forest
5 pm	Daily Briefing (at final field site)
6 pm	Dinner (auditors joined by DNR personnel as available)

Tuesday, March 24 8 am to 5 pm

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>
7:45 am	Auditors arrive at Vision Forestry Offices
8:00 am	Review Selected Sales and Finalize Field Visits (2 separate tours)
8:15 – 5 pm	Field Site Visits
6 pm	Dinner (with informal daily briefing)

Wednesday, March 25 8 am to 5 pm

8 am- 1 pm Field sites Pocomoke and CFP (one tour of local sites)
1 pm - Auditor private discussion (hotel)
6 pm Dinner (auditors on their own)

Thursday, May 26 8 am to 11 am

8:00 am CFP Office – discuss remaining issues
8:45 - 9:30 am Final SFI Exit Briefing
9:30 - 11 am Final FSC Exit Briefing
12:25 pm Thompson / Ferrucci flight from Salisbury airport

APPENDIX II



Corrective Action Requests

Corrective and Preventive Action Request (CAR)

Company/Location: <u>Maryland DNR Forest Service</u>	Date: <u>March 26, 2009 FRS # 0Y301</u>
Auditor: <u>Mike Ferrucci</u>	CAR Number: <u>SFI-2009-01</u>
Location of Finding: <u>Pocomoke State Forest</u>	Previous CAR Number/Date: <u>N.A.</u>
Discussed with: <u>Jack Perdue, Kip Powers, staff</u>	Nonconformance Type (underline): Major <u>Minor</u>

AUDITOR FINDING: Standard Number and Clause: 2005-2009 Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard® 1.1.4 “Periodic updates of inventory and recalculation of planned harvests.”

Description: There is no plan in place for the next forest inventory for the Pocomoke State Forest.

IF NECESSARY, PLEASE ATTACH A SEPARATE REPORT ADDRESSING THE FOLLOWING THREE ITEMS:

1) ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS BY COMPANY—Include potential causes & assurance problem does not exist in other areas. The Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) for the Maryland DNR State Forests are designed to be completed on a ten-year cycle. The collection of the field data for the Pocomoke State Forest inventory was completed in 2001. During the previous inventory, a complete inventory was made, collecting data on all plots according to an established grid. It was the intent for the next inventory to be stratified to reduce the number of plots re-measured (plus insuring statistic reliability) and therefore reduce the expense and time necessary to collect the data. All field data could then be collected in a single summer field season.

2) CORRECTIVE ACTION BY COMPANY – Based on the Root Cause Analysis, the following action has been planned/taken to correct the problem. Please include expected completion date. The re-measure of CFI plots has begun since the 2009 audit was conducted. A field crew has been hired, trained, and is currently in the field collecting data. It is expected that the data collection should be completed by September 30, 2009 and the analysis will begin shortly thereafter, with the conclusion and report ready in time for the next audit.

3) PREVENTIVE ACTION BY COMPANY – Based on the Root Cause Analysis, the following action has been planned/taken to correct the problem. Please include expected completion date. See above.

AUDITOR REVIEW OF COMPANY’S PLAN:

This plan is appropriate and accepted. Progress on the CFI will be reviewed during the 2010 audit.

STATUS: Open AUDITOR/DATE: Mike Ferrucci July 27, 2009

AUDITOR REVIEW OF COMPANY’S COMPLETED ACTION:

STATUS: _____ AUDITOR/DATE: _____

STATUS LEGEND:

OPEN = CA Plan Accepted **CLOSED** = CA implemented, verified & accepted **REJECTED** = C/A Plan or Implementation rejected

Corrective and Preventive Action Request (CAR)

Company/Location: <u>Maryland DNR Forest Service</u>	Date: <u>March 26, 2009 FRS # 0Y301</u>
Auditor: <u>Mike Ferrucci</u>	CAR Number: <u>SFI-2009-02</u>
Location of Finding: <u>Pocomoke State Forest</u>	Previous CAR Number/Date: <u>N.A.</u>
Discussed with: <u>Jack Perdue, Kip Powers, staff</u>	Nonconformance Type (underline): Major <u>Minor</u>

AUDITOR FINDING: Standard Number and Clause: 2005-2009 Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard@ 6.1.2 “Appropriate mapping, cataloging, and management of identified special sites.”

