

# Federal Geographic Data Committee Newsletter

2009 Summer Edition

## Fifty States Initiative

With new awards made in early 2009, the Fifty States initiative now spans 41 States, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands. Since 2006, the FGDC through the Cooperative Agreements Program has made 40 awards totaling over \$1.9 million to advance statewide coordination through strategic and business planning. In addition, the USGS partnership office has made several complementary awards supporting the initiative. With most states having received awards, FGDC is looking at what should be done to advance the initiative in 2010 and beyond.

FGDC Staff Director, Ivan DeLoatch, opened the kick-off meeting for this year's Fifty States Awardees or the "Fifty States Class of 2009." Over 40 people attended this meeting that

was held on February 22, 2009, in Annapolis, MD, in conjunction with the National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) Midyear conference. Eight States comprise the Class of 2009: Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Kentucky, Michigan, Oregon, Virginia, and Washington. The NSGIC Midyear venue provides the awardees with opportunities to interact with geospatial colleagues and with previous awardees.

On February 3, 2009, a Federal Stakeholders workshop on the Fifty States Initiative was held at the National Capital Planning Commission. About 20 people participated. State level activities and lessons-learned regarding the Strategic and Business planning activities of the initiative were presented followed by a facilitated discussion. A key message from the workshop was that the initiative should



Fifty States Class of 2009 at the Kick-Off workshop ( pictured from left to right are: Bill Rowe, Steve Aichele, Jeron Wagnedorp, Gene Trobia, Joy Paulus, Tom Sturm, Ed Arabas, Cy Smith, Mike Mahaffie, Kevin Blake, Scott Van Hoff, Kim Cloud, Bill Sneed, Bruce Bach, Kim Anness, Stu Blankenship, Kent Anness, Dan Widner, Paul Harmon (obscured), and Diane Eldridge)

continue. Over the next several months FGDC will develop a plan for continuing the initiative—the Fifty States Next Step Action Plan.

In a complementary task, FGDC is refreshing and modifying the Strategic and Business plan templates that were originally developed in 2006. Some of the changes include changing the name from “Templates” to “Guidelines.” One of the new features will be a minimum set of mandatory elements that all plans should contain. This minimum set will provide more consistency across plans while making it easier for Federal agencies to lend a hand in their implementation. A draft of these changes will be available for review by the end of April and should be finalized in May 2009.

For further information on the Fifty States Initiative please contact: Milo Robinson, [mrobinson@usgs.gov](mailto:mrobinson@usgs.gov) or (703) 648-5162. Or visit these web sites:

[www.fgdc.gov/policyandplanning/50states](http://www.fgdc.gov/policyandplanning/50states)

[50states.nsgic.org](http://50states.nsgic.org)

## 2009 NSDI CAP Awards

Awards were made to 25 proposals in the 2009 National Spatial Data Infrastructure Cooperative Agreements Program (NSDI CAP). This year’s NSDI CAP included seven categories that support development of the NSDI by advancing standards, taking advantage of the Geospatial One-Stop catalog, developing strategic and business plans in eight states, geo-enabling government tabular data, building data stewardships, and fostering partnerships across local, state, and federal government. Below is a list of the awards. For more information about the projects, including a synopsis of each one, please visit the 2009 NSDI CAP web pages at [www.fgdc.gov/grants/2009NSDICAP/2009CAPDescriptions](http://www.fgdc.gov/grants/2009NSDICAP/2009CAPDescriptions).

**CATEGORY 1: Metadata Trainer and Outreach Assistance** provides assistance to organizations with NSDI expertise knowledge and experience in assisting other organizations

with the training and implementation of meta-data. The two projects listed are funded up to \$25,000 each.

### ***Metadata 101: Hands on Training and Support for North Carolina***

Winston-Salem State University  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

### ***Metadata Training and Outreach for Tribal Natural Resources and Environment Management in New England Areas***

Penobscot Indian Nation  
Old Town, Maine

### **CATEGORY 2: Behind the Portal - Use of Geospatial One-Stop Map and Data Services**

projects will promote the development and sharing of client or server-mediated applications (e.g. desktop GIS, decision support software, models, other portals) that can access and exploit the geospatial data and services referenced by GOS in support of a specific transferable and popular geographic or discipline requirement. The four projects listed are funded up to \$40,000 per project.

