

## OUTREACH EVENT REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Attendee's Name: Joseph Kerski

Location: New York, NY

Other USGS Attendees: From RMMC: Carol Mladinich, Tanya McKay  
Other exhibitors: Elizabeth McCartney (lead), Peggy Hughes, Richard Sheehy, Cindy Manuel, Roger Barlow, and others.

Event Dates: 27 Feb - 3 Mar 2001

Purpose of Travel: Association of American Geographers (AAG) 1997 Annual Meeting

(1) Conduct presentation on the implementation of GIS in the secondary geography curriculum.

(2) Perform duties as Secretary/Treasurer for AAG Geography Education Specialty Group. Assist in conducting specialty group meeting and present financial report.

(3) Assist with operation of USGS exhibit.

### **Summary:**

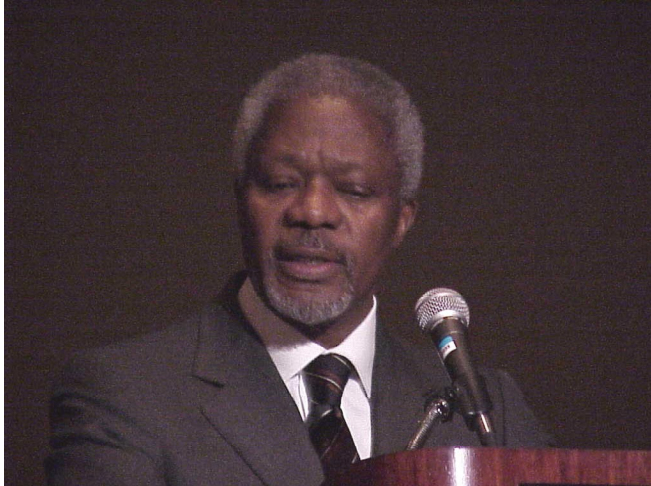
The AAG is **the** major geography research professional society in North America, founded in 1904 in Philadelphia. The society includes geographers in business and government but is primarily composed of the academic geography community--professors at universities and community colleges, and graduate students. Their conferences attract between 3,000 and 4,500 people annually; the 2001 conference hosted the largest attendance yet: nearly 5,000. The Executive Director of the AAG has been Ron Abler for many years; the President serves one year terms and is usually a university professor--currently, Susan Cutter from the University of South Carolina (photo below). The AAG authors two academic journals through Blackwell Publishers, the *Annals of the AAG*, and *The Professional Geographer*.



By participating in this conference, we demonstrated the leadership that the USGS has in geographic data and research that not only geographers, but anyone with an earth-based project, can use in their research. In so doing, the publicity generated from geographers for the USGS could potentially be enormous, particularly with increasing media attention on both the need for geographic skills as well as the need for geographic and environmental research.



Our emphasis for attending this conference was two-fold: First, capitalize on USGS strength in technology. The explosion in geographic technology presents an excellent opportunity for the USGS to get our data and products into the hands of students and educators across the country. Geographers who are trained in the types and applications of our data are a powerful lobby for the USGS. Students familiar with our data will form an expanded future USGS customer base. The second objective was to inform the geographic community that our strength does not end with maps and digital cartographic data, but it includes hazards, water resources, energy, and biological research.



Elizabeth McCartney will be able to provide more complete information on our exhibit, but to summarize: We displayed the following digital demonstrations: Mojave digital data sets, Hurricane Mitch digital data, DRG-DEM-DRG-DOQ applications, NMD data and applications PowerPoint slide show, and USGS WWW pages. We displayed the following products and information: Backdrop: Hawaii volcanoes lava flows thematic map, Lake Tahoe 3D maps, and other California research results. Publications included Earthshots cards, teachers packets, volcano and earthquake information, and fact sheets on digital data.

***Observations and Recommendations:***

1) The AAG conference is a worthwhile one for the USGS to participate in, particularly as we seek to concentrate efforts on targeted audiences and de-emphasize “general public” events where the benefit is questionable for the resources expended. I highly recommend that we participate in this conference **each year**. AAG is **\*the\*** geographic research professional society in the USA and one of the largest in the world.

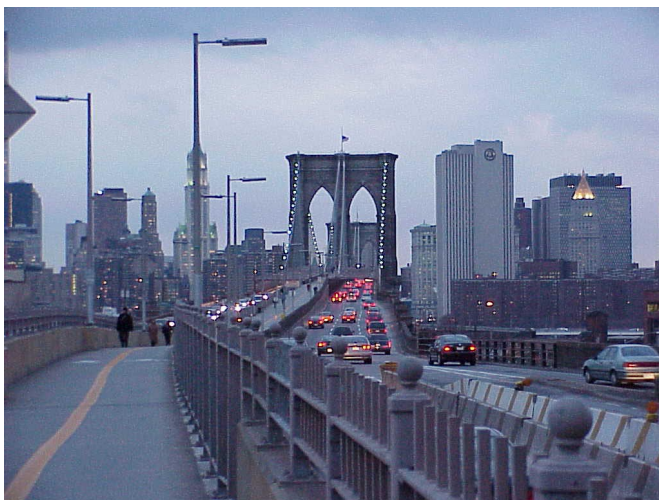
2) Our Earthlink ISP account worked extremely well both at the exhibit and in the hotel room.

3) This event showed once again the excellent cross-regional work that can be accomplished, in this case, WMC and RMMC.

4) I recommend that we continue to include materials from other USGS divisions in AAG exhibits. Geographers are interested in interdisciplinary studies, and also in applications of data. Most geographers are familiar with our maps and digital data, but they are not aware of the breadth of science in the USGS. Our interdisciplinary, applications-oriented posters, professional papers, maps, and circulars were the materials that generated the most interest in the exhibit.

5) The presence of Bob Marinaro in the USGS exhibit impressed me. I believe all supervisory staff should be required to work at least one outreach event each fiscal year. It would benefit the outreach staff to receive the input from management as to their perspectives, as well as help management in leading the outreach program. I believe it also benefits our customers to have management staff at the exhibit, as the public frequently asks programmatic questions about the USGS that management can best answer.

6) The AAG is interested in partnering with the USGS on an educational outreach product. I have spoken with Osa Brand, AAG educational affairs director, about this several times. I definitely think we should pursue it; both of our organizations are highly respected and it would bring a good deal of publicity to the USGS. It would help move the USGS from being viewed by many as just a source of data, to a partner with the academic community. About 30 people attended my session, and last year, Jack Dangermond, ESRI President, attended my session. This indicates the interest by others in the USGS and our research.



\*\*\* Looking back on the Brooklyn Bridge on 1 March 2001 - End of AAG 2001 report \*\*\*

