

Certified by:



Filosoofi 31
50108 Tartu
Estonia
www.nepcon.org

Certification managed by:
NEPCon Canada
Contact person: James Hallworth
Email: jhallworth@nepcon.org

Ver 12 September 2019

FSC Forest Management

Certification

Reassessment

Report for:

**Corporation of the County of Simcoe
In**

Midhurst, Ontario, Canada

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Report Finalized: | Sept 1, 2020 |
| Audit Dates: | June 10-11 (remote) & July 7, 2020 (field visits) |
| Audit Team: | Yves Bouthillier (Lead) James Hallworth |
| Type of certificate: | Single FMU |
| Certificate code: | NC-FM/CoC- 005013 |
| Certificate issue/expiry: | 26/07/2015 25/07/2020 |
| Organisation Contact: | Graeme Davis |
| Contact details: | 1110 Highway 26 Midhurst, Ontario L9X 1N6 |

TABLE of CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| INTRODUCTION..... | 3 |
| 1. AUDIT CONCLUSIONS..... | 4 |
| 2. AUDIT PROCESS..... | 27 |
| 3. COMPANY DETAILS..... | 32 |
| 4. FSC PUBLIC SUMMARY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN | 40 |
| Annex I: FSC forest management standard conformance (confidential) | 42 |
| Annex II: Conformance to FSC Chain-of-Custody and Trademarks requirements (confidential) | 139 |
| Annex III: List of all visited sites (confidential)..... | 146 |
| Annex IV: Map of certified area (confidential)..... | 147 |
| Annex V: Detailed list of stakeholders consulted (confidential) | 148 |

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of an independent certification audit conducted by a team of specialists representing NEPCon. The purpose of the audit was to evaluate the ecological, economic and social performance of The Corporation of the County of Simcoe forest management (referred to as Simcoe County Forest, abbreviated to SCF in this report) as defined by the Principles and Criteria established by the Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC®).

This report contains various sections of information and findings and several annexes. Sections 1-4 of the report will become public information about the forest management operation and may be distributed by NEPCon or the FSC to interested parties. The remainder of the annexes are confidential, to be reviewed only by authorized NEPCon and FSC personnel bound by confidentiality agreements. A copy of the public summary of this report can be obtained on the FSC website at <http://info.fsc.org/>.

Dispute resolution: If NEPCon clients encounter organisations or individuals having concerns or comments about NEPCon and our services, these parties are strongly encouraged to contact relevant NEPCon regional office. Formal complaints and concerns should be sent in writing.

Impartiality commitment: NEPCon commits to using impartial auditors and our clients are encouraged to inform NEPCon management if violations of this are noted. Please see our Impartiality Policy here: <http://www.nepcon.org/impartiality-policy>

Standard Conversions

1 mbf = 2.4 m3
1 cord = 3.6 m3
100 tons hardwood = 97 m3
100 tons = 101 m3
1 acre = 0.404687 hectares

1. AUDIT CONCLUSIONS

1.1 Audit Recommendation and certification decision

Based on Organisation's conformance with certification requirements, the following recommendation is made:

Certification approved:
 Minor NCR(s) upgraded to MAJOR NCR(s)

Certification not approved:

Additional comments, including issues identified as controversial or hard to evaluate and explanation of the conclusion reached:

1.2 New Non-conformity Reports (NCRs)

Note: NCRs describe evidences of Organisation non-conformities identified during audits. NCRs include defined timelines for the Organisation to demonstrate conformity. MAJOR NCRs issued during assessments/reassessments shall be closed prior to issuance of certificate. MAJOR NCRs issued during anual audits shall be closed within timeline or result in suspension.

Check if no NCR(s) have been issued

| | |
|--|--|
| NCR: 01/19 | NC Classification: MAJOR |
| Standard & Requirement: | Regional FSC FM Standard (Great Lakes St. Lawrence 2010) - 4.2.1 |
| Report Section: | Appendix 1 |
| Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence: | |
| <p><u>Requirement:</u> All forest workers comply with all relevant provincial occupational health and safety requirements.</p> <p><u>2019 finding:</u> Some forest workers were found to not be in compliance with provincial occupational health and safety requirements. Specifically, a forwarder operator on the Strachan Tract was not wearing a hard hat while walking around the log landing on an active logging operation. In addition, a loader operator on the same work site was observed not wearing steel toed boots. The use of appropriate personal protective equipment is also a requirement stipulated in SCFs Timber Sale and Cutting Contract, Section 2 Health and Safety, Clause 5.2.3. Lastly, a skidder was inspected by the auditor on-site at the Vasey Tract and was found to not have a fire extinguisher. In addition to applicable provincial requirements this is also a requirement stipulated in SCFs Timber Sale and Cutting Contract, Section 2 Required Work Practices, Clause 2.15.3. SCF has developed and uses</p> | |

a Harvest Operations Inspection checklist that includes the line items "inadequate fire suppression equipment" and "inadequate PPE", however implementation of the checklist does not appear to be entirely effective.

2020 finding :

During site visits to active operations within the Tosorontio and Orr Lake Tracts, auditors observed some forest workers were found not to be in compliance with provincial health and safety requirements. 5 forest workers were interviewed (owner-operators / employees of owner-operators), 3 fuel tanks and 5 heavy equipment (2 harvesters, 2 skidders, 1 forwarder) were inspected.

Specifically, at the Tosorontio Tract, a truck spill kit was missing mandatory items and a fire extinguisher on a harvester was missing its inspection record and the gauge showed it needed to be recharged. At the Orr Lake Tract through interviews with all forestry workers on site and observations, it was discovered that no certified first aid worker was present on site, first aid kits were in poor condition with expired products (i.e. 2016) and there was no record of regular inspection of the first aid kits. In addition, a fire extinguisher on a harvester was missing its inspection record. Documentation such as completed Harvest Pre-Start Checklists and harvest inspection records were evaluated and showed these procedures were being implemented, however during interviews with forest workers there was some ambiguity regarding health and safety requirements.

Taking all of the above factors into consideration, implementation of the checklist and associated SOPs does not appear to be entirely effective in ensuring compliance with health and safety requirements. The auditor recommends that this non-conformance remain open and be upgraded.

2020 evidence:

- Loggers Safety Meeting May 2019 Summary
- 2019 Harvest Pre-Start Checklist template and samples
- Safety Requirements on SCF Worksite Contractor supplement
- 2019 team safety meeting notes

In addition to specific evidence above:

- Staff interviews
- SCFs Timber Sale and Cutting Contract
- SOPs 2.1, 2.2
- Field verification
- Start-up meeting records
- Harvest inspection records
- Forest worker interviews

Corrective action request:

Organisation shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.

Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.

Timeline for Conformance:

3 months from report finalization date

| | |
|---|--|
| | Due date: 2020-12-01 |
| NCR Evaluation Type | On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Desk Review <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Evidence Provided by Organisation: | PENDING |
| Findings for Evaluation of Evidence: | PENDING |
| NCR Status: | OPEN |
| Comments (optional): | |

| | |
|--|--|
| NCR: 6.7.1/20 | NC Classification: minor |
| Standard & Requirement: | Regional FSC FM Standard (Great Lakes St. Lawrence 2010) – Indicator 6.7.1 |
| Report Section: | Appendix 1 |
| Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence: | |
| <p><u>Requirement:</u> Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are in place and implemented regarding safe handling and disposal of chemicals, liquid and solid non-organic wastes including fuel and oil. These SOP's reflect best management practices and at a minimum ensure compliance with all regulatory guidelines.</p> <p><u>Finding:</u> During site visits to Tosorontio and Orr Lake Tracts, auditors observed conditions which were not in compliance with regulatory guidelines, the incorrect storage of hazardous chemicals according to the requirements related to the Transportation of Dangerous Goods (TDG) Regulations, specifically related to label and placard container placement and unsecured containment. Unsecured containment was observed at the Orr Lake Tract with observations at both tracts being made on container labelling. In addition, an onsite spill kit was missing mandatory items and was in poor condition. That said, no related environmental impacts such as spills were observed during the auditor's time on site.</p> <p>SCF have a requirement stipulated in their Timber Sale and Cutting Contract, Section 4 Health and Safety, Clause 4.2.1 regarding all workers having WHMIS training and are aware of hazardous or controlled products that may be used during the completion of the contract in addition to SOP 2.1, but this does not appear to be fully implemented.</p> <p>This represents a minor non-conformance. It is considered minor given the gaps detected in the field are not considered to have a potential high risk or significant impact on the environment or safety of workers.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and worker interviews • Simcoe County Forest FMP (2011 – 2030) • SOP 2.1 • Field verification • Timber Sales Contracts | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Corrective action request: | <p>Organisation shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.</p> |
| Timeline for Conformance: | <p>Within 12 months from report finalization date Due date: 2020-12-01</p> |
| NCR Evaluation Type | On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Desk Review <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Evidence Provided by Organisation: | PENDING |
| Findings for Evaluation of Evidence: | PENDING |
| NCR Status: | OPEN |
| Comments (optional): | |

1.3 Observations

Note: Observations are issued for the early stages of a problem which does not of itself constitute a non-conformance, but which the auditor considers may lead to a future non-conformance if not addressed by the organization; observations may lead to direct non-conformances if not addressed.