### ***GOS Dashboard - An Enterprise GIS Desktop Dashboard for the GOS Portal***

Carbon Project  
Burlington, Massachusetts

### ***Utilize GOS Map and Data Services for Cross-Agency Earth Science and Geospatial Cyberinfrastructure Communities***

George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

### ***The Coeur d’Alene Tribe, North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and US EPA GOS Integration Project***

Innovate!, Inc.  
Alexandria, Virginia

### ***Leveraging GOS Map and Data Services for Search and Rescue Operations using NASA WorldWind Open Source 3D Visualization Platform***

MobiLaps LLC  
Silver Spring, Maryland

**CATEGORY 3: Fifty States Initiative** develops and implements statewide strategic and business plans that will facilitate the coordination of programs, policies, technologies, and resources that enable the coordination, collection, documentation, discovery, distribution, exchange and maintenance of geospatial information in support of the NSDI and the objectives of the Fifty States Initiative Action Plan. The states listed are funded up to \$47,000 each.

Arkansas	Kentucky	Virginia
Arizona	Michigan	Washington
Delaware	Oregon	

**CATEGORY 4: Enabling Use of Government Tabular Data in a Geographic Context** project will develop, demonstrate, and operate a high-performance, public standards-based Web Service to create geospatial datasets automatically from tabular government data merged with geospatial features. Resulting data and services will allow the data to be discovered, accessed, and applied in its geographic context. The project is funded for \$150,000.

***Automating Tabular Data in a Geographic Context While Utilizing the GeoCommon's Platform***

FortiusOne, Inc.  
Arlington, Virginia

**CATEGORY 5: Building data stewardship for *The National Map* and the NSDI** focuses on fostering stewardships for transportation data through best business practices. The four projects listed are funded up to \$50,000 each.

***Create Central Repository for Transportation Data***

Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District  
Kenai, Alaska

***Building Data Stewardship for The National Map and the NSDI in Michigan***

Michigan Center for Geographic Information  
Lansing, Michigan

***Montana MSDI/NSDI Transportation Stewardship***

State of Montana Base Map Service Center  
Helena, Montana

***Utah Transportation Data Exchange Framework***

Utah Automated Geographic Reference Center  
Salt Lake City, Utah

**CATEGORY 6: FGDC-Endorsed Standards Development and Implementation**

**Assistance and Outreach (excluding Metadata Standards)** projects will develop of and/or implement FGDC-endorsed standards. The results of this category are materials that can provide step-by-step assistance or a roadmap for implementing FGDC-endorsed standards. The two projects listed are funded up to \$25,000 each.

***Large-Scale Orthophoto Standards Development and Implementation***

Old Dominion University  
Norfolk, Virginia

***Development of Training Materials for NSDI Support Using Open Geospatial Consortium Standards***

OGC Interoperability Institute  
Los Altos, California

**CATEGORY 7: Demonstration of Geospatial**

**Data Partnerships across Local, State and Federal Government** projects will support the continued development and documentation of partnerships and processes to implement a nested approach for one or more data themes of NSDI using *The National Map*. The four projects listed are funded up to \$75,000.

***Idaho Roads Framework***

INSIDE Idaho at the University of Idaho Library  
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

***Illinois NSDI GIS Data and Standards Coordination System Demonstration Project***

DuPage County  
Wheaton, Illinois

## ***Demonstrating the IndianaMap Data Sharing Initiative with Four Key Framework Data Layers***

Indiana Geographic Information Council, Inc.  
Indianapolis, Indiana

## ***Eastern Missouri Collaborative Review and Maintenance of Tier 1 and Locally Critical Structures***

Missouri Spatial Data Information Service  
Columbia, Missouri

Information about the 2010 NSDI CAP announcement will be available in July 2009. It is expected that the proposals for the next CAP can be submitted at the end of October 2009. For more information please visit [www.fgdc.gov/grants](http://www.fgdc.gov/grants) or contact Gita Urban-Mathieux: [burbanma@fgdc.gov](mailto:burbanma@fgdc.gov) or 703-648-5175.

