FOREST CERTIFICATION

MANAGEMENT REVIEW REPORT

Final Report
Approved by the DNR Resource Bureau Management Team
May 10, 2016

Forest Resources Division
IC4506 (Rev. 05/11/2016)

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BACKGROUND

Michigan's state forest was dual certified in 2005 by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and the Forest Stewardship Council (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 14 and Objective 20 address 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 (DNR) 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 review is based on the results of the internal and external audits and includes:

1. A report of the disposition of 2014 audit results;
2. An evaluation of 2015 audit results;
3. A report of actions immediately taken to address new audit findings;
4. Identifies pending actions needed to address new audit findings; and
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 implementation responsibility;
2. Address unresolved non-conformance reports (NCRs) from past internal audits; develop strategies to resolve them and assign implementation responsibility;
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 will produce a draft management review report for the management review meeting in St. Ignace on February 18, 2016.
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 to the Forest Resources Division, Wildlife Division, Fisheries Division, Law Enforcement Division and Parks & Recreation Division management teams for comment by March 3, 2016.
3. Management team comments on the draft report and list of needed work instruction revisions are due on March 28, 2016 to the Forest Certification Coordinator, who will review with the Forest Certification Team Executive Committee.
4. The revised management review report and the list of work instructions requiring revision will be sent to the Resource Bureau Management Team for information by April 12, 2016, with approval desired by May 10, 2016.
5. Following approval of the management review report by the Resource Bureau Management Team, the Forest Resources and Wildlife Division chiefs will assign implementation responsibility for each decision to the identified manager.

IMPLEMENTING PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

1. Whenever possible, immediate changes will be made to remedy identified non-conformances.
2. The Forest Certification Team will be responsible for ongoing management review of implementation and for recommending actions necessary to improve sustainable management of forest resources.

3. Division Management Teams will review decisions related to remedies and improvements specifically in terms of impact and work load.
4. The Resource Bureau Management Team will review and approve management review decisions that identify changes and improvements necessary at all DNR 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.

DISPOSITION OF 2014 AUDIT RESULTS AND 2015 MANAGEMENT REVIEW REPORT

This section provides the disposition of implementation actions identified in the 2015 management review report to address 2014 external audit and internal audits findings. Details regarding the disposition of audit findings may be found in the published reports summarizing the 2015 external and internal audits.

EXTERNAL AUDIT FINDINGS

The 2014 external audit was a surveillance audit under both the SFI and FSC standards and focused on the Newberry, Shingleton and Escanaba forest management units. There were no findings from the SFI portion of the audit and three observations under the FSC standard. All three observations were closed during the 2015 external audit:

- FSC Observation 2014.1 was written against FSC-US indicators 9.1.b and 9.1.c for not conducting any stakeholder consultation activities as specified by the indicators for this newly identified high conservation value attributes of the forest. The DNR fulfilled this observation to complete a written plan of action to complete its high conservation value forests and representative sample area classification under the ecological reference area classification process as detailed in its response. Feedback received from stakeholders during the audit was overwhelmingly supportive of the process since it recognizes the needs for protection, management and public involvement in ecological reference areas. This observation has been closed.
- FSC Observation 2014.2 was written against FSC-US indicator 9.2.b for not carrying out a transparent and accessible public review of proposed roadless high conservation value type 3 forests attributes, their locations and management. The DNR fulfilled this observation to complete a written plan of action to complete its high conservation value forest and representative sample area classifications under the ecological reference classification process as detailed in its response. Public involvement is ensured as detailed in the ecological reference classification framework and legislative oversight. This observation has been closed.
- FSC Observation 2014.3 was written against FSC-US indicator 9.3.a since the management plan and relevant operational plans did not describe the measures necessary to ensure the maintenance and/or enhancement of all high conservation values present in all identified high conservation value areas, including the precautions required to avoid risks or impacts to such values. The ecological reference area planning framework contains the threat assessment and management goals/objectives and reviewed draft community guidance contained elements of protection and active management to ensure that these ecological reference areas are protected. This observation has been closed.

INTERNAL AUDIT FINDINGS

There are no non-conformances remaining open from any internal audits prior to 2014.

The 2014 internal audits were conducted in the Shingleton, Escanaba and Gaylord forest management units. There were no major non-conformances and only one minor non-conformance remains open.

Gaylord Minor NCR 52-2014-06 is written against Work Instruction 8.1. There were several parts of the non-conformity involving three divisions – Parks and Recreation, Wildlife and Forest Resources. Only the Forest Resources Division non-conformities remain open. This open portion of the non-conformity will be discussed further in Section V.

2015 MANAGEMENT REVIEW REPORT

The 2015 Management Review Report contained 18 recommendations for implementation in 2015 and all but 5 were implemented. The details of implementation are discussed below and the items that are incomplete have been carried over into Section V. The implemented recommendations were:

- Writing of a new Inventory and Compartment Review Policy and Procedure (32.22.00) was started in 2013 and continued in 2014. The revised policy and procedure was approved in 2015 and is being implemented for the 2018 year-of-entry compartment review process.
- The 2015 management review recommended revisions to most of the work instructions. In response to this direction, a complete set of newly revised work instructions were approved by the Resource Bureau Management Team and were implemented on June 23, 2015.
- The Management Review Team approved revisions to the internal audit that were implemented in 2015. The major changes involved a change from a separate lead auditor for each audit to a single lead auditor for all audited management units and the introduction of a theme audit that was applied to the 12 unaudited units (it was part of the audit in the three audited units). A third change involved re-defining the unit-level major non-conformance category and the introduction of a multi-unit non-conformance that was applied based on the audit results once all three unit-level audits had been completed.
- The role of the Forest Certification Team was reviewed, reconfirmed and new membership was proposed for implementation.
- New management direction for Potential Old Growth areas and additional management direction for ERAs and Designated Habitat Areas (DHAs) has been incorporated into Work Instruction 1.4.
- Three FSC observations related to social impact and public participation (Work Instruction 1.5) were closed (see External Audit Findings section above).
- Silvicultural Guidelines - Silviculture guides for jack pine, aspen, and northern hardwoods were finalized by July 1, 2014. The FRD Silviculturalist added some basic information about climate change impact to the aspen silvics guide. The link to the guidelines has been provided to the two management teams, and they have been approved by the joint FRD-WD management team meeting.
- A reminder for staff to use the Silviculture Project Abstract Page to track unit level silviculture projects was sent out to all field staff.
- The state silviculturalist planned for a new round of derogation requests. A derogation request for use of Dimilin (diflubenzuron) was submitted to FSC and has been approved.
- New direction regarding event and non-event use permits was developed and included in the revision of Work Instruction 3.1 for field use and was approved in 2015 and some further clarification to identify what positions should review and approve the permits was provided to field staff.
- The approval process for intrusive activities was revised in Work Instruction 3.1 in 2014 and an activity tracking system for harvest prescriptions was developed and will be implemented as part of the Michigan Forest Inventory system release 2 that was completed in January 2015; and forest treatment proposals are not included.
- Opportunities to include management direction on riparian management zones and vernal pools were built into training sessions in the Lower Peninsula.
- The annual Research Summary was improved by adding more value to the summary in terms of the relevance of the research and more detail on the projects.
- Forest Resources Division continued to support the SFI Statewide Implementation Committee's annual best management practices monitoring program.
- Direction to field staff on the use of personal protective equipment was clarified.
- The Department Tribal Coordinator and Division Tribal Coordinators meet quarterly to discuss tribal outreach and collaboration in order to coordinate with the tribes and learn from our experiences and coordinate collaborative efforts.