No observations

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| OBS: 4.4.2/20 | Standard & Requirement: | Regional FSC FM Standard (Great Lakes St. Lawrence 2010) - 4.4.2 |
| | Report Section | Appendix 1 |
| Description of findings leading to observation: | <p><u>Requirement:</u> Adjacent landowners and local resource users that may be directly affected by forest operations are provided with notice, and their concerns considered prior to commencement of harvesting and operations.</p> <p><u>Finding:</u> Organization has procedures in place for notification, however no notifications were received by one affected stakeholder and it was observed that a recent stakeholder complaint was not noted in the 2019 complaints summary.</p> | |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| | <p>SCF holds meetings with user group representatives annually, with a system in place to communicate directly with stakeholders directly impacted by forest operations via email. SCF frequently updates its stakeholder notification lists using GIS and the County's database.</p> <p>The Organization is in conformance with 4.4.2 for the reasons stated above however because of the increasing presence of forest users in the FMU, the managers should strive to maintain a safe environment by making sure to broaden their stakeholder outreach to keep them abreast of ongoing operations, therefore an observation is given.</p> |
| Observation: | FME should ensure continued conformance with Indicator 4.4.2. |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| OBS: 8.2.3/20 | Standard & Requirement: | Regional FSC FM Standard (Great Lakes St. Lawrence 2010) - 8.2.3 |
| | Report Section | Appendix 1 |
| Description of findings leading to observation: | <p><u>Requirement:</u> The manager monitors growth rates, regeneration and condition of the forest, including but not necessarily limited to forest health, disturbance, and age class structure.</p> <p><u>Finding:</u> It was noted that no data was collected from PSPs in 2019 due to staffing restrictions and changes at the provincial level with the MNRF.</p> <p>Growth and yield research information is collected through the PSP program. This data is compared to harvest monitoring records and used in management planning on a periodic basis, while staff monitor forest health problems through on-site visits at regular intervals. They also are in contact with surrounding Counties and NGOs, as well as the general public who report unusual situations. Municipalities within SC are locally responsible through fire departments.</p> <p>The Organization is in conformance with 8.2.3 for the reasons stated above however there is no other procedure for growth and yield data collection if data is not collected from the current collaborative arrangement with the MNRF. An observation is given based on the importance of the frequent need for monitoring and data collection to revise and assess local forest productivity.</p> | |
| Observation: | FME should ensure continued conformance with Indicator 8.2.3. | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| OBS: 9.1.3/20 | Standard & Requirement: | Regional FSC FM Standard (Great Lakes St. Lawrence 2010) – 9.1.3 |
| | Report Section | Appendix 1 |
| Description of findings leading to observation: | <p><u>Requirement:</u> The HCVF assessment shall be made publicly available, including associated maps (subject to confidentiality considerations) as well as a summary of how concerns raised during the consultation and review process have been addressed.</p> <p><u>Finding:</u> While the latest HCV assessment public summary made available is from June 2018 (https://www.simcoe.ca/dpt/fbl/about#ui-id-5) and the HCV assessment was recently updated in June 2020, OBS 9.1.3/20 is issued to ensure that the organization always makes available any updates of its HCV assessment public summary.</p> | |
| Observation: | FME should ensure continued conformance with Indicator 9.1.3. | |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| OBS: 9.2.1/20 | Standard & Requirement: | Regional FSC FM Standard (Great Lakes St. Lawrence 2010) – 9.2.1 |
| | Report Section | Appendix 1 |
| Description of findings leading to observation: | <p><u>Requirement:</u> 9.2.1 The manager shall consult with directly affected persons, qualified specialists and Aboriginals on the identification of the High Conservation Values and the management options thereof.</p> <p><u>Finding:</u> Since the last reassessment, SCF regularly consults with experts in government for support in appropriate management and is in constant contact with different land users and the public regarding its management activities.</p> <p>However, since SCF will likely transition in 2021 to the new THE FSC® NATIONAL FOREST STEWARDSHIP STANDARD OF CANADA for Small-Scale, Low Intensity and Community Forests (https://ca.fsc.org/en-ca/standards/small-community-forests/small-community-forest-standard-revision), it should ensure that consultation is also timely made according to the requirements under 9.1.2, 9.2.3 and 9.4.2. OBS 9.2.1/20 is issued.</p> | |
| Observation: | FME should ensure continued conformance with Indicator 9.2.1. | |

1.4 Notes from previous evaluations

Notes are for the audit team only, and identify items that should be looked at during subsequent audits.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| NOTE 01/17 | Reference Standard & Requirement: FSC-POL-20-003, indicator 2.2.c.vi. | |
| <p>Two public consultation periods (winter 2014 and fall 2015) and six information sessions were conducted during the siting process leading up to the selection of the preferred location planned to be excised from the certificate. These processes were upstream to the mandatory consultations of the resulting modifications being proposed to both the Township of Springwater and Simcoe County land use plans and have thus been considered as meeting the requirements of meaningful public participation under criterion 4.4. During the audit, in accordance with the Planning Act, consultations had either just been initiated (County initiated Simcoe County Official Plan Amendment - Dec 22nd 2016) or were just underway (Springwater Township Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-Law Amendment – January 24th 2017). True confirmation that the planned conversion is part of a community endorsed land use plan will only be possible once the results of these processes are made available.</p> | | |
| <p>NOTE: Future audit team to document what were the outcomes of the two ongoing Official Plan Amendments (the County initiated Official Plan Amendment and the Springwater Township Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-Law Amendment).</p> | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Closed | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Followed-up but still open | <input type="checkbox"/> Not followed-up this year |
| <p>2018 Audit Team Response: Since the 2017 CVA specifically conducted on the planned excision, two public meetings were held regarding these amendments; on May 9th regarding the County Amendment and June 19th for the Springwater Township Amendment. Over the course of the rest of 2017, additional studies were undertaken by the County in response to comments received. In early 2018 final technical studies including the Amended Scoped EIS were submitted to the County and Township of Springwater for the County Official Plan Amendment (COPA) and local Official Plan Amendment (OPA) and Zoning by-law Amendment (ZBA). In June 2018 County staff prepared a comprehensive staff report recommending that County Council adopt COPA No.2. County Council adopted COPA No.2 on June 26th, 2018. Provincial approval for COPA No.2 was received on January 2, 2019. Three subsequent appeals by neighbours were submitted to Ontario’s Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) in January 2019. The Project Team is currently advancing through the LPAT process and addressing these appeals. Given that the LPAT process has yet to be finalized and a decision to move forward with excision has not yet been made, this note remains open.</p> | | |
| <p>2019 Audit Team Response: In 2019 other supplementary studies are being advanced as the LPAT process continues including studies for a Site Plan Approval (SPA) and Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA), which includes an Environmental Management Plan, Wildlife Management Plan and numerous technical studies. Given that the LPAT process has yet to be finalized and a decision to move forward with excision has not yet been made, this note remains open.</p> | | |
| <p>2020 Audit Team Response: As documented above, both the Springwater and County plan amendments had been approved in 2019. However, three appeals had been submitted to Ontario’s Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT). At the time of the audit, the appeals had not yet been heard in court, however the County of Simcoe made a request to the Municipal Affairs and Housing for a minister’s zoning order, to accelerate the process to obtain what would be a final approval of the project development. Given the LPAT process</p> | | |

has yet to be finalized and a decision to move forward with excision has not yet been made, this note remains open.

1.5 Conformance with Applicable Non-conformity Reports (NCRs)

Note: this section indicates the Organisation's actions to comply with NCRs that have been issued during or since the last audit. Failure to comply with a minor NCR results in the NCR being upgraded to major; the specified follow-up action is required by the Organization or involuntary suspension will take place.

| Status Categories | Explanation |
|-------------------|---|
| CLOSED | Operation has successfully met the NCR |
| OPEN | Operation has either not met or has partially met the NCR |

Check if N/A (there are no open NCRs to review)

| | |
|---|--|
| NCR: 01/19 | NC Classification: minor |
| Standard & Requirement: | Regional FSC FM Standard (Great Lakes St. Lawrence 2010) - 4.2.1 |
| Report Section: | Appendix 1 |
| Description of Non-conformance and Related Evidence: | |
| <p><u>Requirement:</u> All forest workers comply with all relevant provincial occupational health and safety requirements.</p> <p><u>Finding:</u> Some forest workers were found to not be in compliance with provincial occupational health and safety requirements. Specifically, a forwarder operator on the Strachan Tract was not wearing a hard hat while walking around the log landing on an active logging operation. In addition, a loader operator on the same work site was observed not wearing steel toed boots. The use of appropriate personal protective equipment is also a requirement stipulated in SCFs Timber Sale and Cutting Contract, Section 2 Health and Safety, Clause 5.2.3. Lastly, a skidder was inspected by the auditor on-site at the Vasey Tract and was found to not have a fire extinguisher. In addition to applicable provincial requirements this is also a requirement stipulated in SCFs Timber Sale and Cutting Contract, Section 2 Required Work Practices, Clause 2.15.3. SCF has developed and uses a Harvest Operations Inspection checklist that includes the line items "inadequate fire suppression equipment" and "inadequate PPE", however implementation of the checklist does not appear to be entirely effective.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timber Sale and Cutting Contract • Field verification | |

| | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest worker interviews | |
| Corrective action request: | <p>Organisation shall implement corrective actions to demonstrate conformance with the requirement(s) referenced above.</p> <p>Note: Effective corrective actions focus on addressing the specific occurrence described in evidence above, as well as the root cause to eliminate and prevent recurrence of the non-conformance.</p> |
| Timeline for Conformance: | <p>3 months from report draft date Due date: 2020-11-21</p> |
| NCR Evaluation Type | <p>On-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Desk Review <input type="checkbox"/></p> |
| Evidence Provided by Organisation: | <p>Evidence provided specifically in 2020 Reassessment Audit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loggers Safety Meeting May 2019 Summary • 2019 Harvest Pre-Start Checklist template and samples • Safety Requirements on SCF Worksite Contractor supplement • 2019 team safety meeting notes <p>In addition to specific evidence above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff interviews • SCFs Timber Sale and Cutting Contract • SOPs 2.1, 2.2 • Field verification • Start-up meeting records • Harvest inspection records • Forest worker interviews |
| Findings for Evaluation of Evidence: | <p>During site visits to active operations within the Tosorontio and Orr Lake Tracts, auditors observed some forest workers were found not to be in compliance with provincial health and safety requirements. 5 forest workers were interviewed (owner-operators / employees of owner-operators), 3 fuel tanks and 5 heavy equipment (2 harvesters, 2 skidders, 1 forwarder) were inspected.</p> <p>Specifically, at the Tosorontio Tract, a truck spill kit was missing mandatory items and a fire extinguisher on a harvester was missing its inspection record and the gauge showed it needed to be recharged. At the Orr Lake Tract through interviews with all forestry workers on site and observations, it was discovered that no certified first aid worker was present on site, first aid kits were in poor condition with expired products (i.e. 2016) and there was no record of regular inspection of the first aid kits. In addition, a fire extinguisher on a harvester was missing its inspection record and an onsite spill kit was missing mandatory items and in poor condition. Documentation</p> |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| | <p>such as completed Harvest Pre-Start Checklists and harvest inspection records were evaluated and showed these procedures were being implemented, however during interviews with forest workers there was some ambiguity regarding health and safety requirements.</p> <p>Taking all of the above factors into consideration, implementation of the checklist and associated SOPs does not appear to be entirely effective in ensuring compliance with health and safety requirements. The auditor recommends that this remain open and be upgraded.</p> |
| NCR Status: | OPEN |
| Comments (optional): | Upgrade to Major |

1.6 Summary of evaluation findings per criteria

| PRINCIPLE 1: Compliance with law and FSC Principles | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|--|----------|--|
| Criterion 1.1 Respect for national and local laws and administrative requirements | | | | | |
| Conformance | X | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) | |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | The manager, staff and/or contractors understand their obligations regarding forestry, environmental, labour and health and safety regulations. In house administrators and professional associations of staff provide updates on regulatory changes. | | | | |
| Criterion 1.2 Payment of legally prescribed fees, royalties, taxes and other charges | | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) | |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | Simcoe County Forest is in good standing with respect to taxes and other payments. | | | | |
| Criterion 1.3 Respect for provisions of international agreements | | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) | |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | SCF follows Provincial and National laws which in turn are consistent with the treaties that Canada has been a signatory to. | | | | |
| Criterion 1.4 Conflicts between laws and regulations, and the FSC P&C | | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) | |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | There were no significant conflicts with the standard identified by the organization or the audit team during this evaluation. | | | | |
| Criterion 1.5 Protection of forests from illegal activities | | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) | |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | SCF developed a Recreation Policy which was updated in 2018 which details activities which are permitted within County Forests. The policy also clearly lists prohibited activities, as well as measures for enforcement. | | | | |
| Criterion 1.6 Demonstration of a long-term commitment to the FSC P&C | | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|--|-----------------|--|----------|
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | SCF has been FSC FM certified since July 2010 and adapted its FMP planning and implementation to adhere to the requirements of the applicable FSC standard. Notably, the FMP 2011-2030 does refer to FSC requirements. Furthermore, SCF reinstates its commitment to FSC in different approved news releases. | | | |
| PRINCIPLE 2: Tenure and use rights and responsibilities | | | | |
| Criterion 2.1 Demonstration of land tenure and forest use rights | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | Ownership of all SCF lands is fee simple and well documented by SCF. The County, as municipal government, has extensive land ownership of properties, including more than just forest. On the ground, property boundaries are well marked with signage and/or fencing. SCF continues to upgrade signage and property markings. | | | |
| Criterion 2.2 Local communities' legal or customary tenure or use rights | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | Regarding communities in the sense of municipalities, SCF is comprised of sixteen towns and townships of the area, so in fact they have community "control, to the extent necessary to protect their rights" in the by-law. The County's Recreation Policy and Recreation Bylaw clearly define permitted public use activities that address various users including hikers, dog walkers, mountain bikers, snowmobilers, other off-road motorized vehicles, hunters, anglers, trappers, and non-timber forest product gatherers. Customary use is clearly defined by the Recreation Policy, and no commercial use is precluded. | | | |
| Criterion 2.3 Disputes over tenure claims and use rights | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | Ultimately, a dispute can be taken to Council who are democratically elected (https://www.simcoe.ca/dpt/clk/aboutcc#ui-id-1). Simcoe County has a customer service department that can receive, acknowledge, and direct complaints to the relevant department. Most disputes are about land use and cooperation between user groups. The auditors did not find a dispute of significant magnitude. Regarding the Freele tract, see findings under section 3.2.2 of the report. | | | |
| PRINCIPLE 3: Indigenous peoples' rights | | | | |
| Criterion 3.1 Indigenous peoples' control of forest management | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | SCF is a community owned forest. The manager has knowledge of the Aboriginal communities within and adjacent to the County of Simcoe. SCF have contacted the Aboriginal Communities in and around the forest, both First Nations and Métis, regarding some specific issues including sites of special interest. There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard. | | | |
| Criterion 3.2 Maintenance of indigenous peoples' resources or tenure rights | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding | SCF is a community owned forest and as such not considered a "public forest" in the sense of the standard. This Criterion is N/A. | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|--|-----------------|--|----------|
| <i>(strength/weakness)</i> | | | | |
| Criterion 3.3 Protection of sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance to indigenous peoples | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i> | <p>SCF is proactive in identifying and managing archaeological sites of interest in consultation with the relevant Indigenous People.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 3.4 Compensation of indigenous peoples for the application of their traditional knowledge | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i> | <p>The SCF managers acknowledge that if traditional knowledge is used then SCF will enter into an agreement with affected Aboriginal communities. To date, there is no use of traditional knowledge regarding the use of forest species or management systems.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> | | | |
| PRINCIPLE 4: Community relations and workers rights | | | | |
| Criterion 4.1 Employment, training, and other services for local communities | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i> | <p>There are no significant changes from past findings on local procurement. Local mills and contractors have continued to be competitive in harvest tenders.</p> <p>SCF staff continue to be very actively engaged in the community and there are multiple examples of support and local benefit from the management of this forest unit.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 4.2 Compliance with health and safety regulations | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i> | <p>Past non-conformance under this Criterion (NCR 01/19) has not been fully addressed in the past year. Though SCF have updated their Standard Operating Procedures and carried out additional communication and training with forest workers to ensure that health and safety procedure implementation on forestry operations exceed legal requirements this implementation does not appear to be entirely effective in ensuring full compliance with health and safety requirements.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 4.3 Workers' rights to organize and negotiate with employers | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding <i>(strength/weakness)</i> | <p>SCF employees continue to be under a collective bargaining agreement through CUPE Local 5820.01.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 4.4 Social impact evaluations and consultation | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|--|----------|
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | There is no change to conformance since the 2015 evaluation based on the current version of the FMP (2011 – 2030). SCF has also demonstrated multiple ongoing examples of community engagement. | | | |
| | There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard. | | | |
| | See section 3.2.2 of report regarding the Freele Tract. | | | |
| Criterion 4.5 Resolution of grievances and settlement of compensation claims | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | As a municipal government agency there is a very strong structure for resolving disputes with the general public and user groups. SCF maintains a very open recreation policy to accommodate multiple user groups in the forest which was recently revised in 2018 based on stakeholder input. | | | |
| | There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard. | | | |
| PRINCIPLE 5: Benefits from the forest | | | | |
| Criterion 5.1 Economic viability taking full environmental, social, and operational costs into account | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | SCF continues to be an actively managed forest unit and is revenue positive for the Municipal Government. The level of financial viability is achieved while also providing significant recreation opportunities for the public. SCF has a well-demonstrated history of management based on multiple values, economic viability, and ecological health. | | | |
| Criterion 5.2 Optimal use and local processing of forest products | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | SCF timber sales continued to be implemented through an open tender process. This generally ensures that timber products are direct to the highest and best use. Timber products from SCF are primarily purchased and used in local sawmills. | | | |
| Criterion 5.3 Waste minimization and avoidance of damage to forest resources | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | Forest operations are typically all planned with direct tree marking in harvest areas to maximize utilization and management objectives. There was good utilization of harvested material on all active and recent operations observed during this re-assessment. | | | |
| Criterion 5.4 Forest management and the local economy | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | SCF continues to manage the forest toward a natural composition. This is leading to a diversification of timber products over time. SCF has also implemented a forest management program based on multiple values and community benefits. | | | |
| Criterion 5.5 Maintenance of the value of forest services and resources | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | SCF continues to be managed for multiple values, including ecological services. Standard Operating Procedures, management planning, and | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|-----------------|--|----------|
| | <p>afforestation programs clearly demonstrate efforts to enhance the value of forest services.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 5.6 Harvest levels | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>SCF continues to use an area-based calculation to determine the sustainable rate of harvest. Harvest rates are reflective of the dominance of planted red pine stands in this forest and SCF objectives to restore natural forest cover over time. Annual fluctuations in harvest rates have been occurring more recently as there has been accelerated red pine decline in some areas. Harvest levels over a five-year term remain below the forecasted growth rate of the forest.</p> | | | |
| PRINCIPLE 6: Environmental impact | | | | |
| Criterion 6.1 Environmental impacts evaluation | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>SCF has described and implemented a management system appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations that provides for the assessment and minimization of potential environmental impacts from forestry activities.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 6.2 Protection of rare, threatened and endangered species | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>Simcoe County Forest have a current listing (last updated June 2020) of all Species at Risk (SAR) in the region of their operations. The list is developed based on occurrences from National Heritage Information Centre (NHIC) and Land Information Ontario (LIO). Other information is used as available.</p> <p>The full SAR list is also refined to a manager's list of species potentially affected by SCF operations. The Manager's List includes the identification of habitat and requirements and sources of available information on management guidance.</p> <p>Management practices appropriate to the protection of SAR are implemented in operational planning, including prescription development and tree marking.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 6.3 Maintenance of ecological functions and values | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>SCF is applying a consistent approach to maintaining, enhancing, and restoring ecological functions their forest areas. The primary harvest methods are partial removal systems focused on thinning and quality improvement. All harvests are pre-marked using certified tree markers under the direction of detailed prescriptions to apply best available management guidelines and SCF's AOC criteria.</p> <p>This approach has been consistently verified and field site visits demonstrated that harvesting is being implemented in a manner that would achieve the long-term management goals for the forest.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 6.4 Protection of representative samples of existing ecosystems | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |

| | | | | |
|--|--|------------------------|--|-----------------|
| <p>Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)</p> | <p>The historical context of the areas managed by SCF significantly limits the ability to identify and protect representative samples of ecosystem types in their natural state. The landscape had almost entirely been cleared for agriculture, and forest cover was only re-established over the past 80 years. SCF was largely established to manage the reforestation of lands and restoration of natural forest types to this landscape. As such the principles of protected area management are not directly applicable in this context.</p> <p>Where a “gap analysis” is not feasible in a landscape with little to no representative natural ecosystems, protected areas are instead targeted to protecting unique forest types where they exist, sensitive lands, and HCVF.</p> <p>The total of areas permanently excluded from management activities represents approximately 21.8% of the SCF area.</p> | | | |
| <p>Criterion 6.5 Protection against damage to soils, residual forest and water resources during operations</p> | | | | |
| <p>Conformance</p> | <p>x</p> | <p>Non conformance</p> | | <p>NCR #(s)</p> |
| <p>Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)</p> | <p>SCF continues to use a system of Standard Operating Procedures to minimize forest damage from management activities. All timber harvests in SCF are carried out by third party contractors through a timber sale process. The terms of the timber sale set out conditions for minimizing site damage. SCF also monitors harvesting activities as per its Forest Operations Monitoring and Assessment Procedures, utilizing standard regeneration assessment procedures for reforestation activities, and conducting invasive species monitoring.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> | | | |
| <p>Criterion 6.6 Chemical pest management</p> | | | | |
| <p>Conformance</p> | <p>x</p> | <p>Non conformance</p> | | <p>NCR #(s)</p> |
| <p>Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)</p> | <p>SCF is primarily managed without the use of chemical pesticides. Some direct application of herbicide does occur in the control of invasive species. In such cases lowest effective concentrations of chemical are used and application is carefully controlled, typically by backpack sprayer and with the assistance of an ATV mounted unit.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> | | | |
| <p>Criterion 6.7 Use and disposal of chemicals, containers, liquid and solid non-organic wastes</p> | | | | |
| <p>Conformance</p> | <p>x</p> | <p>Non conformance</p> | | <p>NCR #(s)</p> |
| <p>Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>)</p> | <p>With regard to liquid/solid non-organic waste disposal, it is the responsibility of the purchaser of the standing timber to properly address waste disposal. Additionally, the following provisions have been put in place: 1) Wording is included within SCF’s Timber Sale Contract requiring garbage left on site; 2) Garbage left on site is monitored as part of ongoing harvest monitoring and; 3) A proper spill kit is required to be on hand. Interviews conducted on-site by the auditor with contractors confirmed that contractors are aware of and follow the procedures for disposing of waste management specified in the SCF</p> | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|--|----------|
| | Timber Sales Contracts. However, it was observed on site that procedures are not being implemented fully regarding safe storage of hazardous goods. Minor NCR is issued regarding this. | | | |
| Criterion 6.8 Use of biological control agents and genetically modified organisms | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>SCF does not typically use biological control agents though they have been involved with several trial applications. The 2019 Annual Report (Page 6) details the application of Rotstop C to control Heterobasidial Irregular Root Disease (HRD) to mitigate productivity losses and mortality in 252 ha of red pine (<i>Pinus resinosa</i>) stands within 11 tracts. This product is essentially a native fungus. Also, starting in 2017 SCF has participated in the experimental release of <i>Hypena Opulenta</i> as a potential biocontrol to manage Dog Strangling Vine (DSV) and trial application in 2017 of Chontea Peat Paste (CPP), a biological herbicide used to control woody growth. The active ingredient <i>Chondrostereum purpureum</i> (Pers. Ex Fr.) Pouzar is a native fungal plant pathogen. This trial was designed to test the efficacy of CPP against invasive Glossy Buckthorn (<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>) in a cut stump operation. These applications are carefully controlled, and well documented.</p> <p>SCF does not use genetically modified organisms in its forest management operations.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 6.9 The use of exotic species | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>Simcoe County does not plant invasive species on County forests. European larch (<i>Larix decidua</i>) is still planted in some areas experiencing red pine root rot (Heterobasidial Irregular Root Disease (HRD)) or affected by white pine weevil (<i>Pissodes strobi</i>) to stabilize the soil until other species can become established. Norway Spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>) is still planted as a windbreak on property boundaries. European larch and Norway Spruce are not considered invasive and their use is limited and based on clearly defined objectives.</p> <p>There are no changes to previous audit findings. SCF is engaged in efforts to remove mature plantations of jack pine (<i>Pinus banksiana</i>) and exotic species including Scots pine (<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>). SCF actions are consistent with the indicator and have been justified which is consistent with a small use of non-native species.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 6.10 Forest conversion to plantations or non-forest land uses | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>SCF is very committed to objectives of restoring forest cover in Simcoe County. SCF is active in the management of existing forest, land acquisition and afforestation to meet this objective. As such, conversion of forest to non-forest uses does not occur within the FMU.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> | | | |

| PRINCIPLE 7: Management plan | | | | |
|---|--|-----------------|--|----------|
| Criterion 7.1 Management plan requirements | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>SCF completed their five year review of the FMP in 2017. The current forest condition has not changed significantly from when the plan was written so there is no need for an early revision to the plan however they did recalculate annual growth projections for hardwoods and softwoods and are carefully monitoring the rate of annual harvest and species selection, as mentioned in criterion 5.6 . There was no consultation process due to the technical nature of the review, which was done by Registered Professional Foresters. The review highlighted the need for SCFs continuance of its adaptive management approach for mitigating the effects of climate change and invasive species.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 7.2 Management plan revision | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>The plan developed in 2011 is reviewed every 5 years (last review in 2017) and updated where needed in the 5-year review documentation or supplementary documentation and is still a good direction for the forest.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 7.3 Training and supervision of forest workers | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>The County ensures training records are kept and all staff have been trained. The small number of staff communicate well. Issues, when identified, are reported immediately.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of this standard.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 7.4 Public availability of the management plan elements | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>The full management plan is available on the County's website, including the 2012-2016 Five Year Forest Management Plan Review.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> | | | |
| PRINCIPLE 8: Monitoring and evaluation | | | | |
| Criterion 8.1 Frequency, intensity and consistency of monitoring | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>SCF publishes an annual report that describes management activities over the past year and measures progress towards meeting the goals and objectives in the management plan.</p> <p>SCF have further updated their Monitoring and Assessment Protocol to continually improve the approach to planning, site level assessment, monitoring, and management plan review.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> | | | |

| Criterion 8.2 Research and data collection for monitoring | | | | |
|--|---|-----------------|--|----------|
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>SCF actively participates in forest related research. In addition to the PSP program, SCF frequently contributes sites for outside research projects. Summary details of research efforts in the FMU are provided in the SCF Annual Reports. The 2019 report identifies several active research initiatives in the forest over the past year, including the monitoring of black-legged ticks, gypsy moth surveillance, and habitat restoration and monitoring of the Museum Tract.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of this standard.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 8.3 Chain of custody | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>Product tracking for the purposes of Chain of Custody requirements continues to be implemented through a timber sale tender process and related SOPs. This process includes the collection of detailed tree marking data and sales information.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 8.4 Incorporation of monitoring results into the management plan | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>SCF's SOP 2.0 Monitoring and Assessment Procedures documentation has established a clear process for how monitoring results are incorporated into the management plan. Monitoring activities from pre-harvest planning, site level inventories, tree marking, and post harvest assessment are all used to inform 5-year updates to the management plan.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 8.5 Publicly available summary of monitoring | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>Requirements for compiling the results of monitoring and public information sharing continue to be met through availability of the full management plan on Simcoe County's website and the publicly available annual reports and 5-Year review reports.</p> <p>There is continued conformance with the requirements of the standard.</p> | | | |
| PRINCIPLE 9: High Conservation Value Forests | | | | |
| Criterion 9.1 Evaluation to determine high conservation value attributes | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>The FMP identifies the 8 major types of HCVs across the certified land base and SCF updates as needed the results of its HCV assessment when relevant new information is available, or land acquisition is made. A public summary of the FMP and HCV assessment are made available on Simcoe County's website: https://www.simcoe.ca/dpt/fbl/about#ui-id-5</p> | | | |
| Criterion 9.2 Consultation process | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |

