

Sonoma Vegetation and Habitat Mapping Map Kick-off Meeting

12/13/2012

Question and Answer Session Notes

Q: Are you collecting information about who is linking or downloading the high resolution imagery to catch user information and user interests?

A: Tom explained that the imagery is served and does not need to be downloaded. He suggested that maybe the District could add a survey for folks hitting the imagery to fill out.

Q: Regarding the add-on options to the funded scope, do some of the non-LIDAR options require LIDAR?

A: The options are structured and the costs have been estimated both with and without LIDAR. Sonoma is the only county in Bay Area without LIDAR.

Q: How are urban areas going to play into the project? One acre is too large to be useful for urban.

A: If the pervious/impervious map option is funded, it will have a much smaller minimum mapping unit (MMU) than 1 acre. The District is not requesting a smaller MMU for non-urban areas because a resulting map with a smaller MMU would be too difficult to use. With or without additional funding for the pervious/impervious option, we need to determine how we will map vegetation within the urban window and we look forward to input from the community. Vegetation and Remote Sensing Advisory Committee member Todd Keeler Wolf mentioned that it is cost effective to have 1 acre MMU, but there will be special vegetation types which may require a more detailed MMU. Advisory Committee member Mark Rosenberg mentioned that urban canopy mapping is important especially when considering ecosystem services in urban areas and if the LIDAR option is funded the District should consider urban canopy mapping.

Q: In terms of the existing data to be used in the mapping process, will the program include fixing errors found in the existing data?

A: In most cases, not. However, if a data layer is very valuable (i.e. highly predictive of vegetation class), and the errors are small, we will consider fixing it.

Q: It was mentioned that historical land use maps can often be inputs into the mapping process. How will they be used?

A: Arthur Dawson (Baseline Consulting) will help us answer that.

Q: Have you thought of developing a protocol for getting information out to and getting information from the community?

A: Yes, this meeting and the web page are our first attempts at reaching out to the community. We want to reach out and make a larger splash. We want to communicate that this project is a magnet for information. We have developed a giant spreadsheet of contacts and we want to make it bigger, so any help in identifying folks who might be interested in the program is very welcome. We are building a digital infrastructure to enact this. Mark Tukman added that we are especially interested in integrating existing or on-going mapping information into the program and the mapping effort.

Q: If an organization is working on a vegetation map already, how can they get their data integrated into the District's program and can the source of the data be protected?

A: Please contact Tom Robinson (Tom.Robinson@sonoma-county.org) if you have data that you want to share with the District. And, yes, the source of the data and the source data itself can be protected.

Q: There are 45 vegetation types, but not many grassland types?

A: Currently there are not many grass types anticipated, but we will be incorporating the recent detailed data from the Coastal Prairie Mapping Project into this map.

Q: Will the development of the map be iterative? Will the classes change over time?

A: Over this year we will be developing the map classification scheme. This will involve a long process of working with the community to identify what classes need to be mapped. However, at a certain point the classification system will have to be finalized so that the map can be made. There will be iterations, but there will be a final classification scheme at some point. However, over time we hope to be able to keep the map current and the incorporate future changes in the classification system.

Q: State and Regional Parks are important and could be a very effective venue for communicating with the public and a great forum for citizen science. Will the maps indicate the location of the State and Regional Parks?

A: Yes. This is easy to implement.

Q: Can the parks link with the high resolution multi-spectral image serves being served by the District?

A: Yes, immediately.

Q: How does this program relate to ecosystem services work?

A: Karen Gaffney explained the ecosystem services project that the District is working on with other partners including Marin and San Mateo Counties and the Moore Foundation. She is excited about the idea of including the parks in the ecosystem services project. The first screening for the project will be based on land cover, so the vegetation cover map will be essential. More importantly, after the first screening, the map will help to determine the economic value of, for example, forests ecosystem services. If the LIDAR option is funded, when coupled with the vegetation map, it will help to map carbon biomass and estimate carbon sequestration.

Q: Will the map be raster or vector?

A: It will utilize raster imagery to create a vector vegetation type map.

Q: How does LIDAR improve pervious/impervious?

A: Because of the high spatial resolution of LIDAR imagery coupled with its ability to measure heights and distinguish the surface of vegetation and structures from the surface of the "bald earth", LIDAR is very helpful in improving the accuracy and reducing the costs of pervious/impervious mapping. Its ability to pierce vegetation is a great asset in precisely distinguishing vegetative cover from the sidewalks and buildings beneath the vegetative cover. New methods are continually being developed in the use of LIDAR in pervious/impervious mapping, and they are very exciting.

Q: Sudden Oak Death (SOD) is proliferating in some areas of Sonoma County. Will the mapping products from the vegetation map be kept current over time, making them usable for monitoring SOD?

A: Because USDA captures 1 meter resolution NAIP imagery every 2-3 years for the county, the District will be able to compare the Vegetation Mapping program's imagery with future collections of NAIP imagery allowing for the monitoring of SOD using change detection techniques.

Thank you all very much!