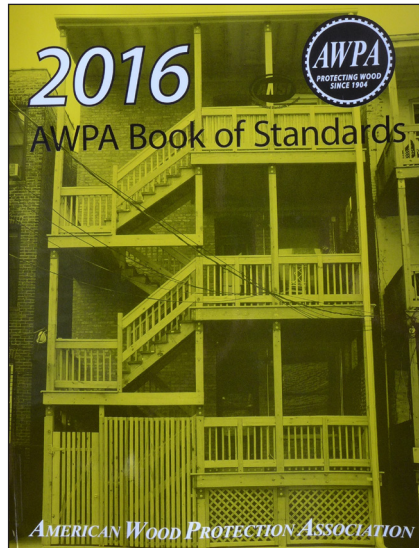


## Codes and Standards Activities at the USDA Forest Service, Forest Products Laboratory

The Forest Products Laboratory (FPL) has traditionally been viewed as an unbiased source of information on grading and properties of structural wood products. In addition, FPL has long had a prominent leadership role in many standards and codes committees. Currently, FPL has 16 scientists that are chairs or active task group participants on committees that directly develop standards and codes for wood utilization in U.S. and international markets.

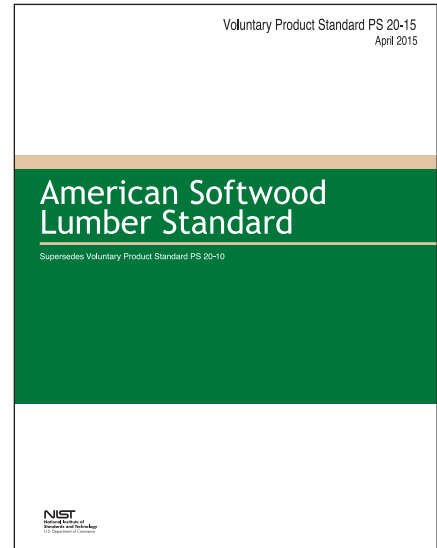
### Background

Over the past century, FPL has had a very prominent role in codes and standards development. Many past and present scientists have labored in the shadows to develop, refine, and improve standardized procedures for wood utilization. For example, a representative from FPL is utilized as the principal technical consultant to the American Lumber Standard Board of Review, which governs virtually all structural lumber production in the United States. FPL also represents the public in consensus-based organizations, such as ASTM International (formerly ASTM, the American Society for Testing and Materials), American National Standards Institute, and American Wood Protection Association, which develop standards for the safe design and use of wood products. Information developed by FPL is used in the National Design Specification and is thus indirectly used in all major building codes in the United States.



**Left: The American Wood Protection Association (AWPA) relies on FPL scientists to provide technical information that is used to prepare their book of standards.**

**Right: An excellent example of FPL's work on codes and standards, the American Softwood Lumber Standard serves as the foundation for evaluating softwood lumber produced in the United States. It is published by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, U.S. Department of Commerce.**



The FPL also provides leadership on an international level. Foreign countries and international standards organizations often look to FPL for reliable information on wood properties. The laboratory's wood identification expertise is also currently being utilized to help with proper identification of wood species so that endangered species can be protected. These activities are extremely important to supporting the mission of the Forest Service. Therefore, we fulfill a public service by providing unbiased information on properties, characteristics, design, and use of wood products to those groups and agencies that develop or control standards for ensuring public safety and health.

**Objective**

To provide unbiased technical advice and counsel in dealing with issues of wood products performance and safety.

**Approach**

FPL actively participates in leadership roles on a number of national and international standards and codes bodies and professional organizations. Through this participation, unbiased technical information can be disseminated and incorporated into standards and best-practice publications, which allow for safe use of wood and wood products in a wide variety of applications.

**Expected Outcomes**

FPL's participation directly affects the safety and reliability of wood and wood-based products in the U.S. marketplace. With its efforts at improving wood identification, FPL also has made and will continue to make contributions aimed at reducing trade of wood products from the illegal harvest of endangered wood species. FPL's efforts also help extend the use of one of our planet's best and most renewable resource—wood.

**Timeline**

FPL has had a long history of participation in codes and standards and it is anticipated that this role will continue for quite some time into the future.

**Cooperators**

American National Standards Institute; APA—The Engineered Wood Association; American Society of Civil Engineers; American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers; ASTM International; American Wood Council; American Wood Protection Association; Building Seismic Safety Council; International Association of Wood Anatomists; International Code Council; International Organization for Standards; International Union of Forestry Research Organizations; National Association of Corrosion Engineers International; Society of Fire Protection Engineers; The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime; USDA Forest Service International Programs

**Contact Information**

Bob Ross  
USDA Forest Service, Forest Products Laboratory  
Madison, Wisconsin  
(608) 231-9221; [rjross@fs.fed.us](mailto:rjross@fs.fed.us)