

**Forest Service Handbook
National Headquarters - Washington Office
Washington, DC**

Forest Service Handbook 2409.13a – Timber Permanent Plot Handbook

Chapter 30 - Data Handling and Maintenance

Amendment: 2409.13a-1992-1

Effective date: January 29, 1992

Duration: This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.

Approved by: F. Dale Robertson, Chief

Date approved:

Responsible Staff:

Last Change:

Superseded Document(s):

Digest: Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

2409.13a: Establishes new Handbook, FSH 2409.13a, Timber Permanent Plot Handbook, outlining direction on establishing permanent plots for sharing of timber growth and yield information. It requires consistent and standard information to be collected on permanent plots that are established for growth and yield modeling.

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30.4 - Responsibility

30.41 - Director, Timber Management, Washington Office

In addition to the responsibility described in section 04.1, the Director of Timber Management has the responsibility to:

1. Prepare and support a data base structure containing descriptions of local permanent plot data bases so that users have access to data managed locally.
2. Coordinate sharing of permanent plot data between Regions and Stations.
3. Establish and maintain national standards for editing required data elements.

30.42 - Regional Foresters and Station Directors

Regional Foresters and Station Directors shall ensure that project leaders, inventory specialists, mensurationists, or others who have direct responsibility for the data:

1. Collect the core variables listed in chapter 20 of this Handbook.
2. Develop, secure approval, and maintain a data base of permanent plot reference records. Provide sufficient information to the Chief about the nature and content of the data base so that appropriate sharing of information about the data may take place.
3. Develop a reference to all properly collected permanent plot data in this data base.
4. Maintain tree and plot level data files for plots that are in this data base.
5. Use national edit standards at both plot and tree level before entering a reference record for the plot in the data base. The owner of the data is responsible for these edits.
6. Keep at least one paper or electronic copy of original data stored separately from the original in order to minimize the possibility of a costly and irretrievable loss of permanent plot data.
7. Maintain infrequently used growth and yield data in a recoverable, archived file.

31 - Data Processing Systems

Use local, regional or national processing systems for editing, loading, storing, field recording, and retrieving the required data. No national data base of permanent plot tree level information exists. A permanent plot data management structure which may be used for local storing, editing, and retrieving of data is available through the Timber Management Service Center at Fort Collins, Colorado.

32 - Reference Record Content

Include information which clearly links the permanent plot reference record with permanent plot data stored at other field units. Give minimum information needed to identify potentially useful data including a plot identification number, all measurement dates, treatment history, and location of the data.

1. Permanent plot data referenced must be error-free based on initial minimum edit checks.
2. Local managers of the data must be able to provide the data on request in a standard data interchange format.

33 - Editing

Ensure integrity of data referenced using an initial edit of tree and plot data and a cross-check edit for remeasured plots. Check against valid codes as given in FSH 2409.14. If definitions, codes, and standards are not in the Handbook, check against the Interim Resource Inventory Glossary or other sources.

1. Tree and Plot Data Edits. Data owners are responsible for all edits of tree and plot data.
 - a. Ensure that data have passed the minimum edit checks in this section before entering a reference record in the permanent plot data base.
 - b. Include checks against a table of legal codes for the core variable and crosschecks with other variables where applicable.
 - c. Permit blank fields only if the variable is optional or not appropriate.
 - d. If there are discrepancies, correct or verify the data for validity.
2. Remeasurement Edits. Make an edit when remeasured plot data are analyzed across measurement dates using a cross-check program.