

FOREST INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS PROGRAM IN THE WESTERN U.S. AFFILIATED PACIFIC ISLANDS: PERSPECTIVES FROM WORKING IN ISLAND ECOSYSTEMS AND BUILDING CROSS CULTURAL PARTNERSHIPS

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Abstract—The Pacific Northwest (PNW) Research Station’s Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program of the USDA Forest Service monitors and reports on the status and trends of the Pacific Island’s forest resources and ecosystem services. Since 2001 the FIA program has partnered with State and Private Forestry’s, Region 5 and the local governments in the U.S. Affiliated Western Pacific Islands to implement a nationally-standardized plot sampling design on a periodic basis. Permanent monitoring plots are measured on a 10 year periodic cycle across the island nations of American Samoa, Guam, Palau, The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, The Federated States of Micronesia and The Republic of the Marshall Islands. To date we are conducting our second measurement of the region and have successfully completed two thirds of the inventory. Forest health changes over 10 years have been drastic on some island ecosystems. Further, collaboration with other agencies, NGO’s and other state governments has been a successful approach to build local partnerships and maximize data use. Monitoring efforts are important for local land managers and communities because inventories provide detailed information on forest health issues and provide insights to long term trends in forest change.

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