

ILLINOIS GIS NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ILLINOIS GIS ASSOCIATION

The Founding of ILGISA

By Richard Hilton
Lake CountyGIS Manager and
Founding Member of ILGISA

ILGISA celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. The long-term success of volunteer organizations is by no means guaranteed—many have come and gone. A number of things have to be gotten right to survive and flourish. It's a measure of the success of ILGISA that we take it for granted, and that it continues to attract new membership and volunteer involvement at higher levels over time. All of this brings great satisfaction to those of us who laid the foundation more than a decade ago.

ILGISA didn't just start at an instant in time, it evolved from an existing tradition. Here are the major factors and events that contributed to the birth of ILGISA.

The Role of IMAC

The Illinois Mapping Advisory Committee (IMAC) was, and is, a voluntary group of agencies and individuals interested in the mapping programs of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). IMAC members encouraged the development of USGS mapping programs in Illinois through joint funding opportunities and by providing suggested priorities. As an advisory committee, IMAC has no budget.

IMAC provided the only regular venue for Illinois public sector mapping professionals to gather, network, and exchange information. The group was chaired by Dr. Richard Dahlberg, Professor of Geography at Northern Illinois University (NIU) and Director of the NIU Laboratory for Cartography and Spatial Analysis. IMAC meetings consisted of program updates by the USGS liaison to Illinois and presentations by members and invited guest speakers. They took place in Springfield and Champaign at government agency offices or university facilities where the space was free.

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The History of ILGISA

By Carol Zar
First Executive Director of ILGISA

The Illinois GIS Association was formally inaugurated at the "GIS in Illinois" conference in fall 1994. It was an outgrowth of a four-year effort initiated by Dick Dahlberg and Ruth Anne Tobias to provide a conference of interest to public sector GIS practitioners.

Originally, the annual conference was underwritten by the Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) at Northern Illinois University. As the conference grew, it became apparent that there was an audience hungering for information on GIS technology and its usage.

At the 1993 conference, Pete Trott, then-Director of CGS, met with a small group of leaders in the field and suggested they explore the possibility of incorporating as a non-profit association that could take on the running of the annual conference and

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The Editor's Corner

By Ruth Anne Tobias

Ten years of ILGISA! Ten years of connections and cooperation. More than 20 conferences, 17 issues of *Illinois GIS Notes* or *Illinois Mapnotes*, growth from 345 to 625 members, and **www.ilgisa.com**—a fantastic website. That's a lot to have accomplished since 1994!

Dick Dahlberg of Northern Illinois University (NIU) and Richard Hilton of Lake County initiated the idea of an organization that grew out of the conferences held between 1990 and 1993.

ILGISA has to thank the Center for Governmental Studies at NIU for all their initial support and the ongoing leadership skills provided by the three executive directors we've had. And the Illinois GIS Association also has to thank the 23 ILGISA board members who have so generously contributed their time to leading us forward and keeping us committed to the needs of the GIS community, to the spread of GIS technology, and to the development of opportunities in education about GIS applications.

The exhibitors at our conferences have been most helpful in the financial and informational support they have provided over the years. We have several old friends who have been at almost every conference.

We expect the exhibitors to be at the cutting edge of technology and applications, and we ask them to educate us at our workshops and at their exhibit booths. Make sure you stop by and say thanks at the fall conference.

And to show how much the organization has grown and matured, our calls for papers elicit more than enough presentations from within our membership. Everyone is doing something interesting. Come to the conference in November to hear what was old and what is new.

So what will the next ten years hold for ILGISA? More members, more local governments using GIS, more mature applications, more explorations of technology and the interactions between the analysis of what's on the ground (or inside the building or wherever) and our imagination.

Ruth Anne Tobias is Editor of "Illinois GIS Notes" and a Research Associate with the Center for Governmental Studies.

Recognizing Those Who Exhibit Support for GIS in Illinois

By Nancy Place and Ruth Anne Tobias

Many exhibitors have supported the Illinois GIS Association through their participation in the 23 conferences we have held since before ILGISA became an official association. We regret that don't have room here to recognize all 108 exhibitors, but we would like to extend our gratitude to all of them for their support of our organization.