- The Training Advisory Team completed a review of the requirements related to training records and made some adjustment to the reporting period for completed course work that should improve conformance with this work instruction.
- A new statement of commitment to the 2015-19 SFI Standard was completed on December 17, 2015 and provided to NSF-International (our SFI certifying body).

EVALUATION OF 2015 AUDIT RESULTS

There were neither major NCRs nor major CARs from either the internal or external audits. The 2015 external audit resulted in five observations and five minor CARs. The observations and minor CARs that will be addressed during the management review meeting are outlined in Section V. Other opportunities for improvement from the internal audits are detailed in Appendix I.

INTERNAL AUDIT FINDINGS

The internal audits were carried out from the end of June through mid-August on the Baraga, Atlanta and Cadillac forest management units and also resulted in the training of five new auditors -- three from Forest Resources Division and two from Parks and Recreation Division. The audits found no major NCRs, 11 minor NCRs, and 12 opportunities for improvement:

1. Baraga Forest Management Unit – The audit identified no major NCRs, 2 multi-unit NCRs, 7 minor NCRs and 4 opportunities for improvement.
2. Atlanta Forest Management Unit – The audit identified no major NCRs, 3 multi-unit NCRs, 3 minor NCRs and 6 opportunities for improvement.
3. Cadillac Forest Management Unit – The audit identified no major NCRs, 3 multi-unit NCRs, 2 minor NCRs, and 7 opportunities for improvement.

Actions taken resulted in the closure of 8 minor NCRs (see Section IV) and the remaining minor and multi-unit NCRs are addressed in Section V.

EXTERNAL AUDIT FINDINGS

The 2015 external audit was a recertification audit for both standards and was carried out during the week of September 28 through October 2, 2015, by Norman Boatwright (SFI) and Kyle Meister (FSC) and focused on the Atlanta, Traverse City, Gaylord and Gladwin forest management units and the Lansing office. The audit resulted in recertification under both standards and included one opportunity for improvement and two minor non-conformances under the SFI standard and five observations and two minor non-conformances under the FSC standard.

Actions have been taken to address one SFI minor CARs, one FSC minor CAR, and one SFI Opportunity for Improvement (see Section IV). The remaining findings are discussed in Section V under the appropriate work instructions.

IMPLEMENTED ACTIONS TO ADDRESS NEW AUDIT FINDINGS

Following the external and internal audits, there is a concerted effort to expeditiously address and close each of the CARs, NCRs, observations and opportunities for improvement. The three 2015 internal audits resulted in 14 minor NCRs, 4 multi-unit NCRs and 17 opportunities for improvement. Nine of the NCRs were closed and the actions taken are further discussed in this section. The two minor and four multi-unit NCRs remain open and the recommendations for addressing those NCRs as well as some of the opportunities for improvement will be discussed in Section V. From the external audit, one FSC minor non-conformance and a related SFI observation have been addressed.

NCR 11-2015-04 cited Work Instruction 3.2 and was related to shoreline/waterline damage around a small shallow lake as a result of unrestricted off-road vehicle access. The damage has been repaired and access has now been restricted. This NCR has been closed.

NCR 54-2015-02 cited Work Instruction 1.3 and concerned examples where inventory, treatments, expected next steps and management objectives did not make sense. The Atlanta unit has had a large staff turn-over and new staff was not fully trained and were give impractical workloads to complete. This has been addressed through training and reduced workloads. This NCR has been closed.

NCR 54-2015-05 cited Work Instruction 1.3 and concerned intrusive activity permits that were missing various levels of approval, missing issue and expiration dates, undetermined level of use, lack of monitoring and lack of adequate permit tracking. The Atlanta unit has instituted changes to remedy these shortcomings. This NCR has been closed.

NCR 54-2015-06 cited Work Instruction 8.1 and concerned the lack of work instruction training for new staff. This shortcoming has been addressed in the short-term and the development of training plans will be part of the performance evaluations. This NCR has been closed.

NCR 63-2015-03 cited Work Instruction 1.6 and concerned the absence of fisheries staff at both the pre-inventory and pre-review meetings and the lack of input or contribution to forest management decisions. Fisheries staff will seek work instruction training and will pay closer attention to the compartment review meeting schedule. This NCR has been closed.

NCR 63-2015-04 cited Work Instruction 3.1 and concerned the absence of forest treatment proposals and completion reports for fisheries projects. Fisheries staff will seek work instruction training and will pay closer attention to work instruction requirements that apply to their projects. This NCR has been closed.

FSC Minor CAR 2015.4 and SFI OFI 2015.1 concerned the fact that not all of DNR's contractors have the equipment necessary to respond to hazardous spills. As observed on two active logging sites, employees of contractors did not have access to spill kits or other containment and cleanup measures to respond to spills in a timely manner. The DNR employees and contractors shall have the equipment and training necessary to respond to hazardous spills. The DNR's completed response will be reviewed at the 2016 audit. This issue was also addressed by SFI Opportunity for Improvement – Indicator 3.1.1 - Program to implement Best Management Practices – The Michigan BMP Manual in part 3 under the Spill Prevention Best Management Practices Section which states: "*At least one spill kit, as recommended by DEQ, **should** be available on every job site."* – Two of the sites visited (one in Atlanta and one in Gaylord) did not have spill kits available on site. The R4050 Timber Sale Contract Inspection Report has been modified to include a check for an on-site oil spill kit, and this change has been communicated to field staff.

SFI Minor Non-Conformance 2015.1 requires a written statement of commitment to the 2015-19 Standard. The September 2014 correspondence to staff did commit us, but did not mention the new 2015-19 Standard. A new statement of commitment was completed on December 17, 2015 and provided to NSF ISR.