| | | | | |
|--|---|-----------------|--|----------|
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>Since the last reassessment, regularly consults with experts in government for support in appropriate management and is in constant contact with different land users and the public regarding its management activities.</p> <p>However, since SCF will likely transition in 2021 to the new THE FSC® NATIONAL FOREST STEWARDSHIP STANDARD OF CANADA for Small-Scale, Low Intensity and Community Forests (https://ca.fsc.org/en-ca/standards/small-community-forests/small-community-forest-standard-revision), it should ensure that consultation is also timely made according to the requirements under 9.1.2, 9.2.3 and 9.4.2. OBS 9.2.1/20 is issued.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 9.3 Measures to maintain and enhance high conservation value attributes | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>Management strategies outlined in the FMP and the HCV assessment summary clearly indicate management strategies were chosen to ensure maintenance or conservation of the attributes with a precautionary approach. The audit team went on-site in recent and on-going operations where HCV values were identified and confirm conformance to this requirement.</p> | | | |
| Criterion 9.4 Monitoring to assess effectiveness | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>SCF tracks the harvesting conducted within HCVFs and the post-harvest inspections are used to assess whether the objectives identified in the prescriptions were met. SCF Forest Technicians continually monitor the forest as part of their daily routine and correspond on a regular basis with the numerous formalized recreation groups that utilize the FMU. As such they can quickly identify and address any damage that may occur from users such as ATVs, motor-cross and mountain bikes.</p> <p>A comprehensive HCV summary was updated in June 2020 to facilitate overall understanding of how HCVs are managed and what kind of monitoring is expected. Measuring the effectiveness of many of the HCVs is a long-term endeavor and is also covered by governmental bodies.</p> <p>In addition, SCF has in place a Forest Operations Monitoring and Assessment Procedures SOP to assess forest operations effectiveness and monitor for environmental or social impacts.</p> | | | |
| PRINCIPLE 10: Plantations | | | | |
| Criterion 10.1 Statement of objectives in the management plan | | | | |
| Conformance | x | Non conformance | | NCR #(s) |
| Finding (<i>strength/weakness</i>) | <p>Simcoe County Forest continues to be characterized by red pine plantations created in the last century to stabilize soils. These old planted areas are being tended over time to encourage the restoration of tolerant hardwood composition that will eventually form a more natural forest cover for this region. Where these planted stands are being managed to restore natural forest conditions, they do not meet the definition of plantation in the FSC standard.</p> | | | |

| | |
|--|--|
| | The only new planted areas established in the Simcoe County Forest are on old field sites, where planted regeneration is used for purposes of afforestation. The intention of these planted areas is to restore natural forest cover over time. The planted stock is used as a nurse crop to support the restoration of tolerant hardwood in the understory over time. The planted sites are not being created with the primary purpose of timber production and will be managed according to the full requirements of Principles 1-9. These areas are therefore not considered "Plantations" for the purposes of this standard. |
|--|--|

1.7 Stakeholder consultation

1.7.1 Stakeholder consultation process

The purpose of the stakeholder consultation strategy for this reassessment was to ensure that the public is aware of and informed about the reassessment process and its objectives. Broad public notification of reassessment was made by NEPCo on April 24. This notice was emailed to NEPCo's stakeholder list and was posted on the FSC Canada and NEPCo websites.

A more targeted approach was then used by the audit team, selecting stakeholders using a comprehensive database provided by the client and past stakeholder consultation records. Engagement with stakeholders consisted of email, interviews and telephone correspondence. Members of the key local stakeholder groups were contacted by telephone and interviews were conducted. SCF has a diverse list of groups that use the forest for their activities. were contacted to gather evidence on conformance with the FSC standards evaluated during this audit".

| Stakeholder Type (NGO, government bodies, local inhabitant, contractor etc.) | Stakeholders Notified (X) | Stakeholders consulted directly or provided input (#) |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| National/Regional ENGOS | ☒ | |
| National/Regional Forest NGOs | ☒ | |
| Academic | ☒ | |
| Government Agencies/Regulators | ☒ | 1 |
| Forest Industry | ☒ | |
| National/Regional Recreation Organizations | ☒ | |
| Labor Unions/Worker Association | ☒ | |
| Indigenous Peoples | ☒ | |
| Local NGOs | ☒ | 2 |
| Local Communities/Representatives | ☒ | |
| Local resource users (trappers, hunt & fish clubs, etc.) | ☒ | 1 |
| Local recreationalists (tourism, hiking, etc.) | ☒ | 7 |
| Local businesses | ☒ | |
| Forest Owner or Manager | ☒ | 2 |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----|
| Buyers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| Contractors | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| Workers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 12 |
| Other (describe): Adjacent landowners | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 2 |

1.7.2 Stakeholder comments

The table below summarizes the issues identified by the audit team with a brief discussion of each based upon specific interview and/or public meeting comments.

| Principle/Subject Area | Stakeholder comment | NEPCon response |
|---|---|---|
| P1: FSC Commitment and Legal Compliance | Some concerned citizens have continued to be vocal against the County's plans to convert a part of the Freele Tract into an Environmental Resource Recovery Centre. | As documented in a specific conformance verification audit (CVA) conducted in January 2017 , the planned excision in conformance to FSC's policy for excision (FSC-POL-20-003) cannot be completed until the Official Plan Amendments have been finalized and final decision to move forward with the excision is made by the Corporation. Most recent events have been documented in Note 01/17 in section 1.4, which remains open. |
| P2: Tenure & Use Rights & Responsibilities | No comment received. | No response necessary. |
| P3 – Indigenous Peoples' Rights | No comment received. | No response necessary. |
| P4: Community Relations & Workers' Rights | <p>A variety of local forest users were solicited, and most stakeholders interviewed were satisfied with the level of information, communication and involvement they had with SCF. Most concerns raised were regarding conflicting interests between user groups.</p> <p>However, one stakeholder had not received any communication or recent follow-up regarding nearby forestry operations.</p> | <p>The auditor triangulated the information with interviews with the county forester and staff. SCF holds meetings with user group representatives annually, with a system in place to communicate directly with stakeholders directly impacted by forest operations. SCF frequently updates its stakeholder notification lists using GIS and the County's database.</p> <p>Hence, the Organization is in conformance with indicator 4.4.2. That said, the SCF managers</p> |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| | | should strive to strengthen stakeholder relationships and maintain a safe environment by making sure to broaden their stakeholder outreach to keep them abreast of ongoing operations and ensure all complaints are documented and responded to satisfactorily. OBS 01/20 has been issued regarding this. |
| P5: Benefits from the Forest | No comment received. | No response necessary. |
| P6: Environmental Impact | Stakeholders indicated concern about the impact of motorized vehicles and mountain bike use on trails, centred around damage to understory vegetation and sensitive ecosystems. | SCF has considerable pressure to provide trail experiences for a wide variety of stakeholders. By defining trails (good signage, trail routing and maps) they intensify impacts but minimize broader damage to vegetation. A selection of tracts was observed by the auditor and no damage outside of the ordinary was noted, in addition to the auditor reviewing the revised 2018 SCF Recreation Policy. |
| | A stakeholder expressed concern involving an area visible from the public road within the Thompson Tract which had been harvested in 2017. Specifically regarding the condition it had been left in, such as standing stumps and brush piles, as well as the general aesthetics of the site. | Each operational area has silvicultural justifications and overall long-term rationale documented within the 2011-2030 Forest Management Plan (FMP) and stand level prescriptions. These documents together with SCF's Standard Operating Procedures and conditions in the Timber Sale Contracts help to ensure environmental impacts are mitigated during forest operations. After reviewing this documentation, interviewing staff and visiting the site, there was no evidence of any special environmental considerations having been missed. SCF staff did note that brush was likely left where it was due to how it was cut and had expected the debris to have decomposed more. |
| | A group of stakeholders shared concerns in regards to a recreational trail built through the Freele Tract. They had observed | This comment was received following the field visits, so the audit team was unable to make direct observations on this specific site, however videos were shared |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | that some hardwood trees had been downed and left to rot. | <p>showing some hardwood trees downed. After having reviewed these videos, the site prescription and FMP documentation in conjunction with interviewing the County Forester, the auditor concludes there was no evidence of any special environmental considerations having been missed nor deviation from the direction of the FMP and silvicultural justifications. There was a greater proportion of large unmerchantable wood left than usual at the site due to the prevalence of Armillaria and Annosus root rot, which was taken into consideration by SCF for the harvest of this area. The downed woody debris left on site is in accordance with SCF's Operational Guidelines for Habitat Improvement (S.5.3, FMP), which is based on provincial forest management guidelines.</p> <p>These stakeholders were also invited to submit their concerns directly to the certificate holder.</p> |
| P7: Management Plan | No comment received | No response necessary. |
| P8: Monitoring & Assessment | No comment received | No response necessary. |
| P9: Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forest | No comment received | No response necessary. |
| P10: Plantations | No comment received | No response necessary. |

2. AUDIT PROCESS

2.1 Certification Standard Used

| | |
|--|---|
| Standards Used: | Regional FSC FM Standard (Great Lakes St. Lawrence 2010) https://ca.fsc.org/en-ca/standards/forest-management-standards NEPCON Chain of Custody Standard for FM https://www.nepcon.org/library/standard/nepcon-chain-custody-standard-forest-management-enterprises FSC and Rainforest Alliance trademarks use https://fsc.org/en/document-centre/documents/resource/225 |
| Local Adaptation: (if applicable) | Not applicable |

2.2 External peer review

Not required for reassessments per FSC-STD-20-007.

