

FIA 2015 National User Group Meeting Notes
San Antonio, TX
April 1-2, 2015

Purpose: To learn about recent progress in the FIA program and to provide an opportunity for FIA staff to hear from users.

Agenda, Presentations and Attendees: Archived at <http://www.ncasi2.org/downloads/BWG/>

Follow-up items and strong endorsements/concerns from the user group:

1) Don't change the design. User community concerns refer to key aspects of the annual inventory that must be maintained in order to get reliable estimates of current status and change over time. Therefore, the fixed plot configuration should not be changed, plot intensity should not be reduced, and every effort should be made to maintain a 5 year remeasurement cycle in the East and a 10 year cycle in the West. A change in core variables or moving to fuzzed mapping would not constitute a design change. Going to a periodic survey beyond interior Alaska, Hawaii, and islands in the Atlantic and Pacific would be a significant design change. Budget reductions should be absorbed with a slower remeasurement cycle so plot intensity can be maintained.

2) Technical issues:

a) GRM – It was suggested that FIA produce a white paper on GRM techniques being used, especially for the macro plot employed in part of PNW-FIA.

b) Condition Mapping – A suggestion was made to look at the benefit of full mapping versus fuzzed mapping. Full mapping can be time consuming, especially with 4 macro-plots that cumulatively cover a full acre. What are benefits and challenges with changes estimation at time 2, time 3, and time 4 of full mapping versus fuzzed mapping?

c) Improve spatial access – FIA should revisit their original proposal to allow users who have legitimate need for access to plot coordinates or more detailed owner information to become FIA Agents. Users should contact Liz LaPoint (elapoint@fs.fed.us) at the FIA National Spatial Data Services with their proposed need. For example, plot coordinates are needed to make maps showing gross and net forest cover change, which is something the User Group expressed an interest in.

3) Other FIA Surveys:

a) TPO – Users endorsed FIA's proposal to develop an actual sample design for the Timber Product Output survey. This would lead to a statistically valid sample and to greater compatibility across the lower 48 states.

b) Alaska – Users endorsed a proposal to conduct a periodic survey in interior Alaska as long as the cost was held down to something on the order of \$2-3 million annually.

c) NWOS - Users were pleased to learn that the National Woodland Owner's Survey is making good progress toward incorporating all owners in the survey and not just family forest owners.

d) Urban - Users were convinced that FIA is striving to minimize the impact of urban inventories on the core program. Users were especially pleased to hear that participating cities are expected to contribute to the costs after they understand the important benefits that this inventory will provide.

e) Tree Planting – Users endorsed FIA's plan to continue sampling tree nurseries and to begin sampling major tree planters, as well. This would allow for the possibility of getting statistically reliable estimates of acres planted by species along with confidence intervals.