

Overview of the California Digital Conservation Atlas

What is it?

The California Digital Conservation Atlas is the first phase in a series of web-based mapping tools that the Legacy Project plans to create to support natural resource conservation planning. The Atlas is a web-based mapping application that will be publicly available for viewing, exploring and, in some instances, downloading natural resource and conservation data related to California. The audience is expected to be primarily natural resource and planning professionals in state government, in other levels of government and the private sector. It will also be useful for educators, researchers, and the media. The Atlas is being designed to accommodate up to 5000 transactions (individual requests for redisplaying the information) and 25 concurrent users. The Atlas will be improved over time to meet increasing demand and user needs.

Expected Completion of First Phase: August 2002

What can you do with it?

- Create on-line maps of statewide data, overlaying data layers such as: vegetation, land cover, public and conservation lands, soils, species distribution (including summarized data about rare species), water quality, important farmlands, publicly available data on current and emerging conservation planning areas, air, soil and water quality, fire, public land survey system (township/range), topography, roads and other transportation, rivers, streams and lakes, urban areas, projected urban growth, and administrative and political boundaries
- View data from any part of the state, zooming in to specific areas of interest.
- Look up more information about specific data records (attributes) or about data sets (metadata)
- Search geographically by county and zip code for areas containing specific data
- Create and print custom maps and download data.

Where do data come from?

The data in the first phase of the Atlas will be mostly statewide data layers at a scale of 1:24,000 or smaller. At this scale, data will not be parcel or ownership specific, but usable for large scale landscape planning.

Data for specific project-level or parcel-level work are generally not available on a statewide basis. As data at larger scales becomes available it will be included in the Atlas where feasible and practical with careful consideration of the concerns and input of private property owners. The statewide data layers to be displayed within the Atlas are publicly available data sets developed and maintained by a variety of public agencies and private organizations. Each data set comes with a detailed description (metadata) that highlights its source, date, appropriate use, and other information. A liability disclaimer will be

included and users will be responsible for reading the metadata and using the data appropriately.

Benefits

- Greatly increased access to natural resource and conservation data
- Ability to create customized maps for specific needs
- More efficient ability of staff to handle public requests for information
- Will eventually link to other public web-based mapping sites being developed by public agencies.

Constraints

- Access for users relying on slow-speed modems may be limiting at first, but we are exploring ways to increase the access speed for those users.
- Data layers will be displayed only within their appropriate range of geographic scale. For example, data developed at 1:100,000 scale will not be viewable at any finer resolution than 1:100,000. This will minimize erroneous assumptions by users about data precision.
- Sophisticated GIS/database operations like criteria weighting and geostatistical analyses will not be available in the first phase.

Atlas Main Page

These are the controls, allowing users to scan different parts of the state, to zoom in and out at different scales, look up more information about specific data records (attributes) or data sets (metadata), search for specific data, print maps, download data and other functions.

These tabs allow users access to different groups of data.

Users can turn on or off the display of different data layers. They can also look up detailed descriptions of each data layer (metadata).

This area shows the map data. It changes as the user turns on or off different data layers and zooms in or out. As users zoom in, different data layers appear as appropriate to the selected scale.