PENDING ACTIONS TO ADDRESS NEW AUDIT FINDINGS

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

WORK INSTRUCTION GROUP 1: PLAN, MONITOR AND REVIEW

1.1 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

- Scope of Certification – this is a carryover from the 2014 Management Review Report. The Forest Resources Division (FRD)/Parks and Recreation Division (PRD) Transition Team was to complete an issue statement by June 1, 2014 to inform staff and clarify whether or not rail trail corridors within the state forest were in scope for the purpose of forest certification. Presently, rail trails are within scope, but whether or not they remain in scope is uncertain.
    - **Discussion Points**: This is a carry-over from the 2015 Management Review. Dennis Nezich and Anna Sylvester have completed a briefing paper and a concept draft for a memorandum of understanding, but have not come to a full agreement. It is time to elevate the discussion to the Resource Bureau Management Team (RBMT) for a decision. Dennis and Anna are working on a condensed version of the report to provide to the RBMT for a decision on how rail trails will be handled with respect to certification.
    - **Approved Decision**: Complete the condensed version and elevate to the RBMT for a decision.
    - **Responsible Manager**: Dennis Nezich and Anna Sylvester

- **Due Date**: Submit to Resource Bureau Management Team, April 30, 2016.

- FSC Observation 2015.2: FSC-US indicator 6.3.h part 2 dealing with invasive species. The DNR has made several advances in its overarching invasive species management program, particularly in aquatic ecosystems. The recent hire of a person tasked with organizing joint efforts in control between the Forest Resources and Wildlife divisions within the DNR is also a positive development for maintaining long-term conformance to indicator 6.3.h. According to interviews with DNR staff located on state forests, implementation of management practices that minimize the risk of invasive species establishment on terrestrial ecosystems has been lacking or slow to launch. The DNR should assess invasive species risks and priorities and as warranted develop and implement practices that minimize the risk of invasive establishment, growth and spread.
    - **Discussion Points:** FRD has had some meetings and has been looking at equipment. Ryan Wheeler is working on this task actively. There is a need to get direction down to the field staff particularly in FRD before the next audit. Another memo to all FRD staff will be coming out soon to reinforce the current direction. Wildlife staff has had field training (last August). Looking to provide training at the unit level. District level may be too large in terms of number of staff and the desired intensity of the training. There is a desire to focus on the specific unit level problem invasive species rather than all species in the state. Training may take place by the end of June.
    - **Approved Decision:** FRD needs to finalize their guidelines and disseminate to staff in the field. There will also be some additional training provided to FRD field staff.
    - **Responsible Manager:** Sue Tangora and Ryan Wheeler.
    - **Due Date:** Training deadline for the end of July 2016. Memo to be out before June 2016. Finalization of the guidelines will be out by the end of May 2016.

- Cadillac OFI 63-2015-01: The DNR uses the work instructions to guide planning, operations and review of state forest management. Currently, the work instructions seem to be lacking in providing guidance on invasive species management; especially management practices related to early detection, rapid response and decontamination.
    - **Discussion Points:** Need to wait for the guidelines to come out from Ryan Wheeler.
    - **Approved Decision:** Revise the work instructions (WI 2.3 and WI 3.1) to accommodate the new guidelines.
    - **Responsible Manager:** David Price
    - **Due Date:** June 30, 2016.

1.2 MANAGEMENT REVIEW PROCESS

- Internal Audits – The format for the audits in 2015 was changed to permit use of a multi-unit level non-conformance and through the introduction of a theme audit across all management units. This is an opportunity to discuss this change and whether or not we wish to continue this format.
    - **Discussion Points**: No issues were identified. Discussion of the approach to developing the root cause and corrective action with respect to the multi-unit non-conformances. Go back to the unit manager in each unit to develop the root cause and corrective action leaving them the option of working together to develop a common approach if appropriate. The spatial distribution of the problem may provide some suggestion as to the group that deals with the solutions.
    - **Approved Decision**: Keep the solutions local to the unit level.
    - **Responsible Manager**: David Price
    - **Due Date**: Completed at February 18, 2017 Management Review Meeting.

- 2015 Theme Audit – Timber Sale Documentation. A review of timber sale documentation for 10 sales in each of the 12 management units not covered by the full internal audit was carried out. The results were summarized in a spreadsheet.
    - **Discussion Points**: Should continue with the theme audit for another year to further evaluate the process. The group would like to see a report summarizing the theme audit for 2015. The group also recommended that the certification planning specialist assign opportunities for improvement and minor non-conformances to the management units as appropriate based on the specific results of the audit.

- **Approved Decision**: Give it another trial year. Present the report and recommendations for non-conformance at the next Forest Certification Team meeting and also have that team choose the theme for the 2016 theme audit.
- **Responsible Manager**: David Price
- **Due Date**: April 25, 2016

1.3 Regional State Forest Management Plan Implementation and Review

- FSC Minor Corrective Action Request 2015.5: FSC-US indicator 7.1.p. The best management practices manual describes cases where certain equipment types or features are recommended based on sensitive conditions (Sustainable Soil and Water Quality Practices on Forest Land; DEQ 2009). However, the management plan does not include a general description and justification of the types and sizes of harvesting machinery and techniques employed on the state forest to minimize or limit impacts to the resource. The management plan shall describe and justify the types and sizes of harvesting machinery and techniques employed on the state forest to minimize or limit impacts to the resource.
    - **Discussion Points**: Proposal is to revisit the BMP manual and revise the document accordingly along with other fixes that have been identified. DEQ is supportive of revising the BMP manual as well.
    - **Approved Decision**: To provide more specificity regarding the requirements of indicator 7.1.p. the DNR and DEQ will initiate an update of forestry best management practices guide (Sustainable Soil and Water Quality Practices on Forest Land, DNR and DEQ 2009). This update may not be completed by the date of the August 2016 surveillance audit.
    - **Responsible Manager**: David Price
    - **Due Date**: October, 2017.
- Internal audit multi-unit level NCR 63-2015-01 and 54-2015-01 related to Work Instruction 1.3 cited the lack of specific rationale and direction with respect to featured species remains open. Although the featured species documentation has been completed to the point that it has been reviewed by staff, we are still in the process of determining if the new material in light of the comments addresses this non-conformity.
    - **Discussion Points**: Need to review the status of the process and examine the comments received on the draft featured species documentation to assess whether or not new documents will satisfy the corrective action. Allow for assessment of the comments submitted as part of the featured species direction review. Once this is completed the non-conformance can be considered for closure.
    - **Approved Decision**: Complete review, finalize the direction and post to intranet/internet for staff to access.
    - **Responsible Manager**: Pat Lederle
    - **Due Date**: June 1, 2016

1.4 Biodiversity Management

- New management direction for potential old growth areas and additional management direction for ecological reference areas and designated habitat areas (DHAs) (in current draft guidance documents) has been incorporated into Work Instruction 1.4.
    - **Discussion Points**: IC4450 is now obsolete and should be considered for rescinding. Most of the information circular has been captured in the new Work Instruction 1.4 and the appendix (of IC4450) details a process that is obsolete and many of the department structures are no longer in existence.
    - **Approved Decision**: Retire and rescind IC4450.
    - **Responsible Manager**: David Price
    - **Due Date**: June 30, 2016 (concurrent with revision of the work instructions).
- Internal audit multi-unit level NCR 63-2015-02 and 11-2015-04 related to Work Instruction 1.4 cited that the required check of the Natural Heritage database and MiFI Opportunistic Field Survey were not being recorded in the locked comments box nor was a signed and dated copy of the check being recorded in the Compartment file.

