GISCorps February Newsletter

February 2008

Other Organizations

URISA

GISCorps Partner Agencies

EWB

GSDI

MMEX

UNDP

UNHCR

UNJLC

VVAF

Volunteers for Prosperity

Relief Agency Links

Relief Web
global hub for time-critical humanitarian information on Complex Emergencies and Natural Disasters

Data/Information Links

Earthwatch Institute
Earthwatch Institute is an international non-profit

A Message from the Core Committee

Volunteers and Friends of the GISCorps

GISCorps has a plan to offer more opportunity to our volunteers

If you are registered as a GISCorps volunteer chances are you are still waiting for an opportunity to serve. Let me report on how the Core Committee is working to increase those opportunities.

GISCorps represents a vast pool (more than 1,100) of ready and willing professionals who share a strong commitment to public service and to caring for the disadvantaged, preserving the environment, and making communities and regions better places to live. The GIS profession is comprised of people with a unique technological expertise and with idealistic visions for a better world. GISCorps is connecting these committed volunteer professionals to non-profit and governmental agencies around the world.

With the help of our dedicated volunteers, partner agencies serving communities in need, and those who have donated funds or their time to these efforts, we have attained success in establishing the program. Some of that success is illustrated in this newsletter and more is provided on our web site. Clearly, our volunteers have made significant contributions to a number of communities around the world.

Yet the potential to do so much more with this vast pool of volunteer talent has been constrained by limited administrative and technological capacity and resources. Thus, we are seeking to expand our program of volunteer assistance dramatically. To do this we are working on several projects, including seeking grants, web and database development, and volunteer development.

Part of the funds we are seeking would enable us to fund travel expenses in limited circumstances. The purpose of the travel funds is to make possible an on-site volunteer project (mission) when the volunteer and the host/sponsoring agency cannot provide sufficient travel funding. Some very worthwhile potential projects have not materialized due to inability to quickly secure needed travel funds. Projects that we will support with travel funds will be evaluated in relationship to other projects and objectives of GISCorps and the availability of funds. Preference will be given to missions with the greatest potential positive impact on the relative deprivation and quality of life of the population to be served by the project. At times travel funds will be made on a loan-basis to prevent delays in responding to time-critical projects. Travel guidelines and reimbursement procedures

are being drafted and will be posted on the GISCorps website once the program is sufficiently funded and operational.

If you think you would like to help with these three activities -- 1) grant research and writing; 2) web and database development and maintenance; or 3) volunteer recruitment -- please contact us. Contact me (m.salling@csuohio.edu) for grant research and writing help and Shoreh Elhami (SElhami@co.delaware.oh.us) for web and database assistance and volunteer recruitment.

Go to the following to read more about these efforts: http://www.giscorps.org/our_volunteers/home.php

In the meantime, we appreciate the continued interest from our volunteers and partners and look forward to facilitating more contributions of our professions' most altruistic and giving members.

GISCorps Core Committee,
Mark Salling, Shoreh Elhami, Dianne Haley, Ingrid Bruce, Kevin Sato

P.S. Please email info@giscorps.org if you want to be removed from this list.

Deployment and Partnership News

Completed Missions:

- **GISCorps Volunteer assists Local 4-H'ers in using GPS/GIS to map Barn Quilts of Sac County, Iowa:** GISCorps volunteer Brandon Haas of NewCom Technologies, Inc. was recruited for a K-12 project in Sac County, Iowa. Brandon provided GIS assistance for a project called Barn Quilts. Read more about the project in here.

- **Five GISCorps Volunteers Geo-Coded Events in Darfur and East Chad:** In July of 2007, GISCorps received a request from Lars Bromley a Project Manager with AAAS to provide five volunteers to help them in geocoding events in Darfur and East Chad. Five volunteers from US and Canada were recruited for this project. They were: Nicholas Hauk from Calgary, Peggy Wu from Pennsylvania, Brian Mladenich from Oregon, Megan Winnenberg from Ohio, and Ryan Kemna from Washington DC. Collectively, they have contributed over 500 hours towards this project. Read more about the project in here.

Missions in Progress:

- **Second project in Hunza Valley of Pakistan:** This project which was launched in October 2007 is still in progress. Carlisle Haworth, a GISCorps volunteer with TRC Solutions Inc. in San Francisco was recruited for this project and his task is to help Bernadette Baird in porting out several ArcGIS feature classes onto Google Earth environment.

- **Healthcare Volunteers:** GISCorps volunteer Tara Athan, from Alternatives to Invasive Species Inc. in California, has been

working on this project since mid November 2007. Read more about the project in here.

New Missions:

- **Mission with iMMAP:** GISCorps was recently contacted by the Information Management & Mine Action Programs (iMMAP). They are interested in working with volunteers who can compile features such as settlement points, transportation, rivers and lakes (complete with attributes) from 405 scanned map sheets in North Korea. This will be a remote mission which means traveling is not required. GISCorps will recruit three volunteers to conduct an initial needs assessment and will then recruit more volunteers to finalize data collection if deemed necessary. Recruitment is now in progress.

