

I trust this newsletter finds you back safe and well after the Christmas Break, although now it seems but a distant memory (the awesome summer weather at least partly compensates). The new year has opened with new challenges and opportunities for the ATLAS team. Alongside the ongoing support work, we have been involved in the Future Forest Research project aimed at creating a "Virtual Forest System" (Objective 3 of the IFS bid). This included a survey of a range of industry stakeholders, to help us understand decision making processes and the needs for decision making support tools.

Work has started on a fire modeling system, creating software around models that attempt to predict fire behavior based on a number of factors including fuel, slope, wind speed etc. This work is being done in conjunction with Scion's Forest and Environment group. Work also continues on a USDA-owned program called Spray Advisor which Scion has been involved in developing for a number of years. The program looks at spray distribution from aerial spraying based on a number of factors (wind speed, direction, droplet size etc) and is made available to the public in the US through the USDA.

During a recent trip to Germany, I visited a newly opened forest visitor centre in one of their regional forest parks. The visitor centre was excellent with interactive displays on tree species, other vegetation and wildlife within the forest environment. They had "periscopes" which allowed a 360 degree view from a revolving camera set in the forest, and a three-D video on the forest and its inhabitants. The video came complete with a "breeze" and moving rubber flaps at the base of the chairs to give you the feeling of creepy crawlies running up your shins at appropriate moments. The effect was a great substitute for actually being out in the forest. It was both fun and informative, and great for all ages.

In amongst all of this hard work, the team (well, those who were present) still found time in February to participate in the Bike



atlas@play

Wise Challenge, clocking up a total of 529 kms in a fortnight. Not bad for a bunch of developers!

We look forward to catching up with some of you in the next few weeks, with a number of events coming up including Forest Tech in Albury NSW, the NZIF conference in Palmerston North in May, and both GeoMaster and Cruiser / Forecaster user group meetings in May.

All the best for the busy months ahead.

Sarah Heine
General Manager

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Technology - What's happening?

Forecaster 1.3

The release of version 1.3 was delayed so we could get the WQI stiffness and density model working correctly. This enables the projection of stiffness to be measured through time.

As well as the stiffness and density model and a number of minor corrections, version 1.3 includes the following enhancements :

- An updated 300 Index model (version which includes adjustments to predicted mortality and regional drift.)
- The batch version of Forecaster (FCMD.exe) can now be passed the name of an existing project. This means that a project can be created with the "List of Combinations" field checked, and it will simulate only those combinations of crop, site, function set and regime that you are interested in.
- Projects within Forecaster can now be imported and exported to CSV files as per other entity types (e.g. Function Sets and Regimes).

Forecaster is being used to process a large number of PSP plots measured at various ages to compare the performance of a number of growth models. Forecaster is also being used to produce detailed ring and branching information to feed a wood stability model. This is part of the Intensive Forest Systems (IFS) programme.



SATCO processor head

ATLAS SATCO BuckManager

ATLAS Technology in co-operation with SATCO LTD is developing bucking optimisation software to work with SATCO's 325 softwood processor head.

ATLAS has long had experience in the field of bucking optimisation, having developed products such as AVIS, MARVL, Goldpine Pole Bucker, Cruiser and more recently Forecaster.

SATCO designs and manufactures heavy duty logging attachments for excavators and purpose built forestry machines. Their range of products includes harvesters, felling heads, log handling grapples and boom sets. They have been developed to work in New Zealand grown Radiata pine plantation forests. These forests produce trees that are some of the roughest, heaviest, largest limbed in the world. SATCO products are also used in plantation eucalypt forests in both New Zealand and Australia. As a result their products are capable of performing in all conditions.

It is hoped to develop and use an adaptive predictive taper function for Radiata pine to assist with the calculation of diameters down a stem that haven't been measured yet. This will allow the bucking system to optimise the stem in a single pass of the head. Value recovery will be maximised while still allowing current productivity rates to be maintained.

The prototype is expected to be delivered by end of June. Field trials are due to commence shortly.

GeoMaster update

Development has continued steadily since the v1.10 release mentioned in the last newsletter, and two updates have been released this year. The increased use of high-resolution monitors has prompted us to extend GeoMaster so that it can operate as easily with large fonts, as it does with normal sized fonts (which have become very small these days). This required reconfiguring all the forms in GeoMaster/Harvest Manager - of which there are approximately 200! This was implemented in version 1.10.1.

Other areas that have received significant development include the management of cutover, and the related ability to report on yield remaining in harvest areas. Priority new features identified

at the last user meeting are currently being worked on, and we plan to include these in v1.11 which should be ready for release about the time of our next user meeting in mid May. We are also working with GBS to establish a prototype web interface for GeoMaster and intend to present our progress on this at the user meeting.

As always, we like to keep on top of errors in the system. The Diagnostics module has often helped to isolate data issues and system errors, and we encourage you to run this tool regularly - at least monthly. Please contact us if you observe errors that concern you.

Upcoming events

Please register your interest to software support software.support@atlastech.co.nz for the following user group and training sessions:

Name	Date	Location
Forest Tech 2008	21 -23 April 2008	Albury, NSW, Australia
FieldMan training	13 May 2008	Rotorua
Forecaster, Cruiser, Yield Table Manager, Harvest Scheduler and FieldMan user group meeting	14 May 2008	Rotorua
GeoMaster, Harvest Manager, SilviQC, Roading Manager user group meeting	15 May 2008	Rotorua
Forest Industry Strategic Summit 2008	22- 23rd July 2008	Rotorua



Marika's Musings

We have been doing a number of web-based demonstrations of software and have found this a useful approach. This opens up possibilities for web based training, and support. It is an effective way to bridge the distance gap, particularly for specific issues that can be covered reasonably quickly. While it is not as quick as the real thing, we have found the speed workable (even with GIS).

As our Yield Table Manager clients might have already noticed, our icon has changed. We are replacing the ATLAS Technology icon with a newer and fresher design of the

current logo. One by one each of our products will go through this transformation, so be set to see our new look!

We are planning to hold a user group meeting for Cruiser, FieldMan, Yield Table Manager, Forecaster and Harvest Scheduler users on 14 May in here in Rotorua, with the GeoMaster users meeting on 15 May. This will be a great opportunity to catch up on all the latest software gossip, so please contact us if you'd like to participate.

Happy computing,
Marika

AusTimber 2008

Aus Timber 2008 was held at Mt Gambier, which turned on beautiful weather, high temperatures, blue skies and a wee bit of that red dust for the three day event. Forest tours were offered the day before the event, looking at both hardwood and softwood plantations in the region. On day one, there was a conference with the theme "Forests – the Issue, or the Answer?", and the exhibitions opened on the slopes of Mt. Gambier.

The exhibition site held 140 indoor sites, and 60 outdoor sites, backed up against a mature stand of pine which was partially felled over the three days as part of the equipment displays. On the second and third days there were in-forest demonstrations around the region, including first and third thinning, radiata and blue gum thinning. A range of exhibitors were present, covering machinery, sawmilling tools and technology, forestry companies and, of course, forestry software.



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- Forest estate planning (FOLPI)
- Data collection (ATLAS FieldMan)
- Harvest planning (ATLAS Harvest Manager)
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- Document management (ATLAS Document Manager)
- Map production (ATLAS GeoMapper)



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