

Shingleton Forest Management Unit

2014 Final Forest Certification Internal Audit Report

Internal Audit Dates: July 14-16, 2014

Initial Post Audit Draft Internal Audit:
July 16th, 2014

Lead Auditor: Gary Roloff

Internal Auditors: Scott Jones, Pat Ruppen, Pat Mohny, Jennifer Kleitch (Observer/Trainee)

Opportunities for Improvement: 7

Minor Non-Conformances: 1

Major Non-Conformances: 0

Follow-Up Required:

Opportunities for Improvement: 7

Minor Non-Conformances: 1

Major Non-Conformances: 0

Final Internal Audit Report: September 16th, 2014

Opening Comments:

The internal audit of the Shingleton forest management unit was held July 14-16, 2014. The scope of the audit was state forest land within the Shingleton forest management unit. The audit criteria were the June 23, 2014 version of the work instructions (WIs) and all supporting 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. The June 23, 2014 version of the work instructions was not made available to the forest management unit staff until approximately a week prior to the internal audit, so the audit team agreed to evaluate any potential non-conformances against the prior version of the work instructions. We agreed that if the observed activity was not in conformance with the June 23, 2014 AND the June 19, 2012 versions of work instructions, the activity warranted a non-conformance designation.

A candidate set of sites and topics was sent to the forest management unit manager prior to arrival of the audit team. On Tuesday, July 14, the lead auditor worked with the forest management unit manager to finalize the route and stops. We selected two audit routes: 1) north of the forest management unit office towards Kingston Lake and south of the office around the city of Manistique. On Wednesday morning, we conducted a brief opening meeting with the audit participants at the Shingleton Field Office. The northern team visited 11 sites that included: an active northern hardwoods site where the logger was interviewed, opening enhancements, culverts with corresponding resource damage reports, herbicide application, beech salvage, a Fish Division forest treatment proposal, campground stop, archaeological site and forest regeneration stops. The southern team visited 10 sites including: rails-to-trails site, aspen regeneration in heavy deer use areas, an off-road vehicle scramble area with a resource damage report, cedar regeneration, beech

salvage, northern hardwood patch cut to look at regeneration in a heavy deer use area, road closure, herbicide application, wildlife plantings and an ecological reference area. Thursday morning we reviewed the audit findings, conducting follow-up interviews and further reviewed documents as needed. A closing meeting was held on Thursday at 10:00 am. The audit team gathered evidence to determine work instruction conformance through interviews, document review and field observations.

We greatly appreciated the cooperation, involvement and openness of the Shingleton unit staff. We were particularly impressed with how the various divisions cooperated during implementation of activities associated with managing Michigan's forests, wildlife and recreation. We also commend the unit staff for their attention to detail on forest treatment proposals and inspection forms and their overall knowledge of the work instructions.

Definitions:

Major Non-conformances: One or more of the Michigan Department of Natural Resource (MDNR) Sustainable Forest Certification Work Instruction requirements has not been addressed or has not been implemented to the extent that a systematic failure of the MDNR to meet a sustainable forest certification (Sustainable Forestry Initiative or Forest Stewardship Council) principle, objective, performance measure or indicator occurs. (Adapted from the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard 2010-2014 Edition definitions.)

Minor Non-conformances: An isolated lapse in MDNR Sustainable Forest Certification Work Instruction implementation which does not indicate a systematic failure to consistently meet a sustainable forest certification (Sustainable Forestry Initiative or Forest Stewardship Council) principle, objective, performance measure or indicator. (Adapted from the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard 2010-2014 Edition definitions.)

Opportunities for improvement: Opportunities for improvement are findings that do not indicate a current deficiency, but serve to alert the forest management unit or department staff to areas that could be strengthened or which could merit future attention.