The exhibitors listed here are those who have attended **ten or more** conferences. They are listed in descending order of the frequency of their participation.

The Sidwell Company

Aero-Metric
ESRI
Intergraph

Bruce Harris & Assoc.
(previously JE & Assoc.)

GeoAnalytics

Patrick Engineering, Inc.

Erdas, Inc.
Walker Associates, Inc.

Fall conferences typically attract more exhibitor participation than do the spring conferences, due to the larger attendance numbers. But for both the spring and fall conferences, the number of exhibitors who participate has steadily risen.

The Spring 1996 *GIS in Illinois* conference attracted four exhibitors, compared to 26 in Spring 2004. And while the Fall 1996 conference attracted only nine exhibitors, we fully expect the number of exhibitors at this year's fall conference to exceed last fall's total of 31.



Notes from the desk of

**Rob Krumm, ILGISA President,
2003-2004**

It's been a joy and honor to serve as President of ILGISA since last November. As a community of GIS users, we gathered for the Fall 2003 meeting in Lisle and the Spring 2004 meeting in Springfield. Both events were well attended and there continues to be a tremendous level of enthusiasm around the state for all things GIS, including ILGISA.

The Spring 2004 meeting marked the first ILGISA meeting in Springfield (previous meetings were held in Bloomington, Urbana, and Champaign). Perhaps owing in part to the new location, people turned out in near-record numbers for the Spring 2004 conference, as more than 230 people were registered for the Wednesday conference.

The Crowne-Plaza Hotel in Springfield proved to be an excellent facility with ample meeting and exhibit space, and the hotel staff provided a high level of support for all ILGISA functions. Even the crawfish for lunch were deemed "O.K." by Kerry St. Pé, the keynote speaker from Louisiana.

It's been an exciting year to be involved with ILGISA. During

the year we established the ILGISA Outstanding Student Awards. Awards were presented at both the Fall 2003 and Spring 2004 conferences, and the student awards should be part of the spring conference tradition for many years to come.

The student awards are intended to recognize talented college students who use GIS as part of their curriculum. In addition, we hope that the awards encourage students to continue using GIS as part of their studies and professional careers.

The Outstanding Student Award winners came from several schools, including Illinois State University, Northeastern Illinois University, Northern Illinois University (two students), Olivet Nazarene University, Wheaton College, and the University of Illinois. We encourage your continued participation with the student award process, so please watch for the call for nominations in advance of the Spring 2005 meeting.

During recent years ILGISA has been working with the GPS2GIS program (visit

www.gis2gps.com), a group that provides information and training to educators and students about GIS and GPS technologies. As part of the ILGISA conferences, we have provided meeting space so that the GIS2GPS team could present workshops on GIS and GPS technologies. These sessions have been well attended, with about 100 people attending the GIS2GPS workshop at the Spring 2004 meeting. By providing the meeting space for these workshops, ILGISA is actively reaching out to the education community and supporting the process of 'teaching the teachers' about GIS.

At the next ILGISA meeting, you might see a number of new faces viewing posters and the exhibits. It's easy to forget that the technology we deal with on a daily basis can be overwhelming to others, so please greet the GIS2GPS workshop participants and make them feel welcome. Let's hope that their students will be ILGISA members in the future.

As a GIS community, Illinois is unique in having two meetings each year. Many states have

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As interest in GIS accelerated in the late 1980s, more GIS-related presentations were given. We put together several single-topic, full-day IMAC meetings at the Levis Faculty Center on the campus of the University of Illinois in Champaign in order to explore these topics in more depth. A full-day meeting in June 1989 focused on soil mapping and was the predecessor for a much larger meeting to take place the next year in DeKalb.

These IMAC GIS-oriented meetings reached their peak with a two-day event in Champaign in June, 1993, involving more than 20 speakers, an evening symposium on the National Spatial Data Infrastructure, and agency tours.

