



Still Looking To Define Ourselves

Donna Phillips, NRURISA Pesident

I was out surfing the net the other day and put "GIS" in the search field. Several sites came up with topics from GIS.com (ESRI) to multiple definitions of what a GIS is, as well as the GIS Jobs Clearinghouse (www.gjc.org). As professionals in our field, we know what a geographic information system is and what it does for our organizations, but has anyone evaluated how many different ways we describe our positions?

GIS Analyst, Senior LiDAR Analyst, Geographic Information System Analyst, CADD Technician, GIS Application Developer/Programmer, GIS Technician, Systems Engineer – Tools and Technology, GIS Mapping Analyst Level I, FLIR Operator, Image Analyst, Senior/Intermediate Developer, Lands & Right of Way Advisor, Traffic Data Specialist, Data Analyst, GIS Developer, Field Data Collector, Program & Database Coordinator, Sr. Web Applications Developer, Manager of Systems Engineering (Digital mapping Operations), DMO Manager, DiCi Operations, Travel Demand Modeler, GIS Spatial Developer, Geographic Information System (GIS) Analyst/Database Administrator, Support Analyst – Programming, Hydragraphic Project Manager, Manager in Global Content, GPS Field Technician, Supervisor Technology, Manual Tester with GIS experience, and an Implementation Specialist to name the ones posted in February.

As professionals in our field, we are aware of the subtle differences in job title...Our managers are not. If you compare the descriptions of the titles above, many of them not only overlap, but my guess is that they will be synonymous. Differences in backgrounds

or software package experience aside. To summarize what I found at www.gislounge.com, trained professionals knowledgeable in spatial analysis and skilled in using GIS software are essential to the GIS process. As our human resource departments are trying to categorize our positions on pay scales, there are so many choices out there for descriptions that we are potentially short changing ourselves. We need to begin the process of standardizing our job titles to better reflect what we actually do...so that managers, current employees and future employees will have a good understanding of the expectations involved in the position.

GIS-Pro 2010, URISA's 48th Annual Conference for GIS Professionals will be held on September 28-October 1, 2010 in Orlando, Florida. The Conference themes this year center on issues such as these and include the following: Value of GIS, One Government, Stewardship, Data-based Decisions, and Training and Education. The conference is addressing the 5 key topics that were brought forward from last year's annual conference. The expectation is to continue to foster our very different perspectives and give us some tools to help the working relationship with our managers and elected officials. The hope is to build a common reference so everyone has similar expectations when we are talking about our profession...from job duties, to titles, to technology needs, and to what an accurate return on the investment either in software, hardware, training, or additional employees should be.

(<http://www.urisa.org/conferences/aboutgis-pro>)

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Register Now for 2010 Intermountain GIS Conference

Registration for the 2010 Intermountain GIS Conference is now open! "Challenges for a Changing World" is being held in Bozeman Montana April 19-23. The Call for Papers is also open. Share your GIS challenges and successes with your colleagues! For more information, see <http://www.magip.org/>

2010 Washington GIS Conference

In Tacoma Washington April 19-21. Call for papers is open until February 25, 2010. See http://www.waurisa.org/conferences/2010/Call_for_papers_publication_guidelines_2010.pdf for details. Visit www.waurisa.org for more conference details.

GEM NEWS

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Imagery Technical Working Group

Margie Wilkins, Chair (Margie.Wilkins@idwr.idaho.gov)

Partners of the imagery consortium are reviewing and using the 2009 NAIP compressed county mosaics (CCMs) in their daily work. The CCMs were made available (to partners only) on a county by county basis as they were completed by the NAIP contractor for Idaho, Surdex Corporation. All counties have been delivered and now the TWG is eagerly anticipating the delivery of the final NAIP product – individual digital ortho quarter quads (DOQQs) containing the near infrared band.

In addition to the ongoing review, the TWG is finalizing various options for the deliverables including distribution methods, tiling structures, and band combinations, among others.

The Imagery TWG meets the first Wednesday of the month usually at the Idaho Center in Boise. News and events are announced through the Geotech Listserv. In order to keep informed on upcoming meetings and progress, please subscribe to the Geotech Listserv at <http://admws.idaho.gov/mailman/listinfo/geotech>.

