

USGS VGI Workshop
Volunteer Management Breakout Session
1/12/2010 --- 13:30

Will Craig - National States Geographic Information Council
Andrea Johnson - U.S. Census Bureau
Nama Budhathoki - University of Illinois
Jenny Runion - USGS NGIS Board of Geographic Name
Bob Ridke - USGS
Major William Schouviller - US Marine Corps GEOINT Office
Casey McCullar - TeleAtlas
Mark Demulder - USGS, National Geospatial Program
Jay Donnelly - USGS National Atlas
Joel Cline - NOAA
David Terril - USGS
Doug Blankenship - U.S. Department of the Interior
Talbot Brooks - Delta State University
Debra Polen - USGS
Doug Coleman - University of New Brunswick – Session Facilitator
Morgan Bearden – USGS – Session Recorder

SUMMARY

Major Points & Recommendations

- Provide a “career ladder for volunteers
- Feedback, appreciation, and recognition should be as immediate as possible
- Keep in mind the motivators that have been identified via relevant research
- Seek to elevate the effort to a nationally recognized “grand challenge”
- Citizen volunteers like to work on their own neighborhoods – a feeling of ownership and accomplishment
- Create clear, concise goals and position descriptions for volunteers
- Take advantage of increasing availability of GPS technology in both cell phones and automobiles – no longer need a dedicated device
- Entice volunteers to perform the more difficult tasks by making them interesting or competitive.

NOTES – sort of a “best of my ability” transcript of what was said

Attracting & Sustaining Volunteers

Talbot Brooks: Hierarchical model acknowledgement for time & effort & praise

Bob Ridkey: make it worthwhile

Identifying the stake holder

Major William Schouviller: Make the user the volunteer

Andrea Johnson: municipalities who contribute information – street and boundary.
Citizen being sort of a watchdog who will be sure that their “sub division is within the data”

Mark Demulder: motivating individuals - Nama’s list of motivators – brand of USGS
What do we want from volunteers – what do they want to give?
Council on geo name authorities reported one volunteer logged 18,000 miles

Talbot Brooks: data credit? for volunteers. Different question – why aren’t they volunteering? Liability?

David Coleman: thank you and immediate response to comments

TomTom: best contributor is an airline pilot! Attempt to recruit Road Warriors?

Bob Ridkey: GRAND CHALLENGE - need for a great national endeavor such as our original mapping efforts, the Genome Project, etc – try to capture the imagination of the public to get behind the effort.

Joel Cline: our volunteers stay put! Stable observations – need them everyday. Everyday until they die. National movement 40-55% turnover in 15 years
Numbers decreasing 200 per year 10250 sites today - 14,500 at peak.

Talbot Brooks: volunteer fireman life 2 ½ years – little support due to budget lack of respect or acknowledgement.

Will Craig: Does NOAA recruit? Joel Cline: 122 local offices look at maps of needed coverage and try to fill holes weather observation has turned into CLI MATE due to long term measurements. At times they have knocked on doors. They recruit volunteers rather than wait for volunteers to show up.

Make equipment easy to use during “vacation” – cell phone technology? Could make volunteering easier and more appealing.

David Coleman: have we tried to guide the volunteer?

Robert Ridkey: Reinforcement and recognition of work being done.

Joel Cline: long term precision TV station stations got started when the NWS got automated --- Humans better than automated systems

Talbot Brooks: toughest job and be competitive – good part of town/bad part of town

Morgan Bearden: quads vs. openness and flexibility of web-based approach

David Terrill: different kinds – employ students and another recruitment of organizations to help with bathy project

How to define a task that can be achieved?

Recruit good volunteers?

Manage results, cover gaps?

Jenny Runion: completeness? Adjacent quads? How many old USGS employees

Adopt a stream – name a stream to Protect it – citizens need a name to identify and rally around

Will Craig: locals may have a name for a feature but the name never was made official

Doug Blankenship: fundament to position description to make the description as good as possible and specific. Create it – Market it – expectations should be known and clear

Jay Donnelly: managing the expectations of volunteers. tips & tricks to being responsive

How to create a self-sustaining program that can weather budgeting issues.

David Terril: Two types of participants: short and long-term – bathy crew. Add a road – short term volunteer for simple vs. bathymetry which would require a long term commitment.

Talbot Brooks: Volunteer's personal achievement – like a firefighter, “I saved that house” is like “I added that street.” Volunteers take pride in their contributions and like to be able to point to them.

Robert Ridkey: what is a volunteer? Where does it come from institutional volunteer or a true single volunteer?

Talbot Brooks: sustainability of volunteer – gets them young, develop their skills and interest

Major William Schouviller: in the military, we have “mandatory volunteer” who have significant new data to contribute

David Terrill: go through existing volunteers to find new volunteers – word of mouth among friends and acquaintances

Casey McCullar: a frequent question from the volunteers will be, “what's in it for me?” the program should be able to provide an answer

Joel Cline: We recognize our volunteers with hats, lapel pins, decals, length of service awards

Will Craig: public participation in the city - alley walkers call in violations got a cleaner and better neighborhood

Don Blankenship: DOI actually had to turn away people who were willing to pay their own way to a Washington, DC recognition ceremony

A major key to success is to put a program in place that is really vetted and supported from on high

Robert Ridkey: know what you are doing and be organized – look to established organizations that use volunteers: Habitat for Humanity, local energy audits, Audubon, etc.

Don Blankenship: enable volunteer to matriculate up – provide a person a chance to be a leader in a field they are interested in.

Talbot Brooks: opportunity for advancement – recognition and support from top down

Will Craig: different level of provider – quality – reliability of volunteer – level of volunteer title

Nama Budhathoki: see something missing and the good feeling of accomplishing it.

David Coleman: grand dream similar for imagery for every quad, up to date within 60 days