

GIS IN EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES -- SEPTEMBER 24, 2008

Attendees: Miriam Pomilio, Mike Mahaffie, Megan Nehrbas, Helen Gieske,
Kim Stratham, John Laznik, Brooke Sanders, Don Berry

Committee Name

A discussion was held regarding the committee name. As it currently stands as "GIS in Education," it's very limiting and most folks don't understand the acronym GIS. We talked about "Geospatial," which is popular, but perhaps over-used at this time. Since the website currently says "*GeoEducation in Delaware*" we decided to go with this name. As Helen pointed out, "GeoEducation" allows folks to think of geology, which is a science, as well as of geography.

Logo

Miriam passed around copies of the logos we are to choose from. Miriam indicated that a survey is being developed and will be sent to the entire group to allow them to vote for their logo choice. Once the survey results are in, the new logo will be incorporated into the Website as well as our correspondence.

Mission Statement

A discussion was held to brainstorm ideas and develop a mission statement for our committee. It was suggested the mission statement not use any technical jargon, be brief, and state our purpose, business and values. After much brainstorming the following mission statement is being proposed:

"The mission of the GeoEducation in Delaware subcommittee is to encourage the use of mapping technologies in Delaware classrooms by empowering teachers, inspiring students and enhancing education to meet the curriculum standards of the State of Delaware. The subcommittee will connect students and teachers with geospatial professionals throughout Delaware."

Please review the mission statement and send any comments or suggestions to Miriam Pomilio.

Website

Miriam led a tour of the new website (<http://mygeoworld.org>). This is the starting point for our subcommittee. It currently contains tabs for Members, News and Events, Tools and Resources. We also have locations for the subcommittee meeting agendas and minutes. Lots of compliments were received on the design of the site, it is very professional and folks liked the photos scrolling along the top. Miriam handed out a web design document that Nicole had created to show how additional content would be added in the future. Some of the comments provided at this meeting included the following:

- ◆ Add content outlining the history of the committee.

- ◆ Add contact information for each of the subcommittee members (those who wish to have it displayed on our site)
- ◆ Organize the Tools & Resources by topic (GIS, GPS, Lesson Plans, etc.)
- ◆ Add a location for Success Stories – where teachers can write about how they've used geospatial technologies and their experience and any benefits.
- ◆ Create an area for the K-12 contest to show the winners (past and present) and offer information about the contest.
- ◆ Create an area for the GIS in Education Award similar to the contest page)
- ◆ Provide an area that shows what types of In-Service workshops our subcommittee can provide
- ◆ The color scheme looks a lot like University of Delaware colors, vs. the State colors (buff and colonial blue). Should we think about a non-UD look to the page?
- ◆ When we create the On-line Geo-games page, we should make that Kid Friendly with lots of cool graphics, kid fonts, and just fun.

Funding/Grant Opportunities

The group discussed how to find and apply for grants and other funding opportunities to provide funding for things such as GPS units, textbooks, lesson plan development etc. Many of the grant opportunities are only extended to teachers which limits our abilities. We also talked about how to manage any funding we received. Since we are a subcommittee of the DGDC, there is a slim possibility of managing funds through the State, but not likely.

In-Service Day Presentations

Miriam and Nicole Minni are presenting workshops at the Delaware Social Studies Conference on October 10, 2008. No other presentations or workshops are scheduled at this time. We talked about how to get the word out to teachers and schools that we have presentations and workshops available to them for In-Service Days. Since there are so many School Districts and each handles their own teacher training days, it was suggested that we look market ourselves to the Technology Specialists in the various Districts as well as look to the curriculum specialists at DOE to help with getting our availability to the various schools. It was suggested we keep our pitch to these groups short and simple and ask them to let us help their teachers.

GIS Day 2008 – November 19, 2008

Megan Nehrbas, chairwoman of the GIS Day subcommittee presented information regarding the upcoming event. It will be a two part event: field trip experience for 160 students during the school day; and an open house event for the public in the evening. The event will be held at the Dover Air Mobility Command Museum from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm. Megan is looking for volunteers to assist with the event on November 19th. You can volunteer to help either during the day, the evening or for the entire day. Please contact Megan to volunteer your services (mnehrbas@sussexcountyde.gov). Megan indicated that the field day portion filled very quickly with 3 schools signing up to bring their 5th graders (McVey in Christina School District, Nellie Hughes Stokes in Caesar Rodney School District and Shields in Cape Henlopen). Two of the outside airplanes are going to be used as classrooms during the event and the Sussex County EMS will be there

with their paramedic units. The Earth Balloon will be there for the entire day along with 14 activities for the students and public to enjoy.

GPS Coordination

Miriam announced that the Delaware Center for Educational Technology (DCET) has retired their GPS lab. This is a disappointment, but considering the age of the units and the State budget cuts and reassignments at DCET, it's understandable. This area was discussed at length in the Grant and Funding portion of the meeting. There are opportunities for teachers to get their own units through grants. The group brainstormed about how to get GPS units to the teachers. However, it's difficult to find one location that would be best for centralized distribution and upkeep of the units, since DCET can no longer take that responsibility.

K-12 Contest

The K-12 contest historically has been held in conjunction with the Delaware GIS Conference. Since the Delaware GIS Conference isn't being held until February 2010, Miriam suggested we connect with the Delaware Center for Educational Technology's conference held each April. DCET liked the idea, but are unsure of whether their conference will be held this coming year due to budget restraints on schools. If teachers can't attend, then they will cancel their conference for April. We also discussed having the contest regardless of a conference at which it would be displayed and the consensus was this was a good idea. However, linking it to the DCET conference would bring it to the attention of many more teachers in Delaware than the Delaware GIS conference. More discussion regarding this needs to happen so we can plan the contest. John Laznik had an interesting idea for the contest: asking students to take photographs of their favorite places and locating the coordinates and linking the photos to that spot using Google Earth. We decided we should have a subcommittee to decide on the K-12 Contest. Miriam, John, Kim, Nicole and Wendy were volunteered by the attendees. Additional volunteers for the subcommittee are welcome.

Lesson Plans for GIS and/or GPS

Miriam showed the newest ESRI lesson plan books to the group. Here we also discussed the distribution of lesson plans to the teachers for GIS and GPS. Helen suggested we use the State Library system. Don agreed since they loan and transfer books and media to all the libraries upon request. It might be good to purchase a set of the ESRI Lesson Books for the library to distribute. Also the Michelle Hall Science GIS lesson plan books would be a good addition. We should explore how to work with the State Library for this purpose.

Helen indicated she is working on curriculum for science to use GIS and needs assistance. Miriam offered to contact ESRI and see if they could help Helen.

Next Meeting

We decided to meet on a 4 month schedule. Our next meeting will be in January 2009. Miriam is proposing Wednesday January 14th. Please provide comments on whether morning or afternoons suit your schedule so a time and location can be determined.