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2024 FOREST CERTIFICATION

MANAGEMENT REVIEW REPORT

March 31, 2025

Approved by the DNR Resource Bureau Management Team
July 8, 2025

Forest Resources Division
IC4506 (Revised 03/31/2025

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary **1**
Section I. Background **2**
Management Review Process 2
Focus of Management Review Meeting 2
Recommended Timeline for Review of Management Review Report 2
Implementing Program Improvements 3
Section II. Status of Previous Audit Results from 2022 Management Review Report **3**
External Audit Findings 3
Internal Audit Findings 3
Section III. Summary of 2024 Audit Results **3**
2023 External Audit Findings 3
2023 Internal Audit Findings 4
Section IV. Implemented Actions to Address 2024 Audit Findings **4**
Section V. Pending Actions to Address Audit Findings **4**
Work Instruction Group 1: Plan, Monitor and Review 5
1.1 Strategic Framework 5
1.2 Management Review Process 5
1.3 Regional State Forest Management Plan Implementation and Review 5
1.4 Biodiversity Management 6
1.5 Social Impact and Public Participation 7
1.6 Management Unit Analysis 7
Work Instruction Group 2: Forest Regeneration and Chemical Use 7
2.1 Reforestation 7
2.2 Use of Pesticides and Other Chemicals 8
2.3 Integrated Pest Management and Forest Health 8
Work Instruction Group 3: Best Management Practices 8
3.1 Forest Operations 8
3.2 Best Management Practices 9
3.3 Road Closures 9
Work Instruction Group 5: Research 9
5.1 Coordinated Natural Resource Management Research 9
Work Instruction Group 6: Recreation and Education 10
6.1 Implementing Public Information and Educational Opportunities 10
6.2 Integrating Public Recreational Opportunities with Management 10
6.3 Sustainable Forestry Initiative Involvement and the Implementation Committee 10
Work Instruction Group 7: Integrated Implementation and Contracting 10
7.1 Timber Sale Preparation and Administration Procedures 10
7.2 Legal Compliance and Administration of Contracts 10
Work Instruction Group 8: Training 10
8.1 Staff Training for State Forest Management 10
Work Instruction Group 9: Tribal 10
9.1 Collaboration with Tribes Regarding Management of State Forest Land 10
Section VI Assessment of the Effectiveness of Work Instructions **10**
Section VII 2024 Audit Schedule **10**
Internal Audits 10
External Audits 10

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Management Review is to evaluate audit results and recommend solutions where warranted, to recommend revisions to the work instructions and recommend management actions that contribute to the continual improvement of forest management in the State of Michigan.

There are three types of certification audits:

1. External surveillance and recertification audits that evaluate the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), forest management program against the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) forest management standards.
2. Internal audits that evaluate forest management activities in each Forest Management Unit (FMU) for conformance to MDNR forest certification work instructions.
3. Internal theme audits that look for conformance to one or more work instructions across all FMUs.

A summary of findings from recent audits follows:

- The one Minor Corrective Action Requests (CARs) from the 2023 external surveillance audit was closed during the 2024 surveillance audit.

- The 2024 external surveillance audit focused on Shingleton, Gladwin and Gaylord FMUs and resulted in one minor CAR from both FSC and SFI.

- There are eleven older internal audit and theme audit minor non-conformances that remain open.

- The 2024 internal audits focused on the Baraga, Cadillac, and Atlanta FMUs.

A theme audit focusing on Work Instruction 3.2-Resource Damage Reports was planned for 2025 but is being cancelled due to higher priority work needs for ice storm recovery.

The 2025 external recertification audit will focus on the Escanaba, Newberry, Traverse City, Cadillac FMUs and Lansing central office, and is scheduled for October 6-10, 2025.

SECTION I. BACKGROUND

Michigan's state forest was dual certified in 2005 by SFI and FSC. Each of these certification systems comes with a set of forest management standards to which the state forest management system is expected to conform, and both standards encourage continual improvement of the forest management system.

