





Edition 8

Information Technology and Mapping for Countryside & Conservation

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"To find new things, take the path you took yesterday"

London

Good advice quoted on the 'Walk London' website www.walklondon.org.uk from the American naturalist John Burroughs, but rarely an option for us in the fast changing world of IT. Our latest project is leading us into new geographic and technical territories.

Late in 2006 we were asked if we could survey several hundreds of kilometres of walking

trails across London, provide the results in a bespoke asset management system and publish the results live through a map based, web interface. A few months later our first surveyors were in the field and LAMS – the 'London Access Management System' was coming on line.

Using the exeGesIS 'Path Surveyor' application, the survey team captured data on 24,000 features with 15,000 images. LAMS has a desktop component allowing trail managers to undertake detailed analysis and reporting and an advanced web viewer application based on Microsoft's© Virtual Earth™ (VE).

This project brings together the functionality and power of

desktop MapInfo, the outstanding map and aerial imagery resources of the VE platform and an open source development environment to offer a very cost efficient solution. Project Manager Gary Cliffe, reports that "we approached exeGesIS as we knew they had UK leading experience in both path survey and spatial data management. We have nonetheless been impressed with the way they were able to work with us to evolve the brief and with their open and friendly approach to business".

The next step in the project is to integrate the LAMS web application into the Walk London website, allowing users highly flexible searches with information returned as maps, text and images – and even perhaps an option to use the 3D fly through capabilities of VE.

Important Plant Areas in Wales

Plantlife International, a respected charity dedicated to conserving all forms of plant life in their natural habitats, approached exeGesIS to help them with the visualisation of 'Important Plant Areas' in Wales and with the identification of habitat expansion areas.

Combining the in-depth specialist knowledge of Plantlife Cymru staff and the spatial data expertise of exeGesIS, has produced valuable information to guide future conservation work. No technology challenges here – just using the power of GIS to take a significant step forward in conservation work.



Image supplied by Plantlife Internation







Who are we?

exeGesIS is an IT and environmental consultancy. We are specialists in digital mapping, geographic information systems, database and web applications, data capture and survey.

Our 21 strong team of consultants and developers are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and professional and they really do enjoy (well most of the time anyway) helping clients to get the most out of their IT solutions.

Over the last 12 years we have developed strong working relationships with just about all of the major countryside organisations in the UK as well as many of the smaller and charitable ones and as such many of you will know us well. However if our name is new to you, then please check us out by visiting www.esdm.co.uk.

If you prefer not to receive future newsletters, wish to change contact details or become a newsletter recipient, please email your request to xginfo@esdm.co.uk





Current News

MapInfo News



exeGesIS is a 'platform neutral' GIS consultancy – that is to say our products and services are not tied to any one GIS Premier Partner application and as a result we can provide independent advice on what will

work best for your organisation. As well as being an ESRI business partner we are also one of just 4 MapInfo Premier Partners in the UK, allowing us to provide best value services and software.

MapInfo V9.0 Released

With the release of MapInfo Professional v9.0, MapInfo have also introduced MATS - Maintenance and Technical Support. MATS is now included in the software buy price and provides for an annual software upgrade and a years technical support. V9.0 adds features to generate better looking maps including curved labelling, several productivity enhancements and increased analysis capabilities.

MapInfo Training - Chilled

Our head office training suite is spacious and well equipped and as of this summer is also fully air conditioned. Although this might make our courses even more chilled, don't expect the super-cooled effect you get in some offices - air conditioning uses a lot of power and as a company trying to be environmentally responsible, we will be using it only when it's really needed.

Training course dates are published on our website at www.esdm.co.uk/training.asp and we also provide on-site GIS training. 99% of trainees have rated our trainers as 'excellent' or 'good' (over three-quarters gave an 'excellent' rating) and we are working hard on the other 1%!

