

Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area GEOBOOK: Software Pilot for the Bureau of Land Management National Training Center

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Discussion

What is a GEOBOOK? It is a digital book with multimedia capabilities for presenting Geographic Information System (GIS) data, maps, video and audio clips, photographs, and other information in an interactive format to audiences within and outside of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). A GEOBOOK is also able to include links to Web sites with additional information (e.g., soil surveys and IKONOS satellite imagery). A GEOBOOK can be developed from authoring software by Sanborn (formerly SpaceImaging, Inc.). It is published as a Windows program and is typically distributed on a compact disk (CD).

Before 2004, GEOBOOKs had been prepared exclusively

by SpaceImaging, Inc., for a variety of clients. In 2004, Diane Nelson, GIS Training Coordinator at the BLM's National Training Center (NTC) pursued evaluation licenses, training, and program support through SpaceImaging, Inc., to determine if there was Bureau-wide applicability and use for this product across a variety of programs. Five licenses were secured and teams began developing GEOBOOKs—this was the first time the software was used outside of SpaceImaging, Inc., for GEOBOOK development. This arrangement was also beneficial to SpaceImaging, Inc., as they received direct feedback on the program's amenities, ease of use, issues, and challenges that could be incorporated to enhance future versions of the software.

The development of the GEOBOOK for the Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), Fairfax County, Virginia, in the BLM's Eastern States, teamed GIS Specialist Bob Schoolar with Outdoor Recreation Planner Vicki Josupait. Mr. Schoolar addressed the technical aspects of the GEOBOOK development, including GIS maps, "how to" instructions, IKONOS satellite imagery, and video and audio clips. Ms. Josupait focused on developing the resource information regarding visitor use and access, text, and photographs for the variety of recreation uses on site. Together the team worked on design, layout, and aesthetics. The final version of the Meadowood SRMA



GEOBOOK was published in 2005. Upon completion, the BLM became the owner of this GEOBOOK, enabling CD publication in unlimited numbers, as well as the capability to post on an Internet Web page without incurring any additional fees from SpaceImaging, Inc.

Conclusions

The GEOBOOK software version that was tested raised concerns about programming, functionality, and ease of development and use. However, SpaceImaging, Inc., was able to immediately address the issues on the basis of the feedback provided by the five BLM teams evaluating the software, which enabled improvement of subsequent versions of the software package.

From the BLM's perspective, the GEOBOOK provides a valuable tool—both internally to staff and externally to the public. Internally, BLM employees can access GIS maps and spatial-imaging tools in a user-friendly format with little or no training. This powerful tool can place scientific and technological information in the hands of staff for planning, and managers for making decisions, potentially providing



data that are defensible in court. For the BLM, the GEOBOOK may also have utility as a training tool. Externally, GEOBOOKs offer the BLM the capability to provide visitors with access to site information, interactive maps, video, photos, and audio clips, so that they can plan their visit before arriving on site. Additionally, GEOBOOKs can allow disabled persons with restricted mobility the opportunity to see, hear, and explore areas on a site that would not otherwise be accessible to them.



Bureau of Land Management staff Bob Schoolar and Alanda Crawford collect GIS data.

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