

Regionalization of landscape pattern indices using multivariate cluster analysis

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Pre-print of published version.

Reference:

Long, JA, TA Nelson, and MA Wulder. 2010. Regionalization of landscape pattern indices using multivariate cluster analysis. *Environmental Management*. 46(1). 134-142.

DOI:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s00267-010-9510-6>

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Keywords: regionalization, landscape pattern indices, multivariate cluster analysis, spatial pattern regions (SPR), forest fragmentation

Abstract

Regionalization, or the grouping of objects in space, provides a useful tool for organizing, visualizing, and synthesizing the information contained in multivariate spatial data. Landscape pattern indices can be used to quantify the spatial pattern (composition and configuration) of land cover features. Observable patterns can be linked to underlying processes affecting the generation of landscape patterns (e.g., forest harvesting). The objective of this research is to develop an approach for investigating the spatial distribution of forest pattern across a study area where forest harvesting, other anthropogenic activities, and topography, are all influencing forest pattern. We generate spatial pattern regions (SPR) that describe forest pattern with a regionalization approach. Analysis is performed using a 2006 land cover dataset covering the Prince George and Quesnel Forest Districts, 5.5 million ha of primarily forested land base situated within the interior plateau of British Columbia, Canada. Multivariate cluster analysis (with the CLARA algorithm) is used to group landscape objects containing forest pattern information into SPR. Of the six generated SPR, the second cluster (SPR2) is the most prevalent covering 22% of the study area. On average landscapes in SPR2 are comprised of 55.5% forest cover, and contain the highest number of patches, and forest/non-forest joins, indicating highly fragmented landscapes. Regionalization of landscape pattern metrics provides a useful approach for examining the spatial distribution of forest pattern. Where forest patterns are associated with positive or negative environmental conditions, SPR can be used to identify similar regions for conservation or management activities.

INTRODUCTION

Regionalization, or spatial classification, is the grouping of geographical entities based on properties or relationships (Chorley and Haggett 1967; Johnston 1968). Regionalization has long been a cornerstone of geographic data analysis (Haggett 1965), and has many purposes. For instance, regionalization is often applied to large, detailed geographical data sets to reduce data dimensionality and aid interpretation (Ng and Han 2002). Examples of regionalization include ecozones (Schultz 2005), environmental domains (Leathwick and others 2003; Coops and others 2009), and spatially explicit regions relating to geology (Harff and Davis 1990), climate (Fovell and Fovell 1993) or agriculture (Lark 1998).

Interest in quantifying landscape patterns has been driven by the premise that some ecological processes can be linked to the spatial pattern of land cover elements (Gustafson 1998). Measurement of landscape pattern can be done using a subset of the numerous landscape pattern indices (landscape metrics) that currently exist (Cardille and others 2005). Given the advancement in methods for acquiring and storing spatial data, the spatial extent of landscape pattern studies has increased. Detailed land cover data is now available for the United States (Vogelmann and others 2001; Homer and others 2004) and Canada (Wulder and others 2008a), leading to large area landscape pattern studies (e.g., Riitters and others 2002; Wulder and others 2008b). Given the spatial extent available to landscape pattern studies, regionalization is a useful approach to aid in interpretation of large area landscape pattern information.

There are only a small number of examples in the peer-reviewed literature that explore how landscape pattern can be used in regionalization. MacPhail (1971) used aerial photography to map landscape patterns and related them to image fabric and

textures to aid in the visual interpretation of different pattern regions. Similarly, Wickham and Norton (1994) created landscape pattern types, defined as a kilometre-wide geographical area, throughout which a limited number of land cover categories form a consistent pattern. Wickham and Norton (1994) employed visual interpretation of Landsat Thematic Mapper (TM) imagery in order to derive landscape pattern types. These studies took a qualitative approach using human interpretation and subjectivity for the regionalization process. A quantitative approach may be advantageous as it is more explicit, repeatable, transferable, and defensible (Hargrove and Hoffman 2004). Examples of quantitative approaches to mapping landscape spatial pattern also exist. Riitters and others (2000) developed a classification of forest fragmentation using two indices of spatial pattern. Forest fragmentation classes can then be mapped to examine the spatial distribution of forest fragmentation (globally, Riitters and others 2000; and in the United States, Riitters and others 2002). Morphological image processing (Soille 2003) has also been used for mapping forest components. Morphological image analysis algorithms classify forest patches as core, edge, or patch (Vogt and others 2007). The forest patch classes can then be mapped to provide information on the spatial arrangement of the landscape. In this work, we intend to expand on these previous examples using multivariate cluster analysis as the method for the regionalization process.

The goal of this study is to use regionalization for mapping forest pattern across a large area. To meet this goal, we implement multivariate cluster analysis as a quantitative approach to regionalizing forest pattern. Multivariate cluster analysis provides a new approach to the regionalization of landscape patterns. Landscape pattern indices are calculated and cluster analysis is performed on these metrics to generate Spatial Pattern Regions (SPR). SPR represent landscape units that exhibit similar forest pattern characteristics. By mapping SPR we can explore the spatial distribution of forest pattern across our study area. In a region of British Columbia, Canada, where increased forest harvesting is occurring due to insect salvage and mitigation activities, SPR are used to identify the spatial distribution of forest pattern.

