Outdoor Recreation Valuation (ORVal) User Guide

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1. Introduction

- The ORVal Tool is web application developed by the Land, Environment, Economics and Policy (LEEP) Institute at the University of Exeter with support from DEFRA. It can be accessed at: http://leep.exeter.ac.uk/orval.
- ORVal's primary purpose is to provide information that might be useful to government, businesses and communities in understanding the benefits that are derived from accessible greenspace in England.
- ORVal is map-based and allows users to explore the distribution of greenspace across England, plotting out the locations of recreation sites, be those beaches, recreation areas like parks and nature reserves, paths through the countryside or along river banks.
- ORVal also allows users to learn something about the nature of those different sites; it provides a large variety of additional layers that users can display on the map. Those layers provide information on the land cover, land uses, water margins, special designations and points of interest to be found in or near each recreation site.
- ORVal has three key functions;
 - (1) It allows users to explore the usage and welfare values that are generated by currently accessible greenspaces. Welfare values can be viewed at individual site level or aggregated by regions.
 - (2) It allows users to estimate how usage and welfare values might change if the characteristics of a recreational greenspace were changed.
 - (3) It allows users to draw new recreation sites on the map, define their characteristics and estimate the usage and welfare values that might be generated by creating that new greenspace in that particular location
- ORVal's estimates of usage and welfare values are derived from a statistical model of recreational demand (see Box 1).
- The recreational demand model is a person-level model; that is to say it provides estimates of the recreational behaviour of a person with particular characteristics living in a particular location. The model can be used to predict which greenspaces an individual might visit over the course of a year and how much welfare value they get from each of the greenspaces available for them to visit.
- The visitation and welfare values displayed in ORVal are obtained by aggregating individual values over all residents of England (see Boxes 2 and 3).

Box 1: The Recreation Demand Model

The Recreation Demand Model that underpins the ORVal Tool is a statistical model that can be used to predict the number of visits that are made by adult residents of England to different greenspaces (see Box 2). The model adjusts its predictions according to a number of factors, most particularly the socioeconomic characteristics of people, the day of the week, the month of the year, the attributes of a greenspace and the availability and qualities of alternative greenspaces.

The model is estimated from data collected in the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey. The MENE survey provides information on the recreational behaviour of a large, representative sample of adults (over 16 years of age) resident in England. Over the course of a week, each respondent records when they visited greenspaces and for one randomly-selected visit the exact location of that visit.

The fundamental assumption of the model is that the choices observed in the MENE data are somehow welfare-maximising. By 'welfare' we are referring to the sense of well-being or utility that an individual feels from their experiences. So when an individual is observed to have taken a trip to enjoy greenspace, we assume that the welfare of taking a trip at that time exceeds the welfare of doing something entirely different (say watching the TV or going shopping). Likewise when an individual is observed to have chosen a visit to one particular recreational site, we assume that the welfare derived from that visit exceeds the welfare that would be enjoyed from visiting an alternative site. Our model seeks to use that information to build a function which describes the welfare an individual gets from making different recreational choices. Indeed, it is this welfare function that is used in ORVal to estimate the welfare values generated by different greenspaces (see Box 3).

In the model, a large number of variables are used to capture important arguments in the welfare function. For example, the welfare that a person gets from taking a trip is modelled as depending on a person's socioeconomic characteristics, the location in which they live, the day of the week and the month of the year. In a similar vein, the welfare derived from visiting a particular greenspace is modelled as a trade-off between the benefits of enjoying time at that site and the costs incurred in getting there. In the model, those on-site benefits depend on the size, land covers, water margins, designations and points of interest that characterise a particular greenspace. Likewise, the costs of getting to the site are calculated as the sum of a 25p per km travel cost (based on estimates of the average variable costs of car travel) and the costs of travel time (based on Department for Transport estimates).

While the data provides lots of information from which to estimate the welfare benefits of visiting greenspace our model is still statistical. Ultimately, we are able to use the model to make probabilistic predictions; How likely is it that a person with particular characteristics living in a particular location will choose to take a visit to greenspace on some particular day? How likely it is it that on that day a person will choose to visit each of the multitude of accessible greenspaces available to them, given the characteristics of each of those greenspaces and the costs of travelling to them?

