

FORESTS – CONSERVE, PROTECT, ENJOY  
**PROGRESS**: an innovative project using GPS and computer modelling

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**Abstract**

The PROGRESS Project is a joint EU funded project between France (Office National des Forêts and Comité Départemental du Tourisme de Seine et Marne), England (Forestry Commission and Natural England) and the Netherlands (Alterra Research Institute).

It aims at improving recreation management in the New Forest (120 km south of London) and Fontainebleau Forest (60 km south of Paris), both protected areas.

The main objective was to use a range of tools for a better understanding of forest biodiversity and recreation to help reconcile the needs of conservation and recreation.

The strategy, and main **innovation**, of the PROGRESS Project was to use **computer modelling** and **GPS monitoring** linked to questionnaires for recording accurate recreational use. The models then used wildlife habitat, disturbance data and recreational use data to allow the team to assess the problem areas. This was then presented to stakeholders for discussion and proposals of changes to recreational access and so forth.

The models were then used to estimate the impact of proposed actions before implementation on the ground. This allowed us to change proposals very quickly for reconsideration with the stakeholders. The presentation will centre on the effectiveness of this approach to deal with the challenges and achievements of recreation monitoring.

It will also cover the potential strength of the model calibrated by GPS data and emphasise the need for its use in ecological, landscape and recreation management.. It will explore more directly the value of GPS data for understanding site use and responding to this.

**Key Words**

Innovation, Computer modelling, GPS monitoring

**Key References**

PROGRESS Project Handbook, 2007

TOURISM SOUTH EAST. - Survey of recreational visits to the New Forest National Park, 2005.

COLAS (S.). – Pour un meilleur équilibre entre accueil du public et préservation des milieux naturels; Evaluation et comparaison d'actions menées en Forêt de Fontainebleau et à la New Forest. – Nancy: Ecole Nationale du Génie Rural des Eaux et Forêts, 2007. (Master thesis)