



NORTH AMERICAN FOREST COMMISSION

THIRTY-FIRST SESSION

17-19 November 2021¹

FOREST INVENTORY, MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT WORKING GROUP (IMWG) REPORT

Queries on the content of this document may be addressed to:

**NAFC Secretariat
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PERIOD: September 2019 – July 2021

1. WORKING GROUP COMPOSITION

Chairperson	Country	Organization
Graham Stinson	Canada	Natural Resources Canada – Canadian Forest Service
Members	Country	Organization
Matt Makar	Canada	Natural Resources Canada- Canadian Forest Service
Alex Song	Canada	Natural Resources Canada- Canadian Forest Service

¹ Rescheduled from 13-15 September 2021

Dave Allen Hill	Canada	Natural Resources Canada- Canadian Forest Service
Byron Smiley	Canada	Natural Resources Canada- Canadian Forest Service
Sonja Oswalt	United States of America	United States Forest Service
Mila Álvarez	United States of America	United States Forest Service
Jim Garner	United States of America	United States Forest Service
José Armando Alanís de la Rosa	Mexico	National Forestry Commission
Rubí Angélica Cuenca Lara	Mexico	National Forestry Commission
Carina Edith Delgado	Mexico	National Forestry Commission
Sergio Armando Villela Gaytán	Mexico	National Forestry Commission

2. LIST OF ACTIVITIES COMPLETED DURING THE PAST 2 YEARS

Meetings	Location	Date
Annual meeting	<i>Knoxville, Tennessee</i>	<i>November 2019</i>
IUFRO 2019	<i>Curitiba, Brazil</i>	<i>September 2019</i>
Quarterly meeting	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>9 September 2020</i>
Latin American & Caribbean Working Group attendance – book chapter participation	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>21 October 2020</i>
Quarterly meeting	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>13 November 2020</i>
First Meeting on Boreal Primary Forests	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>23-27 November 2020</i>
Latin American & Caribbean Harmonization mtg/book chapter	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>27-28 January 2020</i>
Quarterly meeting	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>27 January 2021</i>

Meetings	Location	Date
Boreal Forest Primary Forest pilot study meeting - 2	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>17 March 2021</i>
Latin American & Caribbean Harmonization mtg/book chapter	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>9-10 March 2021</i>
Latin American Caribbean Harmonization/book chapter	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>13-14 March 2021</i>
Latin American workshop on assessment of primary forests	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>19-23 April 2021</i>
Boreal Forest Primary forest pilot study meeting – 3	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>28 April 2021</i>
Quarterly meeting	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>29 April 2021</i>
First Latin American Forest Primary forest pilot study meeting	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>15 June 2021</i>
Boreal Forest Primary forest pilot study meeting – 4	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>23 June 2021</i>
Latin American & Caribbean Harmonization/book chapter	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>15 July 2021</i>
2 nd Latin American Forest Primary forest pilot study meeting	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>19 July 2021</i>
Quarterly meeting	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>October 2021 (TBD)</i>

ACTIVITIES:

- Primary forest assessment

- A preliminary framework for the assessment of primary forest was developed and presented at the FIA² stakeholders meeting in Knoxville, Tennessee.
- Along with FAO, Canada and Mexico co-hosted two regional workshops on improving the assessment of boreal and Latin-American primary forests, respectively.
- Group members from Canada and the United States attended Boreal Primary forest meetings and have participated as pilot countries for assessment of boreal primary forest.
- Group members from Canada and the United States have participated in an IBFRA³ 2021 presentation
- Group members from Mexico have participated in FAO primary forest meetings.

² Forest Inventory and Analysis Program of the U.S. Forest Service

³ The International Boreal Forest Research Association

- **Latin American and Caribbean Harmonization process and book chapter**
 - Members of the IMWG (in addition to our Mexican and Puerto Rican/Virgin Island colleagues who are both members of the NAFC and the LACFC) were invited to attend harmonization meetings and the IMWG wrote an introductory chapter to the LAC harmonization book, which is expected to be printed in 2022.
- **North American Forests Database (NAFDB)**
 - A [storymap web page](#) was created to present some key facts about forest monitoring in the three countries and the work done to create the NAFDB.
 - The webpage was updated to include [map](#) and [reporting tool](#) for consultation of selected forest indicators at regional level.
- **Annual meeting held in 2019:**
 - Working Group (WG) members met in-person at the US FIA Southern Research Station office in Knoxville, Tennessee and (a) compared country experiences completing the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 tables, (b) discussed shared concern amongst Canada, Mexico and USA about primary forest reporting inconsistencies and how the data are used, and (c) entertained further developments to the North American Forest Database. Working Group chair was passed from USA to Canada.
 - WG members attended the FIA stakeholder meeting held in Knoxville, Tennessee, and presented a proposal of a framework for the assessment of primary forests based on a stepwise approach.
- **IUFRO 2019**
 - Co-chair the session on international harmonization efforts; and presentation on the development of the North American forest database.
- **Two virtual meetings held during 2020:**
 - On 9 September 2020, the Working Group held its first meeting since Knoxville. This was the first of a series of virtual meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this meeting, the following topics were addressed: report of activities by each country, specifically aimed to exchange views on how pandemics might affect the implementation of their National Forest Inventories (NFI), in particular, field data collection; WG members discussed on the following steps to conduct primary forests assessment based on the methodological framework presented on November 2019 at the FIA stakeholder meeting, and agreed on implementing the assessment in a stepwise approach using global datasets (Tier 1) and country datasets (Tier 2) as available. The WG members also analyzed the financial and technical implications of changing the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) reporting cycle from 5-year to 2-year in response to FAO consultations in this matter, anticipating the discussion of this matter at the 25th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO).
 - On 13 November 2020, the WG held its second virtual meeting, focused on updating the activities carried out by each institution in relation to their respective national forest inventories and how the COVID-19 pandemic affected their plans and implementation. WG members also commented about

