EDUCATION REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Attendee's Name: Joseph Kerski Title: Geographer, GCRA

Location: Breckenridge, CO Other Attendees:

Meeting Date(s): 21 October 1995

Purpose of Meeting: Operate Display Booth and Attend Sessions at Colorado Geographic Alliance Fall Conference

Summary:

The Colorado Geographic Alliance (COGA) was established in 1986 as part of the national network of state-based alliances supported by the National Geographic Society. COGA is an organization of over 6,000 classroom teachers, professors, administrators, professors, and interested citizens dedicated to promoting and improving geographic education in the schools and universities of Colorado. The coordinators of COGA are Professor A. David Hill (CU) and Professor David Cole (UNC). COGA sponsors summer institutes, teacher consultant workshops, offers small grants, provides scholarships for teacher training, and provides a clearinghouse for instructional materials.

Approximately 200 people attended the conference, which included field trips, technical sessions, and a vendor exhibit area. I operated a booth in the vendor exhibit area, distributed information and material, and demonstrated digital data sets using an animation package. My booth (Geologic Division's velcro concave backdrop) included the digital landform map of the USA, historical explorer's routes in the USA, an example of a 250K with a landsat image on the back, Colorado shaded relief 1:500,000, Mapping the Solar System, Map Projections, and others). I used the display racks purchased recently by Susann Powers, USGS Libarian. I handed out teachers packets, water education posters, information sheets, fact sheets, 100K maps, and general interest publications. I demonstrated the 1:2,000,000-scale DLG, DRG, DOQ, Alaska, and commercial application CD-ROMs.

The small exhibit area allowed for maximum visibility; I could barely keep up with the demand for information and materials. Other vendors included Rand McNally, Nystrom publishers, and 5 others companies. The USGS was listed as one of COGA's "supporters" as we were not charged for the exhibit space and we were the only organization providing free information.

For part of the day, I worked with George Dailey, ESRI education coordinator, demonstrating the new 1:2,000,000 DLG CD-ROM in conjunction with ArcView.

Based on my observations at the COGA conference, I make the following recommendations:

1) These are exciting times for geographic education, with the resurgence of public interest in the subject, and the new national K-12 standards in geography. The state of Colorado has interpreted the national standards in their own state standards, and an emphasis now for schools is how to implement the standards. I believe that the USGS could play a role in this expansion of geographic education, by:

-producing a CD-ROM with base spatial data sets and thematic sets in modules, with one module for each of the national geography standards, and for different grade levels (primary, middle, and high school). Teachers need easy-to-use data that can be imported into an easy-to-use GIS such as Idrisi or ArcView. CD-ROMs still are preferred by teachers over internet sites.

-producing a publication entitled "Educational Resources Available from the USGS." Using a similar publication produced at the Census Bureau as a guide, this should include a selected list of GIPs, digital data, CD-ROMs, circulars, teachers packets, and other materials especially suitable for geoscience instruction.

2) Two weeks after the conference, I met with Professor Hill, COGA director, concerning the possibility of the USGS and COGA cooperating on publications or teacher certification courses. Professor Hill was enthusiastic about this possibility. I intend to follow up on this but I need more ideas about partnering possibilities and what the USGS should support. The USGS should continue to work with COGA, and participate in their Fall and Spring conferences with at least a booth, and possibly a workshop.

3) An amazing number of primary and secondary schools have access to the internet, and need to know where USGS internet resources are. The USGS should increase its efforts in making spatial and metadata available and to educate data users as to their availability.

One idea we should pursue is:

-producing a pamphlet listing and describing our base data types (DLG, DEM, DRG, DOQ) and their applications in an easy-to-understand, non-technical format. Should this be published as a GIP, an open file report, or other?

4) GIS is being increasingly used in secondary and even primary schools. The USGS should continue to investigate the educational potential of GIS packages so that we can make informed answers to customers who seek to use our data in a GIS.

5) I attended a session on the Green City Data Project, a geographic decision-making set of instructional modules. Part of this project includes an effort

to link schools, industry, and government agencies that are associated with digital spatial data. In the Denver area, six schools are involved in the project and one company involved is Tangent (scanner manufacturers). The USGS should be the involved government agency, as this is a project that has received a great deal of publicity due to its involvement bringing real-world issues and data to the classroom.

end of report