An Update Concerning the SRS FIA Program

**SRS FIA Information Update**

2020 has come to an end—finally! Within FIA, we are still in the midst of the COVID-19 impact on FIA activities. Back in the spring of 2020, each of the Regional FIA Program Managers was asked to project what the impact of COVID-19 would be on FIA activities. Of course, back then there were a lot of unknowns—i.e. how long would this pandemic last; what would be the impact on travel? At that time, the estimate was that we would complete only 60–70 percent of the expected plots for the remainder of 2020, data processing and posting would increase slightly for a short period of time, and reporting would be static.

How good were these estimates? In October of 2020, the actual southern FIA plots completed was approximately 90 percent—better than expected. Reporting, data processing, and posting were in line with what was expected. Of course, we are still under restrictions/limitations with overnight travel and have been unable to complete a full-year panel in some States due to travel/access issues.

What will happen in 2021? Due to the inability to complete full-year panels and our policy not to release partial panel data, data processing and posting will begin to lag. Reporting will also lag but delayed by 6 months or so. We have opened multiple year panels in some States to keep the State field crews operating. Bottom line—after we return to more normal operating procedures, the impact of COVID-19 will be felt for years to come. How many? My guess is at least two and possibly more depending on how long these modified procedures are in place.

One other item I would like to mention—the “2021 Timber Products Output (TPO) User Group Meeting” will be held virtually on February 2–5, 2021. The agenda and speakers are currently being finalized and details on how to register for and access the virtual meeting will be completed shortly. If you are interested in this session, please contact me for the details.

As always, if you have any technical questions regarding FIA, please submit them to Janet Griffin (janet.griffin@usda.gov) and we will answer your questions 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*

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Since the latter half of 2018, the SRS FIA unit has been working on how the program delivers congressionally mandated annual products. Christopher M. Oswalt and Ted Ridley, in coordination with others across the unit, led those efforts. Around the office, the project was known as the “Five Priorities Project” due to the objective of reaching five separate reporting goals:

1. Automated annual factsheets for the reporting of the status and trends of State forest resources,
2. A set of automated annual supplemental tables to support the annual factsheets,
3. Automated factsheets for the reporting of timber product output (TPO) data,
4. A set of supplemental tables to support the timber product output factsheets, and
5. Integration of reporting products from the National Woodland Owner Survey.

This article will primarily focus on goals three and four of the priorities project.

The One Click TPO application provides a web-based platform for obtaining State-level FIA summaries for forest industry attributes in an easy-to-read factsheet. The process only requires the user to navigate to the website and click on a State of interest to view State-level timber industry data summary for the most recent, processed TPO survey year. This application not only gives users rapid access to State TPO factsheets, the FIA program can produce these factsheets for publication and archiving at Treesearch more efficiently than before. The result is a significant cost savings for the program and a quicker publication production rate to provide our users with citable documentation of the changes in the forest products industry in the U.S. Additionally, each factsheet contains a link to supplemental tables corresponding to the State the user selected to generate the factsheet.

Goal four of the project was accomplished by constructing a web-based application that allows users a way to obtain TPO data that goes a step beyond the summarized information presented in the factsheets. A user simply selects a survey year and State of interest, or even down to groups of Counties if desired, to be provided with a group of TPO tables ranging from production data to mill residue data. This approach allows the ability to customize what users would like to see and download the individual tables as several file format types for further analysis if desired. The application also helps in the realm of data requests as it gives simple access to State and County-level TPO data that many users have requested.

Currently, One Click TPO and TPO Interactive Reporting Tool is completely operational for the southern States. The National FIA program continues to work toward having all States operational. These new applications and other TPO data resources are available by selecting the “TPO Tool Kit” link shown on the Southern Research Station FIA website. The tool kit site is a depository of past TPO data tools and current applications giving users access to legacy as well as current data.

Please contact Jason Cooper (jason.a.cooper@usda.gov or 865-862-2009) for the current and future development of the One Click TPO application and associated products.

One Click TPO—https://tabsoft.co/3c2ZZV2
TPO Interactive Reporting Tool—https://public.tableau.com/views/TPOREPORTINGTOOL/MakeSelection?:showVizHome=no
TPO Tool Kit—https://www.fia.fs.fed.us/program-features/tpo/
Recently Published TPO Factsheets

These TPO factsheets were developed using: https://public.tableau.com/views/FIATPOOneClickFactsheet/StateSelection?:showVizHome=no


(continued)
Recently Published TPO Factsheets (continued)


Nontimber Forest Products: Think Food & Medicine

Forests provide more than timber! In fact, people were harvesting food and medicine from U.S. forests long before the technology existed to cut timber. The harvest of nontimber forest products continues to support an economy that for the most part is invisible—harvest volumes are rarely tracked.

