

## EVENT REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Attendee's Name and Report Writer:

Joseph Kerski, Geographer:  
Education/GIS, USGS, Denver, Colorado.

Location/Date: Denver, Colorado, 8-10  
October 2002

### Event: **2002 GIS In the Rockies Conference**

Other USGS Attendees: Craig Skalet, Karen Siderelis, Melanie Hood, John List, John Guthrie, Lee Aggers, Susan Harrison, Hui Wang (MSCD Intern in Education Program), and others.

#### **Summary:**

GIS In the Rockies (GISITR) is a regional GIS conference, attracting participants primarily from Colorado and Wyoming. The USGS has participated in the GIS in the Rockies conference since its inception in 1988.

#### **Activities:**

1) USGS Exhibit, featuring GeoMac Wildfires Mapping ArcIMS application, The National Map, USGS mapping coordination in Colorado, USGS participation in GIS Education activities in Colorado.

2) USGS Presentations included:

Karen Siderelis—USGS GIO—Keynote Address

Craig Skalet—The National Map, Mapping Partnerships.

Lee Aggers—Chair, Homeland Security

Track.

Joseph Kerski—Preconference workshop on Using USGS Base Spatial Data within ArcGIS

Joseph Kerski, Esther Worker (ESRI), and Sophia Linn (Colorado Geographic Alliance)—A Decade of GIS Education in Colorado

Joseph Kerski—Spatial Data for GIS, in Introduction to GIS Track

Joseph Kerski and Greg Baca (MGIS)—Where to Go from Here? Furthering Your GIS Education and Networking.



*Karen Siderelis, Geographic Information Officer for the USGS, delivers the Keynote Address. The address included The National Map, the role of a GIO, the role of the USGS, mapping partnerships, and perspectives on trends and issues in geographic information sciences.*



*Craig Skalet, Chief of the USGS Rocky Mountain Mapping Center, speaks about The National Map and Mapping Partnerships.*



*Sophia Linn, Colorado Geographic Alliance, Esther Worker, ESRI, and Joseph Kerski, USGS, after their presentation about GIS in education in Colorado. The presentation included discussion on why and how GIS is used in K12 education, the past decade of GIS education in the state, how the USGS, COGA, and ESRI are working together on educational partnerships, and why and how the GIS professional community can be involved.*

**Audience:**

Attendance totaled approximately 600, including planners, engineers, and scientists

in environmental science, hydrology, GIS, satellite imaging, transportation, land use. Also attending were educators, marketers, private mapping, GIS, and remote sensing companies.



*Portion of Exhibit Hall at GIS in the Rockies conference.*

By participating in this conference, we demonstrated the leadership that the USGS has in geospatial data that professionals can and have used in their work. In so doing, we made contacts that will help us meet our customer's needs as well as encouraged future cooperative agreements. Professionals who are trained in the types and applications of our data are a powerful lobby for the USGS. Students and researchers familiar with our data will form an expanded future USGS customer base.

The GIS in the Rockies program covers a variety of topics, and includes professionals from business, government and academia.

GIS in the Rockies provides a forum for professionals to learn about and to share their experiences with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology. GIS in the Rockies is organized entirely by volunteers from the local GIS community and is sponsored by several professional organizations:

American Congress of  
Surveying and Mapping  
American Society for  
Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing  
Geographic Information and  
Technology Association  
Professional Land Surveyors  
of Colorado

Urban and Regional  
Information Systems Association. Proceeds  
from the conference are returned to the  
sponsoring societies. They use these funds  
to award scholarships and grants and to  
host technical sessions and seminars.

The most useful thing I learned about  
software at the conference was about GPS-  
Photo Link, from a company called  
Geospatial Experts in Fort Collins,  
Colorado. This software uses digital still  
photos and GPS coordinates to  
automatically hotlink the photos to the map  
coordinates!

The most useful item about the USGS that I  
learned at this conference was from John  
Guthrie, who showed us his ArcIMS wildfire  
mapping work for Australia!

