CAP Grant – Category 3 – Interim Report

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Project Title: South Carolina GIS State Outreach

Organization
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SC DNR)
1000 Assembly Street, Suite 134
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Note: this grant is being managed by the SC DNR on behalf of the South Carolina Geographic Information Council (SCGIC)
http://gis.sc.gov

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Project Narrative

Summary of Project Activities
This project is focused on increasing coordination and cooperation throughout the state and to help build relationships with local government organizations through consensus-building exercises. This will be accomplished through a series of facilitated meetings held throughout the state where local government organization will be invited to participate. A contractor with facilitation experience will be utilized in order to maximize the effectiveness of the meetings. The goal of the meetings will be to determine key barriers and challenges to participation in collaborative statewide GIS efforts. Following the meetings, the information gained will be used to produce a plan proposing what can be done in order to help remove said barriers and effect a positive change in the relationship between state and local GIS. The end-goal is an increase in participation between local and state government in relation to GIS data sharing and development. This is in direct line to assist with Criteria 6 of the nine criteria for successful coordination: ("Does your state have mechanisms to work and coordinate with local governments, academia, and the private sector?").

Key Accomplishments to Date
The Principal Investigator has traveled around the state and spoke at multiple GIS user group meetings in order to help build support for the facilitated exercises to come. Preliminary investigations into locations for the facilitation sessions have also been accomplished. Currently a list of people and roles to invite is being developed and extensive work has been invested in developing contact lists for GIS stakeholders in the state. It is anticipated that the vendor chosen to facilitate the outreach sessions may also have suggestions on additional groups or roles to invite to the activities. The list of people and roles to involve in the process is not exclusive in nature, however, and anyone who may be a stakeholder is welcome and encouraged to participate. At this point, the RFP has been developed, put out for bid and responses have been received and are currently being reviewed.

How Inclusive Are the Efforts, New Stakeholder Groups
Understanding the importance of involving the CIO's Office in coordinating activities, they were brought in to assist with the RFP review process. In addition, the CIO's Office has an Ex-Officio role within the SCGIC. Furthermore, in order to help build bridges between the state and local governments, and to show that this grant is meant to benefit everyone, involvement in the RFP selection team was solicited at the local level. Recently, a joint meeting between the State Mapping Advisory Committee body and the SCGIC technical body was held and SMAC voted in favor of working together on activities in the future, including technical working groups, etc. In addition to reaching out at the local level, additional state organizations that would benefit from GIS coordination have been identified and pursued. Since that time several of them (including Clemson University and the Emergency Management Division) have consistently attended meetings, and the College of Charleston has expressed interest in several on-going projects including a statewide LiDAR initiative.

What practices or activities led to success? What practices or activities have not?
At this point it is still too early to identify all practices/activities that will or will not lead to success. However, it is very apparent from a multitude of contacts with local government that participating in local user group meetings is one important key. Reasons identified include being visible, demonstration of willingness to contact and participate with local government "in their backyard", acting as a resource and contact for state-based GIS activities and data, etc. For the state organizations, providing a central point of contact for data and collaborative inquiries has also been of key benefit. It is important to note that August, 2008 marked the one year anniversary of the first State GIS Coordinator, and thus the first time there has been one main contact for multiple organizations in order to help facilitate information sharing and assist with answering questions. Overall, communication appears to be key, and transparency lends itself to greater goodwill among participants. Recently, the state GIS website went online (http://gis.sc.gov), and although still in its infancy, now can act as an information dissemination tool. Currently it includes some data downloads, status of projects, minutes from meetings, etc. These functions include suggestions made by both state and local agencies.

Next Steps
The next step in the project is to identify the vendor that will assist with the outreach sessions. This should be accomplished in the next several weeks. Negotiations are anticipated to be completed by mid-September, and then we can move forward with identification of additional stakeholders and begin the outreach sessions.

Where do you need assistance? What type of assistance do you need?
At this point no additional assistance is needed in the project. Should additional needs be brought to our attention in the coming weeks by the vendor or otherwise, we will reach out to the grants contacts.

Revised Timeline
Is your project proceeding on its original timeline?
Originally, we had hoped to be further along in the process at this time. It took much longer than anticipated to get an account set up to handle the grant. As soon as this was accomplished, we moved forward with the RFP solicitation.

Do you expect to complete your project on the scheduled completion date?
At this point, we believe we will be able to complete the project within the allotted timeframe. Should other factors arise upon identification of the vendor, we will notify the grants contacts immediately.

Attachments
No attachments at this time.