2. The ORVal Map Interface

• The screen that users arrive at upon navigating to the ORVal site is shown below.



- The default ORVal screen presents the locations of accessible greenspaces across England¹, presented on a background map provided by OpenStreetMap.
- Users interact with ORVal through this map-based interface and through a series of menus and wizards.
- The process of navigating around the ORVal map follows protocols familiar to users of mapbased web applications.
 - Zoom in or out using either the
 ■ or buttons on the left of the screen or by using the mouse's scroll wheel.
 - **Pan** across the map by grabbing (clicking and holding the left mouse button) then moving the mouse to pull the map in the direction you wish to move.
- The greenspaces identified on the ORVal map take three different forms:
 - **Areas** (accessible greenspace contained within well-defined boundaries over which visitors usually have freedom to wander)

¹ The map was constructed through the collation of an array of spatial data sources details of which can be found in the project report "ORVal Data Report" (<u>http://leep.exeter.ac.uk/orval/pdf-reports/orval_data_report.pdf</u>).



• **Paths** (walkable routes that pass through greenspaces but confine visitors to defined routes of passage)²



o Beaches

- The core functions of ORVal are accessed through the four buttons at the top right of the screen. These allow users access to;
 - o Display different layers of map data (Map Layers)
 - Explore estimates of the usage and welfare value generated from recreational use of different greenspaces (**Explore**)
 - Investigate how altering the land cover at existing recreation sites will change usage and welfare values (Alter)
 - Investigate how much additional usage and value would be generated by creating a new recreation site in a particular location (**Create**).

² The distinction between areas and paths is somewhat blurred. Nature reserves, for example, which have well-defined extents such that we classify them as areas often restrict visitors to a limited paths network.

Box 2: Estimating Visitation

The Recreation Demand Model can be used to estimate and predict visits to greenspaces. In particular, the model allows us to predict how likely it is that an individual will take a trip to a particular greenspace on a particular day. That likelihood differs according to the socioeconomic characteristics of the person, the attributes and proximity of the greenspace and the attributes and proximity of alternative recreational greenspaces.

To generate estimates of the annual number of visits to a particular greenspace we draw on data from the 2011 UK census. For each Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) in England, that data records the number of adults in each of the socioeconomic groups used in the model. Visitation predictions for a particular greenspace are reached through the following set of calculations:

- For each socioeconomic group in an LSOA, we use our model to calculate the probability of taking a trip to the focus greenspace on a particular day.
- Adding those probabilities up for each individual from each socioeconomic group in an LSOA provides an estimate of the expected number of visits from that LSOA to that greenspace on that day.
- Given visitation varies across months and days of the week, we reach an annual visitation figure from an LSOA by summing expected visitation numbers calculated for each different day of the year.
- Finally we repeat those calculations for each of the 34,378 LSOAs in England and sum the results to arrive at a final prediction of the annual number of visits to a particular greenspace.

Estimating visitation rates for a new recreation site simply entails performing those calculations for the new site. Likewise, In order to estimate changes in visitation that arise from altering the attributes of a particular greenspace, we simply difference visitation levels estimated before and after the change in attributes.

3. Map Layers

- ORVal draws on a large number of spatial datasets. By Clicking on the ^{Amp Layers} button users can change the map interface; choosing what is displayed and layering on additional spatial datasets.
- Seven different types of map layer are made available through ORVal; Backgrounds, Recreation Sites, Land Covers, Designations, Points of Interest, Regions, Value Maps.
- The key for a Map layer can be turned on or off by pressing the information button next to that layer.



• You can turn on display keys for multiple layers, and the additional keys will be stacked below each other. As such, you may need to scroll down the screen to view the key.

3.1 Background

- ORVal offers the user a choice of **Background** layers. Currently the user can select either OpenStreetMap or MapQuest backgrounds.
- The opacity of the background can also be altered by adjusting the slider across the range from 0 (fully transpartent) to 1.0 (fully opaque).