Training prices range from £95 to £135 per person per day for a maximum size group of 5.

www.esdm.co.uk/training.asp Carol Bateman : (01874) 713066 : carolb@esdm.co.uk

Multi-user editing for MapInfo and ArcGIS

Free 5 **License Pack**

It is taken for granted nowadays that data management applications will allow multiple users to edit at the same time.

Well GIS applications can be like this too, without huge investments in RDBMS and licensing, using the exeGesIS multi-user editing tool, known as "MultiEdit".

Designed for MapInfo Professional and ESRI ArcGIS, the tool overcomes the traditional limitation where one editing user locks the layer for everyone else. It works by handling all edits in small temporary layers which are then committed back to the master dataset on saving, with feature-level locking and metadata record stamping. While perhaps not as richly featured as full Oracle Spatial or ArcSDE with ArcEditor, the exeGesIS MultiEdit tool is powerful, easy to use, and provides excellent value for money.

We think MultiEdit deserve more exposure, so we are giving away 20 x 5-licence MultiEdit packs (list price £808 each excluding VAT) - no small print or catches, just email your request to carolb@esdm.co.uk

www.esdm.co.uk/multiusereditor.asp Tobi Tonner : (01874) 713070 : tobit@esdm.co.uk

Microsoft Certified Partner

We are pleased to announce that we have been accepted as a Microsoft Certified Partner for another year. This ensures us access to current (and pre-release) versions of Microsoft's software meaning that we can be ready to make use of new

technologies as they become available. It also gives us access to specialist support from Microsoft's technical staff for those "hard to track down" issues!



New Release Field Surveyor V4

Field Surveyor is a highly customisable map-based, mobile survey application for PDAs. Just 1 year old and using the latest technology it is already being used for surveying trees and woodlands, footpaths and signage, public open spaces, power lines, vegetation, pollution control

and biological recording. New features include:

- Survey statistics
- •Long list and signature controls
- Related record linking
- Graphic object copying (useful for Mastermap polygons)
- GPS precision feedback

Along with the core functions such as:

- Ability to handle 100,000 records
- Fully data driven from design allowing user configuration for any type of survey • High volume basemap handling including
- .ecw and .sid progressive raster formats • Collect data in a fully relational structure
- Eye readable data formats which load simply into MS Office Products
- Record cloning and full graphic editing • 'Sticky' and default value fields with auto data validation

Did you know that you can now use species lists containing thousands of records with ease and include signature fields which can be used, for example, to prove that a landowner has given authority to enter land along with all of the standard data controls.

For a product insight, please send your survey specification and we will be happy to setup a demo configuration matching your exact requirements.

New PDAs releases

PDA development is moving on in leaps and bounds with an ever increasing range of units. The most exciting new features include breaking the 2Gb data card limit – allowing users to take complete aerial photography coverage into the field, improved clarity screens, increased memory providing stability benefits and the greatly improved Windows Mobile 6. WM 6 resolves the age old Bluetooth memory problems, thus ensuring that connections to Bluetooth GPS units and other peripherals are never dropped.

The other exciting area is the release of more Windows Mobile 6, PDA phones with integrated GPS, all of which will run Field Surveyor whilst opening up opportunities to use live web data and map services - watch this space for our new developments in this area...

Tony Pettitt: (01874) 713061 : tonyp@esdm.co.uk



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CAMS for countryside and trail access management

The Countryside Access Management System

CAMSV5 – Updated

CAMS is the comprehensive solution for managing public rights of way, trails, green space and in fact almost anything to do with public access. An expanding client base already over 80 strong, confirms its position as the UK market leader. exeGesIS also offers countryside access consultancy services to any public sector organisations.

Countryside Access & GIS

Most authorities are now using GIS in some form to map their rights of way and public open spaces. By adding other readily available data and using some of the analytical power of GIS, it is possible to generate new and useful information. Here are 3 of the techniques we have recently been using:

1. Gradient mapping

By adding height data and dividing each link of a path network into short sections (say 10m long), we can calculate the gradient of every section and the steepest and average gradient of every path link. This allows you to present simple accessibility information to the public by colour mapping the links according to their gradient. The results can also help path managers to decide where it makes most sense to make accessibility improvements such as replacing stiles with gates or gaps. Gradient mapping for any size network can be undertaken for a fixed cost of £550, with results returned for use directly in your GIS. We also calculate the true

'slope length' of your path network - i.e the length taking into account all the ups and downs.

