

Southeastern Minnesota Counties GIS Users Group Meeting Minutes

Wabasha, MN: 9:30am – 2:30pm, Thursday, September 15th, 2005

Attendees:

Sarah Schrader, Goodhue County
Leanne Knott, City of Red Wing
Michelle Trager, Rice County
Jeremy Maul, Fillmore SWCD
Dave Wavrin, Steele County
Matt McQuire, Dakota County
Renee Vevea, GeoSpatial Services/St. Mary's University
Andy Robertson, GeoSpatial Services/St. Mary's University
Michael Goodnature, City of Rochester
Dan Flatgard, City of Rochester
Ryan Moore, City of Rochester
Shawn Gertken, Wabasha County
Doug Avoles, Applied Data Consultants; Eau Claire, WI
Deena Murphy, NRCS
Danea Larson, Fillmore SWCD
Phil Rosendale, City of Wabasha
Jeanne Franz, City of Winona
Aaron Brossoit, Cloud Cartographics/Brain Magnet

Introductions:

There were 7 new people who attended the meeting.

Presentation: Wetland Mapping

- Andy Robertson, GeoSpatial Services/St. Mary's University

(The full version of this powerpoint presentation is available in pdf format on the users group website)

- General Overview – What is a Wetland? Why Map Wetlands? What is the NWI?

A wetland is defined by the presence of undrained hydric soils, surface or sub-surface hydrology, or hydrophytic vegetation. Wetlands assist with groundwater recharge, water filtration, flood water management, storm protection, and maintenance of biological diversity, and fish and wildlife habitat.

Mapping wetlands can assist with the mitigation and control of flooding and erosion. Other reasons for mapping wetlands include: legislative requirements, studies of habitat and biological diversity, recreational values, and the fact that wetlands are a source of traditional food and medicinal plants.

The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) was established in 1974 with the goal to “create a comprehensive database on characteristics and extents of United States wetlands. Currently, only 40% of all NWI maps are in digital format. About 70% of the mapping for the lower 48 states is complete with 40% completed in Alaska.

- Overview of Mapping Methods

Mapping methods include scanning paper maps, ortho-rectification, and vectorization. Remote sensing using satellite imagery has also been used in Alaska. Utilizes Orthomapper software for geo-referencing as well as Arc 9.x geo-referencing tool bar to link scanned images and photos.

Questions for Presenter:

-Ryan Moore, Do you have a photogrammatist on staff?

- No, not at the initial geo-referencing/vectorization step but they do have one during the quality control stage.

-Tom Hoffman, Are you creating new topology rules or using the existing ones through ArcGIS?

- Combination of both. Writing VB script to find certain errors and also using existing rules.

-Matt McQuire, How do you represent whether there has been a net loss?

- That is the “million dollar question”! There has been such great change in the techniques used to collect and record the data over the years. Are the changes in wetlands coverage due to these updated techniques and better data or do they actually represent a net loss?

Presentation: CLOUD’s Online Map and Technology Solutions

- Aaron Brossoit, Cloud Cartographics/Brain Magnet

(The full version of this powerpoint presentation is available in pdf format on the users group website)

- About CLOUD and Brain Magnet
- Plat Book on CD-ROM

Set up very basic and user friendly for non-GIS users/citizens. This information can also be set up for online viewing.

- Facility Tools

Live Demo: Online facility information and ability to perform search queries and pull up maps, floor plans, video clips or other photos of the building. This information could also be put on a CD-ROM format.

- www.northlandconnection.com

Live Demo: This is a web portal for the Arrowhead region of Minnesota and Douglas County, Wisconsin. It is the first of its kind that offers demographic statistics, real estate information, and much more the entire area.

Questions for Presenter:

-Ryan Moore, Do you build your parcels (for plat books) based on legal description?

- Yes. At the end of the process, they also do manual research to clean up any errors

-Michelle Trager, What if a city/county already has GIS layers for their parcels? For Plat Book creation would you just use the city/county’s files?

- Yes, but it depends on how accurate the existing dataset is.

-Multiple agencies pay for the Northern Connection site but do they pay separately or do they have an agreement set up to merge their funds and pay together?

- The group raises funds from many different sources

-Ryan Moore, Can you use GIS layers for the web portal?

- Yes, we are able to use any current information.

Presentation: History of GIS in Wabasha County

- Shawn Gertken, Wabasha County GIS

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- Wabasha County GIS History

In 1997, a pilot project was completed for Oakwood Township where parcels, sections, water features, road centerlines, and soils data was collected. The county then hired temporary mapping technicians to create a county-wide parcel map in 1999. Phil Rosendale of the City of Wabasha did a lot of work on parcels by geo-referencing plats and vectorizing them in AutoCAD. The first full-time GIS Coordinator was hired in April 2003.

- Data Sources

Dave Johnson, part of Johnson & Scofield, Inc., is the part-time Wabasha County Surveyor, who is in charge of section corner re-monumentation and collecting GPS points for each section corner. There are currently 4 townships that have been completely re-monumented. The US Army Corps of Engineers contacted Wabasha County and offered 2ft LIDAR-based contour data from 2001 for free. The data extent covers the river and 2 miles off from the river though anything west of that area, there is nothing. The contour dataset is huge and so most people cannot use it so Shawn will convert it to 5ft or 10ft contours.

- Current GIS Projects
 - Finish E-911 project
 - Finish assigning street ranges
 - Complete assigning rural addresses
 - Assist with MSAG creation
 - Create and print emergency maps
 - Work with Dispatch mapping vendor
 - Create hard copy maps as needed
 - Provide information to other county departments and the public
 - Data acquisition and development
 - Determine direction of GIS in Wabasha County
- Future GIS Projects
 - Create a Wabasha County ArcIMS site
 - Proposed \$13,000 in 2006 budget
 - (\$8,000 software, \$2,000 maintenance, \$3,00 LINDOW server)
 - Available to internal users by mid-2006
 - Public access to be determined
 - Integration with NAZCA
 - COGO parcel mapping for Greenfield Township
 - Replace existing 'interim' parcel mapping that was completed in 2003

Questions for Presenter:

-Leanne Knott, What is Shawn's educational background?

- Graduated from Alexandria Tech in 1997 with an Associate's Degree in GIS
- GeoComm, St. Cloud 2.5 years
- Crow Wing County 2.5 years
- Wabasha County 1+ year

Discussion:

- Discussion about NAZCA; their products, their prices
- Data fees; What fees are too high/too low?
- Legal issues surrounding giving digital data to private consultants
- Sarah Schrader requested that all user group members compile their data/map fee lists and email them to her so they can be put together in one list and then re-distributed to the users group members. Members can review the information and we can discuss more about fee lists at the January meeting.
- Leanne Knott: Meeting with other users group members during the Tuesday night social event at the MN GIS/LIS Conference in St. Cloud, Oct. 3rd-5th.
- Renee Vevea suggested contacting Dan Falbo of ESRI to ask him to attend and possibly present at the next meeting. Renee will contact Dan and ask him to attend the meeting.

Next Meeting:

January 2006: Ryan Moore of the City of Rochester volunteered to host the next meeting in Rochester.