- **Discussion Points:** A task team was assembled and assigned the development of a root cause and corrective action. The team reported back and the recommendations are being implemented. Their recommended corrective action is as follows:

  Ultimately the corrective action is to completely revise the Rare Species Review process (including Joint Management Team approval), update the work instruction to reflect changes and provide training to staff on the new process. However, since there is another group working on the above revision, an interim resolution is needed and that resolution is multi-fold:

  - Re-name the group layer in the GDSE from 'MNFI Element Occurrences' to ‘Natural Heritage Database’;
  - Update the Inventory Status tool to document that a check of the Natural Heritage Database has been completed and ensure there is a space for comments if any species area identified as being potentially negatively affected by the proposed treatment;
  - Update the Timber Sale Checklist to require and document a check of the Natural Heritage Database prior to implementation of the treatment and provide space for comments to document any new species identified;
  - Update the work instruction (WI 1.4 & WI 3.1) to clarify that when treatments/intrusive activities are proposed outside a year-of-entry, the treatment sponsor (whoever initiates the memo asking for approval of a new treatment) must document in the proposal request that the rare species review has been completed, if any species were identified as being potentially negatively affected and how the treatment was modified to avoid any impacts to the species;
  - Update the work instruction (WI 1.4 & WI 3.1) to clarify what database is to be checked, where the documentation is being done and what should be documented (a review was completed, whether or not any species were identified and what was done to ensure there were no impacts to those species); and
  - Include a description of this interim process in staff training related to the timber sale administration process and clarify that the data managed by MNFI which is to be used in this process is held in the 'Natural Heritage Database' (formerly referred to as the 'MNFI Element Occurrences').

- **Approved Decision:** Accept the recommendation of the task group:

  - Updates GDSE, Inventory Status Tool, Timber Sale Check List completed by June 1, 2016;
  - Staff training before June 1, 2016;
  - Work instruction revision and approval by June 30, 2016;
  - Revision to Rare Species Review process completed and implemented by December 31, 2016.

- **Responsible Manager:** David Price
- **Due Date:** December 31, 2016

- FSC Observation 2015.7: FSC-US indicator 9.1.b and 9.1.c. Management guidelines that document risks and appropriate options for the maintenance of high conservation value attributes and representative sample areas are currently complete for only a sub-set of the high conservation values and none of these draft documents have been formally adopted. However, DNR’s draft plan to complete its public consultation of ecological reference areas is about to be implemented according to its established timeline. At the next audit, the DNR should provide documentation of progress toward making available to the public a summary of assessment results and management strategies for high conservation values (see Criterion 9.3) that have been developed in consultation with qualified specialists, independent experts and local community members.

  - **Discussion Points**: Need to run a couple of ERA plans through the compartment review process to demonstrate the process and some progress on the subject to the external auditors by the time of the 2016 external audit in early August. A planning template has been developed and some draft plans have been developed, but these have not been run

through the compartment review. There may be some issues at Presque Isle that will delay the one in the western UP in the short term. The other two examples are ready to proceed – pine barrens in Gladwin and dune and swale complex in Sault Ste. Marie.
    - **Approved Decision**: Complete a couple of ERA plans. Make available to the public a summary of assessment results and management strategies for high conservation values (see Criterion 9.3) that have been developed in consultation with qualified specialists, independent experts and local community members.
    - **Responsible Manager**: David Price
    - **Due Date**: Both are out-of-year-of-entry. Gladwin – July 30 and Sault Ste. Marie – October 30.

1.5 Social Impact and Public Participation

- FSC Observation 2015.1: Indicator 4.4.a and its relationship to indicator 8.2.d.3. The DNR has not defined the frequency of updating its socioeconomic assessment and what socioeconomic variables or research questions within the categories of indicator 4.4.a should be evaluated to complete the assessment. The DNR should consider updating its assessment of the likely social impacts of management activities and incorporate this understanding into management planning and operations. Social impacts include effects on: archaeological sites and sites of cultural, historical and community significance (on and off the management unit (i.e., state forest)); public resources, including air, water and food (hunting, fishing and gathering); aesthetics; community goals for forest and natural resource use and protection (such as employment, subsistence, recreation and health); community economic opportunities; and other people who may be affected by management operations.
    - **Discussion Points:** Past study was from 2006 and was contracted out. Auditors felt that this one was out-of-date and that a new study should be undertaken. There is some information available from the Wildlife side (Frank Lupe) that might provide some information. There may also be some information available from the US Fish and Wildlife Service at the national scale with application to the state scale, but not to the state forest scale. May be able to work through PERM.
    - **Approved Decision**: Budget request for contracting a new study of the social-economic impact of state forest lands will be proposed as part of the FY2017 budget process.
    - **Responsible Manager**: David Price
    - **Due Date**: December 31, 2017.
- FSC Observation 2015.6: Indicator 8.5.a. The DNR is to make available on request all non-confidential monitoring information. Monitoring reports appear on the DNR Monitoring Reports webpage and although all topics of Criterion 8.2 area addressed, some updates are missing.
    - **Discussion Points**: Review and add relevant reports to the web page.
    - **Approved Decision**: The DNR will review and update the monitoring reports web page for content and presentation including the addition of divisional annual reports.
    - **Responsible Manager**: David Price
    - **Due Date**: Completed by March 1, 2016.

1.6 Management Unit Analysis

- Shingleton OFI 41-2014-6 identified that although staff were aware of the featured species for a given management area, there was uncertainty about the rationale for their use, how they were chosen and where to find more information about their natural history and habitat requirements. This understanding is somewhat of a prerequisite to the planning and to informing the public during compartment review. The information on featured species on the DNR Wildlife Division internet site is incomplete.
- This was not resolved in time for the 2015 internal audits and the issue became a multi-unit non-conformance. A small work group was assigned to this issue and although the species forms have come out for review, we may still need to provide some further direction.
- The decision from the 2015 Management Review was to have the habitat guidance documentation completed by June 1 2015. It was not completed and a multi-unit non-conformance was issued during the 2015 internal audit for Atlanta and Cadillac.