2.3 Audit Team and accompanying persons

| Name | Role and qualifications |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Yves Bouthillier, Biol., M.Sc. | Lead Auditor. Yves is a biologist, Associate Forestry for NEPCON and certification lead auditor for FSC forest management, chain-of-custody, controlled wood and Rainforest Alliance's Sustainable Agriculture System chain-of-custody. Since January 2014, Yves has completed more than 80 FSC forest management and chain-of-custody audits. Prior to his master in forest ecology at the Research Centre on Water, Earth, and the Environment of the INRS University, Yves completed a baccalaureate in biology, with a concentration in conservation and environment at Laval University. He is a member of the Québec's association of biologists and fluent in English and French. |
| James Hallworth, R.P.F. | Auditor in training. James is a Forestry Specialist for NEPCON and a Registered Professional Forester in Ontario with over 5 years of experience in forest and resource management. After his Master's degree in Environmental Assessment, James has worked in a variety of positions within the forestry and environmental sectors. Past work experiences include the development and implementation of forest management plans as a district forester for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry in Northern Ontario, forest resource inventory and timber cruising within Ontario plus assisting with several conservation projects globally, including within the UK, China, India and the USA. |

2.4 Audit Overview

This audit was conducted as a partial remote audit due to COVID-19. This was in accordance with NEPCo Policy on Auditing during COVID-19 Outbreak and FSC-DER_2020-01. NEPCo determined that a partial remote audit could be credibly conducted for the organization. The partial remote audit process was performed in two phases: a remote desk audit followed by onsite field verification. The remote portion of the audit covered all aspects of the audit except for what needed to be verified during field site visits.

| Date(s) | Site(s) | Main activities | Auditor(s) |
|---------------------------|----------|---|------------|
| May 14, 2020 | Remotely | Preparatory call | YB, JH |
| April 24, 2020 | Remotely | Stakeholder Notification | YB, JH |
| June 2-July 6, 2020 | Remotely | Review of evidence | YB, JH |
| June 10, 2020 | Remotely | Remote audit Opening meeting | YB, JH |
| June 10-11, 2020 | Remotely | Remote audit Interviews, review of evidence, stakeholder consultation | YB, JH |
| June 11, 2020 | Remotely | Remote audit Closing meeting | YB, JH |
| July 7, 2020 | On-site | Fields visits w opening/closing meeting | YB, JH |
| Total LOE for audit: 7.38 | | | |

2.5 Audit Background

2.5.1 Changes in FMEs' forest management and associated effects on conformance to standard requirements

| | |
|---|---|
| Has the management system changed since the previous evaluation? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| If yes, briefly review the changes: | |
| Have there been any complaints, disputes, or allegations of non-conformity with the standards raised against the Organisation during the audit period: | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Please refer to 1 complaint documented in section 1.5, Criterion 4.4 Social impact evaluations and consultation, and section 1.6.2, Stakeholder comments. | |

2.6 Description of Overall Audit Process

2.6.1 Changes to the certificate scope

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Number of hectares added: | 50.40 |
| Number of hectares removed: | 0 |
| Number of FMUs (properties) added (if applicable): | 0 |
| Number of FMUs (properties) removed (if applicable): | 0 |
| Total hectares in the certificate: | 13 377.00 |
| Number of FMUs (properties) in the certificate: | 1 |

2.6.2 Sampling and FMUs selected for evaluation

FSC sampling rules were used to select the forest management units (FMUs) to be visited this audit. If applicable, FMUs are divided into subsets based on property size and whether they are new to the group. Small properties are less than 1,000 ha, medium properties are 1,000-10,000 ha, and large properties are >10,000 ha.

Sampling is summarized in the table here:

| Description of Subset | # FMUs in subset | Minimum # FMUs to visit | Actual # FMUs visited | Notes/Comments |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| >10,000 ha | 1 | 1 | 1 | Only FMU. |

Note: FSC sampling formulas from FSC-STD-20-007 v3.0 (Forest management evaluations) were used to determine minimum FMUs to visit.¹

Sample FMU selection was based on extent of recent activity, type of activity and also sought to include a diversity of forest managers and at least one FMU that had never been audited (see table below).

| FMU Name | Rationale for Selection |
|----------------------|---|
| Simcoe County Forest | Certified area is made of different tracts/lots spread throughout Simcoe County. Site visits focused on on-going operations, recent operations, site with values of interests (ex. AOC, HCV, important to stakeholders) |

¹ Sampling formulas (y is #FMUs; x is minimum FMUs to sample)
 FMUs >10,000 hectares: new FMUs (x=y); existing FMUs (x=0.8*y)
 FMUs >1,001-10,000 hectares: new FMUs (x=0.3*y); existing FMUs (x=0.2*y)
 FMUs <1,000 hectares: new FMUs (x=0.6*√y); existing FMUs (x=0.3*√y)
 Multiple FMU: new FMUs (x=0.8*√y); existing FMUs (x=(0.8*√y)/2)

2.6.3 Review of FME Documentation and required records

A. All certificate types

| Required Records | Reviewed |
|---|---|
| Complaints received by FME from stakeholders, actions taken, follow up communication | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comments: 2019 Complaints Summary provided. 6 complaints recorded for 2019. Auditor followed up with 3 stakeholders based on issues being unresolved or partially resolved at the current time. | |
| Accident records | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comments: 1 accident record supplied and reviewed. | |
| Training records | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comments: Reviewed FME staff training records, samples of individual certifications and loggers safety meeting 2019 minutes. | |
| Operational plan(s) for next twelve months | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comments: Reviewed List of 2020 Planned Operations spreadsheet. | |
| Inventory records | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comments: Reviewed from SCF 2011-2030 FMP and stand analysis and prescription documentation. | |
| Harvesting records | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comments: Post harvest stand analysis and damage report, 2019 annual report and 2019 Timber Sales Summary reviewed. | |

2.6.4 List of management aspects reviewed by audit team

| Type of site | Sites visited | Type of site | Sites visited |
|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Road construction | | Illegal settlement | |
| Soil drainage | | Bridges/stream crossing | X |
| Workshop | X | Chemical storage | X |
| Tree nursery | | Wetland | X |
| Planned Harvest site | X | Steep slope/erosion | X |
| Ongoing Harvest site | X | Riparian zone | X |
| Completed logging | X | Planting | X |
| Soil scarification | | Direct seeding | |
| Planting site | X | Weed control | X |
| Felling by harvester | X | Natural regeneration | X |
| Felling by forest worker | | Endangered species | X |
| Skidding/Forwarding | | Wildlife management | X |
| Clearfelling/Clearcut | X | Nature Reserve | X |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|---|
| Shelterwood management | X | Key Biotope | X |
| Selective felling | X | Special management area | X |
| Sanitation cutting | | Historical site | X |
| Pre-commercial thinning | X | Recreational site | X |
| Commercial thinning | X | Buffer zone | X |
| Logging camp | | Local community | X |

3. COMPANY DETAILS

3.1 Client specific background information

Ownership and land tenure description (legal and customary)

In the early 1800's Simcoe County was well endowed with valuable forests with both softwood and hardwood species. Early settlers and timber barons reduced the forests to virtual wastelands. The County of Simcoe entered into the first 'Agreement Forest' program in Ontario in 1922 and has been steadily improving the forest estate since. The Simcoe County Forest (SCF) property is administered by four full time staff who report regularly to the democratically elected County Council.

SCF is the largest municipally owned forest in Ontario, totalling over 33,000 acres, with a mandate to continually add new forest and conservation lands. They provide a multitude of benefits to the County including protection of wildlife habitat and water resources, public education and recreation, scientific research and production of wood products. County Forest tracts are distributed throughout the County ranging in size from 13 to 3500 acres. The County of Simcoe is responsible for all forest management activities, except fire control which is the responsibility of the local municipalities of the County.

An operating plan which is updated regularly identifies areas to be thinned and selectively harvested. Thinning and harvesting operations will be done on approximately 550 hectares of coniferous plantations and 200 hectares of hardwood and mixed stands each year. Trees are sold by public tender (open market bidding process) to forest product companies across Ontario. Products include lumber for many uses including utility poles, pressure treated lumber, pulpwood and firewood. Revenue from the sale of forest products is used for forest management and maintenance. Surplus revenue is credited to a forest reserve account to ensure that adequate resources are always available for management requirements and to purchase additional land to add to the forest estate. Ownership of lands being considered "fee simple" in Ontario, and they are considered a community forest for the purposes of this assessment.

They have a significant forest management program which generates a substantial wood supply from its 13,378 ha of municipal forest properties. 135 tracts are present in 15 area municipalities in addition to the City of Barrie.

Legislative and government regulatory context

Forest management is overseen by Simcoe County staff. The County Forest Manager is a Registered Professional Forester and is responsible for long-term planning, day to day operations, hiring, contracting, etc. The County Forest Manager is at a Director level within the corporate hierarchy of the County, reporting to the General Manager of Engineering, Planning, and Environment, who reports to the CAO. The CAO is directly accountable to the County Council.

Simcoe County is an upper tier municipality of Ontario Canada, and as such is regarded as under the authority of the Provincial Legislature. Municipal elections are held every four years. County Council is comprised of mayors and deputy mayors of each of the sixteen local municipalities within Simcoe County. The head of County Council is called the Warden. The members of County Council elect a Warden for a two-year term from amongst the council members at an Inaugural Meeting held in December. The County administrative centre is on Highway 26 in Midhurst, outside Barrie.

