

Independent Standards Review Panel
Second Meeting
February 19 & 20, 2009
Washington, DC

Attendees:

Linda Casey, Alabama Forestry Commission
Paul Pingrey, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Amelia Wright, Forest Owner
Steve Jarvis, Forest Resources Association
Tim Lundberg, Quad/Graphics
Doug Williams, Association of Consulting Foresters
Andy Mason, National Resources Conservation Service
Tim White, University of Florida
David Ford, Forest Owner / Oregon Small Woodlands Association
Fred Cabbage, North Carolina State University
Tony Lyons, NewPage Corporation
Robert Bonnie, Environmental Defense
Bill Street, International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers
Karl Della Rosa, USDA Forest Service
Cliff Schneider, MWV (retired)

Staff:

Bob Simpson, Executive Vice President, Center for Family Forests
Victoria Lockhart, Certification Manager, Center for Family Forests

Agenda (Day 1)

I. Welcome

The second meeting of the 2008-2009 Independent Standards Review Panel opened at 9:00 AM with a welcome from ISRP chair, David Ford, followed by a review of the meeting agenda and goals. Meeting objectives were to review proposed Standards revisions, discuss public comments submitted to date, and to develop a plan to address remaining issues. Panel members were asked to keep in mind four criteria when discussing suggested revisions; (1) is the provision appropriate for the scope and scale of small ownerships, (2) does the provision say what we mean, (3) is the provision auditable, and (4) is the provision doable by a volunteer force?

II. Review of Panel Member Standards Revisions (Standards 1,2,3,4,5,9,10)

Panel members reviewed suggested revisions compiled by the ISRP working groups. The Revised Standards will be made available for public comment

through the AFF website following the third meeting of the ISRP towards the beginning of April.

AFF Standards Prologue – Panel members reviewed the revised Standards Prologue prepared by AFF staff. The revised Standards Prologue will detail AFF’s commitment to protecting environmental, economic, and social benefits on private forestland in the United States, and reference the Montreal Process and the Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management (PEOLGs) as part of the American Tree Farm System’s (ATFS) commitments under PEFC endorsement. The Standards Prologue will provide context for the AFF Standards.

Standard 1: Compliance with Laws – Revised Standard 1 (Standard 2 under the current AFF Standards) addresses Tree Farmer compliance with relevant laws, regulations and ordinances. Panel members discussed how compliance could be audited, with an explanation from AFF staff on how compliance is currently affirmed. An important issues related to Standard 1 discussed during the meeting was how to define natural resource professionals.

Standard 2: Commitment to Practicing Sustainable Forestry – Under revised Standard 2 (Standard 3 under the current AFF Standards), Panel members discussed the meaning of forest vitality and how the scale of forestry operations affects the level of requirements reviewed by a third-party auditor. The Panel discussed measures to ensure the revised Standards are appropriate for the size and scale of forest management on the wide variety of Tree Farms currently certified. The spirit and intent of the revised Standard 2 is to ensure Tree Farmers are somehow engaged with a natural resource professional and have access to current forestry knowledge. Panel will address specific management plan requirements at the third ISRP meeting towards the beginning of April. Panel will consider US Forest Service and National Resources Conservation Service forest management plan guidelines when drafting the revised management plan requirements in the AFF Standards. Standard 2 will be expanded to address monitoring issues.

Standard 3: Commitment to Practicing Sustainable Forestry – Current Standard 3 transferred into revised Standard 2. Please see above for notes.

Standard 4: Reforestation – The ISRP working group on Standard 4 was led by Fred Cubbage, who explained the working group’s consensus process for developing suggested standard revisions. Important issues related to Standard 4 discussed during the meeting include genetically modified organisms (GMOs), non-native invasives, and integrated pest management (IPM). Panel members discussed the possible burden of conformance on landowners related to Standard 4 and are conscious of need for flexibility for the scale and intensity of forest operations.

