

# Free Tree Inventory Possibilities

## *Smart Device Applications*

There are three broad categories of applications you could use for a tree inventory on a smart device. These are identified below, along with example programs for each category. Contents of this document are shared for informational purposes only. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources does not endorse and makes no representations, expressed, inferred or implied, concerning these programs or services.

### **Form**

These are applications that can be set-up as a series of questions that you answer one-by-one. For example, you identify the tree species, then you identify the tree diameter, and onward.

- [EpiCollect5](#) – a free program in which you build your tree attributes into a form on a desktop computer, then data collectors can access your form and add to it. Geolocation is available as an attribute.
- [Google Forms](#) – not separate application but survey set-up on desktop and link sent to participants. Geolocation would have to be manually entered into survey (see “Latitude and longitude from a smart phone” section below).

### **Map**

There are some mapping applications that allow you to drop points right on a map. Unfortunately, most of the applications that enable you to do this do not permit much other data to be collected (e.g. tree species, diameter, land use, etc.).

- [Trees Count](#) – a free application developed by Texas A&M Forest Service. Allows you to look at a map and plot trees where you are located, and enter tree information. Data is exported as csv files (spreadsheets) to an email address.
- [TreePlotter Lite](#) – a browser based application that is a stripped-down version of the commercial TreePlotter software. Note that data will not be stored on the system. It should be exported and stored locally.
- [Google MyMaps](#) – a free mapping application that you could develop on a desktop and then share with data collectors. Only full operational for users of Android devices.

### **Spreadsheet**

These are documents/applications in which data is arranged in columns and rows. Common spreadsheet software includes Microsoft Excel, Google Sheets and Apple Numbers.

- [Google Sheets](#) – a free application in which you could develop a spreadsheet and share it with data collectors. Geolocation would have to be manually entered into spreadsheet (see “Latitude and longitude from a smart phone” section below).

## *Paper and Pen*

Though digital tree inventory methods are preferred, pursuing a tree inventory with paper and pen might be a fine option, depending on audience and number of trees. For those inventories, two pieces of technology are still recommended. First and foremost, a latitude and longitude is encouraged to be derived from a smart device or GPS unit. See below on tips to collect a geolocation using a smart phone. Secondly, it is good to digitize your inventory by typing your paper data into a computer spreadsheet. These are easier to update and more transferable to others.

### *Latitude and longitude from a smart phone*

Using Google Maps, hold your finger down on a spot until a red pin appears. On an Android device, you will see the latitude/longitude in the search box at the top. On an Apple device, you will see “Dropped Pin” text at the bottom. Tap that and more information will pop up, including latitude/longitude. It is recorded in decimal degrees (xx.xxxxx). It is good to record five digits to the right of the decimal point (e.g. 43.12345, -89.12345).