The SFI Principle 12 Objective 17 addresses the need for continual improvement and the requirement for an annual management review.

The FSC standard does not explicitly address the concept of 'continual improvement', but it is implied through Principle 8: Monitoring and Assessment, where monitoring is used to achieve continued improvement.

Management Review Process

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Forest Certification Work Instruction (WI) 1.2 establishes both the management review team and the management review. The review is a systematic process to evaluate forest management practices and to promote continual improvement in the management of the state forest system. The present review is based on the results of the internal and external audits and includes:

1. A report of the disposition of audit results identified in the 2023 management review report.
2. An evaluation of 2024 audit results.
3. A report of actions immediately taken to address new audit findings.
4. Identification of pending actions needed to address new audit findings.
5. An assessment of the effectiveness of work instructions.

Focus of Management Review Meeting

Discuss and make management decisions to:

1. Address any SFI and FSC corrective action requests (CARs) and assign responsibility for actions to address findings.
2. Address unresolved non-conformance reports (NCRs) from past internal audits; develop strategies to resolve them and assign responsibility for actions to address findings.
3. Address pending actions proposed at previous management reviews that are not fully implemented.
4. Identify needed revisions to work instructions; and
5. Identify other actions for continual improvement of state forest operations.

Recommended Timeline for Review of Management Review Report

1. The Forest Certification Coordinator produced a draft management review report for the management review meeting that was held virtually on March 31, 2025.
2. The Management Review Team will agree on a draft Management Review Report and identify any needed work instruction revisions at the management review meeting. The draft report will be forwarded through the Management Review Team to the Forest Resources Division, Wildlife Division, Fisheries Division, Law Enforcement Division and Parks & Recreation Division management teams for comment by April 30, 2025.
3. Management Team comments on the draft report and list of needed work instruction revisions are due on May 31, 2025, to the Forest Certification Coordinator, who will prepare a final draft of the report.
4. The Forest Certification Coordinator will send the final draft management review report and the list of revised work instructions to the Resource Bureau Management Team for approval on June 17, 2025.

Implementing Program Improvements

1. Whenever possible, immediate changes will be made to remedy identified non-conformances.
2. The Management Review Team will be responsible for recommending actions necessary to improve sustainable management of forest resources.
3. Division management teams will review recommended actions specifically regarding impact upon program and field operations.
4. The Resource Bureau Management Team will review and approve management review decisions that identify changes and improvements necessary at all MDNR levels to continually improve conformance with work instructions and standards.
5. Division chiefs will ensure changes and improvements approved by the Resource Bureau Management Team are implemented via delegation to the appropriate manager.

SECTION II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS AUDIT RESULTS FROM 2023 MANAGEMENT REVIEW REPORT

This section provides status including disposition or extension of open findings from previous external audit and internal audits and actions identified in the previous Management Review Report. Details regarding the disposition of audit findings may be found in the published reports summarizing the 2023 external audit.

External Audit Findings

Open findings from the 2023 surveillance audit were addressed, reviewed, and closed during the 2024 surveillance audit.

In response to FSC 2023.1 to address a minor CAR regarding improper felling techniques in the Sault and Roscommon Units, in which trees were felled using improper hinge cuts, safe felling practices were added to the safety column on the Timber Sale Contract-Field Inspection Report. At the 2024 external audit opening meeting, this document was shared with the auditors as well as an explanation that contractors participate in safe work practices training through MIOSHA as well as through the qualified logger program that the MI SFI Implementation Committee conducts.

Internal Audit Findings

There are no open non-conformances from any internal audits prior to 2016.

Eleven findings from internal audits during the period of 2017 to 2022 remain open and are discussed further in Section V.

SECTION III. SUMMARY OF 2024 AUDIT RESULTS

Results of the 2024 internal and external audits are discussed below. Actions to address the new findings are outlined in Section V.

2024 External Audit Findings

The 2024 external audit was a surveillance audit for both standards and was carried out from October 15-18, 2024 by Kyle Meister (SFI) and Dave Wager (FSC) on the Shingleton, Gladwin and Gaylord FMUs. The FSC and SFI audits resulted in one new minor CAR; and the finding from the 2023 external audit was closed.

