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Mapping direct use value of ecosystem services: a GIS-based approach.

Authors

Chen NengWang; Zhang XiaoYin; Lu XiaoMei

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A GIS-based approach designed for spatially valuation and visualization was developed to estimate direct use value of ecosystem service and to map results for a case study representing a county scale. The approach highlights the use of GIS to collect data, spatial analysis, and calibrate economic values of ecosystem service. Three core steps of spatial valuation for agricultural products, forest products, and tourism assets were investigated in the technical framework. The GIS-based approach was implemented in a case of Tiantai County, Zhejiang province in southeast China. Selected components of natural products and tourism assets in the Tiantai County were mapped as data layers in a GIS, with each layer containing monetary values for every 25 m cell. The results of this case study showed that a total value of 538 million RMBs in 2005, 8.6% of GDP, was mostly contributed by agricultural products (65% of total value) and forest products (30% of total value). A current low economic value of tourism assets can be increased by development of eco-tourism and ecosystem-based conservation and management. The economic value maps of ecosystem service can be used to obtain distribution of the natural capital and identify regions needed more concern. The present study demonstrates that GIS is a powerful tool for mapping direct use value of ecosystem service, and also provides a solid foundation for integrated valuation of regional ecosystem, eco-environmental zoning and planning, as well as policy making.

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