METHODS

Study Area

Two adjacent forest districts within British Columbia, Canada were chosen as the study area (Fig. 1). The Prince George and Quesnel Forest Districts cover 5.5 million hectares of primarily forested land base. The climate in the Prince George and Quesnel Forest Districts is characterized by long, cold winters interspersed with hot, humid summers (Meidinger and Pojar 1991). Forests here are comprised primarily of lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), white spruce (*Picea glauca*), and sub-alpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*).

< Approximate location for Figure 1 >

Currently, the largest recorded mountain pine beetle (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*) infestation is occurring in British Columbia, causing extensive mortality in lodgepole pine stands. The range of infestation is estimated to have increased from 166,000 ha in 1999 to 10.1 million ha in 2007 (Westfall and Ebata 2008). Short-term increases to the provincial allowable annual cut have been prescribed in the Prince George and Quesnel Forest Districts as a means to recover economic value from infested timber (British Columbia Ministry of Forests and Range 2007). The increased allowable annual cut will

facilitate salvage harvest opportunities, which are expected to impact resulting forest patterns.

Data

A 2006 land cover dataset was generated for the calculation of landscape pattern metrics. Using a change detection method based on Landsat Thematic Mapper (TM) and Enhanced Thematic Mapper (ETM+) data (Han and others 2007), we updated forest conditions of an existing land cover dataset produced by the Earth Observation for Sustainable Development of Forests (EOSD) program (Wulder and others 2003; 2008a). Land cover is represented at a spatial resolution of 25 m, with up to 23 classes of categorical detail, which can be aggregated to forest, non-forest, and other classes (Wulder and Nelson 2003). The forest, non-forest, and other categories are useful for examining the spatial pattern of forests, and are comparable to land cover categories used for forest fragmentation studies in Canada (Wulder and others 2008b) and the United States (Riitters and others 2002).

A regular squared partition (fishnet) was used to generate an encompassing set of smaller analysis units (landscapes) within the study region. A 1 km landscape was chosen to capture the impacts of forest harvesting and insect salvage and mitigation activities. Larger landscape sizes exhibit varying levels of spatial pattern, while smaller landscape sizes tend towards a bifurcation of forest patch or no patch. In Canada, a 1 km landscape has been used for forest fragmentation reporting and identified as an appropriate scale for provincial and regional studies (Wulder and others 2008b).

Analysis

Landscape Pattern Variables

Many metrics exist for quantifying the spatial pattern of land cover. It is typically appropriate to choose a subset of metrics relevant to a specific application (Gergel 2007). Previous work has used correlation analysis to identify key components of landscape spatial pattern (e.g., Riitters and others 1995). Others have based selection of metrics on background literature identifying the key components of spatial pattern (e.g., Hargis and others 1997; Boots 2006). Regardless, it is imperative to select applicable indices for any given study, and a small number of uncorrelated metrics are often sufficient to quantify the relevant aspects of pattern for any specific application (Gergel 2007).

We select five indices of landscape pattern (Table 1) to quantify forest pattern for regionalization. Class proportion effectively defines the composition of the landscape in two class landscapes (Boots 2006) and researchers have demonstrated that class proportion is the driving factor of landscape spatial pattern (Boots 2006; Rempel and others 2002). Join counts are useful in quantifying the level of spatial clustering (sometimes calculated as contagion, see Li and Reynolds 1993) in landscape components and can be related to edge, an important aspect of habitat (Ranney and others 1981). Landscape fragmentation can be monitored using number of patches (Haines-Young and Chopping 1996). When quantifying patch area, Boots (2006) suggests that the sum of squared area of patches provides more information than average patch area, as it is sensitive to patch size distribution (e.g., the difference between one large and one small patch, and two medium patches). Thus, we have chosen to use an area squared measure to quantify the areal properties of patches. Patch perimeter-area ratio is useful in monitoring the regularity/complexity of patch shapes. Generally, natural landscapes exhibit complex, irregular shapes (Forman 1995), while anthropogenic landscapes contain regular shapes

and straight edges (Hammett 1992; Forman 1995), and we employ the mean patch perimeter-area ratio to quantify these differences.

< Approximate location for Table 1 >

Multivariate Cluster Analysis

Cluster analysis has been referred to as the art of finding groups in data (Kaufman and Rousseeuw 1990). More specifically, cluster analysis is a quantitative statistical method that uses unsupervised learning to explore, find, and categorize features, and to gain insight on the nature or structure of data (Duda and others 2001).

The CLARA (Clustering for LARge Applications) algorithm (Kaufman and Rousseeuw 1990) was used to perform cluster analysis. CLARA is a flat-partition method that has been specifically designed for use with large datasets. User definition of the k parameter (the output number of clusters) is required, and since k is unknown we implement the algorithm for a range of k values (2–10). An optimal clustering level (k) can be chosen iteratively using evaluative criteria that identify a k value for which the clustering is strongest (Milligan and Cooper 1985; Halkidi and others 2002).

