

GIS database on outdoor recreation opportunities in Finland

Petri J. Shemeikka¹ and Leena Kopperoinen²

¹ Research Scientist, Finnish Environment Institute, Geoinformatics and Land Use Division, Helsinki, Finland, petri.j.shemeikka@ymparisto.fi

² Senior Research Scientist, Finnish Environment Institute, Geoinformatics and Land Use Division, Helsinki, Finland, leena.kopperoinen@ymparisto.fi

The Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) will publish a nationwide GIS database on outdoor recreation opportunities in Finland in 2007. The database has been compiled in cooperation with Metsähallitus and the University of Jyväskylä during the last three years. Metsähallitus has produced data on recreation opportunities on state land while information on municipal recreation opportunities has been gathered through the data system on sports venues at the University of Jyväskylä.

The outdoor recreation opportunities database consists of three datasets: areas (polygons), trails (linear data), and recreation services (point data). Each of these datasets have several categories according to type of use and other characteristics. The scope of the data content is not yet all extensive but it will improve continuously. The new data policy of environmental administration will open up all databases to all users through Internet for free. Therefore, also this database can be exploited widely in planning, research, and commercial services.

When trying to assess recreation opportunities in Finland, one must take into consideration the concept of everyman's rights. In addition to recreation areas run by the state or the municipalities, outdoor activities can be practiced on private land with no official recreational status. This can be estimated using indirect indicators such as physical environment or activities. It is also possible to evaluate an area's suitability and pressure to various activities using GIS and even at first seemingly unrelated GIS-data (soil, vegetation, land use, trails, cadastre, population etc).

SYKE has in its use a large selection of GIS databases and register data to analyze with the outdoor recreation opportunities database. Our poster presents an example in Jyväskylä area in central Finland on how to use GIS-methods with these data to assess an area's recreational value and its potential use.