The Role of *Illinois GIS and Mapnotes*

A publication called *Illinois Mapnotes* (later renamed *Illinois GIS and Mapnotes*), began in June, 1981. It was edited by Dick Dahlberg and published by the Laboratory for Cartography and Spatial Analysis at NIU, later with the financial support of NIU's Center for Governmental Studies (CGS). *Mapnotes* and its successors have been published annually (sometimes more frequently) from 1981 to the present. Its present incarnation is *Illinois GIS Notes*, which is published by ILGISA.

The early issues of *Illinois Mapnotes* document the beginnings of GIS in state and local government in Illinois. *Mapnotes* began as a 12-page black-and-white document. The September 1989 issue had a full-color cover, 20 pages, and a name change. It became *Illinois GIS and Mapnotes*—reflecting the emergence of GIS.

Similarly to IMAC, *Mapnotes* evolved in response to the level of interest in GIS. What started as a manageable volunteer project became an expensive and very time-consuming effort. The publication grew to more than 60 pages and took on a very polished appearance by the mid-1990s. Over time, the cost of publication rose substantially, although *Mapnotes* was distributed free of charge.

The Transition to ILGISA

The first truly statewide GIS meeting took place in August 1990 in facilities provided by the DeKalb County Farm Bureau. The same core group of volunteers that grew up with IMAC put this meeting together. A full day of presentations on digital soil mapping and tax parcel mapping drew an audience of 220 from 43 counties. The attendance at this meeting was further confirmation that

interest in GIS was growing and that there was a need for Illinois GIS users to be able to meet each other and share experience on a regular basis. Like IMAC, this meeting took place in free facilities and lunch was on your own. There was no registration fee.

The Role of the Center for Governmental Studies

Realizing that the scale of these meetings had outgrown the available free meeting spaces and that there were growing costs, such as printing and mailing, we approached the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University for assistance. CGS performs a number of functions, including public opinion surveys, research, public policy development, and data and mapping services. They also serve as the secretariat for a number of professional groups.

We met with the then-Director of the CGS, Dr. Pete Trott, a colleague and longtime friend of Dick Dahlberg. He was willing to work with us, as unstructured as we were. Our volunteer group had no bank account, no income, and no organizational structure. We had no way to book hotel facilities for a conference. Dick and I worked on the programs with Ruth Anne Tobias acting as conference coordinator on behalf of CGS. Many volunteers participated to make these conferences a success.

The second statewide conference was held in December 1991. This first "GIS In Illinois" conference was our first meeting in paid hotel facilities and our first meeting that charged a registration fee. We continued this annual conference arrangement for the next two years.



Dr. Richard Dahlberg and Richard Hilton brainstorming about the future of GIS in the State of Illinois.

The 1993 conference attracted more than 300 attendees. While the conference income managed to pay for direct costs—including meeting space, food, printing and postage—it didn't cover the indirect costs incurred by CGS staff, nor did it resolve the growing financial challenge of publishing *Mapnotes*.

Dick and I had a dinner meeting at the 1993 conference to discuss these issues with Pete Trott and Carol Zar, executive director for several professional associations at CGS and later our first Executive Director. We explored for the first time the possibility of forming a non-profit association. At a planning meeting later that year at CGS, we discussed the general plan for the 1994 conference and the mechanics for forming an association. That was the first occasion we used the term "Illinois GIS Association."

The Founding of ILGISA in 1994

Throughout the spring of 1994 I worked with Dick to develop a business plan and an organizational structure for what was to become ILGISA. Most importantly, we knew we wanted to create what Sheryl Oliver was later on to describe as "a safe place": meaning an organization that had nothing to sell and no agenda to push, where all would be welcome to come, meet, and share experiences in the tradition of IMAC. ILGISA was to be incorporated as a non-profit corporation under a provision that does not allow it to lobby or be involved in politics in any way.

We also believed that vendor user groups are best left to the vendors and that we would discourage conference presentations or articles for publication that center on the products or services of any single vendor. Our focus was meant to be on applications, problem solving, management issues, and concepts.