Normalization and Weighting

Normalized (standardized) data are necessary for cluster analysis. We normalize our data following Kaufman and Rousseeuw (1990):

$$z_{if} = \frac{x_{if} - m_f}{s_f} \quad [1]$$

where z_{if} is the normalized value for observation i of variable f , x_{if} is the original value for observation i of variable f , m_f is the mean of variable f , and s_f is a measure of dispersion for variable f . We use the mean absolute deviation as the measure of dispersion which is defined as:

$$s_f = \frac{1}{n} \left\{ |x_{1f} - m_f| + |x_{2f} - m_f| + \dots + |x_{nf} - m_f| \right\} \quad [2]$$

where n is the number of observations. This dispersion measure is more robust than the typically used standard deviation and is therefore recommended (Kaufman and Rousseeuw 1990).

A priori knowledge can be a useful tool to improve a clustering by adding weight to given attributes (e.g., Abrahamowicz 1985). In the absence of quantitative information, expert opinion is used to assign weights to input variables on a case specific basis. In consideration of the relative importance of land cover composition over configuration metrics (Gustafson and Parker 1992; Fahrig 1997; Rimmel and others 2002; Boots 2006), we increase the weighting of the class proportion metric by a factor of two over the other metrics in our study.

Early in our analysis, we identified two landscape groups that were impacting results: regions containing either 0% or 100% forest. Prior to analysis, we grouped these two groups into two intuitive clusters, SPR0 and SPR100, representing the proportion of forest in each.

Spatial weighting can be a useful tool in regionalization when the end goal is to define spatially contiguous regions (see Oliver and Webster 1989 for a discussion on spatial weights). However, with forest pattern we expect spatially disjointed or distanced regions to exhibit similar forest patterns (e.g., separated by natural or anthropogenic features). As such, when identifying new/different locations with similar characteristics, methods not including spatial weighting are preferred (Coops and others 2009). We

exclude spatial weighting for the generation of SPR because of the expectation of spatially distanced landscapes with similar forest patterns.

Measure of Separation

With cluster analysis it is necessary to calculate a measure of separation between objects. The use of the Euclidean distance measure is common in regionalization (e.g., Fovell and Fovell 1993; Gong and Richman 1995), and is easily computed on standardized variables in attribute space. Euclidean distance was implemented as the measure of separation between objects. In this example, we employed only interval-scaled variables, however, when using binary, ordinal, nominal, or some mixture of variable types, other separation measures become more appropriate (Kaufman and Rousseeuw 1990).

Cluster Evaluative Criteria

The Davies-Bouldin index (DB) (Davies and Bouldin 1979) and average silhouette width (ASW) (Kaufman and Rousseeuw 1990) were chosen as evaluative criteria for selecting the optimal k . Measures of cluster strength frequently suggested are often tested on datasets with clearly defined clusters (e.g., Milligan and Cooper 1985). While these measures are known to work well with clusters that are compact, novel approaches are needed to test cluster validity when the data does not exude compact clusters, as with spatial data (Halkidi and others 2002). Strongly defined clusters are not expected here, as landscapes vary continuously over the range of metrics tested.

ASW is calculated using [3], which is a measure of how well clusters are separated from their closest neighbour (Kaufman and Rousseeuw 1990).

$$ASW = \frac{1}{k} \sum_{i=1}^k \frac{b_i - a_i}{\max\{b_i, a_i\}} \quad [3]$$

Where a is the average dissimilarity between objects in a cluster i , b is the average dissimilarity of the objects in i to those in its closest neighbour, and k is the number of clusters. The maximal ASW for all k is interpreted as the optimal or strongest cluster level (Kaufman and Rousseeuw 1990). ASW values of 0.71-1.00 indicate a k with well defined clusters, while ASW values of 0.26-0.50 indicate a k with weakly defined or artificial clusters, (Kaufman and Rousseeuw 1990).

DB uses a ratio of intra-cluster dispersion to inter-cluster separation divided by k to determine clustering strength for a given k [4] (Davies and Bouldin 1979).

$$DB = \frac{1}{k} \sum_{i=1}^k \frac{S_i + S_j}{m_{ij}} \quad [4]$$

Where S_i is the dispersion of cluster i , S_j is the dispersion of the next closest cluster j , m_{ij} is the distance between the cluster centers of i and j , and k is the number of clusters. DB is advantageous in that it does not require user definition of parameters, such as minimum acceptable cluster distance or minimum acceptable standard deviation, which are often unknown (Davies and Bouldin 1979). Optimal k is found at the minimum DB value; when intra-cluster dispersion is low and inter-cluster separation is high.

In this study, the output clusters of multivariate cluster analysis are termed spatial pattern regions (SPR): regions that exhibit similar forest patterns. Multivariate cluster analysis allows users to examine many statistical and qualitative properties of each cluster. Descriptive statistics, such as mean, median, and coefficient of variation, were computed for each SPR and landscape metric combination. We generate the relative

frequency histogram for each SPR and landscape pattern metric combination to assess the distributional properties of each SPR. Also, each cluster that is created by the CLARA algorithm has a *medoid*, which is a representative object for each cluster and is used as a surrogate center for each cluster (Kaufman and Rousseeuw 1987). Medoids are less sensitive to outliers than other cluster profiles (Van Der Laan and others 2003). With the CLARA algorithm, we extract each medoid and use it as a visual representation for each generated SPR.

