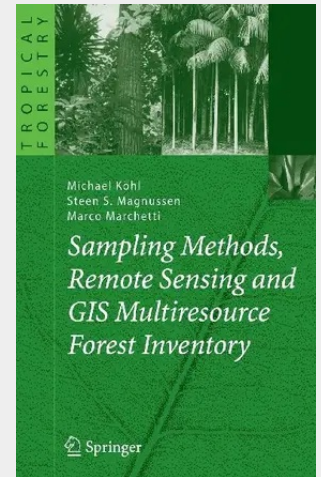


Sampling Methods, Remote Sensing and GIS Multiresource Forest Inventory

When we talk about forests, we talk about 30% of our planet's land surface area. In 2000 there was an estimated 3 870×10 ha of forest worldwide, of which 1 5% is in forest plantations and 95% in natural forests (FAO 2003). Forests are not only a source for timber; they also generate significant nonwood goods and services, mitigate climate change, conserve biological diversity, provide protection from natural hazards, and not least: provide recreational areas for an increasingly urbanized world population. The availability of timber and nonwood goods and services is waning as deforestation and degradation of tropical forests continue. While forest area has stabilized or is slightly increasing in the boreal and temperate regions, the annual loss of forest area in the tropics and subtropics is decreasing. Between 1990 and 2000 the annual rate of deforestation was estimated to be 14. 6×10 ha (approximately 0. 38%) and took place mainly in tropical and subtropical forests (FAO 2003). The net annual rate of change is about 9. 4×10 ha (0. 2%). Maintaining and enhancing forest areas and the vitality of forest ecosystems is a widely accepted political goal, which is often opposed by conflicting demands of various stakeholders.

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