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# Estimation of above ground forest biomass from airborne discrete return laser scanner data using canopy-based quantile estimators

Kevin S. Lim & Paul M. Treitz

Pages 558-570 | Received 11 Nov 2003, Accepted 10 Aug 2004, Published online: 02 Sep 2006

 Cite this article  <https://doi.org/10.1080/02827580410019490>



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## Abstract

A conceptual model describing why laser height metrics derived from airborne discrete return laser scanner data are highly correlated with above ground biomass is proposed. Following from this conceptual model, the concept of canopy-based quantile estimators of above ground forest biomass is introduced and applied to an uneven-aged, mature to overmature, tolerant hardwood forest. Results from using the 0th, 25th, 50th, 75th and 100th percentiles of the distributions of laser canopy heights to estimate above ground biomass are reported. A comparison of the five models for each dependent variable group did not reveal any overt differences between models with respect to their predictive capabilities. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) for each model is greater than 0.80 and any two models may differ at most by up to 9%. Differences in root-

mean-square error (RMSE) between models for above ground total, stem wood, stem bark, live branch and foliage biomass were 8.1, 5.1, 2.9, 2.1 and 1.1 Mg ha<sup>-1</sup>, respectively.

Keywords:

Above ground forest biomass   airborne laser scanning   forest structure   laser altimetry   LIDAR  
quantile estimators   remote sensing

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## Acknowledgments

The authors gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Centre for Research in Earth and Space Technologies (CRESTech), an Ontario Centre of Excellence, and Geomatics for Informed Decisions (GEOIDE), a Canadian National Centre of Excellence. Mr Lim acknowledges the support from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) of Canada through a PGS-B scholarship and the Ontario Government through an Ontario Graduate Scholarship in Science and Technology. Dr Treitz would also like to acknowledge support of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) for financial support through research grants. B. Prenzel, C. Sheriff and V. Thomas are thanked for their assistance with data collection. K. Baldwin and I. Morrison from the Great Lakes Forestry Centre, Canadian Forest Service, Natural Resources Canada are thanked for providing data for the Turkey Lakes watershed study area. The authors gratefully acknowledge Optech Inc. and LaserMap Image Plus for their support in acquiring and processing the LIDAR data for the Turkey Lakes watershed.

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## Notes

Lim, K. S. and Treitz, P. M. (Department of Geography, Faculty of Arts and Science, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, K7L 3N6). Estimation of above ground forest biomass from airborne discrete return laser scanner data using canopy-based quantile estimators.

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# Additional information

## Notes on contributors

Kevin S. Lim

Lim, K. S. and Treitz, P. M. (Department of Geography, Faculty of Arts and Science, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, K7L 3N6).

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