



Dear Landowner,

A network of forest inventory plots has been established across the United States. These plots are selected by position on a nationwide grid, regardless of ownership or current land use. One of these plots is located on property you manage or own. We would like access to this property in order to collect forest inventory data on this plot.

What is a plot? An inventory plot covers about 1 acre and consists of four subplots. Nationally, there is one plot for every 6,000 acres. The center of each subplot is monumented with distance and compass direction to trees to assist us with plot and tree location. Each tree on the plot will also be marked at 4½ feet above the ground where its diameter is measured. The trees will not be damaged by the marks.

How often will the plot be visited? The plot will be visited once every 5 to 10 years. It usually takes less than a day for the crews to complete their work. Also, as a part of our data quality program on about 5 percent of our plots, a second crew may remeasure the plot shortly after the first crew finishes their work.

What measurements are collected on these plots? On all plots, we gather the following tree and forest measurements:

- General land use and changes in use since previous inventory
- General stand characteristics such as forest type, stand age, and disturbance
- Tree diameter, height, damage, amount of rotten or missing wood, and tree quality
- Counts of tree regeneration
- Estimates of growth, mortality, and removals (determined by revisiting plots from the previous time period)

On a subset of plots, we collect more extensive data about forest ecosystem health, function, and condition in the following categories:

- Crown conditions
- Advanced tree seedling regeneration
- Soil chemical analyses
- Invasive plants
- Invasive plants
- Down woody debris

Will the plot data collection damage my trees or land? Our activities will not have any noticeable impact on the site. On a small subset of plots we may collect soil samples using hand tools. Also, if the field crew cannot identify a plant for the vegetation diversity measurements, a plant specimen may be collected for identification in the laboratory.

Will the presence of this plot affect the way I use my land? No, this plot should not hinder or influence you in using and managing your land. In fact, it is critical that the presence of this plot not alter your plans for the property. Land use and management patterns are as important as insects and diseases in determining the amount, health, and productivity of the forest.

Who will have access to the plot location information? By law, the plot location and owner's name will be kept confidential and data will be presented only in statistical summaries. Information from a single owner's land will not be used for tax purposes, nor will it be used in regulation. At times, we may share information with individuals or organizations we work with. These partners are required to sign a non-disclosure document and are held to the same confidentiality requirements as employees under the law.

What will happen with the data collected about my forests? Data collected from your property will be merged with data from thousands of other sites to produce State and regional reports. These reports are used to describe the current conditions of forests and monitor change. If you would like a copy of your State and/or regional report, please let us know.

Who is involved in this program? This is a cooperative program between the USDA Forest Service and your State forestry agency. The data collector who visits your land may be a Federal employee, a State employee, or a private contractor.

Where can I get more information on the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program? Please contact us at the following address:

USDA Forest Service
Forest Inventory and Analysis Program
Northern Research Station
1992 Folwell Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55108

Telephone: (651) 649-5139

Email (via our homepage): <http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/fia/>

Or, contact your State forestry agency.

Or, visit our National Forest Inventory and Analysis Web page at:
<http://www.fia.fs.fed.us>

