

Instructions for Preparing and Using Pre-Printed Soil Sample Bag Labels

1. Estimate the number of soil labels that will be needed and obtain a sufficient number of boxes of Avery standard 5164 shipping labels (3 1/3" x 4", 6 labels per page, 60 pages per box) to print the desired number of labels. Generally, one page of labels is needed per plot (one label for the forest floor sample, one for the 0-10 cm sample, one for the 10-20 cm sample, and an extra to replace any of the labels if necessary).
2. The Blank Regular Soil Labels file can be used by regular field crews for standard field plots if pre-printed soil labels with the state and hexagon information are not available. The Blank Audit Soil Labels file is to be used by audit crews collecting audit samples from standard field plots or QA plots. Print as many pages as needed.
3. To create soil labels:
 - A. Open the Soil Labels Template file. This file contains prompts for the state and plot numbers.
 - B. Set up an Excel file containing the state and plot number data as follows (See the Sample State & Plot List Excel file as an example):
 1. Enter "State" into first row and first column of a new spreadsheet. This is the column label for the state number data.
 2. Enter "FIAHex" into the first row of the second column. This is the column label for the FIA plot number data.
 3. Enter "FHMHex" into the first row of the third column. This is the column label for the P3 FHM hexagon number data.
 4. Enter the two-digit state code into the rows under the "State" column label.
 5. Enter the FIA plot numbers into the rows under the "FIAHex" column label.
 6. Enter the FHM P3 Hexagon numbers under the "FHMHex" column label.
 - C. Click on "Mail Merge" under the Tools header. You will see three pull down menus
 - D. For Menu 1, select "Create Form Letters"
 - E. For Menu 2, select "Get Data" and then click on "Open Data Source." Then find the hexagon file that you have created and select it. Note: you may have to change the file type to look at "all files" in order to see Excel spreadsheet.

- F. Click on “Merge” and then save to a “new document”. Click “merge” again.
- G. Name and save the new file, which should show the state and plot numbers on the top line of each label adjacent to the field names. Each plot will have four labels per page. See the Sample Soil Labels file as an example of how the final labels should look before printing. Submit the Soil Labels file for printing.

4. The soil labels are used as follows:

- Record the sampling date at the time of sampling and circle the correct choices for the other information as directed in the phase 3 FIA-FHM soil sampling field guide. If blank soil labels are used, also be sure to record the state number and hexagon number on the label.
- Each soil labels may be securely taped to the outside of the soil sample bag or placed in a small zip-lock bag to protect against moisture in the soil and then placed inside the soil sample bag.