



## 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

July 12, 2015

To FBRI Supporting Organizations:

The Board of Directors held its second meeting of the year on June 24 and 25 at the World Forestry Center in Portland. Although we covered a lot of material on those two days, in this letter I'm only going to focus on the highlights.

I will start with the best news first. As we all know the Institute relies exclusively on Dr. Jim Arney to provide its services. He is the Institute's biometrician, technical support specialist, programmer, technical writer, workshop presenter, FPS expert, database manager, marketing manager, and the President responsible for day to day operations. For years the Board has struggled with determining how to spread these duties out among more individuals and begin the transition to a future state when Jim has retired. For the past six months we toyed with the idea of hiring one or two individuals to serve as Inventory/Planning Foresters, however this concept had some weaknesses that made Board members very uncomfortable. Our biggest concern was stability. What happens when these individuals move on? That's a huge problem. All of a sudden we lose access to all that FPS expertise and knowledge, as well as the time spent training these individuals.

So, rather than entering into contracts with individual consulting biometricians we are going to search for a forestry consulting firm with many employees that can provide an array of the Institute's services. We are developing the Request for Proposal (RFP) and envision the Institute looking for a firm that has a long-established successful track record of providing forestry services to a broad range of clients. We would want this firm to have a number of employees that could fulfill several of the Institute's services that I listed above. For example, they would take on all forms of technical support including answering the phone, responding to emails, and conducting site visits. They would become FPS experts and assist our Supporting Organizations with problems using the software's various modules for forest inventory, growth and yield, and forest planning. The successful firm would have unprecedented and direct access to Dr. Arney so that he could train and mentor its employees.

Such an arrangement has huge advantages: stability and continuity of service. If one of the firm's employees decides to move on it's not the end of the world. There will be other

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employees in the wings ready to step up and fill vacancies. The firm will develop institutional knowledge that can be passed on from one employee to the next. Our plan is to get the RFP out by the end of July. Firms will have until August 21 to submit proposals. The Board will select the successful firm at its Board meeting in August. The firm will be asked to start working for FBRI on January 1, 2016. Furthermore, we are not looking for a one-year contract with this firm. We want to develop and nurture a long-term relationship that will benefit the successful firm, FBRI, and the Institute's Supporting Organizations.

The entire Board and Dr. Arney are enthusiastic supporters of this approach for evolving FBRI. It does not immediately address the transition of all the duties performed by Dr. Arney, but it's a great start. However there is a catch: cost. There is no question that the Board will have to increase the dues from its Supporting Organizations. In 2016 the Institute will have to pay for the services provided by this new firm and Dr. Arney. The Board will make a decision regarding 2016 dues at its August meeting after we decide which firm to hire and we have an understanding of the compensation that will be required to retain their services. We are also going to consider converting our "endowment" Supporting Organizations to annual dues-paying organizations. For over a decade we had hopes of building up an endowment fund to the point where we could fully support the Institute's activities. Unfortunately, that's not going to happen so it's time to reconsider if and when we should make the tough decision to end the endowment program.

In my last letter I mentioned that Mr. Rob Taylor had notified the Institute of his desire to step down from the Board of Directors. That triggered a search for his replacement and I'm pleased to announce that Mr. Brian Sharer from Greenwood Resources (GWR) will be taking Rob's place. Mr. Sharer has the full support of GWR's inventory and planning staff and corporate executives to take on this role. GWR has great interest in exploring FBRI's capabilities to handle its biometrics needs on a global scale for both traditional and clonal forestry assets. Mr. Sharer brings a unique perspective to the Board that will, no doubt, make us a more robust and successful enterprise.

Some of you have expressed an interest in attending FBRI Board meetings. The Board has discussed this on several occasions and I think we have come up with a plan that addresses this need. To accommodate this request we are going to hold a one-hour Board meeting on the day of our Annual meeting later this year in November. This a unique and non-customary occurrence for a private, non-profit board, however, we are sensitive to this request from our Supporting Organizations. This one-hour Board meeting will occur immediately after lunch. The Board meeting will be called to order and representatives from Supporting Organizations will have an opportunity to address the Board. FBRI Directors may ask follow-up questions or matters may be taken under advisement. The entire one-hour session will be recorded and

minutes will be prepared and distributed to all Supporting Organizations. This is a big step for the Board that has significant benefits for the Institute and its Supporting Organizations. It increases the transparency of the Institute and it provides a forum that allows Supporting Organizations to express their views on matters they see as important to the Institute. I think the minutes will be a very informative communication piece as it will summarize the views, concerns, and opinions of our Supporting Organizations. I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to address the Board. Your input is important and matters.

On a more somber note it has come to our attention that a few of our Supporting Organizations have provided copies of FPS to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties who are not FBRI members. This is not appropriate. If a Supporting Organization wants to hire a consultant to use FPS for any purpose, then that forestry consultant should already be a member of the Institute or that consultant should contact FBRI and purchase his own license to use the program. Currently we are trying to locate anyone who might have an unlicensed copy of FPS and invite them to join the Institute. It is very expensive for us to maintain, update, and enhance FPS and so we need all organizations that use FPS to pay their fair share.

As you are well aware, Dr. Arney has had to answer all the technical support questions since Free State Drivers terminated its agreement with FBRI. Unfortunately, this has taken up most of Jim's time because providing technical support to FBRI organizations is his highest priority. This level of contact with Supporting Organizations has provided Jim with a lot of insight as to what issues are most often impacting FPS users. Given the high frequency of some issues (e.g., designing a timber cruise), Jim is planning to put together a series of short videos that will be made available to Supporting Organizations on the Institute's Web site. Jim believes that such videos could help users work through issues that, in the past, had to be handled one at a time by FBRI technical support personnel. We're hoping that this could be a great way to efficiently handle a large number of the technical support questions raised by FPS users. I've seen some preliminary videos that Jim has put together and I think he's onto something that could be extremely useful to our Supporting Organizations. Thinking outside the box, it may be that other FPS users could put together such videos and post them on our Web site. Perhaps we could have a competition to see who can create the best FPS "help" video?

The last item I want to mention before closing this letter is university involvement. We need to put more effort into finding professors who would be willing to use FPS in classroom settings. FPS could be used for a wide variety of courses including forest inventory, silviculture, growth and yield, and forest planning. To encourage forestry professors to seriously consider using FPS, we are going to make the software available to universities free of charge. If you know a forestry professor who may be interested in this opportunity, please call me up or send

me an email with his contact information. I will personally call the professor and do whatever I can to get FPS into their classroom.

This year's annual meeting will be on Tuesday, November 10. It's a great venue for you to network with resource professionals that rely on FPS for forest inventory, growth and yield, and forest planning. It also provides you with an opportunity to discuss issues that are relevant to your organization with one or more of the Institute's Directors. But, most importantly, this is the place to learn first-hand from Dr. Arney what the Institute has accomplished during the year, and what the work plan looks like going forward. If you want to register for the annual meeting, contact Richard Zabel at [richard@forestbiometrics.org](mailto:richard@forestbiometrics.org). A notice will also be distributed to FBRI Supporting Organizations as we get closer to the meeting.

Thank you for your continued support of FBRI. We have a very enthusiastic and professional user community, and your active participation in the Institute is critical to our direction and success. Come to the annual meeting and let us know what's on your mind. If for some reason you can't attend the November 10 meeting, contact Jim, me, or anyone on the Board of Directors and tell us about your concerns.

Best regards,

Dan...

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## Attachment A

### FBRI Contact Information

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