

# USFS Region 5 2015 LiDAR

Burney Hat Creek, Storrie Fire, Blacks Mountain Experimental Forest, Grider Creek and Walker Creek - Technical Data Report



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**Cover Photo:** A view looking northwest over Lotts Lake and Spring Valley Lake in the Storrie Fire AOI. This image was created from the gridded bare earth surface colored by elevation, and overlaid with the above-ground LiDAR returns.



# INTRODUCTION

This photo taken by QSI acquisition staff shows a view of static GNSS equipment set up over monument CM9.45.



In September 2015, Quantum Spatial (QSI) was contracted by the United States Forest Service (USFS) to collect Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data in the fall of 2015 for the USFS Region 5 2015 project in California. The five contracted sites include: Burney Hat Creek, Storrie Fire, Blacks Mountain Experimental Forest, Grider Creek, and Walker Creek (Figure 1). Due to their proximity, Grider Creek and Walker Creek were processed together for statistical analysis and ease of use. Data were collected to aid USFS in assessing the topographic and geophysical properties of the study area to support ecological restoration planning and to assess existing conditions of area forests.

This report accompanies the delivered LiDAR data and documents contract specifications, data acquisition procedures, processing methods, and analysis of the final dataset including LiDAR accuracy and density. Acquisition dates and acreage are shown in Table 1, a complete list of contracted deliverables provided to USFS is shown in Table 2, and the project extent is shown in Figure 1.

**Table 1: Acquisition dates, acreage, and data types collected on the USFS Region 5 2015 site**

Project Site	Total Acres	Acquisition Dates	Data Type
USFS Region 5 2015	234,174	09/12/15, 09/18/15 – 09/19/15, 09/21/15 – 09/23/15, 10/02/15 – 10/08/15	LiDAR

# Deliverable Products

**Table 2: Products delivered to USFS for the USFS Region 5 2015 sites**

<b>USFS Region 5 2015 LiDAR Products</b> <b>Projection: UTM Zone 10 North</b> <b>Horizontal Datum: NAD83 (CORS96)</b> <b>Vertical Datum: NAVD88 (GEOID03)</b> <b>Units: Meters</b>	
<b>Points</b>	LAS v 1.2, compressed to LAZ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Returns</li> </ul>
<b>Rasters</b>	1.0 Meter ENVI DAT Files (*.dat) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bare Earth Model</li> <li>Highest Hit Model</li> </ul> 1.0 Meter ENVI DAT Files (*.dat) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normalized Intensity Images</li> </ul>
<b>Vectors</b>	Shapefiles (*.shp) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site Boundary</li> <li>LiDAR Tile Index (1/100<sup>th</sup> USGS Quadrangles)</li> <li>DEM Tile Index (1/4 USGS Quadrangles)</li> <li>Flightline Shapefile</li> <li>Flightline Swath Shapefile</li> <li>Smoothed Best Estimated Trajectories (SBETs)</li> </ul>

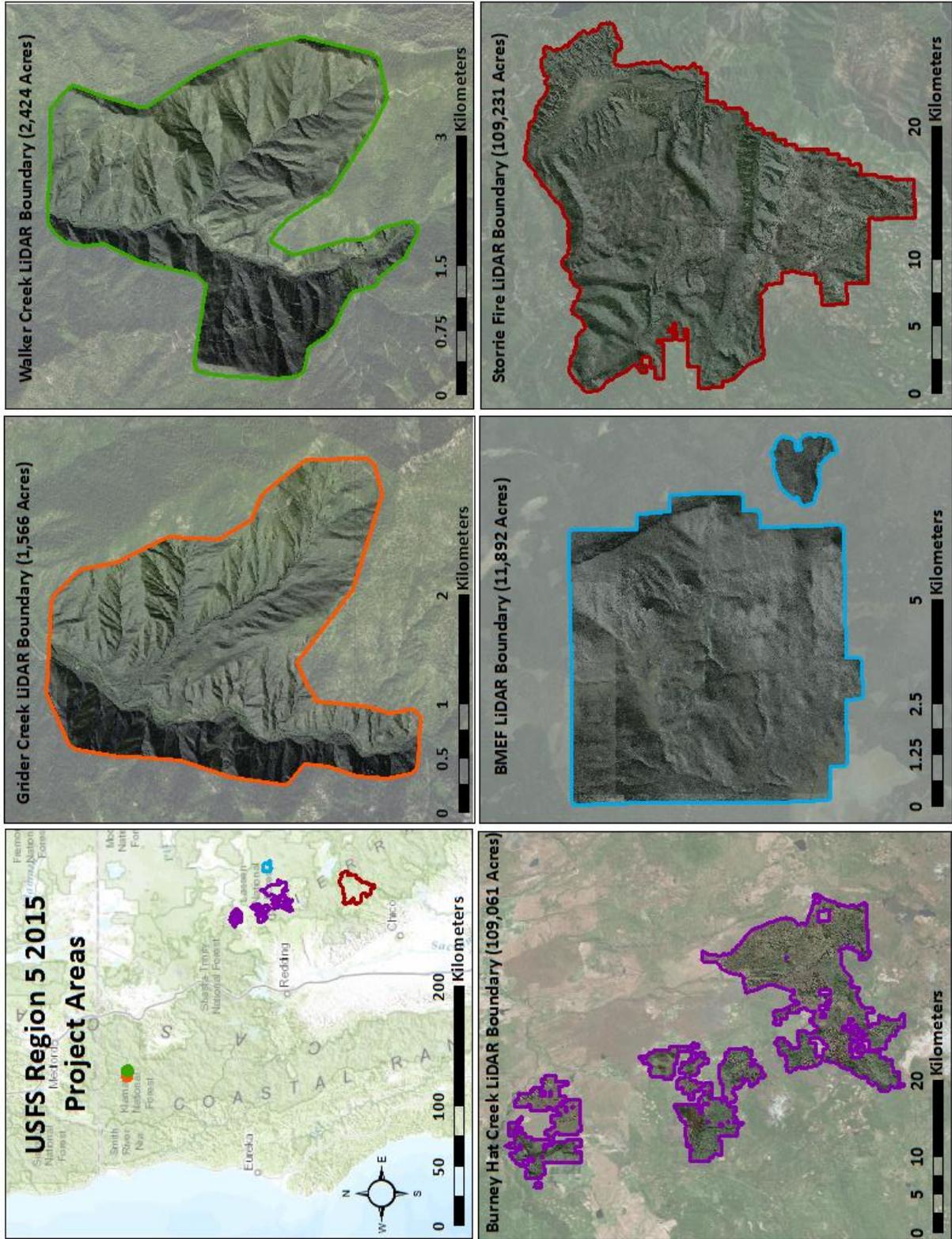


Figure 1: Location map of the USFS Region 5 2015 sites in California

QSI's Cessna Caravan



## Planning

In preparation for data collection, QSI reviewed the project area and developed a specialized flight plan to ensure complete coverage of the USFS Region 5 2015 LiDAR study areas at the target point density of  $\geq 8.0$  points/m<sup>2</sup>. Acquisition parameters including orientation relative to terrain, flight altitude, pulse rate, scan angle, and ground speed were adapted to optimize flight paths and flight times while meeting all contract specifications.

Factors such as satellite constellation availability and weather windows must be considered during the planning stage. Any weather hazards or conditions affecting the flights were continuously monitored due to their potential impact on the daily success of airborne and ground operations. In addition, logistical considerations including private property access and potential air space restrictions were reviewed.

# Airborne Survey

## LiDAR

The LiDAR survey was accomplished using a Leica ALS70 system mounted in a Cessna Caravan 208B or Partenavia P68C aircraft. Table 3 summarizes the settings used to yield an average pulse density of  $\geq 8$  pulses/m<sup>2</sup> over the USFS Region 5 2015 project area. The Leica ALS70 laser system can record unlimited range measurements (returns) per pulse, but typically does not record more than 5 returns per pulse. It is not uncommon for some types of surfaces (e.g., dense vegetation or water) to return fewer pulses to the LiDAR sensor than the laser originally emitted. The discrepancy between first return and overall delivered density will vary depending on terrain, land cover, and the prevalence of water bodies. All discernible laser returns were processed for the output dataset.

**Table 3: LiDAR specifications and survey settings**

LiDAR Survey Settings & Specifications				
AOI	Burney Hat Creek	Storrie Fire	Grider/Walker Creeks	Blacks Mountain Experimental Forest
Acquisition Dates	10/02/15 - 10/08/15	09/19/15, 09/21/15 – 09/23/15	09/12/15	09/18/15
Aircraft Used	Partenavia P68C	Cessna Caravan 208B	Cessna Caravan 208B	Cessna Caravan 208B
Sensor	Leica ALS70	Leica ALS70	Leica ALS70	Leica ALS70
Altitude (AGL)	1,400 m	1,650 m	1,650 m	1,400 m
Target Pulse Rate	195 kHz	165 kHz	165 kHz	195 kHz
Pulse Mode	Single Pulse in Air (SPiA)			
Laser Pulse Diameter	32 cm	38 cm	38 cm	32 cm
Mirror Scan Rate	56.2 Hz	53.4 Hz	53.4 Hz	56.2 Hz
Field of View	30°	24°	24°	30°
GPS Baselines	$\leq 13$ nm	$\leq 13$ nm	$\leq 13$ nm	$\leq 13$ nm
GPS PDOP	$\leq 3.0$	$\leq 3.0$	$\leq 3.0$	$\leq 3.0$
GPS Satellite Constellation	$\geq 6$	$\geq 6$	$\geq 6$	$\geq 6$
Maximum Returns	Unlimited, but typically not more than 5			
Intensity	8-bit	8-bit	8-bit	8-bit
Resolution/Density	Average 8 pulses/m <sup>2</sup>			
Accuracy	RMSE <sub>z</sub> $\leq 15$ cm			

All areas were surveyed with an opposing flight line side-lap of  $\geq 50\%$  ( $\geq 100\%$  overlap) in order to reduce laser shadowing and increase surface laser painting. To accurately solve for laser point position

(geographic coordinates x, y and z), the positional coordinates of the airborne sensor and the attitude of the aircraft were recorded continuously throughout the LiDAR data collection mission. Position of the aircraft was measured twice per second (2 Hz) by an onboard differential GPS unit, and aircraft attitude was measured 200 times per second (200 Hz) as pitch, roll and yaw (heading) from an onboard inertial measurement unit (IMU). To allow for post-processing correction and calibration, aircraft and sensor position and attitude data are indexed by GPS time.



*This photo taken by QSI acquisition staff shows a view of static GNSS equipment set up in the Burney Hat Creek project area.*

## Ground Control

Ground control surveys, including monumentation and ground survey points (GSPs), were conducted to support the airborne acquisition. Ground control data were used to geospatially correct the aircraft positional coordinate data and to perform quality assurance checks on final LiDAR data.

### Monumentation

The spatial configuration of ground survey monuments provided redundant control within 13 nautical miles of the mission areas for LiDAR flights.

Monuments were also used for collection of ground survey points using real time kinematic (RTK) and post processed kinematic (PPK) survey techniques.

Monument locations were selected with consideration for satellite visibility, field crew safety, and optimal location for GSP coverage. QSI utilized nine existing monuments and established 13 new monuments for the USFS

Region 5 2015 LiDAR project (Table 4, Figure 2 and Figure 3). New monumentation was set using 5/8" x 30" rebar topped with stamped

2-1/2" aluminum caps. QSI's professional land surveyor, Christopher Glantz (CA PLS#8850) oversaw and certified the establishment of all monuments.



QSI-Established Monument

**Table 4: Monuments established for the USFS Region 5 2015 acquisition. Coordinates are on the NAD83 (CORS96) datum, epoch 2002.00**

Monument ID	Latitude	Longitude	Ellipsoid (meters)
AE8720	40° 39' 01.26675"	-121° 16' 45.64112"	1613.465
BMEF_EG1	40° 43' 54.72404"	-121° 08' 18.81056"	1750.686
CM9.45	40° 38' 24.25561"	-121° 09' 25.06697"	1683.051
DH6612	41° 48' 29.93881"	-123° 06' 12.08796"	423.777
LAS_11	40° 01' 28.16739"	-121° 25' 01.17761"	1880.762
LA_SF_EG1	40° 08' 34.70393"	-121° 15' 12.98260"	1291.696
LS_DT2	40° 06' 59.54207"	-121° 15' 13.83586"	1375.141
MX1298	41° 50' 29.51137"	-123° 11' 34.89065"	397.222
PGE_PIT3_02	40° 58' 31.93027"	-121° 36' 04.52301"	937.579
USFS_R5_01	40° 05' 13.12600"	-121° 22' 19.99525"	1933.317
USFS_R5_02	40° 06' 29.53108"	-121° 23' 00.45329"	2019.680
USFS_R5_04	40° 41' 38.34039"	-121° 24' 00.73244"	1413.252
USFS_R5_05	40° 42' 20.46961"	-121° 23' 09.88959"	1547.167
USFS_R5_06	40° 46' 38.17252"	-121° 36' 41.09326"	1404.723
USFS_R5_08	40° 47' 34.06578"	-121° 32' 14.15299"	1387.864

Monument ID	Latitude	Longitude	Ellipsoid (meters)
USFS_R5_09	40° 38' 32.92947"	-121° 31' 51.69849"	1648.874
USFS_R5_10	40° 32' 45.10461"	-121° 28' 52.23513"	1937.406
USFS_R5_11	41° 00' 27.14453"	-121° 40' 29.94893"	1037.823
USFS_R5_12	40° 48' 54.38684"	-121° 34' 10.09672"	1335.648
USFS_R5_13	40° 49' 39.67669"	-121° 33' 48.71833"	1296.754

To correct the continuously recorded onboard measurements of the aircraft position, QSI concurrently conducted multiple static Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) ground surveys (1 Hz recording frequency) over each monument. During post-processing, the static GPS data were triangulated with nearby Continuously Operating Reference Stations (CORS) using the Online Positioning User Service (OPUS<sup>1</sup>) for precise positioning. Multiple independent sessions over the same monument were processed to confirm antenna height measurements and to refine position accuracy.

Monuments were established according to the national standard for geodetic control networks, as specified in the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) Geospatial Positioning Accuracy Standards for geodetic networks.<sup>2</sup> This standard provides guidelines for classification of monument quality at the 95% confidence interval as a basis for comparing the quality of one control network to another. The monument rating for this project is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Federal Geographic Data Committee monument rating for network accuracy**

Direction	Rating
1.96 * St Dev <sub>NE</sub> :	0.020 m
1.96 * St Dev <sub>z</sub> :	0.050 m

For the USFS Region 5 2015 LiDAR project, the monument coordinates contributed no more than 5.4 cm of positional error to the geolocation of the final ground survey points and LiDAR, with 95% confidence.

<sup>1</sup> OPUS is a free service provided by the National Geodetic Survey to process corrected monument positions. <http://www.ngs.noaa.gov/OPUS>.

