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Making remote sensing of rivers accessible to rivers scientists and managers: The remote sensing of rivers on-line tutorial project

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The perception that remote sensing of rivers is 'too difficult' and can only be done by remote sensing experts is an obstacle to widespread use of these techniques by river scientists and managers. To evaluate the potential to make river remote sensing more accessible, we developed on-line tutorials that provide field data, imagery, and lab guides on: (1) how spectral response varies with depth, substrate, and viewing direction; (2) how depth can be continuously measured using remote sensing techniques; and (3) how in-stream habitats (e.g. riffles, pools) can be mapped using remotely sensing imagery. Initial tests of these tutorials with five graduate students indicated that on-line activities can be an effective teaching tool, so long as the students are already familiar with a few key commands within the remote sensing software package. However, for remote sensing novices, the difficulty in using the remote sensing software indicates that additional tutorial materials are needed for each major category of software command (e.g., making a mask).