

Statement of CCB Standards Compliance

Restoring a Forest Legacy at Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge

Project Proponent: The Conservation Fund



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Certificate #: SCS-GHG-0041

Date of Issuance: 07/18/2016

Verification Period: 01/19/2011 – 4/15/2016

Project Location: Morehouse, Union, and
Ouachita Parishes, Louisiana, United States



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Verification Scope

The SCS Greenhouse Gas Verification Program has conducted a verification audit of the “Restoring a Forest Legacy at Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge” project against the requirements of the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards, Second Edition. SCS conducted both desk and field based assessment activities in its evaluation of the project. SCS used the client-supplied project documentation as the basis for its evaluation.

Verification Opinion

Based on the results of our verification activities, it is our opinion that the project meets the quality standard defined by CCBA for the period from January 19, 2011 to April 15, 2016. The “Restoring a Forest Legacy at Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge” project conforms to the 14 Required CCB Criteria. The project also conforms to the optional Exceptional Biodiversity Benefits CCB Criteria, qualifying the project for Gold Level.

Project’s Climate Community and Biodiversity Benefits (from Project Implementation Report):

Project Summary: The three primary goals of the project are to decrease the effects of climate change via carbon sequestration, restore Louisiana’s bottomland hardwood forest ecosystem, and create long-term community benefits in the form of recreational lands under the management of the USFWS. As described in the Project Design Document (PDD), 3,905 acres of private, marginal agricultural land within the boundary of the Upper Ouachita NWR were purchased and conveyed to the USFWS. Marginal agricultural land, totaling 2,606 acres, on the newly acquired lands and the existing NWR lands was then planted with bottomland hardwood seedlings during December 17, 2010, and January 19, 2011. Due to low survival in wet conditions, 500 acres of the original planting area were replanted during December 11-21, 2012. Biodiversity values are starting to increase in response to abandoning marginal agricultural practices and planting native hardwood seedlings. Bird surveys conducted by the USFWS reveal consistent use of the site by eastern meadowlark, dickcissel, red-winged blackbird, and mourning doves. Visitor use specifically to the planting zones is low, as expected given the small size of the seedlings, but expected to grow as the trees mature. Refuge staff have given numerous talks to the public about the reforestation effort.

Gold Level Validation: The project achieved Gold Level validation by satisfying Indicator GL3.1.1, Vulnerability, due to the presence of the red-cockaded woodpecker (*Leuconotopicus* [formerly *Picoides*] *borealis*), which was IUCN Red Listed as Vulnerable at the time of project validation. The species, however, was recently down-listed to Near- Threatened (NT). While the red-cockaded woodpecker has been down-listed on the IUCN Red List, an updated assessment confirms the presence in the project zone of several IUCN Red List Vulnerable species, including the crystal darter (*Crystallaria asperella*), western sand darter (*Ammocrypta clara*), paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*), pink mucket (*Lampsilis abrupta*), alligator snapping turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*), southern ladies-slipper (*Cypripedium kentuckiense*), and Arkansas oak (*Quercus arkansana*), in numbers that qualify the project for continuing Gold Level certification.