3.2 Recreation Sites

- Expanding the Recreation Sites list allows users to choose which types of Recreation Sites are displayed on the Map.
- By default all recreation sites (areas, paths, and beaches) are displayed.
- To avoid over-cluttering, note that the paths and beach layers only becomes visible once the user has zoomed in to a sufficiently small area of the map.



Map Layers	- 1
I Background ☑ OpenStreetMap (Opacity 0-1)
MapQuest (Opacity 0-1)	=
1.000	

- By pressing the information button and next to the Recreation Sites list, users can display the Recreation Sites key.
- For display purposes, recreation areas are classified into one of 7 categories reflecting the key land cover or land use of an area. The colour-codes used are shown in the key.
- Paths are shown as red lines on the ORVal map.
- Since path networks may be very extensive we assume that the recreation experience enjoyed by visiting a path network can be attributed to the point at which a visitor accesses that path network. The idea here is that by choosing an access point, visitors determining the landscapes that they will encounter when traversing a path network. Path access point are shown as red circles on the ORVal map3.
- Beach locations are shown on the ORVal map as yellow squares.

3.3 Land Cover

- In ORVal, the attributes of a recreation area are described (in part) by its Land Cover.
- Land Covers can be displayed through the Land Cover list in the Map Layers Menu.
- Land Cover are displayed as colour-coded dots located on a 25m grid over recreation sites.
- For paths, land covers are identified for the area in a 25m region each side of the path.
- Where water courses or water bodies border a recreation site, these water margins are added to the land cover characteristics of the site.







³ Note that access points are identified by a spatial algorithm that looks for 'dangling ends' of paths come within 50m of the road network. In some cases numerous access points to the same path network are found within close proximity to each other. In those cases, the group of access points is approximated by an access point located at the centroid of the group. For this reason some access points on the map are approximations and may not fall exactly on the paths network.

- Beaches are assumed to have land cover that constitutes half coastal land cover types half sea water.
- The land cover key can be displayed by pressing the information button ¹ next to the land cover list. Twenty three different forms of land cover, land use and water margins are identified in ORVal, as follows;



3.4 Designations

- Recreation Sites are also described by the extent of land on that site under special designation or ownership.
- Designations can be displayed through the Designation list in the Map Layers Menu.
- The designation key can be displayed by pressing the information button an next to the designations list.



Fifteen different designations are identified in ORVal, as follows;

Site Designation		
National Park	National Nature Reserve	Ancient Woodland
National Trail	Local Nature Reserve	Country Park
AONB	SSSI	Historic Park/Garden
Heritage Coast	Natura 2000 Site	Millennium/Doorstep
Open Access (CROW)	Ramsar Wetland	Green

3.5 Points of Interest

- The **Points of Interest** layer identifies the locations of a variety of natural features and man-made structures.
- Five different type of feature:
 - **Historic structures** (e.g. castles, country houses etc.)
 - Archaeological sites (e.g. standing stones, burial mounds etc.)
 - Scenic features (e.g. waterfalls, caves etc.)
 - Viewpoints
 - o Playgrounds



Create Sites

Alter Sites

Alter Sites

Image: Create Site

Map Layers

- The Points of Interest key can be displayed by pressing the information button next to the Points of Interest list.
- In the main, the data in the Points of Interest layer were taken from the Ordnance Survey Points of Interest data set.

3.6 Regions

- The **Regions** layer allow the user to overlay a variety of spatial boundaries.
- The user can select:
 - Middle layer Super
 Output Area (MSOA)
 taken from the 2011 UK
 census;
 - Local Authority Areas, taken from the Ordinance Survey's Boundary Line package



 Catchment Areas taken from the National Flood Risk Assessment (NaFRA).

3.7 Value Maps

- The Value Maps layer allow users to visualise the welfare values generated by accessible greenspace.
- Welfare values are calculated for each recreational site using the Recreation Demand Model. The welfare value of a site is a monetary estimate of the extra welfare enjoyed by adult residents of England from being able to access that site (see Box 3).