<sup>2</sup> Federal Geographic Data Committee, Geospatial Positioning Accuracy Standards (FGDC-STD-007.2-1998). Part 2: Standards for Geodetic Networks, Table 2.1, page 2-3. <http://www.fgdc.gov/standards/projects/FGDC-standards-projects/accuracy/part2/chapter2>

## Ground Survey Points (GSPs)

Ground survey points were collected using real time kinematic and post-processed kinematic survey techniques. A Trimble R7 or R8 base unit was positioned at a nearby monument to broadcast a kinematic correction to a roving Trimble R8 GNSS receiver. All GSP measurements were made during periods with a Position Dilution of Precision (PDOP) of  $\leq 3.0$  with at least six satellites in view of the stationary and roving receivers. When collecting RTK and PPK data, the rover records data while stationary for five seconds, then calculates the pseudorange position using at least three one-second epochs. Relative errors for any GSP position must be less than 1.5 cm horizontal and 2.0 cm vertical in order to be accepted. See Table 6 for Trimble unit specifications.

GSPs were collected in areas where good satellite visibility was achieved on paved roads and other hard surfaces such as gravel or packed dirt roads. GSP measurements were not taken on highly reflective surfaces such as center line stripes or lane markings on roads due to the increased noise seen in the laser returns over these surfaces. GSPs were collected within as many flightlines as possible; however the distribution of GSPs depended on ground access constraints and monument locations and may not be equitably distributed throughout the study area (Figure 2 and Figure 3).

**Table 6: Trimble equipment identification**

Receiver Model	Antenna	OPUS Antenna ID	Use
Trimble R7 GNSS	Zephyr GNSS Geodetic Model 2 RoHS	TRM57971.00	Static
Trimble R8	Integrated Antenna R8 Model 2	TRM_R8_GNSS	Rover

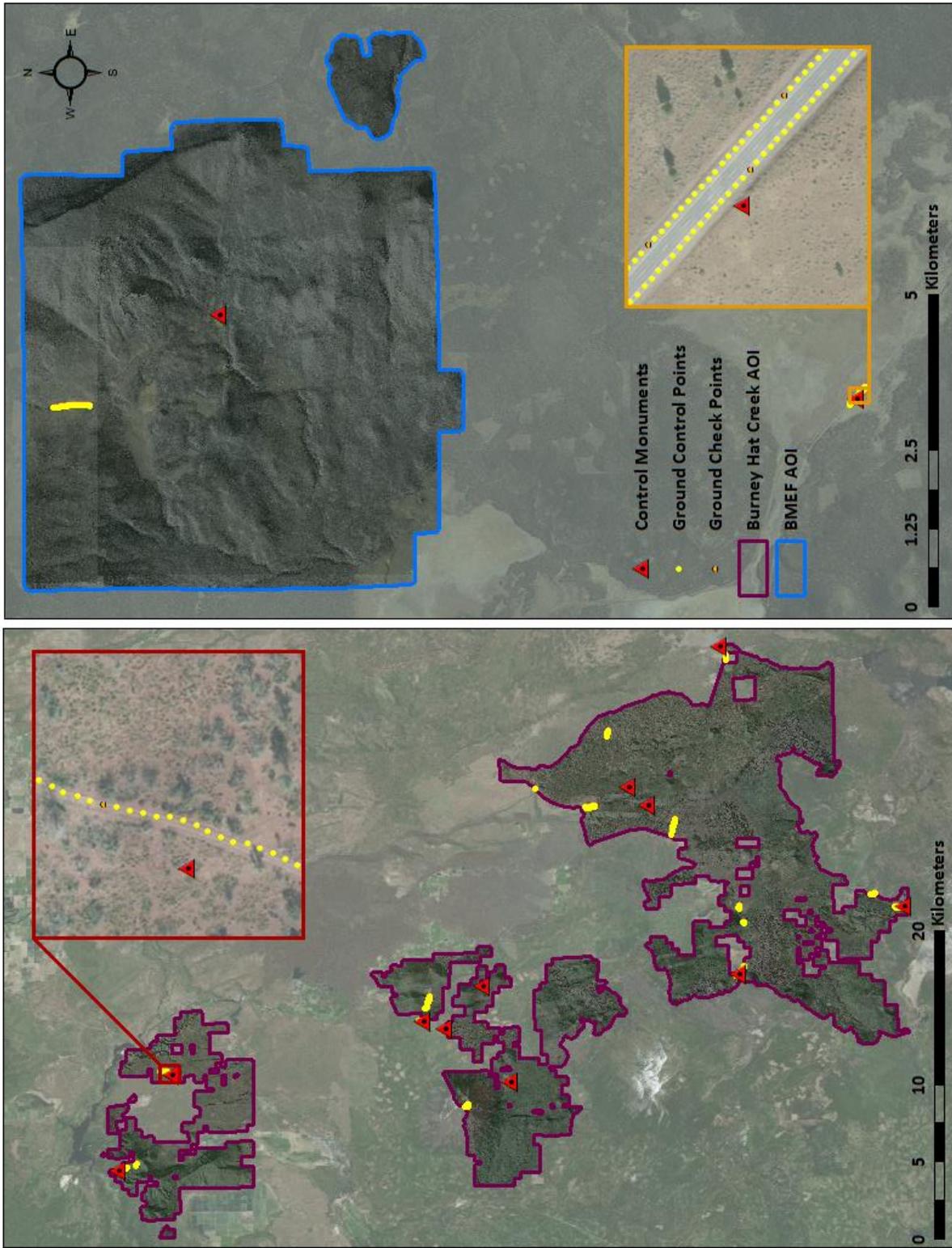


Figure 2: Ground survey location map

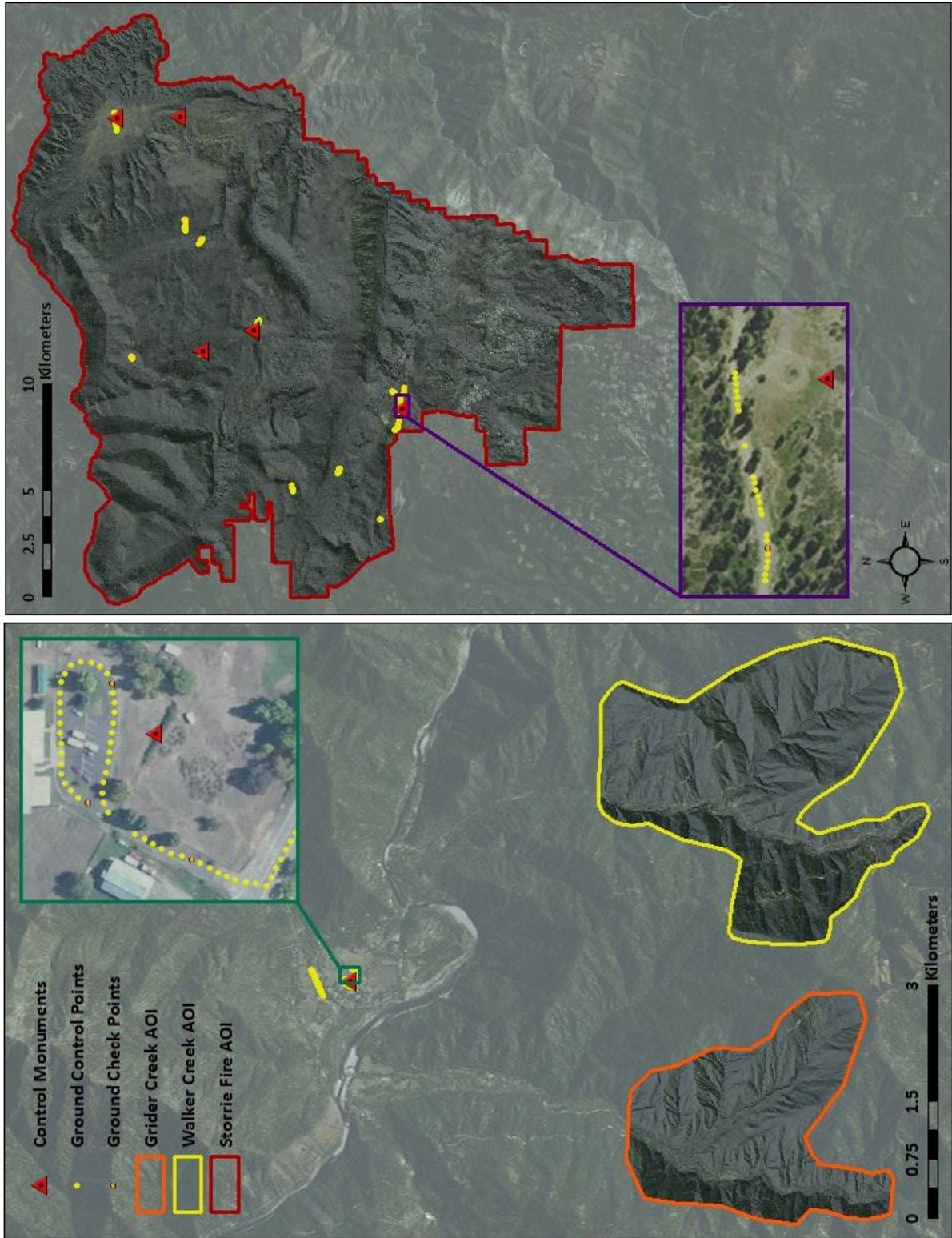
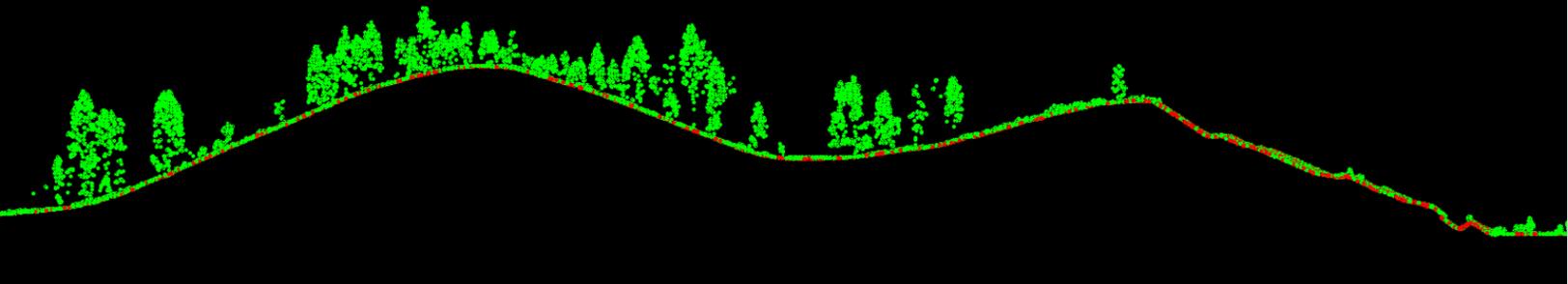


Figure 3: Ground survey location map

Default   
Ground 

This 1.5 meter LiDAR cross section shows a view of the point classification scheme taken from the Burney Hat Creek AOI.



## LiDAR Data

Upon completion of data acquisition, QSI processing staff initiated a suite of automated and manual techniques to process the data into the requested deliverables. Processing tasks included GPS control computations, smoothed best estimate trajectory (SBET) calculations, kinematic corrections, calculation of laser point position, sensor and data calibration for optimal relative and absolute accuracy, and LiDAR point classification (Table 7). Processing methodologies were tailored for the landscape. Brief descriptions of these tasks are shown in Table 8.

**Table 7: ASPRS LAS classification standards applied to the USFS Region 5 2015 dataset**

Classification Number	Classification Name	Classification Description
1	Default/Unclassified	Laser returns that are not included in the ground class, composed of vegetation and man-made structures.
2	Ground	Laser returns that are determined to be ground using automated and manual cleaning algorithms.
7	Noise	Laser returns that are often associated with birds, scattering from reflective surfaces, or artificial points below the ground surface.
11	Withheld	Laser returns that have intensity values of 0 or 255 or points that were the sixth or greater return from a single pulse.

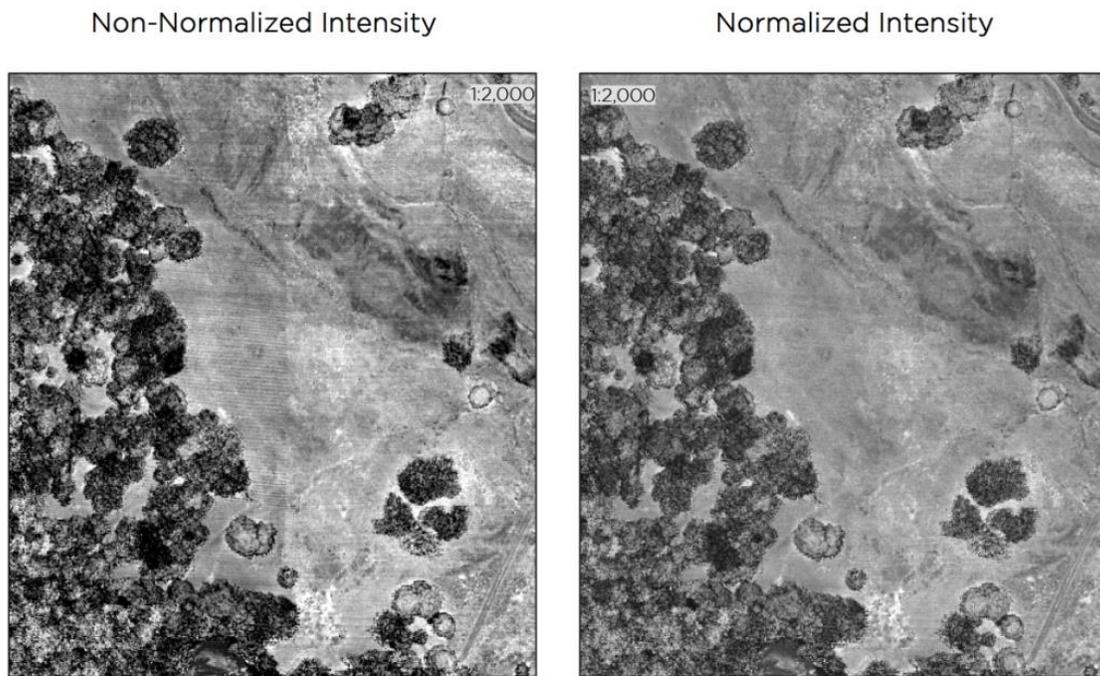
**Table 8: LiDAR processing workflow**

LiDAR Processing Step	Software Used
Resolve kinematic corrections for aircraft position data using kinematic aircraft GPS and static ground GPS data. Develop a smoothed best estimate of trajectory (SBET) file that blends post-processed aircraft position with sensor head position and attitude recorded throughout the survey.	Waypoint Inertial Explorer v.8.6
Calculate laser point position by associating SBET position to each laser point return time, scan angle, intensity, etc. Create raw laser point cloud data for the entire survey in *.las (ASPRS v. 1.2) format. Convert data to orthometric elevations by applying a geoid03 correction.	Waypoint Inertial Explorer v.8.6 Leica Cloudpro v. 1.2.1
Import raw laser points into manageable blocks (less than 500 MB) to perform manual relative accuracy calibration and filter erroneous points. Classify ground points for individual flight lines.	TerraScan v.15
Using ground classified points per each flight line, test the relative accuracy. Perform automated line-to-line calibrations for system attitude parameters (pitch, roll, heading), mirror flex (scale) and GPS/IMU drift. Calculate calibrations on ground classified points from paired flight lines and apply results to all points in a flight line. Use every flight line for relative accuracy calibration.	TerraMatch v.15
Classify resulting data to ground and other client designated ASPRS classifications (Table 7). Assess statistical absolute accuracy via direct comparisons of ground classified points to ground control survey data.	TerraScan v.15 TerraModeler v.15
Generate bare earth models as triangulated surfaces. Generate highest hit models as a surface expression of all classified points. Export all surface models in ENVI DAT (.dat) format at a 1 meter pixel resolution.	TerraScan v.15 TerraModeler v.15 ArcMap v. 10.1
Correct intensity values for variability and export intensity images in ENVI DAT format at a 1.0 meter pixel resolution.	DZOrtho Creator TerraScan v.15 TerraModeler v.15 ArcMap v. 10.1

## Intensity Normalization

Laser return intensity is a unitless measure of discrete return voltage, stored as an integer value from 0 to 255 (8-bit). Intensity values correspond to the reflectivity of the surface, which is a function of surface material composition. The magnitude of intensity values can vary across similar surfaces due to variability in receiver fixed gain control (FGC), atmospheric, target range, and the angle of incidence. These components influence intensity at different rates and magnitudes, with FGC comprising the majority of influence. The result is line to line inconsistency and streaking in the images that can reduce the utility of these data for analysis.

