

OUTREACH EVENT REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose of Meeting: Colorado Science Olympiad
Northern and Southern Regional Finals

Attendee's Name: Joseph Kerski Title: Cartographer, Program Management

Location: University of Colorado - Colorado Springs
and Colorado State University - Fort Collins Colorado

Other USGS Attendees: Catherine Costello
Becky Bottlemy
Diane Stephens
Yvette Ruiz
Diane Stephens
B.W. Rusty Grout
Susan Harrison

Meeting Date(s): 4 and 11 March 2000

Background:

The Science Olympiad is a national educational event, where junior and senior-high school students compete in geology, cartography, hydrology, physics, chemistry, mechanical engineering, and other subjects. Students compete in each state, making it analogous to the National Spelling Bee and the National Geography Bee. The USGS RMMC has participated in the Science Olympiad since its inception--over 10 years. RMMC has been a long-time leader in the Road Scholar (mapping) event and the Dynamic Planet (earth processes--geology, geomorphology, physical geography) event.



High School student examining USGS map of Mars Polar Regions, 4 March 2000.

The responsibilities include creating these "events", which are tests for competition, administering these events, and grading them. In a competition day, approximately 45 high school teams and 45

junior high school teams will compete in each event. These events are based on USGS products: topographic and thematic maps, professional papers, bulletins, posters, and circulars. This year, the Dynamic Planet event featured USGS maps of Denver, Highlands Ranch, Mars Polar Regions, and Hurricane Frederic. The Road Scholar event featured USGS topographic maps of Ohio.



Middle School students examining historical and current topographic maps 11 March 2000.

This year, we also operated a USGS exhibit in the registration area for teachers and event supervisors, where we displayed teachers packets and information sheets. We also seek to expand the media coverage of this competition. We also made contact with Dr Putz, National Science Olympiad director. He is still interested in having the USGS support the national event each year. I told him the USGS travel budget is tight, but in 2001, the national competition will be in Colorado, and we made the commitment to participate. *I will submit a proposal to add a GIS event to the national competition!*



Grading the tests, 11 March 2000.

Reasons for attending:

1) As the nation's largest scientific organization, the USGS can and does provide much input to publications, data sets, software, and other items related to education in geography, earth science, history, and other fields. The benefit in teachers using USGS data could be enormous, particularly

with the amount of media on the need for geographic and science knowledge by students in the America. "Train the Trainer" (in this case, teachers) is the emphasis of the "lifelong learning" aspect of outreach. Events such as this one distribute information about USGS products and services to some of the most active teachers in America. They will spread the word about these resources through their professional societies (such as the National Education Association, National Council for the Social Studies, National Science Teachers Association), school districts, and by other means. The educational community is a powerful lobbyist in Congress. Familiarity with USGS information will enable the USGS name and activities to be spread throughout the Legislature through thousands of school districts and educators throughout the nation.



Middle School Students, Northern regional finals.

2) To produce educational materials valuable and relevant to the educational community, the USGS needs to regularly interact with teachers. Furthermore, teachers will be shown through tangible modules through these events how USGS resources can be used for education. The USGS outreach program needs to contribute *value-added* information--it is not enough to tell people about our data, but *demonstrate how* the data can be used. We create Science Olympiad events entirely based upon USGS resources, and therefore, it is a concrete demonstration of how our resources can be used for education. Furthermore, these teachers purchase USGS products after seeing how they are used. One teacher from Woodland Park, Colorado, told me that he has purchased 3,000 maps over the past 2 years for the Science Olympiad.

Acknowledgments:

I wish to acknowledge the excellent skills of those who once again supported the Science Olympiad: Catherine Costello, Becky Bottlemy, Yvette Ruiz, Rusty Grout, Diane Stephens, and Susan Harrison. I would like to point out that this provided a training experience for a marketing employee in our Business Partner program, Yvette Ruiz. We appreciated her skills and talents as well.



Pikes Peak from UCSS Campus, 4 March 2000.

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