Parcel Technical Working Group

Anne Kawalec, Co-Chair (akawalec@adaweb.net)

(Subgroup of the Cadastral & Geodetic Control Group)

On February 4th the Parcel TWG held a meeting to further the discussion for the need and the creation of a statewide parcel basemap. Although it had been quite a while since our last “official” meeting the group has not been idle. Several members of the Cadastral Group have spent the last year meeting with various groups to get input and support for the creation of the parcel basemap.

During the summer, presentations were made at the regional meetings of the Idaho Association of Counties. In August, Gail Ewart, Idaho Geospatial Information Officer, gave a presentation at the annual meeting of the Clerk, Auditor, and Records Association. In the fall, the Cadastral leadership team, along with Ada County Assessor Robert McQuade, had a meeting with Commissioner Tom Katsilometes of the State Tax Commission. After each one of these meetings, we came away with good suggestions and ideas that will help us in establishing a mechanism to develop and maintain the dataset.

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The National Hydrography Dataset in Idaho

Wilma Robertson (Wilma.robertson@idwr.idaho.gov)

The National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) is used to represent hydrography in Idaho as part of the Idaho Spatial Data Infrastructure. This dataset, which can be downloaded for free from <http://nhd.usgs.gov/>, is part of the National Map and is continuously being updated by State and local stewards all over the country.

There are a number of initiatives and projects underway in Idaho to update and enhance the NHD. We are excited that 14 additional people have been trained on the NHDGeoEditTools which are tools that NHD data stewards use to submit updates to the USGS for inclusion into the NHD. Hopefully, we can look forward to an increase in the number of edits performed in Idaho!

The Idaho Department of Water Resources recently completed an update for the City of Lewiston, and continues its work on the Northside Canal Company and other Irrigation Districts. We focus many of our updates on such agricultural and urban areas since those have changed the most since the original data for the NHD was collected. A large scale update is underway in the Payette subbasin in preparation for a study where points of diversion will be tied to the NHD as events. You can read more about those projects on our website at: http://www.idwr.idaho.gov/GeographicInfo/NHD/Projects/customized_tool.htm

Tying point and line features, such as dams, pumps, gauge sites and levees to the NHD as events has many advantages. For example, it is now possible to trace up and downstream rivers and canals and analyze how these different events are spatially related to each other. If you are interested in using event data we want to hear from you! Please contact Linda Davis at linda.davis@idwr.idaho.gov and let her know what events you would like to use. In the near future we will post a survey to poll your “events wish list”.

For more information on these TWG or other Framework Committees, please visit <http://gis.idaho.gov/framework.htm>

GEM NEWS

Geospatial Occupations Recognized

This is a long-awaited step forward for the GIS&T field. The US Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration's Occupational Information Network (O*NET) now lists five new geospatial occupations: "Geospatial Information Scientists and Technologists", "Remote Sensing Scientists and Technologists", "Geographic Information Systems Technicians", "Precision Agriculture Technicians", and "Geodetic Surveyors".

You can find descriptions of most of these new occupations by doing an "Occupation Quick Search" on "geospatial" at the O*NET site <http://online.onetcenter.org/>

Note: (Geodetic Surveyors seems not to include the keyword "geospatial.")

From the URISA Digest

The **Bureau of Labor Statics** does not list "GIS" type job categories. GIS seems to fall within a grouping with Surveyors, Cartographers, Photogrammetrists and Surveying, & Mapping Technicians. Here is how they describe GIS's role in these professions:

*"Geographic Information Systems (GIS) have become an integral tool for surveyors, cartographers, photogrammetrists, and surveying and mapping technicians. Workers use GIS to assemble, integrate, analyze, and display data about location in a digital format. They also use GIS to compile information from a variety of sources. GIS typically are used to make maps which combine information useful for environmental studies, geology, engineering, planning, business marketing, and other disciplines. As more of these systems are developed, many mapping specialists are being called **geographic information specialists.**"*

Surveyors, cartographers, photogrammetrists, and surveying technicians held about 147,000 jobs in 2008.

The architectural, engineering, and related services industry—including firms that provided surveying and mapping services to other industries on a contract basis—provided 7 out of 10 jobs for these workers. Federal, State, and local governmental agencies provided about 15 percent of these jobs. Most surveyors in State and local government work for highway departments or urban planning and redevelopment agencies. Utility companies are also major employers.

