

Southeastern Minnesota Counties GIS Users Group Meeting Summary

Preston, MN: 9:30am – 2:00pm, April 28th, 2004

Attendees:

Sarah Midler, Goodhue County GIS
John Gabbert, GIS Analyst
Christiana Slivinski, Private consulting firm
Jeff Knopf, GIS Specialist
Dave Wavrin, Steele County
Tom Hoffman, Winona County
Lawrence Svien, NRCS
Michelle Trager, Rice County
Jamie Schulz, DNR Fisheries-Rochester
Eric Miller, Freeborn & Mower County Survey Office
Rebecca Sheely, Fillmore FSA
Jeremy Maul, Fillmore SWCD
Jeff Cooper, Fillmore SWCD
Dave Kiehne, Fillmore SWCD
Blaine Hackett, GIS Rangers

Task assignments are highlighted

1) Introductions

There were 8 new people who attended this meeting.

2) Tips & Tricks Demonstration

Blaine Hackett, Founder of '*GIS Rangers*', gave a presentation for tips and tricks within ArcMap 8.x. Blaine started the presentation by highlighting many points from the ESRI document "Making Maps That Communicate". The full version of this document is available online in pdf format: www.esri.com/news/arcuser/1001/files/bettermaps.pdf

- Cartographic tips: Keep it simple. Don't try to communicate too much.
- Create a 'Map Request' form. This will help other people understand what your office can and cannot produce and you will be able to create a better map for them.
- Maps online: Keep .pdf files at 300 dpi and keep .jpeg files at 96 dpi
- Maps for Newspapers or books: Use Illustrator format and keep .bmp or .jpeg at 300 dpi

Some of the other topics that Blaine showed examples for were: Labeling tips, How to change table of contents and legend items, Working with labels that are being covered by annotation, Georeferencing a .jpeg image to county linework, ESRI Developers Help Kit, ESRI Map Book Maker, and Editing metadata within Arc Catalog.

Blaine's presentation will be added to the website soon.

3) Host Presentation – Fillmore SWCD

Bob Pickett-Fillmore County Assessor's Office and Jeremy Maul-Fillmore SWCD gave a presentation for the overview of Fillmore County and also a demo of 'Civic Sight'.

County Overview

- Fillmore County recently finished a county-wide soils survey. This was a long process and Fillmore staff put in many hours to finish the project.
- Fillmore County and SWCD work a lot with the soils and also mapping sinkholes. There are over 6,000 sinkholes within the county and more are created every day. Currently, Fillmore has 3 GPS units with sub-meter accuracy that are used for locating new and existing sinkholes.

- Staff is working with 1939 aerial photos for the county to orthorectify them

Civic Sight

- Civic Sight is a GIS data viewer and query tool built in the Visual Basic & MapObjects LT development environment. It is very easy to use, providing access to GIS data for the novice or casual user. The program is able to utilize files in ESRI formats as well as CAD files, and many different image file formats.
- Fillmore County Assessor staff uses Civic Sight to search for parcels, create maps, and query information for specific parcels.

4) Presentation of Survey Results:

Note: There were only 10 surveys sent in time for the compilation of the survey results. For the questions regarding topics of discussion, and software, the total of the percentages equal more than 100% as each respondent was able to make one or more choices. For the detailed version of the survey results, refer to the Users Group website.

- 90% of people plan on attending the meetings
- 70% of respondents would like to meet every two months or 'bi-monthly'
- 90% of respondents would like to meet in different locations each meeting
- 100% of respondents would like to try and organize workshops on specific topics
- 100% of respondents would like to keep meeting as a whole group
- Top Five Topics of Interest
 - o Arc Map Tips & Tricks 60%
 - o Charging for GIS Products 50%
 - o Data Availability 50%
 - o Working with Map Projections 50%
 - o Working with External Attribute Systems (AS400, Access, Excel, etc.) 50%
- Suggestions for other discussion topics:
 - o Avoiding Duplication of Effort
 - o Tracking What is Going On
 - o Database Design
 - o Personal Geodatabases
 - o Aerial/Satellite Photos
 - o GPS
 - o ArcGIS Updates and Training
 - o "GIS in _____ speakers" (ie Public Utilities, Police Dept, Land Management, etc.)
- 100% of respondents currently have GIS software
- 80% of respondents have/use Arc View 3.x and 50% have/use Arc Map 8.x
- 40% of respondents have used their software for over 5 years
- 30% of respondents also use AutoCAD in conjunction with their GIS software
- 70% of respondents utilize and can export files in shapefile format
- 100% of respondents have email and internet access

5) Round Table Discussion

- Question was raised as to what information should be available on the Users Group website.
 - o Group decided that the survey results should be available. The results will be added within the next two weeks.
 - o The group decided to add a contact list on the website so people may network and get in touch with fellow group members

- Information from Blaine Hackett's presentation will be made available on the website as well.
- Request was made for a volunteer to host the next meeting. Michelle Trager volunteered to host next meeting in Rice County. *Date to be determined*. Possible presentation topics: 'geodatabases' and 'charging for GIS products'.
- Michelle Trager will set a tentative date and location for next meeting and notify either Jeremy Maul or Sarah Midler. Meeting information will be updated on the website as soon as possible. An email will also be sent out listing any detailed meeting information.

Next Meeting Location: Rice County, *Date to be determined*