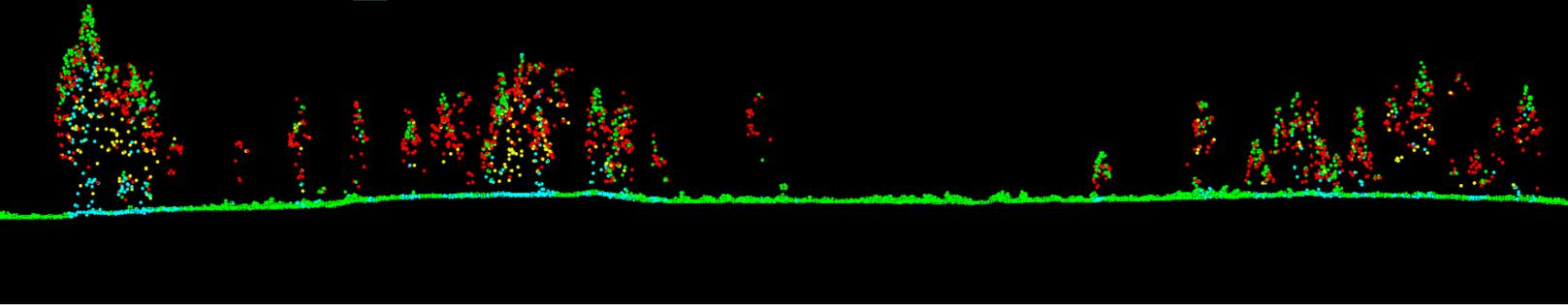
QSI utilized proprietary software to minimize variability caused by fixed gain control, atmospheric transmissivity, range differences, and the angle of incidence to arrive at a normalized intensity value that approaches a true radiometric value for each discrete laser return. A sample result of the intensity normalization process is shown in (Figure 3).



**Figure 4: Comparison of normalized and non-normalized intensities**

Only Echo ■  
 First of Many ■  
 Intermediate ■  
 Last of Many ■

This 1.5 meter LiDAR cross section shows the Burney Hat Creek point cloud colored by laser echo.



## LiDAR Density

The acquisition parameters were designed to acquire an average first-return density of 8 points/m<sup>2</sup>. First return density describes the density of pulses emitted from the laser that return at least one echo to the system. Multiple returns from a single pulse were not considered in first return density analysis. Some types of surfaces (e.g., breaks in terrain, water and steep slopes) may have returned fewer pulses than originally emitted by the laser. First returns typically reflect off the highest feature on the landscape within the footprint of the pulse. In forested or urban areas the highest feature could be a tree, building or power line, while in areas of unobstructed ground, the first return will be the only echo and represents the bare earth surface.

The density of ground-classified LiDAR returns was also analyzed for this project. Terrain character, land cover, and ground surface reflectivity all influenced the density of ground surface returns. In vegetated areas, fewer pulses may penetrate the canopy, resulting in lower ground density.

The cumulative average first-return density of LiDAR data for the USFS Region 5 2015 project was 13.99 points/m<sup>2</sup> while the cumulative average ground classified density was 2.41 points/m<sup>2</sup> (Table 9). The statistical and spatial distributions of first return densities and classified ground return densities per 100 m x 100 m cell are portrayed in Figure 5 through Figure 16.

**Table 9: Average LiDAR point densities**

USFS Region 5 2015 LiDAR Point Densities		
AOI	First-Return	Ground Classified
Burney Hat Creek	14.17 points/m <sup>2</sup>	2.46 points/m <sup>2</sup>
Storrie Fire	13.83 points/m <sup>2</sup>	2.30 points/m <sup>2</sup>
Grider/Walker Creek	15.16 points/m <sup>2</sup>	3.46 points/m <sup>2</sup>

USFS Region 5 2015 LiDAR Point Densities		
Blacks Mountain Experimental Forest	13.25 points/m <sup>2</sup>	2.55 points/m <sup>2</sup>
Cumulative	13.99 points/m <sup>2</sup>	2.41 points/m <sup>2</sup>

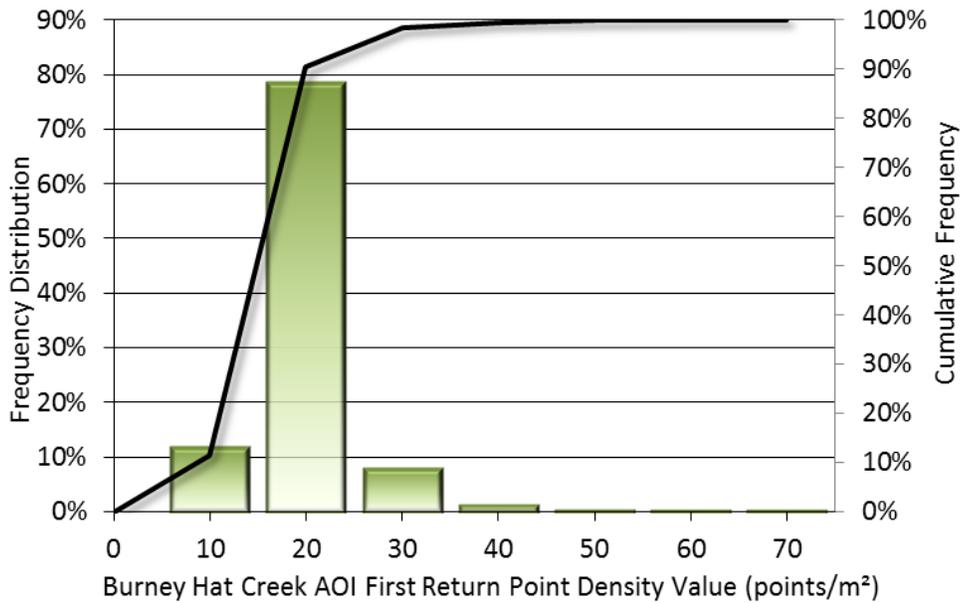


Figure 5: Frequency distribution of Burney Hat Creek first return point density values per 100 x 100 m cell

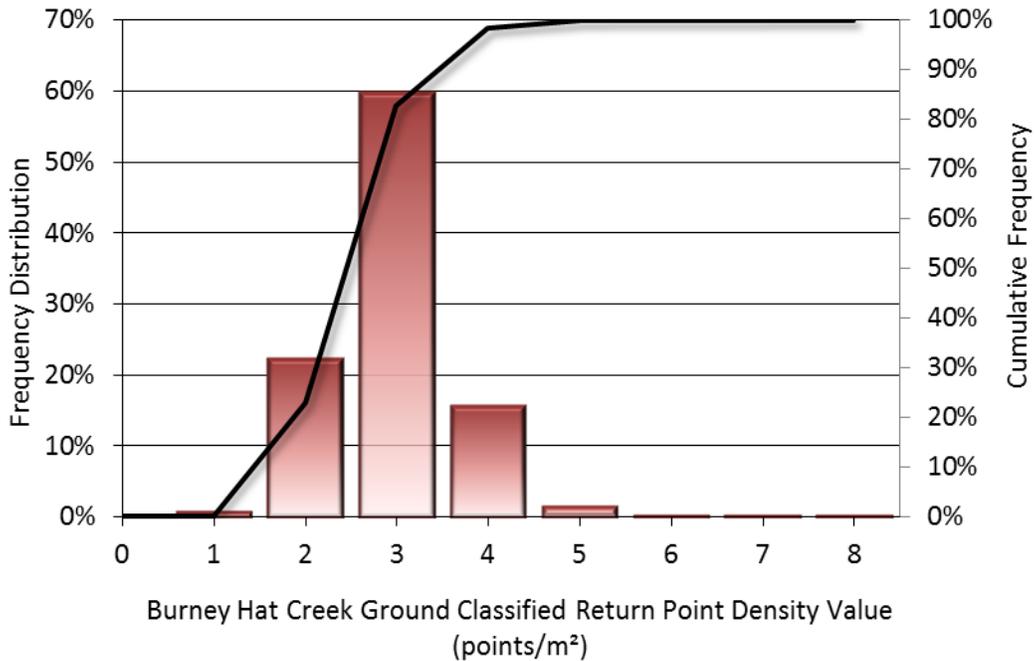


Figure 6: Frequency distribution of Burney Hat Creek AOI ground classified point density values per 100 x 100 m cell

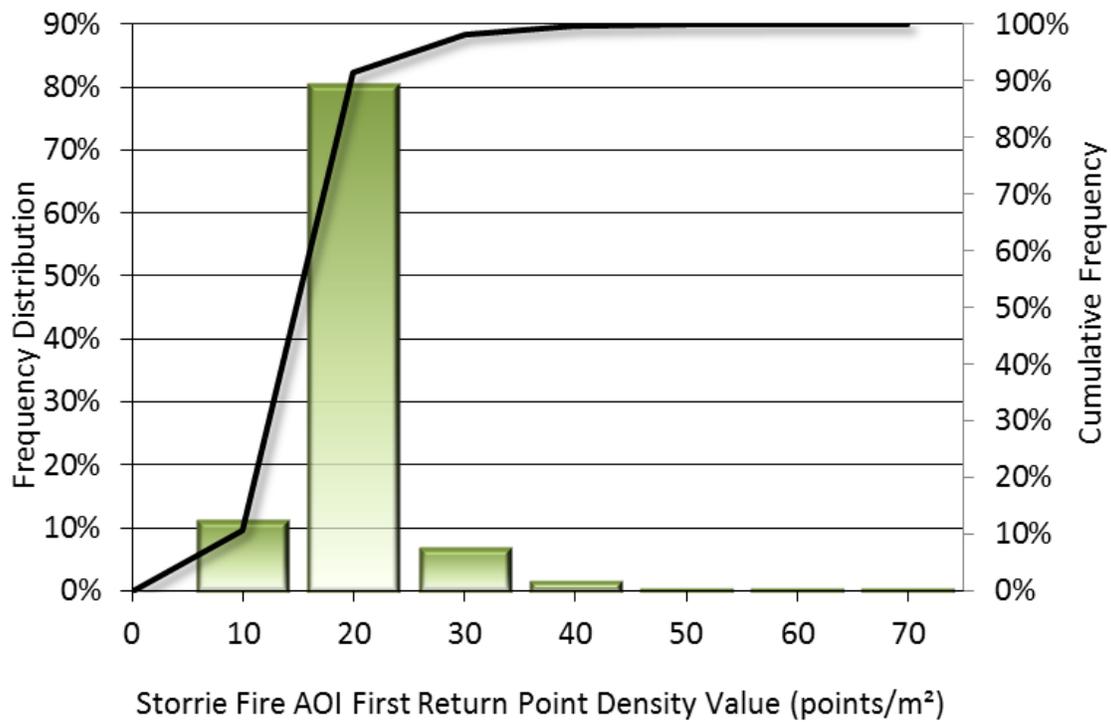


Figure 7: Frequency distribution of Storrie Fire AOI first return point density values per 100 x 100 m cell

