

Note: Exact plot locations are not available to the public due to provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 2276). Section 1770 of this act protects the identity of private landowners on whose property Forest Inventory and Analysis information is collected (Forest Service Handbook Interim Directive 4809.11-2005-1). All plot locations are within 1.61 km (1.0 mi) of the exact plot locations (most are within 0.80 km (0.5 mi)). Precautions are taken to assure that modified plot locations are in the same county as the exact locations and that locations are not in inappropriate locations such as the Great Lakes.

Additionally, up to 5 percent of privately owned plots within a county will have their plot locations swapped with other privately owned plots. Swapping consists of exchanging the locations for a small proportion of close proximity, ecologically similar, privately owned plots. Similarity criteria vary regionally. Except in unusual situations swapping occurs only within counties so that the county statistics based on exact and modified plot locations are identical. Also, for plot data collected under the annual system, plot numbers are reassigned to sever the link to the periodic data, which, prior to the change in the law, had been stored in the FIADB with the unswapped coordinates.

Annual data are identified as those records where subcycle is greater than 0, and periodic data are identified by those records where subcycle is equal to 0. If these data do not meet the needs of the user, requests may be made to the Spatial Data Services Center (<http://www.fia.fs.fed.us/tools-data/spatial/>). Finally, if a data request does not include at least three unique owners in each ownership category represented, then the ownership categories are collapsed into a more generic category. For more information see Estimating and circumventing the effects of perturbing and swapping inventory plot locations a manuscript currently in review for a journal publication.