- **Mission with the Peace Corps:** GISCorps has been in contact with the Peace Corps in the last few weeks and as a result, they have requested one volunteer to provide GIS training to their D.C. staff in spring of 2008. Recruitment is now in progress.

Read more about completed projects here.
Read more about projects in progress in here.

URISA Announcements
Upcoming Conferences

- **12th Annual GIS/CAMA Technologies Conference**
  February 25-29, 2008 - New Orleans, LA

- **URISA/NENA Addressing Conference (formerly known as the Geospatial Integration for Public Safety Conference**
  April 7-10, 2008 - Portland, OR - Register Today

- **URISA Leadership Academy**
  June 16-20, 2008 - Chicago, IL

- **URISA's 4th Caribbean GIS Conference**
  August 25-29, 2008 - Grand Cayman

- **URISA's 46th Annual Conference**
  October 7-10, 2008 - New Orleans, LA

What's New

- Members of the U.S. National Geospatial Advisory Committee Named
- Now Accepting Applications for 2008 Exemplary Systems in Government Awards
- Abstracts Being Accepted for URISA's Fourth Caribbean GIS Conference
- Latest URISA Salary Survey Now Available
- 2nd Annual Student Paper Competition

Shop for GISCorps Stuff!!

Do you find yourself in need of a new T-shirt, coffee mug, ball cap or tote bag? Do you want to advertise GISCorps and your association with the organization? Well, you are in luck! You can now find various GISCorps items at our online shop at:
http://www.cafepress.com/giscorps

Featured Projects

K-12 - Sac County Barn Quilts Project

GISCorps Volunteer assists Local 4-H'ers in using GPS/GIS to map Barn Quilts of Sac County, Iowa

In September 2007, Carol Ehlers, Northwest 4-H Youth Field Specialist from Iowa State University (ISU) Extension office requested assistance for their Sac County Barn Quilts project. They needed a GIS volunteer to assist their Tech team with software selection, application training and linking the data points to the Sac County Barn Quilts website.

Figure 1: A Barn Quilt in Sac County, Iowa - Photo taken by Barn Quilts

Based on the request, Leeanne Pacatte of GISCorps K-12 team recruited Brandon Haas of NewCom Technologies, Inc. in Des Moines, Iowa and put him in contact with the ISU extension staff in October 2007. In November 2007, the 4-H'ers began discussing the project through utilizing webcast meetings with ISU Extension GIS Specialist, Alan Jensen and GISCorps' Brandon Haas. Two months later all of the needed equipment and volunteers were in place and they conducted a workshop on Saturday, January 28th, 2008. The workshop was attended by 22 Northwest Iowa 4-H Technology Team youth grades 8th through 12th and adults who learned how to use their new found Global

Positioning Systems (GPS) and GIS skills to map Sac County's historic Barn Quilts.

Read more about this project here.

AAAS - Darfur and East Chad Project

GISCorps and the Darfur Event Mapping Initiative

By Nicholas Hauk: Calgary, Peggy Wu: Pennsylvania, Brian Mladenich: Oregon, Megan Winnenberg: Ohio, Ryan Kemna: Washington DC

"Most immediately, this database will be cross-referenced with available archival satellite imagery to try and find images of attacks collected the day the attack occurred. In addition, the dataset will be shared with UN and other inter-governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations as a showcase piece to encourage them to do something similar, ideally with GISCorps help!"

Lars Bromley, Project Manager, AAAS

Figure 1: An overview of the makeshift Krinding encampment in West Darfur.©UNHCR/K.McKinsey (July 2004)

In the latter half of 2007, the GISCorps undertook a project in affiliation with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Known officially as the Darfur Event Mapping Initiative, this is part of an ongoing project started in 2005 by The Science and Human Rights Program of the AAAS and funded by the MacArthur Foundation. GISCorps volunteers were tasked with documenting the physical conflicts and geocoding (the tracking of event locations by obtaining the x-y coordinates) in Darfur, Sudan and Eastern Chad, a region that has seen hundreds of thousands killed, and has left millions displaced.

Five GISCorps volunteers participated in this project. These volunteers include Nicholas Hauk, Ryan Kemna, Brian Mladenich, Megan Winnenberg, and Peggy Wu, and these dedicated folks tackled the project remotely in locations within Canada and the United States. The process featured a thorough inspection of many reports, news flashes, and articles which had been drawn from various media sources, human rights and aid organizations, as well as world and regional government bodies and unions. Primarily, the volunteers were to track incidents of

attack, and provide geo-coordinates associated with the location of that attack.

Information provided for a conflict could vary considerably, as the reports were obtained from various sources and from different standards. Information tracked by the volunteers included the location of the event, the number of people killed or injured, the type of attack and alleged attacker(s), the date of the event, and related source information. Such data was compiled into an Access database via an input form, which can be seen below in figure 2. Having a central database allows researchers to search through the events based on any number of variables the volunteers tracked.

Read more about this project here.