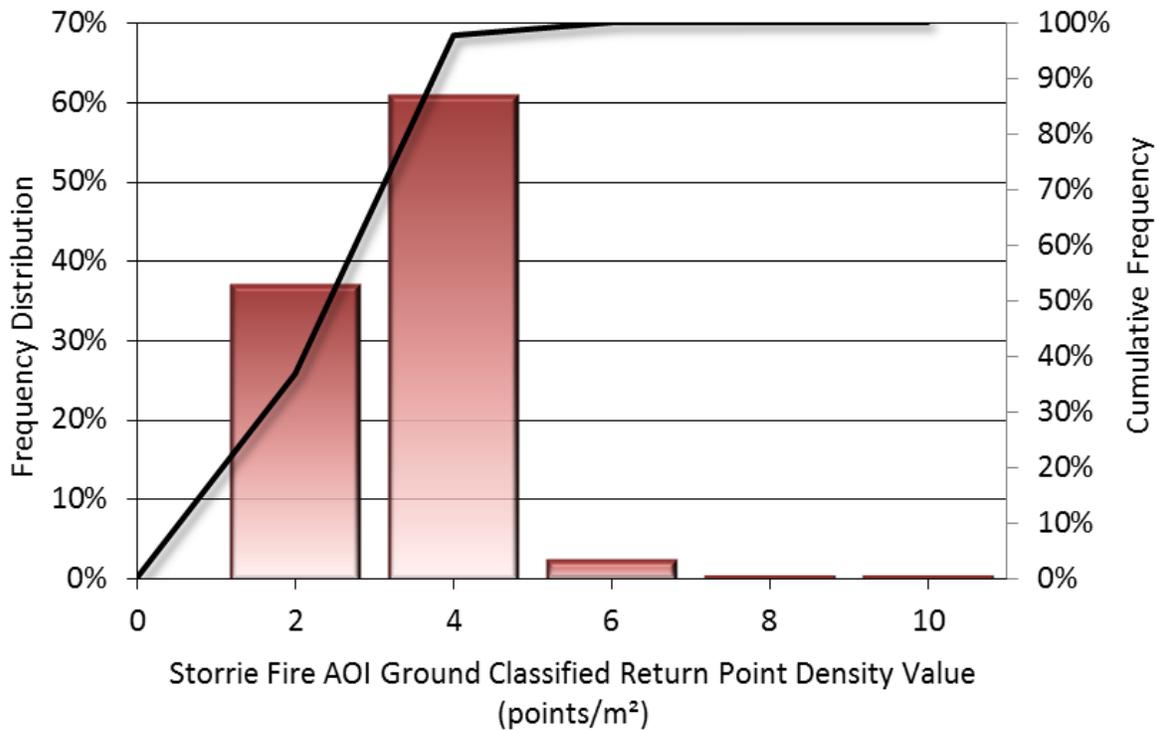
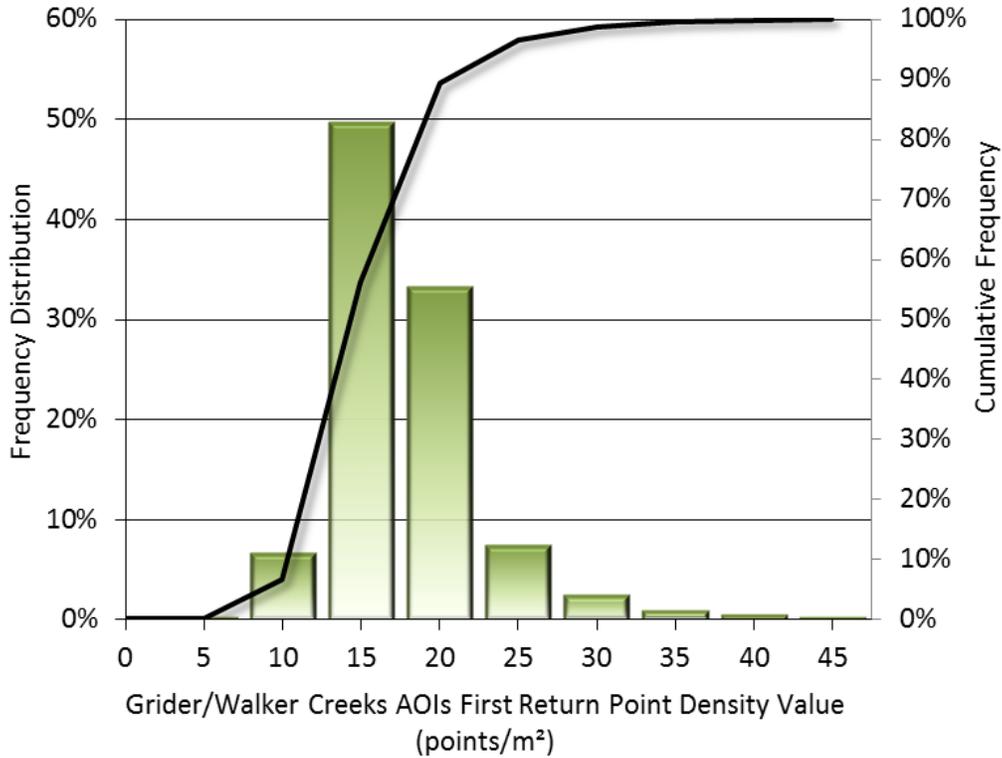
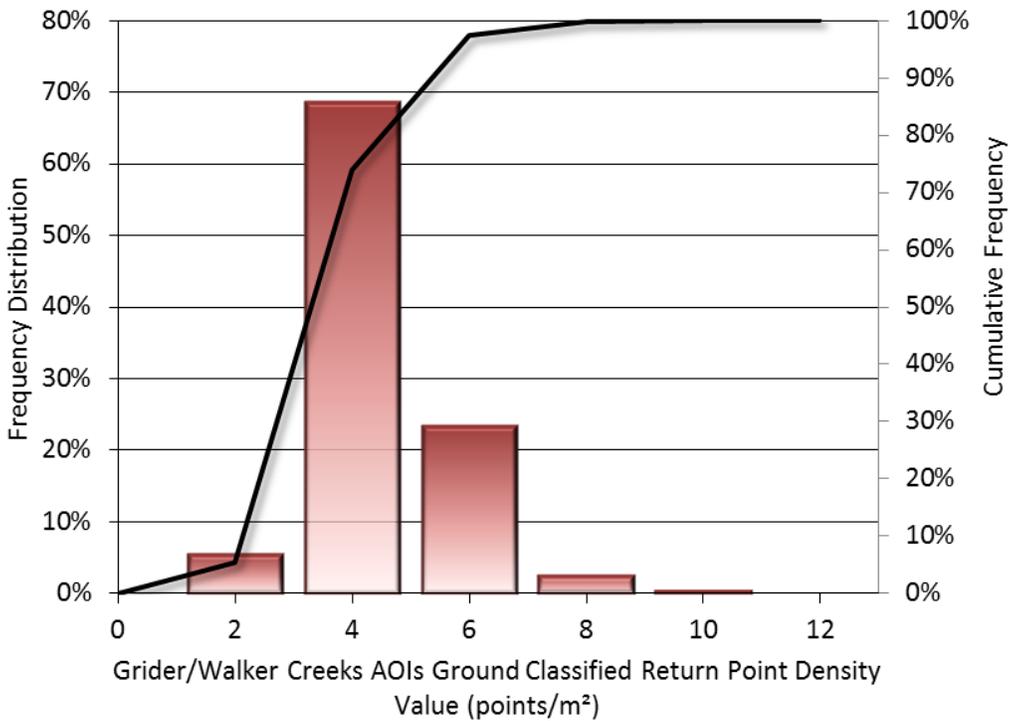


Figure 8: Frequency distribution of Storrie Fire AOI ground classified point density values per 100 x 100 m cell



**Figure 9: Frequency distribution of Grider Creek and Walker Creek AOIs first return point density values per 100 x 100 m cell**



**Figure 10: Frequency distribution of Grider Creek and Walker Creek AOIs ground classified point density values per 100 x 100 m cell**

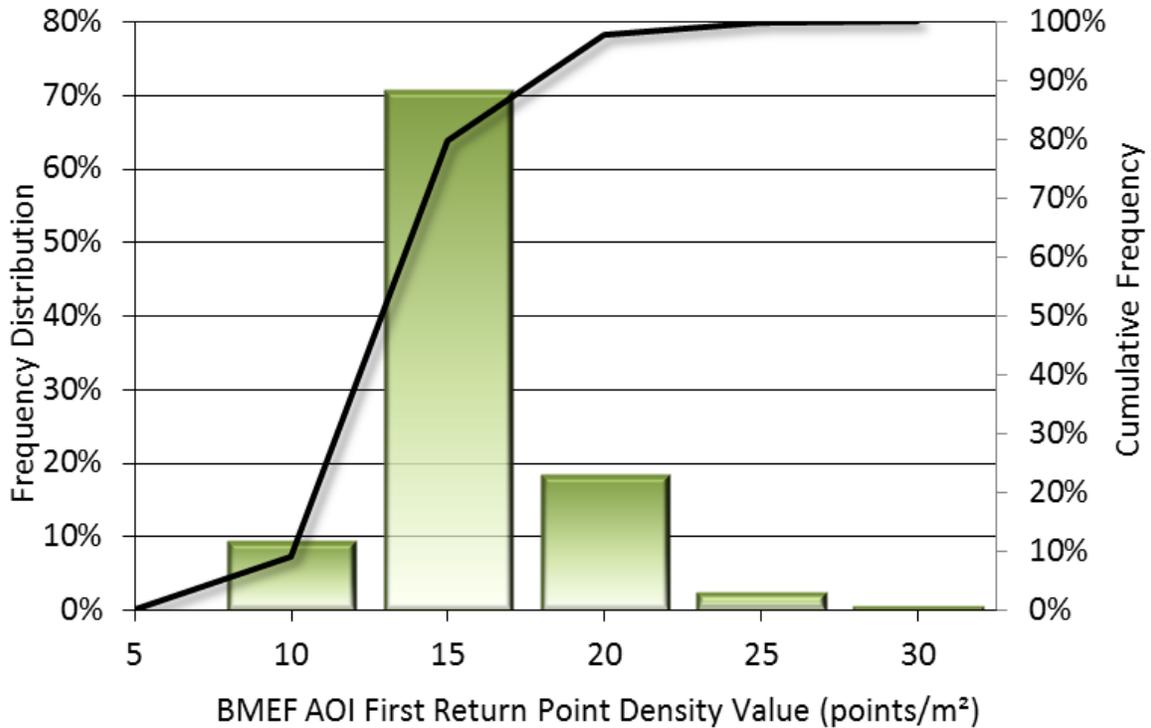


Figure 11: Frequency distribution of BMEF AOI first return point density values per 100 x 100 m cell

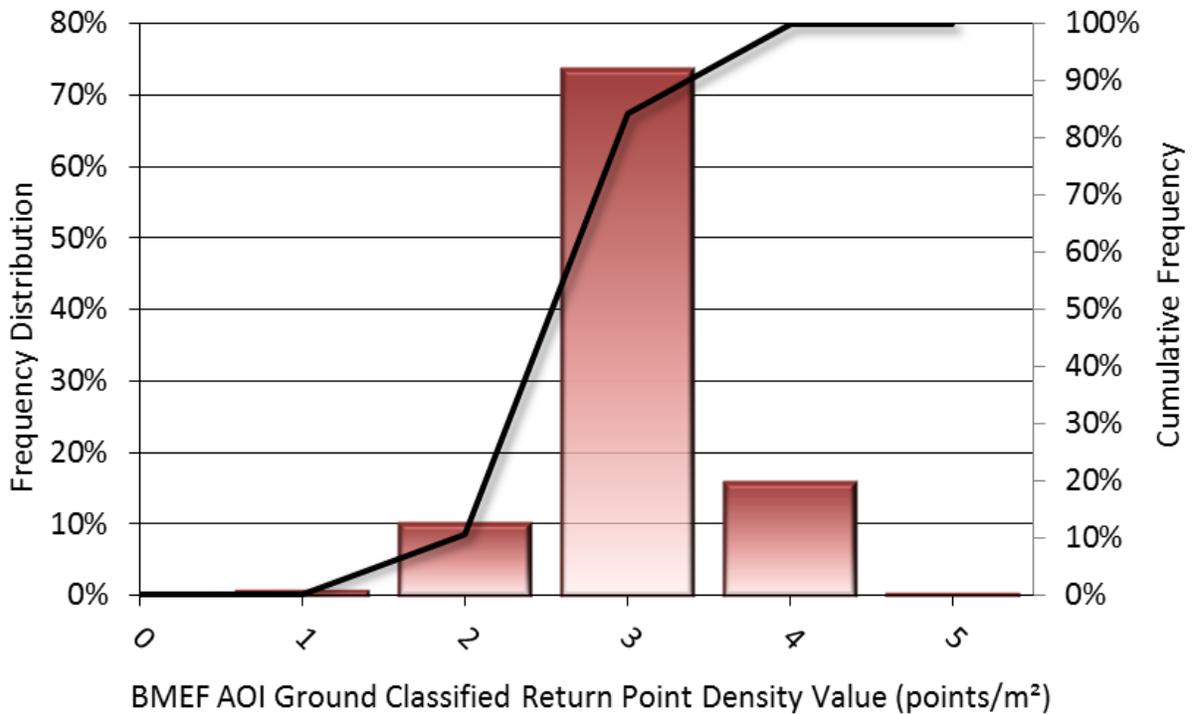


Figure 12: Frequency distribution of BMEF AOI ground classified return point density values per 100 x 100 m cell

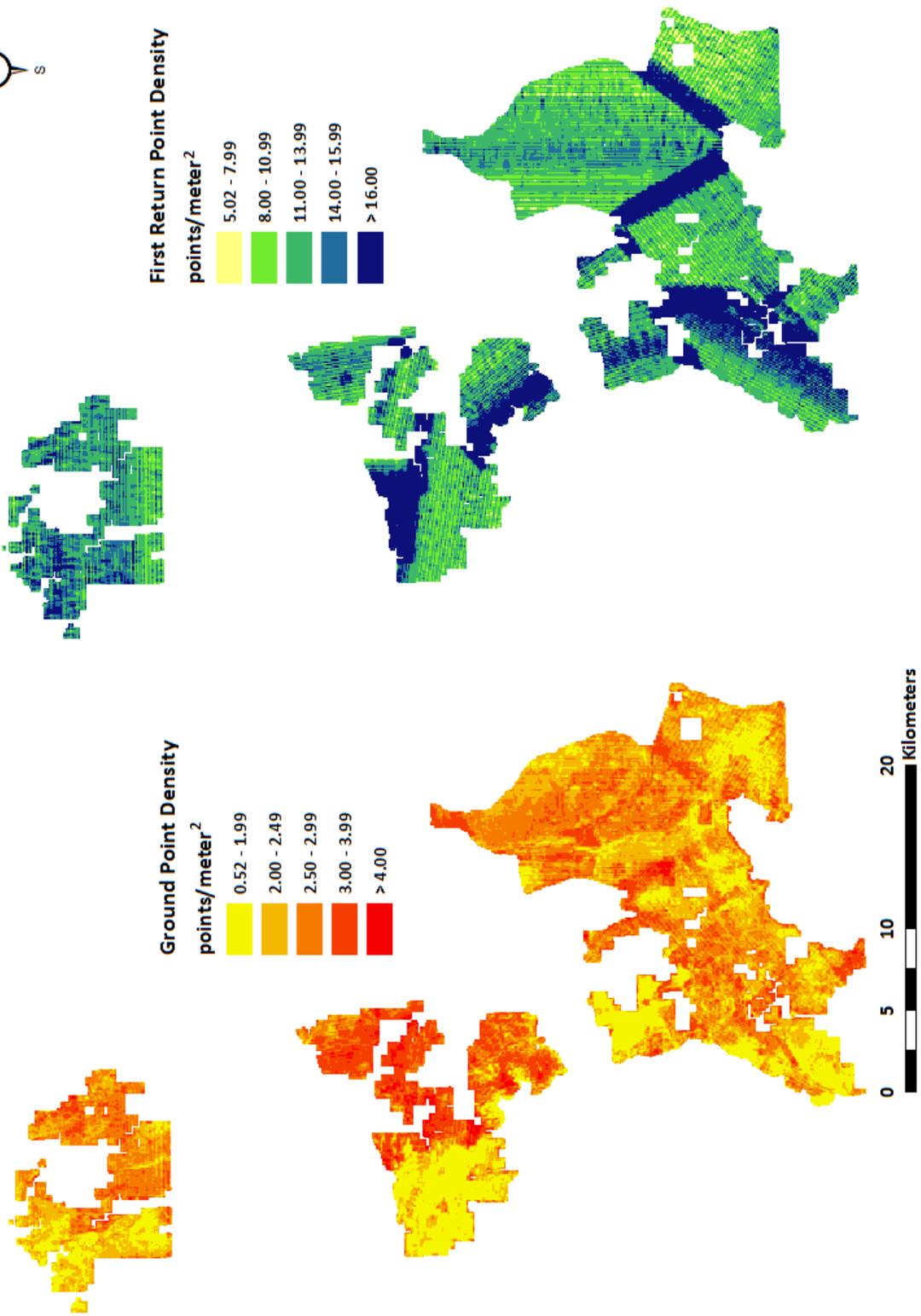
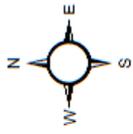


