



Initial Interview Guide

Company Data Sheet
Company Profile
Goals to be Covered by Interviewer
Potential Field Verification Sites
Professional References
Documentation of Compliance History
Third Party Certification Program Guarantee

Company Data to Collect

*Company Name *Company Type (Contractor, Sole Proprietor or Single Component Operator) *Owner
*Company Contact *Mailing Address *Phone (office/home, cell) *Fax
*Email address

Issues to Discuss

(same document for Interview/Verification – used to reconfirm)

Referring to their Readiness Packets:

*Stress the importance of Management and/or Harvest Plans and signed contracts. These are the documents that should clearly describe and define the harvest outcomes and who is responsible to assure the outcomes are being met.

*History of NEMLC and types of recognitions

*Certification and Third Party vs. First and Second Party Certification (NPH-ML is third-party certified)

*NPH-ML is a certification signifying that a company operating a single component of a harvesting operation meets ML goals and harvest responsibilities as they pertain to the harvest. Therefore, the wood being harvested does not meet the certified wood requirements and the company is not eligible for exemption from the Maine Liquidation Harvesting Law.

*When assessing NPH-ML be alert to the interface and differences between the single component operations, such as between the harvester and the forwarder.

*The NPH-ML will be assessed against the Goals and Harvest Responsibilities of the NEMLC Program. The difference will be that the assessment will focus on the harvest responsibilities of the single component operator.

*Additional Trust Certificates that apply to harvesting companies – NEMLC, SmartLogging, FM, CoC

*Let them know that they are committing to submitting a short annual survey about amount and location of harvests in order to stay under a Trust certificate (required for our annual audits by an FSC accredited certifying body)

*Go through steps of NEMLC application process, recertification, and continuous improvement tracking + 800#, random audits, and how the Certification Board works

*Talk about the Code of Ethics, how NEMLC raises the money to keep the costs of certification affordable, and our request that candidates uphold the program by referring criticism and comments to staff for constructive re-evaluation. In other words, don't spread negativity about the program if you want to be a part of making it better!

*Discuss difference between training and recognition. NEMLC is a recognition program – no promised benefits, but many have evolved. Goal is to keep the logger in the recognition chain within a certified product market that previously left them out.

*NEMLC certifies the company, not the individual. A continuous improvement expectation is that company leaders will take the opportunity to build teamwork and communication by educating crew members about their NEMLC recognition. By the time of recertification (about 2 years after initial certification) crew members should understand their NEMLC recognition adequately to discuss it with verifiers.

Guiding Questions for Company Profile

A Company Profile has already been completed as part of the Readiness Folder. If you do not have a copy, call the TCNEF office. Use the sheet and reconfirm the components.

*Ask candidate to tell you about their harvesting background and the story of their company and career.

* # of employees

*equipment used (be specific especially for the NPH-ML)

*types of work done and for whom (be specific especially for the NPH-ML)

*primary markets

*employee supervision

*who's in charge of the prescription?

*employee training

*professional affiliations

*employee turnover/retention

*workshops or training attended in the past 2-3 years

*safety training/workshops attended in the past 2 years

*employee programs/benefits

*professional partnerships (i.e. foresters, ecologists, engineers, etc.)

Ask: Why do you want to become a Master Logger Company?

Has your company been involved in any disputes over the past 5 years? Please explain.

GOALS TO BE COVERED BY INTERVIEWER

GOAL 1: DOCUMENT HARVEST OPERATIONS PLANNING

Harvest Responsibility #1: Discuss any existing forest management plans with the landowner/forester

Performance Standards

- 1.1a Logger certifies, through due diligence and contract sign-offs, that the landowner carries adequate insurance and has clear title to the land that will be harvested; no title, lease, or easement disputes pending, and no outstanding property taxes
- 1.1b Pre-harvest meeting conducted with the landowner/forester to determine if a current forest management plan is available and to set harvest goals and objectives. Timeline and equipment choices are communicated to the landowner
- 1.1c If a forest management plan exists and is available, applicable elements are incorporated into the harvest plan
- 1.1d Landowner/forester agrees to harvest levels that enable long-term fulfillment of the forest management plan. If the landowner objectives differ from the forest management plan, an addendum is attached to the harvest plan and initialed.
- 1.1e A timber sale agreement and/or any contract specifies job responsibilities, such as skid trail maintenance and close-out, are signed by all parties involved and secured.