RESULTS

Using cluster evaluative criteria (DB and ASW), an optimal cluster level was identified at $k = 6$ (Figure 2). In Fig. 2, we see that DB is minimal at $k = 6$, and ASW is maximum at $k = 2$, but has a second peak when $k = 6$. We chose $k = 6$ as the optimal clustering over the case when $k = 2$ based on the evaluative criteria, and also because the case where $k = 2$ provides few unique insights on landscape processes (largely representing a bifurcation of landscapes with high and low forest composition).

< Approximate location for Figure 2 >

Mean, median, and coefficient of variation for each of the 6 generated SPR were calculated (Table 2). Mean forest proportion increases from SPR1 (18.9%) to SPR5 (93.5%), and then decreases to SPR6 (88.3%). The variation in forest proportion is highest when forest proportion is low (i.e., in SPR1, c.v. = 0.60). Number of patches is highest in SPR2 (mean = 24.0) and lowest in SPR6 (mean = 5.2). Forest/non-forest joins are highest in SPR2 (mean = 629.5 joins). Patch areas based on the area-squared measure are largest in SPR5 (mean = 7172 ha²) and smallest in SPR2 (mean = 3481 ha²). Average perimeter-area ratio is highest in SPR4 (mean = 955.0 m/ha), and there is a marked difference between the lowest SPR6 (mean = 527.6 m/ha) and the next lowest SPR3 (mean = 752.3 m/ha). SPR4, SPR5, and SPR6 all have high forest composition (mean > 80%), however, SPR4 and SPR5 have high perimeter area ratios (mean = 955.0 m/ha, 879.6 m/ha, respectively) relative to SPR6 (mean = 527.6 m/ha).

< Approximate location for Table 2 >

We computed the relative frequency histogram of landscape metrics for each SPR (Fig. 3). SPR2 and SPR3 have similar distributions for forest proportion. Configurational attributes for SPR2 and SPR3 differ considerably in number of patches and forest/non-forest joins. Based on Table 2, we would expect SPR4, SPR5 and SPR6 to have similar forest proportions, but there is a noticeable difference in the distribution of SPR4 from SPR5 and SPR6. The relative frequency distribution for SPR4's number of patches and forest/non-forest joins differ when compared to SPR5 and SPR6. SPR5 and SPR6 have similar distributions for most of the spatial pattern metrics, but differ in number of patches and average perimeter area ratio. The relative frequency distribution of perimeter-area ratio for SPR6 is unique in comparison with other SPR.

< Approximate location for Figure 3 >

We extracted the medoid landscape for each SPR (Fig. 4). The medoid provides a visual representation of the type of landscape found in each SPR. This information is useful in interpreting results, as it is a visual reference of observed forest pattern. Multivariate cluster analysis is a quantitative approach to regionalization, however, the medoid landscape represents a qualitative descriptor for each SPR.

< Approximate location for Figure 4 >

A map of the distribution of SPR can be viewed in Fig. 5. We included a digital elevation model (DEM) to aid in interpretation. SPR0 and SPR100 represent the least frequent SPR in the study area, constituting 2% and 4% of the total area (Table 3). SPR2 (22%) has the largest area, while SPR1 (9%) has the smallest area. Topography, especially along the eastern edge of our study area, plays an important role in landscape spatial pattern. Valleys contain SPR5 and SPR6, regions with high levels of forest composition and low number of forest patches. Alpine areas are associated with SPR0, SPR1, SPR2, and SPR3, regions with low forest composition, high numbers of patches, and high forest/non-forest joins. The topographic influence on land cover in alpine area results in these regions being labelled the same as disturbed forest landscapes (e.g., from harvesting, natural disturbance). In reality, the patterns observed in alpine areas are natural, and should be distinguished from low lying areas where landscape pattern originates from some other process using ancillary information such as a digital elevation model (DEM) or land cover information. Anthropogenic activities are expected to be highest near the cities of Prince George and Quesnel (see study area, Fig. 1). These areas show up as predominantly SPR1, SPR2, and SPR3, the SPR with the lowest forest proportion and highest number of patches. In the western portion of the Quesnel Forest District (the lower left portion of Fig. 5), noticeable pockets of SPR100 (continuous forest) and SPR5 and SPR6 (high forest proportion, low number of patches), are interspersed with pockets of SPR1, SPR2, and SPR3 (low forest proportion, high number of patches). The mixture of fragmented and intact forest here may be an indication of the types of forest harvesting occurring in this area. Where topography is less extreme and has less of an influence on the spatial pattern of the landscape, forest harvesting activities are expected to be the driving factor in shaping observed forest patterns.

< Approximate location for Figure 5 >

< Approximate location for Table 3 >

DISCUSSION

Using landscape pattern indices and a 1 km analysis unit, we generated SPR, landscape units exhibiting similar forest pattern characteristics. The landscape pattern indices employed in this study are only a small subset of the suite of metrics available to researchers, and the choice of metrics should be related to the research purpose (Gergel 2007). In this study, we are interested in monitoring forest fragmentation in a study area where post insect infestation salvage and mitigation related forest harvesting has occurred. We employ metrics useful for quantifying the key components of landscape pattern related to forest fragmentation (Haines-Young and Chopping 1996, Wulder and others 2008b).

