



FOREST BIOMETRICS RESEARCH INSTITUTE

4033 SW Canyon Road
Portland, Oregon 97221

A Non-Profit Research Corporation since 2002
For the advancement of research, education, and service in forest biometrics

June 21, 2016

To FBRI Supporting Organizations:

The Board of Directors held a meeting at the CH2M HILL Alumni Center in Corvallis, Oregon, on Monday, June 6, 2016. The Board met for a full day and covered the topics shown on the agenda located in Attachment A. In this report, I do not intend to go over each item. Instead, I am going to focus on those items that I believe are the most important. If you have any questions or concerns about an agenda item that's not covered in this report (or even one that is), feel free to contact me or any other Director to get the information you need. Contact information for Directors and FBRI Officers is contained in Attachment B.

I am pleased to report that our contract with Northwest Management Inc. ("NMI") is working out well. NMI is under contract to provide technical support and to assist FBRI Supporting Organizations with FPS forest inventory, silviculture, and planning utilities. To stay abreast of this important contract, monthly conference calls are held between FBRI's Directors, Dr. Jim Arney, and Mr. Brock Purvis. Already, Brock is handling 85% of the technical support questions without any assistance from Jim. I have inspected the monthly logs¹ and I am amazed at the variety of technical support questions that Brock receives. Nonetheless, several organizations have similar questions and so we have tasked Jim and Brock to begin creating Webinars that FPS users can view to answer common questions. Jim has already created a Webinar that explains how to install and set up FPS software in Windows 10, including setting the ODBC environment. The Webinar is on FBRI's Web site, but here is the link if you want to go to it:

<http://fbrinstitute.org/category/support/fps-software-help/installing-fps>

We expect that such Webinars will be able to address a significant number of the technical support questions from our Supporting Organizations. I'd like to hear from those of you who watch the video and get your feedback. Oh, one more technical support tidbit—Jim has placed a PDF version of the FPS Forester's Guidebook on ResearchGate. Here's the link:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303895927_Biometric_Methods_for_Forest_Inventory_Forest_Growth_and_Forest_Planning

¹ Our contract with NMI requires them to maintain a monthly log which documents dates, clients, and general nature of services provided.

Dr. Arney reported to the Board that he is continuing to make progress on his FPS library calibration project. Jim refers to this new library as the universal library because this single library is going to replace all the regional species libraries that were associated with earlier versions of FPS. The universal library will also make use of Dr. Arney's SiteGrid technology. This innovation will allow users to localize FPS so that growth projections for stands can be modified depending on site-specific environmental factors such as topography, precipitation, and soil depth. Jim reported to the Board that the documentation for the new library exceeds 100+ pages in length. This write-up will include a description of the research database used to construct the universal library, analytical results, and comparisons to past libraries. These comparisons will also display differences and similarities to yields from other non-FBRI growth models. If Jim continues at his current pace, he expects to distribute the universal library and associated documentation by the end of July. Jim advocates that you should continue to use your current library and methods and not switch until after your year-end reports have been completed.

For years, the Board has discussed the importance of getting FPS "into the classroom." College graduates fluent in FPS will be well prepared to work for organizations that rely on FPS for mission critical business functions. Such graduates may also be influential if their employers decide to look at FPS as an alternative to the system(s) currently in use. I am glad to report that Dr. Arney has been working with Dr. Mark Kimsey and other professors at the University of Idaho with the goal of integrating FPS into classes focused on forest inventory, silviculture, and forest planning. As a start, Dr. Kimsey installed FPS on student laptops this past semester and used the software to input and compile timber cruise data. FBRI provided the university with copies of the FPS software and the FPS Forester's Guidebook.

The Board has also discussed the possibility of funding a graduate student (no candidates yet) at the University of Idaho with the objective of working on research projects that lead to enhancements in the FPS software. Another objective would be to publish scientific papers on methods and techniques unique to FPS such as its non-parametric models and the 10m site system. Yet a third objective would be to "groom" and mentor a graduate student so that they could eventually replace Dr. Arney as the FBRI's biometrician. The Board needs to carefully consider funding such a position by weighing the potential benefits against the costs. I must admit that I am very interested in the concept as it provides FBRI with a viable pathway for finding Dr. Arney's successor. Jim intends to meet with faculty members later this year, discuss potential research projects, and make a recommendation to the Board at our next meeting in November.

Another pathway for finding Jim's successor is to simply begin conducting a search. Last year when we updated our 5-year plan, we targeted 2017 as the year to initiate such a search. To cut to the chase, during our meeting the Board decided to expedite the search for a biometrician. Jim is going to develop a position description that we intend to circulate broadly. Of course we would like to find a PhD interested in taking over for Jim, but we may find a talented individual with a master's degree ("MS"). If we do find a promising MS, there's the possibility of this individual attending the University of Idaho with the goal of earning a PhD (as described in the paragraph above) and then working for FBRI full-time thereafter.

