Frequently Asked Questions about LANDFIRE's Data Draw (Fall 2025)

Q: Isn't LANDFIRE just a fire centric program?

A: The official name of LANDFIRE (LF) is Landscape Fire and Resource Management Planning Tools. Fire is a main component of the program however the sponsors (Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC)) envisioned its use for broader resource management. LF distributed data products consist of over 20 spatial data layers in the form of maps and other data that support a range of land management analysis and modeling. Specific data products include: Existing Vegetation Type, Cover, and Height; Biophysical Settings; Environmental Site Potential; Fire Behavior Fuel Models; Fire Regime Classes; and Fire Effects layers. LF products are designed to be used at a landscape-scale in support of strategic vegetation, fire, and fuels resource management planning.

Q: What are some of the fire applications that use LANDFIRE data products?

A: LF data products are important foundational data sets for many fire management decision support applications. A few of these include: The National Wildland Fire Cohesive Strategy, Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS), Fire Program Analysis (FPA), and Hazardous Fuels Prioritization and Allocation System (HFPAS). For more information on how the LF products are being applied, please visit https://www.landfire.gov/resources

Q: What has changed since the last data request?

A: There have been a few changes since the last data request.

- Starting in 2024 LANDFIRE broke out the Other Mechanical treatment type into Mechanical Add, Mechanical Remove, and Mechanical Unknown. Please provide enough detail about mechanical treatments so we can categorize them as add or remove.
- LANDFIRE has stopped collecting Exotics data and producing the Exotics polygon layer.
- The primary focus for this data call is to collect disturbance and treatment polygons from FY 2025. To make annual updates possible we will be asking for data from the fiscal year which runs from 10/1/2024 – 9/30/2025. For more information visit: https://www.landfire.gov/data/contribute.
- **The data submission deadline is October 31, 2025.** Please make every effort to submit your FY 2025 data by October 31, as LF is relies heavily on user contributed data for annual updates.

Q: What is the purpose of LANDFIRE updates?

A: An update program is vital to support the full spectrum of fire and natural resource management programs with timely and quality products that reflect recent changes in landscape conditions. The LF updates focus on landscape changes to vegetation and fuels resulting from disturbance and treatment activities such as wildland fire, fuel and vegetation treatments, mortality from insects and disease, storm damage, and other natural or anthropogenic events. Areas of concern will be improved through the LF update process, and the existing layers will be updated to reflect more current conditions.

Q: How often will LANDFIRE update their data products?

A: LF updates data products on an annual/yearly basis.

Q: Why should we contribute data to LANDFIRE?

A: The Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) envisioned LF be used for broader resource management applications, and this is your opportunity to provide data to improve and update LF products. LF is structured to be part of a National Landscape Conservation Information Framework, where authoritative data sources and coordinated agency data are tapped for updating LF deliverables. LF produces products that serve as key data sets in many decision support applications. Since fire is a natural ecological process, LF data products start with soil and vegetation data, the value and utility of LF deliverables are significant for natural resources management, as well as fire management applications. Your assistance in improving the data products is needed because the continual updating of LF relies heavily on land-management professionals at agency field locations to supply the data needed for mapping improvements and updates. Without this data, LF data products including, existing vegetation and wildland fuels layers would not be as current.

Q: When do you need the data?

A: To facilitate annual updates, LF needs as much time as possible to process data. **LF is asking for data to be submitted or available in database systems by October 31st. Please make every effort to have your FY 2025 data accessible to LF by October 31, 2025.** This may include entering data into online databases/Systems of Record (SOR) so it can be obtained by LF. Data submitted after the deadline will be used if schedules allow in LF2025 production work.

Q: What types of data are needed for LANDFIRE?

A: LF primary focus for this data call is to collect disturbance and treatment polygons from FY 2025 to be evaluated for use in the next update. The fiscal year runs from 10/1/2024 – 9/30/2025. Our secondary focus is vegetation/fuel plot data. LF also benefits from contributions of lidar data and feedback on current data products.

Q: What type of Event (disturbance and vegetation/fuel treatment) data are need for LANDFIRE?

A: LF needs disturbance and vegetation/fuel treatment data. This data will be evaluated for incorporation into a LF Events geodatabase depicting disturbance and vegetation/fuel treatment activities. Events data are first priority for annual updates. The information in the Events geodatabase is used to update existing vegetation and wildland fuel layers to reflect changes in landscape conditions.

Disturbance and treatment data needs include spatial polygon layers of 1) wildland fires, 2) harvest/thinning activities, 3) mechanical vegetation/fuel treatments, 4) seeding/planting, 5) chemical treatments, 6) storm damage, 7) insect and disease infestations. The polygon layers should contain the following information (attributes), at minimum:

- The event must be represented by a polygon on the landscape and have a defined spatial coordinate system.

- The event must have an event type needed for LF updates.
- The event must be attributed with the fiscal year or date of occurrence.

Supporting information, including definitions of the fields and any codes in the data tables, should accompany the data to ensure that they can be interpreted correctly.

Q: What types of LANDFIRE Reference Database (vegetation or fuel plot) data are needed for LANDFIRE?