2. Density mapping

A simple, but revealing technique is to calculate the length of path in every 1 km square across your authority and then colour map each square according to the result. By doing this for different status paths you quickly get a revealing view of relative levels of provision. Ask your GIS staff to show you how.

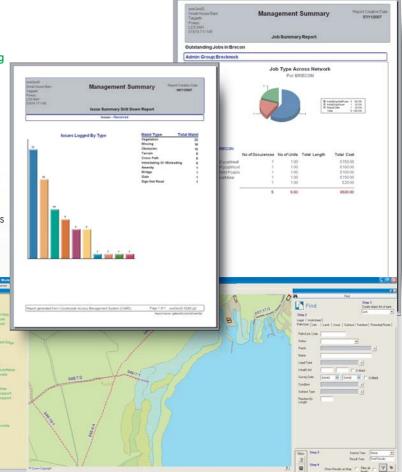
3. Measuring Access Provision

Ensuring equality of provision of public paths and access to public open space is high on the political agenda and GIS provides the means to both visualise and measure provision.

Although density mapping does this in a basic way, it isn't really able to measure peoples access to paths – (for instance you can live close to a good path network, but not be able to reach it if it's on the other side of a motorway). Using network analysis software, it is possible to measure the length of connected paths actually available to each household and then use population data to work out the numbers of people and households that are well provided for or under provided for.

Working in partnership with Paul Harris of Oxfordshire CC we have done just this. Paul reports "in helping to identify weaknesses and opportunities in the network, this type of spatial analysis is really helping us to plan our access work strategically".

For further information contact: Jon Young : (01874) 713068 : jony@esdm.co.uk



CAMS V5.2 released

Almost everyone has now successfully upgraded to v5.2 and several new authorities have joined the CAMS user community. The latest version has many useful new features, such as the ability to save filters and to analyse furniture and issues on promoted routes. There are also several new reports that include interactive graphics allowing you to 'drill down' from management level summary information through to the underlying detail.

The CAMS team are happy to produce customised reports and we will soon be setting up a service to allow users to share and swap their most useful reports.

CAMS Training

CAMS training courses are run throughout the year at our head office and can also be delivered on site. Current courses include Foundation / Update, Intermediate, Administrator, Survey Manager & Path Surveyor.

More information about CAMS

To download an information pack or view a demonstration please visit www.esdm.co.uk/camsdemo.asp

ww.esdm.co.uk/cams.asp

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HBSMR v3.5

HBSMR is the industry-leading data management solution for Historic Environment Records (HERs). Developed in partnership with English Heritage, the system is used to manage heritage data across most of the UK.

HBSMR Product News

It's been another busy year for the HBSMR team, with the highlight being our work with English Heritage to link HBSMR to the Heritage Gateway – more on this below. But first our other news, and a sample of the projects we have been working on recently... • We are pleased to welcome Steve Ellwood to the team. Steve comes from the Greater London SMR where he was the SMR Officer, and before taking up archaeology he worked in IT. • The National Trust's centralised HBSMR system goes from strength to strength, with more regional users being trained to access and use the live system, and a new system administrator (Alison Lane) in post.



• We will soon be undertaking pre-migration data checks and/or installations of HBSMR for the following new clients: Highland Council, City of York Council, and Gloucestershire County Council.

• We are building an HBSMR-web site for Kent County Council, working in partnership with their GIS development team to use ArcGIS Server for the mapping component.

• We have recently installed HBSMR for Coventry City and the Isle of Wight.

The HBSMR Gateway to your Historic Environment Record...