## **EPA and Partners Metadata Training and Outreach Project: Increasing Transparency and Accountability across the Nation**

Recent observations made during the EPA and Partners Metadata Training and Outreach project indicate that various federal, state, and private organizations have a keen desire to improve their geospatial metadata business operations. Not only are personnel interested in learning how to use metadata tools and templates to improve their work flows, but many also want to understand the intricacies

of metadata standards, compliancy, and validation. Does this point to a renewed interest in metadata development as a result of increased sharing and improved technologies or is it just part of an on-going metadata movement that has been consistent over time? Read on to learn more about this notable trend.

The EPA and Partners Metadata Training and Outreach project was completed in 2008 as one of five NSDI CAP Metadata Trainer and Outreach Awards. It was conducted as a cooperative effort between Innovate!, Inc., the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR). It offered six free web-based and one free on-site training course to any interested party (e.g., federal agencies, states, local government, tribes, international groups, or other organizations). The training sessions focused on the FGDC Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata (CSDGM), understanding metadata validation, how to use metadata synchronizers, how to create and use metadata templates, how to use editing tools (specifically the EPA Metadata Editor [EME]), and how to participate in intra- and inter-agency sharing efforts. The North American Profile of the ISO 19115/19139 standard was also introduced. Because the project offered training in a web-based format that was freely available to any individual from any organization, the trainers were able to reach a wide audience that spanned numerous locations and organizations. In total, close to 200 participants from over 20 states and 30 organizations were trained through this project, with many individuals attending multiple sessions. A map of participation by state/country is shown on page 5.

Although metadata is usually not a subject that generates much attention or enthusiasm, the attendees in the series displayed a high level of interest in learning about the topics and applying the tools and techniques to their business processes. Results of a pre-training survey showed strong interest in topics including the FGDC CSDGM, Metadata Validation, Metadata Tools, the EME, and Metadata Catalogs (see figure on page 6). Many parties were interested in ensuring that they would be “reg-

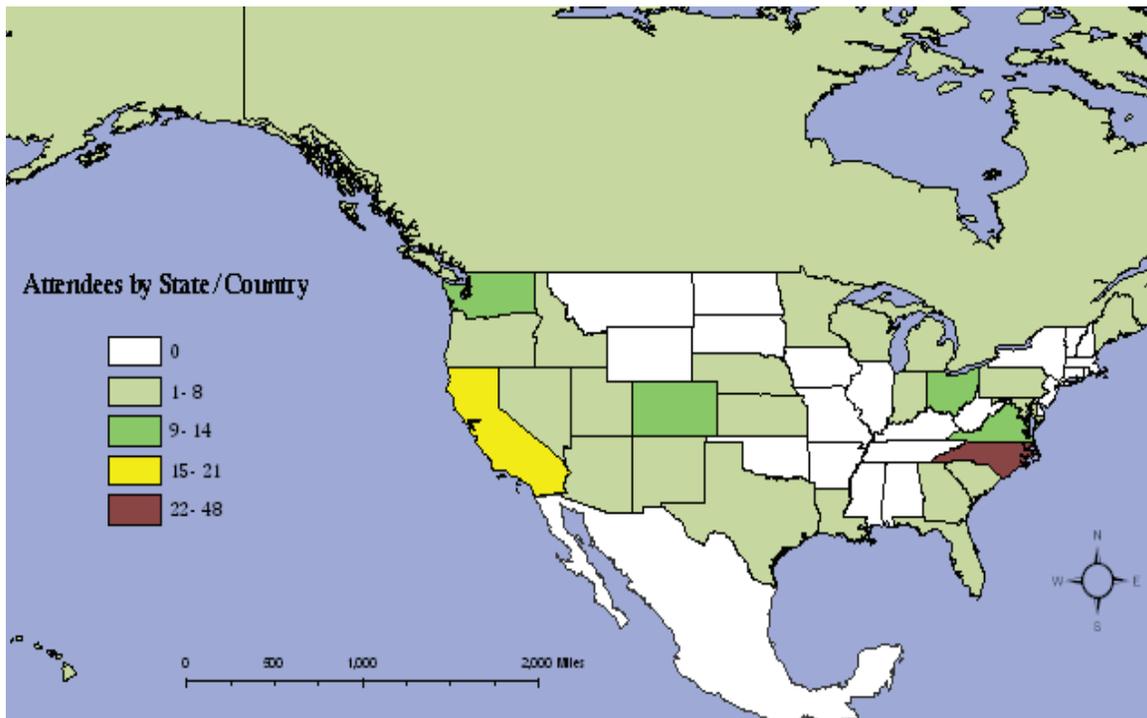
EPA and Partners Metadata Training Program: 2008 CAP Project

