



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CROW WING COUNTY CONTINUES CERTIFICATION OF FOREST LANDS

Crow Wing County manages its public forest lands to the highest environmental, social and economic standards, according to one of the world's leading forest certification organizations. This recognition comes after a surveillance audit for best-management forestry practices from the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI).

By recognizing standards of excellence in management practices, Forest Certification is important to maintaining and expanding markets for locally grown wood, as demand for products harvested in an environmentally responsible way is increasingly required by the marketplace. Certified wood allows industry to compete in a global market, meet their customers' needs and requires the management of our forests in a sustainable way.

Crow Wing County is part of a four-member County cooperative, the Minnesota Counties Sustainable Forest Cooperative, that includes Beltrami, Carlton and Koochiching Counties. In August, SFI® accredited forestry auditors from NSF and county staff met to conduct the surveillance audit. Auditors visited nine randomly selected forestry sites across the county. Audit findings include:

"Minnesota Counties Sustainable Forest Cooperative has an effective and efficient certification program. Stakeholder engagement is sought on an ongoing basis. Internal Audits are conducted internally in the county and across the counties. Internal Audits confirm consistent compliance with the system by employees. Management is highly engaged in the Internal Audits and the 3rd Party Audit. Top management is committed to the certification program and demonstrates and communicates this commitment to employees. Top management is involved in Management Review and continuous improvement."

And

"Minnesota Counties Sustainable Forest Cooperative exceeds the requirements of the Standard through the incorporation of aesthetic considerations in the planning and implementation of harvesting and silvicultural operations. On three sites visited along major highways in high visibility areas, the shape of the harvest, natural features of the landscape, buffers along the highway and wetlands, and reserve areas were used to incorporate aesthetics into the harvest. Landings were also placed a distance from the highway and behind buffers. (SFI® 2022 Forest Management Standard, 5.1.)"

In achieving those standards, Crow Wing County was awarded continued certification, and has been certified since 2008. The County manages 105,000 acres of public land for clean water, healthy forests, and diverse recreational opportunities for multiple users. The sale of timber at public auctions during the year funds the County's management of these lands, while providing surplus revenues to local communities. County forest lands are managed to strict environmental standards established by both the Minnesota Forest Resource Council and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

Our Vision: Being Minnesota's favorite place.

Our Mission: Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.

Our Values: Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.