

For: State Offices

Service Center Agencies (SCA) National Geospatial Workshop

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



1 Overview

A Background

FSA, with partner agencies NRCS and RD, has committed to the USDA goal of one-stop service at the county-based Service Centers. Geographic Information System (GIS) is an essential part of this goal.

FSA continues to work with its sister agencies to create a Common Computing Environment (CCE):

- by coordinating hardware, software, and data acquisition
- through joint development initiatives such as the Geospatial Data Warehouse project, telecommunication upgrades, and security measures
- through establishment of joint agency teams such as the State Geodata Teams who are responsible for provisioning and maintaining geodata on State and Service Center servers
- by developing joint customized GIS training where appropriate and coordinating off-the-shelf training acquisition when customization is not necessary
- through development and publication of common standards and appropriate supporting policy. An example is the SCA Geodata Handbook that provides naming conventions and data management standards.

Disposal Date	Distribution
November 1, 2003	State Offices

Notice CM-467

1 Overview (Continued)

B Purpose

SCA will hold a National Geospatial Workshop on June 9 through 13, 2003, to support coordinated GIS operations and data provisioning in the field. The workshop, sponsored by the SCA National GIS Team, will provide comprehensive training for State Office staff from all 3 agencies involved in GIS implementation.

This notice:

- announces the National Geospatial Workshop (Workshop)
- notifies SED of who should attend
- provides the workshop program
- instructs participants to register on the SCA GIS website for the training
- provides travel authorization for the training session
- provides contact information for additional information.

2 National Geospatial Workshop

A About the Workshop

FSA State Offices are pivotal to the implementation of a nationwide GIS. It is imperative that they understand the steps that are required to successfully complete implementation within FSA and their responsibilities within the framework of SCA, particularly the State SCA Geodata Team. All Workshop sessions are geared towards supporting a more effective and coordinated GIS implementation.

B State Geodata Teams

In June 2002, the National Food and Agriculture Council (FAC) directed State FAC's to establish teams that would be responsible for provisioning and maintaining geospatial data (geodata) on the network servers in Service Centers. These State Geodata Teams were to be made up of representatives from all 3 agencies. Recommended team members were State GIS Specialists, State GIS Coordinators, or staff holding similar or complementary positions. Because State Office Information Technology (IT) and GIS staff need to work closely together for geodata provisioning to be successful, IT staff from all 3 agencies were also to be named to the teams.

Generally speaking, most FSA SED's named the GIS Coordinator and one IT staff person to represent FSA on the Geodata Team. In some situations, other staff were also named to assist or share responsibilities.

2 National Geospatial Workshop (Continued)

C Who Should Attend

Each State is expected to send four SCA Geodata Team members to the workshop, one GIS representative from each agency and one IT staff member that will represent the IT community of all 3 agencies.

FSA SED's shall:

- nominate a State GIS staff member to represent FSA at the workshop
- meet with other members of the State FAC and, in a joint decision, nominate one IT staff person to represent the State IT community.

Note: If the State FAC selects staff from an agency other than FSA to attend as the IT representative, SED may elect to send an FSA IT staff person in addition to the State FAC selection. However, the FSA State Office will be responsible for assuming travel costs for this individual.

D Workshop Program

The Workshop will offer a varied group of sessions over the period of 4 days. It will begin with 2 pre-meeting sessions on June 9 and 10, and conclude with Agency-specific breakout sessions on June 13. Brief descriptions of the sessions are provided as follows.

Pre-Meeting Sessions - June 9 and 10, 2003

- **GIS Fundamentals for Program Managers.** This course will be held before the workshop starts, beginning Monday, June 9 at 1 p.m. and concluding Tuesday, June 10 at noon. The course is open to all participating Geodata Team Members and will provide them with the opportunity to preview a basic GIS course that is being developed by the SCA GIS Team for national distribution.

The intended audience for *GIS Fundamentals for Program Managers* is joint agency program managers and specialists at the State and National levels that have no prior GIS experience. The one-day course will provide students with a basic understanding of GIS and give them an answer to the question, "What can GIS do for me in my job?" The GIS Team plans to deploy this training in late summer 2003 to each State. When offered to the States, this course will be provided in a "Train the Trainer" format that will enable States to provide additional sessions of the course to State and County Office staff as appropriate.

2 National Geospatial Workshop (Continued)

D Workshop Program (Continued)

FSA GIS staff attending the workshop are directed to attend this course. As the GIS Coordinators for their State, they will be expected to assist the SCA trainer when this course is held locally and to coordinate and/or provide additional sessions of the course in their State as required.

- **Customer Service Toolkit (CST) Coordinators Meeting.** This is an informational meeting for NRCS CST Coordinators. It will begin on Monday, June 9 at 1 p.m. and conclude Tuesday, June 10 at noon.

General Session - June 10 and 11, 2003

The General Session launches the workshop and provides a context for the breakout sessions that will take place during the remainder of the week. The General Session will begin at 1 pm. on June 10. Scott Charbo, USDA Chief Information Officer, will be the keynote speaker. CCE and Data Management Team Leaders will provide project updates and representatives from all 3 agencies will discuss GIS data acquisition and ongoing application development. Geodata team members from selected States will provide State geodata plans, best practices, and lessons learned. The General Session will conclude Wednesday, June 11, at noon.

