

To: Paul Cavanagh  
From: Lori Mattern  
Date: February 21, 2005  
Re: Proposal to Update ConservationMapper Web Site

I propose to spend four months updating the ConservationMapper Web site. This will make the site more attractive and easier to navigate, as well as make the mapping applications easier to use.

## **Problems with the Current Site**

There are a number of problems within the current version of ConservationMapper; they are summarized below.

- Poor user interface

The text font used throughout the site is Georgia, a serif font. Generally, a sans-serif font such as Arial is recommended for use in Web sites, as these types of fonts are easier to read onscreen than serif fonts. The navigation bar at the top of the pages is also difficult to read, and does not work properly in the latest version of Netscape; this should be corrected. In addition, the home page has a cluttered look to it, with too many text blocks and small, indiscernible graphics.

- Unneeded pages

Several features in the ConservationMapper Web site are not being used by our stakeholders and have become unnecessary. Because we are no longer sending out e-mail notifications on site updates, we have no need for the mailing list subscription form. In addition, users are not accessing the Featured User page and submission form, apparently due to a lack of interest.

- Insufficient instructions for using thematic viewers

Online instructions for using the mapping applications (i.e. the thematic viewers) currently consist of a "tip sheet," which contains an image of each of the viewer buttons and a one-line description on how to use that button. This tip sheet is insufficient for new users of ConservationMapper. Because of the important role of the Scorecard Viewer in filling out the Conservation Scorecard, specific online instructions should be available for it, as well.

- Unavailable documents

Several documents are still not available for download through this site, and should be uploaded as soon as possible. These documents include the natural community observation form, the *Planning for Wildlife* guide, and the *Conserving Open Space* guide.

- Outdated content

Several pages are in need of updated content, including, but not limited to, the About Us page, the FAQ, the natural community workshop photo gallery, and the home page.

## **Proposed Solution**

I propose to update the ConservationMapper Web site by incorporating the following features:

- Clean, easy-to-navigate user interface

The updated Web site will use a sans-serif font and be easier to read. It will look much cleaner and less cluttered, with a clear, easy-to-use navigation scheme that works in a wide variety of browsers. The thematic viewers will also be redesigned to “match” the Web site interface.

- Up-to-date content

The content of the Web site will be updated, with unneeded sections and pages removed, and all necessary documents available for download. Remaining pages will be edited and rewritten if necessary, and new photos and images will be incorporated.

- Detailed, online instructions for using thematic viewers

The “tip sheet” format of the current instructions will be replaced by an interactive help system containing detailed instructions on using each of the buttons in the thematic viewers, including the Scorecard Viewer. The help system will contain a table of contents on the left side of the screen, with detailed instructions for using the buttons on the right side of the screen. This format is similar to that used in many Windows applications.

## **Method for Updating the Web Site**

The ConservationMapper Web site consists of a set of static Web pages, one of which links to a set of mapping applications known as thematic viewers. The static Web pages will be updated first, followed by the thematic viewers.

First, a new Web page design template will be created featuring a less cluttered, easy-to-use user interface. Site navigation will be more prominent, and will be designed to work in a wider variety of browsers. The text font will be changed to a sans-serif type in order to improve onscreen readability. Next, the site configuration will be updated to reflect the removal of unnecessary pages. Once the new configuration is complete, new and/or

existing content will be combined with the design templates to create the actual Web pages.

The thematic viewers will then be redesigned using the same colors and fonts as the static Web pages, thus promoting a consistent “look and feel” throughout the site. The button GIFs for the viewers will also be redesigned to work with the new viewer interface. Finally, the interactive help system will be created, tested, and incorporated into each of the viewers, thus providing instructions on using the viewers at the click of a button.

## **Resources Needed**

We already have the necessary Web site creation/management software. However, we need to acquire two more software applications for creating the online help system. I would like to purchase Macromedia RoboHelp X5; this software is the de facto standard for creating professional help systems for desktop and Web-based applications. I would also like to buy TechSmith SnagIt; this software will allow me to capture screen images for illustrating the help system.

The most important resource I will need, however, is time. I estimate that it will take me a total of 400 hours to complete this project.

## **Schedule**

Shown below is the estimated timetable for completion of the project.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Hours</u>
Create Web page design template	80
Update site configuration	16
Create static Web pages	40
Redesign thematic viewers	80
Create & test online help system	184
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>

## **Costs**

Shown below is the estimated cost for completion of the project.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Contractor fees	\$10,000
Macromedia RoboHelp X5 software	\$999
TechSmith SnagIt software	\$40
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,039</b>

## **Conclusion**

The ConservationMapper Web site is an important outreach tool for this program, and should be as attractive and easy to use as possible. I believe that updating ConservationMapper to achieve these objectives is a worthwhile investment, and I hope that you will approve this proposal.