Standard 5: Air, Water, and Soil Protection – AFF staff explained the use of “shall” and “must” in the Standards to indicate core requirements. If an element of the Standards includes “must”, is it interpreted as a core requirement which landowners must meet to be certified under ATFS. Important issues related to Standard 5 discussed during the meeting include the expansion of State Best Management Practices (BMPs) beyond water quality measures, disturbances, IPM, and prescribed fire. Panel members agreed that the Standards’ reliance on BMPs is appropriate as state issued BMPs are developed by a broad group of stakeholders and effectively address the wide variety of forest ecosystems spread across the United States. The inclusion of prescriptive indicators related to water quality protection would be inappropriate and unnecessary in the AFF Standards.

Standard 9: Forest Product Harvests and Other Operations – The Standard 9 working group, led by Tony Lyons, worked to broaden and generalize the scope of the current Standard 9 to include forest operations other than harvests. Important issues related to Standard 9 include assessing compliance of forest operations with approved management plans, legal sources, social responsibility, non-timber forest products, forest contractors, and Tree Farm program promotion. The Standard 9 working group agreed to meet before the full panel meeting on Friday morning to develop a second set of recommended Standard language for further discussion among the full panel during the Friday portion of the meeting. The Standard 9 working group added Amelia Wright to represent the landowner perspective.

Standard 10: Outreach and Education- There was interest from the Panel in adding a standard to address outreach issues among the ATFS community, encourage Tree Farmers to take advantage of various educational resources, and encourage greater participation in outreach activities and ATFS promotion. The Standard 9 working group resolved to take up this issue, and the idea of adding a new Standard was tabled.

Glossary of Terms – Panel members suggested language for additional glossary terms including High Conservation Value Forests (HCVFs) and Visual Quality Measures. Members also revised the definitions of State Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Special Sites.

III. Review of Pre-Revision Public Comment Period Submissions (Standard 1,2,3,4,5)

Panel members addressed trends in the public comments received through the Pre-Revision Public Comment period, which closed on December 30, 2008. For a full review of Panel responses to comments, please visit the AFF website.

IV. Presentation on Labor Issues

Bill Street presented on labor issues related to forest owners and forestry operations. Mr. Street brought to the Panel's attention the requirement that all PEFC-endorsed forest certification systems address International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions, while the core ILO treaties have not been ratified by the United States. Panel members questioned whether they were knowledgeable enough about the issue to develop an appropriately sophisticated solution to the issue and asked that Bill Street, as a representative of the labor community, work with staff and other key members of the Panel to develop provisions with the revised Standards.

V. Review of Potential Areas of Interest from ISRP Opening Meeting

The following is a list of potential areas of interest identified in the opening meeting of the ISRP to be evaluated and considered during the standards review process. Please see italicized notes for Panel actions.

Forest Health

- Invasives (*Addressed by Panel in revised Standard 4 – Reforestation*)
- Forest fuels (fire prevention, prescribed fire) (*Addressed by Panel in revised Standard 5*)
- Forest vitality (maintaining forest productivity/forest vigor) (*Addressed by Panel in revised Standard 2*)
- Pathogens (insects, disease) (*Addressed by Panel in revised Standard 5*)
- Impacts (animal populations (ex. deer browsing), extraction of non-timber forest products (NTFP), harvesting, acid rain) (*Addressed by Panel in revised Standards 6 and 9*)
- Climate change (*Will be addressed by Panel under Standard 2 through adaptive management plan*)
- Monitoring (*Addressed by Panel in Standard 2*)
- Forest owner knowledge (*Will be addressed by Panel in Standard 9*)
- Required/encouraged landowner interaction with professional resource manager (*Addressed by Panel in revised Standards 1 and 2*)

Compliance with Federal, State, and Local Laws (*Addressed by Panel in revised Standard 1*)

Carbon and Ecosystem Services

- Total carbon pools (fluxes, carbon cycle, landowner contribution) (*Potentially to be addressed in revised Standard 2*)

