

**Fall Meeting of the New Hampshire GIS Conservation Collaborative
at the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests
Concord, New Hampshire
Monday, November 8, 2004**

Meeting Participants

Katie Callahan, Lionel Chute, Ti Crossman, Dennis Fowler, Ken Gallagher, Kate Hartnett, Jeff Normandin, Bruce Pardoe, Cathy Poppenwimer, Fay Rubin, Steve Schaffer, Cliff Sinnott, Dan Sundquist. Ann Fowler Wallace, Steve Williams, Lora Gerard Wise

Introductions

Ann Fowler Wallace, NHGCC Coordinator, welcomed meeting participants and asked people to introduce themselves.

Updates on NHGCC Activities

Membership and Decision-making Recommendations:

Ann reported that based on feedback from her June 2004 memo, the membership had approved:

- Organizational memberships for NHGCC (vs. individual membership)
- Creation of a Grantmaking Advisory Committee – to recommend allocation of grant dollars from the Fund for Geospatial Technologies

Summer Outreach Committee Meeting:

In July, NHGCC convened an outreach committee meeting to develop a more concrete outreach strategy for the group. Committee members include: Cathy Poppenwimer, AMC; Steve Williams, NRPC; Bruce Clendenning, AMC; Lora Gerard Wise, TNC; Dan Sundquist, SPNHF; and Ann Fowler Wallace, NHGCC Coordinator. The committee discussed a number of questions including: who are the natural partners that NHGCC should work with and reach out to at other conservation agencies? how can NHGCC best approach key decision-makers to educate them about the importance of GIS for conservation and land use planning? The group identified several partners for additional outreach: the RPC's, NH Association of Conservation Commissions, the Center for Land Conservation Assistance, the NH Municipal Association, and Cooperative Extension. To date, Ann has met with two of the programs at Cooperative Extension, and has invited staff from NHACC and CLCA to join our fall meeting. The committee discussed ways to work with the broader conservation community to reach out to key decision-makers to make a case for GIS as part of a case for broader conservation work. One piece of advice for the group was don't sell GIS, but rather sell the product (drinking water protection, habitat restoration, etc.).

Grant-making Advisory Committee:

Ken Gallagher reported that the NHGCC Grantmaking Advisory Committee met in October to do three things:

- Review and clarify the grantmaking process
- Review requests and decide upon funding recommendations for the Fund for Geospatial Technologies
- Make recommendations for how to handle Round Two of the Fund for Geospatial Technologies

Members of the committee include: Jennifer Hopkins, NHCF; Ken Gallagher, OEP; Cliff Sinnott, RCRPC; Bruce Pardoe, Pardoe Foundation; and Lora Gerard Wise, TNC. Ann participated in the meeting as staff.

Ann added that NHGCC had raised \$135,000 toward the Fund for Geospatial Technologies and NHGCC operations, with one grant request outstanding at PSNH.

Ken explained that the Grantmaking Advisory Committee had \$120,000 to allocate, and had set aside \$5,000 to support additional outreach activities in the near future. The Committee reviewed five applications originally, but one from UNH Cooperative Extension for a GIS scholarship fund was deferred due to staff turnover. The Committee's goal was to focus on projects that most closely adhered to the NHGCC Work Plan, had broadest statewide benefit, and broadest applicability to statewide conservation goals.

Four applications seeking a total of \$210,000 were considered, including:

1. Historic Land Use/Parcelization Study in 5 towns in southern NH to be carried out by SPNHF, CSRC, and NRPC
2. GIS analysis of open space and potential developable areas in Coos County to be carried out by NCC and AMC
3. Enhancement of GRANIT web site at CSRC
4. Establishment of conservation science and planning colloquium to be coordinated by SPNHF in conjunction with the RPC's. Target audience – RPC staff (stipends for both senior planner and GIS analyst), non-profits conservation groups, and others such as PSNH.

The Committee recommended two projects for support, with these recommendations ratified by NHGCC membership:

- A two part-grant to the UNH Complex Systems Research Center to enhance the GRANIT web site. A first installment of \$78,300 is payable in November 2004, with a second installment of \$25,500 payable in June 2005, pending CSRC success securing matching support toward the project budget.
- A grant of \$5,700 to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests for a Conservation Science and Planning Colloquium with the RPC's, with the hope that PSNH would support the second half of the project budget.

The Committee encouraged re-submission of the other two projects in Round Two, and asked that revised proposals also address the following questions:

- How can the results of the local projects be extended statewide?
- How will the local projects result in additional conservation activities?

The next funding round will be Fall 2005. Before then, Ann will develop a more formal application process/deadline. The group agreed that NHGCC should continue to seek projects submitted by NHGCC partner organizations.

