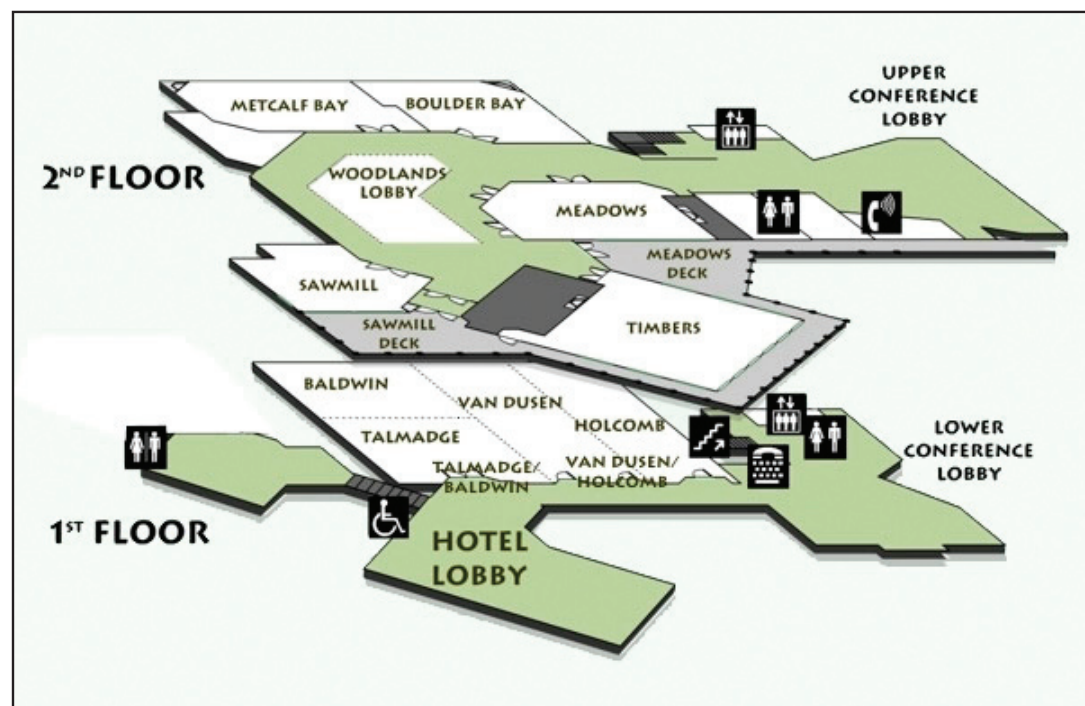




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Northwoods Resort Floor Plan



Society for Conservation GIS

SCGIS 12th Annual Conference

July 18–21, 2009

Northwoods Resort and Conference Center, Big Bear Lake, California



July 18, 2009

Dear Friends and Respected Colleagues:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 12th annual conference of the Society for Conservation GIS (SCGIS). These are difficult times. The impact of the global economic downturn has been felt at every scale, from nations and cities down to neighborhoods and families. Today, organizations are thinking about how to do more with less—how to operate more thoughtfully, more sustainably. While this may be a new paradigm for some, it is, and always has been, a fundamental aspect of the conservation community. And although many of us are suffering now, the seeds of a sustainable future are dropping all around us. More than ever, now is the time to work together and support one another. In our continuing efforts to think geographically and use powerful information tools, we can help serve knowledge leading to more sustainable, ecological, and thoughtful economies and societies.

SCGIS international chapters continue to exemplify all that is great about our community. For example, SCGIS Philippines members always delight me with how much like a caring family they are; they consistently make decisions with everyone playing an equal part so that benefits and opportunities are spread equally among all. Our Nepal chapter hosted a scientific visit funded by Jack Dangermond that enabled Kevin Johnston, ArcGIS Spatial Analyst lead, to go to Nepal to help wildlife biologists. Our Brazil chapter will have completed its first national conference on conservation GIS, with attendees from around the world. SCGIS Kenya is working on a schools conservation GIS program. And our chapters organized and selected the 2009 SCGIS international scholars you will see at this year's conference.

Another big change for conservation GIS is the launch of ESRI's online conservation data warehouse. ArcGIS Online (www.arcgisonline.com) is a true collaborative GIS data sharing platform, with metadata, live data, and social networking functions combined into a powerful distribution and sharing tool for anyone using desktop GIS. In addition, it is a foundation technology for anyone building specific GIS community sites. The Data Basin project of the Conservation Biology Institute is the first conservation community site built on the ArcGIS Online platform. ESRI Press will be doing its first Conservation Planning text thanks to the leadership of Lance Craighead and the new Craighead Center for Landscape Conservation. Workshops on both of these interesting projects will be held at this year's conference. Our GIS grant partnerships have expanded to TechSoup, the international grant makers for Microsoft, and 80 other high-tech companies. We've seen a tenfold increase in the GIS grants we make, spawning dozens of new GIS user communities in everything from disaster relief to alternative transportation. Our Planet Action grants with SPOT Image have also continued to grow, with the first Planet Action world conference held in France this year.

These new GIS grants and projects seem to cast the spotlight on many new communities. However, out of all the world's tens of thousands of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and nonprofits, there is but one community who was there first, who set the bar for how a technology society can work with vision, nurture its leadership, and care for its members. That group is you, and more than ever before, your leadership and example are needed in this changing world.

Regards,

Charles Convis and Sasha Yumakaev

SCGIS International Program



Stay Informed

SCGIS builds community, provides knowledge, and supports people who use GIS technology and science to protect natural resources and cultural heritage. The society helps conservationists worldwide use GIS by offering scholarships and training and providing communication and networking opportunities. Membership is open to anyone seeking assistance in achieving personal or organizational conservation goals.

To learn more about SCGIS, visit www.scgis.org.

SCGIS would like to thank ESRI for all the support it has provided.

ESRI is the world leader in the GIS software industry. The company develops and offers support services for GIS software for all types of organizations, from the one-person office to multinational corporations to innovative Internet GIS solutions.

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