Figure 13: First return and ground-classified point density map for the Burney Hat Creek site (100 m x 100 m cells)

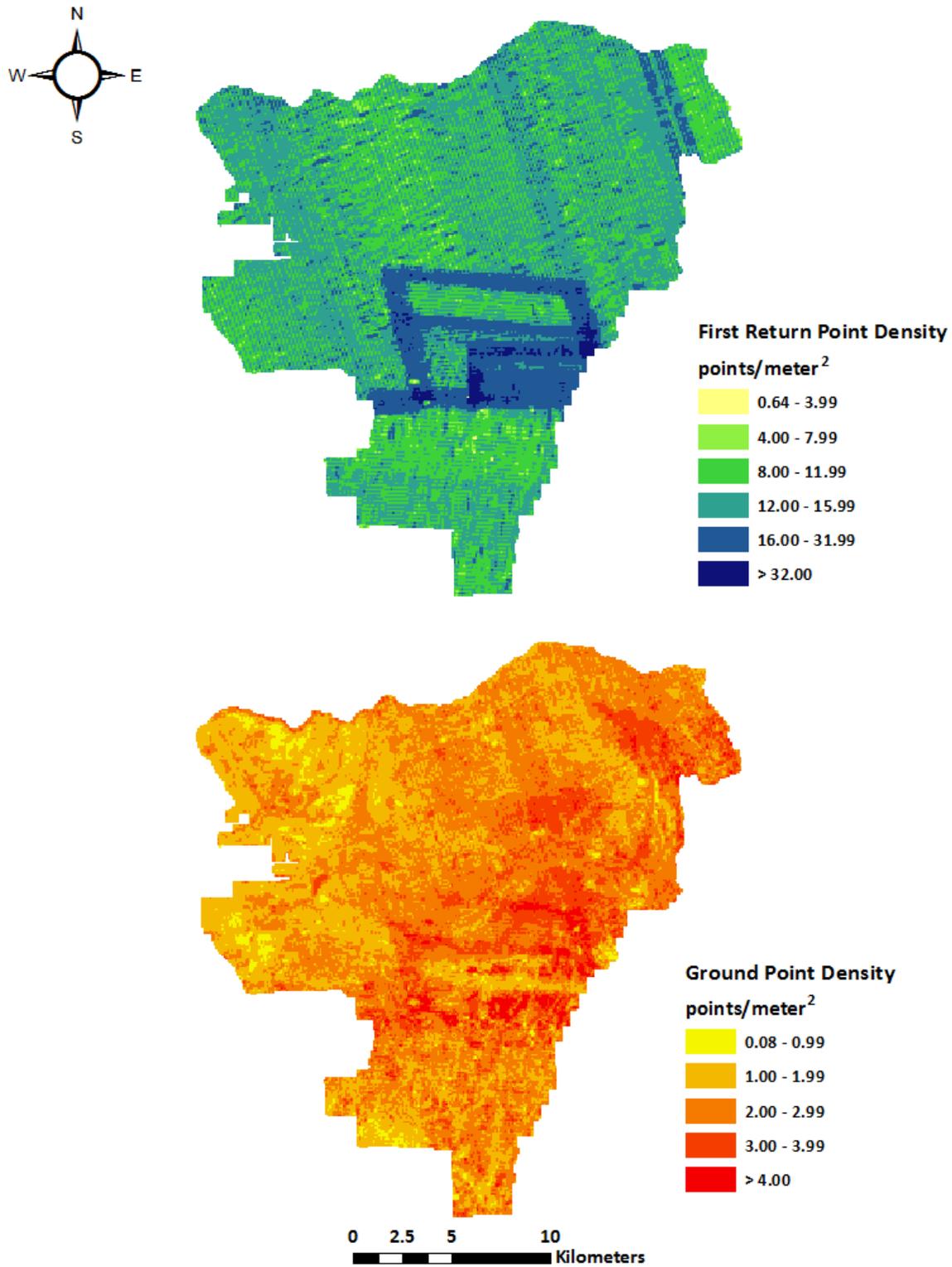


Figure 14: First return and ground-classified point density map for the Storrie Fire site (100 m x 100 m cells)

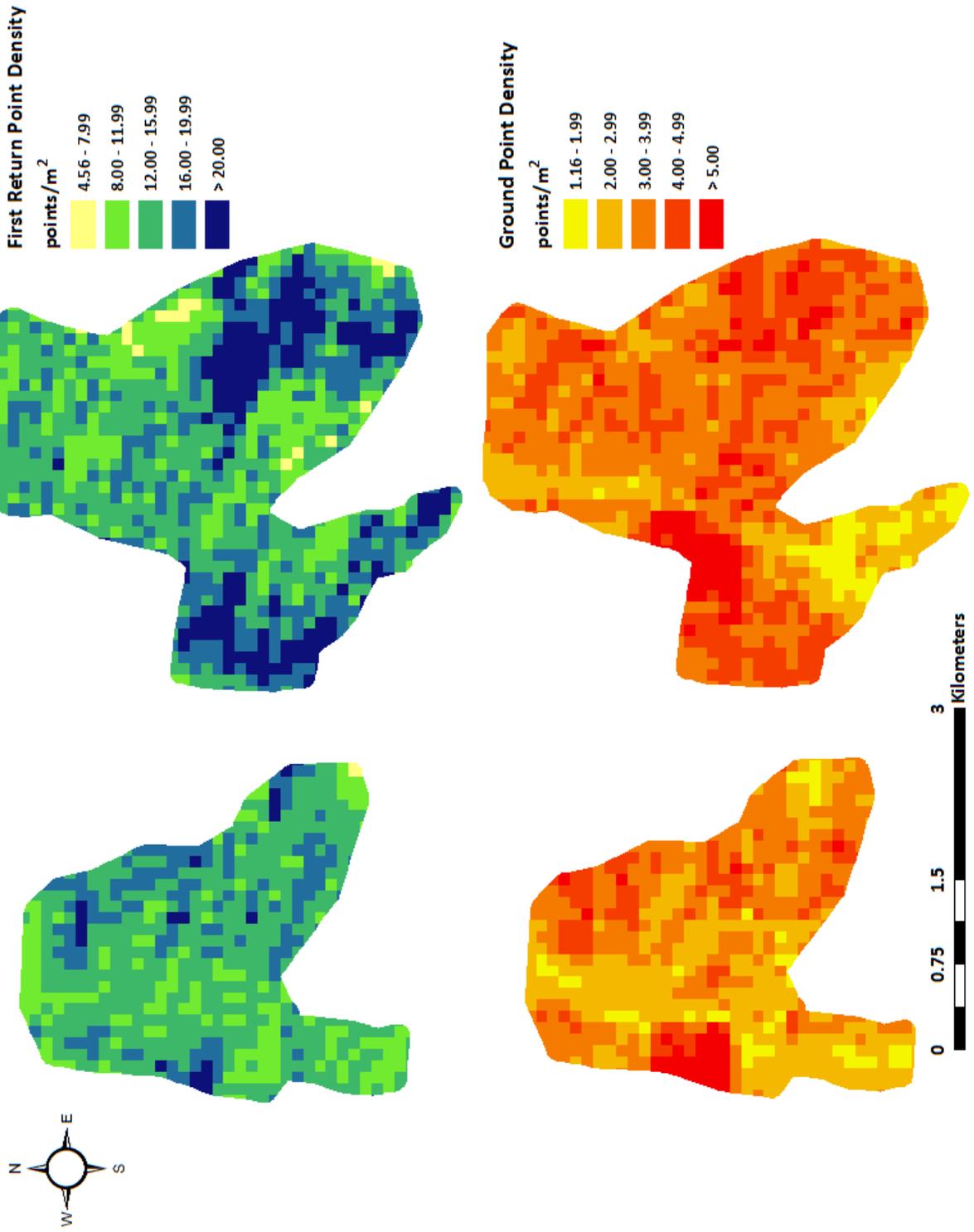


Figure 15: First return and ground-classified point density map for the Grider Creek and Walker Creek sites (100 m x 100 m cells)

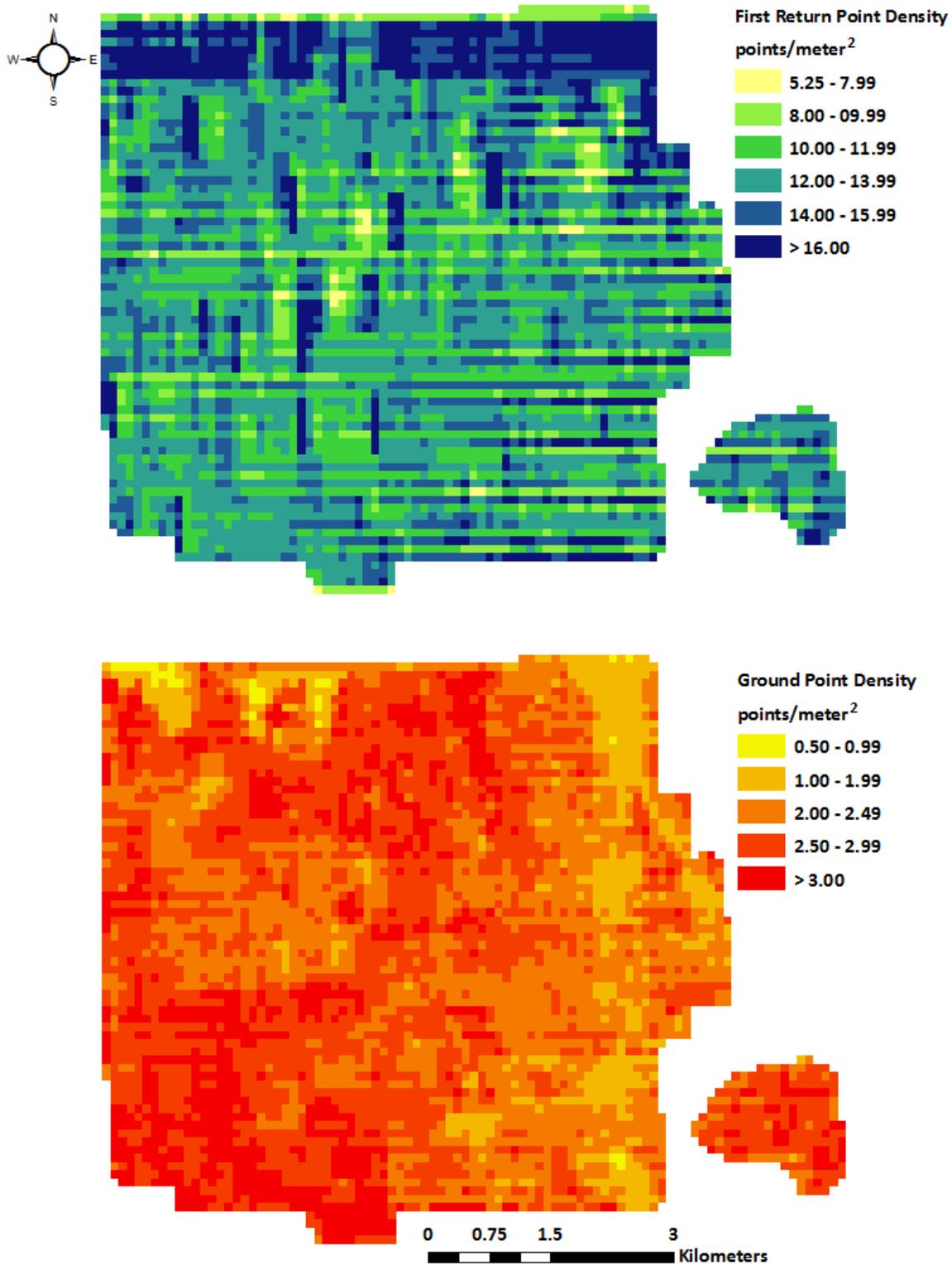


Figure 16: First return and ground-classified point density map for the BMEF site (100 m x 100 m cells)

## LiDAR Accuracy Assessments

The accuracy of the LiDAR data collection can be described in terms of absolute accuracy (the consistency of the data with external data sources) and relative accuracy (the consistency of the dataset with itself). See Appendix A for further information on sources of error and operational measures used to improve relative accuracy.

### LiDAR Absolute Accuracy

Absolute accuracy was assessed using Fundamental Vertical Accuracy (FVA) reporting designed to meet guidelines presented in the FGDC National Standard for Spatial Data Accuracy<sup>3</sup>. FVA compares known ground check point data collected on open, bare earth surfaces with level slope (<20°) to the triangulated surface generated by the LiDAR points. FVA is a measure of the accuracy of LiDAR point data in open areas where the LiDAR system has a high probability of measuring the ground surface and is evaluated at the 95% confidence interval (1.96 \* RMSE), as shown in Table 10.

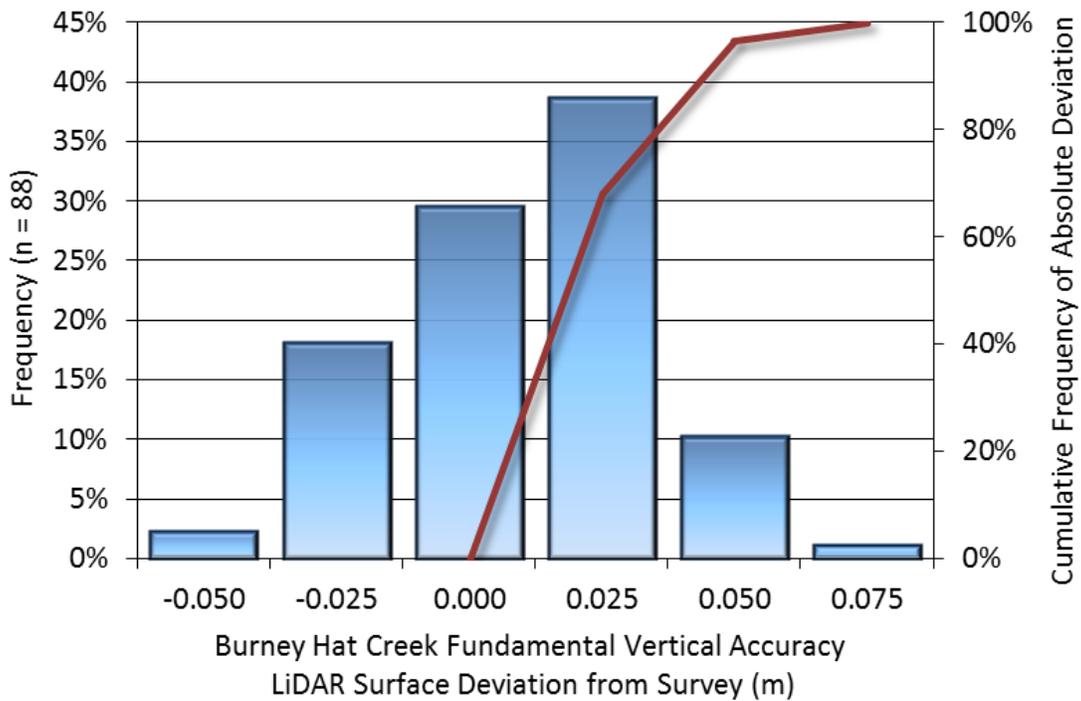
The mean and standard deviation (sigma  $\sigma$ ) of divergence of the ground surface model from ground check point coordinates are also considered during accuracy assessment. These statistics assume the error for x, y and z is normally distributed, and therefore the skew and kurtosis of distributions are also considered when evaluating error statistics. For the USFS Region 5 2015 survey, 147 ground check points were withheld in total resulting in a cumulative fundamental vertical accuracy of 0.055 meters (Figure 21).