Description: Special site (Relict dunes and associated rare species) on Pocomoke State Forest adjacent to ATV trails is not protected.

IF NECESSARY, PLEASE ATTACH A SEPARATE REPORT ADDRESSING THE FOLLOWING THREE ITEMS:

1) ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS BY COMPANY–Include potential causes & assurance problem does not exist in other areas. The Maryland DNR Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) system was established in 1976 and has essentially been unchanged since that time. Meanwhile, the ORV industry certainly has changed, developing smaller and more aggressive machines with an increasing ability to cause environmental degradation. DNR resource managers have certainly attempted to modify how ORVs are interacting with the forest resources they are entrusted to protect, but any real measures have been stymied for various reasons. State Forests were the target areas for ORV trails and were often placed on already existing forest roads. At Pocomoke, these old roads were located on the “best” soils because they tended to be drier sites. Of course, these are now recognized as sensitive xeric soil types which can sometimes harbor sensitive plant species.

For more information on ORV trails visit: <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/orv.html>

2) CORRECTIVE ACTION BY COMPANY – Based on the Root Cause Analysis, the following action has been planned/taken to correct the problem. Please include expected completion date. At the time of the audit it was not known if any rare or endangered species are actually using the site. Since then, the Forest Service and Heritage staffs have met at the site and have agreed to take several courses of actions. First, about 1.5 miles of the ORV trail comprised of the xeric dunes have been blocked and closed to ORV traffic. Also, about 1,000 feet of fencing has been installed to prevent access to these sensitive areas. Next, DNR will be looking for appropriate areas to serve as alternative trail locations. Much of this has already taken place as of July 2009, the relocation efforts will be completed before the time of the next audit. Alternative trail locations will have to be submitted to DNR’s Environmental Review process for approval.

3) PREVENTIVE ACTION BY COMPANY – Based on the Root Cause Analysis, the following action has been planned/taken to correct the problem. Please include expected completion date. No new ORV trails are being planned at this time, other than possible relocation of those mentioned above. Now that the High Conservation Valued Forest (HCVF) have been designated on Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, appropriate actions will be taken to review how these sites are being protected and managed.

AUDITOR REVIEW OF COMPANY’S PLAN:

The actions taken comprise a significant effort to protect rare resources, while seeking alternate routes . The success of these measures will be reviewed during the 2010 audit.

STATUS: Open AUDITOR/DATE: Mike Ferrucci July 27, 2009

AUDITOR REVIEW OF COMPANY’S COMPLETED ACTION:

STATUS: _____ AUDITOR/DATE: _____

STATUS LEGEND:
OPEN = CA Plan Accepted **CLOSED** = CA implemented, verified & accepted **REJECTED** = C/A Plan or Implementation rejected

Corrective and Preventive Action Request (CAR)

Company/Location: <u>Maryland DNR Forest Service</u>	Date: <u>March 26, 2009 FRS # 0Y301</u>
Auditor: <u>Mike Ferrucci</u>	CAR Number: <u>SFI-2009-03</u>
Location of Finding: <u>Affects entire program</u>	Previous CAR Number/Date: <u>N.A.</u>
Discussed with: <u>Jack Perdue, Kip Powers, staff</u>	Nonconformance Type (underline): Major <u>Minor</u>

AUDITOR FINDING: Standard Number and Clause: 2005-2009 Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard@ 13.1.3 “Annual review of progress by management and determination of changes and improvements necessary to continually improve SFI conformance.”

Description: The management review process does not ensure that all aspects of the SFI standard are covered nor that significant changes are emphasized.

IF NECESSARY, PLEASE ATTACH A SEPARATE REPORT ADDRESSING THE FOLLOWING THREE ITEMS:

1) ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS BY COMPANY–Include potential causes & assurance problem does not exist in other areas. The DNR Forest Service and Vision Forestry (management contractor) routinely meet about six months after each audit to review the auditor’s corrective action requests and how each would be addressed. At these meetings, we not only discussed the audit findings, but also issues that needed to be addressed regarding the management of these forests. The SFI standard as a whole is not addressed specifically but given further consideration should be.

2) CORRECTIVE ACTION BY COMPANY – Based on the Root Cause Analysis, the following action has been planned/taken to correct the problem. Please include expected completion date. An agenda for the audit reviews will now include, not only audit findings and plan for completing corrective action requests, but also a checklist of each standard and if improvement is possible. An action plan will be created which will outline potential areas for improvement. Also, any changes in the SFI and FSC standards will be discussed and what actions are needed in management efforts to address these changes. This process will be in place before the next audit.