• The Value Maps allow users to view welfare values either for each site or aggregated by regions (Middle Super Output Areas, Local Authority Areas or Catchment Areas). To be clear, aggregated values represent the sum of values generated by the sites that fall within the boundaries of a region.



- Welfare values on the Value maps are colour coded with darker blues representing higher values.
 - The range of values represented by the colours can be viewed by pressing the information button next to the Value Maps list. Regions coloured white contain no recreational sites.
- Note that the value ranges represented by the colours differ across the different levels of aggregation, so make sure you are looking at the right key for the value map being displayed.

Box 3: Estimating Welfare Values

The Recreation Demand Model can be used to estimate welfare values for greenspaces. By 'welfare value' we mean a figure describing the monetary equivalent of the welfare enjoyed by individuals as a result of having access to a greenspace. In economics this welfare value is often alternatively called an 'economic value' or a 'willingness to pay'. Welfare values are useful for decision-makers in applying cost-benefit analysis to appraise projects that impact on greenspace.

Our calculation of welfare values is enabled by the fact that the recreation demand model provides an estimate of the recreation welfare function (see Box 1). That function identifies how much welfare an individual enjoys as a result of beneficial attributes of a greenspace (e.g. the extent of woodland, the presence of a children's playground). Likewise, it identifies how much welfare is lost from each extra pound of cost incurred in travelling to a greenspace. The latter amount is crucial in calculating welfare values. It tells us the amount of welfare a person considers is equivalent to having one extra pound. In other words, it provides an exchange rate that we can use to convert estimates of changes in welfare into equivalent amounts of money.

Welfare values for an existing site are estimated by calculating how much each individual's welfare would fall if they were no longer able to access that site and then converting that welfare quantity into an equivalent monetary amount. Those welfare values can then be aggregated over the adult population of England for an entire year using the same sequence of steps as used to aggregate estimates of visitation (see Box 2).

Estimating welfare values for a new site follows the same logic. First we calculate, the welfare gain enjoyed by adding this new site to the set of greenspaces available for individuals to visit. Then we convert that to a money equivalent and aggregate to give an annual figure for the whole population. Likewise, the welfare value of a change in greenspace attributes is calculated by aggregating monetised estimates of the welfare changes expected from that change in attributes.

Note that the greenspace welfare values presented in ORVal are estimated under the assumption that the accessibility and attributes of all other greenspaces do not change. Recall that the value of a recreation site is taken to be the monetised welfare loss experienced by individuals if they could no longer visit that greenspace. Of course, that welfare loss will be mitigated the more alternative recreation sites there are that an individual could visit instead. In other words, the level of welfare loss depends crucially on the availability of substitute sites. If we are considering the welfare value provided by a set of recreation sites, then two measures suggest themselves;

- Either add up the welfare value provided by each greenspace assuming that the other sites remain as possible substitutes, a quantity we describe as summing marginal values.
- Or, calculate the welfare value of removing all of the greenspaces simultaneously.

The latter must exceed the former since removing all the greenspaces simultaneously reduces the availability of substitute sites. While the recreation demand model could be used to calculate welfare values that assume simultaneous removal of greenspaces, ORVal currently presents only the relatively conservative estimates derived from summing marginal values.

4. Explore Sites

• The Explore functionality allows users to examine the model's estimates of the usage and welfare value generated from the recreational use of the different greenspaces (see Boxes 2 and 3).

4.1 The Explore Panel

- Pressing the ^{Q Explore Sites} button brings up the Explore Panel, allowing users to choose the level of aggregation at which they wish to view information on the greenspaces.
- Four options are available; users may view information either presented for each individual
 Sites or aggregated within Regions (MSOA, Local Authority or Catchment).



• Selecting one of the options in the explore panel, allows users to begin selecting features on the map and viewing information on those features.

4.2 The Current Site Information Panel

• Information is displayed to the left of the screen in the **Current Site Information Panel**.



• Clicking on a feature on the map will populate the Current Site Information Panel, displaying the name and id of the selected feature and a series of lists containing feature data.

• That data includes information on estimated levels of annual visitation, annual welfare values, land covers, designations and points of interest.



