

Minutes of GISCorps Monthly Conference Call –Tuesday July 10th 3:00 PM EST

Present: Shoreh Elhami, Dianne Haley, Mark Salling, Wendy Nelson, Juna Papajorgji.

1. **Financial Report:** The monthly financial report reflected the following:
 - Total expenses in June '07: \$827.40, and since 2003: \$18,045.27.
 - Total contributions in June '07: None and since 2003: \$56,428.76.
 - Total balance as of end of June '07: \$38,383.49.
2. **Subcommittee Reports:**
 - **Website:** Shoreh asked if anyone had any other additions or changes to the MVQ criteria that she had circulated a couple weeks ago. No additions were suggested. She will send the criteria to the web committee so this task can get started. CC also determined that updating the current volunteer database and developing the MVQ is till the top two priorities and the third one is the group email in the back side of the website.

Volunteer validation issue: Juna brought up an issue raised before that the 1,100+ nr of GISCorps enlisted volunteers does not seem to represent the reality. She said that people have been registering to our site for the last 4 years now and we can not presume they continue to be interested. She argued that validating this list is an important issue for the GISCorps as: **a)** it will bring more truthfulness to the program **b)** it will ease internal operations, trimming out un-necessary records numbers. Dianne shared her experience with a group email sent to the whole group for one of the missions, from which she/staff had only gotten a few responses. Juna asked Wendy if URISA staff can help with the validation operation, as a task to be handled over a period of time.

In conjunction with this issue, Juna also proposed that GISCorps incorporates as a routine procedure prior to the recruitment process, a group email to volunteers, to seek their interest, anytime there is a new project. There was general consensus to that except for when a project would produce a large number of responses (Katrina like). CC members discussed avenues for implementing this issue, including Wendy on behalf of her staff, each bringing their views and proposed approaches, which did not fully converge.

At the end, CC members agreed that perhaps the web committee could create another database identical to the current one (but with the additional fields) and replace the current one with the new version on the website. This will occur as soon as an email is sent to the current volunteers to ask them "to come back and sign up with GISCorps again". A deadline will be placed on that email saying that we would no longer use the old database from that date forward and that if they are interested in staying with us as a volunteer, they should re-apply on the new database. The existing database at that point along with the old resumes will be archived for reference purposes. Shoreh will communicate this matter with the web committee. On another note, GreenCube notified Shoreh that the test environment that they had setup for GC was a temporary one and for a permanent one they want to

charge us \$50 per month. At this point, the web committee is looking for a permanent and less expensive option.

- **Publications/Public Relations:**
 - **Volunteer handbook:** Dianne reported that she and Shoreh had revised the handbook and in addition to re-organizing and making additions to include all types of missions, all dynamic information is now moved to an appendix and as links rather than the material itself. She asked that all CC members would send their comments by the following Monday so it can be sent to the final group of reviewers (4 more volunteers) shortly after. After the final review, the document will be posted on the website.
 - **Newsletter:** a newsletter to include an update on all missions, report on ESRI UC activities, and the upcoming URISA conference will be sent out by the end of July.

- **Financial Resources:**
 - **White paper and cover letters & Donor list:** Mark reported that Ray DeLeon and Heather Milton had already started researching various potential donors and are assembling customized cover letters. Shoreh reported that no comments had been made by the Board members thus far about the documents (CC's response to their concerns) that were sent to them last week.

- **Volunteer Development:** Shoreh asked if it would be a good idea to create a page that shows which projects are in the works so visitors can have an idea about activities in progress. All were in agreement. Juna suggested that we use the heading "Project Opportunities" for the page. This topic brought up the general issue of posting projects on the website once again. This is an idea that we have discussed several times in the past and is already in the SOPM and could be pursued after the top three tasks are completed. This would mean that for many of our projects, instead of CC members searching the database for recruitment, volunteers will visit a webpage and declare their availability and that declaration will go to a mail box of sort to be considered by the project manager (more details about this approach is already in the SOPM document though it should be revisited/modified).

- **Partnership** – OCHA in Thailand had sent us an email before the UC and they are interested in forming partnership with us. Shoreh will follow-up.

3. Other:

- **Discussion over providing volunteer services to agencies/projects with large budgets, when directly disclosed to the GISCorps and when not**

As this item was tabled for the end, it was after 4pm and Dianne had left. Juna expressed concern over GISCorps providing volunteer services to agencies with a large budget or to projects based on large budgeted grants. She is concerned that this conflicts with the part of the GISCorps'

mission, which implies provision of services to agencies that can not afford consultant services. She asked of each of the cc members to consider this issue, which she believes important, aware that it is not an easy issue and asking not for opinions right away, nor for any decisions. She wanted to bring attention to this issue, especially for the times when the budget amounts are disclosed by the agencies themselves to the GISCorps, or when the info is very easy to find on the web.

