Interpretations and Additions to the 2015-2020 ATFS Standards of Sustainability and Guidance

During the course of implementation, there is occasionally the need for additional guidance or interpretation of the ATFS Standards. Such additional guidance and interpretation is developed by the AFF National Standards Interpretation Committee at the direction of the AFF Board of Trustees.

The following interpretations and guidance have been developed for inclusion in the 2015-2020 ATFS Standards of Sustainability and Guidance:

**Indicator 3.1.1 Guidance**
The potential use of biotechnology and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) is an evolving issue in US regulations and the field of forestry in United States. Genetic engineering may offer new opportunities for the restoration of species, such as the American chestnut, and other potential benefits for the resilience and productivity of forests. Research is ongoing and AFF will continue to monitor scientific developments in this area, adjusting guidance for the ATFS Standards, where appropriate.

As of January 2018, use of GMO trees is limited to very specific applications, in accordance with federal regulations. As such, use of genetically modified trees by family landowners in the US is likely to be extremely low during the implementation period of ATFS 2015-2020 Standards. However, use of genetically modified trees is not supported under these standards, reflecting conformance with PEFC requirements, which endorses the ATFS certification program.

**Definitions**
Genetically modified trees: Trees that have had genetic modifications resulting from the direct introduction of one or more genes from another non-tree organism using recombinant DNA technology, planted with the intention to produce short-rotation feedstocks. Clones and trees produced via grafting, vegetative propagation or tissue cultures and hybrids developed by natural processes are not considered GMOs under the ATFS Standards.

- Approved by the AFF National Standards Interpretation Committee, March 1, 2018.