BIODIVERSITY WORKSHOP
October 22, 2007
Summary of Discussion Highlights

Organized by Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program & Selkirk Geospatial Research Centre
Location: Mary's Hall – Selkirk College, Nelson, British Columbia

VISION
- **The existing vision is considered to be too long. A new concise vision should be tied to measurable objectives for further developing the site; a mission statement may also support the vision statement.**
- **A revised vision for the atlas may be:**

  "To positively influence [or provide support to] decision making [processes)]regarding Biodiversity in the Columbia Basin through the provision of integrated geospatial information…"

- To refine the vision further it will be important to know how this Atlas fits in with other similar initiatives to avoid duplication of data.

- This Atlas should be a niche product that presents local data from a variety of existing sources and is searchable from a number of perspectives.

KEY FINDINGS
These key finding are based on a lively discussion amongst 30 attendees. The participants were made up of regional planners, wildlife biologists, fisheries biologists, academia with biodiversity/geography backgrounds, ecologists and GIS Analysts. This group of specialists came from Regional districts, private consulting, NGO organizations, MOF, MOE, ILMB, Parks Canada, DFO, FortisBC, FWCP & academic institutes. Listed below are non-prioritized needs for the Biodiversity Atlas:

Data / Themes / Layers
- A niche for the biodiversity atlas – a local one for landscape level planning

- One-stop shopping - Common use for internet maps is to find data. They are frustrated with looking in multiple places and would like a one-stop shopping experience for data.

- Enhanced searching tools/categories for finding layers, data and reports. Participants would like to be able to search by place name & find all the associated reports for a sub-watershed/river for example. One suggestion was to employ web services to better share and make it easy to query web pages. Another suggestion to use open source data layers and employ WMS. Data could also be presented by ecosystem function.

- Organize data by decisions/topics that we want to influence vs. FWCP project categories

- Don't reinvent what other applications already do; make data accessible regardless of viewer. Avoid replicating data – go to source; use custodial, steward model such as ILMB

- Consider a data model similar to the Community Mapping Network (i.e., "Brad's slide") which accesses multiple data layers and themes through a network of existing databases. This model eliminates the need to update and refresh data and ensures that that Atlas is not duplicating other data sources.

- Identify the users and the decisions we want to influence

- Consider how the Columbia Basin Trust's State of the Basin project could be integrated into this Atlas.

- Representation of the whole land-base not just the biodiversity-rich areas. Show a reality-check of the landscape. Index of interpreted data. Show themes that threaten & influence the biodiversity within the Columbia Basin (terrain – roughness, precipitation, temperature, soil) and other land base activities / policies such as mining, forestry, development, private land, existing reservoirs, dam impacts, historical data showing change over time, policy and regulations national parks etc). Land cover/biodiversity over time
  - Avoid spatial data voids – partner with private licensees, National Parks to fill classically missing data sets

Defining the User

- Isolate and definer the user group by undertaking a user needs analysis. The typical user of the biodiversity atlas is: decision makers or decision making processes.

- Local politicians may need support to interpret the data and consider it fully in decision making

- Interface should be simple and accessible by a range of users with varying technical capabilities.

Collaboration
- Collaboration. For example, participants really want to know whether land is crown or private. Working with the regional districts could meet this need. Get more people involved

- Test the site on "non-geeks"

- Potential exists for students to use the Atlas as an educational tool while supporting further development of the site at the same time (e.g., entering data to the site).

- Regional districts may be able to incorporate data into OCPs.

- Advisory Planning Councils may have data that could be incorporated into the Atlas.

- Could be used by developers

- Private companies / forest licences may have data that could be included in the Atlas. Partnering may result in a positive PR opportunity for the companies.

Marketing / Outreach

- Engage and educate potential user groups (i.e., Regional Districts, Front Counter B.C.) to build awareness of the Atlas.

- Create a Pilot area (to get funding). Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area or Parks Canada are potential pilot project partners.

- Do guerrilla marketing – could we potentially extend the partnership with Selkirk College to task Business students with marketing challenge?

- Involve Students in tasks such as: user need analysis, marketing of site, and outreach

Potential Funding Sources

- Geoconnections, Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC), TD Friends of the Environment, BC Hydro, Shell Canada Environmental Fund, Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, Canadian Institute of Geomatics, and Interior Health Authority.

- Participants willing to write letters of support for funding

- Pursue Funding Opportunities such as Geoconnections, CBT etc.

- Assemble list of achievable objectives (tie them to performance measures) Test to see if the site is really working to improve & maintain biodiversity within the Columbia Basin

No disagreement throughout the discussion.

PRIORIZED LIST OF ACTION ITEMS

Nearing the end of the workshop participants were asked to rank and prioritize by importance a list of actions generated in discussion. The table below shows the group results in order of priority.

Priority	Task	Who?
1	Do a "user analysis" to determine the users' needs. Begin by defining the user and then educating the user about the atlas. College students may be able to help with this analysis / assessment of user needs. Geoconnections may require a user analysis in order to qualify for funding. Explore potential for getting funding to do this analysis. Potential cost = approx. $5000	Ian (SGRC) could involve students in the analysis design and implementation. FWCP could provide support.
2	Identify a project manager who will "drive" the work and coordinate activities. A project manager should be in place no later than April 1, 2008 (start of next fiscal) to ensure development continues in a timely manner. This is a paid position. Geoconnections may fund up to 20% of the manager's wages.	Amy (FWCP) is willing to act as Project Manager if a budget was allocated to cover her time.
3	Form a working group to help move atlas development ahead. This group could help "champion" the atlas and assist with regional meetings, outreach etc.	Ian (SGRC) and Amy (FWCP) will establish a working group.
4	Establish a communications network for workshop participants (and other potential stakeholders / users not in attendance @ Oct. 22 workshop). This may include establishing a blog and / or wiki to facilitate information exchange.	SGRC (Ian) will set up a wiki that will allow users / stakeholders to "talk" online and exchange ideas.
5	Pursue potential funding sources for atlas development. This may include exploring charitable status and / or identifying a partner with charitable status that could apply for funding for specific development tasks.	SGRC can identify and prioritize potential funding sources. Need to determine who will write funding applications
6	Develop an inventory of existing databases and other	

	sites that could be accessed / linked via the atlas / Explore the "doability" of accessing a variety of existing databases via the atlas (referred to as Brad's slide showing the connections to databases accessible via the Community Mapping Network).	
7	Investigate other existing local "grey literature" and data that could be included in the atlas.	
8	Contact regional districts to explore potential partnerships, data sharing / exchanging and or funding opportunities (RDCK, RDEK, RDKB, RDCS) Contact Front Counter BC to explore potential partnerships, communication opportunities, data sharing / exchanging and or funding opportunities.	Meeri Durand is willing to assist with this task.
9	Identify the human resource needs necessary to achieve the development opportunities discussed on Oct. 22. Consider the opportunities for college students and consultants to be involved.	
10	Identify potential pilot projects. Pick a pilot project. Do it. Expand the atlas incrementally. Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area (CVWMA) or Kootenay Lake may be potential pilot areas.	
11	Hold more "biotizer" events (i.e., create informal opportunities for interested users and stakeholders to meet and discuss the atlas etc.).	
12	Link data to the source (e.g., a report) so that data collection methods, how the data can be used / cannot be used is clear. Consider a disclaimer on the data to minimize the potential for the data being misinterpreted.	