iv. Once again we have confirmed sponsorship from **Micromedia ProQuest** for our joint CASLIS/ CACUL social to be held at the Parisian-inspired The French Restaurant.

Strategic Goal #3 - CASLIS will continue to develop, as a dynamic organization that is responsive to its members' needs

- In 2004/2005 the Governance structure was modified allowing us to be more fleet and flexible in addressing and anticipating member needs.
- So far in 2005/2006 we have:
  i. In response to members' requests, made *Special Issues* freely available beyond CASLIS membership.
  ii. Increased transparency and accessibility by using e-communities to share all meeting minutes, chapter and national budgets.

Strategic Goal #4 - CASLIS will ensure its membership is visible within the library, information management, and employer communities

- In the area of increasing CASLIS visibility at the CLA executive council table we have taken the CASLIS report off the consent agenda and will be taking every opportunity to actively promote CASLIS successes, needs, and initiatives.
- Robyn Stockland, Treasurer of the Toronto Chapter, will be working with Juanita Richardson, our Marketing Coordinator, to put together a Fact Sheet promoting the organizational contribution made by Canadian Special Library and Information Centres.

What do you think? Does it seem that we are making some progress? Do you have some ideas? Are you interested in participating? Remember that January is all about making a fresh start. We will look forward to hearing from you. Enjoy the holidays.

Nancy MacKenzie
President, CASLIS

Ottawa's Paperless Map Plot: Bad for Libraries, Bad for People

by David W. Mayhood

Here's a little quiz for you.

The federal government plans to put its topographic map data on the Internet where companies and individuals would be able to access the information, either free or for a fee, and then print it or pay a professional printer to do it (Dawn Walton, Ottawa plots making maps without paper, *Globe and Mail* October 4, 2005).

What is the matter with this plan?

Well, it's a great idea, really — in part. Digital maps lend themselves to some very sophisticated types of computer analyses that are unreasonably difficult to do by any other means. As just one example, my colleagues and I have used digital maps together with geographically-referenced biological data to determine habitat loss over time for grizzly bears, elk, wolves and birds, changing forest composition, watershed condition, and stream channel vulnerability to erosion and siltation, to name just a very few applications. These analyses would have been incredibly tedious and expensive to do on paper maps, but are enormously valuable for properly managing our public lands. So my concern is not that the government plans to issue digital versions of its topographic maps.

The major problem with Ottawa's plan is that it intends to stop printing maps -- paper topographic maps -- for use by the general public. I believe this to be a very, very bad idea. Here's why.

First, consider how most people need to use maps. The general public uses maps for hiking, skiing, canoeing, hunting, fishing, climbing, biking and many other outdoor pursuits, for which they commonly take paper maps into the field. So do field workers in many disciplines — environmental scientists, surveyors, engineers, conservation officers, foresters, rural realtors and many others. Digital maps are usually not an option for field use, except when loaded into specialized, often expensive, electronic equipment like global positioning system (GPS) receivers, weatherproofed laptop computers, and personal

desktop assistants (PDAs). And only printed maps let you see the entire map area in legible form, all at once. (Viewing a map on an electronic device is like peering at it through a knothole.)

So we do need printed maps for many purposes. If Ottawa won't be providing paper maps any more, where will we get them? Well, according to Natural Resources Canada (NRC), we will be able to print our own, or get them printed commercially.

Take a look at a typical topographic map sheet, which commonly measures about 30 inches by 25.5 inches of printed matter. Printing a full sheet on your home inkjet printer on a single sheet of paper would produce a map that is far too small to be legible. Printing at original size means taping together 9 sheets of letter-size paper. Home printing is therefore not a serious option, so we must take our digital map to a commercial outfit for printing.

Commercial printing rates are prohibitively expensive. A major Calgary reproduction firm that specializes in this sort of work charges $8.00 per square foot plus a $16.00 processing fee if the print is to be made from a digital file. A typical 1:50,000-scale topographic map sheet is 5.3 square feet, so the total charge to print a single map from digital data would be $58.40. The lowest commercial cost I have found to print the same job is $21.20.

The current suggested retail price for the same government-printed map is $11.25. Under the National Topographic System's proposal, the price to the end user will be about 2 to 5 times the current price, not including the fee (still undisclosed) for downloading the file from the NRC website.

All of this assumes that you have access to a capable computer, the patience to search around for a commercial printer, the time to wait for the print, and a credit card account (if there is a download charge). Not everyone has these prerequisites. That's where public libraries come in.

It is not news that public libraries throughout the country are strapped for cash. Nevertheless, the map departments of public libraries should look forward to some additional expenditures when the new NRC policy takes effect. Count on purchasing large-format computer displays, for one thing: topographic maps are a colossal nuisance to view with standard monitors. Even the largest display cannot provide an image of a size and resolution comparable to a flat mapsheet, so the collection would have to include a duplicate set of paper maps. Plotting in-house is not reasonable (a suitable large-format plotter runs about $10,000), so look forward to ordering commercial prints at twice or more the present price as new editions are released. A site-licenced version of basic map software will also be required so that people can do basic measurements onscreen. Most importantly, staff will need additional ongoing training to properly manage the digital collection, stay current with new software releases, and show the public how properly to use the collection and software.

All of the extra cost does have an upside: as taxpayers we can look forward to more efficient use of our tax money. The NRC plans to reallocate to better, as yet unspecified, uses the $191,000 it estimates that it will save by abandoning its 1.5 million maps now in storage.

In other words, to save storage charges of $0.127 per map, we the Canadian people are about to spend, at minimum, an extra $9.95 for every paper map that we purchase retail.

Now, I am not an accountant, but … is there something wrong with this picture?

Dave Mayhood is an aquatic ecologist and President of Freshwater Research Limited, an environmental consulting firm in Calgary. Just 3 weeks ago a standard low-tech paper map saved him from spending a wet, cold night in the rain forests of coastal British Columbia. Email him at dmayhood@fwresearch.ca.

It's Not Easy Being a Jack/Jill of All Trades!

A Presentation by Terri Tomchyshyn, Manager of Library Information Services at Communications Security Establishment (CSE)
by Kathryn Howe

On October 24th, 2005, Terri Tomchyshyn, Manager of Library Information Services at Communications Security Establishment (CSE), spoke to students from Dalhousie's School of Information Management about what she has learned along her long career path. In her talk, entitled "It's Not Easy Being a Jack/Jill of all Trades!" Terri gave students some valuable advice about being a librarian through humorous real-life examples.