She had spent some time on the web looking for the financial status of several of the agencies to which GISCorps has provided volunteers, mostly to make a case for the issue. She stated that this was not a structured or scrupulous research, but just a straightforward simple google based search. As there was not much time left in the meeting and as Dianne was not there, she promised to follow up with an email on the specific numbers, which are included below.

The following information is not a part of the minutes and was submitted after the call:

- * Service at Sea, 1 million annual budget
- * AIMS, 3 million annual budget
- * UNHCR, 1.2 billion, 650 million for NGOs
- * AAAS, 100k members, 300 staff employees, hard to tell on their overall budget, but for the project for which they asked our help, they have disclosed \$250k grant budget for 3 consecutive years
- * Nature Conservancy, 3200 employees, 5 million in assets only, 1.5 million in donations from ESRI in software...etc

- **Volunteer validation issue:** See above under the Website committee.

4. Deployment related news

- **Pakistan project** (via Bernadette Baird): Shoreh reported that Miguel Garriga and Bernadette Baird have been working together since mid June. More details will be sent as the project progresses.
- **EWB** (KP University): Juna is the selected volunteer for this project but the project has been stalling for quite a while. Shoreh's been trying to get all the arrangements in place for the training to occur in early September but KPU has not been responsive. She'll keep after them and report back.
- **HealthCare Volunteers (HCV):** Dianne reported that it took a long time find a qualified volunteer for this project but that she had just received confirmation from Martin Dresen of Germany who declared his availability for HCV project. The project should get started shortly.
- **ICHHA (International Center for Health and HIV/Aids):** Mark has spoken to Dr. Vishnu-Priya who is interested in getting a volunteer who can teach them how to use/customize ArcPAD. She has said that the assistance doesn't need to come from Georgia necessarily. Wendy said that she could ask the Georgia Chapter to publicize our need and Mark liked the idea. Mark said that Dr. Priya didn't seem to be in great rush though but that he would contact her again.
- **GSDI:** Juna reported that she will start the recruitment process for two projects with Mongolia and West Africa. Both require volunteers with expertise in open source software.

- **AAAS:** Shoreh reported that she had short listed 12 volunteers for this project, nine had responded, and five were finally selected (the other 4 were placed in a wait list since AAAS may ask for more volunteers). The five volunteers will be put in contact with the project manager shortly.
- **TOPP:** Juna reported that she had spoken to Chris Holmes and that their project will begin in mid October. She confirmed with him, that it should not be an issue for the FGDC CAP program, if TOPP did not use the GC administrative overhead budget, but it only used the part budgeted for volunteer travel expenses. She also confirmed with him, that those transactions, could be handled directly from TOPP, with the volunteers. She then briefed the CC that she had followed up on the Boards' Concerns expressed during their meeting while she was not present, and which had remained un-answered. These two concerns based on her phone conversation with Shoreh were: **a)** that FGDC has listed Juna in stead of the GISCorps as the contact person to this project **b)** that the CC or the Board had not gotten a copy of the grant application. She briefed the CC, that **a)** she had no idea whose name FGDC has put as a contact person, but nevertheless, asked them to remove her name and replace it with the GISCorps' name, which they have done. **b)** she found prove that a copy of the grant had gone to both the Board and the CC. She also asked the cc members to write send her their thoughts on this project, as she believes that although no policies of any kind were ever broken, if the Board is not comfortable with this project, GISCorps should withdraw.
- **Ohio Type 3 IMT request:** Dick Kotapish (one of the Katrina volunteers) is interested in getting GC volunteers for an emergency response task force in Ohio (similar to FEMA project) and sent a brief document about the project to Shoreh. Shoreh has forwarded the document to CC and has told him that we could meet with their committee members to learn more about their project and then will evaluate their request.
- **iMMAP request:** iMMAP (formerly VVAF) is interested in building a formal relationship with GISCorps. Shoreh asked if any of the CC members were interested in attending a conference call with their representative, they should let her know.

5. URISA Annual conference related

- **Presentations** (summary of deployed/in-progress missions, K-12; presenters?); room for the F2F meeting: Shoreh asked if all CC members would be interested in presenting at the session and share their experiences with what ever projects they had been involved with since last year. Mark said that he'll do UNHCR and Dianne said that she will share her experience with HCV project. Shoreh will cover Beni's K-12 activities since she won't make it to the conference and will also talk about all other projects that are in the works (a summary). Juna will talk about GSDI projects. Dianne asked if an email could be sent about this presentation and Shoreh will do so. Shoreh asked if we could get room numbers for this presentation and also for the F2F meeting. Wendy will send that information as it becomes available.

Next call: Wednesday August 22nd, 2007 at 10:00 AM to Noon EST