

Verification Report

Davey Corporate Forest Preservation Davey Resource Group

City Forest Credits Project Number 026

12 March 2023

Ecofor LLC

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1 INTRODUCTION

City Forest Credits engaged Ecofor LLC (a Validation and Verification Body (VVB) acting as a third-party verifier) to verify the Davey Corporate Forest Preservation (Project), within the City of Kent, Brimfield Township, Portage County, OH, for the reporting period 13 October 2022 through 12 October 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 is encompassed within three forested parcels totaling 21.40 acres of project area within three land parcels totaling 31.22 acres in Brimfield Township, Portage County, Ohio. The lands support forests ranging in age from 25 to about 80 years. The most predominant species across the project area are Maple species, with other common species being Oaks, Cherry and Plum. A part of the project area is dominated by Tuliptree and Black Locust. Project lands are owned by The Davey Tree Expert Company, of which the Davey Resource Group, Inc. is a segment.

1.2 CONTACT INFORMATION

Project Operator

Davey Resource Group, Inc.
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Kent, OH 44240
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Verification Body

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Lake Forest Park, WA 98155
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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 Preservation 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 the asserted GHG removals to a reasonable level.
- The verification items identified in the tables are all material elements, and any asserted GHG removals must be free of material 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 is located within tax parcels 17-043-00-00-013-000, 17-007-00-00-001-003, and 04-025-00-00-003-013 Brimfield Township, Portage Count, Ohio. The project area is specifically described in shape files and kmz files provided by the project and represented in maps showing project boundaries overlaid on maps showing property parcel boundaries and aerial photos. The verifier confirmed that these parcel numbers match the locations and ownership information in the public records of the Portage County, Ohio, Auditor.

- The Landowner recorded a 40 year “Declaration of Development Restrictions, a restrictive covenant running with the land that prohibits cutting down, removing or destroying trees “except as necessary to control or prevent hazard, disease, fire, or improve forest health, ore otherwise to maintain existing trails”.
- 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 13 October 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 maps of the project area, recorded ownership records, recorded conservation provisions, surrounding development, urban area boundaries, applicable zoning codes, the forest inventory, carbon stock calculations, and credit calculations. 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 independently checked mapping and calculated values in each stage of calculations.
- Verifier reviewed the credit calculations and made independent calculations based on the verifier’s interpretation of aerial images and zoning codes.

4.2 CFC 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 that the landowner, The Davey Tree Expert Company signed an Agreement to Transfer Potential Credits to Davey Resource Group,

Inc, the Project Operator on October 13, 2022. The verifier confirmed that County records show The Davey Tree Expert Company is the landowner.

- Project Implementation Agreement (Section 1.2): Verifier confirmed Project Operator has properly executed a Project Implementation Agreement with City Forest Credits.
- Project Location (Section 1.3): The project location is entirely within the Akron Ohio Urbanized Area, which is an “urban area” defined by the United States Census Bureau.
- Defining the Project Area (Section 1.4): The project area is mapped, meets the requirements of the Protocol, and has greater than 80% tree canopy cover.
- Land Ownership or Right to Receive Credits (Section 1.5): Verifier confirmed that there is a clear title to carbon credits transferred from the Landowner to the Project Operator by a signed legal “Agreement to Transfer Potential Credits” granting the Project Operator legal authority to create and dispose of greenhouse gas offsets generated on the project lands.
- Project Dates (Section 2): Project initiation dates meet the requirements of the Protocol.
- Project Documentation (Section 3): Verifier reviewed and confirmed Project Documentation including Project Design Document is complete and accurate.
- Demonstration of threat of deforestation and project preservation commitment preventing deforestation (Sections 4 and 6):
 - Verifier confirmed that in the absence of the covenant limiting tree removal, applicable regulations allowed removal of the trees present on within the project area and conversion of the land to developed uses.
 - Verifier confirmed that trees within the Project Area are now preserved from removal by a recorded restrictive covenant in the deeds to the three land parcels.
 - The Project Operator has committed to meeting CFC permanence requirements.
 - Verifier confirmed that the land is zoned allowing development, and not in an “overlay zone” such as wetland or steep slope that would prevent development, resulting in the trees being at risk of removal prior to the Project.
 - Prior to the Preservation Commitment action by the Project Operator there was threat of conversion of the project lands to non-forest cover shown by existing development on at least 58%, 51% and 78% of the perimeters of Sites 1, 2, and 3, respectively, using the most conservative possible interpretation of what constitutes developed use (e.g. not counting an adjacent tree nursery as “developed”), which is greater than the 30% minimum amount required to demonstrate risk of development.
- No Double Counting and No Net Harm (Section 5): Verifier confirmed that Project Operator signed an Attestation of No Double Counting and No Net Harm.
- Monitoring and Reporting (Section 8): Verifier confirmed that Project Operator has a written plan for monitoring and reporting over the Project Duration, and the plan is plausible and reasonable. Note that the offices of the Project Operator are adjacent to one of the three sites