Harvest Responsibility #2: If no forest management plan exists, the harvest company negotiates a harvest operations plan based upon landowner objectives and in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws

Performance Standards

- 1.2a Harvest operations plans based on landowner objectives are in writing (Harvest Integrity System (HIS) may be utilized by MLC company) and are adequately communicated to all crew members.
- 1.2b All harvest operations plans are consistent with MLC Goals 2, 3, 4 & 5
- 1.2c Harvest plans documents current condition of the parcel, include special areas, BMP needs, abutters, and close out procedures
- 1.2d Property boundaries and limits of the harvest area are clearly marked and shown on the harvest operations plan
- 1.2e Any amendments to the harvest operations plan are noted and initialed by all parties
- 1.2f Ways in which water moves in and around the harvest site during all seasons is fully understood and informs the harvest operations timeline

Harvest Responsibility #3: Conduct a pre- harvest inspection and post harvest assessment of the site

Performance Standards

- 1.3a NEMLC pre-harvest check sheet documents current condition of the parcel including special areas, BMP needs, property boundaries, harvest area boundaries, abutters, and close out procedures
- 1.3b Impact of previous harvest operations (i.e. old roads, log landings, skid trails, rutting, and residual stand damage) is documented on the pre-harvest checklist
- 1.3c Implementation and closeout of the various components of the harvest operations plan are documented on the post harvest check sheet

Harvest Responsibility #4: Comply with all relevant laws and regulations and ensure that all necessary permits are obtained in accordance with federal, state, and local laws

Performance Standards

- 1.4a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Clean Water Act (CWA) standards are met
- 1.4b State Water Quality standards, guidelines and recommendations are met
- 1.4c Endangered Species Act (ESA) is met
- 1.4d All required land use, cutting practices, wetlands, and municipal permits are obtained
- 1.4e All company harvesters and foresters have licenses, where required

GOAL 2: PROTECT WATER QUALITY (Note applicability and responsibility of the Harvest Responsibility as the contract clearly indicates.)

Harvest Responsibility #1: Organize and plan road construction and access to harvest location in a manner that prevents soil erosion and does not impede water flow

Performance Standards

- 2.1a Field reconnaissance and planning occurs prior to commencement of road construction
- 2.1b New truck road construction is minimized
- 2.1c New roads are kept from streams and from lakes

Harvest Responsibility #2: Prepare skid trails in a manner that does not reduce soil absorbency

Performance Standards

- 2.2a Field reconnaissance and planning for skid trails occurs prior to commencement of the harvest
- 2.2e Topography is considered in the skid trail layout to avoid wet areas
- 2.2f Layout of skid trails considers predominant lean of the stand where chainsaw felling is used

Harvest Responsibility #3: Attend to stream management zones in a manner that does not divert or concentrate water flows

Performance Standards:

- 2.3a All stream management zones are identified prior to harvest and necessary permits are obtained and followed
- 2.3b Stream channel integrity is maintained

Harvest Responsibility #5: Establish logging yards at the proper distance from streams, ponds, lakes, marshes, steep slopes, and wetlands so as to maintain the benefits of vegetation next to water bodies

Performance Standards:

- 2.5a Yard and landing placement is pre-planned and retired post-harvest

Harvest Responsibility #6: Monitor all regulations and obtain necessary permits in accordance with federal, state, and local laws.

Performance Standards:

- 2.6a: National Environmental Policy Act and Clean Water Act standards are met
- 2.6b: State Water Quality standards are met
- 2.6c: Endangered Species Act (ESA) as it relates to waterways is met
- 2.6d: Land Use Regulatory Commission, Department of Environmental Protection, as they are titled by state, and any municipal permits are obtained
- 2.6e: Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, as titled by state, and other state specific departments, significant and essential habitat is noted on the harvest plan
- 2.6f: Harvest site is reviewed after the first winter to determine the effectiveness of erosion control, stream protection, etc., and corrective action is taken as necessary
- 2.6g: Rare, threatened, and endangered plants and/or unusual or exemplary natural communities are noted by state specific Natural Areas Programs

GOAL 3: MAINTAIN SOIL PRODUCTIVITY (Note applicability and responsibility of the Harvest Responsibility as the contract clearly indicates.)

Harvest Responsibility #3: Close out harvest site, complete the post-harvest check sheet, and follow-up as necessary

Performance Standards

- 3.3b Sites without forester involvement are checked by the harvesting company one year later (post mud season) for erosion, sedimentation, or other issues unless other arrangements have been made with the landowner

GOAL 4: SUSTAIN FOREST ECOSYSTEMS (Note operator awareness of any pertinent ecosystem delineation considerations.)

