

Increasing Access and Usability of Remote Sensing Data: The Protected Area Archive Tool Applied to UNESCO Heritage Conservation Sites

Michael Abrams, Gary Geller
NASA/Jet Propulsion Lab
michael.abrams@jpl.nasa.gov

Although remote sensing data are now widely available, much of it at low or no cost, many protected area managers or other potential users do not have the expertise or tools to view or analyze it, effectively blocking access to it by this community. The Protected Area Archive increases access to remote sensing data by creating a collection of satellite images of protected areas. Currently we include NASA ASTER and Landsat scenes to create each custom data collection. This collection is accessed using a map-based image-finding tool that displays the locations of protected areas and associated scenes. The user can locate the area and image of interest by zooming in, then display the image or information about the area. A set of simple visualization and analysis tools are provided so the user can explore the data and employ it to assist in management and monitoring of their area. The CD version requires only a Windows-based computer and basic computer skills, and may be of particular help to protected area managers in developing countries. Capabilities include pan, zoom, vector overlay display, image annotation, and distance and area measurement. Because the target users generally have little experience with remote sensing, simplicity is an overarching principle. A Web-based version that includes multiband images is also being considered, as this would allow some additional analysis capabilities. We will demonstrate the use of the PAA tool using a collection of satellite scenes covering UNESCO Heritage conservation sites.