

## Providing integrated forest management and modelling software

March 2011

I hope you have had an enjoyable summer and managed to get a good break during the holiday season. I had a great couple of weeks at the beach with my family, enjoying the weather and the waves. The horrors of recent events in Christchurch certainly make us appreciate the precious things in life, our family and friends and the time we spend with them, such as the summer breaks. Thankfully the Scion people who live and work in Christchurch are all safe and well. Our thoughts are with all our clients, and their families, who were affected by the earthquake.

It seems, each newsletter brings news of changes to our growing team and this one is no exception. Over the summer, Bryan Graham, an information science student, has been working with us in Support. He has instigated several changes in how we use IssueView to support our clients (see Praneita's Postings for more information). Bryan will continue make a valuable contribution to the ATLAS team by working with us three mornings a week when he goes back to his full-time studies in March.

The big news is Bronwyn Douglas is moving on from ATLAS, though not Scion. She has accepted a role in the Sustainable Design team as a Project Delivery Manager. This is a great opportunity for her and the direction she wants to move. Bronwyn has played a significant role in the running of ATLAS and she will be sorely missed by the team. I personally have great respect and a huge appreciation for the role she has played at ATLAS. I congratulate her on getting the new role and know she will be very successful at it.

Speaking of changes, it's hard not to see some changes happening within Scion in the next 6-12 months. The impact from the Government accepting the CRI Taskforce recommendations will take effect from 1 July 2011. In addition Scion's

new Chief Executive, Dr Warren Parker from Landcare Research, will be taking up his new role in early March. I'm confident that any resulting change will be for the good and we will keep you informed of any impact on ATLAS.

One area of change that has been long overdue for us is our website (atlastech.co.nz). There will be a number of improvements made over the coming months so finding product information, releases and updates will be far simpler. You'll notice these changes coming through soon.

Lastly, this is a year of conferences. ATLAS will have a presence at the ANZIF conference in Auckland in May, at the Forest Industries Expo in Rotorua in September and of course at ForestTech in November. We are also thinking of running another Forestry GIS conference sometime this year. You are welcome to let me know if you have any thoughts about what you would like to see at the Forestry GIS Conference, so we can make sure it's worth going to. Enjoy the newsletter.

**Bob Forgan**

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# GeoMaster Update

This quarter has mainly been occupied with cleaning up after the release of GeoMaster v1.15 last November. We're pleased (relieved!) to report that very few major issues have been registered with software support. The most significant hurdle was getting the GeoMaster/Cruiser link to work within ArcGIS 10 in Windows 7. This was resolved in v1.15.1, along with a modest list of other gremlins.

Developments are under way with v1.16. These include:

- the ability to export plots from Assessment Planner in GPX format;
- improved integration between GeoMaster and Yield Table Manager, such that user-defined yield cube properties can be displayed and reported in GeoMaster; and
- extended GIS managed events to include point data so that, for example, foliar sample locations in GIS can be associated with foliar sample events in GeoMaster.

It's not uncommon to discover users wanting to use GeoMaster functions in ways that were never envisioned. One curly

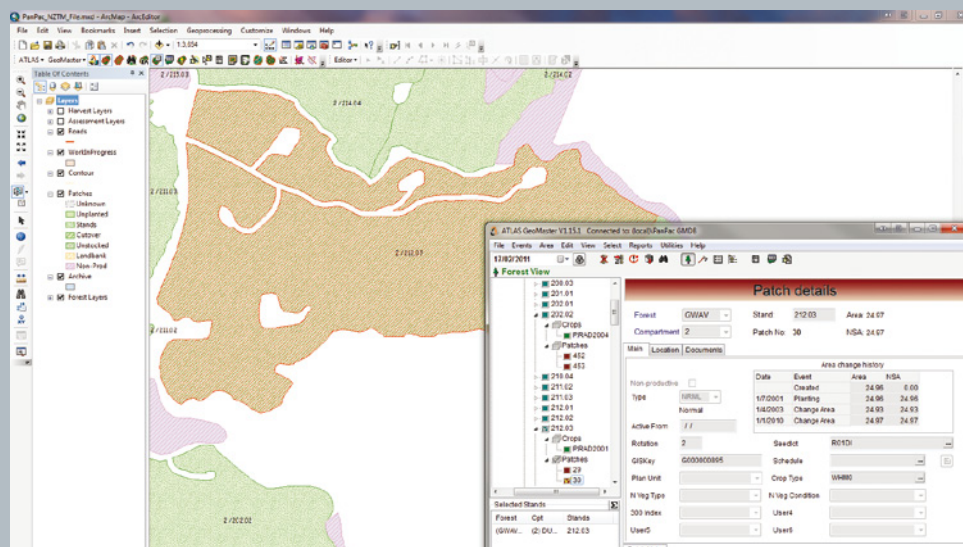
situation that some users have battled with is getting Assessment Planner to generate plots over sparsely distributed areas (e.g. inventories of small plantations spanning distances of over 500km - in Australia, of course). This was resolved in v1.15.1 by having sparse strata temporarily dragged into a huddle (in memory only, not on the map), so that Assessment Planner could generate its plot locations efficiently, irrespective of how widely dispersed the forests are.

