GIS Support for BMP Implementation

GIS, or Geographic Information Systems, has become the preeminent technique for evaluating spatial data through its ability to advance analysis across a breadth of hierarchically arranged features and to describe specific characteristics of its subject through mapping, both physical and web-based. Specifically, GIS derives it greatest benefit through what is in essence a synergy of CAD, or computer added design, and relational databases. This allows precise digital areas, representing features across space, to be attributed with an endless array of descriptive information specific to that particular location. The flexibility of this type of information system continues to develop, allowing quicker, more accurate data collection through GPS and handhelds, assimilation by way of data standardization, and knowledge sharing through expertly created maps and digital data distribution.

The GIS Lab within the Office of Soil and Water acts in multiple facets. Primarily, the office functions as the center of data collection from field personnel involved in BMP, or best management practice, implementation across the state. Created for the purposes of EPA Project 319 support through GIS, the lab has developed into the center of GIS data collection, including statewide imagery, for LDAF as a whole. The OSWC GIS Lab also enjoys a continued professional relationship with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality GIS Department, sharing data, resources, and expertise based on their parallel efforts to promote conservation through controlling soil loss and water quality. The OSWC GIS Lab is also active in promoting the development of GIS agency-wide by providing professional assistance to other departments when needed.