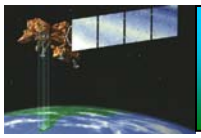


Lead Author's Note and Acknowledgements

This report provides an informational baseline for state foresters and others about organizational approaches, applications, and interorganizational relationships concerning remote sensing, geographic information and other geographic information technology (GI/GIT) in the nation's 50 state forestry organizations (SFOs). It also provides useful general information about SFOs, such as comparative analysis of their size, functionality and organizational placement within state governments.

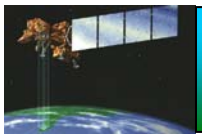
The report represents an interim product in a continuing effort to understand policy and institutional conditions and issues that impact GIT adoption and benefits. While helpful to state foresters to plan and direct GI/GIT internally, this research and future results will help a broader audience of state, federal and other leaders. Most investigations about GI/GIT in states focus on statewide coordination entities and groups, with limited attention to intrastate GI/GIT relationships, impacts and outcomes. The report and future work address this important concern to help all government leaders make appropriate GI/GIT policy, implementation and investment decisions to achieve maximum benefits.

The results clearly support other findings that state governments are key leaders and innovators in the nation's governance, as well as in the adoption and coordination of GI/GIT. The detailed "State Profiles" in Appendix C reveal many examples of innovation and entrepreneurialism within SFOs. Information was provided by and many thanks are offered to the state foresters and their staff, particularly those listed in Appendix B who provided detailed information and graphics used in this report. While extensive efforts were made to ensure accuracy and currency, any omissions or errors are the responsibility of the authors and sincere apologies are offered in any such cases.

Many individuals and organizations support this research, beginning several years ago. Many sincere thanks are offered to past and the current executive director of the National Association of State Foresters (NASF), Terri Bates, Willam Imbergamo, and Anne Heissenbuttel for their foresight and assistance to this and past related research about SFOs. Michigan State Forester Gerald Thiede, Chair, and other members of NASF's Research Committee are sincerely thanked for their guidance and support. Several other state foresters have expressed strong support for this work and are thanked for their help, such as Maryland State Forester Steven Koehn, who provide the report preface; Texas State Forester James Hull, who serves as NASF's Fire Committee Chair; and Florida Deputy State Forester Michael Long, who provided additional help in this and related remote sensing efforts.

This report would not have been possible without the support of NASA and SUNY-ESF. Alexander Tuyahov has provided strong support for research about and work with states for most of his career, and Edwin Sheffner provided current NASA information in the report. At SUNY-ESF, project director Dr. Paul Hopkins and Research Director Ed White provided essential help to this project. Remote sensing leaders at the U.S. Forest Service provided valuable information, particularly Tom Bobbe and Charles Dull. Much appreciation and sincere thanks is offered to these colleagues, and also to the National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC). Stuart Davis, Ohio's GIT director, is thanked for making arrangements for information from NSGIC's recent publication about statewide GI/GIT conditions to be included in this document.

Finally, my co-authors provided excellent and essential assistance and dedication. Conducting research about all 50 state governments is always an arduous task due to the sheer number and diversity of states, but is essential to ensure meaningful and useful results for each state. The quality of this report would not have been possible without the unique research capabilities of Dr. Zorica Nedovic-Budic. The detailed state profiles and overall report presentation could have not occurred without the invaluable help of Ronald Nanni. Many sincere thanks are offered to them and William Stiteler for their assistance and perseverance to complete this report to help state foresters and others.



Preface

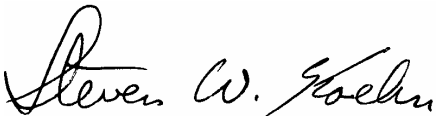
Not long ago, “high tech” forest inventory and management work included a pair of black and white panchromatic photos and a stereoscope. Infrared images were the latest innovation and maps were created on computers with card readers rather than a monitor and keyboard.

The changes in remote sensing, geographic information systems (GIS) and other geographic information technology over the last 20 years have been breathtaking and dramatic. Today there are many remote sensing platforms, high-powered computers and sophisticated spatial analysis software programs that help foresters and other resource professionals synthesize and utilize data in ways that could only be imagined just a few years ago.

The nature of forest resource management has also changed in fairly dramatic ways. No longer are our interests confined to simply inventorying volume, measuring growth and calculating allowable annual harvest levels. The complexity of modern natural resource management demands that resource professionals understand the interconnectedness of and the need to balance both the environmental and the economic benefits that forested ecosystems provide.

In an era of constantly being asked to do more with less, remote sensing and other geographic information technology will become even more essential. This technology and data allow foresters and other resource managers to work smarter, more effectively, and with less field time, while, in turn, making better and more well informed decisions.

The need for informed dialog and sharing of experiences among the nation's state foresters has never been greater. This publication provides essential background and baseline information, and is a critical part of what should become an ongoing process. Many thanks are offered to the authors, state foresters and their staff, other project participants and NASA for their help in making this report a valuable resource for state foresters to share.



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