Supporting The Lone GIS Professional

July 14, 2009

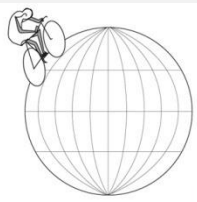**David A. Howes**

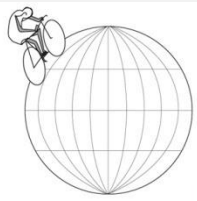**lonegispro@gmail.com**

Agenda

- **Initiative overview**
  - Lone GIS Pro characteristics
  - Goals
  - Activities
  - Observations and considerations
  - Recent conference experience
- **Discussion**

How many of you are already members?

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Initiative Overview

- **Established March 2008**
- **Initial goals:**
  - Consider the plight of the lone GIS professional
  - If their professional experience can be improved, try to help them to be more successful
- **A like-minded user community independent of technology and industry focus**
- **Current membership count: 97**
- **Enthusiasm amongst members high**
- **Strong potential for growth**

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Lone GIS Pro Characteristics

- **Full-time GIS professional**
- **Part-time GIS professional with other responsibilities**
- **Professional in another field using GIS to manage, analyze & present data**
- **Significant portion of GIS community**
- **Diverse knowledge, innovative & creative work products**
- **Many globes to juggle**
- **Increasing expectations, skill requirements**
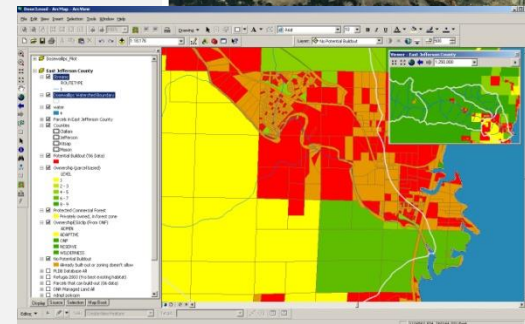
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Lone GIS Pro Characteristics

- **Some are happy to be working on their own, some not so happy**
- **Unrealistic expectations are common**
- **Lack of knowledge, confidence**
- **Need for peer review**
- **Tendency to feel overwhelmed**
- **Insufficient recognition**

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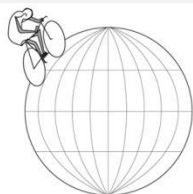
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Initiative Goals

- **Help each other be more successful**
- **Foster interaction & collaboration (web resources, local events, direct contact)**
- **Emphasize multi-disciplinary thinking (someone in another discipline may know just what you need)**
- **Develop customized training materials**
- **Filter information**
- **Share knowledge & experience (positive & negative)**
- **Serve as mentors**
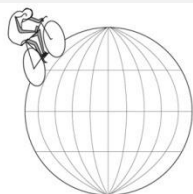
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Initiative Goals (2)

- **Provide collective feedback for vendors & organizations, such as ESRI, WA URISA**

  Help focus activities

- **Lobby for access to resources (e.g., remote access to conferences)**

- **Collaborate with & complement other organizations (e.g., CUGOS)**

- **Promote participation in professional organizations**

- **Encourage giving of instructional presentations**
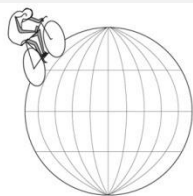
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Presentations This Week

- **Versatile Map Production: The Value of .NET and ArcObjects –** *David Howes*
  - Cartography and Map Production/Database-Driven Cartography
  - Wednesday 8-30 am-9:45 am
  - Room 23 B
- **The Stemilt-Squilchuck Community Vision -** *Matt Stevenson*
  - Ecology and Conservation/GIS for Landscape Planning and Inventory
  - Wednesday 10:15 am-11:30 am
  - Room 32 B

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http://groups.google.com/lonegispro

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Events

- **2008**
  - Washington GIS Conference Session (~70 attendees)
  - ESRI International User Conference Special Interest Group (SIG) Meeting (~45 attendees)
- **2009**
  - ESRI Developer Summit SIG Meeting (~45 attendees)
  - Washington GIS Conference Session (~50 attendees)
  - ESRI International User Conference SIG Meeting – July 14, 2009
- **Local gatherings**
  - Four so far in Seattle area
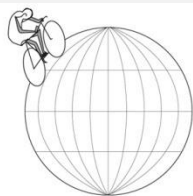
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Observations & Considerations

- **Let group take its natural course**
- **Community is valuable**
- **Trust is critical**
- **Level of participation high**
  - To what extent should we insist on contributions?
- **Group posts often well thought out (strong effort)**
- **Diverse type of member – alternative perspectives useful**
- **New membership protocol**
  - Invitations by existing members
  - Recruitment at meetings
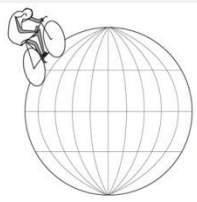
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Observations & Considerations (2)

- **How do we encourage greater participation?**
- **How do you know whether someone read your post?**
- **How important is it that you know some basic background information about other members?**
  - Does anyone look at user profiles?
  - Have you completed yours?