SFI and FSC minor CAR 2024.1 under SFI standard 3.1.1 (Program to implement federal, state, or provincial water quality best management practices during all phases of management activities) and FSC standard 6.7.a (The forest owner or manager, and employees and contractors, have the equipment and training necessary to respond to hazardous spills).

The logging contractor in Gaylord Unit at Gilners Gulch did not have a spill kit in the processor and was unsure if one was in his pickup truck. In the event of a spill, this could prevent the logging contractor from being prepared to take immediate action. The DNR Forestry BMP guide requires that at least one spill kit, as recommended by EGLE, should be available on every job site.
. Employee and logger BMP training includes spill reporting requirements and precautions.

2024 Internal Audit Findings

The internal audits of the Cadillac FMU, Atlanta FMU, and Baraga FMU were held on July 9, 10 and 16, 2024. The scope of the audits was state forest land within each FMU. The audit criteria were the June 15, 2023, version of the work instructions (WIs) with specific focus on Wis 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3, and associated DNR policy, procedures, rules, management guides, guidance documents, plans and handbooks that were relevant to the management of state forest land including any Management Review decisions. In addition, implementation of wildlife habitat specifications and evaluation of natural regeneration were evaluated.

The audit resulted in two OFI's within the Cadillac FMU:

OFI 63-1: WI 2.1 and 2.2 and IC4025 FRD Cultivation and Field Operations Direction.
When reviewing the treatment in MIFI for the Fife Lake Salvage sale, there was no mention of oak regeneration within the treatment. The next steps did not show the full reforestation plan for the site. Per MI DNR Cultivation program Direction…" [As treatments become available to be scheduled, dates are entered for next steps and "on pow" will be included in the probability column enabling these activities to appear on the cultivation POW. The POW is based on a fiscal year approach, but treatments can be scheduled using any date within the corresponding fiscal year….]". As such, the planned next steps should be coded into the site with dates to allow for tracking, budgeting, and ordering of trees. These steps have not been added to the treatment.
The unit is responsible for regenerating stands, while the TMS often assists in formulating plans there should be a plan approved at the time of the variance. It was also unclear at the time of the variance whether native seed would be broadcast per a wildlife division request, and whether herbicide would be used in the future for site prep.

OFI 63-2: WI 3.1 and IC4011 Michigan Forestry BMP Manual for Soil and Water Quality.
While visiting an audit stop, we were adjacent to the closed Wood Tick Mix timber sale. The audit team had questions concerning inadequate BMP measures (water bars, brush bundles) across a skid trail up a steep hill, where evidence of erosion was evident. The forester did request that soil erosion measures be taken, however the sale was closed with inadequate measures implemented on site. It is the responsibility of the forester administering the close of the sale to ensure that all BMPs have been followed. Per the Forestry BMP manual for Soil and Water Quality (v.2023)' Logs or logging debris (slash) consisting of branches, broken tops, and brush can be used to create temporary water bars (Figure 13). Operators build logging debris water bars across traffic surfaces to divert water into vegetated areas. This reduces erosion and helps maintain the road. Water bars made from logging debris are not as effective as those previously discussed, since water can filter through. Still, they can be used in many applications. They work best in low traffic areas with low slopes (e.g., slopes are less than 5%).' In this instance, temporary water bars using slash was inappropriate due to the extreme slope and observed soil erosion on the skid trail.

SECTION IV. IMPLEMENTED ACTIONS TO ADDRESS 2024 AUDIT FINDINGS

Following the external and internal audits, there is a concerted effort to expeditiously address and close each of the CARs, non-conformances, observations, and opportunities for improvement. There are no actions that have already been implemented to address 2023 audit findings.

