

Meeting Notes - Aerial Detection Survey Focus Group

FHM Working Group Mtg, San Diego, CA

January 31, 2007

Jeff Mai

Progress report/group discussion on ASWG Key Issues and 2006 FHM Resolutions:

One of the 2006 ASWG Key Issues identified was the need to develop ground validation or accuracy assessment for aerial survey data. An Aerial Survey Accuracy Assessment committee was formed to consider various approaches in ground survey. The 2006 FHM Aerial Detection Survey (ADS) Focus Group Resolutions were briefly presented & discussed as follows:

1. Review the set of national objectives for collection and using aerial survey data

National objectives are currently being reviewed by FHM Mgt. Team. Objectives to survey forested areas annually are generally being accomplished per national standards and surveys accomplished safely. Reporting is done annually as congressional tool, providing baseline & trend information, locally utilized with uses expanding. There was some discussion about an increasing number of folks using ADS data and a need to assess the range of uses.

2. Determine how the quality of collected data might be reported for inclusion in aerial survey databases
3. Amend the national standards to include documentation of flight conditions

The above resolutions are related. Some examples of quality/disclaimer statements used in R5 provided in handout; Geolink software developments in process & discussed at 2007 ASWG to allow digital sketchmappers to input pre/post flight data such as name of observer, conditions during flight; national standards not amended but the interface is under development and should be available this flight season. There was some discussion regarding those not mapping digitally and needing to know specifically what additional information should be submitted with their paper maps. Questions remained as to exactly where/how information captured using the Geolink interface would reside in the final ADS data.

4. Develop a Mechanism for linking anecdotal info (related studies and reports) to the AS data

Jeff described a few applications of ADS data to on the ground problems (for example to aid, along with FIA data, estimating quantities of material requiring removal as part of the restoration work in southern California and distribution of S&PF funds to counties). However, Ed Yockey pointed out the purpose of the resolution as being more along the line of hyper linking reports to the data. This may provide a way to connect special ground surveys with other forest health surveys. More work can be done toward this resolution.

5. Support further development of internet-based delivery of aerial survey data

FHTET has made progress, a few regions are providing draft ADS maps in near-real-time and subsequently serving final .pdfs and data, R5 has Geodatabase template that downloads with data converting ADS codes to English for users.

6. Investigate possible consequences of presenting survey data in the public domain of the internet and prepare recommendations to ensure compliance with any confidentiality regulations

It has been determined that we are compliant with policy and that presenting ADS data in the public domain does not challenge confidentiality.

Jeff Mai

Aerial Survey Ground Check Guidelines Development and Review of Guidelines:

Aerial Survey Ground Check Guidelines were handed out, applicability to current documentation and direction discussed (Aerial Survey Standards – QA/QC and the Guide to Conducting Aerial Sketch mapping Surveys, AS GIS Handbook, etc). Presented history of the development of guidelines, comments ensued on the accuracy of ADS and its use for first-cut info. with the need for ground checks for project planning. ADS data is used in diverse ways across the country.

Doug Daoust talked about the purpose of ground checks, whether the results should go to FHTET or just be used by observers to do a better job and improve observer confidence. FHTET reiterated that entities want to use the data analytically. Larry Yarger emphasized consideration of costs associated with creating standards and requiring of the field. “Ground Truthing” (GT) implies a certain level of accuracy... discussion about why we do ADS from State and Federal perspectives.

Questions arose about what would minimally need to be examined. Discussion followed regarding host, agent, TPA and the cost of doing these surveys. If indicating GT in the metadata, you’re also indicating a precise level of accuracy – inferring validation of ADS but using a statistically invalid sample. We need to look at host, agent, number of trees in the sense of “Job Improvement for ADS”.

Jeff reiterated that this is voluntary and the purpose is to help the observers and improve the ADS. Frank Sapio suggests that we agree on a National Protocol, on a set of attributes necessary in GT... also acknowledged ADS is a qualitative process – but (as example) if we just have 0.001% of the polygons checked and a resulting % accuracy on those, that would be very useful information.

Key, in some areas, may be just getting the observers out on the ground (ground checking is currently accomplished at various intensity in many survey regions). Keith Sprengel is going to ask each surveyor to complete 2 weeks on the ground utilizing windshield and transect methods. There was some discussion regarding prioritization, where to check? Usually done for unknowns, for important damage agents we are concerned about

(especially new agents), accessibility a factor, etc... Completing ground checks will improve the accuracy and reliability of ADS.

Frank Sapio said the reliability of the data is not getting into the National Database. How does it relate to the eastern states? They use arc pad on a digital pc, different software to capture data may be somewhat of a factor... different regional GIS specialists input paper maps, etc. into National Database. Necessary metadata may/may not be getting into the database. The importance of reporting flown/not flown was discussed, some areas not meeting standards.

There was voluntary agreement to implement the Ground Check Guidelines as presented in Pennsylvania (as they can), Oregon, Washington, California, FHP Northeastern Area and Southern Region. This would be attempted on a trial basis.

Frank Krist

Condition of Data Submitted, Demonstration of ADS Tools:

FHTET discussed problems with some of the data coming in, work involved in auditing, compiling and editing for final. ADS Tools demonstrated (ArcGIS extension) enabling user to make queries and set parameters to automate data clean up... can be used by Feds and States to help meet National Standards. The result should be a shorter turn-around for getting ADS to meet National Standards and complied into the National Database (maybe by as much as one month). R5 used ADS Tools this year, found it helpful in finding some errors, facilitating final edits. Frank Krist demonstrated ADS Tools... searching slivers, invalid codes, unlabeled polygons, etc. ADS Tools would be used by GIS specialists before the data is sent up to Jeanine Paschke at FHTET or before incorporating into the National Database... preference by FHTET that field run ADS Tools before submission.

Doug Daoust

Importance of ADS data to FHM Locally and Nationally:

Discussion and handout with several examples of how the data has been/continues to be used at various levels, manual reference to requirements for reporting annual status, how FHM has participated in developing ADS standards and reporting requirements, and how ADS data has been utilized by FHM/along with FHM data to conduct analysis.

Prior to conclusion of the focus group, Gail Durham presented what had evolved as 2007 Resolutions, minor edits made at group level. Focus group adjourned.

Gail, Doug and Jeff continued some discussion and added one more resolution... that the chair or interim chair of the ASWG lead or co-lead future ADS Focus Groups in order to continue to improve the continuity between FHM and ASWG. The reality may be that the ASWG Chair may not always be able to/need not participate directly but continued ASWG representation and participation is strongly encouraged. Conversely, FHM participation at ASWG meetings is also encouraged.