

The Inventory

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An Update Concerning the SRS FIA Program

SRS FIA Information Update

I believe that one of the strengths of the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Program is the public, online access to FIA data. Access is either through EVALIDator and/or Forest Inventory Data Online (FIDO) online data query tools. These online tools allow a multitude of users to query FIA data for their particular forest inventory questions. In addition, more advanced FIA data users can access the FIA data tables through the FIA DataMart which provides Microsoft Access™ versions of FIA data. Other online tools allow access to National Woodland Owner Survey (NWOS) and Timber Products Output (TPO) data.

In reviewing the draft text for the FY2012 National FIA Business report, I noticed that the number of database retrievals for FIA was slightly more than 94,000. This is a reduction of almost 40,000 from the FY2011 data retrievals and the first reduction since FY2006. The reduction in FY2006 was most likely related to the removal of the previous FIA MapMaker Program and the deployment of both EVALIDator and FIDO. In FY2012 there was no similar elimination of an online FIA tool. This reduction appears to correspond to assuming of the both hardware and software updates of FIA data and online tools by the U.S. Forest Service Chief Information Office (CIO) from FIA.

What does this mean for FIA online data users? As FIA no longer controls these updates, the fast response to changes in online data and tools will no longer occur. The FIA Program will have to follow the CIO procedures and processes to update our information. One recent event that may have deterred users was a temporary RAM issue that caused data queries submitted to “time-out.” It has taken at least 5 months from identification of the problem for the solution to be deployed. This is unacceptable!

If FIA data users have similar “customer service” issues in the future, I need to know about these situations. Please call or email me with your issue. I need this information so that I can attempt to work through the system within the FS to improve “customer service.” Thank you in advance.

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

SRS FIA Program Manager
bburkman@fs.fed.us
865-862-2073

*Our Latest Retirees***Sharon ‘Eagle Eye Junior’ Johnson Has Flown the Coop!**

After 39+ years Sharon Johnson retired on January 3, 2013. Sharon started her Federal career in 1973 at the ripe old age of 17 with the Department of Commerce, National Climatic Data Center as a Personnel Clerk in Asheville, NC. When the personnel office consolidated and moved to Maryland, Sharon decided to stay in Asheville and came to the Forest Service in December 1983 as project secretary under

the FIA leadership of Joe McClure. In 2003, Sharon became a Statistical Assistant in FIA's publication group; learning from the 'master eagle eye' Anne Jenkins. According to Sharon, she “LOVED being a Statistical Assistant and she enjoyed working with everyone (well almost everyone).” Sharon's knowledge and smile will be greatly missed!

Dave Polak—A History with the Forest Service

Dave Polak began working for the Forest Service (FS) in March of 1976. He finished his Master's degree in Forest Resource Management at Southern Illinois University with minors in mathematics and computer science. One of his graduate advisors, who was a Research Scientist at the USDA Forest Service, Forestry Sciences Laboratory (part of the now defunct North Central Station), was looking for someone with those skills and Dave was hired as a temporary part-time GS-5 Forester.

In May of 1976, Dave was hired as a Computer Programmer under a full-time term appointment with the FS Lab in Carbondale, IL. He supported a very active group of scientists and staff and served as a Research Forester, Statistician, and general computer geek. In October of 1976, Dave was converted to a permanent, full-time position. Notably, during his time in Carbondale, the FS implemented the Data General mini-computer systems.

In March of 1988, Dave was hired as a supervisory computer specialist at the “old” Southern Forest Experiment Station in New Orleans, LA. There he served as the “management systems director” working

with the WO computer staff to advance the computing services to forest research. It was during this time that the FS implemented personal computers and the IBM distributed computing system.

In June of 1996, Dave relocated to Asheville, NC as part of the consolidation of the Southern Forest Experiment Station and the Southeastern Forest Experiment Station. In Asheville, he continued as a Supervisory Computer Specialist and continued to work on advancing the computing resources to serve FS research. It was during this time that he guided the Station through the whole “Year 2000” effort. Dave remarked, “Amazingly, life did not come to a halt.

