

# Verification Report

## Black Fork Planting Project

City Forest Credits Project Number 056

July 28, 2024

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Issaquah, WA

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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Dan Hintz (a Validation and Verification Body (VVB) acting as a third-party verifier) was engaged to verify the Black Fork Planting Project (Project) Mifflin Township, Ohio, for the period of April 26, 2023 to November 14, 2023. 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 Black Fork Planting Project is part of the restoration plan for a 480-acre protected property owned by Natural Areas Land Conservancy, a supporting organization of Western Reserve Land Conservancy, with conservation restrictions held by Western Reserve Land Conservancy. The property is located in Mifflin Township, Richland County, Ohio, and the property had been a working farm since 1959 until 2020 when the Land Conservancy acquired the property. Despite portions of the property being systematically cleared and drained for agriculture, it still contains 94 acres of existing high-quality forest which were registered as a preservation carbon credit project in early 2023. The property also contains 115 acres of Category 3 wetlands with the remaining acres consisting of formerly active agricultural fields. The Black Fork Planting Project will reforest a portion of the former agricultural fields as part of restoration efforts to create forest, meadow, and wetland habitat.

The planting project includes approximately 62 acres of upland tree plantings and 26.4 acres of wetland tree and shrub plantings, for a grand total of 88.4 acres planted. The upland areas were planted April 26 and 27 of 2023 with approximately 4,340 trees. Upland species include Ohio buckeye, shellbark hickory, swamp white oak, burr oak, and pin oak. The wetland areas were planted on November 10, 12, and 14 of 2023 with approximately 1,198 trees. In addition to the trees, 650 shrub were planted though not included in the carbon quantification. Wetland species include pin oak, swamp white oak, eastern cottonwood, sycamore, and black walnut. The trees and shrubs were planted approximately 25 feet apart. This planting project is part of a larger restoration effort which is already demonstrating significant benefits for the region's water quality and wildlife. Restored wetlands are intercepting and treating runoff from surrounding agricultural land to capture nutrients and sediment before the water drains to the Black Fork of the Mohican River. Planting trees in the upland and wetland habitats will further reduce runoff into waterways by absorbing and slowing the flow of water allowing for increased filtration of pollutants and decreased soil erosion. Additionally, the planting includes a variety of oak and hickory species which will improve biodiversity and benefit wildlife. The restored property is already experiencing an increase in wildlife with regular sightings of Ohio Threatened sandhills cranes and amphibians populating the wetlands.

## 1.2 CONTACT INFORMATION

### Project Operator

Western Reserve Land Conservancy

3850 Chagrin River Rd

Moreland Hills, OH 44022

Contact: Sarah Blakely, [sblakely@wrlandconservancy.org](mailto:sblakely@wrlandconservancy.org), 440-528-4168

### Verifier

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## 1.3 OBJECTIVE

The goal of this GHG emission removal 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

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### 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 Afforestation and Reforestation 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 to a reasonable level.
- The verification items identified in 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 Afforestation and Reforestation Protocol, version 11, February 24, 2023.

### 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

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- The Project is located in Mifflin Township, Richland County, Ohio specifically described in the Project Design Document.
- Period is April 26, 2023 to November 14, 2023.
- The verification includes review of documents, data, imagery, and other evidence provided by the Project Operator; independent checking of selected data; checking of calculations for accuracy and conformance with the Protocol.

### 4 VERIFICATION PROCESS

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#### 4.1 VERIFICATION ACTIVITIES

The verification process consisted of the following activities:

- Verifier checked all requirements in the Protocol, confirmed that documentation satisfies the requirements of the Protocol, and that values extracted from the documents and conclusions drawn from the document are accurate and appropriate
- Verifier checked regional and project aerial maps, georeferenced site photos of pre and post tree installation, tree data spreadsheets, attestations of planting (including photos of planting and invoices matching up with trees being credited) and planting affirmation from tree planting contractor.
- Verifier reviewed the accuracy of the carbon quantification and City Forest Carbon Forward Removal Credit calculations. Verifier reviewed the Project Operator's assertion that the Project results in total GHG emissions mitigation of 13,371 tons CO<sub>2</sub>e over the 26-year Project Duration. Verifier reviewed the Project Operator's assertion that, per Protocol guidelines, 10% of the Project GHG emissions mitigation is issued after initial tree planting, or 1,337 tons CO<sub>2</sub>e.
- Verifier submitted to the Project Operator questions about photo monitoring and whether nannyberry should be included as a tree for carbon credits. These issues were resolved with responses from City Forest Credits and the PO.