Although we are in good shape financially with the dues increase that went into effect this year, if we are going to fund a graduate student at the University of Idaho and expedite the search for Dr. Arney's replacement then we'll need to find additional sources of revenue or support. We think that we can be competitive for grant funding and so we are going to begin looking for an individual to help us identify promising opportunities and prepare grant applications. Another source of revenue is signing up new supporting organizations. Jim and I are going to set aside some time in September to hit the road and see if we can convince several entities to join the Institute. We have had preliminary discussions with a few organizations but a site visit where we demonstrate FPS with its universal library just might tip them in our direction.

In my last letter to Supporting Organizations dated December 22, 2015, I informed you that I was strongly encouraged by the Board to reach out to our endowment Supporting Organizations and ask them to voluntarily terminate their endowment agreements with the Institute and begin paying annual fees. When the Institute was founded in 2002 it was hoped that, eventually, an endowment fund could be built up to the point where it could pay for all the Institute's costs and activities with interest earned. It has become apparent to the Board that we're not going to be successful at this anytime soon. The Board believes that the endowment organizations have benefitted tremendously from their initial one-time investments in the Institute. We are now in a situation where our annual fee-paying organizations are entirely shouldering the burden of the Institute's costs. It took me a lot of time but I finished a first draft of the letter that will be sent to endowment organizations. I'm still getting feedback from the Board but my intention is to send out the final version of the letter by the end of June. With the letter and follow-up phone calls, I hope to convince endowment organizations to convert to annual contributors and fully financially participate in the Institute's evolution.

Things are really looking good at this juncture. The technical support contract with NMI is working extremely well. We're starting to develop Webinars to address frequently asked questions. The Board is fully engaged and is helping Jim on many fronts including marketing, seeking grants, and succession planning. Finally, Dr. Arney is as enthusiastic as I have ever seen him. He has worked tirelessly on the new universal library and I personally can't wait to try it out. Thank you for your continued support of the Institute. There is no other entity that I know of that is as dedicated to providing the forest products industry with high quality decision support tools. For the good of the industry, it is essential that we continue to evolve and improve our software, services, and research databases for decades to come.

Best regards,

Dan...

Daniel Opalach, PhD, RPF
Chairman, Forest Biometrics Research Institute

P.S. FBRI's Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 15, at the Lloyd Center DoubleTree Hotel in Portland, Oregon. Please make sure you put this event on your calendar today. See you there!

Attachment A

**Board of Directors Meeting
Forest Biometrics Research Institute (FBRI)
June 6, 2016 - 8:00am to 4:00pm
Stevenson Room, 2nd Floor
CH2M Hill Alumni Center, Oregon State University
Corvallis, Oregon**

Preliminary optional dinner – Sunday, June 5, 6:00pm

Hilton Garden Inn – meet in Lobby

June 6: FBRI Board Meeting – Scheduled 8:00am to 4:00pm

Call to Order at 8:00am – Dan Opalach

- Record attendance
- Request for modifications and/or additions to the agenda

Minutes from Previous Meeting – Richard Zabel

- Review and approval of the minutes from our meeting in Portland on 11/ 9/15

Financial Review – Richard Zabel

- Profit & Loss Statement through May 30, 2016
- Annual 2016 – 2020 Budget Plan from November 9, 2015 Meeting

Review of Technical Support Activities – Brock Purvis

- Activities and Trends observed in first five months of 2016
- Outlook for balance of 2016 – Activities and Trends

Review of FPS Library Calibration & Distribution – Jim Arney

- Transition to Universal Library with SiteGrid Technology
- Timing of Release – FPS Libraries, Documentation, and Software

9:45 – 10:00 Break

New Topics – Broad Spectrum Impromptu Developmental Discussions

- Topic One – Working Relationships with Universities
- Topic Two – Public Knowledge of FBRI Database Resources
- Topic Three – Building and Distributing FPS SiteGrid Technology

Upcoming Board Items

- Dates, Locations, Action items

Call to Adjourn

Attachment B

FBRI Contact Information

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Dr. Jim Arney	President/Biometrician	(406) 649-0040	jdarney@forestbiometrics.com
Mr. Ken Borchert	Director	(503) 231-6296	kenneth.borchert@bia.gov
Mr. Jim McWhorter	Director	(360) 263-0677	jmcwhorter@terraverdeinc.com
Dr. Dan Opalach	Director/Chairman	(707) 668-4418	dopalach@greendiamond.com
Mr. Brian Sharer	Director	(971) 645-4458	brian.sharer@gwrglobal.com
Mr. Marc Vomocil	Director	(541) 929-2477	marc@starkerforests.com
Mr. Richard Zabel	Secretary/Treasurer	(503) 226-4562	richard@westernforestry.org