

WORKING GROUP REPORTS - Sustainable Forest Data – Paul Geissler and Richard Guldin

1. Program/Activity Name: **Sustainable Forest Data Working Group**
(<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/brd/sfd.htm>)
2. What are the specific federal programs this data supports? **USDA Forest Service's Forest Inventory and Analysis, Natural Resources Conservation Service's National Resources Inventory, U.S. Geological Survey's Breeding Bird Survey and other forest resource surveys and assessments.**
3. Uses of Data: How does your data benefit customers and support agency missions? **The Sustainable Resources Data Working Group furthers the goal of sustainable forest resources by fostering the standardization and implementation of criteria and indicators (C&I) of sustainability. Effective implementation of the C&I ultimately depends upon having common definitions, geographic breadth of coverage, and the assessment of applicable variables for each indicator and upon resolving other C&I-related data issues. The Working Group seeks to coordinate activities of programs that are collecting, monitoring, analyzing, reporting, and/or making available spatial data and other information to reduce duplication and increase data interoperability and availability.**
4. Charter/Plan: Do you have a current charter or plan for collection? If so - please describe (include how recently the charter/plan was implemented and whether it is in need of update).
The current charter (<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/brd/SFDcharter.htm>) **was approved on February 6, 2001 and is scheduled for review after the completion of the National Report on Sustainable Forests in 2003. Responsibilities of the Working Group include:**
 - a. **Implement the MOU on Sustainable Forest Management Data to provide a common interagency forum for Federal coordination to resolve issues integral to collecting, monitoring, analyzing, reporting, and making data available on an ongoing basis related to the C&I, and a process for helping the Federal agencies develop a national report by 2003 for the Montreal Process on the state of the Nation's forests and progress towards sustainable forest management in the United States (U.S).**
 - b. **Integrate data derived through the C&I with other related and overlapping natural resource activities (e.g., range management, and minerals and energy) and existing coordination efforts (e.g., Federal Interagency Working Group on Sustainable Development Indicators and Intergovernmental Panel on Forests), as appropriate to agency missions and consistent with their statutory responsibilities.**
 - c. **Facilitate the development and adoption of FGDC-approved standards and protocols for indicators of sustainable resources.**
5. Metadata Status: Is metadata discoverable and served through the NSDI Clearinghouse? What percentage of this theme's data has metadata and is in a Clearinghouse node? **The Working Group does not have any data or metadata. It seeks to coordinate the activities of agencies and organizations that have data.**
6. Standards: What is the status of this theme's data, process, transfer, and classification standards? **A group** (<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/brd/Definitions.htm>) **has been formed to develop FGDC standard definitions of forests and**

rangelands, which includes representatives of the Roundtable on Sustainable Forests, Sustainable Rangeland Roundtable, federal agencies, professional societies, and other stakeholders. The roundtables are board based stakeholder organizations. We have good conceptual definitions and there general agreement on typical forests and rangelands. Other efforts to reach agreement, starting in 1976, have not been successful. However to compare data and estimates, we need agreement on operational definitions. The Oregon Demonstration Project found 10% to 15% difference in the areas of rangelands and forests with different definitions. There may be 40 to 60 million acres difference in the US, depending on which definition is used.

7. Progress: List FY 2001/2002 activities/progress to date (quantify where possible).
 - a. **Coordinated federal agency input into National Report on Sustainable Forests, scheduled to be published in 2003. This will be a major report on six criteria and 67 indicators of sustainable forest. A 100-150 page summary will be supplemented with substantial reports online. A draft is available at <http://www2.srs.fs.fed.us/2003/2003.htm>.**
 - b. **Organized subgroups to work on definitions of forests and rangelands and on developing a national strategy for monitoring human community and economic indicators. The definitions group has had four conference calls and a meeting in Washington DC and is developing a standards proposal for the definitions of forest and rangeland. The human community group had a organizational meeting in Denver.**
 - c. **Held monthly meetings.**

8. Policy: Do you have a formal agency policy in place for full and open access or data sharing? Are you able to fulfill this policy and provide public access with your current agency financial resources as allocated or are you in pursuit of collaborative federal partnerships to support data access? **It is a goal of the Working Group to promote full and open access and data sharing. The major federal data sets now are available to the public online.**

Are there areas or issues regarding lead responsibilities for spatial data themes that require attention, or lessons-learned that you would like to share with others? Please describe. **None**