that compose the Project Area, a company facility is adjacent to another site, and the third site is approximately 5 miles by road from the company headquarters.

- It is important that monitoring be performed through the life of the project because a substantial fraction of the largest trees at the site 1, the West Campus site, are Prunus species, which have short lives on the order of 60-90 years. Many of these trees are likely to die naturally during the next 40 years while this project exists. A small percentage of the canopy is Fraxinus species that are at risk of being killed by the Emerald Ash Borer. Also, a small fraction of the canopy area is Ulmus species that are at risk of being killed by Dutch Elm Disease.

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 substantially more than the minimum 30% 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 40 years.

4.2.4 Accounting

The Project conducted a complete census of all trees within the project area of at least 5" in diameter at the point 4.5' above the ground. The project used the i-Tree carbon calculator to estimate the carbon and carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) contained in these trees. Because the Project made a complete census of trees, there is no sampling uncertainty, and no deduction is needed for incomplete canopy coverage. I-Tree is a well-tested piece of software and the carbon stocks per acre reported by i-Tree are reasonable so this verification did not replicate the carbon stock calculations from the tree data.

This verification did not field check inventory measurements, or check the accuracy of inventory data recording or transcription. This verification did check the reasonableness of all asserted tree dimensions and the tree sizes are reasonable. However, there are 8 trees in the inventory that have recorded diameters smaller than the stated minimum 5" diameter to be recorded in the inventory. It is not clear whether these trees are erroneously included, or if the stated diameter is a typographical error. This verification assumes that the errors are random, and do not significantly affect the total carbon stock estimate.

Zoning of all the parcels encourages retention of trees but does not require it. Sites 1 and 2 are in industrial zones. As a result, for these two sites, the CFC Protocol section 11.2.A default maximum

applies, of 90% baseline clearing of trees in industrial zones. Site 3 is residential zone, and CFC Protocol section 11.2.B.i applies, with a maximum of 90% of the existing biomass counted as an avoided emission.

Calculating the fraction of avoided impervious surface on sites 1 and 2 is complicated. The applicable City of Kent Planning and Zoning Code has several potentially applicable sections addressing setbacks, screening landscaping on perimeters of lots, parking (including within building setbacks), parking requirements, and landscaping required within paved parking areas. Site 1 is adjacent to a rural residential zone on the north boundary of the site, and section 1108.05(D) of the code appears to require a 60' wide vegetated greenspace between the residential zone and developed area within the parcel. Site 1 is already partially developed, and it is likely that no setback would be required between future development and existing development within the parcel. The situation is further complicated by the fact that several of the project area boundaries are set back from the land parcel boundaries because of non-forested areas along some edges of parcel boundaries (and the project area only includes forested areas), so some of the required setbacks and landscaping within parcels are outside of the project area.