A: LF benefits from contributions of any geo-referenced point or polygon vegetation or fuel plot data along with any associated digital photos, project descriptions, or final reports. These data are incorporated into the LF Reference Database (LFRDB). New plot data with species cover information are being used for annual updates and data submissions will be processed as time allows. Repeat measurements of plots are also welcome. The geo-referenced vegetation and/or fuel plot data should afford some combination of the following from each sampling unit (for example, plot or transect):

- geo-reference with defined coordinate system – required for all sampling units
- sampling date
- cover type/vegetation type label.
- full or partial list of plant taxa with estimates of canopy cover and height (if available)
- measurements of individual trees (may include diameters, height, crown base height, crown ratio, crown class, and/or density)
- counts or biomass estimates of fine and coarse woody material
- depths or biomass estimates of litter and duff layers
- biomass of live and dead shrub or herbaceous material

In the event that individual trees have been mapped within the sampling unit (i.e. if data were collected following a protocol similar to that of the USFS Forest Inventory and Analysis Program (FIA)), we ask that you include the coordinates (or distance and azimuth from mapped plot center) for each of the trees, as those data would enable us to model tree canopy cover ideally suited for LF's remote-sensing applications.

Supporting information, including definitions of the fields and any codes in the data tables, should accompany the data to ensure that they can be interpreted correctly. Any associated digital photos, project descriptions, or final reports are also appreciated.

Q: In what format do you need the data?

A: We will accept Event data (disturbance and vegetation/fuel treatment data) in various formats, including ESRI shapefiles, geodatabases, and ArcInfo coverages. Supporting information, including definitions of the fields and any codes in the data tables, should accompany the data to ensure that they can be interpreted correctly.

If you have LFRDB data (vegetation and/or fuel plot data) to share, we're even more flexible in terms of data format. We will gladly accept digital data in text files, spreadsheets, relational databases, ESRI shapefiles or geodatabases, and ArcInfo coverages – whichever is most convenient. Coordinate information, including map datum, can be bundled with the other attribute information or in a separate, linked

file, or data form. Supporting information, including definitions of the fields and any codes in the data tables or data-entry forms, should accompany the data to ensure that they are accurately represented in the LF reference database.

Q: Does LANDFIRE accept disturbance and treatment data from previous years?

A: No. The production schedule does not allow time for the LANDFIRE team to go back and add disturbance and treatment polygons from previous years.

Q: We have submitted similar information to a web-based data clearing house such as the NPS Data Store or an agency database/ Systems of Record (SOR) such as USFS-FACTS (Forest Service ACtivity Tracking System). Why don't you simply download the information you need from those existing websites or agency databases?

A: LF does draw data from several web-based data clearing houses including the United States Forest Service National Forest Health Monitoring Aerial detection survey data, USGS/NPS Vegetation Characterization Website, National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS), and Interior Fuels & Post-fire Reporting System (IFPRS). LF also acquires data from agency database systems/SOR such as USFS FACTS (Forest Service ACtivity Tracking System), USFS Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA) data, and Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Resources Inventory (NRI) Data. The Website Agency DB Table provides a complete list of websites or agency database systems from which LF draws data. For a copy of the Website Agency DB Table please visit https://www.landfire.gov/data/contribute#previous. If you store data on one of the websites or agency databases/SOR listed in this table, please verify that a current version of your data is posted to ensure that this data will be evaluated for use in the next LF update cycle.

Q: We have some of the types of data you have requested, but not all of them. Can you use our subset of the data?

A: Yes, we likely can. Your data need not contain the full suite of vegetation/fuel or disturbance/treatment activity information that we have listed as examples to be useful. Any subset of those data likely can be used to support some aspect of LF.

Q: How big must a fire or other event be for LANDFIRE to consider when making changes to the vegetation and fuel layers? Is there a lower size limit to the perimeters we should submit?

A: We are not putting a lower size limit on the disturbances or vegetation/fuel treatments for which we're seeking data. Please submit all data. This type of coordinated national effort has not been done before so potential uses for a database of this type may be extremely valuable for other applications. While we can lean on MTBS (https://mtbs.gov/) for remotely sensed data on large fire events (>500 acres in the East), smaller treatments and disturbances are apt to be accounted for in LF if we receive information directly from the various administrative units. Newer Landsat image data mining processes such as Vegetation Change Tracker (VCT) and Remote Sensed Landscape Change (RSLC) will potentially allow us to detect smaller treatments and disturbances. Data contributed on all sized events are critical in labeling the type of disturbance or treatment associated with changes in the Landsat images.

Q: You ask for "information that can be used to improve the existing maps of vegetation and fuel." Will you provide some examples of the information you're requesting? Does it need to be in a particular format?

A: One of the objectives of the LF updates is to address discrepancies between map products and known field conditions. To that end, we are asking for feedback information from you to let us know where these discrepancies or issues exist and to provide information that will help us improve the data with actual conditions on the ground. Visit https://www.landfire.gov/data/contribute#feedback for examples of how you can communicate feedback information to us. Feedback can be submitted through the LF Helpdesk: https://www.landfire.gov/contact.

