

STATUS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TREE FAILURE DATABASE

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The International Tree Failure Database (ITFD) is a program designed to accept data about tree failures from individual cooperators. Data is submitted via an Internet web site and is automatically added to the database. This program is modeled after the basic structure of the California Tree Failure Reporting Program (CTFRP) that began in 1987. Several attempts to expand the CTFRP to the national level in the mid-1990s failed, primarily due to the lack of financial support. In FY 2003, however, the WO-FHP Staff made enough funds available through the Forest Health Technology Enterprise Team (FHTET) in Fort Collins, CO, to begin constructing a web site and database.

The ITFD was developed by a Steering Committee that has met three times, beginning in January 2003. Personnel from federal and state agencies, Universities and the private sector have participated in Steering Committee meetings (see attached Charter). Bringing together the divergent viewpoints and approaches of the federal government and private sector was a challenge, but a consensus has been met. The ITFD will accommodate tree failures that occur in forest and urban settings and will meet the needs of all levels of government, Universities and private industry.

Several versions of the web page have been made, and an operational version, ready to accept data, should be available by late summer, 2004. A corresponding paper form for collecting data in the field is also finished. More than 200 cooperators have already received training on the ITFD. After they are assigned user names and passwords, they will be able to begin entering data when the final web site is available.

Last Spring, comments on the web site were solicited from state contacts representing state forestry or urban forestry agencies. Their suggestions were reviewed by the Steering Committee and are now being incorporated into the next version of the web site.

Two individuals from private industry (Tom Smiley – Bartlett Tree Expert Co., Charlotte, NC and James Clark – HortScience, Pleasanton, CA) have developed a PowerPoint presentation that is the approved training program for the ITFD. Copies of the training program will be made using funding provided by WO-U&CF. The U&CF funds will also pay for creating a printed User's Guide, live help definitions for the ITFD web site and revisions to the PowerPoint training presentation. In addition, the FHTET staff has created a CD that simulates data entry on the web site, which will improve the training program.

Carryover funds from FHP will allow additional improvements to be made to the ITFD and enable operation of the program for up to 2 more years. Two important and needed improvements include the ability to accept metric units of measure and a program interface for personal data recorders.