Green Infrastructure Data Frequently Asked Questions

What are cores/intact habitat areas? How did you create them?

Cores, also referred to as "intact habitat areas," are undisturbed land areas at least 100 acres in size and at least 200 meters wide. They were derived using a combination of the National Land Cover Database (2011) and the US Census Bureau's TIGER files roads and railroads. Paved roads and railways are considered to be fragmenting features, as are developed and agricultural areas. We followed a methodology published by the Green Infrastructure Center, Inc., which can be found here. The tools and data we used to create cores can be found here. Our hope is that you have great local data to use in place of the national datasets to recreate intact habitat cores in a local region.

Are the data free?

Yes! The source data are from publicly available or contributed data sources. The derived core data are also freely available.

How can I get the data?

You can download both the source data and the derived data by state from this FTP site or from this list of map packages in ArcGIS Online. You can also make a subset of cores using the Intact Habitat Filter App, found here, and save it with your ArcGIS Online account.

Does the data have software dependencies?

The data are available as zip files containing ArcGIS file geodatabases, and also as map packages. Both can be used with ArcGIS 10.4 or ArcGIS Pro 1.2.

Where did the data come from?

The data come from a combination of publicly available and contributed data sources. Please refer to this page and use the "See the Source Data" link.

How current are the data?

With the exception of the National Soils data set, all source data were collected and released since 2010. The National Soils data set has been assembled over the last 100 years. Please refer to this page and use the "See the Source Data" link for more information about each data set.

What are the limitations of the data?

The majority of the source level data have a resolution of 30 meters or were sourced from 1:24K datasets. Exceptions are: NHDPLUS data, sourced from 1:100K data, the Biodiversity Index and Endemic Species Max datasets, aggregated to 10 kilometer grid units to protect rare and endangered species, and the Theobald's Human Modified Index, at 90 meter resolution.

How do I use this data?

The source datasets used to construct the intact habitat cores can be used for any purpose, but ideally for constructing or modifying your own intact habitat areas or habitat core areas. The intact habitat cores created using the source data can be used to provide regional context if your community has better or higher resolution data of its own. The data can be used across the entire Esri platform.

Can I add my own data?
Absolutely! The methodology was designed to be supplemented with additional data. See the Green Infrastructure Center's guide "Strategic Green Infrastructure Planning, A Multi-Scale Approach", found here.

Do I need an ArcGIS Online account to use this data?
No. The data were collected and organized for use with ArcGIS Desktop and ArcGIS Pro. Many additional resources are available to you if you have an ArcGIS Online account, plus you can publish and share any analysis or maps that you create as part of the green infrastructure community.

How do I find and download data for my community?
You can download both the source data and the derived data by state from this FTP site or from this list of map packages in ArcGIS Online. An ArcGIS Online account is not required to download the data. If you have an ArcGIS Online account, you may use the Intact Habitat Filter App, found here, to navigate to your community and save filtered intact habitat core data to your account – in other words, with an ArcGIS Online account you can immediately begin to work with this data.

How can I make my own cores and connectors?
The methodology, toolbox and configuration file for creating your own cores/intact habitat areas can be downloaded from this site. Information about using the tool can be found in the Green Infrastructure Center's document "Evaluating and Conserving Green Infrastructure Across the Landscape: A Practitioner's Guide", which can be found here.

I've used your filtering app. Can I save my results? How?
Yes, if you have an ArcGIS Online account you can save your results by signing into your account. A login option is available in the upper right hand corner of the application.

Can I share my saved results with others? How?
Yes, this is a standard feature of ArcGIS Online. Refer to ArcGIS Online documentation for sharing data publicly or to specific groups.

Why is my local park (or reservoir, or bird sanctuary) not shown as an intact natural area?
The methodology we used identifies areas at least 100 acres in size and at least 200 meters wide. Paved roads are considered fragmenting features, and may divide a larger area into portions that don't meet the 100 acre minimum. Another likely possibility is that changes have taken place since the National Land Cover Database (NLCD) was compiled in 2011. It is also possible that these areas were misclassified in the NLCD.

Why aren't agriculture and pasture lands shown as intact natural areas?
Agricultural areas ARE important elements in green infrastructure planning, but are not considered as undisturbed when identifying intact habitat areas.

Data for my community appears to be wrong. Why? How do I fix it?
Conversion of land use from one category to another is happening very rapidly. Many areas that we've identified as "intact" have been developed, paved, logged, plowed, or built upon since the National Land Cover Database (NLCD) was released in 2011. Another possibility is that these areas were misclassified in the NLCD, or in the Census Bureau's TIGER files for roads and railroads. Finally, the definition of several

categories of land cover are troublesome – particularly "Barren." This could be a talus slope in one part of the country and gravel mine in another place.

The data we've provided is intended to serve as a starting point, and not as the final product. We've provided a methodology and toolbox to let you incorporate better local data to the analysis we've done.

My community has better data, why use yours?
Our hope is that every community will have better data than ours and will apply it to green infrastructure planning efforts. While your community may have great local data, a central tenant of green infrastructure planning is prioritizing and connecting green infrastructure assets across communities, counties, states, and regions. We've assembled national datasets to provide context for local communities to evaluate their plans and actions against the resources and needs of their local region.

You made cores (hubs) but not corridors (connectors). Do you have plans to do so?
Yes. The methodology and toolbox we used from the Green Infrastructure Center has utilities to construct corridors at the local level. Since we've created a national database of cores, we're looking at different techniques for generating connections between cores, particularly focused on the new Cost Connectivity tool in ArcGIS 10.4 and ArcGIS Pro. Stay tuned.

Where can I find other green infrastructure data?
If you're just getting started, look through the recommended reading lists on this page for types of appropriate data. Once you understand the concepts behind Green Infrastructure planning, a good place to look is ArcGIS Online.

Are there other organizations doing Green Infrastructure Planning?
Many local governments are already engaged in green infrastructure planning, as well as many conservation and planning groups such as The Trust for Public Land, NatureServe, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, and the Green Infrastructure Center, Inc., and many others.

Where can I find more information on Green Infrastructure Planning?
A list of references as well as a short booklet on Green Infrastructure Planning can be found here.