QSI also assessed cumulative absolute accuracy using 2,693 ground control points. Although these points were used in the calibration and post-processing of the LiDAR point cloud, they may still provide a good indication of the overall accuracy of the LiDAR dataset, and therefore have been provided in Table 10 and Figure 22.

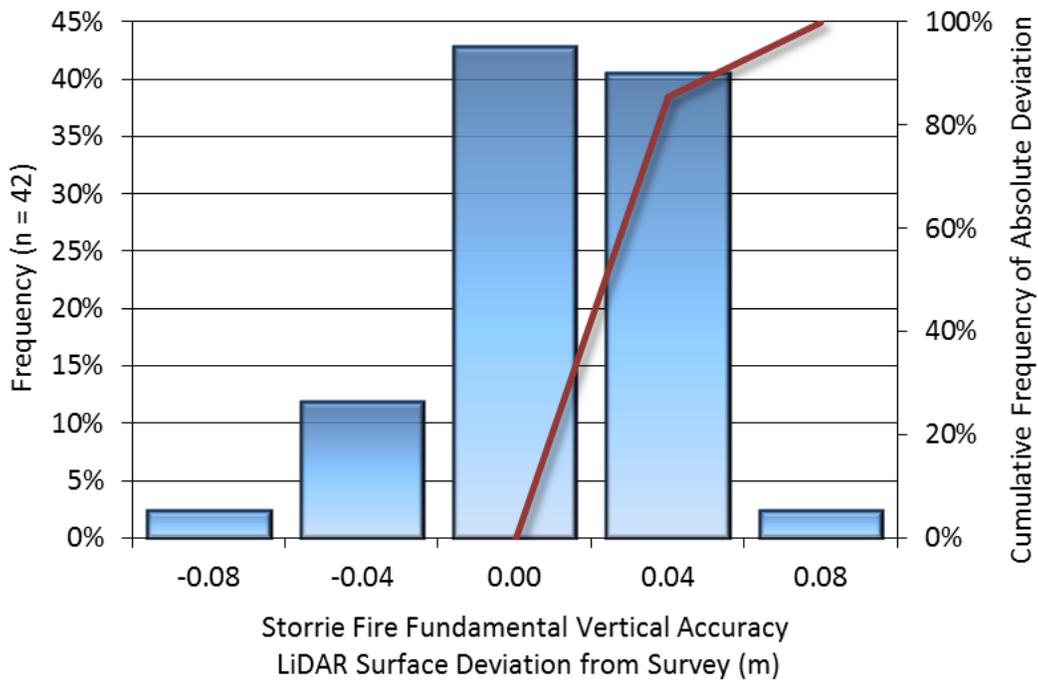
**Table 10: Absolute accuracy results**

Fundamental Vertical Accuracy						
	Burney Hat Creek	Storrie Fire	Grider/Walker Creeks	Blacks Mountain Exp. Forest	Cumulative FVA	Cumulative Accuracy from GCPs
<b>Sample</b>	88 points	42 points	192 points	7 points	147 points	2,693 points
<b>FVA (1.96*RMSE)</b>	0.051 m	0.062 m	0.049 m	0.067 m	0.055 m	0.050 m
<b>Average</b>	-0.002 m	-0.010 m	-0.009 m	0.001 m	-0.005 m	0.000 m
<b>Median</b>	0.000 m	-0.006 m	-0.018 m	0.019 m	-0.002 m	0.001 m
<b>RMSE</b>	0.026 m	0.031 m	0.025 m	0.034 m	0.028 m	0.025 m
<b>Standard Deviation (1<math>\sigma</math>)</b>	0.026 m	0.030 m	0.024 m	0.037 m	0.028 m	0.050m

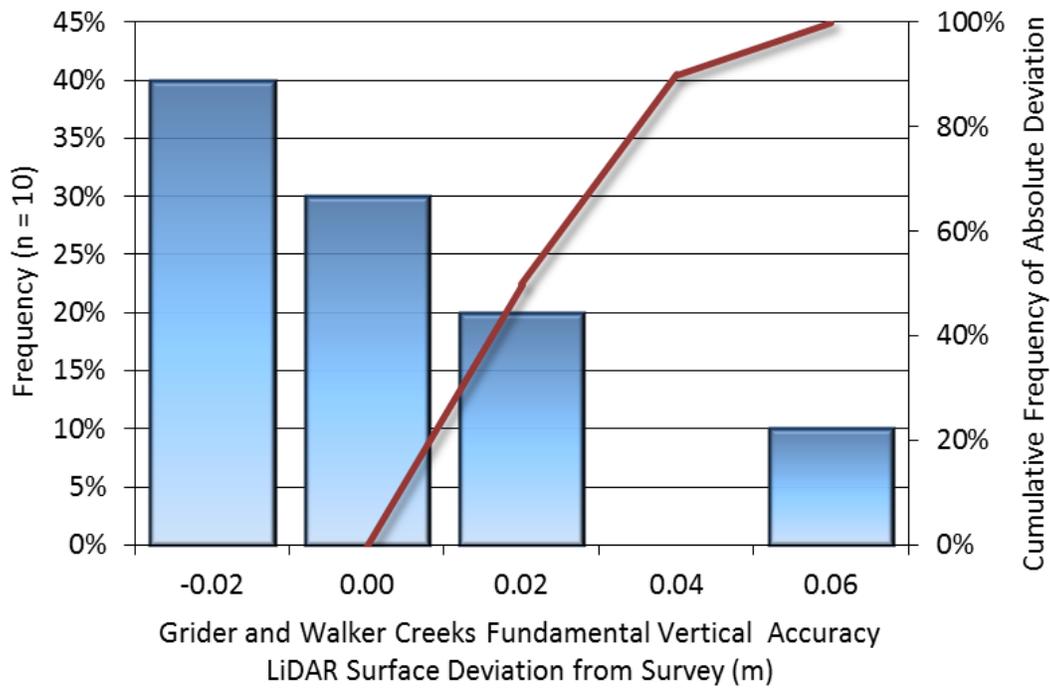
<sup>3</sup> Federal Geographic Data Committee, Geospatial Positioning Accuracy Standards (FGDC-STD-007.3-1998). Part 3: National Standard for Spatial Data Accuracy. <http://www.fgdc.gov/standards/projects/FGDC-standards-projects/accuracy/part3/chapter3>



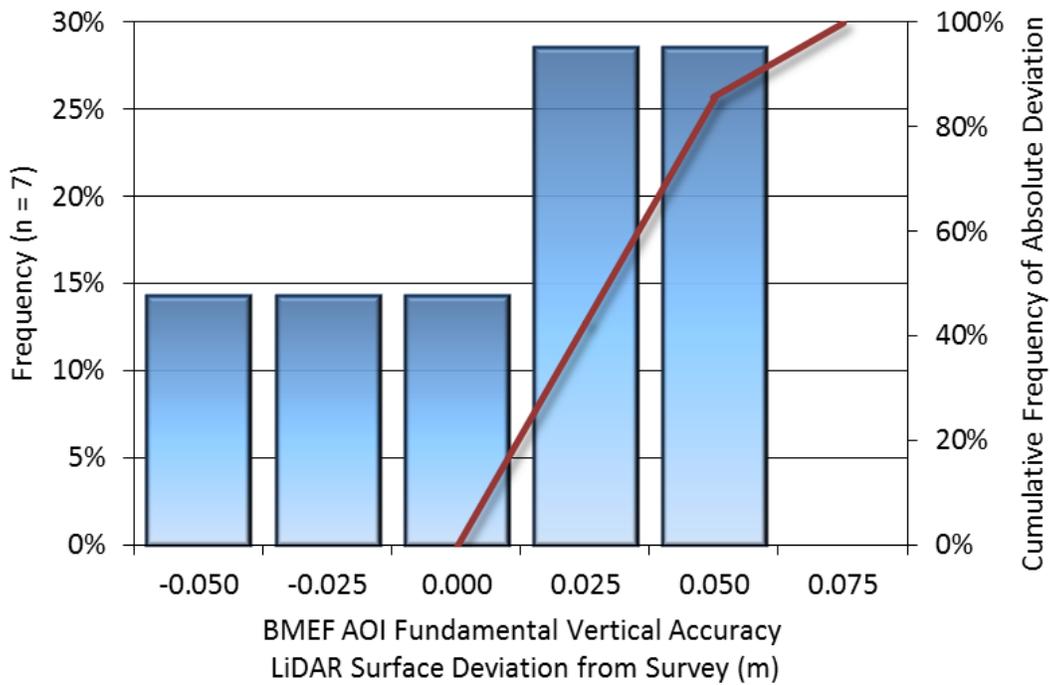
**Figure 17: Frequency histogram for LiDAR surface deviation from ground check point values in the Burney Hat Creek AOI**



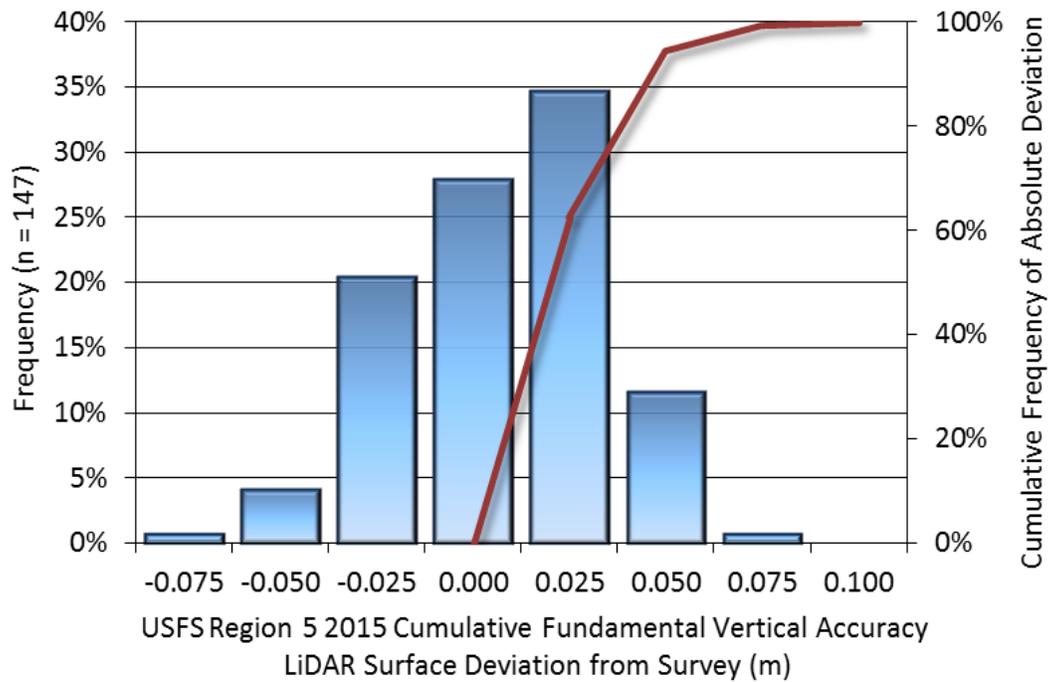
**Figure 18: Frequency histogram for LiDAR surface deviation from ground check point values in the Storrie Fire AOI**



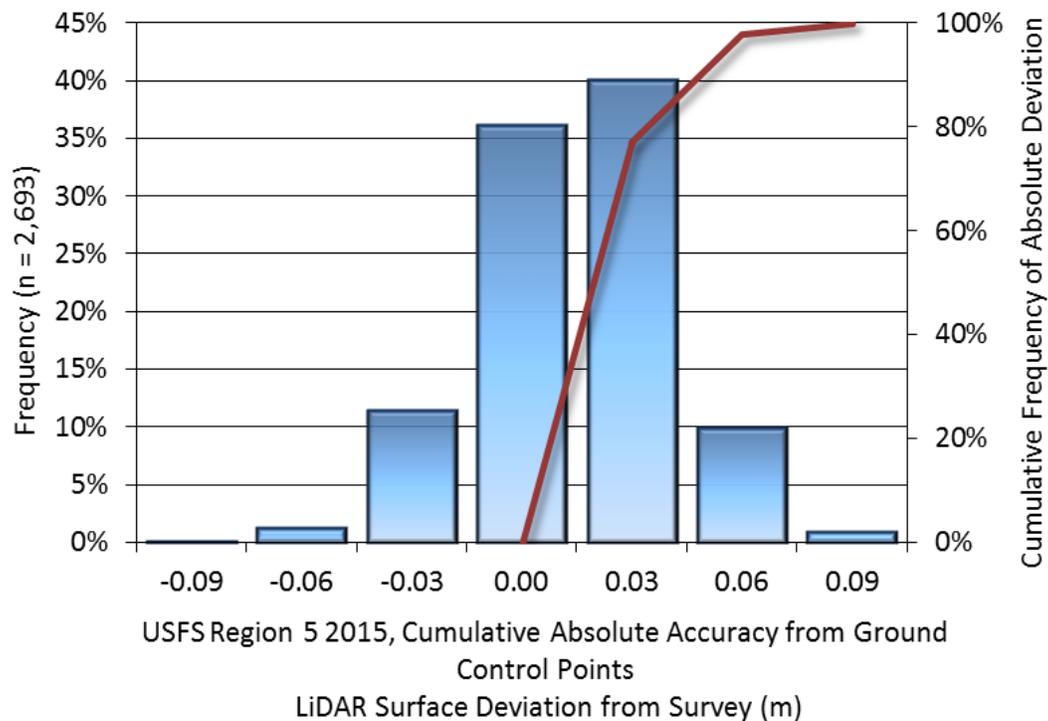
**Figure 19: Frequency histogram for LiDAR surface deviation from ground check point values in the Grider and Walker Creeks AOIs**