Training at both the logger level through our participation in SFI IC Qualified Logger Program and training for MDNR staff through Forest Certification and new forester training will reiterate the necessity to double check the presence of a spill kit. MDNR has sent out an electronic communication within Forest Resources, Fisheries, Parks and Rec and Wildlife Divisions with a reminder of the requirement to ensure spill kit presence at the presale meeting and timber sale inspections and marking it off on the timber sale inspection report checklist, as well as the presence of a spill kit in field vehicles with auxiliary transfer fuel tanks and hydraulic equipment.

SECTION V. PENDING ACTIONS TO ADDRESS AUDIT FINDINGS

The content of this section drives the main discussions at the management review meeting, as it requires the identification of recommended actions to resolve audit findings and the assignment of a manager responsible for implementation. The section is organized by work instruction group.

Work Instruction Group 1: Plan, Monitor and Review

1.1 Strategic Framework

- **Discussion Points:** No issues identified for discussion.

1.2 Management Review Process

- OFI MU 45-53-2019-01: While Burn Reports for prescribed fire are required (per Policy and Procedure 33.42-08 – Prescribed Fire Use) and provide details of the prescribed fire, follow-up monitoring of the effects is rarely being done. There is no policy or guideline for specific follow-up monitoring to assess the success, failure, or degree of either with respect to the burn objective(s).
    - **Discussion Points**: Without monitoring, there is no way to determine why a fire was successful or a failure resulting in an inability to improve forest management. Adaptive management is not possible. [2023] FRD is moving/has filled a new prescribed burn specialist position which should add capacity to address this issue. [2024] Prescribed fire specialist has been hired. No other progress on this finding.
    - **Recommend Decision**: Work to apply improved objective development and structured follow-up/monitoring process to prescribed burns. Possible topics include prescribed burn effectiveness on control of invasives and regeneration of red pine and/or oak. [2025] FPO manager is in the process of incorporating effectiveness monitoring into the charge document for the new silviculture and regeneration team, which will also include recommended membership from WLD ecologists and the prescribed fire program. Team formation is delayed due to late onboarding of new reforestation specialist and the extended process of transferring reforestation duties from the silviculturist specialist.
    - **Responsible Manager**: David Price, FPO Section Manager; Jeff Courser, Glenn Palmgren, UP Fire Management Specialist.
    - **Due Date**: December 31, 2025.

- The 2018 Theme Audit focused on two specific areas in need of evaluation - governance including teams and team membership and internal audit format and focus. The audit was based on interviewing three categories of staff with a separate but similar set of questions for each group.
    - **Discussion Points**: The audit resulted in several recommendations that could be implemented immediately, as well as some that will need further discussion and a recommended course of action from the Resource Bureau before proceeding. [2024] Have completed proposed northern hardwood gap guidance memo, which addresses regeneration effectiveness monitoring.
    - **Recommend Decision**: The Resource Bureau approved changes to the FCT, the Internal Audit process and structure, and associated changes to the Work Instructions have been implemented. The recommendations on restructuring the Management Review Team and implementation of Effectiveness Monitoring, including the identification of monitoring topics and the creation of an Effectiveness Monitoring Feasibility Team, and subsequent Work Instruction changes, are awaiting review by Resource Bureau. [2022] An effectiveness monitoring team will be created to begin implementation of monitoring to supplement the northern hardwoods research project. [2024] Form and task the effectiveness monitoring team to evaluate and make recommendations to divisions for implementation of effectiveness monitoring into DNR program areas. [2025] FPO manager is in the process of incorporating effectiveness monitoring into the charge document for the new silviculture and regeneration team, which will also include recommended membership from WLD ecologists and the prescribed fire program. Team formation is delayed due to late onboarding of new reforestation specialist and the extended process of transferring reforestation duties from the silviculturist specialist.
    - **Responsible Manager**: David Price, FPO Section Manager.
    - **Due Date**: September 30, 2025.

1.3 Regional State Forest Management Plan Implementation and Review

- **Discussion Points:** No issues identified for discussion.