## Hints

One feature of GeoMaster that some people may not be aware of is that when you select patches in the GeoMaster form, GIS zooms to the selection. To enable this feature, tick the menu option **Select > Selection Method > GIS Zoom to selection** in GeoMaster. If it's already ticked, untick, and re-tick it. This option is only visible when you start GeoMaster from GIS.

We remind you to keep running the GeoMaster Diagnostics tool on a regular basis - at least monthly. Often support issues are caused by data errors rather than application errors so it's preferable to keep data errors in check.

## GeoMaster 1.15.1 with Arc10



## Support Processes

As mentioned in Praneita's postings, we have been looking at Support processes with a view to improving our software while still providing timely support when critical issues do arise. In light of this we will be implementing some changes in the way bugs and enquiries are handled, and making use of our new business analysts to ensure that issues are fed into our development lifecycle. This will mean that some issues may not be resolved on the same day, but we are looking to offer more regular updates to our software incorporating a larger pool of fixes. In the end our aim is to provide the best possible experience to you our client, so please feel free to send thoughts and comments to software support.

## Introducing Bryan

My name is Bryan Graham and I am one of the new additions to a rapidly expanding ATLAS team. I have joined ATLAS on a part time basis while I complete a degree in Information Science (BScInfsc) with a view to becoming a high level business analyst.



I will be working primarily on internal processes and procedures, although some of those changes will filter through to you, our clients (for more on this see our IssueView review section in Praneita's postings).

I look forward to my time here at ATLAS, and am excited about the direction Bob and the team are going as we continue to lead the world of Forestry Software development.

# Yield Table Manager Update

Back in December 2010 (seems a long time ago now!), ATLAS released version 2.3 of Yield Table Manager. This version contains several features that users have been requesting for some time, including:

- New yield cubes can now be merged into existing cubes (useful where they are a cutting strategy update of an existing assessment, for instance).
- Yield cubes created as a result of YTM's operations (aggregation, conversion, regrade, etc.) can now be saved into a specified location.
- Import and export via csv file has been improved in a number of ways.
- Properties can now be exported to Woodstock and FOLPI format files.

In addition, GeoMaster 1.15 gets even more power out of YTM with the following enhancements:

- Improved handling of conversion factor information from YTM conversion tables.
- Improved reporting on reasons why data has not come through from YTM.

If you would like further information on these (or any other) changes and how they can simplify the management of your yields, we are only too happy to help. We are prioritising the changes to be included in the next round of development for YTM - please let us know if there are any changes you would particularly like to see.

## Introducing Albert

My name is Albert Jovner and I recently joined the ATLAS Team as a Business Analyst. Although new to the forest industry I do bring extensive business analysis and project management skills to the ATLAS team. I hope that my experience will be of benefit to you by ensuring that ATLAS software is developed according to your business requirements.



I have a Bachelor in Business with majors in Information Management and Human Resource Management from Massey University. This degree is supported by a Diploma in Organisation and Work study and a Higher Diploma in Management Practices.

Before joining ATLAS I had eight years of local government experience, which provided me with opportunities to be involved with developing and implementing various software products. Prior to this I worked in central and local government in South Africa before immigrating with my family to New Zealand.

I look forward to getting to know you and to understand your business needs. As the new kid in the forest industry, PLEASE BE GENTLE WITH ME!

## Praneita's Postings



The start of the new year brought with it lots of bright and exciting ideas for the upcoming months.

Part-timer Bryan has been helping out with Support and at the same time reviewing and upgrading our issue tracking system. Changes being tested include automated logging of issues and responses to clients. While you, our clients, won't notice too many changes, rest assured that these modifications will result in a more efficient and streamlined support process. These automations carve the path for Web Support in the near future.

This is where we need your help:

- When contacting Support with an existing issue, specify the assigned issue ID number in the subject line e.g. IV10925. The issue ID number is provided in the initial notification email when you first report the issue. Providing this information will ensure that the automated logging of the issue will run smoothly and will also enable Support to keep track of the issue.
- When contacting Support with a new issue, ensure that you provide the following:
  - Version number of the application;
  - Screenshot of error/warning messages (if any);
  - What you were doing when the problem occurred;
  - Urgency of the issue.

The more information you provide, the easier it will be for us to reproduce and resolve the issue.

