

Southern Forest Resource Assessment
USDA Forest Service
1720 Peachtree Rd. NW
Atlanta, GA 30309

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON SOUTHERN FOREST ASSESSMENT REPORT –
TIMBR-1

FROM: THOMAS J. EBNER

In reading the material in TIMBR-1 and studying the graphs, especially those relating the softwood harvest and growth levels by state, I was struck by the disparity between the latest FIA reported softwood harvest levels and those shown on your graphs. I examined the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama most closely since I had done projection work using FIA data for these states. In all these states, the 1995 softwood removal level is well below the average annual softwood removal level reported by the FIA for the preceding survey period. The FIA survey period dates, the FIA reported average annual softwood removals (in millions of cubic feet), and the Assessment softwood harvest level for the year 1995 are as follows:

FIA State and Survey Period	FIA Average Annual Softwood Removal (Millions of CF)	Assessment 1995 Softwood Removal (Millions of CF)
Louisiana - 1984-1991	669	605.9
Mississippi- 1986-1993	716	638.9
Alabama – 1982- 1991	720	662.3

Somewhat the same picture emerges in regard to softwood growth in that the 1995 softwood growth differs, in some cases quite considerably, from the reported FIA growth in the preceding growth period. If your models are working correctly I would think that with the increase in pine plantations, the softwood growth would show an increase over the average annual growth from the preceding FIA survey period.

FIA State and Survey Period	FIA Average Annual Softwood Growth (Millions of CF)	Assessment 1995 Softwood Growth (Millions of CF)
Louisiana .- 1984-1991	524.8	508.8
Mississippi- 1986-1993	638.0	623.7
Alabama – 1982- 1991	650.8	711.0

In Louisiana the Quarterly Report of Forest Products (call 504-925-4500 for a copy) shows that the 1995 softwood sawtimber harvest was 6.6% higher than the 1991 harvest and the 1995 pine pulpwood harvest was 11.4% higher than the 1991 harvest. It is also likely that the 1991 harvest level was higher than the 1984-1991 average although I did not check on this. Therefore it appears that your process understates considerably the 1995 softwood harvest in Louisiana.

In Alabama the softwood harvest of 662 million cubic feet shown in your draft report on Figure 40 appears to line up very well to my estimation of the cubic content of their 1982-1991 reported pine severance. However estimating the cubic content of the reported severance in market terms is a best a rough estimation. My estimation of the 1992 cubic content of the reported pine severance is 20% higher than the 1982-1991 average. It would seem that your process has substantially under estimated the 1995 softwood removals in Alabama.

In Mississippi the major problem seems to be large understatement of the 1995 softwood harvest in relation to what the FIA measured the average 1986-1993 harvest to be.

I did not find anything in TIMBR-1 which documented how the latest FIA harvest level was adjusted to the year 1995. I think this needs to be done.

In Louisiana and Mississippi the 1995 softwood growth shown in the draft assessment report is quite close to the growth shown in the preceding FIA survey period. This could be a minor modeling problem but I would think that the 1995 softwood growth should exceed, not be lower than the average shown for the preceding survey period. In the case of Alabama the assessment's 1995 softwood growth is above the FIA's average growth for the preceding survey period. This appears reasonable but I think some discussion is warranted for each state addressing how the softwood growth and removals relates to the latest FIA statement of softwood growth and removals.

I think most readers will assume that the graphic pictures of the relationship of harvest and growth for the IH case shown in TIMBR-1 represent the current situations in each state. I find it hard to believe that it will be year 2040 before the softwood growth in Louisiana reaches the level of softwood harvest developed by the FIA for the years 1984-1991.

I would recommend that this entire chapter be re-done beginning with some projections that more closely resemble the best estimate of the growth and removals situation, by state, for year 1995.

Thank you the opportunity to comment on this draft report.

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