Accuracy Assessment for the Vegetation Map at Rock Creek Park

The accuracy assessment plots were completed in 1998, using 4 employees who were all familiar with the Park and the vegetation in it and who were experienced in identification and the scientific process. The protocol was developed in-house using NBS/NPS guidelines. Plots were randomly chosen using ArcView random sampling routine. 265 plots were chosen in 11 vegetation types, with 6 to 49 plots per type, depending on the amount of land the veg. types occupied and the patch sizes within the type. The randomly selected coordinates were loaded into GPS units as waypoints so that we could navigate to the chosen sites. Then each plot was GPSed (to assure we were close enough to the chosen point). All data was entered into the GPS unit. The unit automatically recorded lat., long., elevation, datum, etc. Data fields included:

Observer
Date
Park Code
Plot Number
Topographic position
Aspect
Veg. Assoc. (determined by the species and their relative dominance in the canopy as well as other veg. Characteristics)
Alternate veg. Assoc. (some of them were similar enough to be confusing)
Veg. Assoc. within 50m.
Canopy closure (5% increments)
Major species
Rationale for choice, if there was any doubt.

These plots were relatively quick, once you got there. They were often hard to find; sometimes navigating with the GPS unit was difficult or impossible because signals could not be maintained. About 2/3 of the plots were read by 3 people working full time for 4 weeks (weather permitting). One person worked half-time (+) for 10 weeks (with the full-time crew, then alone) finishing the rest of the plots and verifying plots about which there were questions.