

Verification Report

Whittlesey Beach Ridge Forest

City Forest Credits Project Number 024

January 11, 2023

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1 INTRODUCTION

City Forest Credits engaged Todd Douglass (a Validation and Verification Body (VVB) acting as a third-party verifier) to verify the “Whittlesey Beach Ridge Forest Project”, in the City of Mentor and the Village Kirtland Hills, Ohio, for the reporting period of October 25, 2022 through October 24, 2025. The goal of the verification is to ensure that the GHG assertion is materially correct, and that the assertions made by the project are well documented.

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The project will permanently preserve the 91-acre Whittlesey Beach Ridge Forest in the Town of Mentor, and the Village of Kirtland Hills Ohio. The project preserves a valuable mature mixed hardwood forest of species including sugar maple, American beech, yellow poplar, and red oak. The forest is home to some of the largest yellow poplars, and sugar maples found in the state. The land was purchased by the Western Reserve Land Conservancy (WRLC) (85.25 acres) and MAS Landholdings LLC (5.7 acres). The larger parcel is protected under a conservation easement held by the Natural Areas Land Conservancy (NALC), and the smaller parcel is protected by deed restrictions that reflect the adjacent easement.

1.2 CONTACT INFORMATION

Project Operator

Western Reserve Land Conservancy

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Verification Body

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1.3 OBJECTIVE

The goal of this GHG emission reduction verification is to ensure that the GHG assertion made by the Project is materially correct, that the assertions and assumptions used in the offset calculations are appropriate, that the offset calculations conform to the City Forest Credits (CFC) Protocol, and that the Project is in compliance with all CFC requirements relating to eligibility, accounting, and documentation.

2 VERIFICATION CRITERIA

2.1 GENERAL

The Registry will accredit VVBs to act as third-party verifiers who meet the Registry's qualifications and complete training. Those accredited VVBs can then act to verify compliance with this Tree Planting Protocol per International Standards Organization 14064-3. Specifically, the Registry adopts and utilizes the following standards from ISO 14064-3:

- Upon receiving a Project Design Document with data on eligibility, quantification of carbon and co-benefits, and a request for credits, the Registry will conduct a validation. If it validates the project at that stage, the Registry will retain a VVB to act as third-party verifier to verify compliance with this Protocol.
- The Registry requires a reasonable level of assurance in the accuracy of the asserted GHG removals.
- The verification items identified in the Tables 1 and 2 are all material elements, and any asserted GHG removals must be free of errors, misstatements, or omissions regarding those elements.
- The Registry will record, store, and track all quantification and verification data and either display it for public review or make it available for public review upon request.

2.2 PROTOCOL

The verification was conducted to the City Forest Credits Tree Preservation Protocol, version 11.40, February 7, 2022.

2.3 LEVEL OF ASSURANCE

This verification was conducted to a reasonable level of assurance. The Verification Report accurately reflects the documentation contained in the Project Design Document and supporting documents.

3 SCOPE OF VERIFICATION

- The Project encompasses land in the City of Mentor and the Village of Kirtland Hills, both located in Lake County, Ohio. Two tax map parcels (16-A011-0-00-018-0 and 16-A-013-0-00-025-0) are located in the City of Mentor and two tax map parcels (22-A-005-0-00-020-0 and 22-A-005-0-00-019-0) are located in the Village of Kirtland Hills, specifically described in the Project Design Document.
- The Project Operator purchased this land in October 2022 as part of a larger preservation planning process. The land was purchased as 17 individual parcels, which were then consolidated into the four current parcels. The Project Operator entered into a conservation

easement with the NALC to preserve 85.25 acres (parcels 16-A-011-0-00-018-0 and 22-A-005-0-00-019-0) on October 25, 2022. MAS Landholdings LLC signed a deed restriction aligning uniform stewardship with the adjacent 85.25 acres for the smaller 5.7 acre portion (parcels 16-A-013-0-00-025-0 and 22-A-005-0-00-020-0) on October 25, 2022. The easement language includes protection of trees and vegetation consistent with the Protocol. The conservation easement states that “Except for those actions that are necessary for environmental preservation, management or restoration purposes, for the protection of human health and safety, or for the maintenance of a diversity of naturally occurring habitat types and control of exotic species of plants, there shall be no removal, destruction, cutting, trimming, or mowing of any trees or other vegetation.”