In June of 2000, Dave transferred into the Forest Inventory and Analysis unit as a Supervisory Computer Specialist. It was during this time that the FIA unit relocated to Knoxville, TN and Dave was kept busy preparing the new building facilities. In May of 2002, his position with FIA was changed to a Computer Systems Analyst. Since then he has served the FIA unit by working on many national FIA efforts, most recently the migration to the centralized computing environment in Kansas City.

National Timber Product Output (TPO) Program

The TPO program has been working on a national TPO system for collecting, storing, processing, and distributing TPO data/information by meshing the three independent regional TPO approaches and addressing new and emerging wood using industries. The nationalization of the TPO program has been one of the last efforts within FIA on standardization and development of a consistent program. It started with the efforts from the regional TPO groups and in the last year has become the TPO task team sponsored by the FIA Analysis Band (AB). The AB will continue to sponsor the TPO efforts but in a more formal manner (i.e., inclusion in the AB work plan) and ensure that the TPO program is represented within the Technical Band (TB) structure. As part of the TB structure, it allows for more formal cross-band assistance from the Information Management Band (IMB). A project management plan was developed by the IMB to track the progress being made by the TPO task team.

After a slow first year start, the TPO task team has made some really good progress. The online data entry for the Eastern United States is complete except for testing. The western version of the data entry is not complete yet. The western version is modified from the eastern version because some additional information is collected from the mills in the Western United States that in the Eastern United States is derived from the plot remeasurements

relating to removal estimates. The TPO online data entry program will be limited to internal use only for the present until measures are in place to protect mill confidentiality. The processing system is complete except for final testing. Some initial testing of the processing system has been done using some previous TPO data from the Eastern United States.

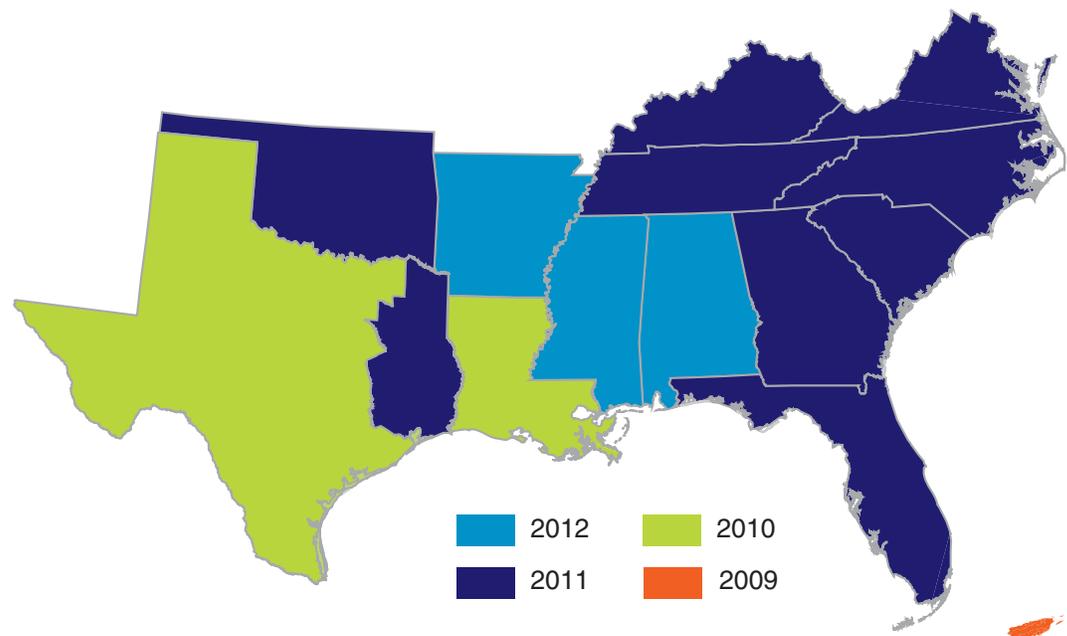
The new system will be tested by entering 2011 data from South Carolina to assure it populates the correct tables for processing. As soon as the data can be entered and processed with the new system and the old processing method in parallel, results from both systems will be compared for inconsistencies. Once the parallel testing is accomplished, attention can be turned to the public-facing database and table reporting. The plan is to work and build off the public-facing TPO database and tables already in place. The national system should be fully operational for the 2013 data collection, which will start in 2014.