MIDAS-XML Public Access

Data Mining Web2.0 Heritage

Outreach Gateway XML HTTP Images

Archaeology

SOAP Survey

Buildings e-Government GIS Research

Interoperable Professional enquiries XSLT

Education www Database Excavation

BSMR

Web Services

One of the biggest challenges facing the Heritage Gateway project (www.heritagegateway.org.uk) was how to get the local and regional HERs linked up. Well this problem is solved for HBSMR users by the new "HBSMR Gateway" system. Running on a web server, either in-house or hosted by us, the HBSMR Gateway is a "web service" that can be called by other web sites and/or desktop applications. The Heritage Gateway portal talks to all the

HBSMR Gateways, which return the requested data from each area. Three HBSMR sites are on-line already: Cambridgeshire, Essex and Norfolk, with several more to be linked up soon. As well as publishing data through the Heritage Gateway, the HBSMR Gateway can also communicate with other web, desktop or mobile applications, transforming and presenting the data in a manner appropriate to the context. See for example how Norfolk's data is presented in different ways in the Heritage

Gateway and the Norfolk Heritage Explorer

(www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk), even though both are calling the same HBSMR Gateway.

The Heritage Gateway project covers only England at this time, but the HBSMR Gateway has much wider value; for example we are already using it in building web-based access to the Western Isles Sites and Monuments Record (watch this space). The true potential of the HBSMR Gateway will emerge with time, and real-world uses could include:

• Publishing data through one or more web sites, including the Heritage Gateway.

• Allowing students and academics to query HERs through HBSMR Gateway for research purposes.

• New portals / mash-ups that query multiple HBSMR

Gateways and integrate results with other datasets.

• Automated constraint checking for land management where data is not more closely available.

• Allowing HBSMR users to search neighbouring datasets, and integrate results with their own data.

• Allowing GIS "i" (info) tools to query the HBSMR Gateway and display rich data to the user.

• Streaming data to mobile phones and/or portable computers based on their location, with potential for fieldworker and tourism.

Overall the HBSMR Gateway keeps HERs at the cutting edge of IT, meets the goals of e-Government, and provides new ways of delivering information and services to a wider audience.

www.esdm.co.uk/hbsmr.asp Crispin Flower : (01874) 713072 : crispinf@esdm.co.uk



TMS - A web-based approach

TMS is a new web-based solution for managing:

- Street trees
- Woodland
- Trees in parks & public spaces
- Veteran trees and ancient woodland
- Protected trees (TPOs)

TMS WebOffice

TMS WebOffice has now had time to mature and so we are now focussed on implementing new functionality. Over the last 6 months the product has been enhanced with a wide range of new features and usability improvements including:

- thematic mapping
- an extended administrator management interface
- improved field survey device synchronisation
- and many more exciting features

Recent sales include Leeds City Council with 15 concurrent licenses to be used by up to 25 staff for both Amenity Tree and Woodland Management across the Authority including Parks and Gardens, Highways and Housing. Leeds will be the largest user of the system and are the second largest local authority in the UK serving a population of approximately 800,000. The Authority manages over 1,200 hectares of woodland along with extensive green-space all of which will be handled using TMS WebOffice and TMS Field Surveyor.

We have also secured a significant sale for managing nine high profile estates across the UK where the web browser basis for the product will ensure that the data for the many remote sites can be managed in a coherent, cost effective and consistent manner by internal staff and outside contractors.

The Tree & Woodland Management Team

www.esdm.co.uk/tms.asp Tony Pettitt : (01874) 713061 : tonyp@esdm.co.uk

Web Mapping - Virtual Earth and Google Maps

We have recently completed a number of projects using the mapping available from Google (www.maps.google.co.uk) or Microsoft© Virtual Earth™ (www.maps.live.com). Both services are similar and offer free use of their mapping (with the likelihood of advertising being added in the future) providing that websites using their mapping are publicly available. There are options for paid service level agreements if you want to guarantee to avoid advertising, or if you need to restrict access.

