

Agreement Number: 04HQAG0149

Final Report

Metadata Assistance to Charlotte Region Data Providers

Organization:

Center for Applied Geographic Information Science
University of North Carolina At Charlotte
9201 University City Blvd
Charlotte, NC 28223
<http://www.gis.uncc.edu>

Project Leader:

Paul Smith
(704) 687-5988
psmith@uncc.edu

Collaborating organizations:

City of Charlotte
Twyla McDermott
Office of Strategic Technology Planning
600 East Fourth Street
Charlotte, NC 28202
Phone: 704-336-8066
Fax: 704-336-2258
E-mail: tmcdermott@ci.charlotte.nc.us

Centralina Council of Governments
Rebecca Yarborough
1300 Baxter St, Suite 450
Charlotte, NC 28204
(704) 372-2416
ryarbrough@centralina.org

Project Narrative

The primary goal of this project was to increase local GIS data providers' capabilities to produce metadata to FGDC standards and make it available to others. Local data providers were broadly defined as those in a 15 county region centered on Charlotte, NC. This goal was accomplished by holding a series of workshops to train GIS professionals in metadata creation and promote mentoring of these newly trained persons by local data producers who already have experience creating metadata.

Since there were no local metadata trainers available we contracted the services of the North Carolina Center for Geographic Information and Analysis (NCCGIA). NCCGIA provided a trainer and all workshop materials. Stacey Kimmel was the trainer for all sessions.

Workshops were held on the UNC Charlotte campus in the Urban Institute's computer training lab. The City of Charlotte and Centralina Council of Governments provided assistance in planning and publicizing workshops and supported staff participants who attended workshops.

A series of three "Introduction to Metadata" workshops were held during March through May of 2005. Total enrollment in the series was 35 people. Most came from local governments including Mecklenburg and Union counties North Carolina and the cities of Charlotte, Monroe and Concord, North Carolina. In addition, staff from the UNCC Library and Centralina COG attended along with students from UNCC. Most participants were involved in producing datasets and documenting them through metadata. Others, such as the information specialists and students from UNCC were learning about metadata more to assist in finding and using GIS datasets.

Two semi-structured, one-day "mentoring sessions" were held immediately following the April and May metadata workshops. These provided an opportunity for people who had already taken the metadata workshop to come back for more help after getting some hands-on experience. Stacey Kimmel led the mentoring sessions with help from local staff from the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, NC and York County, SC. Common themes identified by the participants were discussed first and then time was devoted to one-on-one mentoring to help students with their particular problem areas. Twenty-two people returned to take part in the mentoring sessions.

A metadata clearinghouse node was established at UNCC and made available to workshop participants. Those whose jobs involved publishing data already had access to other distribution channels, however, and did not choose to publish metadata on the clearinghouse. In the future we would like to try and use this service to assist other local governments in the region who do not have access to this capability in-house.

Partly as a result of this project the awareness of the value of good metadata has been enhanced in all of the organizations involved. Each local government that participated now has many more staff capable of creating metadata and aware of its value in documenting data collection procedures, processing steps and distribution. In the future we hope to have metadata trainers in each of the large departments so that training can be offered using local staff instead of having to

contract with an outside agency.

Next Steps

The next step would be to train metadata trainers from local departments and try to have metadata training be made part of their normal duties. By doing this we would have formal recognition and support for training activities and would have potentially many more people capable of creating quality metadata. Assistance would be helpful to provide support to send staff to workshops where they can learn more about metadata creation and how to train others. We would also like to provide a mechanism to promote mentoring of novice metadata creators. This might take the form of an online forum or bulletin board where specific questions can be raised and answered online or in person.