

gis corner

The Western and Southeast Regions recently held GIS workshops. The Western Region workshop, held in Tucson last August, looked at the practice and prospects of GIS implementation in Arizona parks. Subsequently, the Arizona parks GIS steering committee met in Flagstaff in January to discuss the workshop's findings and make recommendations to management for implementing GIS technology in Arizona (and neighboring) parks. Principal recommendations were (1) to examine mechanisms for providing technical GIS support to Arizona parks; (2) to investigate the possibility of procuring UNIX workstations through a consolidated procurement action; (3) to explore the possibility of standardizing the classification of all GIS themes; (4) to examine DOS-based GIS alternatives (for use by smaller parks); and (5) for GISD to take a stronger role in setting standards, guidelines, and policy.

The Atlanta workshop looked at GIS implementation throughout the Southeast Region. As in the Tucson workshop, Park Service and other-agency GIS implementations were explored, including a demonstration of GRASS. Recommendations on the Region's strat-

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egy and approach to GIS included: (1) strengthening coordination, goal-setting, and policy; (2) recognizing the need for both an agency-wide and Regionwide "corporate" data base; (3) recognizing the need for centralized support for the use of GIS technology, including both policy and technical matters; (4) establishing a major role for technical GIS support in the Southeast Regional Office; (5) establishing a uniform classification for vegetation mapping throughout the NPS; (6) recognizing that larger parks can assist smaller parks in using GIS technology; (7) demonstrating the utility of the technology to upper management by showing its long-term cost effectiveness and positive contribution to decision-making; (8) strengthening GISD's role in setting standards for data, classification, hardware, and software; and (9) publishing a Servicewide GIS newsletter.

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February 6-8 the GIS Division gave its first training course on *GIS for Managers*. About two dozen NPS managers and superintendents attended. The course covered the nature and use of GIS technology, staffing, hardware, software, funding, uses, and institutional considerations for implementation within NPS. Lively discussion covered barriers to implementation. Attendees went away with an understanding of the technology, the realities of implementation, and steps they might pursue to institutionalize its use within the Service.

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Resource Technology 90 (RT 90): I am putting together about four sessions (of eight papers each) dealing with GIS (and related) technology in parks and protected areas. A number of international parks are represented. **The conference has been officially authorized as an NPS training opportunity.** Accordingly, you may attend as a course trainee, rather than as a meeting attendee. A formal training announcement will be issued this spring.

Gary Waggoner of our office points out that GIS people around the Service have begun to publish and present professional papers about their park GIS applications and experiences . . . a sure sign that GIS in the Service is growing up – that it is beginning to be perceived as a routine management tool. In the interest of improved communications, Gary encourages everyone preparing such papers to send a copy to us, so it can be mentioned in this column.

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