GIS Workshop on Analyzing Precision Agriculture Data - June 10, 2003 Elective Evening Course

From 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. on June 10, Joe Berry, Berry and Associates, will offer an elective course to Workshop participants entitled *Analyzing Precision Agriculture Data*. This course is voluntary and noncompulsory; participants choosing to attend this course will do so on personal time.

More details about this course can be found on Workshop Agenda in the SCA website at <http://www.gis.sc.egov.usda.gov>. Pre-registration is required for this course to ensure enough materials are available. **A \$25.00 charge for course materials will be taken at the door.** Course attendees can receive reimbursement by itemizing this cost in miscellaneous expenses on the travel voucher for this trip.

Working Luncheon - June 11, 2003

Guest speaker Joe Berry, Berry and Associates, will present *Precision Agriculture: Brief History, Current Realities and Probable Future Directions*. Lunch will be provided. Participants that have special dietary requirements must notify staff at the SCA registration booth when signing in on June 9 or June 10.

2 National Geospatial Workshop (Continued)

D Workshop Program (Continued)

Breakout Sessions - June 11 and 12, 2003

Four different breakout sessions will be held on June 11 and 12. The breakout sessions, held concurrently in a round robin fashion, are divided into 2 series, *SCA Geospatial Information* and *Collecting and Managing Geospatial Data*. The breakouts will begin at 1:30 p.m. on June 11 and conclude at 11:30 a.m. on June 12.

GIS and Global Positioning System (GPS) Demonstrations - June 12, 2003

Booths will be set up “trade-show” style from 12:30 to 5:30 p.m. on June 12 to demonstrate different GIS and GPS applications. ArcView Tips and Tricks, Imagery, Remote Sensing, Resource Data Gateway, Agency Applications, and ESRI Product Demos are just a few of the different booths that will be available.

General Session - June 13, 2003

On Friday, June 13, Workshop participants will reconvene as a single group at 8 a.m. Topics of this general session include SCA GIS Training Plan, GIS Software Help Desk Support, ESRI Product Development Futures, and the SCA GIS/GPS Road Ahead.

Agency Specific Breakouts - June 13, 2003

The Workshop will close with Agency Specific Breakout Sessions that begin at 10:45 a.m. and conclude at 12:30 p.m.

E Workshop Pre-Registration, On-Site Registration, and Training Forms

Participants shall register for the pre-workshop course (*Fundamentals of GIS*) and, for the main Workshop, and can elect to register for Analyzing Precision Agriculture Data, on-line at <http://www.gis.sc.egov.usda.gov>. To navigate to the registration page, select *Events* from the main menu, then select *USDA Service Center Agencies National Geospatial Workshop*. All participants **must register by May 16, 2003**.

An SCA registration booth will be set up at the Workshop on Monday, June 9, and on Tuesday morning, June 10. All participants must sign-in and pick-up badges. Workshop name badges will indicate all courses and sessions the participant has registered for or is assigned to.

2 National Geospatial Workshop (Continued)

E Workshop Pre-Registration, On-Site Registration, and Training Forms (Continued)

Participants or the State Training Officer shall document this training by using the Internet Combined Administrative Management System (ICAMS). The ICAMS course number for:

- the National Geospatial Workshop is “020113”
- *GIS Fundamentals for Program Managers* is “020112”.

If participants wish to have the elective course *Analyzing Precision Agriculture Data* added to their ICAMS training history, they should request it as a non-catalog course in ICAMS, or if the State has not distributed ICAMS to all employees, then they should request it through normal channels.

Participants shall direct questions about processing in ICAMS to:

- their State Training Coordinator
- Bessy Plaza, Training Development Branch, HRD at 202-418-9050
- Joe Hoffman, Training and Development Branch, HRD, at 202-418-9048.

F Travel Authorization

Travel is authorized for FSA State GIS staff and for FSA IT Staff as determined by SED and/or the State FAC. The Houston per diem rate is \$119.00. The Government hotel room rate is \$73.00 or the prevailing government rate for single and double occupancy. Meals and Incidentals Rate (M&IE) is \$46.00. A luncheon will be provided on Wednesday, June 11, and the cost of this Government-provided luncheon (\$11.00) must be subtracted from the M&IE rate of \$46.00

Travel for Federal State Office participants shall be charged to Washington-controlled State Travel Funds.

The Workshop will be held at the Houston InterContinental Hotel. Participants must register for hotel accommodations **no later than Friday May 16, 2003**. Participants shall identify themselves as part of the **USDA-Service Center Agencies National Geospatial Workshop** group. Hotel check-in is 3 p.m., check-out is noon. Participants should contact the hotel for reservations at:

**The InterContinental Houston
2222 West Loop South
Houston, TX 77027
713-627-7600.**

2 National Geospatial Workshop (Continued)

F Travel Authorization (Continued)

The Bush International Airport is recommended for air travel.

Transportation from the airport to the hotel is offered by:

**Express Shuttle USDA
713-523-8888.**

The shuttle leaves 18 minutes after each hour, and the cost is \$22.00 one way, \$15.00 round trip.

Participants shall not plan to depart from Houston until after the Workshop closes at 12:30 p.m. on June 13.

E Contact Information

For questions about this notice or for more information about the Workshop, contact Shirley Hall, GIS Coordinator by:

- e-mail at **Shirley.Hall@wdc.usda.gov**
- telephone at 202-720-3138.