Q: How do you intend to use the feedback information that we submit "to improve the existing maps of vegetation and fuel?" Will it be "stamped" or otherwise incorporated directly into the LANDFIRE layers?

A: We will use the narratives and supporting GIS data that you submit as reference materials to (1) understand the issue(s) that you raise, (2) develop a systematic approach for potentially making the desired changes, and (3) evaluate our efforts to improve the products. We will NOT simply substitute or "stamp in" the ancillary data in place of LF data. Please understand that while we will evaluate all contributed information and make a concerted effort to address the issue(s) raised, we anticipate that some requested changes will fall outside the scope of LF updates or may be otherwise impossible to make due to limitations of the information provided and/or other resources at our disposal.

Q: How can we better facilitate data collection and submission efforts for our region of the country?

A: In some regions of the country like-minded individuals have coordinated together to share information and facilitate regional data composites. Spearheading a regional data collection effort within or across agencies can help ensure that all available data for your region is submitted to LF. Because the United States is large and diverse, being able to know and work with all the organizations that manage land is extremely difficult. We do the best that we can, but a regional data collection effort can get partners involved who may not otherwise be aware of LF and the benefits that contributing data can provide for their local area. Data contributions will help improve the LF data products for your area of the country and ensure that the data products are as current as possible.

Q: We have submitted data to LANDFIRE in the past, how can I verify LANDFIRE has my data?

A: To date, LF has acquired many data sets including, disturbance and vegetation/fuel treatment perimeters (Events data) and vegetation/fuel plot data (LFRDB) which were used to support LF mapping and updating efforts.

By referencing the Compiled Data table, you can determine if LF has already collected your data. For a copy of the Compiled Data Table please visit http https://www.landfire.gov/data/contribute/contributions. Please note the *Date Range* field in the table to determine if the most recent data for your area has been contributed.

In addition, LF obtains data from several web-based data clearing houses and agency databases/Systems or record (SOR). The Website Agency DB Table provides a complete list

of websites or agency database systems from which LF draws data. For a copy of the Website Agency DB Table please visit https://www.landfire.gov/data/contribute#previous. If you store data on one of the websites or agency data bases listed in this table, please verify that a current version of your data is posted to ensure that this data will be evaluated for use in the next LF update cycle.

Q: We received a similar request for data from LANDFIRE not very long ago. Why are you requesting data again?

A: Any data that you contributed to date were likely used to support LF 2001 National or LF 2016 Remap mapping efforts and LF 2008, LF 2010, LF 2012, LF 2014, LF 2016, LF 2020, LF2022, LF2023, or LF2024 updating efforts. LF has transitioned to annual updates and will send out a yearly data call letter. Wildland fires, insects, diseases, windstorms, and vegetation/fuel treatment activities continue to alter many landscapes. LF needs disturbance and vegetation/fuel treatment data from FY 2025 to update the existing vegetation and wildland fuel layers to reflect current conditions.

Q: Are there any funds available to cover the time and cost of organizing our data for submission?

A: LF recognizes that it takes some time and cost to organize and submit data. It is also recognized that some agencies/organizations do not have a centralized data structure where their data are linked from the local (field, park, refuge, forest) area up through the states and regions in a standardized electronic format. LF has been able to access many regional and national databases which save time and money because of the structured process (many organizations are moving in this direction). Although LF would like to have resources to be able to support this, ultimately it is up to the organizations to have good data and records management in place. With this type of data management in place, opportunities for sharing data and linking data to efforts like LF do not require a lot of resources. LF does not have funds available for organizing data, however we do accept data in many different formats, and we have staff available that can work with the provided data to interpret and convert the information into the LF format. We can likely work with data you currently have available as long as it meets our data needs and minimum requirements (see question, **What types of data are needed for LANDFIRE?**). Supporting information, including definitions of the fields and any codes in the data tables, should accompany the data to ensure that they can be interpreted correctly. For more information on data format please see question, **In what format do you need the data?**

Q: Will LANDIFRE accept data in hard copy and digitize it?

A: Although this was an offer that we made during the initial development of LF c2001, the complexity of adding in polygon data has precluded us from being able to continue with this offer. We do not currently have the time or resources to digitize data.

Q: What if my data are proprietary?

A: All data that we receive for LF that are not already in the public domain are considered to have been provided to us for internal use only. We will send an official information request to all data contributors asking their permission to share their data before incorporating the information into a public version of the Events or LFRDB. We will gladly enter into formal data sharing agreements if you are concerned about sharing proprietary data. Please contact Brenda Lundberg, the LF Reference Data Administrator, at blundberg@contractor.usgs.gov if you wish to share proprietary or otherwise sensitive

information and/or would like to enter into a formal agreement with LF before sending the data. For more information on the public version of the LFRDB or Events data please visit https://www.landfire.gov/reference.

Q: How do we submit data to LANDFIRE and who should we contact if we have questions?

A: If you have questions or would like to submit data please contact Brenda Lundberg, LF Reference Data Administrator. You may email datasets smaller than 25 MB to Brenda Lundberg. If the files are too large to send via email contact Brenda Lundberg for alternative file transfer options. Please contact Brenda Lundberg at blundberg@contractor.usgs.gov for more information.