The DNR's internal audit review process (Work Instruction 1.2) requires a record, evaluation and report of non-conformances with forest certification standards and related work instruction at all levels of the department. As part of that process, we documented the unit's conformity with policy, procedures, management review decisions and work instructions. Our audit resulted in no major non-conformance, one minor non-conformance and seven opportunities for improvement. Opportunities for improvement include:

Opportunities for Improvement (OFI):

- OFI 41-1, WI 1.3 - Regional State Forest Management Plan Implementation and Revision.
 - We noted that no long-term goal for the desired amount of openings existed at the management area level. There is an opportunity to give consideration to desired amount, size and distribution of non-forested stands these cover-types.
 - This particular issue is part of a much larger gap that was identified in the regional forest management plans related to the lack of wildlife habitat objectives. This shortcoming will be dealt with at the state scale in order to provide direction to the next version of the regional plans, but it is something that the management unit staff should be thinking about in the meantime.
- OFI 41-2, WI 8 - Training. “Provide training to empower employees to perform their jobs at the level required...”
 - It was noted that no forest certification training has been offered to conservation officers working with the Shingleton unit. A basic introduction to the forest certification processes would be helpful especially considering the large number of newly hired officers.
 - The suggestion for developing and implementing such training will be made from the Forest Certification Specialist to Law Division through the Forest Certification Team as a result of this audit finding.
- OFI 41-3, WI 3.1 - Intrusive activities. Wildlife management prescriptions for “Purchased Lands.” Guidelines for the state forest compartment review process.
 - It was noted that instructions in the document created by the Wildlife Division’s State Forest Habitat Workgroup dated July 11, 2013, were not being followed, but we acknowledge that the work instructions were only recently made available to staff. Staff was not aware of the relatively new guidelines. Additional communication regarding these guidelines should be conducted and guidelines should be followed.
 - Both the approved version of these prescriptions and direction on their use will be sent out this fall from the Forest Resources Division Chief and the Wildlife Division Chief. Staff should watch for this direction and become familiar with its use and interpretation.
- OFI 41-4, WI 2.1.1: - “Reforestation of difficult to regenerate stands... will be a consideration when a stand is prescribed for harvest.”
 - We recognize that salvage is an important silvicultural tool. We also acknowledge that long-term plans to regenerate the stand for the future are critical. Although we observed that the forest management unit staff

experimented with beech control in salvage timber units, we encourage the forest management unit staff to think critically about the shorter-term regeneration goals and how those will ultimately influence long-term stand tree composition.

- 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. The Forest Certification Specialist will bring this issue to the Silviculture and Regeneration Team for further consideration.
- OFI 41-5, WI 2.1.5 - “Stands prescribed for natural regeneration will be monitored until adequate regeneration is achieved.”
 - In the deer fence enclosures it was observed that no monitoring of natural or artificial regeneration was occurring. It may be advantageous to monitor cedar regeneration in the enclosures 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. There is an abstract template (see attachment at the end of this report) on the intranet Silviculture page that is supposed to be completed and maintained for projects of this nature. Unit managers should ensure that staff are using this form and that it is posted on the Silviculture page.
- OFI 41-6, WI 1.6 - “Develop and use GIS layers, maps and tabular data to link compartment information and stand-level decisions to broader forest management unit landscape issues, including forest type acreages and age-class trends.”
 - Although staff were aware of the focal/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 focal/featured species on the DNR Wildlife Division internet site is incomplete. Staff could benefit by more training in the ecological role of focal/featured species.
 - The documentation related to each of the featured species is currently being worked on by Wildlife Division staff. The Forest Certification Specialist will inform the process of the need for both information and training related to

featured species needs and their ecological roles through the Forest Certification Team.

- OFI 41-7, WI 5.1 - “A list of in house, collaborative and contacted research ... that advances the concept of sustainable forestry. ... A list of research projects completed in the previous year, with identification of a contact person and a link to a web site if possible.”
 - Staff was aware of some research activity in the management area or management unit, but were unaware of the results, where to find the research summary or the relationship of the research results to their work. Staff was aware of the requirement for a permit to conduct research and the requirement for a report once the research had been completed. The research summary could benefit from a reformatting that includes the purpose of the research and how the results might apply to on-the-ground management in the unit or beyond. The research summary currently includes only the topic title and the lead researcher. There is currently no value added in the summary.
 - The list of research activities on the web-site does not completely conform to the direction in the work instruction and it also contains many projects that are not related to the concept of sustainable forestry. There is also no way to relate the project title with one of the sustainable forestry elements suggested in the work instruction. The Forest Certification Specialist will bring this issue to the Forest Certification Team for further discussion aimed at improving this product.