**Figure 20: Frequency histogram for LiDAR surface deviation from ground check point values in the BMEF AOI**



**Figure 21: Frequency histogram for the cumulative LiDAR surface deviation from ground check point values in the USFS Region 5 2015 project**



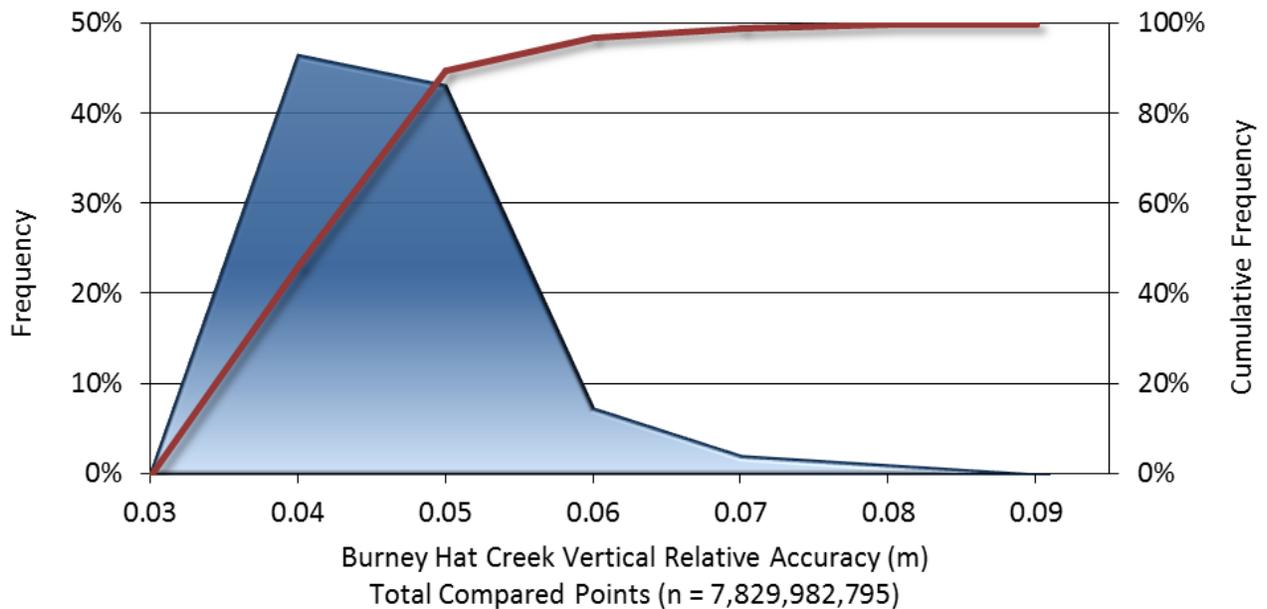
**Figure 22: Frequency histogram for the cumulative LiDAR surface deviation from ground check point values in the USFS Region 5 2015 project**

## LiDAR Relative Vertical Accuracy

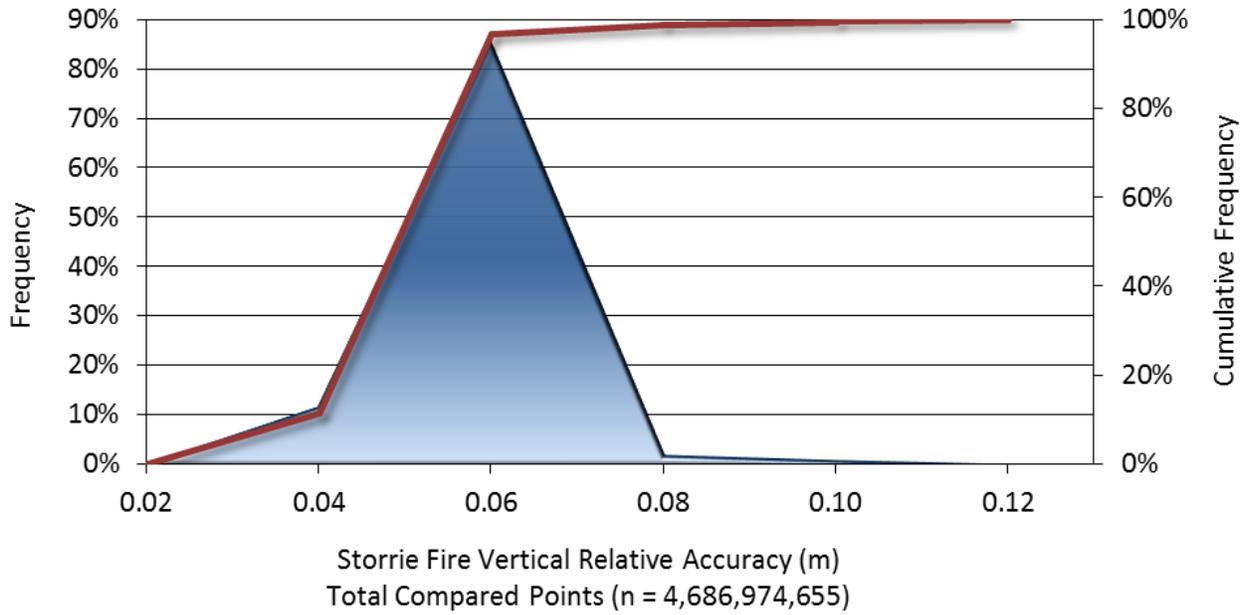
Relative vertical accuracy refers to the internal consistency of the data set as a whole: the ability to place an object in the same location given multiple flight lines, GPS conditions, and aircraft attitudes. When the LiDAR system is well calibrated, the swath-to-swath vertical divergence is low (<0.10 meters). The relative vertical accuracy was computed by comparing the ground surface model of each individual flight line with its neighbors in overlapping regions. The cumulative average (mean) line to line relative vertical accuracy for the USFS Region 5 2015 LiDAR project was 0.042 meters (Table 11, Figure 27).

**Table 11: Relative accuracy results**

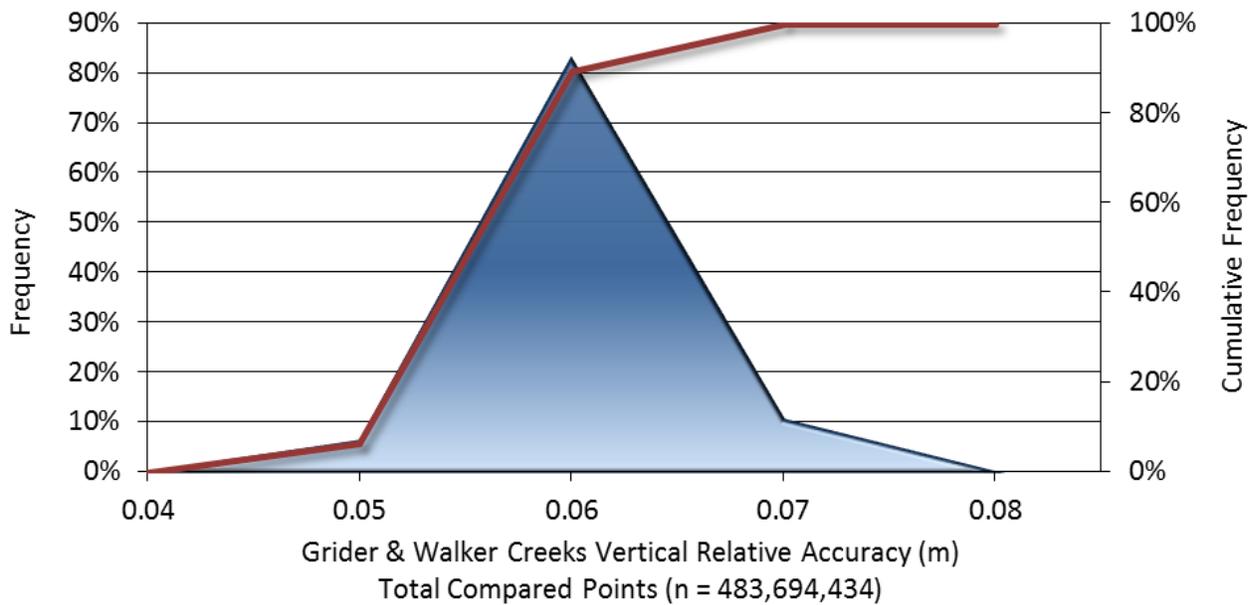
Relative Accuracy					
	Burney Hat Creek	Storrie Fire	Grider/Walker Creeks	Blacks Mountain Exp. Forest	Cumulative
<b>Sample</b>	394 surfaces	259 surfaces	47 surfaces	33 surfaces	733 surfaces
<b>Average</b>	0.041 m	0.045 m	0.055 m	0.036 m	0.042 m
<b>Median</b>	0.040 m	0.044m	0.054 m	0.036 m	0.042 m
<b>RMSE</b>	0.042 m	0.047 m	0.055 m	0.036 m	0.045 m
<b>Standard Deviation (1σ)</b>	0.007 m	0.008 m	0.004 m	0.003 m	0.008 m
<b>1.96σ</b>	0.013 m	0.016 m	0.007 m	0.005 m	0.016 m



**Figure 23: Frequency plot for relative vertical accuracy between flight lines in the Burney Hat Creek AOI**



**Figure 24: Frequency plot for relative vertical accuracy between flight lines in the Storrie Fire AOI**



**Figure 25: Frequency plot for relative vertical accuracy between flight lines in the Grider/Walker Creeks AOIs**

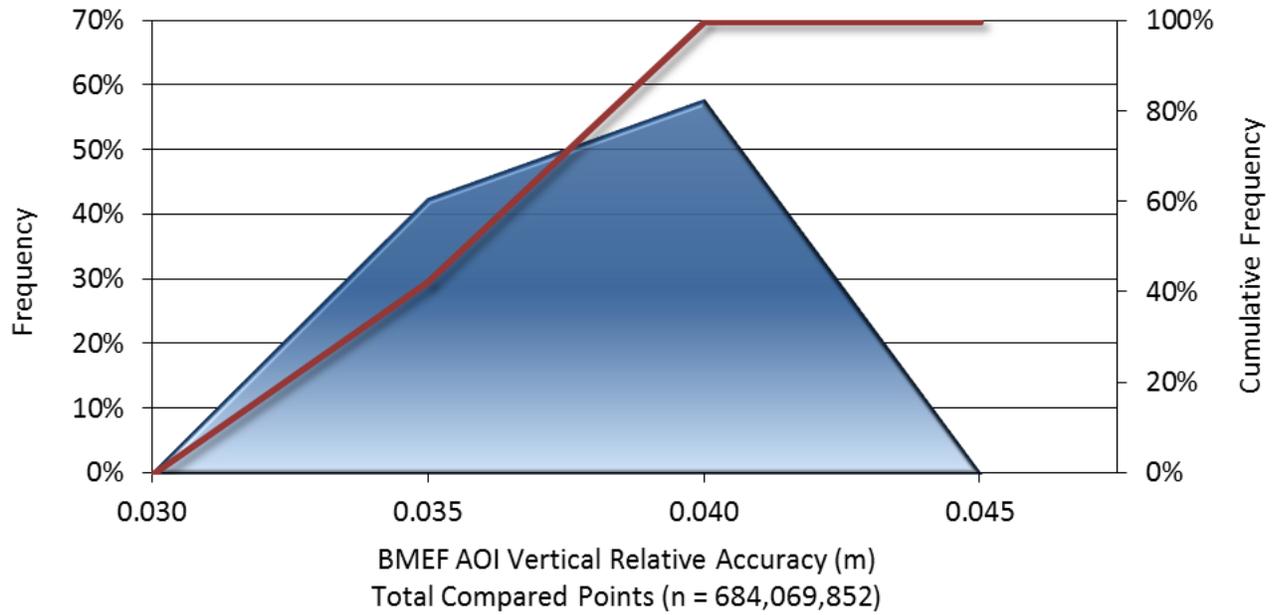


Figure 26: Frequency plot for relative vertical accuracy between flight lines in the BMEF AOI

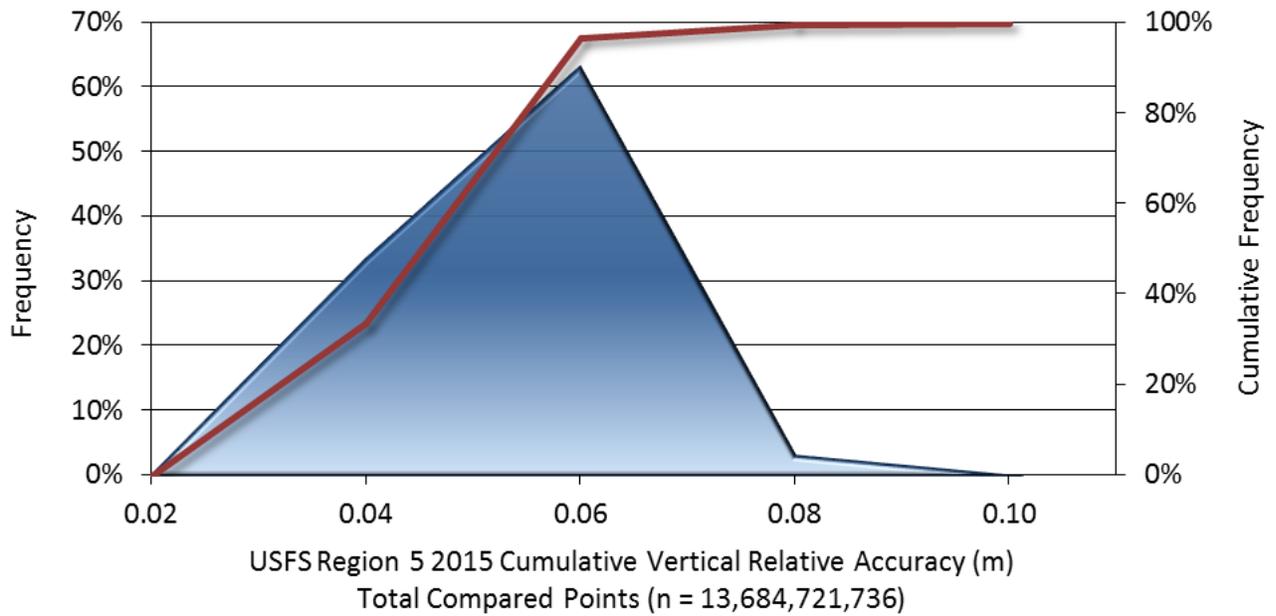


Figure 27: Frequency plot for cumulative relative vertical accuracy between flight lines

## CERTIFICATIONS

Quantum Spatial provided LiDAR services for the USFS Region 5 2015 project as described in this report.

I, Christopher Glantz, PLS, being duly registered as a Professional Land Surveyor in and by the state of California, hereby certify that the methodologies, static GNSS occupations used during airborne flights, and ground survey point collection were performed using commonly accepted Standard Practices. Field work conducted for this report was conducted between September 12, 2015 and October 26, 2015.