Forest fragmentation can be defined as the breaking up of forest into smaller and more numerous parcels (Forman 1995). We use this definition for labelling SPR as a forest fragmentation gradient going from SPR1 (highly fragmented) to SPR6 (low fragmentation, with SPR0 and SPR100 providing external bounds of no and all forest, respectively). Alternatively, researchers have used forest composition as a proxy for quantifying forest fragmentation due to the difficulty associated with interpreting composition and configuration metrics simultaneously (e.g., Wickham and others 2008). SPR provide a useful method for incorporating both composition and configuration measurements in forest fragmentation analysis across large areas.

Generation of relative frequency histograms for each SPR-metric combination proved to be useful for interpretation of SPR properties. For example, based solely on tabulated results, SPR4, SPR5, and SPR6 exhibit similar forest composition levels. The use of relative frequency histograms provides added information on SPR4 as it exudes a noticeably different distribution from SPR5 and SPR6. Similarly, extracting each medoid landscape provides a useful visual representation for each SPR.

Any multivariate cluster analysis is dependant on the data, input parameters, and methods applied. We provide an example of multivariate cluster analysis using the CLARA algorithm and two tests for determining the optimal clustering (DB and ASW). Changing the clustering algorithm or the evaluative criteria will impact results. As it was specifically designed for large datasets, the CLARA algorithm is suited for large spatial datasets, where other methods (e.g., hierarchical) are computationally constrained. It is up to the user to explore combinations of algorithms and criteria that are useful and relevant for their research.

This study was conducted in a region where increased forest harvesting has been prescribed in response to insect infestation (British Columbia Ministry of Forests and Range 2007). In the eastern part of the study area, an examination of the spatial distribution of SPR suggests that topographical influence on land cover is a key factor affecting forest pattern. Not surprisingly, the highest levels of forest fragmentation occur in areas with the most anthropogenic activity, located centrally in the study area. In the western portion, especially in the Quesnel Forest District, parcels of fragmented landscapes (SPR1, SPR2, and SPR3) are interspersed with non-fragmented landscapes (SPR5, SPR6, and SPR100). In the Quesnel Forest District, mountain pine beetle infestation is widespread, with salvage and mitigation harvesting activities likely driving the forest pattern. In the western region where anthropogenic impacts are shaping forest pattern, further investigation of natural processes, such as wildlife habitat loss (Bunnell and others 2004) and hydrologic regimes (Helie and others 2005) may be required.

CONCLUSION

Current international forest monitoring initiatives cite forest fragmentation as a new indicator for reporting (e.g., Montreal Process Liaison Office 2000). Thus effective methods quantifying forest pattern across large areas are required to meet these goals. In Canada, the spatial extent of forest monitoring limits our ability to visualize and interpret forest pattern information. Similarly, the number of attributes required to effectively monitor forest pattern is not easily visualized with maps. Regionalization may provide an effective approach for meeting these monitoring directives.

In this research we demonstrate regionalization as an effective approach for mapping similarities and differences in landscape forest pattern. Regionalization provides a quantitative approach for grouping spatial units into categories based on a given set of attributes. Mapping SPR can benefit a variety management and conservation activities. If the forest pattern in a region has been identified as favourable or problematic, for a specific management goal, other areas with similar conditions can be identified. For instance, wildlife often prefer habitat with particular forest patterns; for example, American Martens in the Uinta Mountains of northern Utah are rarely detected in forest landscapes with >25% area open, but may prefer landscapes with low levels of fragmentation with contiguous forest openings (Hargis and others 1999). Using a

regionalization approach, such as SPR, locations that exhibit landscape pattern attributes preferred by American Martens, can be identified as potential habitat. Given the importance of landscape pattern for many ecological processes, regionalization of landscape pattern indices is a useful approach for examining the spatial distribution of landscape pattern.

Acknowledgements

This project was funded by the Government of Canada through the Mountain Pine Beetle Program, a six-year, \$40 million program administered by Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Forest Service. Additional information on the Mountain Pine Beetle Program may be found at: <http://mpb.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca>. Chris Butson and Xiaoping Yuan of the British Columbia Ministry of Forests and Range and Joanne White of the Canadian Forest Service are thanked for insight and access to data critical to the success of this research. Thanks to Dennis Jelinski for helpful comments on earlier versions of this manuscript.

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Table 1: Metrics chosen for multivariate cluster analysis and their formulation.

Metric	Units	Formulation
Class Proportion	%	$\frac{\sum a_i}{A} \rightarrow \{i = F\}$
Join Counts	#	$\sum g_{jk} \rightarrow \{j = F, k = N\}$
Number of Patches	#	$\sum n_i \rightarrow \{i = F, N, O\}$
Patch Area Squared	ha ²	$\sum a_i^2 \rightarrow \{i = F, N, O\}$
Mean Patch Perimeter-Area Ratio	m/ha	$\frac{1}{n} \sum \frac{p_i}{a_i} \rightarrow \{i = F, N, O\}$

A – total area of landscape, a – area of patch, g – join between two neighbouring cells, n number of patches, p – perimeter of patch, F – forest, N – non-forest, O – other.

