

Forest Certification Test on the National Forest System



2006 Chequamegon-Nicolet Review

Geoff Chandler/Jeanne Higgins

CNNF



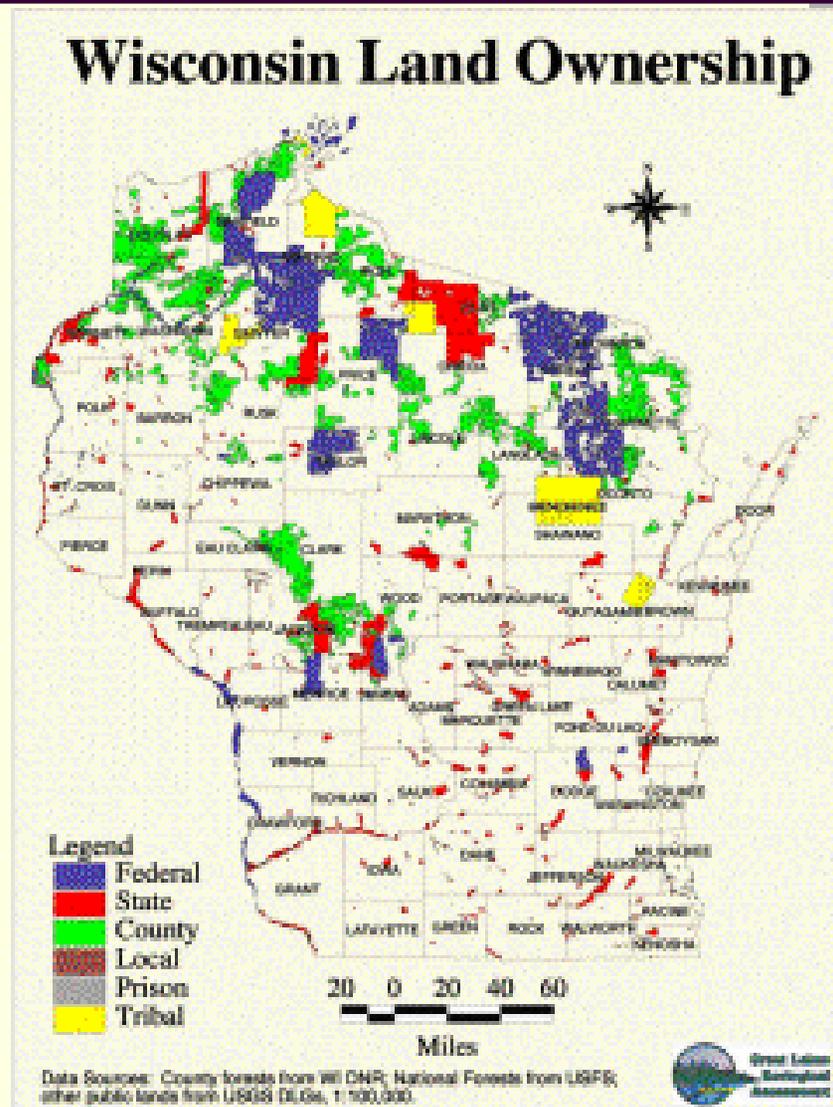
Why the Chequamegon-Nicolet?

- Strong statewide interest and support for certified forests in WI. State/County/MFL forest all certified
- Active timber sale program on CNNF
- Forest Certification is a high-level public lands issue drawing the attention of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan Governors and Legislatures
- At least 15 million acres of state/county/MFL programs certified in Lake States since 2004
- Consistent with State's goal to differentiate WI wood products through certification.

WI Governor Jim Doyle (2nd from left) at a WI DNR Certification Event with DNR Officials and FSC/SFI Auditors



Public Forested lands in Wisconsin



Chequamegon-Nicolet Test Evaluation ...How'd We Fare?



Auditors from
Smartwood (FSC)
and Price
Waterhouse
Coopers (SFI)
toured the CNNF
six days from Oct.
30 to Nov. 4, 2006.

Lead Auditor Dan Pubanz looks over the shoulder of Forest Supervisor Anne Archie.



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General focus on timber harvesting, including contractor training.

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Water quality and wildlife considerations discussed.

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Probing on ATV use, road access and trail development

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Special Management Areas and TES habitats received attention

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Cultural-historic protection, including a stop at the restored Round Lake log sorting structure.

CNNF Test Certification Evaluation



Many interviews with staff and much more emphasis on stakeholder consultation...

Results...

- The auditors noted many CNNF areas of outstanding achievements (e.g., timber sale administration, identification & protection of rare/threatened/sensitive species & habitats, tribal consultation, landscape level planning, invasive species control, river & wetland restoration, addressing forest health issues, etc.)
- There were also be a number of corrective action requests (major/minor) identified and opportunities for improvement. If the FS were to seek certification, none appear to be insurmountable (e.g., recognizing certification in FS policy, logger training requirements, better training records, minimizing delays due to litigation issues)



What might be the potential outcomes of National Forest certification?



- Collaboration/synergy in relation to other public land efforts to promote sustainable forestry
- Wood market assurances
- Independent assessment of management practices by credible third-party organizations
- Valuable insights and constructive feedback from audit teams
- Internal management improvement (complementary to EMS)



What might be the potential outcomes of National Forest certification? (cont.)



- Enhancing the transparency of FS mgmt activities
- Reinforcing the Forest Service's leadership commitment to sustainable forestry both nationally and internationally. Being an active player in certification may achieve benefits way beyond the boundaries of U.S. National Forests.



What did we learn?

1. FSC/SFI systems need to clearly recognize the special obligations and constraints that affect US National Forests – i.e. the aspirational nature of Forest Plans whose rate of implementation is influenced by external variables including the right of citizens to seek redress (a right clearly important to certifying organizations)
2. Need some clarification of FSC/SFI terminology and definitions to effectively evaluate some FS actions such as stream restoration (machines in the water) and requirement to specify logging systems (as opposed to outcomes). Auditors noticed no problems in visiting over 35 logging sites – the outcomes were excellent – but the certification criteria said logging system must be specified. The focus became the process not the outcome on the ground.
3. Certification is a very thorough and comprehensive process.

Thank You!



Geoff Chandler/Jeanne Higgins
Chequamegon/Nicolet National Forest