

SSGIC

General Meeting

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Sequoia National Forest Headquarters - Porterville, CA

Participants

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Overview

The Southern Sierra Geographic Information Cooperative (SSGIC) is an interagency cooperative with five primary stakeholder agencies, Bakersfield BLM, CDF-Tulare unit, Kern Co. Fire Dept., Sequoia National Forest, and Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks. The project's primary goal is to develop a landscape scale framework for interagency fire management planning. Initiated with Joint Fire Sciences Program (JFSP) grant funding, which ended in 2002, the SSGIC continues to support this goal. The focus of this meeting included 1) setting a course for the SSGIC program with respect to the Southern Sierra Fire Management Officers (SSFMO) group, the Fire Program Analysis (FPA) system, and the United States Geological Survey, Rocky Mountain Mapping Center (USGS-RMMC), and 2) review of and feedback on recent data development. *Action items are in italics.*

Accomplishments

Anne Birkholz reviewed recent SSGIC accomplishments.

- ArcGIS training - SSGIC presented a three day ArcGIS course on April 13-15, 2004. It included an afternoon session on using the SSGIC website. There were 12 attendees representing six agencies held in the computer lab of the Bakersfield BLM field office. The ArcGIS course was developed by the NPS and modified by instructor Karen Folger to use local data and fire related scenarios in the course material. Anne Birkholz assisted in presenting the course. Feedback on the course was positive.
- ArcIMS training – Anne Birkholz presented a one day training session for the ArcIMS managers in each agency. This was also held in the Bakersfield BLM field office computer lab and attended by Craig French, Chuck Dickson, Larry Vredenburgh and Orlando Raez.
- Data development – SSGIC has moved forward on acquiring and updating numerous data layers and these are reviewed briefly below.

Program Direction

SSGIC sought member suggestions for ways the program might better meet user needs. Feedback included the need to develop and provide additional web-based help support on the SSGIC web site to make it easier to find and use products. *Anne Birkholz will implement this support.* The need for SSGIC to focus on local issues and enter a production mode was identified. Specific suggestions included maintaining several readily derived and useful datasets such as the age of chaparral stands based on the FRID's interim dataset Time Since Last Fire.

There was significant discussion on the direction SSGIC should move in its relationship with other groups including the SSFMO's, the Southern Sierra FPA prototype, the USGS RMMC, and local FireSafe councils. The potential Homeland Security risk associated with making fire analysis data public on the website was also discussed.

Southern Sierra Fire Management Officers – The SSFMO group includes the FMO's of the federal land management agencies in the southern Sierra Nevada. This includes the three federal agencies of the SSGIC and the four agencies to the north (Sierra, Inyo, and Stanislaus national forests and Yosemite national park). The SSFMO has proposed working with the SSGIC on several projects including a Wildland Fire Use (WFU) map service, download capability for Farsite datasets, display of EBAM data, and live video of remote cameras tracking air quality. The potential for expanding the SSGIC to a larger geographic area to include these agencies was re-considered. It was reiterated that the SSGIC does not have the resources to expand geographically. However, a joint WFU map service would be useful to both groups and within the scope of existing SSGIC capability. *The SSGIC will present a rough proposal for the development of a WFU map service at the SSFMO meeting scheduled for May 18, 2004. It will include funding needs, a business process for maintaining the currency of the data, a timeframe for implementation by the 2004 fire season, and options to include only WFU fires and all fires.*

USGS Rocky Mountain Mapping Center – The SSGIC web server is located at and maintained by the USGS RMMC in Denver, CO. The existing agreement for this support expires August 8, 2004. *SSGIC will negotiate a new five year agreement to continue support for the server.* Proposed funding for this agreement includes:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>
Server IT support	\$10,000 annually	FPA funds, SSGIC agencies
New server & disc space	\$10,000	FPA funds or SSFMO group
Application development	\$10,000	SSFMO group

The application development funds for the first year will support development of the WFU map service and migration to the new server. Any additional development funds would support implementing extract services to provide "clip & ship" functionality for data downloads. It is anticipated that the need for application development would be ongoing and require additional funding each year.

Southern Sierra FPA Prototype – A status report on the FPA program was presented. The IBM group was not successful getting initial runs on the Southern Sierra dataset at the April 5-9, 2004 meeting in Boulder, CO. There are still unresolved issues relating to Fire Management Unit (FMU) definitions and the use of multiple workload points. Fire Planning Units (FPU) have been defined for the entire state of California. The \$60,000 FY 2004 funding for the Southern Sierra prototype from

FPA has still not been transferred to a SEKI account. BLM has requested \$5,000 for travel and the Sequoia national forest has requested \$33,500 for Diane Travis' salary and travel. We still need to determine how much will be obligated to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and the Tule River Reservation for FPA-related travel. Any remaining funds will be directed to USGS RMMC for web server support and the new re-negotiated USGS-NPS support agreement.

FireSafe councils – The development of enhancements to the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) dataset spurred a discussion on the potential for involving the local FireSafe councils in the development process. Both Kern County Fire Department and the Sequoia National Forest already work closely with the FireSafe councils. Additionally, seeking involvement from one public domain group would require involvement with many public groups. The decision was to maintain the status quo and consider the FireSafe councils end users.

Data security – Several recent news articles have highlighted the potential use of wildfires by terrorists to weaken the US economy. Some SSGIC fire analysis and mapped information could potentially be a homeland security risk. We discussed the need for password protection of all map services displaying analysis results. Pros and cons were presented weighing the risk of SSGIC analysis products being used for destructive purposes against the cons of restricting access to outside users and the inconvenience of requiring a password. A decision was made to provide password protection for all analysis map services. A guest password, which will expire regularly, will also be created to distribute to outside users. *Anne Birkholz will implement this.*

Data Development Review

Orlando Raez has worked on the development of several SSGIC datasets which are ready for review.