Table 2: Mean, median, and coefficient of variation for each metric-SPR combination.

		Forest Proportion	Number of Patches	Forest/Non- Forest Joins	Squared Area of Patches	Average Patch Perimeter Area Ratio
	(units)	(%)	(#)	(#)	(ha ²)	(m/ha)
SPR1 <i>n = 5271</i>	mean	18.9	14.9	277.3	5647	831.1
	median	19	15	284	5484	838.9
	c.v.	0.60	0.40	0.49	0.24	0.14
SPR2 <i>n = 12150</i>	mean	55.5	24.0	629.5	3481	889.2
	median	57	23	616	3442	888.7
	c.v.	0.25	0.26	0.21	0.21	0.08
SPR3 <i>n = 11548</i>	mean	65.7	12.7	367.6	4021	752.3
	median	68	13	362	3964	762.6
	c.v.	0.19	0.29	0.28	0.22	0.14
SPR4 <i>n = 8027</i>	mean	84.7	21.4	371.1	5907	955.0
	median	85	20	365	5917	952.0
	c.v.	0.07	0.28	0.27	0.13	0.08
SPR5 <i>n = 10034</i>	mean	93.5	9.7	153.4	7172	879.6
	median	95	10	148	7315	871.6
	c.v.	0.05	0.35	0.50	0.09	0.11
SPR6 <i>n = 5775</i>	mean	88.3	5.2	137.6	6675	527.6
	median	92	5	128	6959	585.9
	c.v.	0.15	0.49	0.62	0.18	0.34

Table 3: Area percentages of each SPR.

SPR	Area (%)
SPR0	2
SPR1	9
SPR2	22
SPR3	21
SPR4	14
SPR5	18
SPR6	10
SPR100	4

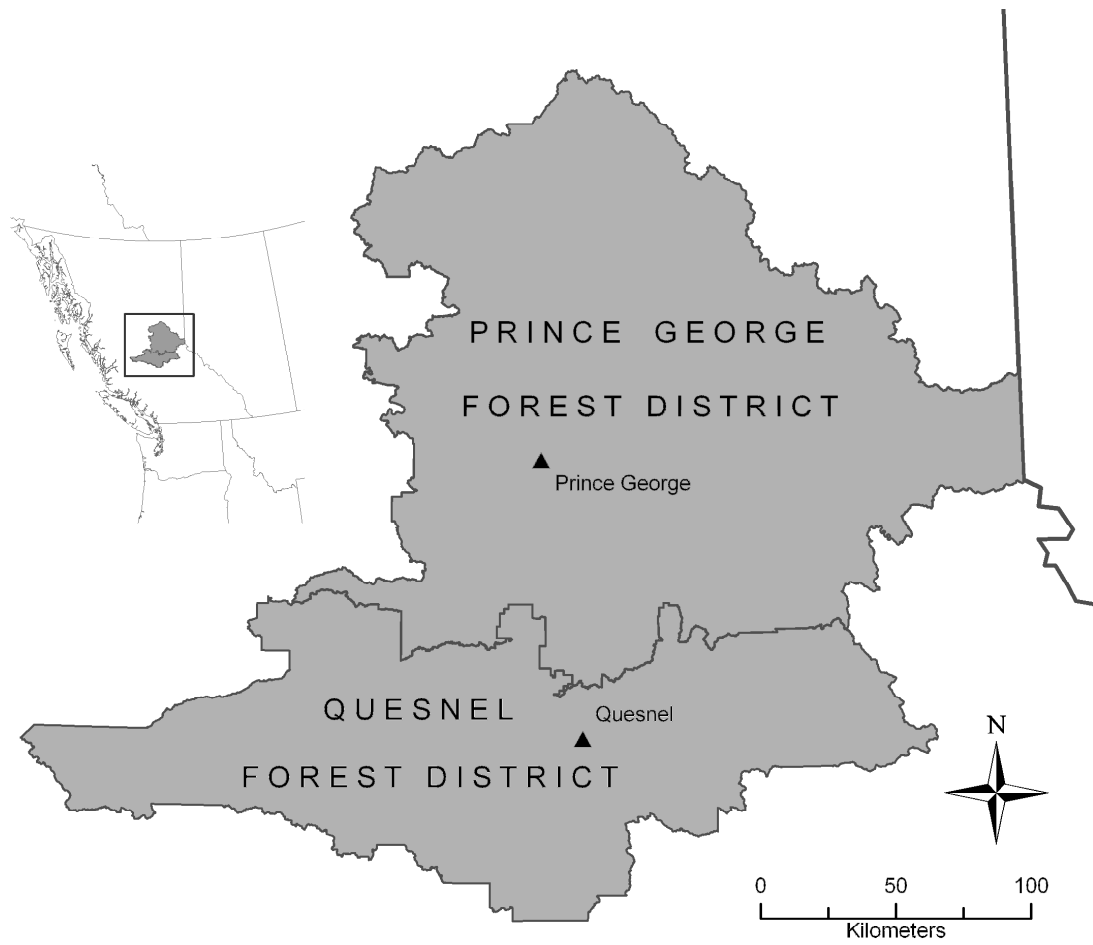


Fig. 1: Study area, the Prince George and Quesnel Forest Districts (5.5 million ha) located in British Columbia, Canada.