Vendors are important to GIS, and have always been welcome to exhibit or put on pre-conference workshops. But by separating these activities from the conference presentations, attendees are able to choose whether they wish to encounter these vendors or not—they are not a captive audience.

The operating philosophy and structure were embodied in the draft bylaws and accompanied by a financial plan. I proposed to Dick an initial Board that included seven people: Dick Dahlberg (NIU), Richard Hilton (Lake County), Sheryl Oliver (IDNR), Don Rich (IDOT), Robert McLeese (USDA), Don McKay (ISGS) and James Carter (ISU). These individuals were drawn from federal, state, and local government and universities—we wanted all those viewpoints to be represented. We all agreed to participate, and the initial ILGISA Board was created.



Pete Trott, receiving a Special Recognition Award from Dr. Richard Dahlberg.

We met for the first time as a founding committee at the Illini Union in Champaign in August, 1994. We reviewed the reasons for establishing ILGISA and for forming a non-profit corporation. We discussed the kind of organization we wanted to be, confirming our values and our style. We recounted the legal steps that were required to come into existence and when we would make a public announcement. We discussed how ILGISA would relate to other organizations, such as IMAC, and the role of vendors. We reviewed an initial financial plan. The meeting ended with a strong feeling of enthusiasm and consensus.

A few months later, at the 1994 "GIS in Illinois" conference, we announced the formation of ILGISA. The Board elected its initial slate of officers, with Dick Dahlberg as President and Richard Hilton as Vice President. We concluded our first contract with the CGS to act as our secretariat.

ILGISA owes much to the Center for Governmental Studies and to its emeritus Director, Pete Trott, whom we honored a few years later with an ILGISA special recognition award for his vital contribution to our founding.

It's not possible in this brief account to give adequate recognition to the many additional individuals who contributed to the early success of ILGISA. A number of them served on the Board in later years and many continue to be active participants today, more than ten years later. Together we've built an organization that continues a tradition going back a quarter of a century—a safe place for sharing experiences and networking.

Richard Hilton is the Lake County GIS Manager.

Geographic Information Technology as Part of the State of Illinois Information Technology Initiative

By Sheryl Oliver

The consolidation of Information Technology and Telecommunications in the state of Illinois has been underway for the past year. During that time, the major information venue that has provided activity updates is the Illinois Technology Board of Advisors (ITBA).

The GIS community has had little exposure to this Board, which has been in existence for decades. The current organization was established by charter in November 2000 and replaced the former Data Processing Management Advisory Board.

The ITBA is a consortium of information technology professionals, which include chief information officers, directors of technology, or other senior information technology professionals serving in various positions throughout Illinois state government.

This organization provides a forum for identification, discussion, collaboration, and resolution of common issues that arise within the Illinois IT community.

The ITBA works with the Governor's Office, Central Management Services (CMS), and other policy-making bodies to promote enhanced quality, productivity, and operational efficiency within technology-enabled business solutions.

More recently, the ITBA has extended its collaborative processes to include associate members from local government,