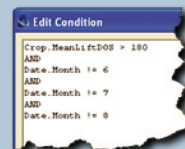
Clients are also requested to email [software.support@atlastech.co.nz](mailto:software.support@atlastech.co.nz) rather than contacting the developers directly as our issue tracking system only monitors the support inbox.

### Forecaster tip:

Users of Forecaster v1.8 will have noticed the use of Conditions rather than Triggers in Regimes and Crop History. Apart from the obvious name change and new user interface, the adoption of Conditions allows more flexibility in scheduling of events. An example is illustrated below.

User A would like to schedule pruning at DOS 18cm but at the same time he would prefer to avoid pruning in the months of June, July and August to minimise the risk of Nectria infection.

To schedule this event in Forecaster, the following condition needs to be entered (note: <> can be used instead of !=)



If the user would like to add in a soft constraint (i.e. allow pruning in those months but with a warning displayed in the message viewer) the condition can be entered in Practical Advice instead.

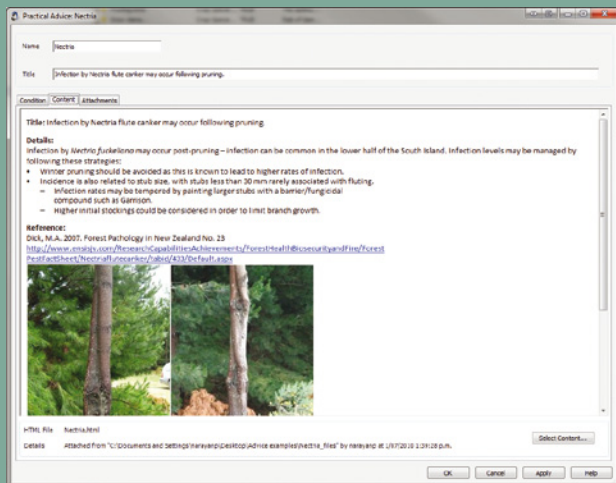
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Praneita



# Forecaster Update

Just after our previous newsletter was sent out, version 1.8 of Forecaster was released. While many of you have now been using this for some time, others may be interested to know of the significant enhancements included in this version:

- Practical Advice module - available to members of FFR's Radiata theme, this module allows for the storage of non-modelled information, and displays it at relevant times of a simulation when pre-defined conditions are met. For instance it can warn users that a particular region is prone to diploдия, or that a heavy or late thinning may result in high windthrow.
- Regimes can now be scheduled on a number of additional variables. Previously only a small number of variables could be used (e.g. MeanDOS, MTH, age), however several more are now available (e.g. mean height, BA), and their use is now more flexible (for instance, you can specify months to avoid pruning).
- Log products can now be constrained on Pruned Log Index.



Forecaster version 1.9 will be released in March and will include the 500 Index growth model for Douglas fir, and the long-awaited optimising bucker.

## Forecaster Management Committee

Following the transfer of ownership of the Forecaster tool from Scion to Future Forests Research, a Forecaster Management Committee (FMC) was established to:

- Agree the scope and objectives of the Forecaster framework.
- Review and approve plans and deliverables.
- Monitor overall progress of Forecaster development.
- Approve change requests and set development priorities.
- Communicate with FFR members and Forecaster users.
- Plan and schedule training opportunities and user group meetings.

The FMC comprises a balance of representatives from both Scion and industry in order to provide relevant knowledge and strategic leadership. Your industry reps include FFR's Mike Riordan and long-time Forecaster user Mike Baker from Hancock Forest Management.

At time of writing, the FMC has recently held its third meeting, and is starting to form a picture of the current issues and the likely future direction. One significant undertaking has been to issue a brief survey on user satisfaction, which is already providing some very valuable information. If you use Forecaster and haven't received this, please contact ATLAS software support.

The FMC look forward to communicating outcomes in the near future - in the meantime if you have any questions, please feel free to contact either ATLAS software support, or the industry reps listed above.

## To learn more about ATLAS products visit [www.atlastech.co.nz](http://www.atlastech.co.nz)

Forestry information management and decision making support tools, to maximise the value of your business:

- Forest and land information (ATLAS GeoMaster®)
- Forest resource assessment (ATLAS Cruiser®)
- Forest management DSS (ATLAS Forecaster®)
- Quality assurance (ATLAS SilviQC)
- Forest estate planning (FOLPI)
- Data collection (ATLAS FieldMan)
- Harvest planning (ATLAS Harvest Manager)
- Harvest scheduling and log allocation (ATLAS Harvest Scheduler/ATLAS Market Supply)
- Inventory design (ATLAS Assessment Planner)
- Map production (ATLAS GeoMapper)
- Yield Table Management and Manipulation (ATLAS Yield Table Manager)



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