- **Discussion Points**: The Forest Certification Team assigned a team to address the root cause, corrective action and proposed completion date. The draft habitat guidance documents were made available near the end of November for review by staff.
- **Approved Decision**: Complete the review and publish the habitat guidance for featured species.
- **Responsible Manager**: Pat Lederle
- **Due Date**: June 1, 2016

- Content of WI 1.6 is now duplicated in the new DNR Policy and Procedure 32.22-12 – State Forest Inventory and Compartment Review.
  - **Discussion Points**: Direction for this work instruction is now detailed in the new compartment review policy and procedure: 32.22.15 – State Forest Inventory and Compartment Review. There was some discussion by the Management Review Team about deleting this work instruction or referring to the policy and procedure.
  - **Approved Decision**: Preference seems to be to keep the work instruction and refer to the Policy and Procedure 32.22-2015 for at least a few years, so that staff may get familiar with the location of the required direction.
  - **Responsible Manager**: David Price
  - **Due Date**: June 30, 2016

WORK INSTRUCTION GROUP 2: FOREST REGENERATION AND CHEMICAL USE

2.1 REFORESTATION

- Shingleton OFI 41-2014-4 concerns reforestation of difficult to regenerate stands following beech salvage. This particular observation came about from a failed attempt at spraying beech regeneration to knock it back and allow other species to fill in. The failure of the treatment is not unique to this management unit and is something for which a much broader solution is required.
  - **Discussion Points**: A new research proposal will be implemented and on-going for 10 years and is currently looking for sites in eastern UP and northern LP. Not much to recommend in the meantime. Walters did talk about possible tactics at a recent training session (February 2016). There is a need to solve a silviculture problem. Walters may have further direction based on his completed research.
  - **Approved Decision**: 1) Initiate new WD and FRD PERM project with MSU to identify silvicultural approaches for promoting diversity and sustainability in Michigan's northern hardwood forests. 2) Future revisions to the hardwood silviculture guide can be considered based on Mike Walter's latest work. Provide field staff summaries of Walters' research to date.
  - **Responsible Manager**: David Price
  - **Due Date**: June 30, 2016.

- Shingleton OFI 41-2014-5 concerns monitoring of stands prescribed for natural regeneration until adequate regeneration is achieved, but where no monitoring of natural or artificial regeneration was occurring within deer exclosures. It may be advantageous to monitor cedar regeneration in the exclosures to better quantify the effects of excluding deer on cedar. This type of 'experiment' is duplicated on other forest management units and lack of monitoring is a common shortcoming. If staff are going to go to this level of effort and cost, the 'experiment' should have a proper design including a monitoring plan and at least periodic reports. Without monitoring and reporting, the adaptive management and lessons learned values are lost.
  - **Discussion Points**: The Shingleton example was done to re-establish cedar – it was not an experiment. There is a Silviculture Project Abstract Page that is intended to track unit level silviculture projects, but it is not being used. The 2015 MRR decision was to remind staff to use the Silviculture Project Abstract Page to maintain documentation of regeneration, by sending out a note to staff as a reminder. It is uncertain as to whether or not this was actually accomplished – there has not been an influx of completed forms for 2015. Discussion of what should really be captured in this category. Should the TMSs be responsible for filling out this form? Should Forest Treatment Proposals (FTPs) be involved in triggering the submission? Should there be a different FTP form for this aspect? Can MiFI

be used to track this? Should this OFI be moved to Work Instruction 5.1? How do we track "research"?
    - **Approved Decision**: Develop some more detailed direction to unit mangers and TMS' as to what should be included and then get the direction out to the field staff through the responsible managers.
    - **Responsible Manager**: David Price, Dennis Nezich
    - **Due Date**: June 30, 2016.

2.2 Use of Pesticides and Other Chemicals

- Chemical Derogations. The FSC International Board of Directors discussed plans for the upcoming revision of the FSC Pesticides Policy and approved the Terms of Reference of a stakeholder balanced Working Group to lead the revision. It was agreed that the Working Group shall prioritize the task of developing the fundamental approach towards the use of pesticides in certified operations. The Board then decided to suspend the need to apply for derogations for new active ingredients that were added to the FSC List of 'highly hazardous' pesticides until the Board has made a decision on this issue based on input from the Working Group on the future of derogations. This is expected before the end of 2016. The list of 'highly hazardous' pesticides will not be updated during this period.
    - **Discussion Points**: The derogation request for permethrin (for Midland County mosquito control) has been submitted to SCS. The joint derogation application for the use of emamectin benzoate and imidcloprid (coordinated by the PA DCNR) is completed, with no further action needed at this time. The use of rotenone may continue for 2016 since it was not on the old HHP list, but we still need to prepare a derogation request for use in 2017. The use of Zenivex E20 or E4 (etofenprox) may also continue for 2016 since it was not on the old HHP list, and Midland County may revert to use of this chemical if the derogation request for permethrin is not approved.
    - **Approved Decision**: Complete a derogation application for rotenone. Extend the allowable use date for etofenprox until December 31, 2016. Need to change the date in the work instruction to allow for use through the end of this year.
    - **Responsible Manager**: David Price and Darren Kramer (Fisheries Division).
    - **Due Date**: June 30, 2016 for work instruction revision and September 30 2016 for the rotenone derogation.
- FSC Observation 2015.3: FSC-US indicator 6.6.e. The DNR Work Instruction 2.2 includes a few pesticides (such as rotenone) that are authorized for use, but they do not appear in the "FY15 Annual Summary of Pesticide Use on State Forest Lands" report submitted by the organization. It is not clear if all Divisions, including Fisheries, are following the reporting instructions. The DNR's full response will be reviewed at the 2016 audit.
    - **Discussion Points**: The 2015 annual summary of pesticide use was amended to include the use of rotentone prior to the finalization of the 2015 FSC audit report.
    - **Approved Decision**: Communication needs to be made between the FRD Pesticide Coordinator and Fisheries Division to ensure future timely reporting of rotenone use.
    - **Responsible Manager**: Darren Kramer (Fisheries Division) and David Price
    - **Due Date**: June 30, 2016.

2.3 Integrated Pest Management and Forest Health

- No identified issues.

Work Instruction Group 3: Best Management Practices

3.1 Forest Operations

- Approval process for intrusive activities. This is a carryover from the 2014 and 2015 Management Review Reports. There were several recommendations resulting from the management review and although some have been addressed, there are still some that are being carried over to the 2015 management review. The items being carried over included the need for interim guidance related to the forest treatment proposal process; inclusion of the procedures for updating inventory records and for preparing forest treatment proposals and completion reports in the Michigan Forest

Inventory user manual rather than in a policy and procedure document; updating Work Instruction 3.1 to reflect the new activity tracking process in the MiFI system; and interim guidance regarding intrusive activities.

  - **Discussion Points**: There is no longer a need to develop and provide interim guidance for intrusive activities. The need for an FTP tracking database has not risen to the top of the priority list. Substantial work on the MiFI user manual did not occur in 2015 due to lack of resources and other priority work. Staff training has been developed and delivered to field staff. There is training material available. Do we really need a user manual? Updating inventory records is huge and needs to be addressed. Some direction needs to be included in the work instruction. We will need to address what constitutes "completion." There are several work instructions that need to be included to cover updating the inventory – it goes beyond just work instruction 3.1 (2.1 and 7.1). Part of the solution is to develop a policy and procedure regarding FTPs? Can this be accomplished through the work instructions? Next steps require a timelier update of the inventory than for instance a wildlife FTP.
  - **Approved Decision**: Update the work instructions and put off develop of the MiFI user manual.
  - **Responsible Manager**: David Price
  - **Due Date**: June 30 2016 update to work instructions.

