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CASE STUDIES



West Virginia Division of Forestry

FASTER, MORE EXACT DATA FOR FIRE PROTECTION

Rapid Mapping/Assessment Solution for Mountain State

Situation

West Virginia's Division of Forestry provides fire protection in forests, state parks, as well as environmental research and forestry management throughout the state. Previously, the DOF collected assessment information and risk data on paper forms in the field. Staff then entered data on computer spreadsheets, which were later sent to headquarters. GPS and location data was gathered separately, processed into other forms, and entered into the main database. It was a time and labor-intensive process with many chances for errors, despite the best efforts of the DOF team. And it didn't enable quick response. Such a manual process limited data completeness and the ability to integrate it quickly with mapping. Digital photos were used, but without links to the data.

Application

Division chief Rodger Ozburn had a vision of what technology could provide: "Speed, the ability to capture larger amounts of data and respond quickly and efficiently to that data. And the solution must be very user-friendly in the field." GeoAge developed a simple, yet technologically-robust approach. GeoAge's FAST software solution was designed to capture field data, GPS, location information and digital photos, then upload it all in real time via wireless services. GeoAge incorporated Juniper / Archer field devices due to their outstanding screen visibility and ruggedized construction.

Results

FAST's flexible data form creation ability enabled the DOF field team to be up and running within a few hours. Now DOF reports and maps are produced within minutes, not days. In West Virginia, the DOF has a much improved grasp of potential fire danger than ever before. "GeoAge's FAST solution enables us to capture larger amounts of data with greater accuracy, then visualize and respond to it more quickly," noted Rodger. "We further anticipate field data collection time savings of 30% or more."