

**Ground Survey Notes and Focus Group Resolutions
FHM Working Group Mtg, San Diego, CA
February 2007**

Meeting Minutes

Co-leaders: Jim Steinman, USFS Northeastern Area
Don Eggen, Pennsylvania DCNR

Notes by: Gail Durham, Nevada Division of Forestry

Participants: 34 people evenly representing state agencies and FHP regions across the country with Washington Office representation by Larry Yarger, FHP Deputy Director

Introductory Presentation (30 minutes)

Don Eggen (PA DCNR) handed out the Pennsylvania Report Handouts and reviewed how Pennsylvania does aerial and ground surveys by districts and how Sanborn is automating their data management and reporting system for the Penn Bureau. In the future they hope to have that available on line the database, but right now only the Pest Condition Report is available on line. Don showed how each agent is important to the State and how ground surveys pick up agents that the aerial survey is not picking up. An example is the *Sirex noctilio* surveys by PDA, APHIS, & DCNR. Another example is FTC and consequent Anthracnose surveys showing later mortality – even within the state data not making it to the State Coordinator. Their Insect & Disease Report form collects much of the same data on the national database. A point equals 1 acre for their database, with anything bigger being delimited. Gypsy moth, aerial survey map and Pest Condition Report are turned into the Region.

Preparatory Presentation for Discussion: (10 minutes)

Jim Steinman (USFS NA) reviewed the Goals and Objectives of the FG- Due to a lack of reporting ground survey reporting at the national or regional level, discussion pursued on how to get these data into a database. Ground Surveys are necessary, especially in the mixed forest of the NE US to fully capture and document the numerous forest pest and forest health conditions. Coop FHP and FHM Off-Plot funds provide both A & G surveys, however the national product only includes data from Aerial Surveys. The annual insect and disease condition report has a lot of data not reflected in the map as well.

Discussion Topic: What are other states doing for ground surveys? (30 minutes)

Dave Struble (ME Forest Service) said they do similar surveys but they are not at the database level that Don is at yet. Ground surveys were done on paper in past and they are trying to put into an electronic database. Scott Pfister (VT DNR) collects the same type of data and it is not in a data base yet either. Oftentimes there is not any acreage assigned yet. It was pointed out that part of the variability in effort among states is related to staff size: PA DCNR has a large staff to do this level of survey and a lot of states do not have this type of staffing.

Alaska does ground surveys with Lat. Long and they generate the maps and goes into their conditions report. Too much area to cover so just do special needs surveys and continue to follow up as long as it a problem. South Carolina and NC has given R-8 their data and it is sometimes rolled up into it and it takes time to get it to national standards in order to report it. Jerri Lynn (USFS R2) talked about the specific ground surveys with the data going to the district that is doing the study.

States from various other FHP regions discussed their internal use of special ground surveys, and agreed these data are not well captured in regional and national reporting efforts. However, they also mentioned there would need to be good reasons for modifying their field methods for the sake of national standards.

Discussion Topic: What would be the benefits/costs of a national database? (15 minutes)

Many States mentioned they saw utility in having a database where they could readily determine pest distributions in neighboring states,

Many States saw particular utility in a database providing improved ability to monitor rates of spread of invasive and exotic pests.

Frank Krist (FHTET) saw utility in having this database provide supplementary information for the risk map effort (pest distributions and projected rates of spread) that is not fully captured in the aerial detection survey.

Gregg DeNitto (USFS R1) cautioned the group to fully evaluate the utilities and objectives of from a proposed effort to compile ground survey data nationally.

Larry Yarger (USFS WO) cautioned about developing a mandate to standardized data without having the funding to implement it.

Discussion Topic: Should we proceed in some way? (15 minutes)

The group concluded by agreeing there is a need for an assessment of what data states are currently collecting and what utility they serve.

A questionnaire for states to complete should address the following questions:

How often and why are ground surveys used as an alternative to aerial surveys?-

How are these data processed and used?

How consistent are data being collected for the same species in the various states?
(e.g., what are the lowest common denominators among surveys among states?)

How is ground survey data transferred into a GIS Environment? (e.g., can ground survey data be put into a map (point data/polygons) or geo-referenced data based with associated acreage?)

Ground Survey Focus Group Resolutions (25 minutes)

Whereas:

Ground surveys are a significant component of national insect and disease detection efforts, but few ground survey data are included in national survey maps and not easily accessed by state and federal partners;

Whereas:

There is a particular need to include geo-spatial ground survey data for exotic-invasive insects and diseases in national maps and make the data readily available to state and federal partners so they can monitor rates of spread.

Resolution 1:

We request that the 5 FHM Regional Managers gather and compile the metadata for ongoing ground surveys used for exotic pests, and prepare a summary report describing what data are available (i.e., which pests, what states, what attributes are available)

Resolution 2:

We request the FHM Management and FHTET use the summary report to determine the utility and feasibility of including ground survey data into a national database that can be used to make national maps and provide access to state and federal partners to monitor exotic pest rates of spread.