Community Consultation and Validation Report

Proposal: Community Mapping, web GIS and the Creative Rural Economy
Proponent: Applied Geomatics Research Group (AGRG)
Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), Middleton, NS

Background

The Applied Geomatics Research Group (AGRG) is, as its name suggests, an applied research group. It is located in Middleton, Nova Scotia, as part of the Annapolis Valley Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC). One of the other components of the Campus is the Centre of Geographic Sciences (COGS) in Lawrencetown. For nine years, AGRG has undertaken research on the application of Geomatics technology to issues of interest to rural Canada. In association with the Rural Secretariat, it has explored the concept of a rural knowledge cluster (RKC) based on Applied Geomatics. With support from the three levels of government, this has led to the creation of InGEOnuity, a Business Incubation Centre for Geomatics/IT start up companies. AGRG has also supported the Rural Secretariat by developing online tutorials and training materials to support their Community Information Database (CID). This is an online webGIS for developing community profiles using Statistics Canada census data.

Chronology of Community Engagement

This proposal, submitted under the knowledge building component of the Community Development Program can be separated into three elements: Community Mapping, webGIS and the Creative Rural Economy. Community Mapping is a methodology for helping community groups, or individual citizens, map their local knowledge about community assets. WebGIS is an innovative technology for sharing local and government geographic knowledge with interested stakeholders. The context, or application, is the Creative Rural Economy. AGRG, as a Research and Development group located in rural Nova Scotia, is part of the Creative Rural Economy (staff of 17) and can play a unique role in community engagement and technology innovation. The process and results can be shared online and through face-to-face workshops with other parts of rural and Northern Canada.

a)   Community Mapping initiatives

- Workshops for community groups on the use of GPS, e.g. Digby Historical Society, Annapolis Apple Growers, Bridgetown Elementary School. **Fall 2007.**
- Workshops for non-government organizations on the link between GPS and GIS, e.g. mobile Geomatics Lab for Coastal CURA project. **Spring 2008.**
- Workshops for Fundy Community Development Association on mapping the results of historic and genealogy research. **Spring 2009.**

b)   web GIS initiatives

- Invasive species map web site for CARP. **Fall 2007**. http://www.plantpatrolns.ca
- Interactive map for Grape Growers. http://agrgims.cogs.nscc.ca/website/agrgweather/viewer.htm
- Provincial online wind atlas. **Spring 2008.** http://www.nswindatlas.ca
- Creative Annapolis **Spring 2009.** http://lgs.getmyip.com/FlexViewer3/index.html
- Online lake atlas for MTRI. **Spring 2009.** http://lgs.getmyip.com/flex_mtri/index.html

c)   <u>Creative Rural Economy activities</u>

- Cultural mapping project with Novita, Lunenburg. **Fall 2008.**
- Creative Muskoka with AuthentiCity, Toronto. **Winter 2008.**
- Workshop on 'Building the Creative Rural Economy at Annapolis Royal'. **Spring 2009.**
- Tech Social with Dr. Goodchild, UCSB, at Middleton. **Summer 2009**.

Other relevant work

AGRG has been supporting the municipalities on the Centre for Land Information and Community Knowledge (CLICK) project. This is a webGIS application for the three towns: Annapolis Royal, Bridgetown and Middleton. AGRG has been collaborating with the Annapolis Digby Economic Development Agency (ADEDA), the regional development agency for Annapolis and Digby County on sustainable biomass (forestry and agriculture) and land suitability for alternative crops (agriculture). These applications require local knowledge from woodlot owners and farmers. WebGIS tools can ensure that these communities are actively engaged in the decision making process. AGRG has been working with the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Association (SNBRA), the association responsible for administering the biosphere reserve in accordance with the UNESCO-MAB criteria. Under this relationship we are exploring the use of GIS tools for creating an online atlas of sustainability which gives a regional synthesis of the results derived from the municipal Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) process. AGRG has been mapping 'lost villages', which includes Roxbury, Margo and, in the future, 'Electric City' or New France.

Conclusion

AGRG, as a research unit within an educational institution, has the capacity, through this project, to contribute to community development for the footprint of ADEDA (two counties) and SNBRA (five counties) in rural Nova Scotia. As a R & D group it makes a direct contribution to the Creative Rural Economy. From our previous experience with the CID project, we have demonstrated the ability to deliver bilingual online tutorials and training materials, which allow AGRG expertise and products to be shared with the rest of rural and Northern Canada.