- Expanding a list reveals the information for the selected feature.
- Information on estimates of visitation and welfare values can be viewed either in aggregate or broken down by socioeconomic segments.



- Multiple sites or regions can be selected. Just click another site or region, the details will be displayed in the Current Site Information Panel on the left of the screen identified by that features unique id number.
- Users can clear down the selections they have made in the Current Site Information Panel by pressing the Clear button.

Information on the current selection of sites or regions can be saved off by pressing the
 Print button at the bottom of Current Site Information Panel.

4.3 Filtering Results

- When exploring data in Sites mode, users have the ability to select multiple sites. Likewise, when
 exploring data in Region mode (i.e. by choosing Local Authority, MSOA or Catchment regions in
 the Explore Panel) then users are implicitly selecting all the sites in the selected regions. ORVal
 allows users to filter their results so as to examine data for those sites in their current selection
 that meet some user-defined criteria.
- As an example, a user could select a local authority and then use the Filter functionality to look at the visits and welfare values generated by the greenspaces that border rivers and lakes. Alternatively, a user might select a number of MSOAs and then use the Filter functionality to narrow the information to those sites that contain woodland and have SSSI designation.
- To access the Filter Dialogue, first select one or more regions or sites then press the Filter button in the Current Site Information Panel.
- The Advanced Filter Panel will appears, presenting three lists of site characteristics that can be used to filter the selection.

E.	Туре
Select All	
 Allotment 	Cemetery
Country Park	✓ Golf
Nature	🗹 Park
✓ Woods	National Trail
✓ Path	Beach



The Type List allows users to narrow their selection to particular types of greenspace.

	Designation
Select All	
Ancient Wood	AONB
Country Park	Open(CROW)
FC Woodland	Greens
Heritage Coast	Historic
✓ Local N.Reserver	∕e 🕑 Natura 2000
Nature (NIA)	National N.Reserve
National Park	National Trail
National Trust	Ramsar
SSSI	No Designation

- The Designation List allows users to narrow their selection to greenspaces under special designations.
- Notice the 'No Designation' category that ensures users can restrict their selection to greenspaces which do not have any special designations.

- The Land Cover List allows users to narrow their selection to greenspaces that contain certain land covers, land uses or water margins.
- <u>IMPORTANT</u>: When filtering on multiple criteria (by ticking a number of different items from the filtering lists) ORVal joins from different lists with an 'AND' and from within lists with an 'OR'. For example, if a user ticked 'Nature' (Type) and 'National Park' (Designation) and 'Saltmarsh', 'Estuary', 'Fen Marsh' (Land covers) then the filter would select greenspaces that are classified as Nature AND designated as National Parks AND contain some land covered in Saltmarsh OR Estuary OR Fen Marsh.

i 🗮 La	and cover
Select All	
Agriculture	Allotment
🕑 Built Up	Cemetery
Coastal	🗷 Estuary
🗹 Fen Marsh	🗹 Formal Garden
🗹 Golf	Lake/Reservoir
Managed Grass	Moors Heath
Mountain	Natural Grass
Parking	Playground
River/Canal	Rock
Saltmarsh	Seaside
Sports Pitch	Wood Pasture
✓ Woods	







- On pressing the
 Filter button, the Filter Dialogue
 Panel will display a summary of the attributes on which the user is filtering.
- Pressing the
 + Show Results button allows the user to view data for their narrowed selection.

- As usual that data is presented in the Current Site Information Panel.
- Note that the figures presented in that panel represent the sums of welfares values and visits for those greenspaces in the original selection of sites or regions that meet the users filtering criteria.
 For example, the data might show the total value and



visits to greenspaces within a local authority that have woodland.

Again users can download a permanent record of their filtered results by pressing the button.

5. Alter Sites

• The **Alter Sites** functionality allows users to investigate how altering the land cover at existing recreation sites will change usage and welfare values.

5.1 The Alter Panel

- Pressing the Alter Sites button brings up the Alter Site
 Characteristics Panel.
- To begin, press the ^{T Sites} button which enables the selection of sites on the map and brings up the Current Site Information panel.
- Select the site whose attributes are to be altered. Its name and id number will appear in the Current Site Information panel.