3) PREVENTIVE ACTION BY COMPANY – Based on the Root Cause Analysis, the following action has been planned/taken to correct the problem. Please include expected completion date. See above.

AUDITOR REVIEW OF COMPANY’S PLAN:

This plan is appropriate and accepted. Management review results will be reviewed during the 2010 audit. The approach of using a checklist is commendable. Other organizations use a rolling or targeted approach wherein selected parts of a standard are emphasized each year.

STATUS: Open AUDITOR/DATE: Mike Ferrucci July 27, 2009

AUDITOR REVIEW OF COMPANY’S COMPLETED ACTION:

STATUS: _____ AUDITOR/DATE: _____

STATUS LEGEND:

OPEN = CA Plan Accepted **CLOSED** = CA implemented, verified & accepted **REJECTED** = C/A Plan or Implementation rejected

APPENDIX III



SFI Surveillance Audit Summary

The SFI Program of the Maryland DNR Forest Service for the Chesapeake Forest Project has demonstrated continuing conformance with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard®, 2005-2009 Edition (SFIS), according to the NSF-ISR SFIS Certification Audit Process. Maryland DNR's SFI Program includes land management operations on approximately 60,548 acres of the Chesapeake Forest Project (CFP) in six counties in eastern Maryland, 14,753 acres of the Pocomoke State Forest in Worcester County, and related sustainable forestry activities designed to improve the practice of forestry throughout the region and state. Jack Perdue of the Maryland DNR has been assigned responsibility for the SFI Program.

The Chesapeake Forest Project started from an innovative partnership between The Conservation Fund, the Richard King Mellon Foundation, and the State of Maryland to purchase and manage 58,000 acres of former industry lands in eastern Maryland. "The goal [is] to retain the property as a working forest ... managed in a conservation-minded way to provide forest products, local employment, and recreation opportunities while protecting or improving the water quality and habitat value of the lower Chesapeake Bay watershed." Source: CFP Management Plan.

The forest management plan for these lands details an adaptive approach to meeting the goals. The management of habitat for Delmarva Fox Squirrel, forest interior-dwelling birds, and an array of locally or nationally rare, threatened, or endangered plants or unique natural vegetation communities, as well as riparian buffer protection measures provide the framework for forestry operations on more than half of the lands. Much of the land consists of young Loblolly Pine plantations, with the remaining lands comprising hardwood or mixed forests and wetlands areas. Maryland DNR Forestry Service has day-to-day management responsibility, with timber management conducted by Vision Forestry.

On the Pocomoke State Forest management is conducted entirely by the Maryland DNR Forestry Service in accordance with its own forest management plan. Management plans for both forests are available to the public on the Forest Service's web site (<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/Forests/>).

NSF-ISR initially certified Maryland DNR to the SFIS on July 24, 2003, and the program was re-certified in July, 2006. This report summarizes the third follow-up surveillance audit designed to focus on changes in the standard, changes in operations, the management review system, and efforts at continuous improvement.

The surveillance audit was performed by NSF-ISR on March 23-26, 2009 by an audit team including Mike Ferrucci, Lead Auditor and Mike Thompson, Team Auditor. Audit team members fulfill the qualification criteria for conducting SFIS Certification Audits contained in the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Audit Procedures and Qualifications (SFI APQ). The objective of the audit was to assess continuing conformance of the Maryland Forest Service's SFI Program to the requirements of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Standard, 2005-2009 Edition on the Chesapeake Forest Project lands and an expansion of scope onto additional lands including the Pocomoke State Forest and other recently acquired lands. This audit was conducted in conjunction with the Annual Audit under the Forest Stewardship Council's principles, criteria, and indicators.

The scope of the SFIS Audit included vegetation management and related land management operations. As with the initial certification, procurement requirements of Objective 8 are outside of the scope of the SFI Certification Audit. Forest practices that were the focus of field inspections included those that have been conducted on the Chesapeake since the previous field audit as well as recent operations on the Pocomoke. A sample of harvesting operations was reviewed to ensure that SFI Standards were met. In addition, SFI obligations to promote sustainable forestry practices, to ensure all workers are properly trained, to protect soil and water, and to incorporate continual improvement systems were reexamined during the audit.

