USGS National Hydrography Dataset Newsletter
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by Jeff Simley, USGS

New NHD Stewardship Staff

National Geospatial Technical Operations Director Kari Craun has announced that Elizabeth McCartney and David Anderson have joined the USGS staff to serve as NHD Stewardship Points of Contact working with our partners to improve and maintain the National Hydrography Dataset.

Since December, 1999, Elizabeth McCartney has supported the U.S. Geological Survey in Rolla, MO as a contractor with Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC). As part of the Earth Science Information Center (now known as the Science, Information, and Library Services), Elizabeth promoted the USGS extensively through workshops, exhibits, and presentations highlighting the search, retrieval and use of USGS geospatial datasets and educational resources. As a member of the NGTOC Commercial Partnerships Team, Elizabeth provided in-depth assistance to customers obtaining geospatial data and mapping products using the Geospatial Products and Services Contract and the Commercial Remote Sensing Data Contracts. Elizabeth received her B.S. in Geography/Biology and her M.S. in Biology from Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville, Alabama.

David Anderson is originally from a small town in east Tennessee. He started federal service in 1981 as a member of the U.S. Army Reserves, then "jumped ship" to spend his time in the U.S. Navy as a sonar technician onboard submarines and as the ship's oceanographer. In the Navy, David got his first taste of remote sensing and spatial analysis work. After the Navy, David attended the University of West Florida where he attained a degree in Environmental Studies/Natural Sciences and a certificate in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). He has worked for the University of West Florida in remote sensing and GIS analysis; the City of Pensacola, Florida building the storm water GIS infrastructure and with the Florida Geological Survey in both GIS analyst and coordinator capacities. David is coming to USGS from the State of Florida, Department of Environmental Protection where he has been serving as the statewide National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) Coordinator and state data steward. During his time as the Florida NHD Coordinator, David has been a member of several state advisory committees to USGS for the NHD, Watershed Boundary Dataset (WBD) and the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS). He is hoping to bring his experiences at all levels to the USGS to better integrate federal and state business needs.

Realignment of Stewardship Zones

The USGS established stewardship zones across the U.S. a few years ago to help facilitate USGS assistance to NHD stewards. A "Point-Of-Contact" person from the USGS could then provide a consistent relationship with a contiguous group of states forming a zone. Initially it was thought that it would take nine POC's to aggressively jump-start the stewardship process across the nation. It has not been possible to staff at this level. The revised strategy now calls for six stewardship zones. However, in addition to the six POC's, a POC supervisor is in place, and a support staff of two people will assist the POC's with quality control of incoming data edits, relieving some of their load and allowing them to work with more states. For a map of the new NHD stewardship zones and the POC's assigned to the zones, go to ftp://nhdftp.usgs.gov/Stewardship/New_Stew_Assign.pdf.

High Precision NHD Data

This Fall NHD data will only be available in the ArcGIS 9.2 version of Geodatabase. The 8.3 version will be discontinued. This then means that all Geodatabase data will be in high-precision.

Change in FTP Site Address

For those who access ftp://rockyweb.cr.usgs.gov, the address had now changed to ftp://rockyftp.cr.usgs.gov.

Symbolizing the NHD in Your GIS

The symbolization of the NHD is not always a pretty sight when you open the data in ArcMap. Often the streams come out green and the lakes are purple. You can easily display a good color coded symbolization set by importing a symbol layer. In ArcMap, double-click on NHDFlowline in the table of contents. This will open the Layer Properties window. Click on the Symbology tab. Then click on the Import tab to the right. This opens the Import Symbology window. On the Layer line, click on the browse button on the right side. Navigate to where you have the NHDFlowline.lyr file (download below). Click on it and click on Okay. On the Value Field line click on the black down arrow and select FCode rather then FType. Then click on Okay. You will see the new symbology applied. Do the same thing for NHDWaterbody and NHDArea, selecting NHDWaterbody.lyr and NHDArea.lyr (see below). The difference with NHDWaterbody and NHDArea is that you do not have to change from FType to FCode. To get the layer files, go to ftp://nhdftp.usgs.gov/Workshops/NHD_Tools/NHDFlowline.lyr, etc., and save in your folder.

Hydrography Stewardship Conference

A national conference will be held April 15-17, 2009 in Denver, Colorado to discuss hydrography data stewardship composed of the NHD and WBD. The goal of the conference is to better develop data stewardship by exchanging ideas amongst a broad group of participants to find out what works, what doesn't work, and how to fix what doesn't work.

September Hydrography Quiz / New October Quiz

Bob DenOuden, a Senior GIS Analyst for Lane Council of Governments in Eugene, Oregon, was the first to correctly guess last month's hydrography quiz ftp://nhdftp.usgs.gov/Quiz/Hydrography39.pdf as the coastline, bays, estuaries, and rivers of Charleston, South Carolina. The Lane Council of Governments is a voluntary membership organization of local governments in Lane County. They provide a variety of planning and technical services to member agencies and other clients. Bob has used NHD data in his work with the local utility, Eugene Water and Electric Board. This includes hydrologic modeling of the McKenzie River watershed, where Eugene residents receive their drinking water. Both NHD high resolution data and NHDPlus data have been very helpful in serving as a foundation in building our McKenzie watershed GIS.

Others with the correct answer were (in order received): Jory Hecht, Jennifer Sharpe, Bill Samuels, Joanna Wood, Angela Redmond, Albert Hindrichs, Bill Wilen, Jim Sherwood, Thom DeGriselles, Janel Day, Jim McDonald, Tom Morey, Tom Christy, John Lynam, Richard Patton, Ed Carter, Roger Barlow, Al Rea, Jeff Walker, Gerry Daumiller, David Asbury, Bill Kaiser, Adam Marx**,** Hans Klausner and Ken Koch.

This month's hydrography quiz can be found at ftp://nhdftp.usgs.gov/Quiz/Hydrography40.pdf. The small lake in the center of the image is a "one-of-a-kind" in the world. The lake drains into two oceans – in other words, it straddles the Continental Divide. Although the NHD does not show flowlines directly draining the lake, the lake does drain to the northeast and to the southwest. Another thing that makes the lake so unique is that it flows backwards. The flow to the east flows into the Pacific and the flow to the west flows into the Atlantic. The lake has a GNIS name, but this name is not in the NHD. Identify this lake by its GNIS name along with where it is located and send your answer to jdsimley@usgs.gov.

Upcoming NHD Geo Edit Tool Training

November 4-6, Concord, NH, Contact Carl Nelson cwnelson@usgs.gov
January 26-28, 2009, Tallahassee, FL, Contact George Heleine at gheleine@usgs.gov, David Anderson at danderson@usgs.gov or Joe North at joe.north@dep.state.fl.us

Upcoming NHD Applications Training

Nov. 4-6, Sacramento, California, contact Carol Ostergren at costergren@usgs.gov.
Feb. 4-6, 2009, Michigan, contact Steve Aichele at saichele@usgs.gov.
Feb. 18-20, 2009, Wisconsin, contact Dick Vraga at rsvraga@usgs.gov.

Thanks to Kari Craun, Ariel Bates, and Terry Higgins.
The NHD Newsletter is published monthly. Get on the mailing list by contacting jdsimley@usgs.gov.
You can view past NHD Newsletters at http://nhd.usgs.gov/newsletter_list.html
Jeff Simley, USGS, assumes full responsibility for the content of this newsletter.