LIDAR-DERIVED ELEVATION DATA FOR KETCHIKAN, SOUTHEAST ALASKA, COLLECTED AUGUST29, 2024

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Raw Data File 2024-31

Location map of survey area.

This report has not been reviewed for technical content or for conformity to the editorial standards of DGGS.

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LIDAR-DERIVED ELEVATION DATA FOR KETCHIKAN, SOUTHEAST ALASKA, COLLECTED AUGUST29,2024

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INTRODUCTION

The Alaska Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys (DGGS) used aerial lidar to produce a classified point cloud, digital surface model (DSM), digital terrain model (DTM), and an intensity model of Ketchikan, Southeast Alaska, during leaf-on conditions (cover figure). The survey provides snow-free surface elevations for use in landslide hazard analysis after a fatal landslide occurred in downtown Ketchikan on August 25, 2024. Aerial lidar data were collected on August 29, 2024, and ground control data were collected on August 30–31, 2024, and subsequently merged and processed using a suite of geospatial processing software. This data collection is released as a Raw Data File with an open end-user license. All files are available to download on the DGGS website at [https://doi.org/10.14509/31453.](https://doi.org/10.14509/31453)

LIST OF DELIVERABLES

Classified Points DSM and DTM Intensity Image Metadata

MISSION PLAN

Aerial Lidar Survey Details

DGGS used a Riegl VUX1-LR²² laser scanner with a global navigation satellite system (GNSS) and Northrop Grumman LN-200C inertial measurement unit (IMU) integrated by Phoenix LiDAR Systems. The sensor can collect a maximum of 1,500,000 points per second at a range of 230 m, or a minimum of 50,000 points per second at 1,000 m (ranges assume ≥20 percent natural reflectance). The scanner operated with a pulse refresh rate of 800,000 pulses per second at a scan rate of 160 revolutions per second. We used a Bell 206 helicopter to survey from an elevation of approximately 100–300 m above ground level, at a ground speed of roughly 30 m/s, and with a scan angle set from 80 to 280 degrees. The total survey area covers approximately 11.1 km^2 (yellow outline in the cover figure), with a 3.1 km2 portion of the block considered a priority area of interest (blue outline in the cover figure).

Weather Conditions and Flight Times

The survey area was accessed by air from Temsco Helicopters in Ketchikan (fig. 1). Data were collected from 12:05 pm to 1:05 pm and from 3:05 pm to 4:00 pm (AKST). The weather throughout the survey was overcast with scattered low-level clouds and no wind. For a GNSS base station occupation to later correct lidar survey flightlines, we set up a Trimble R10-2 on a jetty on Tongass Narrows (fig. 1).

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Figure 1. Lidar data collection flightlines.

PROCESSING REPORT

Lidar Dataset Processing

We processed point data in Spatial Explorer for initial filtering and multiple-time-around (MTA) disambiguation. MTA errors, corrected in this process, result from ambiguous interpretations of received pulse time intervals and occur more frequently with higher pulse refresh rates. IMU and GNSS datawere processed in Inertial Explorer, and flightline information was integrated with the point cloud in Spatial Explorer. We calibrated the point data at an incrementally precise scale of sensor movement and behavior, incorporating sensor velocity, roll, pitch, and yaw fluctuations throughout the survey. For the lidar data collection, the average pulse density is 218.7 pulses/m², and the average pulse spacing is 6.8 cm. Within the priority region, the average pulse density is 325.4 pulses/ m^2 , and the average pulse spacing is 5.6 cm.

We created a macro (an ordered list of point classification commands tailored to this dataset) in Terrasolid software and classified points in accordance with the American Society for Photogrammetry & Remote Sensing (ASPRS) 2019 guidelines (ASPRS, 2019). Once classified, we applied a geometric transformation and converted the points from ellipsoidal heights to GEOID12B (Alaska) orthometric heights.

Raster products were derived from the point cloud in ArcGIS Pro. A 50-cm DSM was interpolated from maximum elevations of the ground, vegetation, bridge deck, wire, and building classes using a binning method. A 50-cm DTM was interpolated from all ground-class returns using a binning method and minimum elevation values. We also produced a 20-cm intensity image using average binning in ArcGIS Pro, with no normalization or corrections applied.

Higher-resolution elevation products were also produced within the high-priority region. A 20-cm DSM was interpolated from elevation values in the ground, vegetation, bridge deck, wire, and building classes using a triangulation method. A 20-cm DTM was made using a triangulation interpolation from all ground-class returns.

Classified Point Cloud

Classified point cloud data are provided in LAZ format. Data are classified following ASPRS 2019 guidelines (table 1) and contain return and intensity information. For classified ground points, the average point density (fig. 2) is 12.4 pts/ $m²$ and the average spacing is 28.4 cm; within the high-priority region, the average ground point density is 11.5 pts/m² and the average spacing is 29.4 cm.

 Table 1. Point cloud class code definitions.

Figure 2. Ground point density for the survey displayed as a raster.

Digital Surface Model

The DSM represents surface elevations, including heights of vegetation, buildings, powerlines, bridge decks, etc. The DSM is a single-band, 32-bit GeoTIFF file of 50-cm resolution. No Data value is set to -3.40282306074e+38 (32-bit, floating-point minimum). The DSM from the high-priority area is a single-band, 32-bit GeoTIFF file of 20-cm resolution, with a No Data value of -3.40282306074e+38.

Digital Terrain Model

The DTM represents bare earth or snow surface elevations, excluding vegetation, bridge decks, buildings, etc. The DTM is a single-band, 32-bit GeoTIFF file of 50-cm resolution. No Data value is set to -3.40282306074e+38. The DTM from the high-priority area is a single-band, 32-bit GeoTIFF file of 20-cm resolution, with a No Data value of -3.40282306074e+38.

Lidar Intensity Image

The lidar intensity image illustrates the relative amplitude of reflected signals contributing to the point cloud. Lidar intensity is (1) primarily a function of scanned object reflectance in relation to the signal frequency, (2) dependent on ambient conditions, and (3) not necessarily consistent between separate scans. The intensity image is a single-band, 16-bit unsigned GeoTIFF file of 20-cm resolution. No Data value is set to 0.

SURVEY REPORT

Ground Survey Details

Ground control points were collected from August 30–31, 2024. We deployed a Trimble R10- 2 GNSS base receiver on a jetty along Tongass Narrows (cover figure) and surveyed points with a rover Trimble R10-2 GNSS receiver/Mesa controller within the survey area. We collected 115 ground control points and checkpoints, with 51 located on markers (crosswalks and other paint lines) with enough intensity contrast with their surroundings that they were visible in the lidar data. Surveyed points were used to correct the point cloud vertically and horizontally and to calculate the vertical and horizontal accuracy of the corrected point cloud. The checkpoints and ground control points were collected on bare earth (i.e., gravel, dirt, or pavement).

Coordinate System and Datum

We processed and delivered all data in NAD83 (2011) UTM9N and vertical datum NAVD88 GEOID12B.

Horizontal Accuracy

The offset between the intensity image and 25 ground control points was -115.6 cm measured west to east and $+57.9$ cm measured south to north (app. 1). This was reduced to $+0.7$ cm and +4.4 cm, respectively, by applying a constant horizontal correction (app. 2). We used 26 checkpoints to determine the horizontal accuracy of the corrected point cloud by measuring the offset between checkpoints and their respective locations in an intensity image produced from the corrected point cloud. The project horizontal accuracy has a root mean square error (RMSE) of 7.6 cm in the east-west direction and 15.9 cm in the north-south direction (app. 2).

Vertical Accuracy

We measured a mean elevation offset of -10.2 cm between 58 control points and the horizontally corrected point cloud (app. 3). This offset was reduced to -0.1 cm by applying a constant vertical correction to the lidar point data (app. 4). We used 57 checkpoints to determine the vertical accuracy of the point cloud ground class using a Triangulated Irregular Network (TIN) approach. The project vertical accuracy has a root mean square error (RMSE) of 6.4 cm (app. 4). We evaluated the relative accuracy for this dataset as the interswath overlap consistency and measured it at 7.6 cm RMSE.

Data Consistency and Completeness

This is a full-release dataset. There was no over-collect. Data quality is consistent throughout the survey.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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REFERENCES

The American Society for Photogrammetry & Remote Sensing (ASPRS), 2019, LAS Specification 1.4 - R15. https://www.asprs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/LAS_1_4_r15.pdf

APPENDIX 1: HORIZONTAL GROUND CONTROL POINTS

APPENDIX 2: HORIZONTAL CHECK POINTS

APPENDIX 4: VERTICAL CHECK POINTS

