

MnGeo Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council

March 31, 2011 Meeting Notes

Blazing Star Room, 658 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55155

Attendees

Members: David Arbeit, MnGeo; Rebecca Blue, SEH; Will Craig, University of Minnesota; Rebecca Foster, City of Edina; Rick Gelbmann, Metropolitan Council; Patricia Henderson, ARDC; Brian Huberty, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; John Mackiewicz, WSB & Associates; Haila Maze, City of Minneapolis; Robert McMaster, University of Minnesota; Robert Meeks, MN School Board Association; Jeff Narabrook, MN Council of Non-Profits (for Sally Wakefield); Tim Ogg, Board of Water and Soil Resources; Mark Olsen, Pollution Control Agency; Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County; Terry Schneider, MetroGIS; Dawn Sherk, White Earth nation (Video); Steve Swazee, SharedGeo; Gary Swenson, Hennepin County; Mark Thomas, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities; and Ron Wencil, U.S. Geological Survey.

Non-Members: Chris Cialek, MnGeo; Mike Dolbow, MN Dept. of Agriculture; John Hoshal, MnGeo; Mark Kotz, Metropolitan Council; Fred Logman, MnGeo; Nancy Rader, MnGeo.

Welcome

Chair Victoria Reinhardt called the meeting to order. Participants introduced themselves.

Notes of December 29, 2010 Meeting

In the Geocoding discussion on page 3, Will Craig's comment that the U.S. Census address data is identified as "private" should be changed to "not-public".

Motion by Terry Schneider with second by Mark Olsen: to approve the December 29, 2010 [Council Meeting Notes](#) as amended. Motion carried.

State Government Geospatial Advisory Council (Rebecca Foster)

There have been two State Government Council meetings (January 11 and March 15) since the December 29th Statewide Council meeting. The agendas have been very similar for both councils. See the State Government Advisory Council [Meeting Notes](#) for details.

Presentation: Geocoding RFI (Mike Dolbow)

The Geocoding Workgroup was formed in response both to an identified need by many agencies for geocoding and 2010 legislation that mandates that "all geospatial data conform to an approved state geocode model." To meet these needs, the Workgroup has developed a draft [Request For Information](#) (RFI), identified several [business use cases](#) and generated a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) informational sheet. The Workgroup is now asking for suggested edits to the RFI from the Council and would like to see the RFI released as soon as possible.

Action Item: Council members review the RFI and provide any comments to Mike Dolbow.

Action Item: MnGeo edit and release RFI with assistance from the Geocoding Workgroup.

Dolbow provided a short demonstration of the Department of Agriculture's [Gypsy Moth Treatment Areas Application](#) which uses Google Maps' geocoding service for its address matching. One feature of the Google service is the ability to enter something like "UMD" for the University of Minnesota, Duluth and get back a point where the campus is located. Returned maps are at an appropriate scale and users can zoom in and out.

Dolbow indicated the Geocoding Workgroup was looking for something (a product, service, data bases, and/or a combination thereof) that would meet all of the identified needs and provide a statewide solution for both batch and interactive uses. The solution should not only geocode addresses but also landmarks and possibly building names. The Council asked questions and made suggestions including:

- Will the envisioned geocoder work with coordinates? - No, it is intended to provide points from an address, landmark name or building name.
- Have response evaluation criteria been developed? - No, this is only a request for information and responses are not going to be ranked or scored. The purpose is to acquire information and ideas from responding vendors. The information acquired may then be used in the development of an RFP.
- How would a product or service be paid for? - The Workgroup believes that State agencies are already expending resources doing geocoding at this time and that those resources might be adequate, if aggregated, to pay for a product or service. There has not yet been a study to determine what the current State spending is. Until we see the RFI responses, we will not know what the costs or opportunities may be.
- Is the MetroGIS solution being considered? - Yes, it is a good model for what is desired but a statewide solution is needed. Until the responses are reviewed, we will not know what approach or approaches will meet the identified needs.
- Will the next step after the RFI be a sole source arrangement? - MnGeo will follow the State's procurement policies and most likely would go through a bid process.
- How will the State identify who to send the RFI to? - The RFI will be advertised like other State bids. In addition, the Workgroup has identified several potential vendors who will be contacted and asked to respond.
- Is ease of use a consideration that can be added to the RFI? Yes.
- It appears that a geocoder will work well in urban areas but not as well in rural areas where there are rural routes vs. structure addresses. - Rural addresses are an issue. Use of a standard address format would help ensure better results. It will be important that the solution have the ability to use "local" data and work with local partners to be able to use the best possible data.
- What is [Connect Minnesota](#) using for their broadband maps and would that work? - Connect Minnesota is using ESRI's geocoding service.
- Connect Minnesota also is asking households to review the data for their area and provide feedback. Is something like that being considered? - Crowd sourcing can be a means to validate and acquire more accurate data.
- Would an RFP exclude the MetroGIS solution? - No, it is possible that an enhancement of the MetroGIS application to function statewide could meet the needs identified by the Workgroup.
- The Census Bureau collected and built a good address database that includes point data. It would be nice if we could use that data, however that data is not available to us. NSGIC has pushed that issue and continues to look for ways to make that significant data set available.

