

Attendees

Steve Sinclair
Mark Heyde
Carmen Austin
Nicole Hill
Alton Perry
Bryan Hulka
Amadou Diop
Barry Graden
Jessica Leahy

AFF Staff

Sarah Crow
Nephtali Chavez
Facilitator
Nancy Walters

Welcome and Meeting Objectives

The meeting was opened by Steve Sinclair welcoming all members to the final call before the in-person meeting in Minneapolis, MN next week. He encouraged the group to dive in and efficiently address the issues of the call. The focus of this call was to address issues with Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species under Performance Measure 5.1 and forest health language under Performance Measure 5.3. During the in-person meeting, any unresolved issues will be addressed along with the issue of BMPs.

Sarah Crow began the conversation by describing the feedback surrounding these topics. Most of the feedback surrounded guidance language not in the purview of the ISRP. Accordingly, the group will look at the corresponding language under the lens of clarifying the intent of the language while suggesting improvements for the National Standards Interpretation Committee (NSIC).

Threatened and Endangered Species

Performance Measure 5.1 addresses protection of T&E species. The corresponding guidance language discusses the Endangered Species Act (ESA) requirements and encourages landowners to go beyond the legal requirements. The ESA requires protection of T&E plant species, but not to plants on private lands. On public lands and in instances in which a private landowner is receiving federal funds, protection of T&E plants is required. The current language within the Performance Measure does not clarify protection expectations related to plant species protection or private vs. publicly owned lands requirements.

The intent of Performance Measure 5.1 is to protect T&E as required by ESA and state law and encourage landowners to offer additional protections. The group agreed that the current language, although achieving its intent, is not clear enough to deal with variances in state laws. It was suggested that language be added at the end of guidance for 5.1 stating that the Performance Measure is required to the extent of the law, including state laws. Suggested additional language for guidance to clarify these points was discussed, and it was agreed that Crow would write up an intent summary for the NSIC for the group.

Forest Health

Feedback related to Performance Measure 5.3 was specific to the guidance language. The concept of forest health was introduced during the first round of revisions to deal with confusion associated with invasive species and integrated pest management. With introduction of a new term, the group ensured that the guidance language aligned with the intent of the Performance Measure.

Consistency of Terms

Terms used in the Performance Measure and corresponding guidance included forest owner, landowner, forest manager and qualified natural resource professional. These terms are used interchangeably in the document. The group agreed that during the in-person meeting, a thorough revision for consistent term usage and definition would be conducted.

Best Management Practices

Current language on Best Management Practices (BMPs) in Performance Measure 4.1 and Indicator 4.1.1 require landowners to meet or exceed their state BMPs where applicable on their property. The intent of this language is that BMPs are mandatory whether they are voluntary or not at the state level. Over time, the emergences of new types of BMPs beyond water quality are being created and the group must decide if other BMPs without the longevity and broad multi stakeholder development processes would be mandated.

ISRP members noted that Standard 4 addresses air, water, and soil protection and therefore, the BMPs required should go beyond just water quality to encompass those elements. Simultaneously, public feedback discouraged unnecessary change. The group agreed that to clarify that all state forestry related BMPs are required; a suggestion to the guidance would be made. Crow will write up a summary of intent for the NSIC for the group to look at the in-person meeting.

The group discussed whether it was necessary to highlight Federal BMPs in the document and agreed that no additional language on that was necessary as there is widespread confusion about what constitutes a federal BMP.

Wrap up

In closing, Crow confirmed that she would draft summaries reflecting intent of the ISRP in regards to T&E and BMPs. The group will review these before they are shared with the NSIC for guidance development. During the in-person meeting, the group will close any unfinished topics from past calls and work on revision of definitions. Accompanying the finalized draft will be a memo from, the chair, Steve Sinclair for the NSIC that the group will assist in composing.