### **Geospatial Metadata: Introduction**

Module 1: Introduction & Overview of the FGDC CSDGM



2008



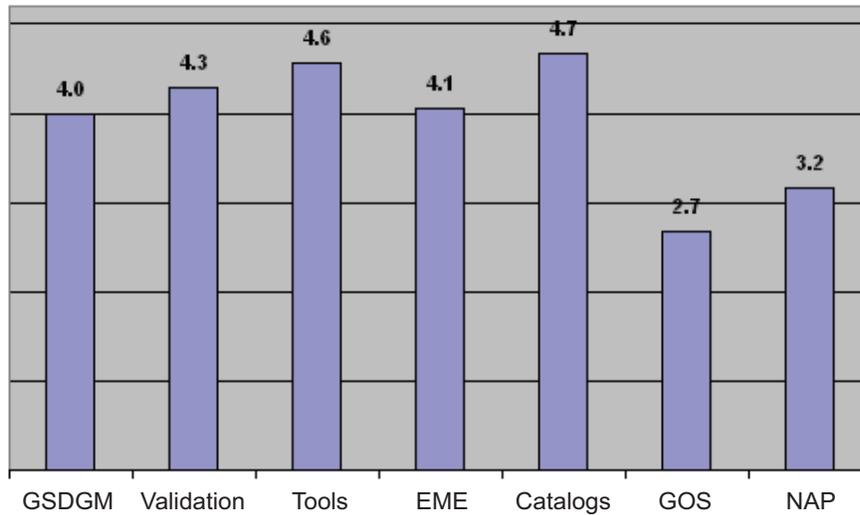
istered” for the courses before they filled up in order to ensure that they would not miss out on the opportunity. Additionally, many organizations broadcast the training to their teams in a conference room setting in order to ensure that all team members could participate. The first training session recorded over 70 attendees, with many individuals broadcasting the training for their organization. Attendees were recorded from Alaska, to Florida, to Guam, as well as within parts of Canada. Individuals from federal government, international groups, state government, tribal organizations, local government, and private companies attended. Attendees ranged from GIS Analysts to Project Managers, with backgrounds ranging from metadata expert to novice.

In addition to the training sessions, post-training consultation follow-up was offered to individuals who had additional questions after the training series were provided. This allowed individuals who needed more detail for specific topic areas to learn more by working with the trainers directly. Additionally, in response to requests from participants, on-line videos were created that captured the training information presented and were made available through EPA’s website ([www.epa.gov/geospatial/eme.html](http://www.epa.gov/geospatial/eme.html)). In order to further use

the information developed, an article was written for *ArcUser* magazine that summarized key take-home messages of the training in a short tutorial. Finally, a presentation was provided at the ESRI Federal User’s conference that summarized the training. All training materials and samples may still be accessed from the Innovate training website ([innovateteam.com/projects/epa-and-partners-geospatial-metadata-training/](http://innovateteam.com/projects/epa-and-partners-geospatial-metadata-training/)). It is hoped that resources made available from the training will provide attendees and others with the ability to continue to utilize the information developed for their needs in the future.

Another key project outcome was the development of a draft metadata implementation for the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources (NCDENR). Prior to the project, NCDENR did not have an implementation for their agency. As a result of this training, they developed a needs assessment and draft implementation specifying which elements are important to their agency and specific wording for certain elements. This implementation will be FGDC compliant and Geospatial One-Stop (GOS) compliant. It is evolving into an agency-wide geospatial metadata implementation and template that will be used to standardize metadata file generation across their agency.

