

BC Environmental and Occupational Health Research Network GIS Group

Informal minutes: June 29, 2007

Attendees:

Mieke Buller (BCCDC, GIS)
Sunny Mak (BCCDC, GIS)
Ruth Cridland (Fraser Health)
Genevieve Prudhomme (Fraser Health)
Eleanor Setton (UVIC PhD student)
Anders Erickson (UNBC student)
Sulan Dai (UVIC post-doc)
Christine Ronning (Interior Health)

General discussion:

- Presentation from Dr. Ying MacNab was well received. It is available for download on the BCEOHRN GIS website. Members were interested in increasing their ability and understanding of spatial smoothing and modeling. Eleanor briefly showed GeoDa, a free application that has a range of smoothing techniques and is quite easy to use. Sunny has had more experience using GeoDa. The link for download is:

<https://www.geoda.uiuc.edu/>

Eleanor noted that Dr. Andrew Lawson will be arriving at SFU in September to hold the Canada Research Chair in spatial epidemiology. We will be making every effort to have him present to the group.

- Ian Parfitt emailed a request for the group to consider the recent call for proposals from CGDI. There was general discussion about past experiences with applications and the need to progress through the Categories. Ruth and Genevieve thought they might be submitting, but for early stages GIS planning and capacity building within Fraser Health. In general, there was no consensus in the group that we have a solid idea that would make sense to pursue for this round of funding.

Updates:

- Anders is in Victoria for the summer, working on thesis proposal and organizing NPRI data. He is looking at establishing a GIS platform at UNBC to support environmental health research and risk assessment, which would include basic GIS data sets. He may also have some data for a case study of birth outcomes/defects (contacted Cheryl Dale at the Reproductive Care Program)
- Sunny – went to the ESRI conference last week, saw some of the new tools coming in ArcGIS 9.3, including a geographically weighted regression tool and dynamic scatter plots (linked to maps). CPHA conference in Ottawa Sept 16 – 19th is coming together. In total, 52 abstracts for the GIS section were accepted, 24 oral and 28 posters.

- Mieke is making progress on the West Nile virus website, using ArcIMS. She has also been working on a reportable disease website with ArcServer, but needs a VB.net programmer. Christine mentioned an online VB.net course as being very useful:

<http://calendar.sait.ca/webapp/CourseDetails.aspx>

- Christine has been working on West Nile virus data, for areas not covered by BCCDC. A very recent inquiry from the Interior Health Health Protection group regarding the mapping of uranium in water, radon in air and geological outcroppings of uranium has provided some interesting opportunities for analysis. There is also interest in air pollution, both from point and non-point sources and in relation to weather patterns.
- Ruth and Genevieve are making headway in terms of illustrating the usefulness of GIS to the Fraser Health folks, and now have authorization for their MapInfo license. They did a great job of using GIS to map the flood threat in the FHA, and were able to identify FHA employees and clients who were in danger of being stranded in the event of flooding. The mapping also helped generate flood evacuation notices. They are working now on building internal partnerships to advance GIS.
- Sulan Dai – is a post-doc at UVIC, most recently working on the Coasts Under Stress study that looked at determinants of health in coastal towns in BC. Her main interests are in community health, and she is looking for work now.
- Eleanor is working on a post-doc funded by the Ministry of Health. The project includes the mapping folks at BC Stats (Pat Bluemel, Don LaPrise, Dave O’Neil). The main objective is to develop web mapping for health related data. She is also about to start working with Paul Demers at UBC SOEH, on his newly funded National Cancer Surveillance project. She will be looking at ways to develop spatial estimates of exposure risk to environmental contaminants.

Next dates:

July – no call or webinar – everyone is on holidays!

August 24th, 10am – regular call

September 28th – tentative webinar by Sunny Mak and Trisalyn Nelson

THANKS TO ALL!!!