

Verification Report

Black Fork Forest Preserve

City Forest Credits Project Number 027

February 6, 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 “Black Fork Forest Project”, in Mifflin Township, Richland County, Ohio; for the reporting period of July 29, 2021 through July 28, 2024. 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 protect 94.16 acres of noncontiguous forest within a larger 417-acre preserve in Mifflin Township, Ohio. The forested area is spread across five individual stands comprised of three separate forest stand types, including oak-hickory forest, oak-pine forest, and maple-beech-birch forest. These forests contain a variety of hardwood species including red oak, black oak, white oak, sugar and red maple, shagbark and bitternut hickory, beech, cherry, and Ohio buckeye. All forest types represent mid-succession and are approximately the same effective age, originating over 65 years ago. The forested stands fall within a larger landscape of agricultural fields, wetlands, residential properties, and a highway corridor; and serve as a buffer to the hydrologic features that feed the nearby Charles Mill Lake. The land was purchased by the Natural Areas Land Conservancy (NALC) in June 2020, and it was then entered into an environmental covenant with the Western Reserve Land Conservancy (WRLC, the “Project Operator”), The Conservation Fund (TCF), and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, to maintain and protect the property subject to the conservation values of the covenant. The Project Operator is the holder of this covenant.

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 the asserted GHG removals to a reasonable level.
- 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 Township of Mifflin, within Richland County, Ohio. The Project forests are located on four neighboring parcels. Tax map parcels include 021-17-030-13-001, 021-17-030-17-000, 021-17-019-13-001, and 021-17-030-14-003, specifically described in the Project Design Document.
- The Project Operator was recorded as the holder of an environmental covenant on the project area in April 2022. The parties to the covenant agreed to uphold the property’s conservation values by adhering to restrictions of land use. The covenant requires the property to be maintained in its “perpetuity as a natural area” and “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 July 29, 2021. 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 analysis of aerial imagery to confirm vegetation typing (and reviewing historical imagery to estimate stand ages); and checking of calculations for accuracy and conformance with the Protocol.

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. Verifier reviewed the Project Operator’s assertion that the Project results in GHG emissions mitigation of 14,408 tons CO₂e.

- Verifier submitted to the Project Operator a request to include the National Wetlands Inventory overlay in affected portions of the project area. The Project Operator added the wetlands overlay and adjusted the calculations of carbon offset risk to exclude wetland area.

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 (WLRC) is a legitimate entity and is responsible for the project and its reporting.
- Project Documentation (Section 3): Verifier reviewed and confirmed Project Documentation including Project Design Document is complete and accurate.
- 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 in the Mansfield Metropolitan Statistical Area.
- Defining the Project Area (Section 1.4): Verifier confirmed the Project Area meets forest canopy cover requirements. Canopy is close to complete coverage, as verified with i-Tree canopy tool.
- 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. On December 6, 2022 the Owner (NALC), entered an agreement to transfer potential credits from carbon projects to the Project Operator (WRLC). In the agreement, WRLC assumes all responsibilities for the development and sale of carbon credits and the authority to act as the project operator.
- 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 four parcels in the project area were subject to zoning that allowed for non-forest use, however a total of 12.63 acres of wetlands are present within the project area boundaries. These wetland areas would require additional permitting prior to development; to be conservative, the Project Operator excluded them from calculations of avoided emissions. Prior to the project no deed restrictions or encumbrances limited development of forested area. Verifier reviewed existing easements on the four parcels, and confirmed that these had no impact to project area.
 - Verifier confirmed that trees within the Project Area are now preserved from removal by a recorded Environmental Covenant.
 - The Project Operator has committed to meeting the permanence requirements.

- o 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, agriculture and highway right-of-way. Verifier also independently confirmed that 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. The Project Operator will inspect the project area annually and provide a triennial report.

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 60% of the perimeter of the preserve being adjacent to non-forested land including residential, agricultural, and highway.
- 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 environmental covenant protecting the Project Trees and lands is permanent.

4.2.4 Accounting

The Project documents forest type, age and cover, and uses required factors in carbon stock and offset calculations.

The Project Operator accounted for stored carbon stock according to CFC Protocol Section 11.1A. This method involved the use of the afforestation table in Appendix B of the US Forest Service GTR NE-343 to determine estimated carbon stock as a factor of forest type and forest age. US Forest Service (USFS) forest types were observed and documented by the Project Operator on site. Three separate forest types were observed in the project area; maple-beech-birch, oak-pine, and oak-hickory. Forest age was estimated from historical aerial imagery to be at least 65 years old. The verifier confirmed forest canopy coverage in aerial imagery dating back to 1959, and determined the effective forest age to be reasonable. The verifier reviewed forest stand photos and confirmed the forest typing to be appropriate and the age to be reasonable given the tree size, density, and stage of succession.

The Project Operator estimated the canopy cover over the project area using the i-Tree Canopy tool, which produced an estimate of 97%. The verifier confirmed this assessment to be accurate.

To estimate the threat of loss due to conversion, the Project Operator first adjusted the project area conservatively to wholly exclude portions that fell under the National Wetlands Inventory overlay.

The Project Operator provided calculations of biomass at risk of removal for both sets of zoning requirements where applicable for each of the three USFS forest types. The Project Operator calculated avoided biomass emissions, and avoided soil carbon emissions, and accounted for deductions according to Protocol Section 11. The verifier repeated and confirmed carbon quantification calculations to be accurate and in compliance with the Protocol.

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.

All issues raised by the Verifier were clarified and corrected by the Project Operator.

6 VERIFICATION RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

This verification of the Black Fork Forest Project for the reporting period July 29, 2021 through July 28, 2024 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 (mtCO ₂ e)	Reversal Pool Account (10%) (mtCO ₂ e)	Emission Reductions to be Issued to Project (mtCO ₂ e)
Black Fork Forest	2023	8,501	850	7,651
Black Fork Forest	2024	7,508	751	6,757
Cumulative		16,009	1,601	14,408

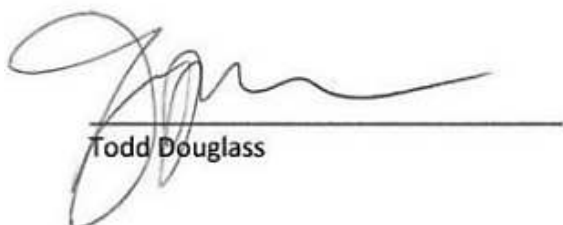
The Project Operator calculated ecosystem co-benefits using the CFC tool to determine dollar values of other ecosystem services provided by the forested project area. The verifier corroborated the CFC tool inputs and outputs to produce the values below. The verifier does not make an assessment to the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

Table 2. Ecosystem Co-Benefits Per Year

<i>Ecosystem Services</i>	<i>Resource Units</i>	<i>Value</i>
Rainfall Interception (m ³ /yr)	48,521.6	\$102,555.56
Air Quality (t/yr)	3.4313	\$8,495.29
Cooling – Electricity (kWh/yr)	143,714	\$20,134.34
Heating – Natural Gas (kBtu/yr)	5,895,100	\$82,450.58
Grand Total (\$/yr)		\$213,635.77

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

Verifier Signature



Todd Douglass