SRS FIA is working to change that. The eastern hardwood forests have been the source of raw materials for the herbal medicine industry since the 18th century, yet production and trade volumes have not been tracked, monitored, nor recorded (Kruger et al. 2020a). The exception to this is the harvest of American ginseng, which has been tracked since the mid-1970s when international trade of this slow-growing forest herb became regulated by the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Flora and Fauna (CITES). Because of this, buyers must be registered with appropriate State agencies, and report volumes, transactions, and purchase locations. Partnering with the College of Natural Resources at Virginia Tech, ginseng buyers were surveyed across the region, who reported buying more than 60 species of medicinal forest plants—the most common being goldenseal, black cohosh and bloodroot (Kruger and others 2020a). Transactions occurred in all 15 states, with greatest concentration of trade volumes distributed in Forest Inventory and Analysis units in Central Appalachia (figs. 1 and 2 on following page).

Despite well established markets, there is little estimation of annual trade value or volume of medicinal forest products (Kruger and others 2020b). Mean and total purchased volumes of 11 medicinal forest products were reported by respondents of the buyer survey. Projections of annual output for these products range from more than 120,000 kg of black cohosh to 91 kg of Virginia snakeroot. Black cohosh and goldenseal accounted for more than 70 percent of estimated total trade volume. Average prices per Kg ranged from US$5.37 for wild yam to US$186.00 for Virginia snakeroot. The
overall estimated value of the 11 medicinal forest products, at first point of sale, was over US$4.3 million in 2015.

As part of this project, the partners developed an internet-based tool [RootReport] to monitor harvest volumes of medicinal forest products across eastern United States. The goal of this effort is to provide measures of the scope and distribution of production and economic impacts, and to make results available to people who work with and care about these plants. This effort provides an essential analytic, yet needs to be expanded to other regions, markets, and products.

Not all medicinal forest products come from understory herbaceous plants. The bark of several trees, including slippery elm and black cherry, is harvested for its medicinal properties. Other forest grown trees—pinyon pine, sugar maple, persimmon, pawpaw, and eastern black walnut—provide food. SRS FIA is gleaning information from its databases to provide Science Updates on these and other trees which will be accessible through a soon-to-be released webpage. Stay tuned for a summary of some of these in future issues of this newsletter.

References


Recently Published NTFP Science Updates
An Update on Longleaf Pine Forests in the United States

In 2012, the Southern Research Station (SRS) Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) unit published a comprehensive assessment of the extent and condition of longleaf pine (Pinus palustris)-dominated forests across the United States. Today, SRS-FIA is releasing an “unpublished” report that updates the estimates of longleaf forests after about 10 years of time has passed.

In this report, we present an update on the status of longleaf pine in the Southern United States. Specifically, we provide selected tables and summary data for the two longleaf pine-dominant forest types—the longleaf pine type and the longleaf pine/oak type—using the latest round of forest inventory data from each of the nine States encompassing the range of longleaf pine. The report represents 7–8 years of change in the longleaf pine resource, and it provides a comparison with a previously published report on the history and current condition of longleaf forests. The data presented show that the two dominant longleaf pine forest types occupy slightly more than 4.5 million acres across the South, a net gain of only about 232,000 acres since the 2012 report. But there are strong indications in this 2020 update that clearly show that efforts to restore this iconic forest type are meeting with success. There are dramatic increases in live tree longleaf pine numbers in the 10.9-inch and smaller diameter classes, and similar increases in the area of longleaf pine forest types in the 0–40 year age classes, both of which far exceed numbers in the previous 2012 report.

It is FIA’s hope that our partners and other interested parties will review this newly released update and provide feedback as the authors look toward developing this information into the next comprehensive report on the extent and condition of longleaf forests in the United States. Feedback can be provided to christopher.oswalt@usda.gov.

Both reports are accessible at the links below:

**Status of Longleaf Pine in the South: an FIA Update**


**History and Current Condition of Longleaf Pine in the Southern United States**


For more information, contact Christopher Oswalt at 540-231-3611 or christopher.oswalt@usda.gov.


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The FIA one-click application for annual State FIA data can be found here: https://doi.org/10.2737/FIA-One-Click-State-Report-v1.2.


## Status of Current Field Inventories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Subcycle start date</th>
<th>Cycle and inventory year of current inventory</th>
<th>Percent of current subcycle collection completed</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>May 2020</td>
<td>11:2021</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Feb., 2020</td>
<td>11:2020</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>June 2018</td>
<td>10:2018</td>
<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida*</td>
<td>June 2020</td>
<td>11:2019</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>June 2019</td>
<td>11:2019</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia*</td>
<td>June 2020</td>
<td>12:2019</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>Sep., 2019</td>
<td>08:2018</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>Oct., 2019</td>
<td>09:2018</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>Feb., 2020</td>
<td>10:2020</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>Sep., 2020</td>
<td>10:2021</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma (east)</td>
<td>June 2020</td>
<td>09:2019</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>June 2020</td>
<td>03:2019</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
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<td>06:2018</td>
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<td>Puerto Rico*</td>
<td>April 2019</td>
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<td>South Carolina</td>
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<td>11:2020</td>
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Information compiled January 8, 2021
*Closing out prior panel—beginning new panel.
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