- Intrusive Activities as they apply to mineral leasing. The Office of Minerals Management (OMM) has asked about the rationale for including the leasing process as an intrusive activity. This decision goes back to 2005 and we need to re-visit the rationale for doing so and discuss whether or not it should remain as an intrusive activity so that we may respond back to OMM. Any change in status or approach will initiate a change to the work instruction.

  - **Discussion Points**: Wildlife Division has a need to know of intrusive activities on purchased land – these lands are all being identified in the GDSE. Mineral rights take precedence over surface rights. There is a need to know where mineral rights will be exercised well in advance of the leasing. This can be caught at the parcel review recognizing that there cannot be a use permit without a lease and there cannot be a lease without the parcel review. What is the value of having this in the work instruction?
  - **Approved Decision**: Remove these two rows from the table pend input from Dennis Nezich.
  - **Responsible Manager**: David Price
  - **Due Date**: June 30, 2016

3.2 NON-CONFORMANCE REPORTING

- Internal audit multi-unit level NCR 63-2015-05, 54-2015-05 and 11-2015-04 related to Work Instruction 3.2 cited the lack of maintenance of the Resource Damage Database. Individual damage reports were found that were incomplete, had missing data or had no useful data recorded. A small work group was assigned the task of reviewing this non-conformance and developing the root cause and corrective action. These recommendations were due on December 30, 2015.

  - **Discussion Points**: The task group that was assigned this multi-unit non-conformance was unable to address the issue and the team leader has been reassigned. We need to charge another group or team leader to address this issue. Staff were unaware that they could update the database. There needs to be a manual but no staff to do it and it is likely a low priority. Database is not great, but it will work if it is used properly. There needs to be some education in how to use the database to make it functionally useable. It is not being used effectively nor is it being maintained. Suffers from no completion reports. How is the database used now, how can technology help improve use, and how is the new road initiatives related to the database? Do we need more education/training in the database use? There is a history of not addressing the problems that may have led to a failure to report. Is there a long-term fix with an improved database and/or collection method? Attach an RDR requirement to money to fix the problem. Forstat provided some good direction to the Cadillac staff for fixing the database problems associated with the entries.
  - **Approved Decision**: This topic should be discussed at an FRD meeting with the unit managers (statewide managers' meeting) and then provide further direction/training to field

staff regarding the use of the database and the need to report problems. Unit managers from the three units audited in 2015 will be tasked with developing the root cause and corrective action for this multi-unit nonconformance and implementation in their respective units (see WI 1.2).
    - **Responsible Manager**: David Forstat and Bill Sterrett
    - **Due Date**: September 30, 2016.

3.3 Road Closures

- No identified issues.

Work Instruction Group 5: Research

5.1 Coordinated Natural Resource Management Research

- No identified issues.

Work Instruction Group 6: Recreation and Education

6.1 Implementing Public Information and Educational Opportunities

- No identified issues.

6.2 Integrating Public Recreational Opportunities with Management

- Internal audit NCR 11-2015-09 related to Work Instruction 6.2 cited that there was no up-to-date volunteer agreement for work conducted by volunteers on the North Country Trail on certified state forest land, nor was there a recording of volunteer hours as required by Parks and Recreation Division. Further investigation uncovered that the issue was statewide involving other trails. Parks and Recreation Division has developed a statewide solution that will be implemented to correct this non-conformance by June 1, 2016.
    - **Discussion Points**: This issue was missed for the agenda for the Management Review, but a corrective action has been developed by Parks and Recreation Division and it was discussed at the April 25, 2016 meeting of the Forest Certification Team.
    - **Approved Decision**: Modify the existing direction used for equine trails and implement for the North Country Trail.
    - **Responsible Manager**: Parks and Recreation Division Field Coordinator.
    - **Due Date**: June 1, 2016.

6.3 Sustainable Forestry Initiative Involvement and the Implementation Committee

- No identified issues.

Work Instruction Group 7: Integrated Implementation and Contracting

7.1 Timber Sale Preparation and Administration Procedures

- SFI Minor non-conformance – Indicator 11.1.5 - The pre-harvest planning form has a checkbox used to indicate logger completion of the core training requirements. The new SFI Standard has changed this requirement such that annual update training is now required. The Michigan State Implementation Committee has defined this requirement to mean that a trained individual must have direct responsibility and must be on-site regularly. It wasn't evident that DNR has incorporated this change in the Work Instruction 7.1.c or communicated it to field staff. In addition, the check box on the pre-harvest planning form was not being used consistently.
    - **Discussion Points**: The form R4050 - Timber Sale Contract Field Inspection Report has been revised to include the new Sustainable Forestry Education continuing education requirement, and has been provided to field staff for immediate implementation along with a remind for timber sale administrators to properly verify Sustainable Forestry Education training requirements on the form. Interim revisions of Forest Certification Work Instruction 7.1 – Timber Sale Preparation and Administration Procedures have been made to include the new Sustainable Forestry Education continuing education requirement and directions for implementation. These actions have been provided to NSF ISR.
    - **Approved Decision**: Include revised work instruction for approval by the RBMT.

- **Responsible Manager**: Forest Certification Coordinator
- **Due Date**: May 12, 2016 Resource Bureau Management Team meeting for approval.

- The 2015 Theme Audit consisted of an analysis of timber sale inspection forms for conformance with the minimum standards for the timber sale inspection process as defined in Work Instruction 7.1, IC4031 and form R4050.
  - **Discussion Points**: The audit findings have been summarized and we need to discuss and decide how to proceed based on those findings. Do we need a task team to develop the root cause and corrective actions? Is it a minor non-conformance to specific units? Is it a multi-unit non-conformance? What positions are responsible for correcting the non-conformities?
  - **Approved Decision**: Set up some GoTo Meetings to instruct staff in the use of the form 4050 (preferably in April), provide a simple summary of the theme audit and highlight weaknesses and strengths and new expectations with respect to changes and what is expected of them in completing the forms. There is a need for a summary report for the web site and for staff. Identify unit level OFIs, NCRs and multi-unit NCRs. Provide details on the metadata in the table in the report.
  - **Responsible Manager**: David Price
  - **Due Date**: April 30, 2016.

7.2 Legal Compliance and Administration of Contracts

- No issues identified.

Work Instruction Group 8: Training

8.1 Staff Training for State Forest Management

- Internal audit NCR 52-2014-06 related to Work Instruction 8.1 cited that a forester was not familiar with his position's core training needs (R4252) and had not discussed these with his supervisor during performance reviews as part of a larger non-conformance. This is the only piece remaining open. The FRD supervisor was tasked with reviewing a new training memo (which was disseminated to all FRD staff in January 2015) and discussing it with employees during their performance reviews. Individual performance reviews were to be revised as they were completed.
  - **Discussion Points:** District and unit manager are aware of the issue.
  - **Approved Decision:** Carry out the performance review.
  - **Responsible Manager:** Steve Milford
  - **Due Date:** June 1, 2016

Work Instruction Group 9: Tribal

9.1 Collaboration with Tribes Regarding Management of State Forest Land

- No issues identified.