Average Interest in Training Topics (on a scale of 1 to 5)



Subsequent to the training sessions, the project team followed-up with attendees to determine if the information and tools provided were useful. Numerous individuals responded, indicating that they are using the training not only to improve their metadata but are also using the information to provide training to their organizations. Attendees also indicated that they were thankful for the opportunity to participate in the free web-based sessions and that they would be interested in future sessions if they were offered. The high number of attendees and the enthusiasm observed for the topics may signify that there is a high level of interest in metadata within the GIS community at large. Although metadata has never been known as a favorite task among GIS personnel, it appears that it is becoming recognized as an important part of the data management and sharing process.

As the knowledge gained through this effort translates into better and more comprehensive metadata development across the nation, the overall goals of improved data sharing, coordination accessibility, accountability and transparency will continue to be realized within the larger GIS community. For more information about this project, or to find out what's next, please contact Jessica Zichichi at [jzichichi@innovateteam.com](mailto:jzichichi@innovateteam.com).

### What's In a Name? Ask the U.S. Board on Geographic Names

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) is a Federal body created in 1890 and established in its present form by Public Law in 1947 to maintain uniform geographic name usage



throughout the Federal Government. The Board comprises representatives of Federal agencies concerned with geographic information, population, ecology, and management of public lands. Presently, agen-

cies represented on the Board include the U.S. Geological Survey, Federal Geographic Data Committee, U.S. Forest Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Census Bureau, Government Printing Office, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Coast Guard, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management and the Library of Congress. In conjunction with the Secretary of the Interior, the Board promulgates official geographic feature names with locative attributes as well as principles, policies and procedures governing the use of domestic names, foreign names, Antarctic names, and undersea feature names.

The original program of names standardization addressed the complex and sensitive issues of domestic geographic feature names during the surge of exploration, mining, and settlement of western territories after the American Civil War. Inconsistencies and contradictions among many names, spellings, and applications became a serious problem to surveyors, map makers, and scientists who required uniform, non-conflicting geographic nomenclature. The Board gradually expanded to include foreign names and other areas of interest to the U.S. The usefulness of standardizing geographic names has been proven over time and today more than 50 Nations have a similar national names authority.

The Board continues to serve the Federal Government and the public as a central authority to which new name and name change proposals can be directed. In partnership with Federal, State, Tribal and local agencies, the Board provides a conduit through which uniform geographic name usage is applied and current names data are promulgated and incorporated into the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS). For further information, contact Lou Yost, [bgnexec@usgs.gov](mailto:bgnexec@usgs.gov).

## Q&A about External Standards

### What is INCITS Technical Committee L1?

INCITS Technical Committee L1, Geographic information systems (INCITS L1 for short), is the means by which the U.S. participates in national and international standardization activities in geographic information.

INCITS L1 is one of nearly 40 technical committees overseen by INCITS, the InterNational Committee for Information Technical Standards.

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) has accredited INCITS to develop standards for Information and Communications Technologies (ICT). ANSI is a non-governmental organization that describes itself as the “voice of the U.S. standards and

conformity assessment system.” ANSI is the U.S. member body of ISO, the International Organization for Standardization.

INCITS L1 serves as the U.S. Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to ISO Technical Committee 211, Geographic information/ Geomatics.

### Why should I care?

Office of Management and the Budget (OMB) Circular A-119 directs Federal agencies to use voluntary consensus standards in lieu of government-unique standards and to participate in voluntary consensus standards bodies, whenever possible. OMB Circular A-119 provides Executive Branch guidance to Federal agencies on the implementation of the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act (NTTAA) of 1996 (P.L. 104-133).

Widespread implementation of standards developed through ANSI and ISO promote data sharing at international and national levels. This benefits Federal and non-Federal agencies alike.

### ***Why then does the FGDC develop geospatial data standards?***

OMB Circular A-119 directs Federal agencies to use voluntary consensus standards in lieu of government-unique standards *whenever possible*. ISO and ANSI standardization activities provide the “building blocks” for developing thematic data standards. ISO and ANSI standardization activities have not been concerned with requirements unique to data themes.

