



American Tree Farm System
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NEWS RELEASE

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American Tree Farm System® (ATFS) Invites Comments on Draft Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification

Draft Reflects Extensive Public Input, Outreach to Private Forest Stakeholders

WASHINGTON, DC—The [American Tree Farm System](#)® (ATFS), a program of the [American Forest Foundation](#) (AFF), today invited forestry community stakeholders to participate in a second 60-day public comment period on a [draft revision](#) of AFF's current Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification (Standards).

The ATFS Standards, which undergo a formal public review process every five years, are the benchmark for all ATFS forest certifications and inspections under the third-party-audited ATFS Certification program. The review currently under way follows protocols established by the [Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification](#) (PEFC), the world's largest forest certification program, which is based in Geneva, Switzerland.

The draft currently available for comment was prepared by 14 members of an [Independent Standards Review Panel \(ISRP\)](#), a body of forest stakeholders convened by AFF in January to oversee the review process. ISRP members represent the social, environmental and economic sectors associated with family forest ownership in the U.S.—a broad spectrum of conservation organizations, forestry professionals, forest scientists and academics, forest owners, and government agency and forest products industry representatives.

The panel began its work with two months of public input on the 2010-2015 Standards, which were last reviewed in 2010. The ISRP gathered feedback through the ATFS website, online webinars, public listening sessions, and written comments submitted by multiple forest stakeholder groups.

"What we found during the first stage of the review process was that, in general, the current standards remain a good match for the size, scale, and characteristics of family forestlands, and require no major changes" said Sarah Crow, Senior Director of Certification for ATFS. "We received more than 500 comments on the 2010-2015 Standards from a diverse range of stakeholders and the most prevalent comment was 'Don't make unnecessary changes; these standards are well suited for family woodlands.' The ISRP listened, but also balanced that with the opportunity to promote forest health and align with market opportunities."

Interested members of the public are invited to participate in the latest round of review by [submitting comments online](#), participating in the next listening session, scheduled for July 17 at the Tree Farmer Convention in Pittsburgh, or signing up for the next ISRP [webinar](#). The ISRP will review all comments

submitted through these channels, and will submit a final draft of the revised Standards to the AFF Board of Trustees in November. Upon adoption by the Board, the revised Standards will take effect on January 1, 2015; the ATFS community and certificate holders will have one year to transition to any revisions to the Standards.

Those interested in learning more about the ISRP process and the panel's work are encouraged to visit www.treefarmssystem.org/standardsreview or contact Sarah Crow at scrow@forestfoundation.org, 202-765-3440.

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The American Tree Farm System® is a network of 82,000 family forest owners sustainably managing 24 million acres of forestland. ATFS is the largest and oldest sustainable woodland system in the United States, internationally recognized, meeting strict third-party certification standards.