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.

The 2015 internal audits resulted in 32 findings categorized as multi-unit non-conformances, minor non-conformances and opportunities for improvement. These issues were related to 14 of the 20 work instructions. The Plan, Monitor and Review work group had 12 findings; Forest Regeneration and Chemical Use had three; Best Management Practices had eight; Research had three; Recreation and Education had three; Integrated Implementation and Contracting had one; Training had two; and Tribal had none.

Including the findings of the external audit, the number of findings bumps up to 42 on 16 work instructions. Work Instruction 3.1, Forest Operations had eight findings. Similarly, Work Instruction 1.3 had five findings, and Work Instruction 1.1 had four findings. Multi-unit non-conformances were found for Work Instructions 1.3

(Regional Forest Management Plan Implementation and Revision), 1.4 (Biodiversity Management on State Forest Lands), 3.2 (Best Management Practices – Non-Conformance Reporting Instructions) and 6.2 (Integrating Public Recreation Opportunities with Management on State Forest Lands).

The need for improved management related to the issues is discussed in Section V and Approved Decisions will be identified during the management review meeting. Closed NCRs are discussed in Section IV above.

A review of the audit findings across the eleven years (2005 – 2015) that internal audits have been conducted in Michigan shows some rather interesting results (Table 1). The review compares total audit findings and findings categorized as major non-conformances (including the new multi-unit non-conformances), minor non-conformances and opportunities for improvement for the eleven year period. Overall, Work Instructions 1.4, 2.1, 3.1, 7.1 and 8.1 continue to garner the most findings (Figure 1).

The work instructions that correspond to the major issues are related to biodiversity management, reforestation, forest operations, best management practices, timber sale preparation and training (Table 1, yellow highlights). A more detailed look at the results shows that most of the first group of work instructions, related to planning, review and monitoring, needs further attention in terms of compliance with the direction in the work instructions (first four points in Figure 1).

These findings could and should be used to focus the internal audits, theme audits and improvements to the management framework.

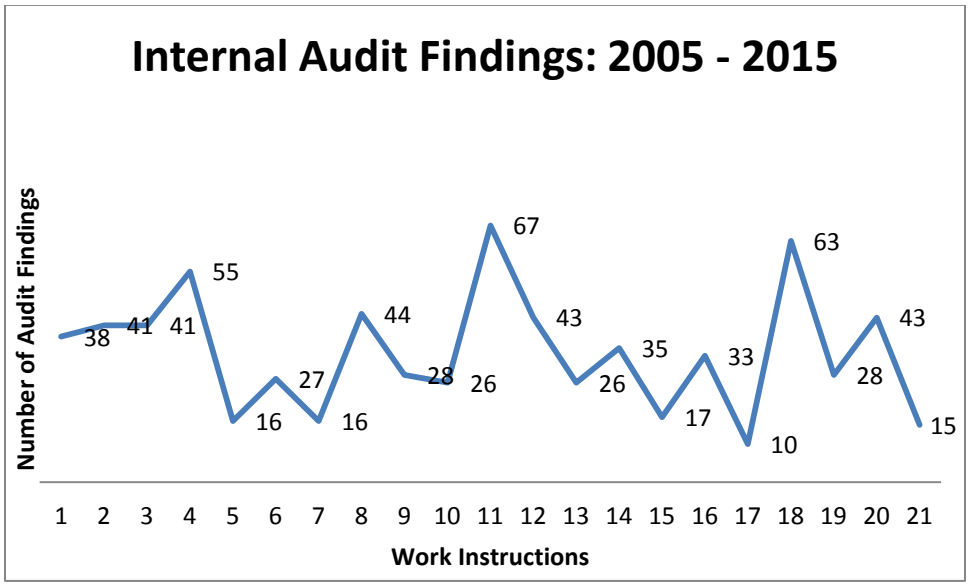
Table1.1

Summary of Internal Audit Findings for the 2005-15 Period for the state forest in Michigan (Note: Work Instruction 1.7 is no longer used) (unpublished DNR data).

Work Instruction	MjNCR	MiNCR	OBS	Total
1.1	9	12	17	38
1.2	9	18	14	41
1.3	16	11	14	41
1.4	12	19	24	55
1.5	3	2	11	16
1.6	10	5	12	27
1.7	6	2	8	16
2.1	7	17	20	44
2.2	3	15	10	28
2.3	6	7	13	26
3.1	9	38	20	67
3.2	7	14	22	43
3.3	7	8	11	26
5.1	6	13	16	35
6.1	0	0	17	17
6.2	8	11	14	33
6.3	0	2	8	10
7.1	9	36	18	63
7.2	0	17	11	28
8.1	7	21	15	43
9.1	3	6	6	15
Total	137	274	301	712

Figure1.1

Graphical Summary of Audit Findings by work instruction for the eleven year period 2005-15 for the state forest in Michigan (unpublished DNR data).



2016 AUDIT SCHEDULE

INTERNAL AUDITS

2016 internal audits will be conducted on the Gwinn, Roscommon and Newberry forest management units. The Gwinn unit in July (19-21), Roscommon unit will be audited in late August (23-25), the Newberry unit in early November (1-3). The focus of the 2016 theme audit will be determined by the Forest Certification Team at its next meeting.

EXTERNAL AUDITS

2016 is scheduled to be a Forest Stewardship Council and a Sustainable Forestry Initiative surveillance audit. Both surveillance audits will be conducted simultaneously during August 8-11, 2016. The auditors have selected the East part of the Sault Ste. Marie, Pigeon River Country and Cadillac units for the audit. The 2017 external audit will focus on the Baraga, Crystal Falls and Gwinn forest management units in the more traditional October time slot.

APPENDIX I

Opportunities for Improvement from the 2015 Internal Audits for the Baraga, Atlanta and Cadillac Forest Management Units

Baraga Forest Management Unit:

OFI 11-1, WI 1.3 Regional State Forest Management Plan Implementation and Revision.

There has been an ongoing discussion as to whether or not the Keweenaw Tip Management Area should remain as part of the managed state forest or should be turned over to Parks and Recreation Division to be managed for its recreational potential. A recreation plan was prepared for the management area some years ago, but has remained in limbo. A decision on what course of action should be taken needs to be made by Forest Resources and Parks and Recreation divisions. OFI 11-2 then needs to be addressed depending upon that decision.

There are ongoing discussions about transferring this management area to PRD, but these talks have gone on hold as the state land strategy is discussed and finalized in the legislature. Until this issue is resolved no progress can be made in terms of potentially transferring this management area to PRD. PRD is interested in the management area because of the recreational opportunities and potential opportunities. On the other hand there are a number of ERAs in the management area that are globally ranked and for which no ERA plans have been developed. This issue will need to be addressed before any decision is made on transferring the area to PRD.

OFI 11-2, WI 1. 3 Regional State Forest Management Plan Implementation and Revision.