The great thing about these services is that they offer road mapping combined with aerial photography, making putting your mapping data on the web more affordable than ever by avoiding large hosting and map data licensing costs. Although we have used both services, we have focussed on Microsoft's VE service for the simple reason that they presently have better detailed aerial imagery for areas outside of cities. Using either system users can get additional information, and access to hyperlinks, thumbnail images etc by clicking on a map object of interest.

Why would anyone ever pay for their own hosted mapping if they can use this?

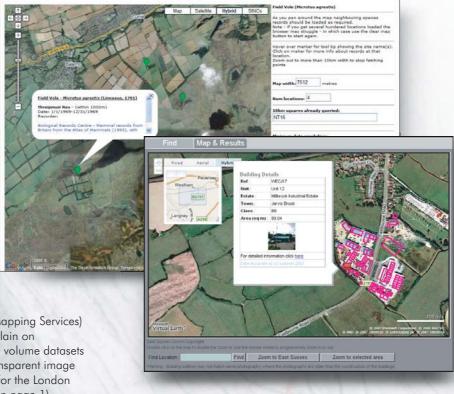
The above solutions are an enormous step forward and have certainly made mapping datasets possible for many individuals and organisations that could never have afforded it before, but there are times when your own server based solution and use of Ordnance Survey map data for instance can be preferable.

Please call us if you would like to know more or to understand what the best solution is for your web mapping requirement.

OK – so that's the background maps – how do I get my data to display?

There are a couple of ways that data can be displayed onto the background maps and the most appropriate method really depends on the type and volume of your data. It's possible to display points (or simple boundaries) by displaying them as a layer within your browser. We adopted this approach in the WIMBY project for Scottish Natural Heritage (www.snhwimby.org.uk), where species records were returned by the National Biodiversity Network gateway (www.searchnbn.net) and then displayed over Google map data. This is great for low volumes of data as it gives a nice interactive feel to the data - but as the objects are being rendered in layers in your browser, there is a limit of about 200 objects before your browser will start to grind a bit.

For higher volumes of data we use WMS (Web Mapping Services) to serve out a layer of data that can then be overlain on background mapping. This works well with large volume datasets as all that is arriving at the client browser is a transparent image of the data layer. This is the system we adopted for the London Access Management (LAMs) project (see article on page 1).



James Perrins : (01874) 713080 : jamesp@esdm.co.uk

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CMS V7

CMS is a tool that helps you to rationally plan your site management and then goes on to provide all the recording and data management you need to manage, monitor and report on your sites. Supported by a consortium of leading conservation organisations CMS was first developed in 1988 and now has an ever-expanding client base across the UK and overseas.

Price cut for CMS software

With around 100 active user organisations and over 400 licenses, the CMS approach to management planning has never been stronger. We know though that there are still many smaller or less well funded organisations that are keen to adopt it, but have simply not been able to afford to do so. The CMS Consortium, which remains committed to spreading good management planning practise, has therefore asked us to reduce the software pricing by 25%. The new pricing has immediate effect. A single license now costs £750 (£563 for Consortium members) and additional licenses cost less.

CMSMini – a new addition to the CMS suite

In response to suggestions that full CMS has more functionality than is sometimes needed for managing smaller sites, we are developing CMSMini - a much simplified version of CMS without the planning elements. CMSMini can still be used with the popular MapLink and LibraryLink add-ons and can also be upgraded to full CMS. A 1st license costs £250, with additional licenses costing less.

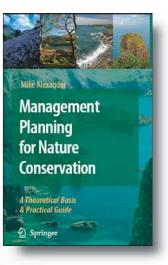
CMSConnect - for outworkers

Many people use CMS to prepare work programmes for field staff and volunteers, but in the past have had to resort to hard copies to communicate these. CMSConnect keeps a record of outworkers and automatically generates work programs for them using Microsoft Excel. These are then emailed to workers, who also use them to record their activities. On return the updated records are automatically imported back into CMS, keeping everything up to date. A 1st license costs £500 and can be used to manage work programmes for any number of outworkers.