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Washington GIS Conference Experience

- **Presentations**
  - **A Lone GIS Pro Profile –** *Gretchen Peterson, PetersonGIS*
  - **Lone GIS Collaboration –** *Matt Stevenson, COREGIS*
  - **Reflections on Collaborative Experience –** *Gretchen Peterson & Matt Stevenson*
  - **Resource availability/mentorship options –** *Eric Edlund, Stillwater Sciences*
- **Modes of communication**
  - **Professional:**
    - What is needed? When? What format?
    - How best to work with him/her/them?
  - **Technical:**
    - MXTs, data, fonts, styles, ArcGIS 9.3.1 layer packages
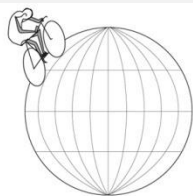
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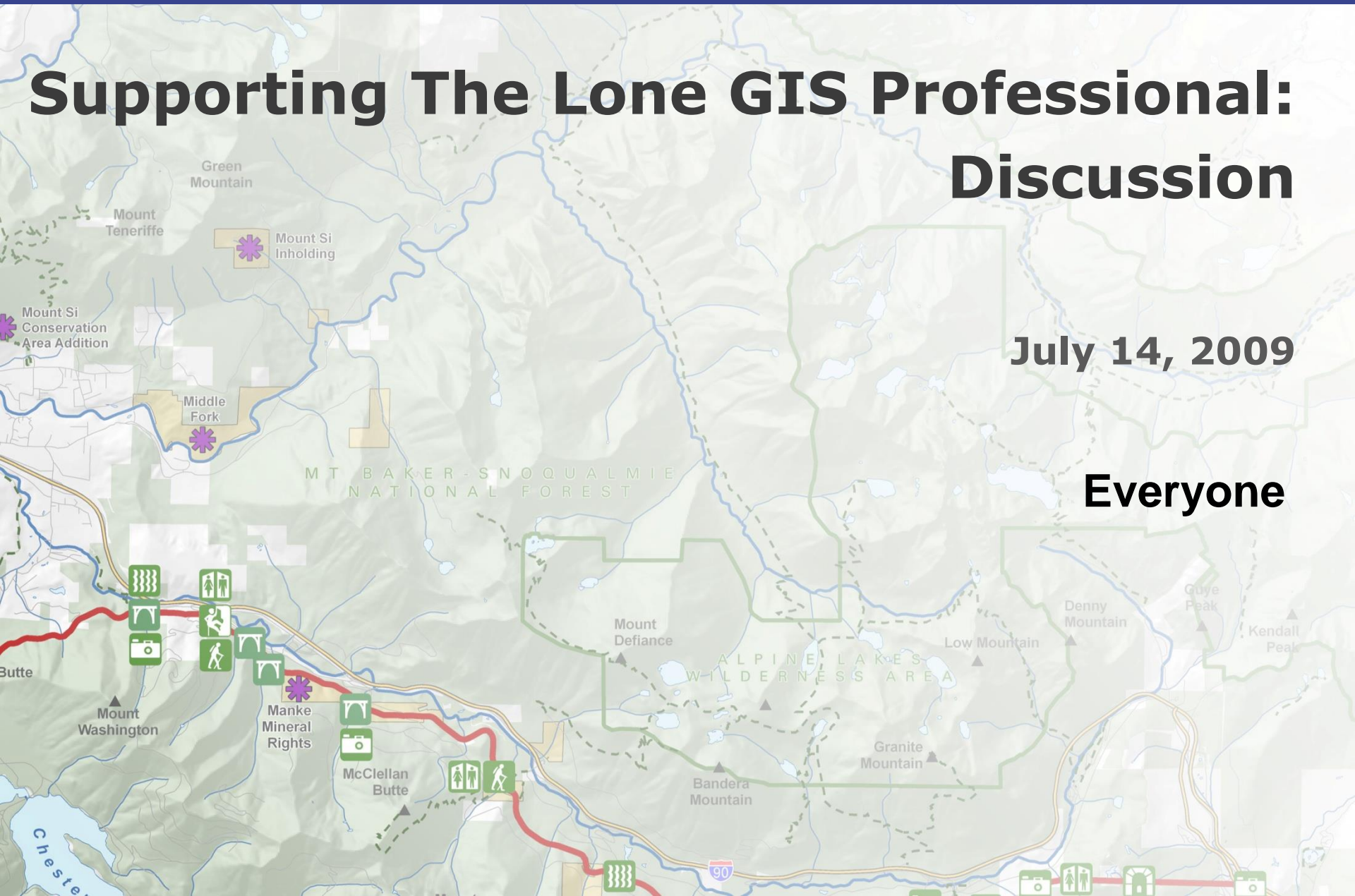
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Everyone