Rockingham/Strafford Land Use Change Project

Fay Rubin gave a general presentation on the CICEET-funded project to forecast development pressures in Rockingham/Strafford Counties. Meeting participants offered the following recommendations for further efforts:

- Talk to Ben Frost about statewide development plan
- Include relationship of zoning/land use change in NHGCC proposal
- Look at incorporating water availability in modeling component
- Recalculate cost estimate for expanding statewide
- Lionel sees opportunities for NHI to re-visit historical observations, and assess the likelihood that those populations still exist, using the historic photography.

The Environment for Conservation and Planning in NH

Dan Sundquist provided an update on the political environment for conservation planning. Overall, the election seems to be good news for conservation, but it is still too early to think about the kinds of changes that might occur in the new Administration. There is a policy team that has been formed by the Governor-elect. At the agency level, Nolin may be leaving DES according to the Union Leader. Others are rethinking strategies.

He offered some specific recommendations from SPNHF staff for NHGCC outreach:

- It's time to begin advancing our agenda
- In December/January, NHGCC should consider sending a letter to Governor Lynch's policy team (Caroline McCarley is Lynch's chief policy advisor) outlining who we are, our specific priorities, and some things for the new administration to think about. Identify a single person in that letter as a contact for the Collaborative.

The group discussed the Collaborative's role in outreach. State agency staff are comfortable introducing NHGCC, but cautious about an advocacy role. Dennis suggested that NHGCC host a GIS workshop/open house/briefing and invite the Governor's staff, legislators, etc. Dan noted that SPNHF's first priority under the new administration is to revive LCHIP. The group agreed that NHGCC should draft a letter to the policy committee, with the outreach committee taking the lead. The committee also should think about broader outreach priorities. The group suggested that this letter

include references to other large projects (e.g. I-93), to demonstrate that NHGCC is trying to benefit the whole state. Dan will be the point of contact for NHGCC.

Member Exchange – Project Updates

- Dennis Fowler, NHDOT. Still trying to finish an RFP to get 1-ft. digital color orthos for 26 CTAP communities at an approximate cost of \$250,000. DOT Planning Bureau is being reorganized, with the GIS section being reduced from 12 to 4 persons. GIS section's responsibility will be exclusively to maintain geospatial datasets, not applications work. Working on road metadata file.
- Steve Williams, NRPC. Introduced Steve Schaffer, new GIS manager. Steve's background is local LU/transportation planning. Came from University of Florida, Florida Geographic Data Library.
- Fay Rubin, CSRC. Mentioned National High Altitude Photography (NAIP) files that are available statewide, and noted that CSRC is the FEMA State Mapping Coordinator. CSRC/RPC may propose acquisition of LiDAR for coastal NH.
- Ken Gallager, OEP. OEP is in discussions with OIT regarding statewide "enterprise" GIS, (with respect to software access). Now working on updating cell tower layer, and is also interested in wind power siting. (Dan commented that the new high-definition TV cell towers are 800-2000' tall.)
- Cliff Sinnott, RPC. RPC has developed a standard map set for ~11 communities using OEP funding, and is completing 5-6 towns/year. Will publish them as .pdf. Commission got a grant from Greater Piscataqua Community Foundation to buy CommunityViz. They have two applications in mind: a) conventional build-out for Stratham; b) finding a significant proposed development site, and using to test site development scenarios. The latter will require cooperation of the engineering firm to provide necessary data inputs (e.g. topos).
- Lionel Chute, NHB. Has completed statewide natural community classification defining 210 natural communities. The 225-page book is available on-line. Includes a limited mapping component. NHB used statewide ecosystem map to determine whether each natural community is likely to occur in each region. Also working with F&G on statewide comprehensive wildlife plan developing statewide "aggregate community systems" classification, and working on modeling specific habitats, e.g. pine barrens – for the plan. Finally, doing early detection work with invasive species. NHB has USGS funding for a pilot, and has found a "wave" of pepper weed that is coming up from MA salt marshes.
- Dan Sundquist, SPNHF. Is using the NAIP imagery as a visualization/reference data set. On historical LU data – have plans to update NH's Changing Landscape (in January/February). May want to include "cameos" from the 2-county area. He may also suggest that Dijit Taylor use it in working with coastal CC's re land

conservation. Main project Dan is working on is Quabbin to Cardigan (Q2C) – 3,000 square miles, 25 stakeholders, from White Mountain National Forest down to the Quabbin Reservoir. This is the first interstate conservation planning project that Dan knows of and it involves a strong contingent of public/private agencies. Project has preliminary delineations of focus areas (200/300 sq. miles) for collaborative efforts.