the decisions adopted by COFO at its 25th session regarding FRA, in particular, the decision to maintain the 5-year reporting cycle and the request to countries to report some key indicators on annual basis according to their national capabilities and circumstances; the WG also took note that FRA main results had been presented at this COFO 25th session, including new tools for searching and consulting data by country or region. Regarding primary forest assessment, Canada announced they would be co-hosting with FAO the virtual International Expert Workshop on Improving Reporting on Boreal Primary Forests in November and preliminary results of the assessment of primary forests using global datasets (Tier 1) was presented by Canada.

- **Two virtual meetings held during 2021:**

- On 27 January 2021, the Working Group held a virtual meeting, in which the following topics were addressed: report of activities by each country; evaluation of primary forests and future actions. The group agreed to continue with the assessment of primary forests, including work on its definition to improve the reporting of this indicator within the framework of the FRA and discussed the preliminary results of the workshop on assessment of boreal primary forests.
- On 29 April 2021, the group held a meeting focused on updating the activities carried out by each institution related to their respective national forest inventories, as well as reporting on the results of the workshop of experts from Latin America and the Caribbean on primary forests. The members of the group agreed to carry out a regional pilot study to identify criteria, indicators and threshold values, as well as methods and inputs for the evaluation of primary forests, preferably with the financial support of NAFC's Bureau of Alternates (BoA).

3. PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT 2 YEARS

Activity	Location	Date	Status (ongoing/new)
Working group meeting	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>October (exact date pending)</i>	<i>ongoing</i>
Release of book chapter authored by NAFC IMWG in the Latin American/Caribbean harmonization book (published by FAO).	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>new</i>
Assessment of primary forest in the North American region	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>2022-2023</i>	<i>ongoing</i>
North American Forest Database phase 2	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>2022-2023</i>	<i>ongoing</i>
Annual working group meeting (subject to conditions on COVID-19 pandemic)	<i>Mexico (location TBD)</i>	<i>2022 (early summer, exact dates pending)</i>	<i>new</i>

Working group (follow-up) meetings	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>January, October</i>	<i>new</i>
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4. WORKING GROUP FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS AND/OR NETWORKING

WG started collaboration with other countries on the assessment of primary forests in the boreal biome and in the Latin American region, coordinated by FAO.

Mexico and the USA have been working on the formulation of a book on the National Forest Inventories in the Latin American region, which is expected to be published by the end of 2021.

Mexico has been collaborating with FAO and other countries in the Latin American region in the harmonization of relevant forest definitions and indicators to produce a Latin American forest database following the experience of the NAFC.

5. REQUEST FOR FUNDING AND/OR OTHER SUPPORT

- Development of a regional pilot study for the identification of primary forests that contributes to improving the reporting of this indicator in the context of the FRA.

Description: Funding is requested to hire specialist[s] in [the US and] Mexico to support analysis of global, regional, and national geospatial datasets, as well as other relevant information, including from NFI, to define criteria, indicators, and thresholds for assessing and monitoring primary forests in the North American region. It is expected that the outputs of this work will contribute to informing the pilot study coordinated by FAO in other regions; this will also support capacity building and the increase of the countries' capabilities to monitor and report the extension of primary forests under the FRA framework is expected as an outcome. Specific outputs will include criteria, indicators, and threshold for operationalization of the FRA definition of primary forests and assess its extension at national and regional levels, using the stepwise approach as proposed by the NAFC Inventory and Monitoring WG.

Funding requested: In the case of Mexico, it is estimated that an amount of USD \$6,000 for a six-month period for hiring services from a specialist will be sufficient.

6. CLOSING REMARKS

Recent discussions about the FRA reporting period in the 25th Session of COFO highlight the relevance of forest monitoring as a key element for assessing dynamics and trends of forest resources, and to support decision making processes for promoting conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of forest resources; although new tools and global datasets are available thanks to technological innovation and development, forest data collection and its analysis remains a key element of forest monitoring efforts; capabilities for collecting and analyzing data must be secured and strengthened by providing enough human and financial resources

at country level as new information and indicators, such as primary forest monitoring, are requested by the global community. The COVID-19 pandemic was an unexpected element that greatly impacted field data collection in the last two years.