1.4 Biodiversity Management

- Disagreement between what is represented in the Cold-Water Lakes and Streams SCA layer and local knowledge of Fisheries Division (FD) staff has been discussed in detail resulting in the identification of varying understanding of cold-water/high priority trout streams and the application of buffers.
- OFI 45-2019-01: Access to accurate aquatic information including lake and river classification and regulatory and protection status has been a consistent challenge on state forest lands (see 2019 Management Review Report). Fisheries Division's Institute for Fisheries Research developed the Aquatic Habitat Viewer, an ArcGIS Online application useful for accessing accurate aquatic information. However, the tool currently has restricted access and is only available to Fisheries Division staff.
    - **Discussion Points**: SCA layer should clearly identify areas where FRD field staff need to engage with Fisheries Division staff on proposed treatments or project planning. Further discussion with SCA/HCVA committee also identified the broader need for similar clarification of areas of co-management with PRD (e.g., rail trail corridors and State Forest campgrounds).
    - **Recommended Decision**: Reinforce Fisheries Division's ability to provide expertise and engage in state forest decision-making. Correct cold-water and high priority trout stream representations in Enterprise GIS based on accurate sources including the Institute of Fisheries Research AGO app. [2022] Work with Resource Assessment Section (RAS) and FD staff to replace Cold Water Streams and Lakes layer with appropriate Institute of Fisheries Research – Data Viewer layer. Isolate to cold and cold transition. FD can help with cut offs. RAS can determine if we need to host or can point to outside sources. [2024] Have new data on coldwater streams and lakes, but still need to update the SCA. In 2025, MDNR will revise MDNR PP Inventory and Compartment Review to update processes for effective multi-divisional input for proposed management treatments. [2025] Coldwater Lakes and Streams SCA data has been updated. Update of MDNR PP 32.22-15 State Forest Inventory and Compartment Review has been delayed due to Inventory Specialist higher priority time commitments for continued development of MiFI 2.0 (just completed).
    - **Responsible Manager**: David Price, FPO Section Manager.
    - **Due Date**: December 31, 2025.
- OFI: MU-3, WI 1.4: Opportunity to clarify requirements associated with wildlife habitat justification for treatments on purchased lands. There is a need to clarify basis for justification requirement and scope of application. In addition, there is inconsistency in restrictions being applied to purchased lands, i.e., chemical use restrictions (request for no use on state forest purchased lands while use occurs in SWMAs).
    - **Discussion Points:** It is important to provide descriptions of benefits to wildlife for treatments on "purchased lands" for both federal and requirements and to satisfy stakeholder interests. There are multiple ways to report on treatment benefits to wildlife. A good solution may be to include "purchased lands" management guide reoccurring analysis and reports on benefits of treatments on purchased lands as part of the SFMP revision. (2023) FRD, WLD and PRD assistant chiefs have met to develop a problem scoping doc and propose a path to resolution. [2024] OPL is coordinating the next USFWS audit of purchased lands.
    - **Recommended Decision:** [2024] Add language to MDNR PP 32.22-15 State Forest Inventory and Compartment review to require documentation of how treatments on purchased lands primarily benefit wildlife species. [2025] Update of MDNR PP Inventory and Compartment Review has been delayed due to Inventory Specialist higher priority time commitments for continued development of MiFI 2.0 (just completed). Discussion on whether to address purchased land management and priorities within other documents ensued.
    - **Responsible Manager**: David Price, FPO Section Manager.
    - **Due Date:** December 31, 2025.
- OFI 52-1, WI 1.4: On several occasions, appropriate rare species mitigation measures were considered and reflected in treatments, yet there were no records or documentation of rare species review.
    - **Discussion Points:** Consistently capturing environmental review decisions and associated rare species mitigation measures has historically been a challenge. Printouts in compartment files or notes in stand or treatment comments have been used with varying effectiveness. (2023) RAS needs to complete a Survey 123 that will facilitate mitigation decision-making process but has lacked capacity in 2023 to complete work.
    - Table revisions need to be complete consistent with 2023 update of T&E species list.

