



Western Forestry Leadership Coalition

A Western Status Update
USFS Forest Inventory and Analysis Program

February 15, 2010

Current and accurate Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) information is essential for the western State Foresters and federal land management agencies to understand emerging issues such as changing forest conditions and trends related to climate change, evaluate potential for new bioenergy markets, and monitor habitat for wildlife species of concern. Furthermore, the FIA data are fundamental to keeping accurate forest fuels data updated for the LANDFIRE Program and national reporting for greenhouse gas inventories, and the associated carbon stored in western forests. This WFLC brief will give you an update as to the current status of FIA in the west and the expanded utilization of FIA.

Status of the Fully Annualized Inventory in the Western States

For over ten years the FIA Program has been transitioning from a *periodic* inventory, where forested plots were visited in an entire state every ten years, to an *annualized* inventory, where one out of ten of the forested plots are visited every year in every state with reports generated every five years. Increased funding has been provided over the years to transition states one at a time to the new annualized inventory. In this process, some states in the western U.S. have not been brought up to the same base level of data or analysis as the rest of the country.

In Fiscal Year 2010, funding was included to conduct the full inventory for three states that have not previously been part of the annualized FIA program. These three states are Nevada, New Mexico, and Wyoming. Interior Alaska, Hawaii and the other western pacific islands (American Samoa, Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and Marshall Islands) are exempt from the annualized inventory system. FIA has initiated a periodic inventory in Hawaii with 2010 funding. Periodic inventories for the other pacific islands were completed by FIA between 2001 and 2007. Because of the remote nature of these islands, FIA intends to continue the ten-year periodic inventory for the islands. The FIA Program is currently exploring various approaches for an inventory of Interior Alaska; however the work has not been funded. Coastal Alaska is currently funded as part of the annualized inventory.

The recently released Fiscal Year 2011 President's budget proposes a \$5 million decrease in FIA funding. The annualized inventory in 46 states will continue, including partial support for New Mexico. Wyoming, Hawaii, interior Alaska and a portion of Nevada would be discontinued under the President's proposal.

Expanding Uses of FIA Data

LANDFIRE: The Landscape Fire and Resource Management Planning Tools Project is a five-year, multi-partner project producing consistent and comprehensive maps and data describing vegetation, wildland fuel, and fire regimes across the United States. It is a shared project between the wildland fire management programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service and U.S. Department of the Interior. LANDFIRE data products include layers of vegetation composition and structure, surface and canopy fuel characteristics, and historical fire regimes. FIA data comprise

one of the essential foundation data layers used to develop and maintain LANDFIRE. The WFLC West Wide Wildfire Risk Assessment is currently underway and uses LANDFIRE data. For more information visit: <http://www.landfire.gov/> and <http://www.westwideriskassessment.com>.

US Greenhouse Gas and Carbon Reporting: Each year the U.S. provides an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions as part of the U.N. Framework on Global Climate Change. The forestry and land use change sector reporting relies exclusively on FIA data and associated estimates of forest biomass and carbon to track changes in carbon stocks for U.S. forests. For the most recent report visit: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/usinventoryreport.html>.

Biomass Estimates for Bioenergy Feedstocks: Strategic analysis of bioenergy for the western U.S. was conducted by a team working with the Western Governors' Association. FIA data provided essential information for estimating biomass available to achieve forest restoration and hazardous fuels reduction goals. The FIA data were also used to predict the impact of various definitions of "renewable biomass" for national and regional biomass supply estimates. Biomass energy projects are being proposed and tools to estimate potential feedstock from all lands within a working circle defined by the user are needed. The ability to separate out portions of the land base, such as inventoried roadless areas, is critical for project developers as well as the ability to model potential sources.

http://www.westgov.org/index.php?option=com_joomdoc&task=doc_download&gid=213&Itemid=

State Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies: The western states rely on current and accurate FIA data in order to conduct their State Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies as required by the 2008 Farm Bill. This data provides a base upon which forest benefits and threats can be analyzed and activities prioritized for funding and implementation. For the current state of the Resource Assessments and Strategies in the west visit: <http://www.wflcweb.org/planning>.

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