There are some additional things to keep in mind with the implementation of the new system. The online data entry tool has to go through the CIO security approvals to become public-facing. Therefore it will only be for internal use until that process is accomplished. The system also has to be migrated from the development arena to full production, which may or may not cause some delay.

For more information, contact James Bentley at 865-862-2056 or jbentley@fs.fed.us.

Current Status of FIA Data Posted

Most Recent FIA Data by State and Collection Year



For more information, contact Ali Conner at 865-862-2228 or aconner@fs.fed.us.

Status of Current Field Inventories

State	Cycle start date	Subcycle start date	Cycle and subcycle of current inventory	Percent of current subcycle collection completed
Alabama	2012	June-12	10-2013	63
Arkansas	2010	Dec-12	10-2013	13
Florida	2008	Oct-11	9-2012	99
Georgia	2009	Oct-12	10-2013	35
Kentucky	2010	Apr-12	7-2012	75
Louisiana	2009	May-12	8-2012	99
Mississippi	2009	May-12	9-2013	54
North Carolina	2008	Oct-12	9-2013	56
Oklahoma (east)	2010	Mar-12	8-2012	100
Oklahoma (west)	2009	June-12	2-2012	100
Puerto Rico	2011	Jan-11	5-2012	65
South Carolina	2012	Jan-13	11-2013	9
Tennessee	2009	Feb-12	9-2012	83
Texas (east)	2008	Oct-12	9-2013	33
Texas (west)	2004	July-11	1-2011	99
U.S. Virgin Islands	2009	Aug-09	2-2009	100
Virginia	2012	Nov-12	10-2013	2

Information compiled February 13, 2013.

For more information, contact Dale Trenda at 865-862-2039 or dtrenda@fs.fed.us.

Our Newest Analyst

Humfredo Marcano Vega

Dr. Humfredo Marcano Vega, latest addition to the Resource Analysis and Use section, spent the month of February in the Knoxville SRS FIA office. Fito, as he is known, holds a doctoral degree in Biological Sciences from the Department of Ecology of the Complutense University of Madrid, Spain. He has worked for SRS FIA as a biological scientist collecting the FIA plot data in the Caribbean since 2004.

He will continue working from an office at the International Institute of Tropical Forestry in Río Piedras, Puerto Rico where his duties include being the resource analyst for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and Territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands. His time in Knoxville was spent learning about all aspects of our program regionally and nationally, and trying to keep warm.

To contact Fito, call 787-766-5335, ext. 311, or hmarcano@fs.fed.us.

FY2013 Research Publications Published Since December 2012

Cooper, J.A.; Bentley, J.W. 2013. East Oklahoma harvest and utilization study, 2008. e-Resour. Bull. SRS-190. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 25 p.

Oswalt, S.N. 2013. Mississippi, 2011 forest inventory and analysis factsheet. e-Science Update SRS-063. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 4 p.

To access an electronic copy of each research publication, click on the publication number.

Southern Research Station
Forest Inventory and Analysis
4700 Old Kingston Pike
Knoxville, TN 37919
865-862-2000



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 FIA database available at: <http://www.fia.fs.fed.us/tools-data/other/default.asp>

National Timber Product Output (TPO) database available at: <http://srsfia2.fs.fed.us/>

National Woodland Owner Survey Web site: <http://www.fia.fs.fed.us/nwos/>

Information specific to Southern States: <http://srsfia2.fs.fed.us/>

Electronic copies of SRS FIA publications at: <http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/>