

MAGIP Education Committee Meeting

July 12, 2012

Members attending: Gerry Daumiller (chair), Chris Bardash, Jane Horton, Meghan Burns, Stephanie Anderson, Wendy Largent, Van Shelhamer

In the call for this meeting to MAGIP and the MAGIP list-server, Gerry referred members to a list of potential agenda items on the MAGIP web site and asked for volunteers to choose an item and lead a discussion on it. The list is reproduced at the end of these minutes.

Chris Bardash has begun exploring existing on-line GIS education resources. He said he was just starting and reported that the National Council for Geographic Education, <http://www.ncge.org>, has a section of its web site devoted to geography clubs, starting in the 3rd grade, with information on how to start them and activities for them to do. Chris is considering starting a club at his daughter's school. Van said that two teachers who already have extensive curriculum materials are Dean Thompson in Libby and Suzi Flentie in Lewistown. Chris will familiarize himself with what these teachers have done and with what it might take to get GIS included in the Office of Public Instruction's curriculum guidelines, through Kristen Crawford, the Science Curriculum Specialist. Van said that Jennie Stapp may be able to provide advice on approaching OPI, which in the past has resisted including GIS because they thought the suggestions brought to them could be considered as endorsements of ESRI software.

Meghan said that she would lead the organization of a GIS Day event in the Capitol Rotunda, which has been reserved for this on November 14.

Meghan said that links to education resources should be available on the MAGIP web page. Gerry will start a resources page for the education committee and a link to it will be added to the MAGIP resources page. Chris will contact Dean Thompson and Suzi Flentie to see if we can place the material they have developed on the MAGIP site.

Meghan will try to get the Geospatial Trunks going again, in cooperation with the Montana Geographic Alliance and the Montana Natural History Center. These are physical trunks that have materials in them that teachers may use with their classes. One trunk has 15 GPS devices. The other has materials targeted at K-8 teachers, such as lesson plans, ArcView software, and globes. Van said that the trunks have in the past been overwhelming and a decision was made to replace one of them with a virtual trunk pointing to the materials needed to put a class or activity together. MAGIP has budgeted \$1,000 to improve the trunks. ArcGIS Online is probably a better option than ArcGIS desktop for the trunks.

Jane said that getting the word out about GIS education has always been our biggest problem and asked if we have done a survey of teachers to see what they need. Wendy said that the Education Committee's programs should be included in the MAGIP brochure that the Board has decided to produce. Van said that we need to define a specific goal or goals for what we mean when we say we want GIS education in K-12 schools. Meghan and Jane will start a dialog on the MAGIP discussion forum on what the goals should be and what questions we should ask teachers. Suggestions for questions regarding the grant program were mentioned, including whether the grants are large enough, whether the application process is too difficult, and whether it is happening at the right time of year.

The group agreed that Gerry should propose a larger budget for the committee to the Board, to allow us to award two \$2500 scholarships and two \$2500 grants each year.

Potential agenda items from the May 23 meeting, from the Education Committee home page:

1. Meet with guidance staff at a northwest Montana high school and explain the opportunities for college education in GIS. We have been told that they have a counselor who is discouraging students from pursuing GIS as a career.
2. The Montana Office of Public Instruction has curriculum standards for many areas, but none of these include GIS. Meet with the OPI Science Curriculum Specialist, to find out what the process is for working GIS into Montana's Science Curriculum.
3. Organize a GIS Day activity in your town.
4. School administrators could be GIS users! ESRI will give them free ArcGIS software. We need someone who can get word out to school administrators on how GIS could help them.
5. MAGIP has "geospatial trunks" with materials to help teachers put together GIS activities for the classes. We need someone to find out about the trunks and work with the Montana Geographic Alliance and the Montana Natural History Center to update them and help find teachers who can use them.
6. Two teachers known to be involved with GIS are in Lewistown and Libby. Get in touch with them and find out if we can help them or they can help us understand how to help teachers better.
7. There are great resources already out there for GIS education, such as ESRI and the Montana Geographic Alliance. See what they have and whether they can help us with any of these tasks.
8. Find out why we don't get more scholarship and grant applications. Are the amounts too small? Are we doing everything we should to publicize them?
9. MAGIP formerly had a \$20,000 endowment which earned money that we used to fund our scholarships. Because of a problem with the managers of the endowment, this was split into two halves and turned over to the UM Foundation and MSU Foundation. Find out if these funds are currently granting any scholarships.