### Membership

### ***Why should organizations become INCITS L1 members?***

Organizations should become INCITS L1 members to ensure that INCITS standards and equivalent international standards meet their requirements and are created in a timely and efficient manner.

## ***Doesn't FGDC membership in INCITS L1 cover my agency?***

There has been discussion for a long time about how wide and deep an organization's membership in external standards organizations goes. Many FGDC member agencies have chosen to join INCITS L1 to ensure that their interests are represented. FGDC member agencies that have joined INCITS L1 include the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), DoD agencies National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and U.S. Geological Survey.

In addition, private industry and professional organizations are INCITS L1 members. INCITS L1 encourages robust participation from all sectors of the geospatial data community in its standardization activities.

## **What is Friends of the Committee?**

Friends of the Committee (FOC) applies to a non-INCITS Member organization defined and approved by an INCITS Technical Committee. There is no charge for FOC participation. FOC privileges include observing INCITS L1 meetings and receiving copies of Draft proposed American National Standards (dpANS) prior to announcement in ANSI Standards Action, ANSI's biweekly bulletin on public review of standards.

However, FOC are subject to restrictions. They shall neither serve on US Delegations to ISO TC211 Plenary or associated meetings, nor hold any officer position, nor vote on TC matters. Voting privileges are limited to full paying members.

## **I'm sold. How do I join INCITS L1?**

You may find information about joining INCITS Technical Committee L1 through the INCITS website, [www.incits.org](http://www.incits.org). Membership fees run from December 1 - November 30: mark your calendars!

Contact: Julie Binder Maitra, [jmaitra@fgdc.gov](mailto:jmaitra@fgdc.gov), (703) 648-4627.

## **North American Profile of ISO 19115:2003, Geographic Information–Metadata**

The FGDC Metadata Working Group anticipates the publication of the North American Profile by mid to late May, 2009. Final reviews by the American National Standards Institute, ANSI, were held late 2008 with comment adjudication in the following months. ANSI's International Committee for Information Technology Standard, INCITS L1, continued to shepherd the profile through various ANSI processes through its anticipated publication. See FGDC Newsletter - Summer 2008 for background information.



The NAP results from an agreement with the Canadian General Standards Board – Committee on Geomatics, CGSB-CoG, and INCITS L1. The CGSB-CoG is the technical committee responsible for the development and maintenance of unique National Standards in the area of geomatics. The work of L1 consists of adopting or adapting information technology standards and developing digital geographic data standards. FGDC is a member of INCITS L1.

The FGDC implements the Profile with the support of the FGDC Metadata Working Group, WG, and through an agreement with Land Information Ontario (Canada). Several implementation aids are under development. A draft transitional guide from the Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata to the North American Profile is circulated among WG members, who have volunteered to work on the NAP, and our Canadian partners. A graphic

representation of the NAP is under developed as well. The representation is a colorized graphic of NAP content and the shows the relationships between the profile classes. A lesson on the content of the NAP too is under development and when complete posted to the NSDI Training Project. See [www.fgdc.gov/training/nsdi-training-program/online-lessons#metadata](http://www.fgdc.gov/training/nsdi-training-program/online-lessons#metadata) for the existing introductory lesson on ISO 19115 Geographic Information – Metadata titled “NAP Development for ISO 19115.” A capstone to these materials is a NAP workbook compiling much of the preceding work with additional subject matter. This workbook will be distributed from the FGDC website at no cost. The workbook time line begins in FY 2010.

The NAP Registry is available to the community and contains items and class items for specifying the content of the NAP. The content of the register presented in both English and French is found at: [www.fgdc.gov/nap/metadata/register/index.html](http://www.fgdc.gov/nap/metadata/register/index.html).

For further information, contact Sharon Shin at [sshin@usgs.gov](mailto:sshin@usgs.gov).