SFIS Surveillance Audit Process

The review was governed by a detailed audit protocol designed to enable the audit team 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 auditors in advance, and a sample of the available audit evidence was designated by the auditor for review.

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.

Overview of Audit Findings

Maryland DNR's SFI Program was found to be in conformance with the SFIS Standard. There were three new non-conformances:

Indicator 1.1.4 requires "Periodic updates of inventory and recalculation of planned harvests."
There is no plan in place for the next forest inventory for the Pocomoke State Forest.

Indicator 6.1.2 requires "Appropriate mapping, cataloging, and management of identified special sites."
Special site (Relict dunes and associated rare species) on Pocomoke State Forest adjacent to ATV trails is not protected.

Indicator 13.1.3 requires "Annual review of progress by management and determination of changes and improvements necessary to continually improve SFI conformance."
The management review process does not ensure that all aspects of the SFI standard are covered nor that significant changes are emphasized.

Four opportunities for improvement were identified:

Indicator 2.1.2 mandates "Clear Requirements to judge adequate regeneration and appropriate actions to correct under-stocked areas and achieve desired species composition and stocking rates for both artificial and natural regeneration."
There is an opportunity to improve the requirements to judge adequate regeneration for mixed species stands.

Indicator 3.2.4 requires "Identification and protection of nonforested wetlands, including bogs, fens, vernal pools and marshes of significant size."
There is an opportunity to improve procedures for identification and protection of Vernal Pools.

Indicator 10.1.3 requires "Staff education and training sufficient to their roles and responsibilities."
There is an opportunity to improve the system for ensuring that workers (foresters, technicians, temporary workers) receive all of the training needed to perform their jobs.

Indicator 12.4.1 requires “Program that includes communicating with affected indigenous peoples to enable Program Participants to a. understand and respect traditional forest related knowledge; b. identify and protect spiritually, historically, or culturally important sites; and c. address the sustainable use of nontimber forest products of value to indigenous peoples in areas where Program Participants have management responsibilities on public lands.”

There is an opportunity to improve the program for communicating with affected indigenous peoples.

These opportunities for improvement do not indicate a current deficiency, but served to alert Maryland DNR to areas that could be strengthened or which merit attention.

The Chesapeake Forest Project of Maryland DNR should also be recognized as exceeding the standard as follows:

- Developing a cutting-edge management forest management plan that uses an adaptive management approach to learn how to best manage these lands for critical habitat, watershed services, recreational use, and forest products
- Using Integrated Pest Management methods to greatly reduce the use of pesticides, including monitoring and testing of very low levels of herbicides and superb employment of timely thinning treatments to maintain the health and vigor of planted pine trees;
- Implementing extensive programs to restore and protect biodiversity ;
- Employing extensive efforts to monitor and control invasive exotic plants; and
- Providing a diversity of recreation opportunities to the public.

This program is being audited under the continuous surveillance audit option provided in the SFI program. The next audit will be another Surveillance Audit. This audit is tentatively scheduled for April 13-16, 2010.

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 with the conservation of soil, air and water quality, biological diversity, wildlife and aquatic habitat, recreation, and aesthetics.

2. Responsible Practices

To use and to promote among other forest landowners sustainable forestry practices that are both scientifically credible and economically, environmentally, and socially responsible.

3. Reforestation and Productive Capacity

To provide for regeneration after harvest and maintain the productive capacity of the forestland base.

4. Forest Health and Productivity

To protect forests from uncharacteristic and economically or environmentally undesirable wildfire, pests, diseases, and other damaging agents and thus maintain and improve long-term forest health and productivity.

5. Long-Term Forest and Soil Productivity

To protect and maintain long-term forest and soil productivity.

6. Protection of Water Resources

To protect water bodies and riparian zones.

7. Protection of Special Sites and Biological Diversity

To manage forests and lands of special significance (biologically, geologically, historically or culturally important) in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities and to promote a diversity of wildlife habitats, forest types, and ecological or natural community types.

8. Legal Compliance

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

9. Continual Improvement

To continually improve the practice of forest management and also to monitor, measure and report performance in achieving the commitment to sustainable forestry.

Source: Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) Standard, 2005–2009 Edition

For Additional Information Contact:

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