Accuracy statistics shown in the Accuracy Section of this Report have been reviewed by me and found to meet the "National Standard for Spatial Data Accuracy".

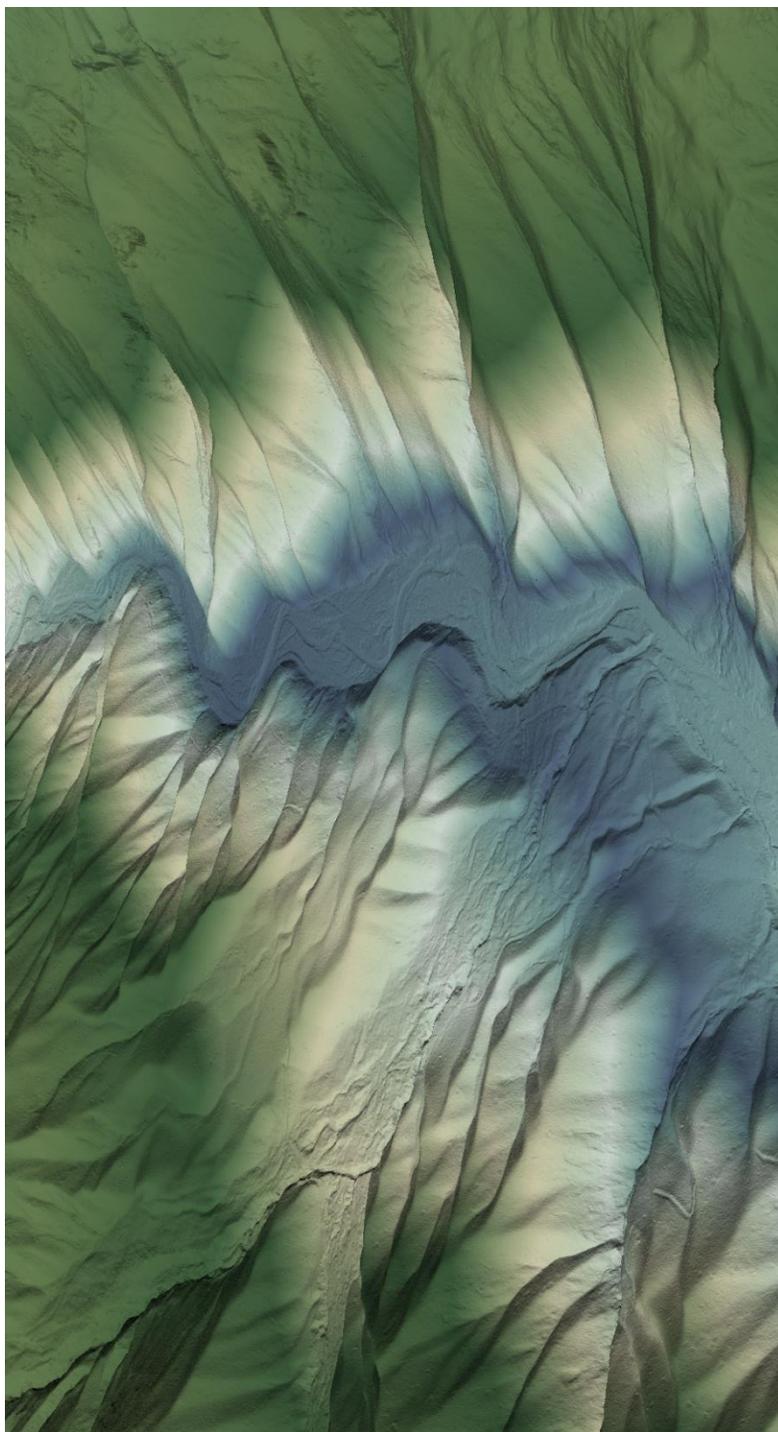


12/15/2015

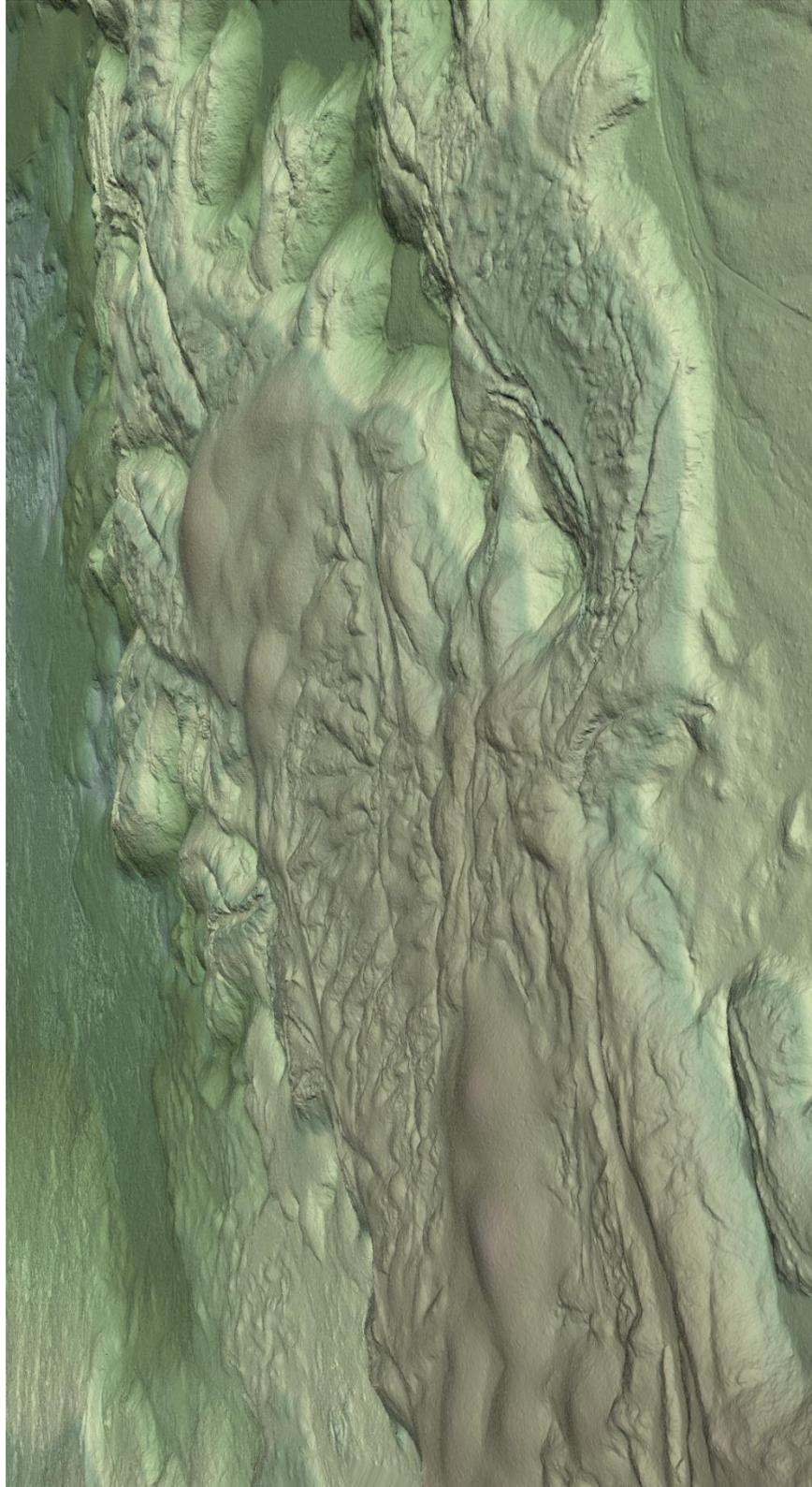
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Christopher Glantz, PLS  
Land Survey Manager  
Quantum Spatial, Inc.





**Figure 28:** This image shows a view of Grider Creek, displayed using the gridded bare earth model colored by elevation.



**Figure 29: A view looking north towards a lava flow on Potato Butte. This image was created from the gridded bare earth surface colored by elevation.**

**1-sigma ( $\sigma$ ) Absolute Deviation:** Value for which the data are within one standard deviation (approximately 68<sup>th</sup> percentile) of a normally distributed data set.

**1.96 \* RMSE Absolute Deviation:** Value for which the data are within two standard deviations (approximately 95<sup>th</sup> percentile) of a normally distributed data set, based on the FGDC standards for Fundamental Vertical Accuracy (FVA) reporting.

**Accuracy:** The statistical comparison between known (surveyed) points and laser points. Typically measured as the standard deviation ( $\sigma$ ) and root mean square error (RMSE).

**Absolute Accuracy:** The vertical accuracy of LiDAR data is described as the mean and standard deviation ( $\sigma$ ) of divergence of LiDAR point coordinates from ground survey point coordinates. To provide a sense of the model predictive power of the dataset, the root mean square error (RMSE) for vertical accuracy is also provided. These statistics assume the error distributions for x, y and z are normally distributed, and thus we also consider the skew and kurtosis of distributions when evaluating error statistics.

**Relative Accuracy:** Relative accuracy refers to the internal consistency of the data set; i.e., the ability to place a laser point in the same location over multiple flight lines, GPS conditions and aircraft attitudes. Affected by system attitude offsets, scale and GPS/IMU drift, internal consistency is measured as the divergence between points from different flight lines within an overlapping area. Divergence is most apparent when flight lines are opposing. When the LiDAR system is well calibrated, the line-to-line divergence is low (<10 cm).

**Root Mean Square Error (RMSE):** A statistic used to approximate the difference between real-world points and the LiDAR points. It is calculated by squaring all the values, then taking the average of the squares and taking the square root of the average.

**Data Density:** A common measure of LiDAR resolution, measured as points per square meter.

**Digital Elevation Model (DEM):** File or database made from surveyed points, containing elevation points over a contiguous area. Digital terrain models (DTM) and digital surface models (DSM) are types of DEMs. DTMs consist solely of the bare earth surface (ground points), while DSMs include information about all surfaces, including vegetation and man-made structures.

**Intensity Values:** The peak power ratio of the laser return to the emitted laser, calculated as a function of surface reflectivity.

**Nadir:** A single point or locus of points on the surface of the earth directly below a sensor as it progresses along its flight line.

**Overlap:** The area shared between flight lines, typically measured in percent. 100% overlap is essential to ensure complete coverage and reduce laser shadows.

**Pulse Rate (PR):** The rate at which laser pulses are emitted from the sensor; typically measured in thousands of pulses per second (kHz).

**Pulse Returns:** For every laser pulse emitted, the number of wave forms (i.e., echos) reflected back to the sensor. Portions of the wave form that return first are the highest element in multi-tiered surfaces such as vegetation. Portions of the wave form that return last are the lowest element in multi-tiered surfaces.

**Real-Time Kinematic (RTK) Survey:** A type of surveying conducted with a GPS base station deployed over a known monument with a radio connection to a GPS rover. Both the base station and rover receive differential GPS data and the baseline correction is solved between the two. This type of ground survey is accurate to 1.5 cm or less.

**Post-Processed Kinematic (PPK) Survey:** GPS surveying is conducted with a GPS rover collecting concurrently with a GPS base station set up over a known monument. Differential corrections and precisions for the GNSS baselines are computed and applied after the fact during processing. This type of ground survey is accurate to 1.5 cm or less.

**Scan Angle:** The angle from nadir to the edge of the scan, measured in degrees. Laser point accuracy typically decreases as scan angles increase.

**Native LiDAR Density:** The number of pulses emitted by the LiDAR system, commonly expressed as pulses per square meter.

# APPENDIX A - ACCURACY CONTROLS

## Relative Accuracy Calibration Methodology:

**Manual System Calibration:** Calibration procedures for each mission require solving geometric relationships that relate measured swath-to-swath deviations to misalignments of system attitude parameters. Corrected scale, pitch, roll and heading offsets were calculated and applied to resolve misalignments. The raw divergence between lines was computed after the manual calibration was completed and reported for each survey area.

**Automated Attitude Calibration:** All data were tested and calibrated using TerraMatch automated sampling routines. Ground points were classified for each individual flight line and used for line-to-line testing. System misalignment offsets (pitch, roll and heading) and scale were solved for each individual mission and applied to respective mission datasets. The data from each mission were then blended when imported together to form the entire area of interest.

**Automated Z Calibration:** Ground points per line were used to calculate the vertical divergence between lines caused by vertical GPS drift. Automated Z calibration was the final step employed for relative accuracy calibration.

## LiDAR accuracy error sources and solutions:

Type of Error	Source	Post Processing Solution
GPS (Static/Kinematic)	Long Base Lines	None
	Poor Satellite Constellation	None
	Poor Antenna Visibility	Reduce Visibility Mask
Relative Accuracy	Poor System Calibration	Recalibrate IMU and sensor offsets/settings
	Inaccurate System	None
Laser Noise	Poor Laser Timing	None
	Poor Laser Reception	None
	Poor Laser Power	None
	Irregular Laser Shape	None

## Operational measures taken to improve relative accuracy:

**Low Flight Altitude:** Terrain following was employed to maintain a constant above ground level (AGL). Laser horizontal errors are a function of flight altitude above ground (about 1/3000<sup>th</sup> AGL flight altitude).

**Focus Laser Power at narrow beam footprint:** A laser return must be received by the system above a power threshold to accurately record a measurement. The strength of the laser return (i.e., intensity) is a function of laser emission power, laser footprint, flight altitude and the reflectivity of the target. While surface reflectivity cannot be controlled, laser power can be increased and low flight altitudes can be maintained.

**Reduced Scan Angle:** Edge-of-scan data can become inaccurate. The scan angle was reduced to a maximum of  $\pm 16-19^\circ$  from nadir, creating a narrow swath width and greatly reducing laser shadows from trees and buildings.

**Quality GPS:** Flights took place during optimal GPS conditions (e.g., 6 or more satellites and PDOP [Position Dilution of Precision] less than 3.0). Before each flight, the PDOP was determined for the survey day. During all flight times, a dual frequency DGPS base station recording at 1 second epochs was utilized and a maximum baseline length between the aircraft and the control points was less than 13 nm at all times.

**Ground Survey:** Ground survey point accuracy (<1.5 cm RMSE) occurs during optimal PDOP ranges and targets a minimal baseline distance of 4 miles between GPS rover and base. Robust statistics are, in part, a function of sample size (n) and distribution. Ground survey points are distributed to the extent possible throughout multiple flight lines and across the survey area.

**50% Side-Lap (100% Overlap):** Overlapping areas are optimized for relative accuracy testing. Laser shadowing is minimized to help increase target acquisition from multiple scan angles. Ideally, with a 50% side-lap, the nadir portion of one flight line coincides with the swath edge portion of overlapping flight lines. A minimum of 50% side-lap with terrain-followed acquisition prevents data gaps.

**Opposing Flight Lines:** All overlapping flight lines have opposing directions. Pitch, roll and heading errors are amplified by a factor of two relative to the adjacent flight line(s), making misalignments easier to detect and resolve.