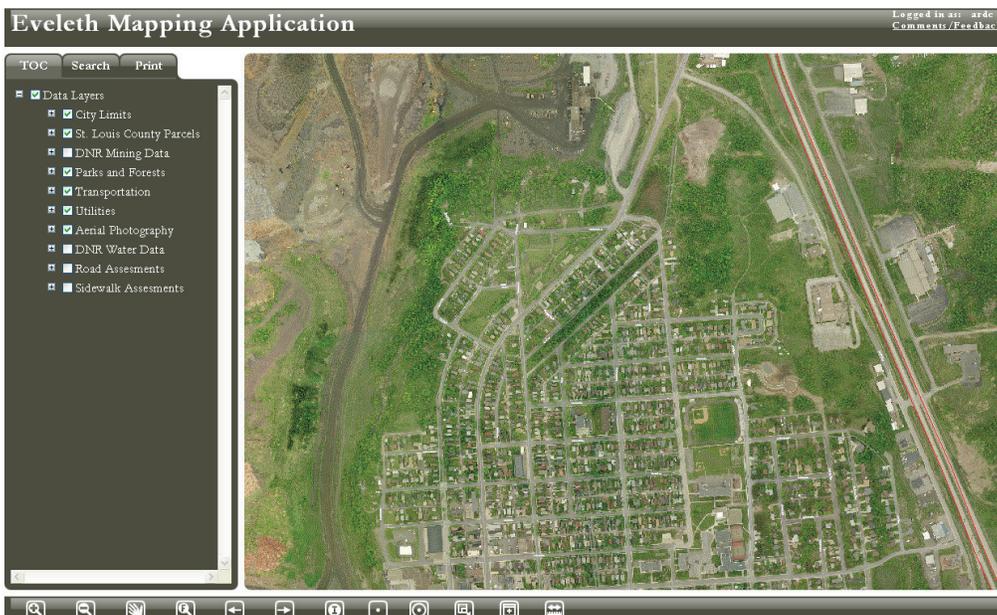
## Laurentian GIS Collaborative GIS Web Mapping

Since April 2005, the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) and Iron

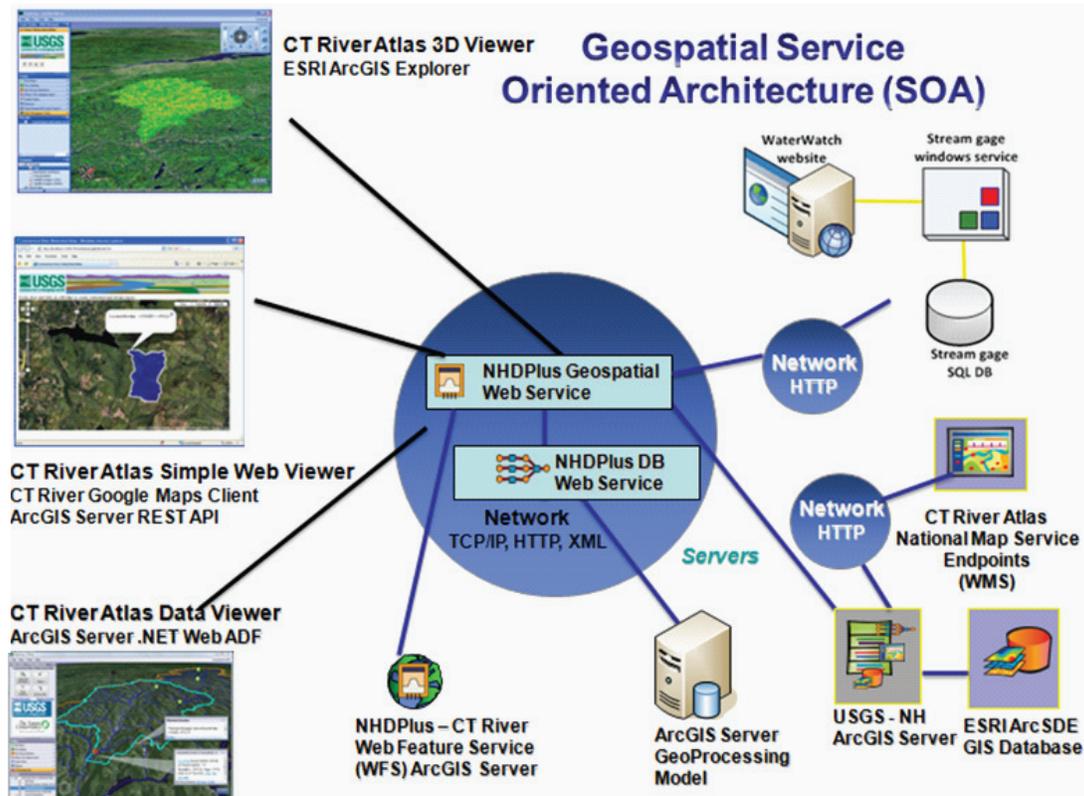
Range Resources (IRR) have been working together to help identify ways that GIS can effectively be implemented at the municipal level for small communities on the Mesabi Iron Range. Iron Range communities wanted to take advantage of the numerous GIS resources in the area at the state and national level, without incurring a serious financial burden as is typical with such implementations.