- **Recommended Decision:** Recognizing this challenge, a department team with the assistance of MNFI, has been working to develop a Rare Species Review Tool, which is a standalone app and database built within a GIS environmental. The tool is intended track rare species review and assist with decision-making for mitigating the potential impacts on rare species of proposed forest treatment and other state forest project development. [2024] Rare species review app is almost ready for implementation. [2025] Rare species review app is still not ready for implementation as of April 2025.
- **Responsible Manager:** David Price, FPO Section Manager and Amy Derosier, Planning and Adaptation Section Manager
- **Due Date:** September 30, 2025.

1.5 Social Impact and Public Participation

- **Discussion Points:** No issues identified for discussion.

1.6 Management Unit Analysis

- **Discussion Points:** No issues identified for discussion.

Work Instruction Group 2: Forest Regeneration and Chemical Use

2.1 Reforestation

- Minor NCR 73-45-2019-01: Failure to identify potential natural regen problems prior to harvest and staff not consistently following natural regen evaluation requirements.
- NCR 33-2022-01: Department guidance lacks a clear definition of forest productivity and no way to clearly describe successful natural regeneration of forest stands within first 10 years after harvest. In some instances, natural regeneration harvests are being prescribed without clearly defining specific and expected regeneration outcomes. Stand management objective is often being described very broadly, i.e., any combination of tree species currently on site without target stocking densities. Field evidence suggests inconsistent application of quantitative natural regen surveys and when conducted, results are not captured except in stand comments. In addition, staff are not documenting clear, site-specific environmental or forest health considerations when successful natural regeneration exceeds 5 years since timber sale completion. Finally, the Work Instructions lack a clear definition of forest productivity, e.g., maintenance of stand forest volume and/or species diversity across rotations at a given point in time and/or capturing adequate stocking of desirable species to meet values identified in forest management plan.
    - **Discussion Points:** [2019] Examples illustrate a lack of understanding on specific guidance related to difficult to regenerate stands and demonstrate that current regeneration guidance may be unclear or that more training may be required. [2022] New Forester Training is tentatively scheduled for October 2023 and will include regeneration monitoring. In addition, MDNR continues to support collaborative research to better understand methods and measure for successful regeneration of northern hardwoods and cedar-dominated lowland conifers. [2023] Theme audit was not conducted due to acting assignments. Completed proposed northern hardwood gap guidance memo, which addresses regeneration effectiveness monitoring. Conducted new forester training in December 2023. Monitoring of Walters-Roloff northern hardwood research continued in 2023. Scoping use of Mobile Map and Inventory Manager to conduct regeneration surveys. [2024] Hiring a reforestation specialist which will increase ability of silviculturist to address this issue. NH gap guidance memo has been approved by the FRD MT and distributed to field staff. Incorporation of planted and natural regen survey data collection into MM and IM is in progress.
    - **Recommended Decision:** [2019] Conduct additional training and develop additional communication on updated regeneration guidance. [2022] Continue to support collaborative research on difficult to regenerate cover types. Conduct theme audit in 2023 on difficult to regenerate stands (not conducted due to acting assignments). Complete incorporation of planted and natural regen survey data collection into MM and IM. Recommend initial implementation focus of natural regen surveys in natural pine and oak regen in the NLP. [2025] Funding for incorporation

of planted and natural regen survey data collection into MM and IM was cut from the 2025 FRD spend plan due to budget constraints. Will try to include in the FY26 budget.
    - **Responsible Manager:** David Price, FPO Section Manager, Jason Hartman, State Silviculturist
    - **Due Date:** December 31, 2025.