Supporting The Lone GIS Professional: Discussion

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Everyone

Discussion Topics

- **What would you like to see in a Lone GIS Pro website?**

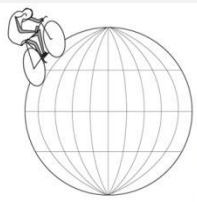- **What events would you like to see/contribute to?**

- **Anything else? How would you like to help?**

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DISCUSSION: Website Ideas

What would you like to see in a website?

- **Wiki forum**
- **Interested in becoming a lone GIS pro – how to make the move**
- **How to get out**
- **How to grow your way out – increase your business**
- **What to do if you don't have the technical resources**
- **Comments from Matt – technology, business requirements, what's a minimal setup – type of work matters**
- **Background info – Matt = urban planner**

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What would you like to see in a website?

- **Helps to have a few years transition**
- **Sources of liability insurance**
- **A forum – source of communication, share ideas**
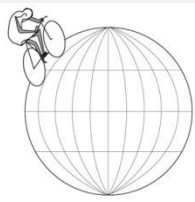- **Help find work**
- **Help get professional support**
- **Newsfeed – way of filtering info**
  - E.g., GIS vs surveying world
- **Social interaction sites**
  - Facebook – great for social/friends
  - Could restrict membership
  - ½ people have Facebook – not really appropriate for our group

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- **Facebook cont. – doesn't look good in the office**
- **Makeup of group**
  - Private sector – ¼ of audience
  - Public sector – ¼ of audience
  - ½ ?
  - User profile will really help – identify people and contact directly
  - Identify demographics/recruit to complement
- **Resource page – other GIS options, esp. OS**
- **Post capabilities – looking for work**
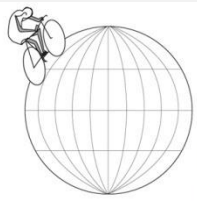- **Isolated GIS users – may be in a big organization**
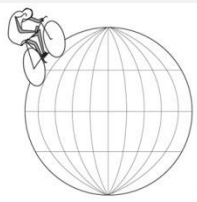
- **How do you get the next job? No time when crunching data, may have a finder's fee?**
- **Joint marketing effort**
- **Need to be strong, must produce, plan ahead**
- **Training materials – eg. In big organization, on own**
- **How fast can we scale up?**
- **Availability**

DISCUSSION: Event Ideas

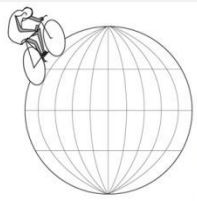**What would you like to see/contribute to?**
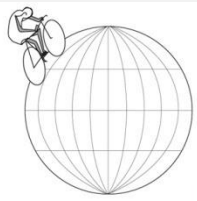
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What would you like to see/contribute to?

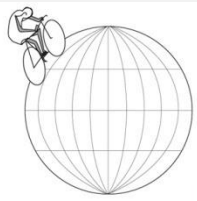**The Lone GIS Professional**

DISCUSSION: Comments/Contribution

Anything else? How would you like to help?

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Closing Remarks

- **Conclusions**
  - The Lone GIS Professional Initiative appears to be of increasing value to many GIS professionals
  - Potential for growth strong through your contributions
- **Acknowledgments**
  - All our members
  - Everyone who's supported us, especially at ESRI (Jim Barry, Jim Henderson, Marty Balikov, Heather Glock, Susan Reynolds)
- **Upcoming events**
  - Seattle and Eastern Washington gatherings
  - 2010 Washington GIS Conference
  - 2010 ESRI International User Conference SIG Meeting
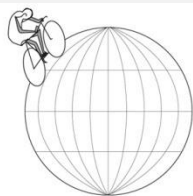
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Please Join & Contribute

The **Lone GIS Professional** Initiative

Helping lone GIS Professionals be successful

http://groups.google.com/group/lonegispro

For details and to sign up, please contact David Howes at lonegispro@gmail.com

See cards & sign-up sheets

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