

Minutes of First Quarterly Meeting
GIS Users Group in Southwest Minnesota

Wednesday, June 19, 2002
10:00 a.m.

The first quarterly meeting of the GIS Users Group was called to order in Slayton at the Murray County Courts Building at 10:00 a.m..

Introductions were made.

No additions or corrections to the agenda were offered.

Current Events:

Chris Winter reported that he had recently attended a meeting in which a statewide digital elevation model layer in 2 foot elevations is being proposed, and if accepted and completed, it will be available on the DNR Data Deli website. The present system available and used by most agencies is created in 10 foot elevations. Our agencies would benefit greatly from the creation of this data.

Chris also reported on the statewide floodplain mapping proposal in the process of being created by Metro GIS. This will be a welcome GIS layer as well.

Charlie Kost, provided information about a project proposal by University of Minnesota professor Will Craig, for funding lakeshore property parcel mapping in Minnesota. The grant application and request for funding was submitted to the Legislative Commission of Minnesota Resources(LCMR). Senator Jim Vickerman is on the committee of the LCMR, and it was suggested by Charlie that GIS users contact him to support the project. The allocation meetings are scheduled for July 10-31, 2002 and those of us who support the proposal should contact him soon.

Discussion then led to a GIS data sharing discussion. The issue of sharing data will be offered as a possible agenda item at future meetings, as this discussion could get lengthy and inconclusive.

Discussion then began on the MN DOT base maps. Clint Sires reported that MN DOT is initiating the submission of updated data from the county level, in an effort to open communications and the ability to acquire assistance in updating the MN DOT Base maps. Dan Ross, coordinator of the GIS support of MN DOT, St. Paul is accepting electronic updates to the MN DOT base maps.

A comment was made about the use of GIS in the preparation of the Lyon County water plan. The draft of the plan can be viewed on line at www.lyonco.org.

A question was raised about the availability of transmission line spatial data from electric or telephone companies, hopefully on a statewide basis. No one was aware of the creation or availability of such information. Suggestions were made to contact Otter Tail Power, Northern States Power, REA or Gopher One.

Presentation:

Craig Christensen, of the Murray County SWCD gave a presentation of some of the ways GPS equipment is used in the development of spatial data. He gave a demonstration of the GPS unit, and how to create polygons using the data downloaded from the GPS unit. He uses a Garmin 76 GPS unit along with the DNR Garmin extension available from the DNR website. Craig displayed the GPS data over aerial photos he has acquired through FSA of Murray County. He demonstrated selected projects and talked about the value of GIS in completing his work and assisting his clients.

The presentation led to a discussion of precision and accuracy issues when using GPS data. Gene East commented that we all need to be aware that the precision (number of decimal places displayed) of the spatial information displayed in a GIS application does not indicate the accuracy of the collection methods and equipment used to create the data. As users and presenters of data using GIS we need to be informed about the accuracy of the data we use. Metadata files are used to convey information about the methods and accuracy used to create spatial data sets. We also need to be careful not to use data in displays that would require greater accuracy than our data possess. For many legal processes there is still a need for data produced via professional survey.

Statement of Purpose:

The draft statement of purpose from the prior meeting was discussed. The statement was unanimously adopted by the members present at the meeting. The statement now adopted states the groups purpose as follows: To share GIS information in order to improve productivity, data access and solve individual project problems.

The objectives of the GIS users group are for 1.) technology updates, 2.) topic demonstrations, 3.) data sharing-resource identification, 4.) Individual project problem solving and 5.) advisory group to local organizations.

Other Items:

One of the group stated that he had a problem saving and e-mailing layouts to other agencies. It was suggested that the person export the layout as a wmf or pdf file, and if necessary, use the adobe acrobat distiller to size the project. When changes in that layout need to be made, of course, we then go back to ArcView to the saved project to make the changes, and again save it as a wmf or pdf file.

Gene East talked about the existence of a new aerial layer of flyover photos created by (DNR or FSA) that are very detailed, in color and are worth looking into. There are again pros and cons to this layer, as the geo referenced data can become less accurate as the projection expands.

Discussion was held on the MN GIS LIS consortium, and the availability of funds to set up workshops, conferences, or project presentations. These options will be considered at future meetings. The group was also informed of the MN GIS LIS consortium annual meeting scheduled for October 2-4, 2002 in Duluth, Minnesota. Brochures are being mailed to GIS users.

Next Meeting:

A discussion was held to determine the presentation topic for the next meeting will be a demonstration of the ArcGIS software by Chris Winter.

The next quarterly meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 11, 2002 at 10:00 a.m. at the Lyon County Courthouse.

Minutes created by Cindy Potz and edited by Charlie Kost.

Members present:

Charlie Kost, SSU GIS Center

Dennis Guse, Schwan's

Clint Sires, SRDC

Tom Kresko, BWSR

Wayne Smith, Nobles County

Joel Connot

Cindy Potz, Yellow Medicine River Watershed

Ardis Hotzler, Jackson County

Chris Winter, Lyon County

Gene East, MN DOT

Jim Reinert, Murray County

Chris Hansen, Murray County

Dan Livdahl, Nobles SWCD

Sharon Balster, Nobles County

Jean Christoffels, Murray County

Gordy Olson, Jackson County

Craig Christensen, Murray County

Tony LaSota, Schwan's