Ignition Points – Work on an updated ignition dataset was done in conjunction with the FPA effort to minimize duplication of effort. SSGIC was provided with an ignition dataset based on 1202 records imported with PCHA for the federal agencies within the FPA analysis area (Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks, Sequoia National Forest, Bakersfield BLM field office, and Tule River Reservation). Current Kern County Fire Dept. and CDF datasets were added as well as existing Sierra and Inyo national forest datasets. This combined dataset is now available for review in the FOA Analysis map service. The current version of PCHA does not import the FireType field of the 1202 database which would be very useful for identifying duplicate fires. An updated version of PCHA, due out within the next month, will import FireType. *The SSGIC will wait for this version to re-import the ignition data before proceeding to evaluate the combined dataset.*

Fire Management Datasets – The need for a map service of fire management lines was identified. These include the State Responsibility Areas (SRA's), Direct Protections Areas (DPA's), Response Areas, Mutual Aid boundaries, FPA Fire Management Units (FMU's) , budget related FMU's, planning document related management units, etc. We identified a need to develop a business processes for updating fire management lines including notifying people when updates have been completed. *The SSGIC will develop a map service of these boundaries.*

Enhanced Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Related datasets – There is an ongoing need to develop enhanced WUI related datasets. At the previous meeting, Larry Vredenburg presented his work linking Kern County parcel data to assessor's property improvement values to identify parcels with structures and/or residences. Tulare and Fresno counties have been

added to this dataset and a map service is now available under “Fire Related Maps” displaying parcels in these counties with land improvement values greater than \$0. Each county also has a “Use Code” which will allow better discrimination of what the actual land improvement is. These codes have been obtained for Kern and Tulare counties. SSGIC is negotiating with Fresno to obtain their use codes. Once obtained, this information will be used to further refine the identification of parcels with improvements to discriminate between non-structure improvements, structure improvements, and residences. Aaron Gelobter noted that the WUI for the forest is defined by the forest dataset and additional SSGIC datasets should be clearly distinguished from the dataset tied to the Forest Plan

An updated Threatened WUI dataset developed by CDF’s Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) is available in the same draft map service. A preliminary evaluation of this data indicates that it is a more robust dataset than the previous version. It is a complex dataset with several attributes of interest.

Special Management Zones (SMZ) – Several years ago each agency of the SSGIC identified additional agency specific datasets of importance that were not included in the original set of SSGIC integrated datasets. These were referred to as Special Management Zones. The SSGIC has obtained many of these datasets and developed three draft map services displaying this information. The thematic groupings identified are:

- Designated boundaries
- Planning areas
- Habitat
- Cultural
- Geology
- Invasive species
- Infrastructure
- Research

There was consensus that the basic organization was good and confirmed the value of these datasets. The term Special Management Zones already has specific meaning to the forest and it was suggested we find an alternate name. *SSGIC is soliciting alternative suggestions for ways to group or organize these datasets.* Air basins were identified as a new layer that needs to be added to this database. Each group also needs to be defined to clarify the data each holds. Distribution of these datasets will be in geodatabases. Geodatabases are the new data format or container for spatial data supported by ArcGIS.

Three new draft Fire Related map services are available on the website. The lists below include the data currently available in each one. *Any feedback either on the organization of files into these three services or suggestions on additional datasets to include are welcome.*

- Designated Boundaries –
 - Wild and Scenic Rivers (KNP & SQF)
 - Public Conservations and Trust areas
 - Sequoia National Monument
 - Air Basins
- Planning Areas –
 - Areas of Critical Concern (BBD)
 - Wilderness Study Areas (BBD)

- Inholdings (KNP)
- Proposed Wilderness (KNP)
- Aquatic Refuges (SQF)
- Critical Aquatic Refuges (SQF)
- Fisher Conservation Areas (SQF)
- Old Forests (SQF)
- Roadless/Rare II (SQF)
- Sensitive Species Habitat –
 - Invasive Species (KNP)
 - Sensitive Species (KNP)
 - Meadows (KNP)
 - Meadows (SQF)
 - Owl PACS (SQF)
 - Willow Flycatcher Habitat (SQF)

Fuels and vegetation – Karen Folger updated the group on the status of the new vegetation map being developed by the USFS Region 5 Remote Sensing Lab. It should be available the week of May 10, 2004. *Once the new vegetation map is available, Karen will meet with key fuels specialists from the agencies to develop a fuels crosswalk from the new vegetation map to Anderson fuel model codes to create a consistent fuels map across the southern Sierra Nevada.* For all agencies outside of Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks, fuels will be predicted from the CalVeg codes in the new vegetation map. For the Parks, this will require additional cross-walking to the old park vegetation classes and the National Vegetation Classification System (NVCS) utilized in the current, partially completed vegetation mapping project. Updating the Fire Return Departure Interval (FRID) analysis will require developing an updated Fire Return Interval (FRI) table based on the CalVeg codes represented in the SSGIC analysis area. *Tony Caprio will develop this crosswalk.*

Land Status – There are a number of issues related to updating the Land Status datasets which are outside the scope of the SSGIC to resolve including migration from datum NAD27 to NAD83, implementation of GCDB coordinates, land survey issues, etc. The updated SSGIC land status layer includes the updated BLM land status, and two corrections to Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks.

Hiking Trails – Orlando Ruez has updated the draft hiking trails dataset presented at the last meeting based on the feedback he received. If there is no further feedback, this will become part of the corporate dataset.