### **USGS Exhibit:**



*Joseph Kerski, Lee Aggers (USGS  
Colorado Mapping Liaison), and Dave*

*Murray, GIS in the Rockies Program Chair,  
at USGS exhibit. Other exhibitors included  
LandInfo, ESRI, Metropolitan State College,  
Digital Data Systems, Autodesk, Microsoft,  
Horizons, and approximately 50 others.*



*Our USGS exhibit at the conference  
featured The National Map, GeoMac  
Wildfire ArcIMS application, data sources  
for GIS work, and research projects  
involving Colorado. We showed our ArcIMS  
sites (such as The National Map at  
[rockys20.cr.usgs.gov/natmapp1](http://rockys20.cr.usgs.gov/natmapp1)) and  
searched attendee questions with our  
Internet connection.*



*Dave Murray and Tina Cary, two of the main  
organizers for the conference. Tina gave an  
address during the preconference  
workshops.*

Our exhibit was in an excellent location in the exhibit hall, and we were able to use a bit more than our “allotted” space for distributing the many free maps and materials we brought. See exhibit hall layout below with arrow to USGS exhibit location.



We displayed the following products and information in our exhibit: a DOQ mosaic of the Front Range of Colorado, GeoMac poster, Colorado map from the NED data, flyers on USGS base spatial data, satellite imagery, Colorado USGS activities, Front Range Infrastructure project, GIS in Education, How to Use Terraserver images in a GIS, How to Use USGS Spatial Data in a GIS, How to Find information at the USGS, USGS web sites, Gore Creek watershed study, land cover program, NED, NHD, and other items. I brought some Colorado 1894 maps, USA surface water maps, and Colorado NED shaded relief maps, and as usual, the response to these was tremendous. There is nothing like a free map, even for digital spatial data users, to attract attention.

## Recommendations:

1) This was the best GISITR conference I have attended, because of the contacts that I made in educational initiatives. For example, I spoke with GITA, LandInfo, URISA, Leah Lewis (state of Colorado GIS Coordinator) and others about upcoming GIS education events that they could participate in. Overall, for the USGS, we had our best presence ever, with many presentations and workshops.

2) I recommend to the GISITR board that they continue to seek out ways to attract graduate and undergraduate students from the Front Range universities and community colleges. I was pleased to see many faculty and students from Front Range Community College and Metropolitan State College at this year's event.

However, I believe we are still barely touching the surface of informing faculty and students at the University of Denver, University of Colorado-Denver, Colorado State University, Colorado School of Mines, University of Colorado-Boulder, University of Colorado-Colorado Springs, and the University of Northern Colorado. I would also like to see ways of getting high school students and teachers who are using GIS to attend this event. At the Intermountain GIS Conference in Montana and other regional GIS conferences, students have the opportunity to display their GIS-generated maps and discuss their research projects. I believe that the entire GISITR conference would be enhanced through greater student participation at all levels.

3) I was extremely pleased at the attendance at the presentations that I conducted and co-conducted: 75 for the spatial data presentation, 30 for the preconference using USGS data in ArcGIS,

50 for the Educational presentation, and 60 for the furthering your GIS training presentation. Our exhibit traffic was light, as expected, but it was still worthwhile for us to host our exhibit, especially with the work that Lee Aggers is doing as Colorado mapping liaison.

4) The GISITR conference is a worthwhile one for the USGS to participate in. After being absent from the exhibit hall in 2001, I thought that our decision to return was a good one. The traffic at the exhibit at GISITR is light, except during breaks and during the social event, but nonetheless, the exhibit provides high visibility for the USGS and a place to meet with current and potential data partners.

5) I recommend that, in 2003, we donate some maps and data for the door prize giveaway. We should also donate bags for the conference attendees as they walk in the door. We tried to do that this year but missed the deadline. We did, however, hand out USGS bags at the exhibit booth (thanks to Steve Vandas for the bags).

6) The demonstrations, display, and handouts were suitable and of the correct volume and themes. However, we are OUT OF STOCK on many items, such as the NLCD, NED, NHD, and many National Map fact sheets. This is a problem, even though we had an Internet connection at our exhibit.

#### **Acknowledgements:**

I thank my USGS colleagues Melanie Hood, John Guthrie, John List, Lee Aggers, and these folks and others (Liz Lile, Steve Vandas, and Carol Mladinich, for example) who provided exhibit, plots, flyers, bags, and materials assistance. It was enjoyable to work with them at this conference and it

added a great deal to the entire USGS presence. I especially thank Melanie Hood for her weeks of preparation for the USGS exhibit at this conference. I also thank Craig Skalet and Karen Siderelis for speaking at the conference. I thank Dave Murray and Tina Cary, and the rest of the GISITR organizing committee for their help and for being a pleasure to work with.

\*\*\*end of report \*\*\*