Source: *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-11 Edition; US Dept of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics* (<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos040.htm>)

Idaho's Dept of Labor – Occupational Employment & Wage Survey 2009

Statistics and Analysis (for our subject fields statewide)

SOC Code	Occupational Title	Employment	Entry Wage (Hourly)**	Mid-point (Median)	Average (Mean)	Middle Range	
17-3031	Surveying and Mapping Technicians	840	13.40	18.70	21.36	14.94	25.20
17-1021	Cartographers and Photogrammetrists	130	17.15	23.64	25.16	19.47	29.85

Source: <http://www.lmi.idaho.gov/Wages/WagesbyOccupation/OccupationalEmploymentandWageSurvey2009/tabid/2276/Default.aspx>

Who knew that Idaho was a great place to be a Surveying and Mapping Technician!

Among the states that provided published employment concentrations and wages for occupation 17-3031 Surveying and Mapping Technician, Idaho ranks highest in percent of State employment at 0.129%. For Metropolitan Areas with the highest concentration of workers in this occupation, Coeur d'Alene, ID ranks 4th behind Midland Texas, Tyler Texas, and Lafayette Louisiana!

Source: *US Dept of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; Occupation Employment Statistics* (<http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes173031.htm>)

GEM NEWS

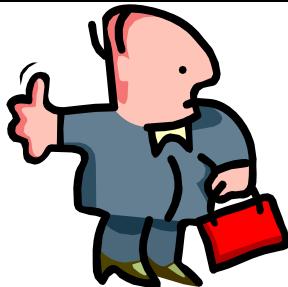
Don't Let No Travel = No Recognition

Traditionally, GIS folk got the word out about the great work they are doing by presenting and attending conferences. If there was not time to present, then a poster would do. These typical venues for professional recognition and CV building are being severely limited due to shrinking budgets and travel restrictions. Once again it is time for some thinking out of the box to keep some level of recognition. Try applying for an award.

Applications for the 2010 ESIG Award are now being accepted
(<http://www.urisa.org/2010esigapplication>).

How about talking to your ESRI representative about nominating a colleague for ESRI's Special Achievement in GIS Award
(<http://www.esri.com/sag/index.html>)?

Watch for those opportunities to get the word out about what great things you are doing!



Volunteer for the 2011 Intermountain GIS Conference

Can you believe it! The 2011 Intermountain GIS Conference is just over a year away! Save the dates March 21-25, 2011 and plan to be in Pocatello, Idaho! Conference planning committees are forming and there is much to be done. Many hands make light work so contact Kindra Serr (serrkind@isu.edu, 208-282-6078) and help make the 2011 conference the best yet! (And don't forget, being a conference committee member is worth 6 points toward GISP Renewal Contribution to the Profession Points!)

Highlight Your GIS Program by Submitting to the Map of the Month

Monthly, the Office of the GIO displays a map in the LBJ Building at 650 W. State Street, Boise where there is a good deal of legislative and executive branch traffic. Make sure your GIS Program's good deeds are seen by those who can make decisions about GIS statewide.

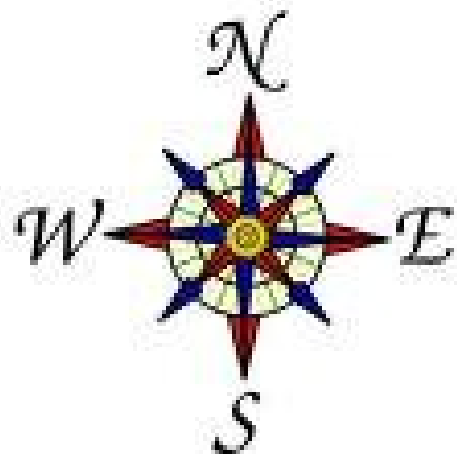
To submit a map for consideration:

1) Email Bob Smith (Robert.Smith@cio.idaho.gov):

- Who made the map
- Name of organization
- .jpeg of the map
- A short description highlighting the map's purpose should be included. Just a few sentences will do. This description will be posted with the map display in the hallway.

2) Finally, mail a printed map to PO Box 83720, 650 W. State St, Rm 100, Boise, ID 83720-0042. Attn: Bob Smith.

View the current and previous "Map of the Month" at
<http://gis.idaho.gov/IGO/MapGallery/MapGallery.htm>



Parcel Technical Working Group

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Hopefully, our meeting on the fourth got us thinking again about how we want this project to go forward. Thanks to Dixie Booker-Lair, ID Department of Lands, we have some very detailed minutes for that meeting. The minutes can be found on the Framework website, <http://gis.idaho.gov/framework.htm>. After you have read the minutes, you might want to take a look at the vision, goals, and objectives for the group.

In his 2010 State of the State address, Governor Otter stated, "we must do whatever we can to avoid any duplication of effort or any waste of the taxpayers' hard-earned dollars." As I heard that, it brought to mind that this is just what we have been talking about in our GIS world for the past ten years. In our effort to put together a statewide parcel basemap, the Parcel Work Group is ultimately trying to save taxpayer dollars by leveraging the data that is being created in each county.

Details concerning our next meeting will be posted on the Framework website and sent out on the Geotech List Server. Hopefully, if you have an interest in seeing this project move forward, you will be able to join us.

Pictometry Donates Images of Haiti to GIS Corps

Within days of the earthquake in Haiti, Pictometry captured more than 45,000 oblique images of the damage in the capital city of Port au Prince and its surrounding area. The imagery was then donated to URISA's volunteer GIS Corps to assist with the recovery efforts. The link below is a small video clip of that damage.

<http://www.pictometry.com/government/haiti.shtml>

(You do need QuickTime viewer to watch it.)

For more information on being involved in the GIS Corps, see <http://www.giscorps.org/>

For more information on Pictometry Imagery products, contact Todd Carruthers:

todd.carruthers@pictometry.com, 208-375-8918



Corp Dive GIS Summer Course 2010

Dive GIS summer course will celebrate its 5th anniversary in 2010. The 5th edition of the course will be held from the 28th of July to the 7th of August in Crotona at the Capo Rizzuto Marine Protected Area. The course, organized by Mappamondo GIS in collaboration with the MPA, represents a unique training initiative that offers the chance to learn Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing methodologies while becoming a certified SCUBA diver. Participants learn to use state of the art technologies and to combine them with passion oriented sport and field activities in the context of marine environment management and science.

During the course, the participants work on a real case study concerning the mapping of marine habitats using on-screen visual interpretation, supervised and unsupervised classification of satellite images and aerial photos.

Early bird enrollment is now open at a reduced fee!

For further information about the course and online registration for the 2010 edition visit the following website:

www.mappamondogis.it/divегis.htm or write an email to info@mappamondogis.com

GEM NEWS

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Managers are continually bombarded by maps, graphs, charts, and reports whose basis is the data collected and integrated into a variety of Geographic Information Systems. It is with these systems that they are able to make good decisions - better decisions. The issue that we face is that the manager often times does not know what it takes both in hardware and software or the costs associated with each to produce what they want. So how do you, with no budget, work toward what they want? You take baby steps...and constantly be on the lookout for funding sources outside of your department.

Address the most pressing issues first; for example, getting more people in your organization accustomed to using GIS data in their workflow. As more and more employees are trying to access the same data either in a read only environment or in a desktop GIS, the slower...it becomes. With the added assistance of your new found user group, you can use them as leverage for the next step...and so it goes. Instead of tapping just your GIS budget, you may be able to get buy in from other departments to offset the cost.

Another way to offset cost is to work regionally to purchase products like ortho or oblique photography, or LiDAR data. The City Green Grant Project designed to analyze the tree canopy coverage for the Rathdrum Prairie and surrounding City jurisdictions, was a vessel to enable the purchase of base LiDAR data for all entities involved.

Grants are a really good opportunity to help move your GIS forward...even if you don't think that you have any chance of receiving it, use the application as a learning tool for future grants and, who knows, you may actually be pleasantly surprised.

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WEBSITES FROM THIS EDITION

NORTHERN ROCKIES URISA:

www.intermountaingis.org

National URISA:

<http://www.urisa.org/>

Idaho Geospatial Office:

www.gis.idaho.gov

ESRI:

www.esri.com

Bureau of Labor Statistics:

www.bls.gov

Idaho Dept. of Labor, Statistics

<http://www.lmi.idaho.gov/LMIHome/tabid/729/Default.aspx>

Pictometry

<http://www.pictometry.com/home/home.shtml>

Mappamond GIS

<http://www.mappamondgis.it/>

O*Net

<http://online.onetcenter.org/>



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