The forest inventory for the Keweenaw Tip Management Area was rudimentary and the partially updated inventory has resulted in major changes to the cover type and age-class distributions which will in turn impact the cover type management objectives. It is recommended that once the inventory is completely updated in early 2016 that the Keweenaw Tip Management Area direction in the Western Upper Peninsula Regional State Forest Management Plan be updated through an amendment to the plan.

This would be considered as a routine part of planning – major changes in the inventory would result in a revision of the plan. There are three compartments in the area and inventory is progressing – the last compartment will be inventoried under the new format this year. Once that is completed, the plan for the management area can and will be revisited.

OFI 11-3, WI 1.4 Biodiversity Management on State Forest Lands

The 2013 Overview of Audit Findings provided guidance on the protection of vernal pools during intrusive activities. Although numerous definitions of vernal pools exist (e.g., MNFI community description), field staff is uncertain about how to correctly identify vernal pools during normal field operations (e.g., during inventory or timber sale preparation). Discussion occurred among the auditors and field staff at Eh Hardwoods.

New area biologist is up to speed on the definition and characteristics of vernal pools can bring that expertise to the unit. Mentoring of forestry field staff will occur as inventory is carried out. Vernal pools are handled through the implementation of best management practices.

OFI 11-4, WI 6.1-9 Implementing Public Information and Educational Opportunities on State Forests. The Department of Natural Resources conducts public educational outreach through a variety of methods including: posters and interpretive signing.

On the East Tour at Big Lake Campground a jack pine timber sale has been sold to remove hazard trees around the campground. No special measures have been taken to inform the public of pending harvest activities or the purpose of the harvest.

This work was done during a period when there was no public use to avoid any conflict. Future work in a similar vein will include notices for the public to inform them of pending work in recreational sites.

Atlanta Forest Management Unit:

OFI 54-1, W.I. 1.1 Strategic Framework for Sustainable Management of State Forest Land
Multiple new staff did not have Work Instruction training. Emphasis on understanding the Work Instructions is highly recommended for the upcoming external audit.

All unit staff attended Work Instruction training provided for the 2015 external audit and will take refreshers as they become available.

OFI 54-2, W. I. 1.2 Management Review Process for Continual Improvement in the Management of Forest Resources

Staff need to make themselves familiar with the forest certification report page and its contents, particularly the management review report and the research summary.

Staff have been told to review this page by the Unit Manager after the internal audit was completed and prior to the external audit happened to ensure they were prepared.

OFI 54-3, W.I. 2.1.1 Reforestation

Several treatment reports were examined that were lacking complete data or had inaccurate data. Acceptable regeneration and next step treatments were missing. Inaccurate records should be updated as the opportunities arise.

Many errors were found that were created from transferring data from IFMAP to MiFI. Staff continue to identify and resolve issues on a daily basis while working in the MiFI system.

OFI 54-04, W. I. 3.1 Forest Operations

Other division should provide written input as a co-manager on timber treatment proposals. Currently, input is undocumented.

Parks and Recreation and Fisheries divisions sent written comments for treatments that affect their respective programs and these are included in the compartment review packet. Wildlife Division works with Forest Resources Division as the treatments are created and provide verbal input at onsite meetings, pre-review and informal discussions and forester update the treatment to reflect necessary changes.

OFI 54-05, W.I. 3.1 Forest Operations

Copies of the timber sale proposal should be sent to the wildlife biologist, fisheries biologist, timber management specialists and park staff if the treatment is within 500 feet of a facility as directed in the work instruction.

The unit tracking spreadsheet was updated with a column to ensure other divisions not located in the Atlanta office are notified and emailed a copy of the Timber Sale Proposal prior to it being advertised when required by the work instructions.

OFI 54-6, W.I. 5.1 Research

During a stop at a well site it was noticed the site was covered with knapweed. The group had a discussion regarding the difficulty of reclaiming abandoned well sites with non-invasive species of plants. Steve Milford, the East NLP District Supervisor mentioned an ongoing study to find ways to reclaim these disturbed well sites. A copy of the study abstract was provided upon request by Greg Gatesy, land use specialist; however, the study was not found on the 2014 annual research summary. Even though this study is externally funded it is suggested that it be included in the annual research summary because it takes place on state forest land and because a successful reclamation protocol would have far-reaching benefits for regenerating excessively disturbed sites.

The unit will monitor for research being done and for further opportunities. The unit will also ensure that any identified research projects are included in the annual research summary.

Cadillac Forest Management Unit:

OFI 63-1, WI 1.1 Strategic Framework for Sustainable Management of State Forest Land

The DNR uses the work instructions to guide planning, operations, and review of state forest management. Currently, the work instructions seem to be lacking in providing guidance on invasive species management; especially management practices related to early detection and rapid response, and decontamination.

This is a statewide issue that will be referred to the Forest Certification Team for consideration – it is recommended that this issue be addressed in the 2016 review of the forest certification work instructions.

OFI 63-2, W. I. 1.2 Management Review Process for Continual Improvement in the Management of Forest Resources

Staff need to make themselves familiar with the forest certification report page and its contents, particularly the management review report.

Staff is now familiar with the forest certification report page and its contents. The reports will be topics of discussion at future staff meetings.

OFI 63-3, WI 2.2 Use of Pesticides and Other Chemicals on State Forest Land

In the Compartment 117 Stand 8 experimental treatment of beech and ironwood regeneration there were inconsistencies in documentation. The documentation failed to clearly link treatment to planned objectives and the prescription. Records of observed chemical application did not coincide with the treatment proposal and the objective (target species varied from MiFI report, Forest Treatment Proposal, Pesticide Application Plan and Pesticide Use Evaluation Report).

OFI 63-4, WI 3.1 Forest Operations

There were some inconsistencies between MiFI treatment types, comments and acreages and those reflected in timber sale contracts. This may be a result of data transfer issues between Operations Inventory, IFMAP and MiFI. However, information provided in MiFI should reflect what is proposed or was completed on the ground. If a treatment is changed at compartment review, those changes should also be reflected in MiFI.

OFI 63-5, W. I. 5.1 Research Summary

Staff need to make themselves familiar with the forest certification report page and its contents, particularly the research summary. Also, experimental applications need to be documented and brought to the attention of the research coordinator.

Staff is now familiar with the forest certification report page and its contents. The reports will be topics of discussion at future staff meetings.

OFI 63-6, WI 6.1 Implementing Public Information and Educational Opportunities on State Forests.

On special projects that impact visual or aesthetic values of recreational users in concentrated recreation areas such as the Goose Lake Campground oak wilt project, communication efforts prior to treatment is lacking. Public information meetings or other communication tactics on special projects are an option to fulfill the intent of the work instruction.

The Unit did place “what’s happening here” signs at the location during the harvest. We had a press release as well. Both of these notifications came after the harvest had already started. We have had numerous press releases prior to our most recent oak wilt projects and future notifications will occur well in advance of and at the site of the work on the ground.