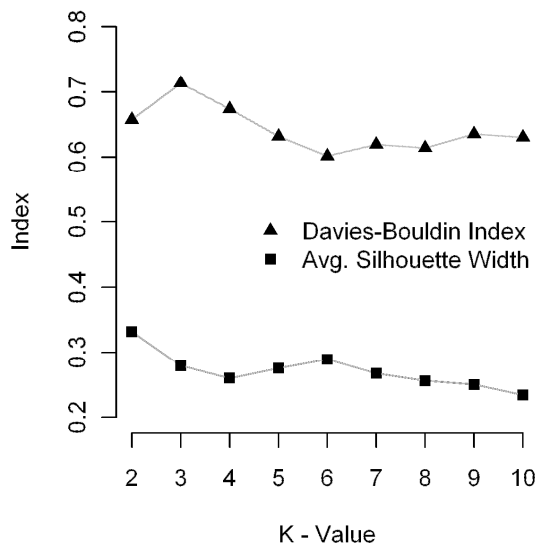


Fig. 2: Davies-Bouldin Index (DB) and Average Silhouette Width (ASW) results for k values of 2 – 10. Optimal k is found at minimum DB and maximum ASW (in this case $k = 6$).

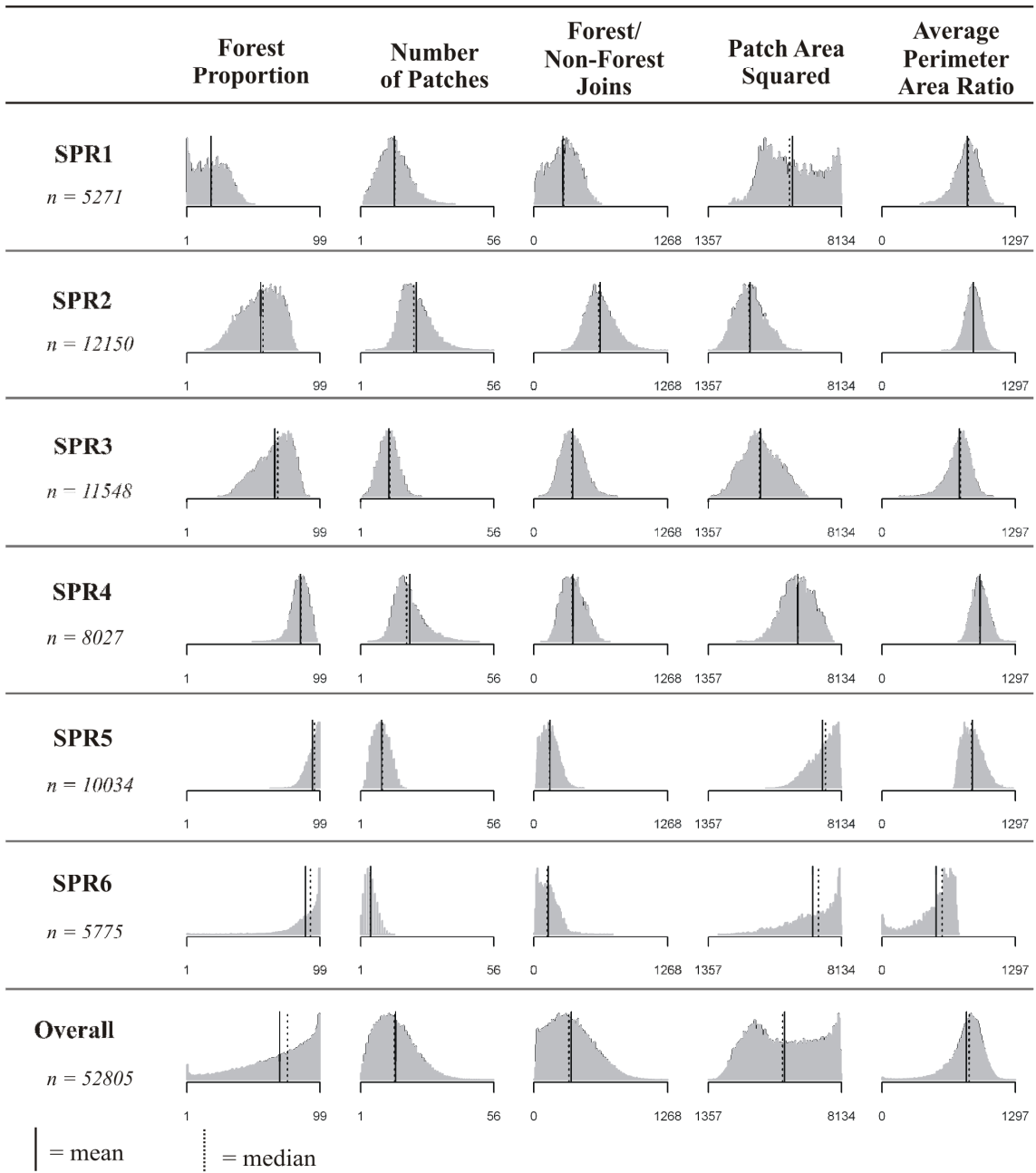
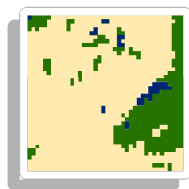
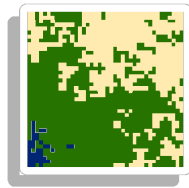


Fig. 3: Relative frequency histogram for each metric-SPR combination. Included are the mean and median values for each histogram.