#### 4.2 CITY FOREST CREDITS AFFORESTATION AND REFORESTATION PROTOCOL REQUIREMENTS

Verifier reviewed the Project against all CFC Afforestation and Reforestation Protocol requirements and confirmed the following:

- Project Operator Identity (Section 1.1): Verifier confirmed identity by reviewing Project Operator website and IRS 990 form.
- Project Design Document (Section 3): Verifier reviewed and confirmed Project Design Document is complete and accurate.
- Project Implementation Agreement (Section 1.3, 3, and 4): Verifier confirmed fully executed Project Implementation Agreement on file.
- Location (Section 1.4): Verifier reviewed mapping and location data and confirmed project location is within Mifflin Township, which is within the Richland County Regional Planning Commission boundary, meeting criteria 1.4.D. an incorporated city or town created under the law of its own state.
- Land Ownership or Right to Receive Credits (Section 1.7): Verifier confirmed a signed Agreement to Transfer Potential Credits between Western Reserve Land Conservancy (Project Operator) and Natural Area Lands Conservancy (Landowner).
- Commencement (Section 2.4, 3): Verifier reviewed Approval of Application Letter. Verifier reviewed the Attestation of Planting and confirmed the date the last project tree was planted.
- Project Documentation (Section 3 and Appendix A): Verifier confirmed all required project documentation present.
- Additionality (Section 4): Verifier reviewed for additionality as follows:
  - Legal requirements test (Section 1.8) – no law or ordinance for Project Operator to plant trees.
  - Performance Standards Baseline (CFC Standard, Section 4.9) – per the program wide performance standard baseline showing net tree loss, these trees are additional. The performance standard baseline is attached to the Project Design Document.
  - The Project did not plant trees on sites that were forested and then cleared of healthy trees (Section 1.9)
  - Project Operator signed a Project Implementation Agreement with City Forest Credits for 26 years.
  - The 26-year Project Duration commitment is additional to and longer than any commitment the Project Operator makes to non-carbon project tree plantings.
  - Project Operator completed and signed the Attestation of Additionality (Section 4).
- Permanence (Section 1.3, 2.2, and 8): Verifier confirmed Project Implementation Agreement imposes a legal obligation to Project Operator to conduct this project for 26 years, including a reversal obligation.
- Quantification (Section 10 and Appendix A):

- Verifier confirmed Project Operator utilized the Afforestation and Reforestation Protocol, version 11 (February 24, 2023) CFC quantification methodology, specifically the cluster planting design and quantification method, described in Appendix A.
  - Verifier reviewed the accuracy of the data integrity in the quantification methodology.
  - Verifier reviewed spreadsheets with tree data, invoices for trees purchased, and geocoded photos for carbon quantification.
  - Verifier reviewed the completed and signed Attestation of Planting and Attestation of Planting Affirmation.
- Co-Benefits (Appendix A): Verifier confirmed the calculation of ecosystem co-benefits as set forth in the City Forest Credits quantification tool.
  - Attestation of No Double Counting of Credits and No Net Harm (Section 5)
    - Verifier reviewed the completed and signed Attestation of No Double Counting of Credits and No Net Harm.
    - Verifier compared the Project geospatial data to the registered urban forest carbon afforestation and reforestation projects geospatial database using Google Earth and determined no overlap was present.

## 5 VERIFICATION FINDINGS

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All issues raised by Verifier were clarified or corrected by the Project Operator and all issues were closed by appropriate responses by City Forest Credits and Western Reserve Land Conservancy.

## 6 VERIFICATION RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

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This verification of the Black Fork Planting Project for the period April 26, 2023 to November 14, 2023 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 verified GHG emissions removals for the Project for initial credit issuance. These City Forest Carbon Forward Removal Credits are ex-ante credits based on forecasted removals and subject to multiple safeguards, including sampling, and which convert to ex-post at Year 26.

**Table 1. Project GHG Removals**

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>GHG Removals Attributed to the Project (mtCO<sub>2</sub>e)</b>	<b>GHG Removals After Deductions for Mortality (30%) (mtCO<sub>2</sub>e)</b>	<b>GHG Removals After Deductions for Reversal Pool Account (5%) (mtCO<sub>2</sub>e)</b>	<b>City Forest Carbon Forward Removal Credits to be Issued to Project (mtCO<sub>2</sub>e)</b>
Black Fork Planting Project	20,106	14,074	13,371	1,337
Cumulative	20,106	14,074	13,371	

**Table 2. Ecosystem Co-Benefits Per Year After 25 Years**

<b>Ecosystem Services</b>	<b>Resource Units</b>	<b>Value</b>
Rainfall Interception (m <sup>3</sup> /yr)	34,377.88	\$246,113.43
Air Quality (t/yr)	1.0013	\$4,636.51
Cooling – Electricity (kWh/yr)	944,323.10	\$71,674.12
Heating – Natural Gas (kBtu/yr)	13,744,090.91	\$133,795.04
<b>Grand Total (\$/yr)</b>		<b>\$456,219.10</b>

**Verifier Signature**




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**Daniel J Hintz**