

## **Current Status and Future Biometrics Research Issues in FIA**

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Since the 1998 Farm Bill, Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) has changed dramatically to address forest resource information needs in a more comprehensive, consistent and timely fashion. These changes have numerous implications for the sampling design, estimation procedures, and inference. FIA now has roughly 80% of the funding needed for nationwide implementation of the annual inventory system. As such, roughly 80% of the area in the US has been switched from periodic to annual surveys (all 13 states in the Northeast are now annual). As one part of an effort to be more consistent nationally, documentation of the national estimation procedures is about to be released. The sampling design, plot design, and compilation and estimation methods are described in detail. Because only a portion of the sample plots is measured each year, a rolling average is used. Recently, FIA has moved from a 5-panel system to an annual Subcycle approach – assuring independent annual estimates. Data are being posted on the Web along with tools to provide estimates. However, owner privacy issues have forced FIA to provide only approximate plot locations using fuzzing and swapping methods. In an effort to continually improve FIA, NE-FIA is conducting studies on tree taper equations, small area estimation, Quality Assurance of field measurements, and national maps of forest area, forest type, and biomass. NE-FIA is also working on its first five-year comprehensive analytical report (for Maine) and is collaborating on developing a national portable data recorder program.