



Did you know? A MrSID image is a compressed file format with a common compression ratio of 20:1



Did you know? Users who choose to convert a section of a MrSID image to Tiff can easily end up with a 2-gig image file?!



Images courtesy of Ministry of Natural Resources

Working with MrSID Imagery

This guide has been created to assist users with MrSID image format files. MrSID is a compressed raster file format that requires specialized software to view or manipulate. As most of the Map Library's orthoimagery collection is available in MrSID format, this guide may be useful to those users who wish to work with the compressed imagery outside of the library.

For a complete list of the Map Library's orthoimagery collection, please visit :

<http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/locations/umd/digital/OrthoimageColl.html>

MrSID Image Format Files

MrSID is a proprietary data format for raster images that allows image files to be substantially compressed with little to no loss of image quality. MrSID format, developed and marketed by LizardTech, Inc stands for "Multi Resolution Seamless Image Database".

There are several software products that enable users to view MrSID imagery with the functions of zooming, panning, printing and saving. Some software products also enable users to view both imagery and vector files (such as ESRI Shapefiles) simultaneously. Conversion from MrSID file format to a georeferenced jpg or GeoTiff formats are also possible with certain software programs.

The table on the next page lists and describes some of the products that support MrSID imagery.

MrSID Image File Format : Supporting Software

This table will aid you in deciding which software program to work with when using MrSID imagery. It will distinguish between programs that are simply viewers and those that will convert MrSIDs to other image formats while retaining the resolution. If all you need is to view an image, you may select from any of the programs listed below. The table is organized by software functionality – that is, the programs with more advanced image functionality, such as image format conversion, are at the beginning of the list and those that offer basic functionality, such as simply image viewing are near the bottom.

*If you require image format conversion which will retain the resolution (such as GeoTiff) you will want to choose software from the column ‘Converts to other image format’.

*If you require saving the image, the column ‘Saves/Prints Image’ refers to capturing the screen which will not retain the resolution if you choose to zoom in afterwards.

*If you require map generation such as a legend, title, scale, etc, you will want to choose software from the column ‘Generates Maps’.

Software Program	URL	Converts to other image format	Saves/Prints Image	Generates Maps	Displays Shapefiles	Comments
LizardTech’s GeoExpress View	http://www.lizardtech.com/download/	Yes – excellent resolution	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not free. But free trial period.
Forestry GIS	http://www.forestpal.com/fgis.html	Yes – excellent resolution	Yes	Yes	Yes	Free. Edits Shapefiles.
TatukGIS Viewer	http://www.tatukgis.com/products/viewer/viewer.aspx	Yes – excellent resolution, but slow	Yes	Yes	Yes	Free. Excellent program. Highly Recommended
ESRI’s ArcGIS 9.x/ArcView	http://www.esri.com/	Yes – some resolution loss	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not free for personal use.
ESRI’s ArcExplorer 9x	http://www.esri.com/software/arcexplorer/index.html	No	Yes	Yes – very simple	Yes	Free. Very simple, limited program
ESRI’s ArcGIS Explorer	http://www.esri.com/software/arcgis/explorer/index.html	No	Yes	No	Yes	Free. Similar to Google Earth.
Quantum GIS (QGIS)	http://download.qgis.org/downloads.rhtml	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Free. Excellent Program
Map Window GIS	http://www.mapwindow.org/download.php?show_details=1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Free. Excellent Program
Geomatica FreeView 9x	http://www.peigeomatics.com/products/freeview.html	No	Prints Screen	No	Yes	Free. Very simple program, slow.
Christine GIS	http://www.christine-gis.com/en/download/download.htm	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Free. Excellent Program