

2015-2020 American Tree Farm System (ATFS) Standards of Sustainability

Independent Standards Review Panel (ISRP)

ISRP Overview

The Independent Standards Review Panel (ISRP) is convened by the American Forest Foundation (AFF) Board of Trustees for the purposes of reviewing the American Forest Foundation Standards of Sustainability and Independently Managed Group (IMG) Certification Requirements and making recommendations for appropriate modification or improvement. The ATFS certification program is designed specifically for family forest owners in the United States. The ISRP is comprised of a representative cross-section of forestry community leaders with a stake in the ATFS Certification Program or a sincere interest in forest sustainability on small private forest ownerships in the US. The work of the ISRP is guided by AFF's Standard Setting Procedures (attached) and the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) requirements for standard setting.

ISRP Objectives

- Collaboratively review comments and views submitted during public comment periods and ATFS Standards Revision Workshops.
- Collaboratively revise and amend existing ATFS Standards language for presentation to the AFF Board of Trustees.

Chair's Role

- Generally oversee the work of the ISRP, supporting AFF staff to ensure the ISRP objectives are met.
- Facilitate ISRP calls and meetings, coordinating with AFF staff to plan agendas, as needed.
- Forward progress memos of the ISRP's progress to the AFF Woodlands and Certification Committees, as needed.
- Coordinate presentation of final revised standard to AFF Board of Trustees.

Participant Responsibilities:

- Represent your respective organization.
- Receive comments and views of interested parties, including disadvantaged stakeholders or those unable to participate in the standard setting process due to their own or AFF's resource limitations, elevating those views to ISRP discussions.
- Engage in consensus based decision-making processes.

Process Overview

- ISRP calls and meetings will be convened by AFF and facilitated by the Chair of the ISRP.
- The ISRP will convene for a minimum of two face-to-face meetings; conference calls and electronic communications will also be utilized throughout the standard revision process
- ISRP members are encouraged to circulate draft documents within their representative organizations.
- Any presented views of interested parties, including ISRP members or their respective organizations, shall be reviewed and considered in an open and transparent manner.
- Should an ISRP member be unable to participate in an ISRP meeting or call, please notify the ISRP Chair and Sarah Crow (scrow@forestfoundation.org). In these cases, substitute representatives may be requested. Substitute representatives must be well-informed as to the progress of the ISRP's work to date and prepared to engage actively in ISRP discussions.
- Engagement with the AFF Certification Committee, Woodlands Operating Committee and Board of Trustees will also be incorporated into the revision process, according to the meeting schedules of those bodies.
- All records, minutes communications associated with the standard setting process shall be made available to the public upon request.
- The AFF Disputes and Appeals Procedures shall be utilized in any case of sustained opposition.

Standards Revision Timeline

Fall 2013

- November 12, 2013: AFF Board of Trustees convene ISRP and standard-setting process
- Week of December 9 or 16, 2013: ISRP kick-off call, including introductions, scope of work and stakeholder engagement process

Winter 2014

- January 7 - March 7, 2014 : Release current standards for first 60-day public review and comment period
- February 18, 2014: AFF Certification Committee Meeting (ISRP member participation not required)
- February 18-20, 2014: Public feedback session at the ATFS National Leadership Conference in Savannah, Georgia (ISRP Member participation optional)

Spring 2014

- Week of March 3, 2014: ISRP call to initiate review of comments and develop draft revisions
- Week of March 25 and 26, 2014: ISRP in-person meeting to review public comment and revise draft, Washington, DC
- April and May 2014: ISRP calls for comment review and draft revision, as needed
- May 8-9, 2014: AFF Woodland Operating Committee (WOC) meeting; review working draft and discussion (ISRP member participation not required)
- May 15, 2015: Target date for draft revisions
- June: AFF National Standards Implementation Committee (NSIC)/Certification Committee meet to develop standards guidance for revisions

Summer 2014

- Late June – late August 2014: Release draft revised standards and guidance for second 60-day public review and comment period
- July 17-19, 2014: Public feedback session at the ATFS National Tree Farmer Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (ISRP Member participation optional)
- July/August 2014: Auditor feedback sessions on draft revision (ISRP and NSIC subgroup and AFF staff)

Fall 2014

- August and September 2014: ISRP calls to review of comments and integrate into working draft
- October 1-2, 2014: AFF Woodland Operating Committee (WOC) review draft report (ISRP member participation not required)
- September 30 and October 1 2014: ISRP in-person meeting to finalize revised standards for presentation to AFF Board of Trustees, Location TBA
- October 2014: NSIC/Certification Committee calls/meetings to finalize guidance
- November 12, 2014: Presentation of revised standards to AFF Board of Trustees by ISRP Chair and AFF staff

2015

- February 2015: Release of revised standards and guidance; Facilitator Training at ATFS National Leadership Conference
- February- December 2015: Transition and 2015-2020 Standards of Sustainability adoption period

2016

- January 2016: Full revised standard adoption