A Recommended Read

Mike Alexander has just published "Management Planning for Nature Conservation", an excellent addition to the literature that combines key theories with real life practice, but then goes further to provide a detailed and practical guide to producing a plan. Mike has been at the forefront of developing practical approaches to conservation planning for many years and is also a member of the CMS Consortium management team.

The book is published by Springer, ISBN 978-1-4020-6580-4



Giant Strides for Site Management Plans

Most site managers are acutely aware of the need to have management plans for their conservation and amenity sites, but often struggle to find the time and resources to prepare them. Conservation plans are critically important in understanding sites and defining appropriate management, but this is really just the first step. Acting on the plan, recording activities and reviewing outcomes is what really creates plans that are dynamic and useful.

Using a combination of field visits and workshop sessions, our newly established conservation planning team can help you to prepare and implement plans quickly and efficiently.











We prefer to work alongside your specialist staff with 'on the ground' knowledge, and to use our expertise to collate information, identify key features and to prepare the plan itself. This particular approach relieves local staff of much of the burden involved in plan preparation, but uses their knowledge to the full and builds plan ownership.

We have successfully adopted this approach with the National Trust in Northern Ireland where we helped to prepare plans for 20 major sites, including the Giants Causeway. Regional Conservation Advisor, Phil Davidson, said that "working with exeGesIS has proved an effective way to get our management plans up and going and their approach of working alongside our staff has made the whole process more inclusive and stimulting".

A unique part of our service is that we hand over a complete management planning software system containing your plan. This provides you with the tools needed to implement and monitor your planned projects, to centralise all site records and to keep the whole plan up to date.

If you are interested in creating dynamic and practical plans for your countryside sites then please visit www.esdm.co.uk/conservationplans or contact David Mitchel.

www.esdm.co.uk/cms.asp David Mitchel : (01874) 713077 : davidm@esdm.co.uk







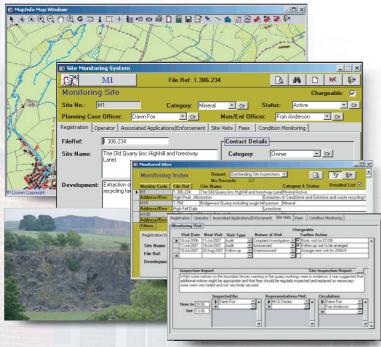




PACS for development control and planning The Planning Application Control System

PACS

The Planning Application Control System is a complete text and map management system for: development & building control, enforcement & appeals and land charges. Well established and with an active user group, PACS provides a low-cost solution to the management of development control and planning information.



Site Monitoring Module

A new Site Monitoring product has just been released by our Planning team targeting the needs of Development Control, Enforcement, Building Control, Environmental Protection, Minerals & Waste and other officers responsible for site monitoring. The system functions as a stand alone product or as a module within the PACS suite of software.

Site Monitor integrates:

- Recording of details such as:
 - o basic site information
 - o site visits
 - o meeting minutes/action
 - o income generation
 - o planning condition monitoring
- Advanced MapInfo/ArcGIS mapping module
- Document and image handling
- Easy customised report generation
- Data filtering and search

The system includes as standard a wide range of features from the rest of the Planning suite of products, including:

Audit trails, quick search, rapid record paging, automatic reference generation along with System Administrator options such as in-situ dropdown list editing, user defined report generation etc.

The product family is supported by a very active user group with regular meetings, ensuring that all users have direct input into the systems development direction and functionality.

www.esdm.co.uk/pacs.asp Carol Bateman on (01874) 713066

LibraryLink Integrated Image and Document Management for GIS

What is LibraryLink?

LibraryLink is a digital image and document management system that integrates seamlessly with MapInfo Pro or ESRI ArcGIS. LibraryLink can be used in all situations where effective digital asset management is required in combination with databases or GIS.

