EDUCATION REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Attendee's Name: Joseph Kerski   Title: Cartographer, PM

Location: University of Denver   Other Attendees: none

Meeting Date(s):   Saturday 14 March 1998

Purpose of Meeting: Operate Display Booth and Conduct Workshop 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 100 people attended the conference, which included technical sessions and a vendor exhibit area. I met Colorado Lieutenant Governor Gail Schoettler at the USGS exhibit and invited her to tour the USGS NMD facility in Denver. I operated a booth in the vendor exhibit area, distributed information and material, and demonstrated digital data sets.   In the workshop, I emphasized how USGS digital data can be used in the classroom. I co-conducted this workshop with a high school teacher whom I have been working with for several years. He is now quite proficient in using USGS maps as well as digital data in a GIS. The combination of me (data provider) and Mr Wanner (data user) was a powerful one that can work in other presentations, not just educational outreach, but the other outreach focus areas.

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 presence of the lieutenant governor showed the link between educational outreach and legislative relations. Education receives a great deal of publicity. 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.

2) An increasing number of primary and secondary schools have access to the Internet, and need to know where USGS Internet resources are. The USGS should continue 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?

3) 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.

4) This is my fifth year to be involved with COGA as a USGS representative. I recommend the other outreach staffers to become involved in the geographic alliances of their states. They are one of the best means for us to "train the trainers", maximize our resources, and get USGS products used in education. Many alliances house a materials clearinghouse. These clearinghouses need to contain USGS material, and it is up to us to contact them and get the material in the hands of the teachers.

end of report