These calculations are most complicated for site 1. The north boundary of site 1 is adjacent to a rural residential zone outside the City of Kent, so a 60' wide greenbelt of vegetation may be required, per City of Kent code section 1108.05(D). Even assuming that no rear landscaping is required between existing development on the east side of the parcel, and potential future development within the project area on the west side of the parcel, and setbacks may be impervious surface except for minimum landscaping requirements, and the design is such that no landscaping is required around parking areas other than the landscaping on exterior parcel boundaries, only 64% of the project area would be allowed to be impervious surface. However, it is likely that some part of the interior area of the project area would be required to be landscaping, and it is possibly that the City of Kent would not apply their residential buffer because the adjacent residential land is in a different jurisdiction with a different zoning code. Because of these uncertainties in the interpretation of the zoning code, the verifier accepts the Project Operator's calculation that 6.56 acres of site 1 could be converted to impervious surface as stated on page 13 of the Project Design Document, in the section addressing quantification of soil carbon. This area is 73% of the site 1 Project Area, and the verifier calculates avoided soil carbon emissions from avoided impervious surface using 73% avoided impervious surface.

Site 2 has some areas around the edges of the legal land parcel that are not forest and thus are excluded from the project area. The verifier assumes that required landscape areas screening development within the site would be placed adjacent to parcel boundaries, and thus much of the required landscaping area would be outside the project area (though still within the land parcel boundaries). Based on this assumption, the verifier calculates that if no more than 0.32 acres of interior landscaping is required then 90% of the project area could be developed, and the verifier uses 90% of the project area being avoided impervious surface in calculation of avoided soil carbon emissions, matching the Project Operator's percentage of avoided impervious surface.

Site 3 is a residential zone with a minimum of 1 acre per dwelling unit and Brimfield Township zoning code section 304.03.A applies, limiting impervious surface to 30% on parcels of 1 to 1.5 acres. The tract could be subdivided into two tracts, each approximately 1.25 acres, with a maximum impervious surface allowed by code of 30%. The project proponent estimated 20% maximum impervious surface by assuming that the parcel would be kept as one parcel and not subdivided. The verifier recalculates avoided emissions using 30% maximum impervious surface on site 3.

Equations and factors required by the CFC Protocol are used to calculate avoided emissions from the potentially removed amounts of biomass and avoided impervious surface.

4.2.5 Leakage

Calculations of emissions resulting from displacement of development resulting from preventing development on project lands follow the requirements of the CFC Protocol.

5 VERIFICATION FINDINGS

The Project Operator reviewed the verifier observations described in this report and revised the Project Document and credit calculations to conform with this report.

With these revisions, the verifier finds that the avoided emission amounts claimed by the Project Operator are accurate or conservative, subject to the adjustments to the areas of avoided impervious surface described in section 4.2.4 of this report, with a reasonable level of assurance.

6 VERIFICATION RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

This verification of the Davey Corporate Forest Preservation project for the reporting period 13 October 2022 through 12 October 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	GHG Reductions and Removals Attributed to the Project (mtCO₂e)	Reversal Pool Account (10%) (mtCO₂e)	Emission Reductions to be Issued to Project (mtCO₂e)
Davey Corporate Forest Preservation 2023	4,603	460	4,143
Cumulative	4,603	460	4,143

Because the project is less than 50 acres, all credits are issued in the first year.

The project calculated co-benefits using the CFC co-benefits calculator. The tool asserts the following benefits documented in Table 2. The project also claims social impacts of health and wellbeing, clean water, and making cities more sustainable. This verification did not review these claims and this verification makes no assessment of the plausibility of these claims.

Table 2. Ecosystem Co-Benefits Per Year

<i>Ecosystem Services</i>	<i>Resource Units</i>	<i>Value</i>
Rainfall Interception (m ³ /yr)	10,162	\$21,479
Air Quality (t/yr)	0.70	\$1,728
Cooling – Electricity (kWh/yr)	30,858	\$4,323
Heating – Natural Gas (kBtu/yr)	1,277,374	\$17,866
Grand Total (\$/yr)		\$45,397

Lead Verifier Signature



Gordon R. Smith, PhD