National mapping project using satellite imagery completed

A national mapping project of interest to members, Land Cover Database (LCDB1), has recently been completed.

LCDB1 utilised SPOT satellite imagery acquired over the summers of 1996 / 97 to classify 16 land cover types to a minimum mapping unit of 1 ha. The data is available as a ready to use digital GIS layer and contains over 151,000 polygon features. The file size is approximately 300MB.

This database is a first for New Zealand where the synoptic overview possible from satellite imagery enables a 'snap shot' of land cover to be recorded. Acquisition of another set of imagery is planned for October 2001 - March 2002. Once completed, trends in land cover can be assessed against the LCDB1 benchmark for a number of monitoring objectives.

The database was developed through collaboration of MAF, Ministry for the Environment, Department of Conservation and most regional councils. The project was managed by Steve Thompson, GIS / Remote Sensing analyst from Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

The Crown partners have selected Terralink NZ Ltd as database custodian and copies can be ordered at www.terralink.co.nz. A licence fee of $600 is charged to recover costs associated with archival, distribution and ongoing error correction of the data. More details will be released in October.

Strategic forest asset sale

A substantial commercial forest asset in Marlborough, New Zealand is to be sold, announced today by broker Forestmarkets.com Limited. Director Peter Read said Benhopai Forest was 'strategically significant' due to its size, age distribution and quality of its crop, and its proximity New Zealand's newest and deepest deepwater export port at Shakespeare Bay.

For sale is a controlling interest in the growing forest asset and 100% of freehold land title of approximately 2,000 hectares, to be promoted through the www.forestmarkets.com website.

Forest Fibre Solutions

A new arm of CHH, Forest Fibre Solutions, has started advertising around the country. They are offering expertise in purchasing and marketing wood, and in harvesting management to woodlot owners, farmers, and forestry companies. In addition to providing forestry expertise, they are also offering financial services, including fixed term pricing, short-term deposits and financing harvest roading.

Panel for West Coast review

The saga of Timberlands West Coast continues with Government establishing an "independent" panel to review an earlier DoC study of the Timberlands indigenous estate and make recommendations to the Government on the future management of the forest. While establishing an 'independent' panel to determine the fate of the forests, the Minister for the Environment has also predicted that a substantial area will be transferred to DoC, given that the DoC study had ranked more than 90 percent of the area as having medium or high conservation values.

The only two management options the panel will consider are:

- merging areas of the native forest into the existing conservation estate; or
- retaining areas of the native forest in Crown ownership as unalienated land, or
- Unallocated Crown Land (UCL).

Areas designated as UCL that the Government decides to dispose of will be offered first to Ngai Tahu.

Members of the panel are Forest and Bird director Dr Gerry McSweeney, natural heritage consultant Dr Les Molloy, former DOC West Coast conservator Bruce Watson, Westport farmer and former West Coast Conservation Board chairman Bruce Hamilton, and conservation consultant Mike Harding.

Cable Logging Workshops

The US company, Forest Engineering Inc is holding cable logging workshops in New Zealand and Australia during October. The purpose of the four-day workshop is to present the advantages and disadvantages of cable logging systems and also review the requirements in engineering design, technique and equipment systems that make cable logging productive.

The company says that with the increased concern for the forest environment and the increase in harvest costs, it is important that the most productive systems be utilised in the most efficient way to harvest timber. This means methods that are environmentally acceptable and economically feasible must be utilised correctly.

As the terrain conditions become more difficult due to slope or soil conditions and the soil constraints become more imposing due to harvest prescriptions, such as selective logging and partial suspension of the loads, it becomes more difficulty to maintain a physically possible harvest system.

The workshops and being held in Auckland from 9-12 October and at Tullamarine, Victoria, from 16-19 October. Each workshop will discuss various cable systems and their individual applications to conditions presented.

The advantages and disadvantages of each system will be discussed. The different techniques used to meet the environmental and economic requirements will be illustrated.

For more information, contact Forest Engineering Inc. in the US at Tel: 541-754-7558; Fax: 541-754-7559; or office@forestengineer.com