The purposes of such municipal GIS implementation would include not only an efficiency upgrade to municipal data handling but also boost state information sets which have data deficits. Benefits of GIS implementation include community and economic development, and future land use planning to accommodate growth and future industrial activities.

In this first phase of the Laurentian GIS Collaborative, ARDC assisted the local decision makers of seven pilot communities with the ability to quickly design maps, analyze data and view infrastructure details through a GIS web application. The project team from ARDC worked to include input from stakeholders from local, county, state, and federal governments. Members of the professional GIS community were invited to participate in the project. The project has resulted in a coordinated acquisition and development of data that addressed the business needs of multiple agencies such as parcel, utility, zoning and road inventories.



Laurentian GIS Collaborative GIS Web Mapping Tool



ARDC understands that data collected as part of the collaborative benefits people from the local to national level. Partial funding was provided by a 2007 NSDI CAP grant. Contact Kara Kent at [kkent@ardc.org](mailto:kkent@ardc.org).

Partial funding was provided by a 2007 NSDI CAP grant.

**Project Contacts:**

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Cindy McKay, Horizon Systems, [ldm@horizon-systems.com](mailto:ldm@horizon-systems.com), [www.horizon-systems.com](http://www.horizon-systems.com).

**Connecticut River Watershed Stream Information Tool**

USGS New Hampshire-Vermont Water Science Center, working in conjunction with GCS Research and Horizon Systems, recently completed the Connecticut River Watershed Stream Information Tool and associated Geospatial Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA). This project makes available existing complex NHDPlus network traverse tools coupled with Framework Web Feature Service (WFS) extraction tools in a Geospatial SOA to further advance geospatial analysis with the Connecticut River Watershed. The toolset allows users to view near real-time gauging station information, build watershed boundaries from upstream/downstream reaches identified via network tracing, create attribute reports, and download/extract NHDPlus from a WFS.

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## 2009 Upcoming Conferences

June 15-19	GSDI 11	Rotterdam, Netherlands
June 14-18	National Congress of American Indians Mid-Year (NCAI)	Niagara Falls, NY
July 11-17	ESRI	San Diego, CA
July 24-28	NACO	Nashville, TN
August 18-20	Tribal College Forum	Bellingham, WA
August 19-22	Crime Mapping	New Orleans, LA
September 13-16	ICMA	Montreal, Canada
September 16-18	GIS in the Rockies	Loveland, CO
September 29-October 2	URISA	Anaheim, CA
October 4-8	NSGIC Annual	Cleveland, OH
October 11-16	NCAI Annual	Palm Springs, CA
October 18-21	Geological Society of America	Portland, OR
October 26-27	United SE Tribes (USET) Annual	Hollywood, FL
November 10-14	National League of Cities	San Antonio, TX
November 16-19	ASPRS	San Antonio, TX

## 2010 Upcoming Conferences

April 14-18	AAG	Washington, DC
April 18-22	MAGIC	Kansas City, MO

590 National Center  
Federal Geographic Data Committee  
U.S. Geological Survey  
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive  
Reston, VA 20192

First Class Mail  
Postage & Fees Paid  
USGS  
Permit No. G-788

Official Business  
Penalty For Private Use \$300