2.2 Use of Pesticides and Other Chemicals

- OFI: MU-2, WI 2.2: There are no clear thresholds for determining when a site prep spray is required prior to planting. Our current system places burden on the District Timber Management Specialist (TMS) to make a qualitative evaluation which may be leading to a default decision to spray. Conversely, release sprays have clearer criteria, i.e., Free to Grow measurements.
    - **Discussion Points:** The effectiveness of varying red pine site prep and release techniques were evaluated 2022. The MDNR should assume that all previously forested stands will require competition control for establishment of red pine. Determining site prep vs. release treatment decisions will require earlier development of PAPs and PAPs should initially be developed by the treatment sponsor who has the most knowledge of the site.
    - **Recommended Decision:** Guidance should be updated to state that it is the MDNR's expectation that all red pine artificial regeneration will require competition control, either site prep or release treatments. Work Instruction should be revised to require earlier development of PAPs, initiated by the treatment sponsor once the treatment is scheduled. (2023) Completed WI 2.2 revision as recommended, recommend closure. [2024] Guidance for pine management should be updated to provide criteria for competition for determining when a site prep spray is needed. [2025] IC4018 Red and White Pine Management has been modified to include criteria for competition for determining when a site prep spray is needed for planted pine and is currently pending FRD and WLD MT approval.
    - **Responsible Manager:** David Price, FPO Section Manager
    - **Due Date:** September 30, 2025.

2.3 Integrated Pest Management and Forest Health

- **Discussion Points**: No issues identified for discussion.

Work Instruction Group 3: Best Management Practices

3.1 Forest Operations

- NCR 71-2016-05 cited Work Instruction 3.1 and concerned an oil well lease that was "out-of-compliance" with the conditions of the lease and with EGLE requirements. This non-conformance will be held open to provide time for the operator of the well site to carry out the necessary actions to bring the operation into full compliance.
    - **Discussion Points:** [2016] This non-conformance identified a host of issues with well sites in the area and resulted in a meeting between EGLE and DNR staff to iron out differences and form a plan to move forward to clean-up. The lessee has been conducting the necessary fixes to bring the operation into conformance with EGLE and DNR requirements. [2020] Minerals Management requested an AGO opinion on March 2, 2020, to determine liability of the lessee for site clean-up, which remains pending. [2022] Non-conformances continue to be documented on site. [2024] No progress has been made to date to resolve non-conformances due to vacancies in the Roscommon UM and statewide land use specialist positions and a request for AGO opinion regarding the responsible party. An AGO opinion has been received that identifies the lessee as the responsible party. Next step is to send a communication to the lessee specifying requirements and deadline for site remediation.
    - **Recommended Decision:** [2016] Allow unit staff to continue to work with lessee to ensure that compliance is gained. [2022] Local staff will work with Land Use Specialist and EGLE to resolve issues. [2024] Make inquiry with DNR Exec and AGO regarding 2020 request for AGO opinion before DNR can proceed with any enforcement action. [2025] AGO opinion was received in 2024. Enforcement letters requiring cleanup of the Rose City West field have been mailed to three lessees and one operator by the MMS manager. Site restoration updates to come.
    - **Responsible Manager:** Matt Fry, Minerals Management Section Manager; Ashley Autenrieth, FRD WLP District Supervisor; Jason Lewicki, Roscommon FMU Unit Manager.
    - **Due Date:** December 31, 2025.

- SFI and FSC Minor CAR _2024.1under SFI standard 3.1.1 (Program to implement federal, state, or provincial water quality best management practices during all phases of management activities) and FSC standard 6.7.a (The forest owner or manager, and employees and contractors, have the equipment and training necessary to respond to hazardous spills).
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- **Discussion Points:** [2024] The logging contractor in Gaylord Unit at Gilners Gulch did not have a spill kit in the processor and was unsure if one was in his pickup truck. In the event of a spill, this could prevent the logging contractor from being prepared to take immediate action. The DNR Forestry BMP guide require that applicator vehicles associated with applications have spills kits. Employee and logger BMP training includes spill reporting requirements and precautions.
- **Recommended Decision:** [2025] Training at both the logger level through our participation in SFI IC Qualified Logger Program and training for MDNR staff through Forest Certification and new forester training will reiterate the necessity to double check the presence of a spill kit. MDNR will send out an electronic communication within Forest Resources, Fisheries, Parks and Rec and Wildlife Divisions with a reminder of the requirement to ensure spill kit presence at the presale meeting and marking it off on the timber sale inspection report checklist, as well as the presence of a spill kit in field vehicles with auxiliary transfer fuel tanks and hydrologic equipment.
- **Responsible Manager:** Heather Shaw, Forest Biodiversity and Certification Specialist, David Price, Forest Planning and Operations Manager
- **Due Date:** September 30, 2025