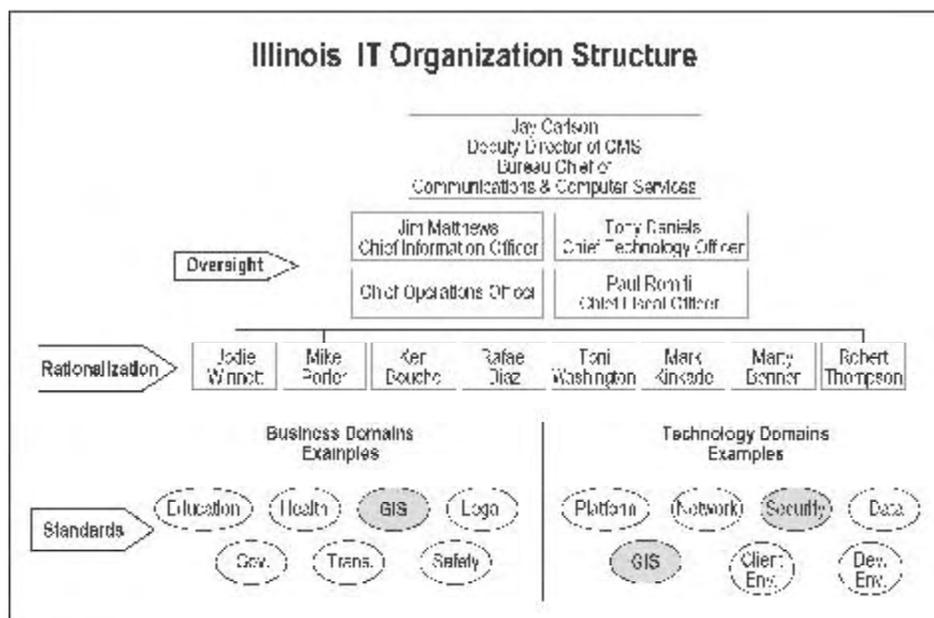
educational institutions, and other government offices. The State Legislature has renewed the CMS responsibility and authority for conducting IT and Telecom rationalization, with no specific time limit for this authority.

The figure below illustrates the organizational structure for IT. The structure begins with the Deputy Director of CMS. A Chief Information Officer, Chief Technology Officer, Chief Operations Officer, and Chief Fiscal Officer provide oversight at the second level.

The Rationalization Board at the third level is composed of eight appointed senior IT leaders, who represent a diversity of agencies. They function as thought leaders and domain mentors in addition to providing dispute resolution.

GIS appears at the fourth level along with other business and technology domains. Domain leaders identify and "matrix manage" Subject Matter Experts" (e.g., hardware/software,

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framework data, and clearinghouse experts), manage technical standards, and influence consolidated business functions.

The state's budget crisis is looming large, and implementing the new state Information Technology consolidation has been intense. It is uncertain where ILGIC will land, but it *will* land.

The Illinois Geographic Information Council was written into statute as Act 1128 in July 1995. **It was one of the first legislated GIS councils in the nation** and was created as part of the state's Spatial Data Infrastructure. Stakeholders at all levels prefer to partner with a recognized GIS council.

ILGIC met last in October 2003 and will regroup again within the next several months, when the IT consolidation is more firmly planted. At that time ILGIC will meet to restructure so that it can effectively function within the governance model, providing sound, strategic business, and technical recommendations for GIS in the state of Illinois.

Sheryl Oliver is the ILGIC Coordinator and GIS Coordinator with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Rob Krumm, (continued from page 3)

only one state GIS conference per year while others meet on a biennial basis.

During the past two years, there has been a lot of discussion at board meetings concerning the two meetings per year format. We've bantered about the question of whether ILGISA should continue to host two meetings each year or whether there should be just one meeting each year.

During the last few years, we've recorded steady to increased attendance at both the spring and fall conferences, so from that perspective it seems that the two meetings per year format is working.

There are many options, including hosting one general meeting on an annual basis and perhaps rotating the location throughout the state. If ILGISA held one meeting each year, then perhaps the organization could host specific workshops or meetings: e.g., workshops on address matching, 2-D/3-D modeling, GIS policy issues, etc., rather than a second general meeting.

If attendance at the spring or fall meetings was starting to diminish, then that would be an indicator that the two meetings per year format was not working. As it is, many ILGISA members seem to like this meeting format. Some members only attend either the spring meeting or the fall meeting while others attend both.

What do you think? We're curious to get your input. Tell us what you think about the two meeting per year format. You can email me your thoughts at krumm@isgs.uiuc.edu.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the efforts of several people who keep ILGISA on the straight and narrow. Sherrie Taylor is the Executive Secretary for ILGISA and she does a terrific job working with the Board of Directors, maintaining the ILGISA web pages, working with the hotels, and much more. She's a treasure and all ILGISA members benefit from her drive and commitment.