Harvest Responsibility #1: Determine if the forest management plan has delineated current wildlife habitat to remain undisturbed. If no management plan exists, wildlife habitat should be delineated in the harvest plan

Performance Standards

- 4.1d Plan documents any significant and essential wildlife habitats identified by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, as titled by state, and specifies how they will be treated.
- 4.1e Harvest supports overall biodiversity
- 4.1f Endangered Species Act (ESA) as it relates to terrestrial habitats is met
- 4.1g Harvesting is consistent with recommended practices for biodiversity conservation

Harvest Responsibility #2: Check all special or unique sites and clearly mark boundaries per harvest plan

Performance Standards

- 4.2a Species-specific habitat is protected as marked (based upon Maine Natural Areas Program)
- 4.2d State Natural Heritage or Natural Areas Programs, biodiversity assessments in unorganized territories, and Habitat Maps of organized towns are consulted for the presence of unique or critical habitat when creating the Harvest Plan. Significant and essential rare, threatened and endangered species habitat is identified and noted on the harvest plan.

Harvest Responsibility #3: Discuss with the landowner/forester the need for attention to preserving native biological diversity

Performance Standards

- 4.3c Wildlife and plant diversity is noted on the harvest plan (see Natural Areas Program designations – further instructions by state in NEMLC Standards Guidance document)

GOAL 5: MANAGE FOREST AESTHETICS (Note operator awareness of aesthetic considerations. Job close-out requirements should be specified in contract.)

Harvest Responsibility #1: Discuss the aesthetic considerations of the harvest with the landowner/forester

Performance Standards:

- 5.1a Pre-harvest aesthetic conditions are documented and reviewed with landowner/forester, and areas of concern to the landowner are identified
- 5.1c Landowner/forester informs abutting landowners of changing forest aesthetic due to harvest and negotiates any suggestions/conflicts
- 5.1d Cultural features of historic and/or archeological value (i.e.: stone walls, cellar holes) are marked and protected

Harvest Responsibility #2: Exhibit an aesthetic sensitivity in areas that adjoin roads and highways, known recreation trails, landing areas, vistas, and other areas of local community value

Performance Standards:

- 5.2a Harvest plan documents any geologic, archeological, historical, cultural, ecological, or aesthetic special areas to be preserved

GOAL 6: ENSURE WORKPLACE SAFETY (Be specific as to what equipment is being operated when discussing this goal.)

Harvest Responsibility #1: Track compliance with all OSHA rules for safety awareness, personal protective equipment, machine operation and maintenance, hand tool safety, harvesting and felling, sharpening of blades, notching, yarding, limbing, and handling flammable or combustible liquids

Performance Standards:

- 6.1a OSHA regulations are known by supervisors and employees
- 6.1b Monthly audits of OSHA safety requirements are conducted and documented as part of a larger safety program
- 6.1c Company's written safety plan is on file for OSHA regulated companies and sole proprietors
- 6.1d Sole proprietors and each harvest employee demonstrate evidence of training and take advantage of regional training resources

Harvest Responsibility #2: An OSHA compliant safety and health plan that includes a hazard communication program, lockout/tagout program, blood borne pathogens, etc. is documented and implemented

Performance Standards:

- 6.2a Twice monthly training requirements for employees are documented
- 6.2b All employees have a current CPR certification and additional opportunities for first responder rescue are provided and documented
- 6.2c All employees have a strategy for making their whereabouts known to others at prescribed times each day, and this is verified as a daily procedure when in the woods
- 6.2d Daily, weekly, and monthly safety checks of all equipment is conducted and a proper lockout/tagout program is evident
- 6.2e Employees are trained in blood borne pathogens and safety gloves are present in First Aid kits
- 6.2f Spill kits are located on each machine and operators are familiar with their use

Harvest Responsibility #3: Initiate Superior Management Practices (SMPs) that exceed minimum expectations of federal and state safety laws

Performance Standards:

- 6.3a Worksite liabilities are clarified with landowner/forester
- 6.3b Deep woods rescue and other advanced safety training is provided by the harvest company
- 6.3c Management provides for employee supervision at each landing
- 6.3d Company has a policy outlining the storage of hazardous materials. Chemicals and containers of liquid or solid non-organic wastes are disposed of in an environmentally appropriate manner at off-site locations
- 6.3e Employees are prepared for all emergencies, and emergency phone numbers are posted in each piece of equipment

GOAL 7: DEMONSTRATE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Harvest Responsibility #1: Develop and implement Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Performance Standards

- 7.1a Employees are trained to use NEMLC Vision and Principles as definitive guidelines when faced with non-regulated scenarios
- 7.1b A continuous improvement approach is utilized to solve problems and correct mistakes
- 7.1c Promising research is translated and utilized in the field
- 7.1d Harvest company monitors forest inventory data provided by state or federal government to stay abreast of forest conditions and trends
- 7.1e Harvest company develops a documentation process with landowners or uses the Harvest Integrity System (see NEMLC standards Guidance Document)

Harvest Responsibility #2: Incorporate advanced and emerging harvest technologies

Performance Standards:

- 7.2a Internet resources are utilized to monitor emerging harvest technologies
- 7.2b Communication systems are continually upgraded with the goal of linking loggers in the woods