- Bruce Pardoe, Pardoe Foundation. Reported that site work at Prescott Farm is ongoing for new, 2500 sq. ft. education facility, and they are also looking at acquiring a couple of parcels that are on the edge of the property. Foundation will approve \$30K next year for NHGCC work. (Current year commitment: \$40K.)
- Lora Gerard Wise, TNC. Noted that the Ashuelot River Conservation Plan (completed with SWRPC, SPNHF, etc.) is complete and available from the web site. A piece of that involved developing a forest core model to determine highest quality interior forest. TNC will be working statewide as subcontractor to Comprehensive Wildlife Plan, and also looking at evaluating conservation lands throughout the state – what kind of uses are allowed for each parcel – and trying to update this component of the data set – also for Comprehensive Wildlife Plan.
- Jeff Normandin, ASNH. ASNH is working on the I-93 plan. Also, it has mapped out point locations of eagle nests, peregrine nests, ospreys, loons, winter eagle roosts, and important bird areas. These are all being reported to Fish & Game and entered into the database (Nongame Program) for use in the Comprehensive Wildlife Plan.
- Cathy Poppenwimer, AMC. Cathy just finished a pilot project/report in Berkshire Mountains on evaluating sites for wind power siting. Looked at 20-30 data layers and hope to expand to all of New England over next couple of years. AMC's objective is to establish policies on wind power siting.
- Katie Callahan, Fish & Game. Reported that all Comprehensive Wildlife Plan contracts have gone out. The plan will be addressing 20 critical wildlife habitats, and 109 wildlife species, and developing comprehensive profiles of 86 of the 109 species. Basing profiles/habitats on NHB's new classification. Initial set of coarse filter maps have been distributed to ~200 communities for use until the Plan is done. Nongame Program has held 4 workshops discussing how to use the maps. Also held a summit in March for conservation partners to get feedback on where important species/habitats are. Presently developing a web site to execute the same survey for the public.
- Kate Hartnett, The Jordan Institute. Institute is working on a conservation framework for the I-93 corridor and is collaborating with 20 conservation groups trying to come up with structure for conservation in the corridor looking at current protected lands and connectors/passages between them. They hope to have a collaborative conservation proposition – for DOT, communities, for developers –

how the “green infrastructure” and its ecological services can evolve as a network. Its focus: wildlife, forestry resources, water resources. Also noted that \$3.5 million in I-93 Community Technical Assistance Plan (CTAP) is not enough. We need to find more funding.

- Ti Crossman, SRPC. Ti is developing regional master plan development, pushing re-writes of zoning regs, subdivision regs, etc., so they conform to the master plan. Writing model ordinances that push for sizable stream buffers, etc. Working with local watershed organizations. Interested in developing an easement tracking system for at least Strafford County.

Scaling Up Outreach and Education Efforts

Some possible upcoming venues for NHGCC-related presentations and outreach opportunities:

- Ti Crossman - planning workshops – e.g. SRPC is hosting a series of workshops, trying to get towns to look towards 2020. Ti recommends showing “GIS in Action” – examples of how GIS can be used to support town rules/regulations. SRPC’s particular interest: open space design. Questions arise regarding impact on tax rates, water quality.
- Bruce Pardoe – develop a checklist of questions that could be answered using spatial analysis. So, when a developer proposes a project, the town could require that these questions be addressed.
- NH Association of Natural Resource Scientists – talk with them about NHGCC and what we can offer. They do fieldwork that is the basis for the development plans. Note that a site-specific wildlife evaluation process is in place. (Darrel Covell, UNH and Mark West, private developer, both use it.)
- Kate Hartnett – envisions enhanced web site being used to support conceptual plan review at Planning Board meetings. Another application – supporting passive solar heating site designs (as documented in RSA 674-171).
- Dan Sundquist – need to identify communities that are in the same trend as those who have voted in land conservation plans in the past few years (>\$100m). SPNHF has talked with some communities regarding their plans, and some have well-formulated strategies, while others haven’t any idea. Dan suggested that based on local intelligence from RPCs, we start to develop a watchlist of 5-10 communities who are starting to think seriously about local conservation initiatives. Dijit Taylor from CLCA could provide guidance.
- Lora Gerard Wise – NHGCC should have a presence at GIS Day. Lora and Jeff Normandin will be there and offered to help staff a table/exhibit.

- Dan Sundquist - Annual Land Conservation Conference is coming up in April, 2005. Need to start thinking about presentations for that agenda.
- Fay Rubin – NHGCC needs a power point presentation that describes the Collaborative. Fay offered to start collecting application slides for eventual incorporation in the power point.
- Bruce Pardoe – Mentioned need for more funding next year. Presently have \$85K for NHGCC projects next year. NHGCC should consider idea of hiring a development consultant. Dan Sundquist asked if there any foundation prospects in the 6-state region? Ann’s response – they usually focus on individual issues. Kate – what if LCHIP actually had money, and this group served as a technical resource to a statewide conservation initiative. Bruce suggested having a presentation at the next meeting from potential fundraising consultants. Fay suggested going to Congressional delegation, particularly if we go to a 3- or 4-state region.

Next Steps

Ann will work with the Charitable Foundation to oversee grant payments from the Fund for Geospatial Technologies.

She also will follow up and organize a meeting of the outreach committee in the next few months to further develop NHGCC’s outreach strategy, including near term educational outreach to the new administration and other key decision makers.

Meeting Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:10 pm.