Dolbow stated that as the project progresses, interested parties can check the [Geocoding Workgroup website](#) where updated information and links are being maintained.

Presentation: State Geospatial Standards (Chris Cialek)

All of the State's existing geospatial standards were vetted through the Standards Committee which was formed almost 20 years ago. The standards were reviewed and approved by the Minnesota Governor's Council on Geographic Information. Many of the existing standards are federal or national standards that have been modified or accepted for Minnesota's use. Most of the standards apply only to how data is exchanged, rather than how the data must be stored. The geospatial standards are considered standards for State agencies but are only guidelines or suggestions for local government and others. The

[presentation](#) provided information about the standards, past approval processes and the developing OET process.

Cialek indicated there are 10 existing [geospatial standards](#):

1. Codes for MN Counties
2. State Agency Coordinate Interchange
3. Positional Accuracy
4. MN Geographic Metadata Guidelines
5. Codes for the Identification of States
6. Codes for Lake and Wetland Basins
7. Codes for Watersheds
8. River Reach/Watercourse IDs
9. City, Township and Unorganized Territory Identifiers
10. U.S. National Grid

The first three standards listed above and the metadata guidelines were fully vetted and approved as Information Technology Standards for State agencies by the former Information Policy Council (IPC). Standards 6 – 10 were approved by the Governor’s Council after the IPC was dissolved; OET has published them on its website and is now developing new processes that can be used to approve them as enterprise standards.

There are three draft standards being tracked or worked on at this time:

- Stormwater Conveyance
- Thoroughfare, Landmarks, and Postal Address Data Standard
- MN Geocode Model

Cialek then provided a short description of the [OET Standard Approval Process](#) that includes Subject Matter Experts, Data Domain Group, Architecture Review Board, CIO Council and the State CIO. The geospatial community and the councils are subject matter experts. Chris Cialek is on the Data Domain Group and David Arbeit, as State CGIO, is on the Architecture Review Board providing geospatial perspectives.

The OET Standards have a more defined “conformance” or “enforcement” component than do the ten geospatial standards. This is an area where some additional work will be needed before the geospatial standards can be implemented as enterprise standards by OET. In the past if a geospatial standards violation was identified, the entity was notified and asked to address the problem. More formal processes will be needed to record, track and address any violations.

Cialek then provided recommendations to the Council for consideration that he and Standards Committee Co-chair Mark Kotz had formulated:

1. OET consider the first 3 previously ratified IRM standards as state approved and inform the CIO Council of that decision.
2. OET address the 6 standards that were approved by the Governor’s Council and posted by OET as geospatial standards by sending them directly to the ARB to consider for ratification.
3. OET provide advice and guidance to the Standards Committee and OET’s Data Domain Team to help each group prepare for and deal with new proposed standards.
4. MnGeo adopt a procedure that includes the reporting of instances of non-compliance to the Standards Committee for research and recommendations.
5. The Metadata Guidelines be reviewed and updated, including compatibility with ArcGIS 10, then submitted. A [Metadata Workgroup](#) has been formed and has begun updating the metadata guidelines.

Action Item: *Standards Committee and Metadata Workgroup will update the Minnesota Geographic Metadata Guidelines and submit it to OET as a proposed standard.*

Action Item: *Standards Committee will reformat and add any needed information to the other nine standards so that they are compatible with OET standards.*

Subsequent Council member discussion about the geospatial standards included:

- The two geospatial advisory councils should be involved in the process. The councils and the geospatial community are a group of subject matter experts. Proposed geospatial standards will be developed and brought to the councils for review prior to being submitted to the Data Domain Group.
- Any community of interest can propose a standard.
- Once a standard has been adopted as an enterprise standard by OET, contractors and vendors are required to provide products and perform their work in compliance with all of the State standards.
- It may be useful to see what geospatial standards other states have developed and implemented.

Subsequent Standards Committee efforts will include:

- Updating standards to conform to OET format
- Formally submit geospatial standards to the OET Architecture Core Group for re-consideration
- Reorganize web publication material to fit OET's new template
- Participate in the Metadata Workgroup
- Continue to move new standards through the committee and then to the councils for review.

Discussion – Spring Floods

John Hoshal began the discussion by informing the Council of MnGeo's activities to support the flood fight which include:

1. Providing staff support for the State Emergency Operation Center (SEOC) GIS desk. Support is provided by MnGeo staff and volunteers from other State agencies. The GIS desk has been active for the past couple of weeks. As SEOC activities have been winding down, the need to staff the GIS desk has been reduced. It is anticipated that activities may increase when the Red River crests.
2. Responding to map requests coming through the SEOC. If agencies or local government need a map that they cannot generate themselves, they need to request it through the SEOC which will review and prioritize all emergency assistance requests. Requests are entered through HSEM's DLAN incident and tracking system. MnGeo would respond to SEOC requests for maps that could not be generated by the GIS Desk.
3. Recently DLAN's geospatial capability has been upgraded. Several viewers have been built to allow DLAN users access to geospatial data being served outside of the SEOC. HSEM is also supporting MESA, an Arc Server viewer that is intended for use by emergency responders outside of the SEOC. The geospatial viewers built into DLAN and MESA have reduced the need for GIS support in the SEOC.
4. Assist HSEM with coordination of imagery. This year MnGeo has noticed a significant improvement in imagery coordination and availability with Homeland Security's new Interagency Remote Sensing Coordination Cell (IRSCC) hosting daily conference calls to coordinate imagery. Multiple FEMA regions, several states, local governments and MnGeo participate in the calls. IRSCC's goal is to provide needed imagery in a timely manner, have consumable products available through HSIN, provide consistent and on-going communication, and to reduce redundant activities.

Victoria Reinhardt stated that Ramsey County declared an emergency as they are anticipating near record river crests this year and are much better prepared than in the past. GIS has been a key tool assisting them with their planning and preparation.

Council member comments and discussion included:

- Rivers in some areas of the state have crested and are beginning to fall, although there may be subsequent cresting.
- There seems to be much better coordination of Federal, State and local resources.
- FEMA Region 5 is more involved even though there has not been a presidential declaration for Minnesota.
- LiDAR and derivative products becoming available for more and more of the state is a big plus.
- The SEOC is focused on situational awareness and the issues of State agencies.
- The MnDOT Road Closure Application is available for local highway engineers and public works departments to post and update road information in a very timely manner and make the data widely available from a single site.
- There is a need to make more people aware of what data and assistance is available and how to request it. This may be the type of effort that a Council Outreach Committee could work on.
- HSIP Gold has a lot of data available but it is not available for wide use unless there has been a presidential declaration due to licensing restrictions. This continues to be a problem not just for emergency planning and management but also for other on-going operations.

Legislation and Budget

David Arbeit provided a [handout](#) on some of this legislative session's geospatial-related bills. Arbeit also provided an update and comments on the current legislative session including:

- All of the committee chairs are new to that position.
- The Legislature is dealing with the budget before policy issues this session, which is different than previous years. Therefore, we have not seen a lot of policy legislation come out yet.
- There are significant differences between the proposed budgets of the Governor, the House and the Senate. The Governor's proposed budget does not have deep cuts for MnGeo. The House and Senate versions have significant cuts for the Department of Administration without identifying specifically where they should be made. We are not likely to know the impact on MnGeo until late May.
- The regular legislative session is scheduled to end on Monday, May 23rd.
- There are several bills that move MnGeo to OET, and Arbeit indicated he was almost certain that MnGeo would eventually be moved to OET.
- HF 191 moves all Executive Branch IT functions under OET. This would include most agency GIS activities.
- HF 656 provides a continuation of the LiDAR funding with Legacy funds and has both DFL and GOP authors.
- HF 1010 provides \$90,000 for LiDAR data training. This bill also requires all data to conform to State standards and classifies the data as public if there are any State funds used to build or acquire it.
- Arbeit indicated the MnGeo "housekeeping" legislation had not yet been introduced but will include: continuation of the two advisory councils, adding tribal nations to the list of entities that are on the Statewide Council, and changing the appointment process for members of the State Government Advisory Council so that they are appointed by their respective agency heads instead of going through the open appointments process.
- Proposed changes to the Data Practices Act have been submitted to the Governor's Office but have not yet been considered by the Legislature since they are policy issues.

Victoria Reinhardt stated that things are moving quickly but does not expect action on many policy issues until the budget is resolved or close to the end of this year's session.

Outreach Committee

Will Craig presented the [charter](#) for the proposed Outreach Committee to the Council. The objective is to find compelling stories and get them out to policy makers. The Committee would be more like a “story teller” and would help get information out when it is brought to the Committee or Council. These are not just MnGeo stories but ones that are important to the whole community.

Motion by Will Craig with a second by Ron Wencl to approve the Charter as written. The motion carried.

Victoria Reinhardt said that communications should make it real and make it human in order to communicate to policy makers.

Terry Schneider said 2 or 3 concise stories do more than reports and white papers to influence people.

Remote Sensing Discussion: Issues, Priorities, Actions?

Brian Huberty provided the Council with a draft letter to Mr. John Holdren, Director, President’s Office of Science and Technology Policy, that he proposes be sent from the Council regarding federal remote sensing programs and priorities. Chair Reinhardt indicated that she had problems with the letter as written. Discussion indicated that the Council did not feel the direction of the letter was what they would support. Terry Schneider said we need to identify what is important to Mr. Holdren and relate to that. Ron Wencl had heard a radio interview with Mr. Holdren about federal budget cuts and Mr. Holdren had stated that one of his priorities was ground imagery.

Action Item: *Brian Huberty will work with MnGeo to draft a letter to be sent to the appropriate federal entity for Council review and comment prior to the next meeting.*

Will Craig provided a short [presentation](#) on NSGIC’s *Imagery for the Nation* initiative. In the presentation Craig described the various federal imagery programs. Most of the past imagery for the State has been acquired partnering with the National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP) and is usually leaf-on. The State is currently acquiring leaf-off in a [multiple year project](#) that involves numerous partners. Many federal imagery acquisitions allow states and/or local governments to buy up to a higher resolution if they are able. Council member discussion included the following:

- Different resolutions are needed to address different business needs.
- Local users usually want the highest level of resolution while Federal users usually need lower levels of resolution and state agencies somewhere in-between.
- Municipalities usually want six-inch to one-foot resolution, but funding can be an issue.
- Some applications like farming, ideally would like one-foot imagery on a weekly basis to be able to see crop growth and problems.

State and Local Government Coordination and Collaboration

Chris Cialek described the current state and local partnerships that have made the leaf-off imagery project possible. Partners for the 2010 collect included: DNR, USGS, Metropolitan Mosquito Control District, the Met Council, Dakota and Scott Counties; with MnGeo providing project administration. The 2011 collect is one-meter resolution focused on 36 counties in the southern part of the state with McLeod, Murray and Sibley counties buying up to one-foot resolution. Currently there are ground observers in the various counties checking for snow, floods and the start of vegetation leafing so that the contracted vendor will know when they can begin and end collection flights.

Commendations

The council was asked if they thought there should be Governor's Commendations again this year. There was strong support to check with the Governor's Office and to have awards. Rebecca Foster volunteered to chair a review committee again. Will Craig and Robert Meeks volunteered to be on the committee.

***Action Item:** MnGeo will check with the Governor's Office to see if they will support commendation awards this year.*

Informational Items and Announcements

David Arbeit told the Council that MnGeo has received notification that they have been awarded a CAP grant to develop a [business plan to build a statewide parcel data layer](#). Arbeit also called attention to the [NSGIC](#), [GIS Cloud Assessment](#), [Projects Updates](#) and [Committee/Workgroup](#) reports.

Steve Swazee announced that Joella Givens and Kitty Hurley have just been awarded (March 2011) their Professional Certifications in Emergency Management as granted by Minnesota's Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Course structure is extensive and related [here](#). In addition, Joella Givens was selected by the Twin Cities FBI [InfraGard Program](#) to serve as the Deputy Director of their Public-Private Coordination and Action Team (P2CAT). She will be helping them develop visualization and social networking approaches previously pioneered by the Emergency Preparedness Committee's "Go Team". These developments represent substantial involvement and integration of the state GIS community with other important emergency service sector communities.

Future Meetings

The Council was told the Blazing Star Room is not available for the June 30th meeting and asked for suggestions for where to hold the next meeting. Terry Schneider suggested the Metropolitan Counties Building in St. Paul. It was also suggested to consider a non-metro location.

Robert Meeks also requested that the Council consider changing the December 29, 2011 date to early January.

***Action Item:** MnGeo will look at options for the June 30th Council meeting and get back to the Council with possible locations.*

***Action Item:** MnGeo will look at options for rescheduling the December 29, 2011 meeting.*

Meeting Adjourned.

Notes by Fred Logman and Nancy Rader