3.2 Best Management Practices

- Minor NCR 73-45-53-2019-02: The goal of forestry Best Management Practices is to minimize the effect of non-point source (NPS) pollution caused by logging. NPS pollution is caused by the conveyance of mineral or organic sediment, nutrients, chemicals, heat or debris into ground or surface water, or otherwise damage streams, lakes, and wetlands. Forestry Best Management Practices also seek to maintain forest productivity during logging by minimizing soil rutting and compaction. Resource Damage Reports are intended to capture instances of non-conformance to forestry Best Management Practices. Staff continue to demonstrate confusion over the definition of Best Management Practices non-conformances (Resource Damage Reports). In additions, staff report challenges with the current reporting format and database.
    - **Discussion Points:** There are 2 points: 1) what constitutes reportable resource damage; and 2) problems with the current database. There are other activities beyond forestry that can create NPS and loss of soil productivity like ORVs. (2023) Began discussion of creating a new RDR database, but no progress made due to RAS staffing shortage. [2024] No progress made on new RDR system in 2023 due to RAS staffing shortages.
    - **Recommended Decision:** Clarify definitions on what constitutes an RDR, e.g., Handbook of examples; update/Revise RDR database (building upon culvert app may be an efficient option). [2022] Re-enforce existing system through training for staff. Management team to discuss development of team to evaluate existing system and revision process as necessary. [2025] Scoping of new RDR database has begun but development has not begun due to higher priority RAS staff work.
    - **Responsible Manager:** John Spitzley, Manager RAS, David Price, FPO Section Manager
    - **Due Date:** December 31, 2025.

3.3 Road Closures

- **Discussion Points**: No issues identified for discussion.

Work Instruction Group 5: Research

5.1 Coordinated Natural Resource Management Research

- **Discussion Points**: No issues identified for discussion.

Work Instruction Group 6: Recreation and Education

6.1 Implementing Public Information and Educational Opportunities

- **Discussion Points**: No issues identified for discussion.

6.2 Integrating Public Recreational Opportunities with Management

- **Discussion Points**: No issues identified for discussion.

6.3 Sustainable Forestry Initiative Involvement and the Implementation Committee

- **Discussion Points**: No issues identified for discussion.

Work Instruction Group 7: Integrated Implementation and Contracting

7.1 Timber Sale Preparation and Administration Procedures

- **Discussion Points**: No issues identified for discussion.

7.2 Legal Compliance and Administration of Contracts

- **Discussion Points**: No issues identified for discussion.

Work Instruction Group 8: Training

8.1 Staff Training for State Forest Management

- **Discussion Points**: No issues identified for discussion.

Work Instruction Group 9: Tribal

9.1 Collaboration with Tribes Regarding Management of State Forest Land

- **Discussion Points**: No issues identified for discussion.

SECTION VI ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WORK INSTRUCTIONS

The implementation of forest management and operations on the Michigan state forest is governed by a suite of 20 work instructions that are divided into eight categories. Internal audits assess management and operations against the requirements of all work instructions. External audits assess management and operations against the indicators in the two certification standards which are aligned with the work instructions.

SECTION VII 2025 AUDIT SCHEDULE AND TRAINING

Internal Audits

A theme audit focusing on Work Instruction 3.2-Resource Damage Reports was planned for 2025 but is being cancelled due to higher priority work needs for ice storm recovery.

External Audits

The 2025 Forest Stewardship Council and Sustainable Forestry Initiative audit will be a recertification audit scheduled for the week of October 6 on the Escanaba, Newberry, Atlanta and Traverse City FMUs as well as the central office in Lansing.

Training

Biodiversity training will be taking place in the Upper Peninsula and Southern Lower Peninsula in summer 2025. Full forest certification training will be offered in summer (late July or August). Pre-external audit training will be held with the Escanaba, Newberry, Atlanta, Traverse City, and Lansing staff in early October.