- The Project avoids emission of CO₂ from trees and soil, by avoiding conversion of forest to non-forest land cover and avoiding conversion of forest soil to impervious surface.
- The project duration is 40 years, beginning on October 25, 2022. The Project Operator commits to protecting the trees within the Project Area and monitoring the project carbon stocks for the entire project duration.
- The verification includes review of documents, data, imagery and other evidence provided by the Project Operator; independent checking of selected data; independent review of ownership records, tax maps, and municipal zoning ordinances; analysis of inventory and plot sampling data and i-Tree Eco-based carbon stock calculations; and checking of calculations for accuracy and conformance with the Protocol. All forest carbon input values were independently checked and calculations were independently replicated.

4 VERIFICATION PROCESS

4.1 VERIFICATION ACTIVITIES

The verification process consisted of the following activities:

- Verifier checked all requirements in the Protocol (outlined in 4.2), confirmed that documentation satisfies the requirements of the Protocol, and that values extracted from the documents and conclusions drawn from the documents are accurate and appropriate.
- Verifier reviewed the credit calculations. Verifier reviewed the Project Operator’s assertion that the Project results in GHG emissions mitigation of 8,784 tons CO₂e.

4.2 CITY FOREST CREDITS TREE PRESERVATION PROTOCOL REQUIREMENTS

4.2.1 Eligibility

Verifier reviewed the Project against all CFC Tree Preservation Protocol requirements and confirmed the following:

- Project Operator Identity (Section 1.1): Verifier confirmed the Project Operator is the landowner of 85.25 acres, and MAS Landholdings LLC is the landowner of 5.7 acres by reviewing project parcel deeds.
- Project Implementation Agreement (Section 1.2): Verifier reviewed and confirmed fully executed Project Implementation Agreement on file.
- Project Location (Section 1.3): Verifier reviewed mapping and location data. Project is located within the boundaries of incorporated cities or towns within the state of Ohio. The city of Mentor is also defined as an Urban Area by the United States Census Bureau.
- Defining the Project Area (Section 1.4): Verifier confirmed the Project Area is mapped accurately and meets forest canopy cover requirements of greater than 80% tree canopy.
- Land Ownership or Right to Receive Credits (Section 1.5): Verifier confirmed that there is a clear title to carbon credits and the Project Operator has legal authority to create and dispose of greenhouse gas offsets generated on the project lands (85.25 acres) and a signed agreement from the landowner to receive the greenhouse gas offsets on the remaining project lands (5.7 acres).
- Project Documentation (Section 3): Verifier reviewed and confirmed Project Documentation including Project Design Document is complete and accurate.
- Demonstrating Preservation and Threat of Loss (Section 4):
 - Verifier confirmed that trees within the Project Area were not protected from removal prior to the Project. All parcels in the project area were subject to zoning that allowed for at least one non-forest use, including residential development. There are no significant hydrological features or terrain that would limit development within the project area.
 - Verifier confirmed that trees within the Project Area are now preserved from removal by a recorded conservation easement on two parcels, and a restrictive deed on two parcels.
 - The Project Operator has committed to meeting the permanence requirements.
 - Prior to the Preservation Commitment action by the Project Operator there was threat of conversion of the project lands to non-forest cover. Threat of conversion was verified according to protocol section 4.4 A. and 4.4 B. The project area is bordered on greater than 30% of its perimeter by non-forest uses including residential and highway right-of-way. Land was conveyed prior to preservation at well over \$8,000 per acre.

- No Double Counting and No Net Harm (Section 5): Verifier confirmed that Attestation of No Double Counting and No Net Harm is on file.
- Monitoring and Reporting (Section 8): Verifier confirmed that Project Operator has a plan for monitoring and reporting over the Project Duration, and the plan is plausible and reasonable.

4.2.2 Additionality

Verifier reviewed and confirmed that Project lands met the additionality requirements of the Protocol:

- Prior to the Project, lands were not protected from conversion by easement, zoning, or other legal mechanism.
- Zoning allows development including removal of existing trees.
- The trees in the Project Area face some risk of removal or conversion out of forest, demonstrated by more than 70% of the perimeter of the project lands being adjacent to developed parcels.
- Project Operator signed an Attestation of Additionality.

4.2.3 Permanence

The Project Operator has committed to CFC that the Project Operator will protect the trees on the Project Area for 40 years. The conservation easement protecting the Project Trees and lands are permanent.

4.2.4 Accounting

The Project documents an on-site plot sample forest inventory and canopy cover, and uses required factors in carbon stock and offset calculations.

