

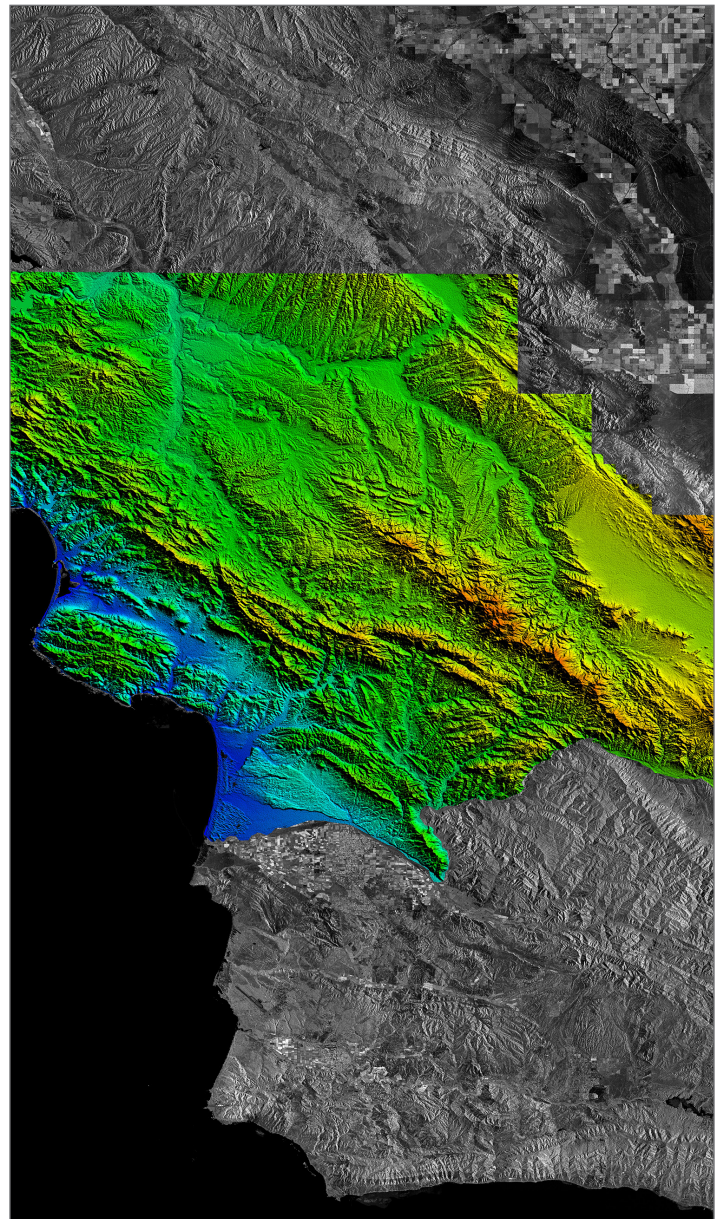
CASE STUDY

Intermap® helps make one California county a safer place to live.

Challenges

San Luis Obispo County, California, is a university town that has also recently attracted an influx of retirees and families. To address mounting countywide development pressures from this population growth, the Department of Planning and Building wanted to “incorporate smart growth into its planning policies. We needed accurate terrain models of the county to make good development decisions,” said John Kelly, supervisor of the geographic technology and design team.

The county’s geography includes coastal mountains with steep slopes that are subject to landslides as well as rural, undeveloped areas that are designated as high fire severity risks. “Like many places in California, we have to deal with properties falling off bluffs and washing into the ocean, or being consumed by fire,” explained Kelly. “We’re responsible for ensuring that these high-risk areas are zoned appropriately for something other than dense residential, single family housing.



NEXTMap® data is showcased in this image of a colorized and shaded elevation model, with radar imagery providing a backdrop for San Luis Obispo County.

With so many challenges to address, we needed the best data available to help us develop the county and retain its scenic value. It's a matter of protecting residents, visitors, and property from disasters."

Solution

Kelly and his colleagues purchased digital elevation models created by Intermap's proprietary interferometric synthetic aperture radar (IFSAR) technology. Now, several county departments and agencies are using NEXTMap® USA – California 3D elevation datasets and geometries, including digital surface models, digital terrain models, and orthorectified radar images, to rezone land for appropriate use and reduce subdivision development in hazardous areas.

"We have the ability to look at terrain in 3D and base our development decisions on more

accurate data that reflects the real world," said Kelly. The data is also used in the county's fire protection and response program to address high fire severity areas, steep slopes, and vegetation issues related to fires.

Results

"Intermap's data has exceeded our expectations and we're sharing it with our consultants," Kelly said. "Agriculture, engineering, environmental firms, and geologists can use the data for projects as well." He also noted that Intermap delivered the data in a an easy-to-use format that didn't present many technical challenges, and that it was easy to incorporate the data into the county's geographic information system.

Furthermore, "Intermap's customer service is excellent," said Kelly. "We really appreciate how attentive and helpful they are."

Although San Luis Obispo County has not yet tapped into all the ways it can use Intermap's data, Kelly believes that "if we save one house by using Intermap's data, we've paid for it over and over again."

“There's real value in being able to make the right decision the first time, and Intermap's data has helped us achieve this goal. The data's positional accuracy and detail were very impressive.”

John Kelly
Department of Planning and Building
San Luis Obispo County

INTERMAP®

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