SRS FIA Information Update

By the time you read this we will have made it through one of the most chaotic (and stressful) fiscal years (FY) that I can remember. Looking back we have had sequestration, “final” FY13 budgets about 9 months (late May 2013) into the FY, and finally, fire transfer. This is all on top of a new financial management system within the Forest Service that had numerous implementation problems and at times may have provided erroneous amounts of funding spent. In order to keep the Southern Research Station Forest Inventory and Analysis (SRS FIA) Program relatively consistent, we supplemented our appropriated funds with funding from carryover and deobligated agreements. We deferred/reduced expenditures, postponed/delayed hiring, and examined all of our operations for efficiencies and savings. The SRS FIA Program has generally survived intact with minimal impacts on the consistency in the program. But it wasn’t easy!

So how does FY14 look? Right now, there is a slight to a major increase, depending on the budget that you examine – the President’s, the House, or the Senate – compared to FY13. I am somewhat optimistic that the SRS FIA Program will be able to generally maintain the SRS FIA Program at FY13 levels – status quo. In addition, many of our partners, cooperators, and users of FIA data are openly expressing support for the program. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

At any of these funding levels, the ability to deliver a complete FIA Program – base grid forest inventory information funded at a 7-year cycle in the Eastern United States and a 10-year cycle in the Western United States, total carbon/biomass amounts, National Woodland Owner survey, National Timber Products Output assessments, and selected ecosystem indicator measurements – is not possible. Recognize that the situation is extremely fluid, so it could change with limited notice. My goal for the SRS FIA Program is, at a minimum, keep the status quo and continue to strive to deliver a complete FIA program, when budgets are more favorable.

As always, if you have any technical questions regarding FIA, please submit those questions to Charlene Walker (cwalker@fs.fed.us) and we will address them in a future issue of The Inventory. Thank you for your interest in FIA and please let us know how we may serve you in the future.

Bill Burkman

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Looking for Input on Expanding the National Woodland Owner Survey to Industrial, Corporate, and Large Forest Landowners

The Southern Research Station Forest Inventory and Analysis (SRS FIA) unit in cooperation with the National FIA Program is in the process of developing an extension of the National Woodland Owner Survey (NWOS) that will focus on forest landowners that have not been surveyed by the NWOS in the past – the industrial, corporate, and large forest landowners. The traditional NWOS centered on nonindustrial forests or the “family forest landowner” whose ownership is driven by multiple factors and which financial and economic considerations may be secondary. The current NWOS contacts forest land owners from across the county to ask them questions about the forests they own, the reasons for owning it, how they use their lands, and basic information regarding the management of their forests.

The new supplemental survey is being designed to address landowners who view their holdings primarily as investments or profit making enterprises. This category of landowners includes timberland investment organizations, real estate investment trusts, large corporate or, industry forest lands, and large private landowners who actively manage their timber for forest products.

Many issues need to be addressed before this study is initiated. Of primary concern is how to identify and contact these landowners. Of equal importance is ascertaining what these landowners are willing and capable of responding to. Defining potential users of this information and their needs is also a prerequisite. Regardless of what questions are asked of these forest landowners, the FIA program will need to identify the “sensitive” and “confidential” that may be provided. The FIA program will also need to develop a security plan to ensure the confidentiality of the “confidential” information.

Questions currently under consideration include:

- Economic factors:
  - What comprises their income stream? Timber and land sales, hunting leases, pine straw, higher and better use, etc.?
  - Do they have fiber supply agreements?
  - Do they manage their own land or contract out to a third party?

- Silvicultural practices – Including rotation lengths, frequency of thinnings, amount of planting, use of genetically modified organisms, and application of chemicals

- Logging contracts/equipment – How these are obtained and length of contracts?

- Fire suppression – Do these landowners suppress fires or do they rely on State and local entities?

Andrew J. Hartsell, Research Scientist with SRS FIA Program, is being tasked with leading this effort. At this time Mr. Hartsell is seeking input from potential stakeholders. This includes those who are interested in the results, as well as landowners and organizations who own these forests.

To provide feedback regarding this effort, please contact Andy Hartsell at 865-862-2032 or ahartsell@fs.fed.us.
Forest Resource Assessment of Non-wood Forest Products

The International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) promotes global cooperation in forest-related research and enhances the understanding of the ecological, economic, and social aspects of forests and trees. In 2014, IUFRO will hold the XXIV World Congress, themed: “Sustaining Forests, Sustaining People: The Role of Science.” The U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service is hosting the XXIV IUFRO World Congress in Salt Lake City, Utah (October 5–11, 2014). IUFRO research groups (RG) 4.02 (Multipurpose Inventories) and RG 5.11 (Non-wood Forest Products) are co-hosting a technical session “Forest Resources Assessment of Non-wood Forest Products (197).”

The IUFRO RG 4.02 and 5.11 are offering a joint technical session to examine challenges and opportunities to improve the assessment of forest resources for non-wood forest products. Forests around the world have been assessed every 5 to 10 years since the 1940s. The Global Forest Resource Assessment organized by the United Nations, Food and Agriculture Organization attempts to provide consistent descriptions of the world’s forests and how they are changing. Non-wood forest products (NWFP) are critical to the food security and health of people around the world. Over the last 2 decades there have been tremendous changes in the world and these products are now being considered in forest resource assessments. The uses of NWFPs support the livelihood of people and communities as well as the economies that affect them. Non-wood forest products are critical elements in the Congress’s primary theme of forest products for a greener world. This session, though offered to the primary theme of forests and forest products for a greener world, is apropos in all themes.

The technical session will provide a forum for colleagues from around the world to assess the challenges of reporting on non-wood forest products. Posters and oral presentations will provide the means to share experiences in reporting on non-wood forest products. The call for abstracts opens on August 5, 2013, with online abstract submission until October 15, 2013. For more information go to the official Congress web site: http://iufro2014.com

We look forward to seeing you in Salt Lake City in October 2014 at this session.

Status of Current Field Inventories

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<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Cycle start date</th>
<th>Subcycle start date</th>
<th>Cycle and subcycle of current inventory</th>
<th>Percent of current subcycle collection completed</th>
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Information compiled July 21, 2013.

For more information, contact Dale Trenda at 865-862-2039 or dtrenda@fs.fed.us.
FY2013 Research Publications Published Since June 2013


To access an electronic copy of each research publication, click on the publication number.
FY2013 Research Publications Published Since June 2013 (continued)


FIA is a USDA Forest Service research work unit which collects, analyzes, and reports on data pertaining to our forest land in the Southern region. This region includes Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Virginia. FIA conducts this program of research to improve the understanding of the Southern forest ecosystem.

Government and private agencies utilize this data to monitor forest resources, forest use, and forest health. The collection of data is done on private and public land.

Our system development success is a direct result of our partners, our talented scientists, analysts, computer specialists, and other staff members who have continually contributed to the mission of this complex project.

The Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is dedicated to the principle of multiple use management of the Nation’s forest resources for sustained yields of wood, water, forage, wildlife, and recreation. Through forestry research, cooperation with the States and private forest owners, and management of the National Forests and National Grasslands, it strives—as directed by Congress—to provide increasingly greater service to a growing Nation.

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National and Southern FIA Web sites of Interest

National FIA Web site: http://www.fia.fs.fed.us
National Timber Product Output (TPO) database available at: http://srsfia2.fs.fed.us/
Information specific to Southern States: http://srsfia2.fs.fed.us/
Electronic copies of SRS FIA publications at: http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/