Volunteers build a Story Map for Worldwide Fund for Nature-South Africa (WWF-SA)

Transforming a website story to an interactive Story Map

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Worldwide Fund (WWF) for Nature is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organisations, with almost 6 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF - South Africa requested assistance from GISCorps volunteers in developing an interactive ArcGIS Online based story map. Shruthi Srinivasan (TX), was recruited for the project, and along with Leslie Zolman, a GISCorps Core Committee member and GISCorps volunteer, developed a detailed and informative Story Map using ArcGIS Online (AGO).

Mission of the Project:

Water doesn't come from a tap and only 8% of South Africa's land area produces 50% of its surface water. The goal of this project was to transform the "Journey of Water" website (http://www.journeyofwater.co.za/) into an interactive story map. Using compelling multimedia content and narrative text on the WWF Journey of Water website, we produced authoritative maps that can help reconnect people to the real water source areas in South Africa.

Process:

After the initial story map draft was reviewed by the group, Shruthi decided to use the Map Journal as the overall template for the 'Journey of Water' story map. Each water source area was a separate page in the map journal, which had an associated side panel and a main panel. The side panel had additional information on the water source area. User actions to navigate to a section or an area in the map were defined in the side panel if required. The main panel had embedded apps for each water source area in the map journal. The first story map draft had a tabbed series embedded story map in the main panel for every water source area. The first tab was the location map, second tab was the threats tab and the third tab was the gallery tab. All the testing for the story map draft was done on Amatole water source area. Only when all updates were approved by the group, would the team plan to propagate the changes to every water source area. After testing the first story map draft and brainstorming with the group, the tabs in the main panel were replaced with bullets. The first bullet displayed the location map with the threat icons; the remaining bullets displayed a gallery of pictures. This design was a significant improvement in terms of performance and maintenance.

The GIS data for rivers was downloaded from https://www.dwa.gov.za/iwqs/gis_data/. This shapefile only had the main rivers and did not have the river name in the attribute table. The strategic water source area blobs were downloaded from http://bgis.sanbi.org/Projects/Detail/145

One major update was to reduce the number of web maps. Instead of having an individual web map for every water source area, volunteers created a web map for each region - Eastern Cape, Kwazulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Western Cape. Each region's web map had the blobs for the water source areas within the region. The blobs were zipped

shapefiles that were added to the web map in AGO. Each water source area blob had a popup with the 'Did You Know' information from the "Journey of Water" website.

On the home page main map, volunteers added national parks and hiking trails that could be interesting for the public. Partners who contributed to the "Journey of Water" were also added to the story map.

Volunteers added metadata to all the items in AGO and added the following tags to all items plus individual tags; WWF-SA, Journey of Water, WWF, GLOBIL, StoryMap, Africa, Water, South Africa. The 8% of South Africa's Land Area Provides 50% of its surface Water image was used as the item thumbnail. All the items had the following tags WWF, GLOBIL, Story Map, Africa, Water, South Africa and additional item specific tags. For the Access and Use constraints, they added that the data and information may only be used for non-commercial purposes, and WWF retains no liability for errors. All the data sources were given credit too. Information was added to the summary and description to explain the items, which also included a link to the story map journal and the PDF report -
 http://www.journeyofwater.co.za/files/wwf_sa_watersource_area10_lo.pdf. This would provide enough information for WWF to know what items were used in the story map and would also allow users to find individual maps and apps and easily access the full story map.

Once a final review on the design and the content of the story map was completed, all items in AGO were made public. Full documentation and a detailed status report was provided to WWF-SA throughout the project. The Story Map can be accessed from here.