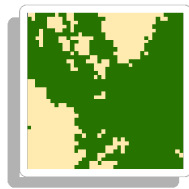
SPR1

SPR1 has the lowest level of forest proportion. It has moderate but variable number of patches and forest/non-forest join counts. It has high squared area of patches, but these are also quite variable. Perimeter-area ratio for SPR1 is very similar to the overall mean. This SPR has the highest level of forest fragmentation.



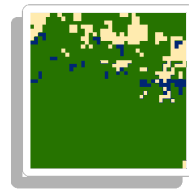
SPR2

SPR2 portrays medium levels of forest proportion, similar to that of SPR3. It has on average the most number of patches, which provide the lowest area squared value. The highest level of forest/non-forest joins was seen in this class indicating the least amount of spatial dependence in forest cover, and most forest edge.



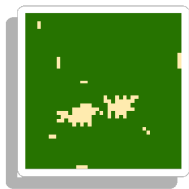
SPR3

SPR3 is comprised of similar forest proportion to SPR2. Conversely to SPR2 it has a low number of patches and lower number of forest/non-forest joins. patch areas are comparable to SPR2, but low compared to other SPRs.



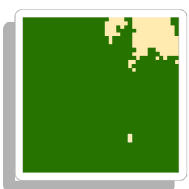
SPR4

SPR4 is a bit of an anomaly. It is characterized by relatively high forest composition, and high patch numbers but moderate forest/non-forest joins. Patch area squared measure for SPR4 is comparable to SPR1. SPR4 has the highest average perimeter area ratio of any of the SPRs.



SPR5

SPR5 has the highest mean forest proportion. It is characterized by a low number of patches and low forest/non-forest joins. SPR5 has high patch area squared measurements but similar perimeter area ratio to the overall mean.



SPR6

SPR6 has the second highest mean forest proportion, and is most comparable to SPR5. It has lower number of patches than SPR5. Forest/non-forest joins and patch area squared measure are highly variable for SPR6. It's distinguishing feature is that it contains the lowest average perimeter-ratio of all SPRs. It is the SPR with the lowest forest fragmentation.

■ Forest ■ Non-Forest ■ Other

Fig. 4: Medoid landscapes for each SPR. Medoids are the central object in each cluster of the multivariate clustering. They are the representative landscape for each SPR. SPR0 and SPR100 are not shown but represent no forest and all forest, respectively.

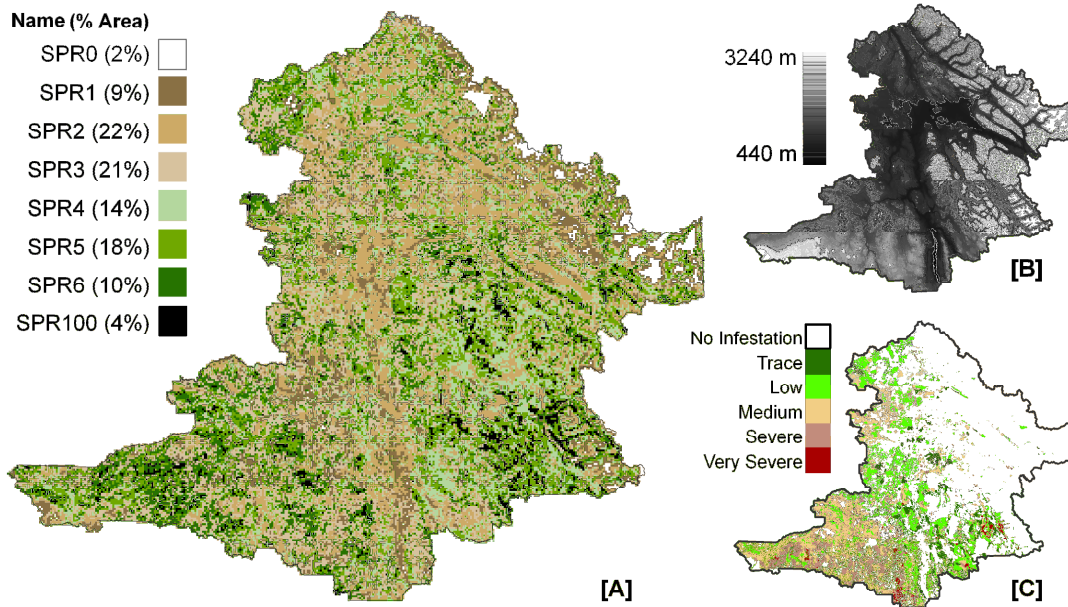


Fig. 5: Map of spatial pattern regions – SPR [A], across the Prince George and Quesnel Forest Districts in British Columbia, Canada. Ancillary information, such as elevation [B], and mountain pine beetle infestation severity levels for 2006 [C], can assist interpretation of SPR.