Past-President Ken Lovett, President-Elect Ruth Anne Tobias and Board Members Kingsley Allen and Keith Caldwell have provided a level of consistency and foresight that comes with experience on the Board. Their guidance and support are appreciated. The newest Board Members—Terri Arnold, Pat Keegan, and Chris McGarry—have provided fresh ideas and energy that are critical to any organization. As a group, I salute you, and I thank everyone for the opportunity to serve as ILGISA President.

Robert Krumm is a Geologist with the Illinois State Geological Survey.



The first ILGISA board. Standing, from left: Sheryl Oliver, James Carter, Robert McLeese, Carol Zar. Sitting, from left: Richard Hilton, Don Rich, Richard Dahlberg, Don McKay.

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perhaps provide other services to GIS practitioners in the state. This initial group included Dick Dahlberg and Richard Hilton. They agreed to make some contacts around the state and pull together a group to determine if creating an association was feasible.

Dick and Richard were successful in convincing colleagues to work with them. The initial group of representatives from federal, state, and local government agencies and universities was put together to lead the effort of drafting bylaws, recruiting a Board of Directors, and putting forth a work plan for the new association.

The group consisted of Jim Carter, Illinois State University; Dick Dahlberg, Northern Illinois University; Richard Hilton, Lake County; Don McKay, Illinois State Geological Survey; Bob McLeese, Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA; Sheryl Oliver, Illinois Department of Natural Resources; and Don Rich, Illinois Department of Transportation.

One of the group's first decisions was that an office with a staff person to run the new association was a necessity. They decided to contract with CGS to provide that service, and I was asked to serve as Executive Director of the association.

During 1994 I worked with the group to draft bylaws, incorporate as a non-profit, and plan the 1994 conference. The formation of the association was announced at that conference and the founding group was elected as the first Board of Directors with Dick Dahlberg as the association's first president.

During the process of drafting bylaws, many issues were discussed, foremost of which was the nature of the membership of the organization. The founding group felt strongly that this should be an organization of and

for public sector GIS practitioners. They wanted to retain close ties with private sector developers of GIS technology, but wanted to retain their independence from any one vendor.

They also felt that GIS technology would no doubt have many useful applications in the private sector but that the needs of the public sector were unique enough to warrant forming an association dedicated to those needs.

The initial Board was both creative and prudent. They decided early on to risk running two conferences: one in the metro Chicago area and one downstate. Both were immediately successful. They also agreed to publish *Illinois GIS and Mapnotes*, a publication that CGS had also underwritten for a number of years.

The founding members of the Illinois GIS Association were

The initial Board [of Directors] was both creative and prudent... They were enthusiastic about sharing their time and knowledge with a broad spectrum of colleagues and willing to put forth the effort to get the new organization up and running.

early users and supporters of GIS technology and understood its many public sector implications. They were enthusiastic about sharing their time and knowledge with a broad spectrum of colleagues and willing to put forth the effort to get the new organization up and running.

They would all be pleased to observe the success of ILGISA as it celebrates its 10th anniversary.

Carol Zar is Assistant Director of the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University.



A Multidisciplinary Approach to Wetlands Restoration

An interview with Kerry St. Pé, conducted by Keith Caldwell and Ruth Anne Tobias

Mr. St. Pé is the Director of the Barataria – Terrebonne National Estuary Program in Louisiana and was the keynote speaker at the spring “GIS in Illinois” conference. He spoke about the importance of the fragile ecosystem of coastal Louisiana and the multi-disciplinary restoration efforts that are currently underway.

Losing an average of 34 square miles of coastal land a year is astonishing. What are the biggest areas of concern in dealing with this problem?

We have become completely vulnerable to hurricane storm surges, our drinking water is becoming too salty to drink during times of drought, and we are losing the very system that defines our culture—our wetlands.

What is the projected cost to implement the changes needed to restore the Louisiana coastline? With tightening budgets and deficits on the rise, where do you look for funding resources?

