

BC Environmental and Occupational Health Research Network GIS Group

Informal minutes: November 29, 2007

Attendees:

Ian Parfitt (Selkirk College)

Brendan Mather (VIHA)

Sunny Mak (BCCDC)

Dawn Mooney (CHSPR UBC)

Ellen Larcombe (HELP UBC)

Jay Douillard (CATCH – Committee on Action Toward's Children's Health – Okanagon).

1. BCEOHRN AGM & Scientific Exchange.

Friday, January 25, 2008

12:00 pm-6:00 pm

Sutton Place Hotel, 845 Burrard Street, Vancouver

Call for posters deadline is January 18, 2008

See <http://www.bceohrn.ca/BCEOHRN-AGM.html> for more information

2. Special session on health geomatics – visualization focus for Canadian Cartographic Association conference May 13th – 15th 2008, Vancouver BC (UBC).

This session is envisioned as a plenary session with a speaker and a concurrent session with a panel of 4 or 5 people. It could also include a poster session. BCEOHRN is willing to pay the costs for a speaker. Some nominations for speaker include:

- Dr Nadine Schuurman, health geographer, SFU
- Dr Paul Sheppard, visualization, architecture and design, UBC
- The cartographer from the NYTimes.
- Dr Mark Monmonier, Distinguished Professor of Geography, Maxwell School of Citizenship, Syracuse University, New York.

Action: Dawn and Ian to develop a short-list, then contact them and select one, keeping the rest of the group in the loop via email.

Updates from members:

Brendan has just learnt that VIHA will receive funding from GeoConnections for the development of a GIS Strategic Plan for the health authority. They will conduct a high-level GIS user needs assessment in order to determine the future GIS needs of several departments within the health authority in addition to several community groups that

VIHA has provided GIS support to in the last two years. He anticipates that one of the outcomes from the Strategic Plan will be to provide an internet mapping site that will display population and health statistics at the LHA level; this site will also display certain resources in the community (VIHA Facilities, schools, parks). They also plan to host data that has been collected by various communities within VIHA. A community group in Sooke created an inventory of all the resources in and around Sooke that relate to health. They plan to identify a maintenance methodology and post this information on the public VIHA mapping site for the public to view.

A completely separate project at VIHA will be an ArcIMS site used for emergency management. The VIHA Emergency Management GIS, VEMGIS, will only be accessible to participating organizations, mostly local government and a few other agencies involved in providing emergency services, PEP, BCAS, Canadian Red Cross, etc.

Both VIHA sites are on the CRD's servers because of their experience and expertise with online interactive atlases.

Dawn is in the planning stages of a hard-copy atlas of pharmaceutical use across BC and Canada which will look at the top 20 drugs by quantity, cost, and region. She is also developing maps of LHA and provinces showing primary care and home care. These maps may be PDF or interactive in format.

Ellen, a first-time caller, described the main activities of the HELP. The main goal of the partnership is to investigate how children are doing across the province, in particular during early development years. Much of the data comes from a survey sent to Kindergarten teachers. Socio-economic indicators are also used, including Canada Census data from 2006, aggregated in custom geographic units representing neighbourhoods. Aboriginal community asset mapping is ongoing in the Okanagan and Cowichan Valley. Work is done at the request of local groups. Research, community empowerment, and knowledge transfer are all major activities of HELP.

Jay is doing EDI asset mapping work in Kelowna. He is developing an internet mapping application using free and open source software including Google Maps, PostGIS and Ruby on Rails. Current develop work includes building a mechanism for service providers to upload data, creating a comfortable user interface, and implementing polygon features (point features are already available).

Sunny is mapping licensed meat processing plants in BC for BCCDC Food Protection staff and the public to identify the nearest facility for meat processing. He is also doing ecological niche modelling of *Cryptococcus gattii* and *Lyme Borreliosis* to forecast areas within the province that have the ecological conditions necessary for these organisms to be established in the environment. Together with Mieke he is summarizing the results of the 2007 West Nile virus surveillance season for the final surveillance report. The base 16 degree Celsius growing degree day model for *Culex tarsalis* was updated for 2007. Mieke is analyzing the effectiveness of larval mosquito control in the City of Richmond.

Ian attended a Future of Food conference in Nelson and has begun a literature review of food security mapping. Inventory of food production, processing and warehousing facilities is ongoing. He is also involved in several internet mapping projects including water resources and biodiversity indicators that may have application in environmental health research. The SGRC is involved with discussions with various groups around a State of the Basin reporting mechanism that will involve a range of indicators and may include an IMS application developed at the College.

Submitted update for Anders:

Not much to report, finishing up my last classes of my Masters, and looking forward to actually getting some work done on my thesis project. My first task is putting together a quick and dirty watershed risk assessment, although it won't end up being very quick. My second challenge will be assigning point locations to cases represented by large postal code areas. So I may be posting a lot of questions on the Wiki site, and/or to the group ... be forewarned!

Internet Mapping:

As several members of the group are involved in internet mapping there was a brief discussion of methods during the update from members round. One question was how to choose between developing static maps (like PDFs) and interactive maps. Important considerations are organizational capacity and the media requested by users.

Next call:

1pm January 7th 2008