EnSym

Environmental Systems Modelling Platform

EnSym Tools: Landscape Preference Tool

EnSym's Landscape Preference Tool makes it easy to identify sites that match a program's natural resource priorities.

The Landscape Preference Tool allows natural resource managers to define a set of assessment criteria by which to assess sites and projects. The tool will then score sites using these criteria. Scores can be used as an objective measure to assist investment decision making.

The Landscape Preference Tool contains a number of data layers that can be used to assess assets. This includes: proximity to rivers, wetlands of national significance, rare and threatened species, bioregions and ecological vegetation classes.

Applications of Landscape Preference Tool

The Landscape Preference Tool is useful for comparing sites across a catchment. It can be used for:

- Ranking projects across a landscape
- Selecting certain types of projects across a landscape
- Evaluating the characteristics of existing projects.

User requirements

The Landscape Preference Tool is user-friendly, and can be used by natural resource managers and decision makers with basic computer skills.

EnSym programmers will provide users with on-going support including:

- Training in EnSym's Landscape Preference Tool
- Designing a scenario suitable for the project
- Updating features and scoring to suit the preferences of the project
- Data quality control.

Using the Landscape Preference Tool

The Landscape Preference Tool allows managers to independently determine the criteria and scoring strategy for prospective projects. When the scoring criteria have been confirmed, the process of ranking projects is simple.

1. Create sites/zones: The project officer imports site shape files or identifies each site in the landscape using an aerial photograph and the 'point and click' function. They then enter the associated scores for each criterion.

2. Score sites: The Landscape Preference Tool will then score the site using the predetermined criteria.

3. Generate report: The reporting feature will export a summary of the data to an Excel spreadsheet. This report provides a list of sites, scores for each attribute, as well as a total site score. The total score can be used to rank assets, helping guide resourcing decisions.

Case Study: Bass Coast Landcare Network

Bass Coast Landcare Network (BCLN) was awarded a grant to deliver the Powlett River Project – a project to improve the condition of the Powlett River at the landscape scale. To effectively deliver the project, they needed to identify and select sites that best fit their priorities. BCLN wanted a flexible tool that could guide investment.

BLCN was attracted to the Landscape Preference Tool as it allowed sites to be rated according to a set of criteria established by project managers, investors and the community. Their criteria included features such as proximity to the river, ecological vegetation class and minimal weed cover. The tool scored each site according to these criteria and the results were used to assist decision making.

BCLN will be using the Landscape Preference Tool for future rounds of the Powlett River Project. By using this tool they are more professional and accountable which improves their chance of success in future grant applications.