Michigan Department of Natural Resources - Forest Resources Division

2014 INTERNAL AUDIT NON-CONFORMANCE REPORT

Unit Name: Shingleton Forest Management Unit	Site location: Unit-wide	Non-Conformance Report Number (Unit Code - yyyy - #): 41-2014-1
Lead Auditor: Gary Roloff	Team Members: Scott Jones, Patrick Mohney, Patrick Ruppen Observer/Trainee: Jennifer Kleitch	
Date: July 17, 2014	Work Instruction or Standard and Clause Number: 5.1.3 - Coordinated Natural Resource Management Research	
<input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor	Other Documents (if applicable):	Responsible Manager(s) (Person identified by the internal audit team who implements the corrective action): Ron Murray, Forest Resources Division, Forest Health, Inventory and Monitoring Unit Manager
Requirement of Audited Standard/Work Instruction: "The Forest Resources Division Forest Health, Inventory and Monitoring Unit Manager will facilitate the review and timely update of the Research Summary by March 1 st of each year and will make the summary available to all DNR staff by posting on the DNR intranet."		
Observed Nonconformity: The 2013 version of the Research Summary was not posted on the internet (2012 version was provided) or intranet (2012 version was provided).		
Root Cause Analysis: The report was prepared and submitted via e-mail to the person who posts it on the website. The e-mail was never received by that person and the preparer who sent it failed to check to see if it was posted. Following meetings about the report, the Division representatives respectively submitted their portions of the report as requested, with the exception of Wildlife Division. The response time for input was very short due to a late meeting date being called by the Forest Resources Division representative. All divisions present at the meeting were in agreement that they would make the deadline. In spite of repeated requests via e-mail and in person, the Wildlife Division component was not received until well after the deadline for posting the report. Since the report preparer has no real authority to demand the input, the report was posted without that section.		
Prepared by and date: Ron Murray September 15 th , 2014		
Corrective Action: Once the mix-up was discovered, the preparer resubmitted the report and the web person posted it. In the future, the preparer will verify posting by looking on the website. In the future, the meeting to start the reporting process will be called earlier so that more time is available for representatives to prepare the input from their division. If report input is not received by the deadline in the future, the preparer will remind the division representatives. If input is still not received, the request will be made through the appropriate administrative channels.		
Prepared by and date: Ron Murray September 15 th , 2014		
Proposed Completion Date: October 15 th , 2014		
Responsible Manager: Ron Murray		
Responsible Manager Signature: Electronic Date: September 15 th , 2014		
Bob Burnham Electronic September 30, 2014 <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> Forest Resources Division Signature Date Unit Manager	Jeff Stampfly Electronic September 30, 2014 <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> Forest Resources Division Signature District Supervisor	
CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN ACCEPTED		
Forest Certification Specialist: Scott Jones		
Date: September 30 th , 2014		

Actual Completion Date: October 22 nd , 2014					
Responsible Manager: Ron Murray					
Date:					
Verified by:			Closed by:		
Paul Kollmeyer	Electronic	October 23 rd , 2014	Scott Jones	<i>Scott Jones</i>	October 24, 2014
Responsible Manager Supervisor	Signature	Date	Forest Resources Division Forest Certification Specialist	Signature	Date
Follow Up Comments					
This non-conformance will be kept open until Wildlife Division provides the wildlife research summary.					
This has been completed.					

Supplementary Information for Opportunity for Improvement Related to OFI 41-5, WI 2.1.5

Silviculture Project Abstract Page to be completed and maintained for unit level silviculture projects

SAMPLE ABSTRACT

Cover Type:

Project Subject/Title:

County:

TRS:

Date Abstract Submitted:

Contact Person:

Contact Phone/Email:

Type of Prescription:

Year Initiated:

Abstract/Prescription:

Results:

Discussion/Recommendations:

Site Statistics:
Habitat Type:
Equipment used:

List of Enclosed Documents: