

## SIX NATIONS ADAPTS TRADITIONAL BELIEFS TO NEW TECHNOLOGY six nation

With the development of the Land Claims Policy in the 1970s, Six Nations — a confederacy of the Mohawk, Cayuga, Seneca, Onondaga, Oneida, and Tuscarora nations with a membership of nearly 20,000 and 46,000 acres of territory — began research into ancestral and territorial land ownership.

Over 22 years of investigation has yielded thousands of historical documents pertaining to the history of land transactions. Treaties, deeds, sales records, appraisal records and maps were of special interest to Six Nations, and their vast accumulation of documentation soon required a management system organized geographically.

In the early 1990s, Six Nations began their quest for affordable and flexible organization, finding the answer in a geographic information system (GIS). What was required was a GIS system that could analyze and display nonspatial and spatial data while managing the vast amount of nonspatial data necessary to perform the extensive land parcel mapping. Since most of the data had already been compiled, a user-friendly system was sought to integrate the current database. Six Nations also realized that the technical knowledge required to implement and maintain such a system were not readily available within the community.

Based on these needs, the newly formed organization, Six Nations Geo Systems, together with several nonnative technology companies, designed and developed Eagle's Cry software using ESRI Canada's ArcView GIS technology.

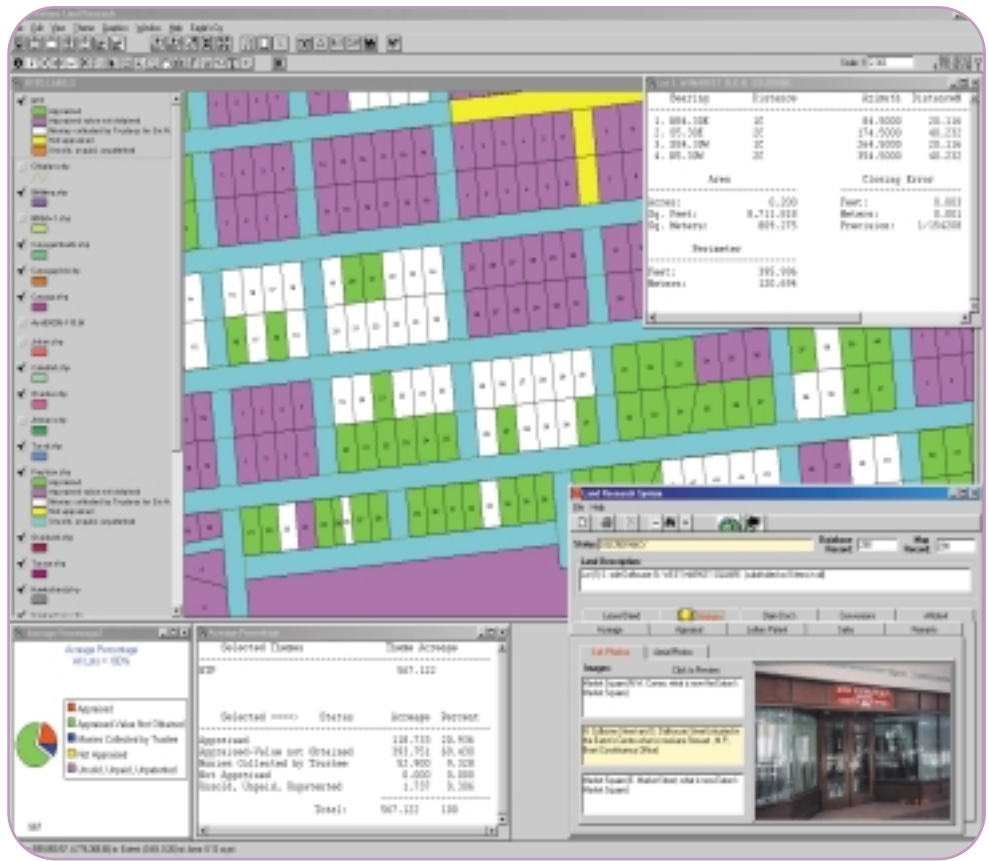
The primary goal of the Eagle's Cry project was to create a comprehensive land information system that would address Six Nations' community needs, such as public works, infrastructure management, utility maintenance, ecosystem management, forestry and emergency response.

"What we have done is take our traditional beliefs of respect for Mother Earth and our relationship with the land and adapt them using new technology to benefit the Six Nations people today and our children in the future," says Philip Monture, president, Six Nations Geo Systems.

To achieve this success, Six Nations Geo Systems joined two colleges in Ontario, Niagara College and Six Nations Polytechnic, to launch GIS Technician Native programs. The curriculums address technical training issues and promote the development of unique applications specific to First Nations people throughout Canada.

"These programs allow First Nations people to learn the academics of GIS using Eagle's Cry while building a base map and applications for their community," adds Monture. "The students can use their knowledge to help the community, which is beneficial for First Nations people if they want to manage their own lands."

In response to many community needs, Six Nations Geo Systems has also established Six Nations Land Systems in order to use the Eagle's Cry software for customization and development of land tenure, cadastral infrastructure, and land registration systems. These applications extended beyond use by North American First Nations and Tribal



Using Eagle's Cry's land information system to integrate a variety of data sources.

Governments. Latin American native and nonnative governments can also use them to establish land base systems.

The focused use of GIS and related spatial data technology is increasing among Native North American tribes. Tribal organizations' use of the technology, fueled by the diminishing costs of hardware and software, continues to expand, producing an impressive diversity of applications addressing tribal needs. 🌍

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