

NASP Inventory/Monitoring and Decision Support (IMDS)

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Please read “A Statistics Primer for Foresters” by S. Stafford (from the *Journal of Forestry*) and Chapter 1 of “*Statistics as Principled Argument*” by R. Abelson (both on the IMDS website) before you do the pre-class exercise below.

This pre-class exercise is designed to get you thinking about the purpose of statistical description and analysis. You’re not required to conduct any statistical hypothesis tests for this exercise, but you may wish to compute some summary statistics. This exercise is due on Monday September 14th at the start of class. You might find it helpful to bring 2 copies to class – one to turn in and one to keep and refer to. I’ll grade them based on the quality of your description of the 2 plots and the 2 types of trees.

The data in the associated Excel spreadsheet are the diameters (DBH in inches) of 70 trees located in 2 different plots. Each tree may be alive or dead (indicated by the ‘status’ column). Each plot was 0.1 acres in size, and all the trees in each plot were measured. Each plot is located within a different forest stand. Assume that the measured plot trees are representative of all the trees in the area.

You may use any tools you wish – computer/software, paper/pencil etc. to complete the assignment. This is not meant to be an exercise in learning new software. Feel free to do simple things if that’s what’s comfortable for you.

Assignment:

1. Examine (analyze) the data and compute any summary statistics that might be helpful in the requested descriptions.
 - a. Write a paragraph in which you describe the distribution of diameters of live trees and the distribution of diameters of dead trees in plot 1 and (separately) plot 2. Also describe any similarities or differences between those plots. Please use simple language that a co-worker or supervisor would understand.
 - b. Next, write a paragraph in which you describe what the stands that surround the plots might look like assuming the plots are representative of the surrounding stand.
2. In a short paragraph summarize your past experience with statistics. Describe any courses on statistics that you have taken, list the software you use to analyze or describe “data”. This information will help us understand the range of experience in the class.