The estimated cost to restore coastal Louisiana is 14 billion dollars—a lot of money, but far less than what it would cost the nation if this system goes. If there were no Louisiana wetlands, there would be about 25% less oil and gas production in the United States. Louisiana cannot afford this restoration cost alone. It will have to be shared by the federal government.

You mentioned that outreach and education are primary objectives of yours. What is it that you are hoping these programs achieve?

Obviously we need a lot of money to restore this system. That means the Illinois and other state congressional delegations will need to understand what the Louisiana coast has to do

with their states. Why should they care? Why should they support sending money to solve what they perceive as Louisiana’s problem? These questions must be answered and addressed through educational program.

Equally important—there will be changes in our own practices in our coastal regions. One of our restoration tools is to use Mississippi water to re-nourish our wetlands. This means that our salinity regimes will change back to something closer to what they were in years past.

In order to keep the resistance to these needed changes down, our own people have to understand why these changes are necessary. Fisheries interests will need to change where they fish for oysters, for example.

Also, local and state taxes will be used. People want to know how their taxes are being spent.

Can you describe how you develop and foster positive interaction and dialog between the scientific, academic, and government agencies?

I would have to spend a couple of days answering this one. Simply put, we completed our plan over a five-year period using hundreds of individuals, each representing a stakeholder group. We included fishermen; educators; university and government scientists; federal, state and local agencies; business people—you name it, they were on one of our committees.

All decisions are made through consensus. We engaged the help of all. We did not only use government representatives.

Achieving consensus is not as hard as some would want you to believe. It does mean that your own ideas may be modified or enhanced or changed somewhat. Some governmental

agencies or academics cannot live with the idea that their own beliefs are not necessarily gospel, so they resist involving others in key decisions.

What are your primary sources for GIS data?

Most of our GIS work is done by the USGS office in Lafayette.

After the introduction of the nutria, to control exotic plants in the estuary, it became apparent that they are very prolific and problematic to other animals and plants. In light of this, what is your favorite nutria recipe?

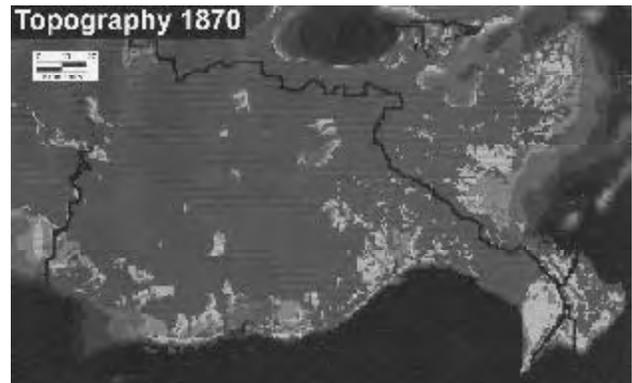
[Clarification: Nutria were not brought in here to control exotic plants, they were brought here and to many other places for their fur.]

St. Pé' s Favorite Nutria Recipe

1. Find a nutria and carefully remove entrails and fur. A young nutria is best.
2. Leather is the best thing to cook a nutria on. An old shoe sole works really well.
3. Place the cleaned nutria on the shoe sole.
4. Season the nutria liberally with cayenne pepper, salt, pepper, onions, bell pepper, and celery.
5. Bake the nutria in a preheated oven at 350 degrees for 6 hours. Bast often.
6. Take nutria out of oven and let it cool for about 15 minutes.
7. Scrape the nutria into a garbage can.
8. Eat the shoe sole!

Enjoy!

The imagery at the right reveals a retreating Louisiana coastline. The lighter areas on the images show the extent of the coastline that is submerged, and the extent that is projected to be submerged by 2020 if conditions persist.



COME CELEBRATE THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF ILGISA!



The Illinois Geographic Information Systems Association will be holding its fourteenth annual fall conference on November 8-9, 2004, at the Hilton Hotel in Lisle, Illinois. This is a conference of celebration for the last ten years of the Illinois GIS Association as an official organization.

Don't forget to return your voting ballot for the new Board Members and changes to the bylaws!

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