Harvest Responsibility #3: Maintain accurate production data (be specific as to the equipment and the job responsibilities)

Performance Standards

- 7.3a Source origination of the forest product is tracked within each company through the Harvest Integrity System (HIS)
- 7.3b Harvest planning and implementation costs are tracked, with consideration given to variables such as weather, equipment breakdown, subcontractor delays, etc.
- 7.3c Company keeps harvest records including owner, location, acreage, and volume by species/product through the Harvest Integrity System (HIS)
- 7.3d Any remediations to the harvest plan are documented

GOAL 8: ENSURE BUSINESS VIABILITY

Harvest Responsibility #1: Provide technical and training support to company employees and abide by all federal and state labor laws

Performance Standards

- 8.1a Livable wages and adequate benefits are provided to all employees and sole proprietors
- 8.1b Training programs on safety, harvesting practices, and labor laws are available to employees
- 8.1c Professional attitude of management, employees, and subcontractors is consistently evident in interactions with other wood harvesters and the public
- 8.1d The company has a clear, written dispute resolution process in place

Harvest Responsibility #2: Utilize technology to improve planning and decision making

Performance Standards

- 8.2a Company business plan is updated
- 8.2b Company institutes computerized cost tracking, inventory, and accounting systems
- 8.2c Company uses internet resources for planning and decision making

Harvest Responsibility #3: Actively participate in the logging industry on local, state, regional, and national levels

Performance Standards:

- 8.3a Access to diverse markets is established through professional contacts
- 8.3b Master Logger Certification designation is marketed and promoted to end users and consumers in local and state markets
- 8.3c Membership in professional and trade associations is maintained
- 8.3d Mentoring opportunities are developed for young men and women interested in the wood harvesting industry

GOAL 9: UPHOLD CERTIFICATE INTEGRITY

Harvest Responsibility #1: Protect NEMLC Codes

Performance Standards

- 9.1a: Earned NEMLC certificate numbers are not shared with non-NEMLC companies for use in the sale or transport of non-MLC harvested wood.
- 9.1b: NEMLC companies will not buy wood harvested by a non-NEMLC certified harvester and sell, or otherwise represent it, as Master Logger wood using their certification code.
- 9.1c: Fraudulent use of an NEMLC certificate code will be reported to the Director of Harvest Certification

Harvest Responsibility #2: Submitting Annual Data to the Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands

Performance Standards

- 9.2a: **For Chain of Custody group members:** A signed consent/acknowledgement form regarding obligations and responsibilities of group membership is submitted to the Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands
- 9.2b: Annual harvest data, as requested by TCNF (“Annual Survey”), is submitted in a timely fashion and is required for retaining active certification each year.

Harvest Responsibility #3: Maintaining CoC Certification Files (For Chain of Custody Group Members)

Performance Standards

- 9.3a: **For Chain of Custody group members:** Each NEMLC company enrolled in the TCNF’s CoC group certificate, appoints a site manager to maintain files relevant to the company’s group CoC membership
- 9.3b: The site manager maintains an up-to-date file of required certification information, including the Rainforest Alliance CoC guidelines and standards, training/orientation materials, the certification number, and annual auditing procedures

Interviewer: If the company has harvest plans, management plans, or contracts for potential field verification sites, please remind them to have them available for the field verifiers.

Potential Field Verification Sites

Please provide the following information for each potential field verification site:

Site #	Active or Closed? (If closed, date of closure)	Site Location	General Description	Other?

(Sample) Professional Reference One

1. Where you satisfied with the quality of work done by this company?
2. Did the company address your goals and objectives?
3. Did the harvest yield your expected benefits?
4. Was the completed job closed out correctly and in an aesthetically pleasing fashion?
5. Would you recommend this company to others?

**Documentation of a Background Check of the Company's Compliance with
Business and Natural Resource Law**

Compliance Check	Initial of Person Completing the Check	Date	Issues Identified or N/A
CLP			
IRS			
OSHA			
MFS			
DEP			
LURC			
IF & W			

Northeast Master Logger Third Party Certification Program Guarantee

Harvest products that bear the logo or trip ticket of the Master Logger Certification Program have been harvested by companies that embrace a vision of mutual economic and environmental benefit. Master Logger companies consistently work to implement superior harvesting and business practices. The recognition of adherence to the MLC performance standards is verified by a third party, independent, field-based assessment process. Companies are recertified every two years and undergo random auditing.

I _____ confirm that this report on _____
(verifier code) (MLC candidate code)

is my own work and accurately reflects my professional field observations.

Verifier Signature

Date

If the verifier does not wish to guarantee that, base upon the field sites visited, this company meets the requirements for Master Logger Certification, please explain here: