

December 2011



3. Walking Access Mapping System Frequently Asked Questions



What is the Walking Access Mapping System?

The Walking Access Mapping System (WAMS) is an online system using geographic information system (GIS) technology to provide a view of the legal boundaries of public land.

This boundary information, known as the cadastre, can be viewed against topographical maps or aerial photographs. WAMS has a search facility, using GIS planning and zooming tools, and other functions such as measuring distances. All maps can be printed.

The system can also display a 'Tracks and Access Points' layer that shows other walking access information, including Department of Conservation tracks, Te Araroa pathway route and some Fish & Game access points. Voluntarily agreed farm access points signposted in accordance with signage schemes sponsored by the Commission and other organisations such as Federated Farmers New Zealand and Rural Women New Zealand will also be displayed.

Where do I find the Walking Access Mapping System?

The maps can be accessed online at www.wams.org.nz. Users can also find the maps via the Walking Access Commission's website, at www.walkingaccess.govt.nz.

How much does it cost to use WAMS?

Access to WAMS is free.

Why do we need a Walking Access Mapping System?

One of the functions of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission, as specified in the Walking Access Act 2008, is to compile, hold and publish maps and information about land over which the public has access.

A need for maps and information that identify public land was identified by the public during debates over access between 2002 and 2008.

For recreational users, maps that identify public land and access are vital if they are to know what recreational opportunities and limits exist.

For landholders, maps that provide clarity about public and private land are vital if people are to respect property. In order to respect those property rights, people have to be able to identify land which is public and land which is private.

What makes WAMS unique?

There are other mapping databases in existence, but none provide the type of freely-accessible information available through WAMS.

WAMS is currently the only product that focuses on and identifies land over which the public has access, classified by type. The cadastral information on the Commission's system is updated monthly. WAMS is also the only system that provides a walking access enquiry function.

Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) holds the authoritative source of New Zealand's property boundary information in its survey and property database (Landonline). Landonline is designed for use by surveyors, lawyers and real estate agents. It is primarily designed for land transactions by surveyors and land conveyances and access to Landonline is licensed and a data fee is charged. This licensing and costing regime makes Landonline unsuitable for general public use.

The Google Maps service is free, but the maps provided do not show the public access status of land. The aerial imagery in WAMS is also of a higher quality and resolution than that found in Google Maps. WAMS cadastral and topographic information is more accurate and is updated monthly from the source data in the LINZ database.

TUMONZ and other similar commercially-available maps contain topographic, photographic and cadastral data but are not currently available online.

While some local authorities also provide free online GIS mapping services, these tend to focus on rating and property information for administrative and utility management rather than public access.

How long has WAMS been in development?

Planning and consultation for the project began in early 2009 and WAMS

development started in January 2010. The project was completed in December 2010 and WAMS was opened to public testing on 21 December 2010. WAMS left testing in July 2011.

How much did WAMS cost to develop?

The New Zealand Walking Access Commission received a capital allocation of \$1 million of government funding to develop WAMS. The system was completed within budget and time.

How accurate is the Walking Access Mapping System?

WAMS draws on the most up-to-date cadastral, topographic and aerial imagery data available through LINZ and Terralink International Ltd. While the New Zealand Walking Access Commission can not guarantee the accuracy of the maps in all instances, many users have commented that WAMS is more up-to-date than other publically available maps.

The Topo50 maps provided by LINZ have an official spatial accuracy of +/-22m. However, many areas have an improved spatial accuracy in the order of +/-6m, due to technological improvements in the equipment used to obtain imagery.

If any inaccuracies are discovered, users are encouraged to submit the error using WAMS' built-in enquiry system with the information required to identify the land in question (eg, street address, property title reference or parcel appellation). The error will then be fixed.

How often are the maps in WAMS updated?

The entire New Zealand cadastre is updated monthly by LINZ and processed and uploaded to WAMS by Terralink.

Topographic maps are updated twice per year by Terralink.

Public Access Layers are updated as required and on a monthly basis when each New Zealand cadastre is supplied by LINZ.

How can I tell if the data I'm looking at on the Topo50 layer in WAMS is current?

A page on the LINZ website details the update history for Topo50 map sheets: www.linz.govt.nz/topography/topo-maps/topo50/update-history/index.aspx.

LINZ welcomes feedback about areas that have changed. You can email information to LINZ at info@linz.govt.nz with subject line: "Topo50 map feedback", or phone 0800 665 463.

Are the roads and tracks shown on the Topo50 layer in WAMS indicative of a public right of access?

No. Representation of a road or track on a Topo50 map does not necessarily indicate a public right of access. Many roads and tracks are privately owned.

How do I know if a road or track shown on the Topo50 later in WAMS is available for public access?

By switching on the Public Access Layer within WAMS, users will be able to see if a road or track shown on a Topo50 map is on land that is publicly accessible. If the road or track coincides with the cadastral representation of public access then it will be public.

How can I tell if a road shown in the Public Access Layer of WAMS is formed or unformed?

You need to look at the map with both the topographic layer and the Public Access Layer turned on. The Public Access Layer will show you where the legal road access is, and by comparing that with the topographic map which shows formed roads, you can see where the unformed road begins.

A landowner is preventing me from accessing an unformed legal road shown in WAMS? What can the Commission do?

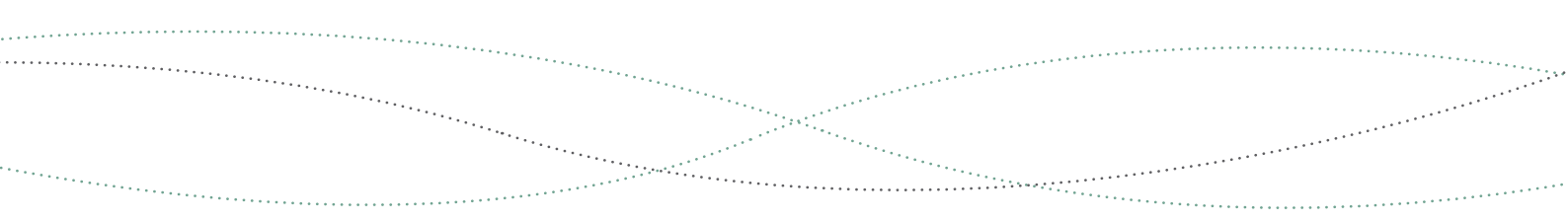
Users can submit an enquiry to the Commission through the mapping system, including as much information as possible. The Commission will investigate the issue.

Can I make an enquiry about public access?

Yes. The Walking Access Mapping System has a built-in enquiry function that makes it easy to lodge enquiries about public access and other information shown in the mapping system.

Why does the Topo map disappear at scales larger than 1:15,000?

Topo50 maps are designed to be viewed at a maximum of 1:15,000 before the image becomes pixelated on screen. The accuracy of the topographic map also decreases beyond this point, so the Commission has chosen not to display Topo50 maps at larger scales than 1:15,000.



Why is there a difference between the data on a Topo50 map and what I can see on the corresponding aerial image?

There could be a number of reasons for this. The most likely is that the data on the map has been updated before or after the aerial image. To see the update history of any Topo50 map sheet, see www.linz.govt.nz/topography/topo-maps/topo50/update-history/index.aspx.

If the differences are small, it could be the result of the techniques used when producing the 1:50,000 maps. At 1:50,000 scale, not all features can be shown – for

example, if there is a group of five or six buildings in close proximity, only two or three may be shown. Where features are very close together – for example a road, railway line and coastline – they may be separated slightly on the map to enable each to be clearly visible. Similarly, small but significant features may be shown on the map slightly larger or longer than they truly are to ensure they are visible. For example, bridges less than 50m long are lengthened to 50m to ensure the bridge symbol is readable.