The Project Operator quantified present stored carbon stock according to CFC Protocol standards in Protocol Section 11.1 B. This method involved the collection of a random sample of 1/10th acre fixed radius forest inventory plots, measuring all live trees greater than 5" at 4.5' above ground level (DBH). Twenty-four plots were distributed randomly across the sample area and a total of 269 trees were measured. Stratification was unnecessary due to the uniformity of the stand age and forest composition; confirmed from aerial imagery dating back to 1937 (independently gathered and analyzed by the verifier). Sample size was sufficient to produce a carbon stock estimate within the allowed 15% standard error threshold required by the protocol. Collected plot data was summarized in Davey Tree's i-Tree Eco modeling software to produce stand metrics and calculate forest biomass stock according the protocol. The verifier validated the model inputs to be accurate.

The verifier summarized plot and tree data independently of i-Tree to verify stand density and forest structure. The data produced an average stand basal area of 114 ft²/ac and an average of 112 trees per acre within the project area. The verifier determined that this density estimate is appropriate for the given forest type and forest age.

Although the Protocol does not call for measuring canopy cover under section 11.1 B., the Project Operator provided an estimate of 94% canopy which reflects the almost complete canopy cover of the project area with the exception of the edge abutting the road right-of-way. The verifier confirmed this value to be accurate for use in the co-benefit calculator.

The Project Operator provided calculations of biomass at risk of removal for each separate set of zoning requirements within the Project Area. Verifier determined the calculations accurately followed the Protocol's allowances for avoided biomass emissions detailed in section 11.2 A. and 11.2 B. ii.

To determine risk of soil carbon loss due to conversion to impervious surfaces, the Project Operator followed Protocol section 11.4 B. The residential districts within the project area do not stipulate limits to impervious surfaces and therefore, the Project Operator used the allowed 50% of eligible project area to calculate loss due to conversion. There is one driveway present on the property which was measured by the verifier using aerial imagery. This driveway accounts for approximately 1/5th of an acre of impervious surface, or 0.22% of the entire property. The Project Operator accounted for this to determine a weighted average of 49% avoided conversion, which the verifier confirms as appropriate.

4.2.5 Leakage

Offset accounting makes deductions for expected displacement of emissions following the requirements of the Protocol.

5 VERIFICATION FINDINGS

The project documents and data were reviewed and the verifier found that the emission reductions claimed are reasonable and in accordance to the preservation protocol. The verifier makes no further recommendations.

6 VERIFICATION RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

This verification of the Whittlesey Beach Ridge Forest preservation project for the reporting period of October 25, 2022 through October 24, 2025 was completed in a manner consistent with ISO 14064-3 and in conformance with relevant CFC standards and guidelines. The table below is a summary of the emission reduction or removals.

Table 1. Project GHG Removals

Project Name	Issuance Year	GHG Reductions and Removals Attributed to the Project (mtCO₂e)	Reversal Pool Account (10%) (mtCO₂e)	Emission Reductions to be Issued to Project (mtCO₂e)
Whittlesey Beach Ridge Forest	2023	5,363	536	4,827
Whittlesey Beach Ridge Forest	2023	4,397	440	3,957
Cumulative		9,760	976	8,784

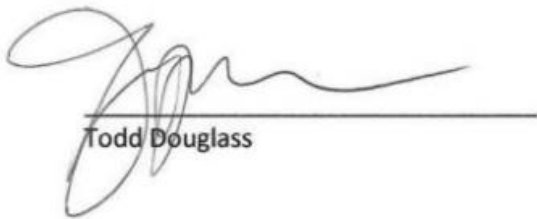
The Project Operator calculated ecosystem co-benefits using the CFC tool to determine dollar values of other ecosystem services. The verifier corroborated the CFC tool inputs and outputs to produce the values below. The verifier does not make an assessment to the plausibility of these values.

Table 2. Ecosystem Co-Benefits Per Year

<i>Ecosystem Services</i>	<i>Resource Units</i>	<i>Value</i>
Rainfall Interception (m3/yr)	43,820.7	\$92,619.76
Air Quality (t/yr)	3.0232	\$7,452.88
Cooling – Electricity (kWh/yr)	133,062	\$18,641.94
Heating – Natural Gas (kBtu/yr)	5,508,071	\$77,037.48
Grand Total (\$/yr)		\$195,752.05

Because the project area is more than 50 acres, credits are issued over two years. See Table 1. above.

Verifier Signature



Todd Douglass