Environmental Context

Simcoe County is one of the most geologically diverse areas in Ontario, containing a wide array of prominent physiographic features. The County contains 68 provincially significant wetlands, 35 provincially significant Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest, and at least 64 species of plants and animals considered to be vulnerable, threatened, or endangered in Ontario and/or Canada. Extensive tracts of undisturbed forest in the north and east of the County are habitats for forest interior bird species and mammals such as Black Bear, Marten, and Fisher. As the County is situated at the contact zone between the Precambrian Shield and till/morainal deposits to the south it has elements of both Boreal Forest and Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest represented together. The elevated Niagara Escarpment runs through sections of the western part of the county, and the Minesing Wetlands, a Ramsar Convention wetland of international importance, is located in the central area of the county.

Simcoe County lies on limestone bedrock which provides a productive soil substrate. As a result it has been farmed extensively. In the 1930s drought caused a severe decline in agriculture and loss of soils. SCF was created in effect through lands that were better as forest and turned back to the County. Planting of red pine produced a very valuable crop in the late 20th century. There is ongoing work in the Museum tract of SCF to restore habitat for the Kirtland's Warbler, a globally endangered migratory bird.

There is significant infrastructure within the County, the road network based on a grid pattern, with most roads running north-south or east-west. The topography of the land has permitted roads to be set in predominantly straight lines.

Socioeconomic Context

The County of Simcoe and vicinity had a permanent 2016 population of 479,650 (including the adjacent cities of Barrie and Orillia which are not part of the County). Urban development is greater in the southern portion of the County which is nearer to the Greater Toronto Area. Residential development has also been attracted to the shores of Georgian Bay and Lake Simcoe. Agricultural use is found in many places throughout the County, except in the Precambrian shield at the northern end of the County. Settlement of the County by First Nations and subsequently by non-aboriginal settlers has resulted in a wealth of cultural heritage resources.

Two First Nations are the Chippewas of Rama First Nations (eastern portion of the County) and Beausoleil First Nation (also referred to informally as Christian Island) to the north. There is minimal overlap in interests with the two First Nations as SCF property is regarded as private land, and Treaty claims on private lands are regarded as extinguished in this area. Simcoe County maintains a good working relationship with these First Nations. Also in the County are members of the Métis Nation of Ontario. There are no communities identified as Métis in this forest.

One of the primary roles of the County Forests is to provide for a range of passive recreational pursuits for County residents and tourists alike. A Recreation Policy and Recreation Bylaw is in place to ensure that all responsible users of the forest are able to enjoy their recreational pursuits. Permitted activities with restrictions include; mountain biking, motorized trail riding, hunting and fishing, trapping, and organized or commercial events. Harvesting of non-wood forest products is also permitted strictly for personal use only.

Workers

Number of workers including employees, part-time and seasonal workers:

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Total workers | 167 workers (provide detail below) | |
| Local employees | Approx. 120 Male | Aprox. 50 Female |
| Non - Local employees | 0 Male | 0 Female |

| | |
|--|---|
| Number of serious accidents (past 12 month period) | 0 |
| Number of fatalities (past 12 month period) | 0 |

3.2 Certificate Scope

3.2.1 Description

Simcoe County Forest continues to implement a significant forest management program and generates a substantial wood supply from its 13,378 ha of municipal forest properties. Over the past year the county forests produced 44,658 m³ of timber, which was sold through an open market bidding process. Ownership of lands by Simcoe County is considered “fee simple” in Ontario, and they are considered a community forest for the purposes of this assessment.

The current Forest Management Plan 2011-2030 applies to all parcels of land currently owned by the County and identified as a ‘County Forest’ in addition to lands acquired in subsequent years. It is intended to complement the County of Simcoe Official Plan and ensure that the goals and objectives for the County Forests align with the strategic directions identified within the County’s Strategic Plan. The strategic direction focuses on economic sustainability (to ensure the SCF remains economically self-sufficient and contributes to a healthy, viable wood using industry), environmental enhancement (the protection and enhancement of the Natural Heritage features of the County including flora, fauna, soils, and watershed health) and social benefit (protection of cultural and spiritual values provided by the SCF while making a positive contribution to tourism objectives). Some adjustments continue regarding the County’s strategy regarding invasive species management as well as an increase in final harvests of red pine plantations due to stands maturing / declining faster than initially forecasted.

A planned excision (Freele Tract) is currently being advanced to locate The Environmental Resource Recovery Centre (ERRC). This facility is planned to house the Organics Processing Facility (OPF), Materials Management Facility (MMF), and areas for truck servicing, public education, and space to potentially sort blue box recycling in the future. Updates on the current process are available in section 1.4.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Reporting period: | Previous 12 month period | Dates | June 2019 – June 2020 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|

| | |
|---|---|
| A. Scope of Forest Area | |
| Type of certificate: single FMU | SLIMF Certificate: not applicable |
| New FMUs added since previous evaluation | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

| If Multi-FMU Certificate: List of new FMUs added to the certificate scope: | | | |
|---|------|-------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A (do not complete sections below) | | | |
| FMU Name/Description | Area | Forest Type | Location Latitude/Longitude ² |

² The center point of a contiguous FMU or group of dispersed properties that together comprise a FMU in latitude and longitude decimal degrees with a maximum of 5 decimals.

| | | | |
|--|----|--|--|
| | ha | | |
| | ha | | |
| | ha | | |
| | | | |

If Group Certificate: Updated of FMU and group member list provided in **ANNEX VI**

N/A

B. FSC Product categories included in the FM/CoC scope

No changes since previous report (do not complete sections below)

| | Level 1 | Level 2 | Species |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | W1 Rough wood | W1.1 Roundwood (logs) | Softwood: <i>Abies balsamea</i> , <i>Larix decidua</i> , <i>Larix laricina</i> , <i>Picea abies</i> , <i>Picea glauca</i> , <i>Picea mariana</i> , <i>Pinus banksiana</i> , <i>Pinus resinosa</i> , <i>Pinus strobus</i> , <i>Pinus sylvestris</i> , <i>Thuja occidentalis</i> , <i>Tsuga canadensis</i> Hardwood: <i>Acer rubrum</i> , <i>Acer saccharum</i> , <i>Betula alleghaniensis</i> , <i>Betula papyrifera</i> , <i>Carya cordiformis</i> , <i>Fagus americana</i> , <i>Fraxinus americana</i> , <i>Juglans cinerea</i> , <i>Ostrya virginiana</i> , <i>Populus balsamifera</i> , <i>Populus grandidentata</i> , <i>Populus tremuloides</i> , <i>Prunus serotina</i> , <i>Tilia americana</i> , <i>Quercus alba</i> , <i>Quercus macrocarpa</i> , <i>Quercus rubra</i> , <i>Tilia americana</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | W2 Wood charcoal | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | W3 Wood in chips or particles | W3.1 Wood chips | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | W5 Solid wood (sawn, chipped, sliced or peeled) | W5.1 Flitches and boules | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Non Wood Forest Products N1 Barks | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other | | |
| | | | |

C. Forest Area Classification

No changes since previous report (do not complete sections below)

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Total certified area (land base) | 13,378 ha |
| 2. Total forested area | 13,344 ha |
| 3. Total production forest area (where harvesting occurs) | 10,607 ha |

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|-------|
| 4. Total non-productive forest area (no harvesting) | 2,737 ha | |
| 4.a Protected forest area (strict reserves) | 1,555 ha | |
| 4.b Areas protected from timber harvesting and managed only for NTFPs or services | 0 | |
| 4.c Remaining non-productive forest (other uses) | 1,182 ha | |
| 5. Total non-forested area (<i>e.g., water bodies, wetlands, fields, rocky outcrops, etc.</i>) | | 34 ha |
| Forest zone | Temperate | |
| Certified Area (ha) under Forest Type | | |
| Natural | 13,378 ha | |
| Semi-Natural | | |
| Plantation | | |
| Stream sides and water bodies (Linear Kilometers) | 116 linear kilometers | |

| D. High Conservation Values identified via formal HCV assessment by the FME and respective areas | | | |
|---|---|--|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No changes since previous report (do not complete section below) | | | |
| Code | HCV TYPES | Description: | Area (ha) |
| HCV1 | Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, endangered species, refugia). | Endangered species; Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas (Tiny and Wye Marsh) | 901 |
| HCV2 | Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance. | Provincially designated ANSI's | 685 |
| HCV3 | Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems. | Old growth | 21 |
| HCV4 | Forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control). | Riparian / valleylands / wetlands | 1,696 |
| HCV5 | Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g. subsistence, health). | Area leased to Hardwood Ski & Bike; Museum Tract | 268 |
| HCV6 | Forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities). | Archaeological sites | 98 |
| Number of sites significant to indigenous people and communities | | | 7 sites |

| E. Pesticide Use | | |
|---|--|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> FME does not use pesticides (if checked, do not complete below). | | |
| FME has valid FSC derogation for use of a highly hazardous pesticide | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A (no-highly hazardous pesticide used) | |
| FSC highly hazardous pesticides used in last calendar year | | |
| Name | Quantity | # of ha treated |
| | | |
| | | |
| Non FSC highly hazardous pesticides used in last calendar year | | |
| Name | Quantity | # of ha treated |
| Garlon RTU, PCP# 29334, Triclopyr | 77 litres | 55.8 |
| Garlon XRT, PCP# 28945, Triclopyr | 3 litres | 7.0 |
| Rotstop C, PCP# 31140, Phlebiopsis gigantea | 2191 grams | 252.0 |
| VP480, PCP# 28840, Glyphosate | 39 litres | 39.9 |

| F. List of overlapping forest tenure holders |
|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FME has no overlapping forest tenure holders in scope or no changes since previous audit |

3.2.2 Excision of areas from the scope of certificate

| A. Applicability of FSC partial certification | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | All forest land owned or managed by the FME is included in the scope of the certificate. |

| B. Applicability of FSC excision policy (FSC-POL-20-003) |
|--|
| <p>Important: Excisions and removals from the certified area must be documented below during each audit.</p> <p><u>What are area excisions from the certified area?</u></p> <p>Requirements of FSC Excision Policy (FSC-POL-20-003) Sections 1.2, 2.2, 3.2 are applicable.</p> <p>Applicable when the certificate holder decides to isolate/separate an area from the certified area because this area cannot meet the FSC requirements for reasons either within or beyond its control. Possible examples of excisions: nurseries, areas within the FMU that are influenced / affected by activities from other users that result in non-</p> |

compliance with FSC requirements (ex. Oil and gas, powerline ROWs, commercial gravel, etc.).