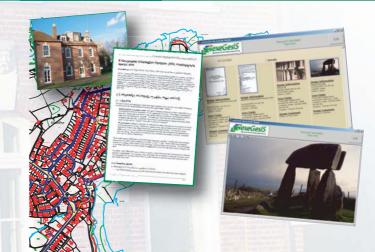
How does LibraryLink help?

Digital images, documents, spreadsheets, databases and digital mapping applications need to inter-relate to inform day-to-day business processes. LibraryLink brings all these digital assets together by making them accessible from within your normal GIS or database working environment.

Features:

- Full multi-user viewing and editing over networks
- Viewer and Editor options available
- Data storage in Microsoft Access database or Microsoft SQL Server
- Compatible with Microsoft Terminal Services and Citrix Metaframe
- Share your linked documents and images within your organisation with LibraryLink WebView

www.esdm.co.uk/librarylink.asp Tobi Tonner: (01874) 713070 : tobit@esdm.co.uk



Map: © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100/300/305 Key Functionality:

- Maintains a searchable and publishable catalogue of your digital assets, including metadata such as annotation and keywords
- •Links any number of digital images and documents to individual GIS records and handles hundreds of image and document file formats
- Provides advanced image processing tools

Recent Projects

Land, Coast & Marine

exeGesIS has a busy GIS services section undertaking all forms of data capture & data processing. Contracts range from the simple digitising of path networks, through to projects that combine data from disparate sources to create coherent, national scale datasets.



One such project recently undertaken has been the building of a 'vegetated shingle' inventory for Natural England - the Government's advisor on the conservation of the natural environment and its enjoyment. Our consultants, in partnership with habitat specialists have been able to bring together existing partial data, aerial photography interpretation and paper based reports to provide the client with the information they need to monitor and conserve this important but often overlooked coastal habitat.

Sue Rees of Natural England commended the approach "the exeGesIS tender was very good value and also offered the services of a team that combined in depth GIS technical skills with and a good understanding of Natural England's requirements". Led by Dr James Perrins, exeGesIS also offers coastal zone and marine habitat surveys and data management.

James Perrins : (01874) 713080 : jamesp@esdm.co.uk



The shaded area shows houses within the 400m greenspace target – as measured along the access network in black.

Greenspace Mapping

Greenspaces are the 'green lungs' of our towns and cities. They contribute to improving people's physical and mental health by providing places for informal recreation. Ensuring all communities have adequate provision is high on the agenda and a range of 'target standards' have been prepared. For example, 'every household should have some form of natural and accessible greenspace within 400m'.

Working with a number of local authorities, under a project led by the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and part funded by the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Programme, exeGesIS were able to build comprehensive and consistent greenspace datasets - making good use of MasterMap data, aerial imagery and workshops with authority staff. This dataset was used to assess whether the target standards were met. Network analysis techniques were employed to ensure the shortest walking distances from every postcode area, to the nearest greenspace could be identified and measured.

The results showed that whilst the total area of greenspace in the region was generally high, it often wasn't near to, or accessible from the residential areas. Because of this even in the best served area, some 25% of the population fell outside the 400m target.

Project Officer Kerry Rogers, from CCW, said: "Ensuring that everyone has access to greenspace should be a central part of town planning. This project has shown how existing data and knowledge can be brought together, with advanced GIS techniques, to produce information planners can draw on to develop and implement appropriate policies."

Jon Young : (01874) 713068 : jony@esdm.co.uk

New Faces and New Opportunities

In response to ever increasing user numbers we have recruited David Bennett and Timothy Derbyshire to the CAMS team and Steve Ellwood to the HBSMR team. Colin Bertram has also recently joined us to look after our spatial data capture and processing projects.

Although we now have a team of 21, we are always interested in hearing from anyone that offers in depth skills and experience in our work areas.

Contact Jon Young in the first instance for an informal chat.

See www.esdm.co.uk/StaffInfo.asp for more details.

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