Agriculture (%)	8
Allotmont/0()	0
Allouthent(%).	0
Built Op(%).	0
Cernetery(%).	0
Coastal(%):	0
Estuary(%):	0
Fen Marsh(%):	0
Formal Garden(%):	0
Golf(%):	0
Lake/Reservoir(%):	0
Managed Grass(%):	17
Moors Heath(%):	0
Mountain(%):	0
Natural Grass(%):	66
Parking(%):	0
Playground(%):	0
River/Canal(%):	7
Rock(%):	0
Saltmarsh(%):	1
Sea Water(%):	0
Sports Pitch(%):	0
Wood Pasture(%):	0
Woods(%):	0
↓ Lindate	



The Land Cover List

- To begin altering the site's attributes, expand the land cover list by pressing ≡ Land cover. This will bring up a list of land covers.
- The land covers for the selected site, in its present state, are displayed alongside the list expressed in percentages of the whole site area.
- To experiment with how changes in land cover might impact on usage and welfare value, alter land covers by clicking in the boxes next to the various land covers and changing the percentage amounts.
- Once the new land covers have been entered press the VUpdate button to confirm that the new land cover extents add up to 100%. If they do not, then make alterations until they do.
- Press the submit button to calculate predictions of how welfare values and visitations might change due to the change in attributes.

5.3 Results

- Once the calculations are complete the + Show Results button appears at the bottom of the Alter Site Characteristic Panel. Pressing this button will update the Information Panel with details of the predicted changes in welfare values and visits resulting from changing the sites attributes.
- Note that the quantities that are displayed in the Map Information Panel are recorded in terms of changes from the welfare values and visit predictions for the selected site with its current attributes.
- Users can download a permanent record of the results of their query by pressing the
 Print
 button.

6. Create Sites

• The **Create Sites** functionality allows users to investigate how much additional usage and value would be generated by creating a new recreation site in a particular location.

6.1 The Create Site Panel

- Pressing the Create Sites
 button brings up the Create
 New Site Panel.
- The procedure for creating a new recreation site proceeds through three steps.
- In the first step, users select whether the new site is a
 Park or a Path
- In the second step, users choose how to represent the new site on the map.
 - By selecting the ^{∠Draw}



- button, the greenspace can be drawn directly on the map.
- If creating an area then the draw feature allows users to outline the boundary of that area, clicking at a location on the map to add a vertex and clicking twice on the final vertex to complete the area outline.



 If creating a path then the draw feature allows the user to draw the route on the map, clicking at a location on the map to add a vertex and clicking twice on the final point to complete the path.



- On finishing by clicking twice, the new greenspace extent turns from a dashed line to a yellow line and the area (area feature) or length (path feature) of the new greenspace is displayed in the Create New Site panel.
- The location of the new greenspace is also displayed in units of latitude and longitude in the Create New Site panel.
- Alternatively, selecting the Alternatively, selecting the selecting the selecting the selecting the selecting the selecting the selection of the selecting the selecting
 - Clicking on the map places a yellow marker on the map. If the user is creating a new area then this will be taken to represent the centre of that greenspace. If the user is creating a new path then this is taken to be the access point.
 - The location of the marker is displayed in units of latitude and longitude in the Create New Site panel.
 - When creating sites in marker mode, the user must manually insert the extent of the new greenspace, either entering an area in hectares for an area greenspace or a length in kilometres for a path greenspace.
- In the third and final step, users define the land cover of the new greenspace by expanding the ≡ Land cover list in the Create New Site Panel and inputting the percentages of different land covers as per the procedure for updating land covers described in 4.2.

6.2 Results

Once the calculations are complete the + Show Results button appears at the bottom of the Create New Site Panel. Pressing this button will bring up the New Site Results Panel to the left of the screen with details of the predicted changes in welfare values and visits resulting from changing the sites attributes.



Users can download a permanent record of the results of their query by pressing the
 Print button at the bottom of the New Site Results Panel.