What area removals from the certified area?

Requirements of FSC Excision Policy (FSC-POL-20-003) Sections 1.1, 2.1, 3.1 are applicable.

Applicable generally when an area of the certified area is changing tenure type or property. This is considered a removal from the certified area. Possible examples of removals from the certified area: sale of area; conversion of forest to a non-forest area, in cases such as governmental disposition of lands to be converted for development of an infrastructure.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <p><u>Past excisions or removals from the certified area</u></p> <p>Check this box and complete sections 2 and 3 below and document conformance to FSC-POL-20-003 if in the past years, any area of the certified area has been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excised and its excision proposal evaluated during an audit; AND/OR• Removed by another entity (ex. government) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <p><u>New or potential excisions and removals from the certified area</u></p> <p>Check this box and complete sections 1,2 and 3 of below and document conformance to FSC-POL-20-003 if any area of the certified area under evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is proposed to be excised from the certified area; AND/OR• Is being removed from the certified area. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Not applicable</p> <p>The organization has not excised or removed areas from the certified area or does not plan to do so before their next audit.</p> |

1. Rationale for new excision of area from the certified area

Finding:

Potential excision of 5.5 ha of forests from the Freele tract located at 2976 Horseshoe Valley Rd. W for the construction of an Environmental Resource Recovery Centre (ERRC), a waste processing complex, owned and managed by Simcoe County. This excision of 5.5 ha represents about 5% of the area of the Freele tract or about 0.04% of the total certified area of Simcoe County Forest. However, this 5.5 ha does not include potential conversion of areas required for road access to the ERRC and other areas converted during the construction phase. As documented in the January 2017 Conformance Verification Audit (CVA), the issue relating to the social acceptability of The Corporation of the County of Simcoe's planned excision of 5.5 ha of the Freele tract in relation to the development of an ERRC is still ongoing and waiting approval from different authorities. In April 2020, Simcoe County made a request to the provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for a Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) to expedite the construction of the ERRC. Such MZO gives the minister extraordinary power to override local planning processes, including the public consultation and participation. Consequently, the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) that was planned for April 2020 and after for the hearing of comments and concerns from local citizens and an NGO on the ERRC project is suspended and most likely cancelled.

Final findings on the excision of this area per the requirements of FSC's Excision Policy (FSC-POL-20-003 V1-0 <https://fsc.org/en/document-centre/documents/resource/218>) will be made only once Simcoe County's final decision and actions regarding the conversion of the Freele tract of the ERRC.

2. Findings explaining conformance against requirements of FSC-POL-20-003

Finding:

1. Potential excision of 5.5 ha of forests from the Freele tract: Conclusions from the January 2017 CVA are still valid at the time of the 2020 reassessment. Here are those conclusions, updated:
 - I. The wood that would be harvested from the excision would be done in accordance to the County's bylaws and provincial laws. There is no evidence of risks of non-conformance with the law. Only one NCR was issued on compliance to applicable laws since 2010.
 - II. Consultations were done with First Nations on the project. There was also an archeological assessment of the Freele tract to make sure that no cultural values would be affected. There is no conflict of substantial magnitude with First Nation Communities on the management of the forest of the Freele tract.
 - III. Environmental Impact Study (EIS) did not identify High Conservation Values on the site of the proposed excision. Moreover, the part of the Freele tract that is projected for excision was visited during the 2017 CVA audit by the auditor David Brunelle. He walked the whole area thoroughly on January 17th. The auditor did not identify HCVs on the site. There were interviews with the forest management staff and documentation was provided on the stands present on the projected excision.
 - IV. Two public consultation periods (winter 2014 and fall 2015) and six information sessions were conducted during the siting process leading up to the selection of the preferred location planned to be excised from the certificate. These processes were upstream to the mandatory consultations of the resulting modifications being proposed to both the Township of Springwater and Simcoe County land use plans and have thus been considered as meeting the requirements of meaningful public participation under criterion 4.4. In accordance with the Planning Act, consultations were completed (County initiated Simcoe County Official Plan Amendment - Dec 22nd, 2016 and (Springwater Township Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-Law Amendment – January 24th, 2017).
 - V. There are no genetically modified trees on the Freele tract. This was confirmed through interviews, documentation and field visit.
2. 2016 excision (from the 2016 annual audit report): There was a conversion of 4 ha of forest into a non-forest use on the FMU in 2015. It is the construction of a garage for the Corporation of the County of Simcoe to improve the capacity for maintenance of the machinery owned by the corporation. The rationale for the Garage is to improve the FMUs capacity to build and maintain roads for forest management and other activities. See findings of the 2016 annual audit report for the findings confirming conformance to FSC-POL-20-003.

3. Details of control measures implemented to prevent contamination of FSC certified wood from the certified area with the wood that cannot be certified from the excised/removed forest areas.

Finding: Wood from past and planned excisions are not claimed as FSC certified. The organization's chain-of-custody tracking system where harvest operations are tied to a specified harvest tract contract specifying if the wood is FSC certified ensures that.

4. FSC PUBLIC SUMMARY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. Main objectives of the forest management are: | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No changes since previous report | |
| Primary priority: | Growing and sustaining large, healthy, diverse and productive forests |
| Secondary priority: | economic sustainability and contributing to a healthy local wood using industry |
| Other priorities: | Environmental protection and enhancement including watershed health, increased biodiversity, provision of habitat; social benefits including the provision of a wide range of recreational opportunities. |
| Forest composition: | |
| 55% of production forest is coniferous plantation; 45% natural | |
| Description of Silvicultural system(s) used: | |
| Single & group selection; shelterwood; occasional clear-cut with re-establishment | |
| 2. Silvicultural system | Forest under this management (ha) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No changes since previous report | |
| a. Even aged management | |
| Clearcut (clearcut size range below 1 ha) | |
| Shelterwood | 6000 |
| b. Uneven aged management | |
| Individual tree selection | 3890 |
| Group selection (group harvested of less than 1 ha in size) | 800 |
| c. Other types of management (specify) Click here to enter text. | |
| 3. Forest Operations | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No changes since previous report | |
| 3.1 Harvest methods and equipment used: | |
| traditional cut and skid; mechanical harvester / processor and forwarder; feller buncher | |
| 3.2 Estimate of maximum sustainable yield for main commercial species: | |
| red pine: 5.9 - 8.8 m ³ /ha/year | |
| 3.3 Explanation of the assumptions (e.g. silvicultural) upon which estimates are based and reference to the source of data (e.g. inventory data, permanent sample plots, yield tables) upon which estimates are based upon. | |
| The volume growth of red pine plantations in the 1982 management plan was estimated at 1 to 1.5 cords/acre/year (5.9 to 8.8 m ³ /ha/year), which was based upon substantial growth and yield data which had been conducted up until that time. An extensive analysis conducted in the United States (Buckman, R.E., et al, 2006) confirms that this is a reasonable, and probably conservative, estimate based upon a range of site types. More recent measurements of permanent sample plots will provide any necessary revisions in coming years. | |
| 3.4 FME organizational structure and management responsibilities from senior management to operational level (how is management organized, who controls and takes decisions, use of contractors, provisions for training, etc.). | |
| The County Forest Manager is a Registered Professional Forester and is responsible for long-term planning, day to day operations, hiring, contracting, etc. The County Forest | |

Manager is at a Director level within the corporate hierarchy of the County, reporting to the General Manager of Engineering, Planning, and Environment, who reports to the CAO. The CAO is directly accountable to County Council.

3.5 Structure of forest management units (division of forest area into manageable units etc.).

SCF tracts are separated into unique compartment numbers which are further divided into manageable units or 'stands'.

3.6 Monitoring procedures (including yield of all forest products harvested, growth rates, regeneration, and forest condition, composition/changes in flora and fauna, environmental and social impacts of forest management, costs, productivity and efficiency of forest management).

Monitoring includes: maintenance and measurement of permanent sample plots in cooperation with MNR to assess long term growth rates, regeneration, forest condition, composition/changes in flora and fauna; harvest and silvicultural effectiveness monitoring includes tracking of forest yields and environmental impacts; annual budgeting process monitors efficiency and productivity of operations including cost.

3.7 Management strategies for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species.

Annual cross checking with provincial database prior to annual work scheduling; staff training regarding species identification; tracking / updating using internal database of any additional information; working with other partners / subject matter experts to restore rare habitat (Kirtland's warbler).

3.8 Environmental safeguards implemented, e.g. buffer zones for streams, riparian areas, seasonal operation, chemical storage, etc.

Wetlands and riparian areas are designated as protection zones. All other Areas of Concern (AOC) are identified in the Forest Management Plan and digital mapping with guidelines to follow in prescription development. All identified AOC's are tracked from the stand assessment stage to the final post harvest audit to ensure adequate protection measures are maintained.

Other Sections may be added by the FME