Non-Wood/Timber Forest Products (*Addressed by Panel in Standard 9*)

Utilization (*Addressed by Panel in Standard 9*)

Biomass (*Addressed by Panel in Standard 9*)

Consultation (neighbors, other stakeholders) (*Identified as unnecessary and unrealistic for small private landowners*)

Public Use (liability, access) (*Panel recognizes the private rights of landowners and provides Tree Farmers with the opportunity to consider recreational values in forest management plans as covered under revised Standard 2*)

Indigenous Rights (*Addressed by Panel in revised Standards 8 and 9. PEFC will address at the international level*)

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) (*Addressed by Panel in Standard 1*)

Conversion of Natural Forests (*To be addressed in revised Standards Prologue*)

Recreation (*Addressed by Panel in revised Standard 2*)

Forest Safety (*To be addressed in Standard 9*)

High Conservation Value Forests (*Issue taken up by Standard 6 and 8 working group*)

Research, Outreach and Education (*To be addressed by Panel in Standard 9*)

Agenda (Day 2)

I. Review of Panel Member Standards Revisions (Standards 6,7,8,9)

Panel continued with discussion on revised Standards suggestions from the working groups for Standards 6, 7, 8, and 9.

Standard 6: Fish, Wildlife and Biodiversity – Standard 6 working group, led by Robert Bonnie, attempted to address the following issues in their suggested language; endangered and threatened species, rare species, species of concern, passive management, and IPM. Panel discussed the necessary balance between technical language and ensuring that the Standards remain approachable for landowners, and worked to clarify requirements under this Standard. Indicators and Performance Measures were intended to provide landowners with enough flexibility while increasing the rigor of Standard 6.

Standard 7: Forest Aesthetics – Bob Simpson provided the Panel with the historical background on the inclusion of this Standard in the current AFF Standards. Panel reviewed the proposed Standard revisions with regard to the variety of size and scale of forest operations under ATFS, and noted the importance of forest aesthetics to the overall reputation of forestry even outside of AFF and ATFS. Location of forest activities was an important issue for discussion under this Standard. Panel identified “visual quality measures” as an element to be included in a revised glossary. Panel identified Performance Measure 7.2 and its associated indicators as unnecessary as they will be addressed by revised Standard 4.

Standard 8: Protect Special Sites- Panel members supported the expansion of Standard 8 language to be more specific about what this Standard is intended to

address. Revised Standard 8 will address historical, geological, ecological, archeological, and cultural sites of interest. Important issues discussed by the Panel include landowner monitoring, mapping, and the size, scale and intensity of forest operations.

Standard 9: Forest Product Harvests and Other Operations – The Panel working group for Standard 9 presented revised language suggestions that incorporated panel discussion from Day 1. The working group was charged with expanding monitoring requirements under Standard 9 for the next Panel meeting.

II. Review of Pre-Revision Public Comment Period Submissions (Standards 6,7,8,9)

Panel members addressed trends in the public comments received through the Pre-Revision Public Comment period, which closed on December 30, 2008. For a full review of Panel responses to comments, please visit the AFF website.

III. Review of Potential Dates for Third Panel Meeting

Panel members are to contact AFF Staff with their availability for the week of March 30 for the third ISRP meeting to be held in Washington, DC.

IV. Timeline Planning for Next Actions

Working groups asked to complete revisions and submit to AFF Staff by March 4. AFF Staff will review revised Standards for consistency with PEOLGs and Montreal Process protocols. Panel asked that revised Standards be reviewed by a professional editor to ensure consistency, clarity, punctuation, and to identify terms requiring definition in a revised glossary. AFF Staff will submit revised Standards for legal review. The revised Standards, including glossary, are to be sent to ISRP members March 23 for review before third Panel meeting in Washington DC.

V. Meeting Close

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 PM (Eastern).

Respectfully submitted by Bob Simpson, Senior VP Forestry, AFF