

MnGeo Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council

April 1, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Blazing Star Room, Centennial Office Building, 658 Cedar St., St. Paul, MN 55155

Attendees

Members: Brad Anderson, City of Moorhead; Jeff Bloomquist, Farm Service Agency; David Brandt, Washington County; Scott Freburg, Dept. of Education; Kari Geurts, Dept. of Natural Resources; Blaine Hackett, Flat Rock Geographics; Andrew King-Scribbins, Hennepin County (via WebEx); Len Kne, University of Minnesota; Mark Kotz, Metropolitan Council; Chad Martini, Stearns County; Josh Pankratz (via WebEx); Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County; Ben Richason, St. Cloud State University (via WebEx); Cory Richter, City of St. Paul; Dan Ross, MnGeo; Gerry Sjerven, Minnesota Power; Trisha Stefanski, Dept. of Transportation; Michelle Trager, Rice County; Danielle Walchuk, Region Nine Development Commission; Tim Wotzka, Itasca County.

Non-Members: Chris Buse, MN.IT; Mike Dolbow, MnGeo; Tyler Johnson, Dept. of Revenue; Brad Henry, University of Minnesota; John Hoshal, MnGeo; Kelly Koenig, Dept. of Revenue; Susanne Maeder, MnGeo; Nancy Rader, MnGeo; Hal Watson, Dept. of Natural Resources

Welcome

Ross called the meeting to order. Participants introduced themselves.

Minutes of January 28, 2015 Meeting

The January 28, 2015 [council meeting minutes](#) were approved with no changes.

Parks and Trails Projects

Parks and Trails of Regional Significance: Data Integration and Website Project ([slides 5-11](#))

Watson described a major DNR project whose goal is to help citizens look for recreation opportunities in a specific area of Minnesota, or for places to go for a specific recreation activity. Currently, each level of government has its own site, so citizens need to search multiple sites to answer these questions. When searching for recreation information, citizens aren't very concerned with which level of government manages the park or trail; they want integrated information. In response to this need, this legislatively mandated project directs the DNR to create enhanced, integrated, and accessible Web-based information for park and trail users, support joint marketing and promotional efforts for all parks and trails of regional or statewide significance, and support activities of a parks and trails legacy advisory committee. Project partners include the Metropolitan Council, Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails, MnGeo and Explore Minnesota.

Short term (one year) project goals are to develop a parks and trails end user website and, in partnership with MetroGIS, to develop a recreation data standard. Longer term goals are to provide consistently structured recreation data and services that are consumable by a wide variety of other public and private applications. Plans are to use the Minnesota Geospatial Commons infrastructure as a focal point to collect data from partners and to publish the results as integrated datasets and services.

Member discussion:

- Does the project include trails such as those for 4-wheelers, bicycles or snowmobiles?
No. For now, the project is limited to trails of "regional significance" (for example, those

receiving LCCMR funding). In future, it could be expanded to include additional types of parks and trails.

- How do existing county parks and trails applications and websites fit in?
They are still very much needed. The new DNR site will be designed to support initial searches with high-level, relatively static information and will then funnel users to the appropriate local sites for more information. Local entities would continue to administer their sites with all their existing features and would maintain details that change often, such as events.
- Much work has already been done to develop a recreation data standard; this project will build on that work. A standard would apply more widely than just to parks and trails of regional significance.
- Washington County (as well as other counties) is very interested in cooperating since this will benefit everyone.

Legacy Fund Parks and Trails ([slides](#) 12-15)

Ross described a related MnGeo project to track parks and trails that receive [Legacy Amendment funding](#). The initial project created a prototype that will support further discussion about more fully reaching these goals:

- Create common definitions for parks and trails data in Minnesota (accomplished through stakeholder meetings).
- Create an online web app to display information about projects, including their locations, and to allow multiple users to edit and maintain the information.
- Provide the ability to perform analysis on parks and trails data.
- Provide a sustainable approach to obtain and maintain the data.

Ross emphasized that these two projects are examples of the approach of collaborating, developing common standards, and data sharing that can apply to many other types of data, not just parks and trails.

Member discussion:

- Most projects have funding from multiple sources, not just Legacy funds.
- Providing a geographic location is a challenge for some projects, for example, a project may spend the money over several years and the location may change during that time.

Update on Legislative Session ([slides](#) 16-17)

Three major items were reported on:

1. Next Generation 9-1-1: Ross reported that the legislation to increase fees to support the build-out of NG9-1-1 is still in process; the project will keep moving ahead.

2. Buffer strips along waterways: Watson summarized Governor Dayton's proposal to require vegetative buffer strips along Minnesota's watercourses in order to improve water quality and wildlife habitat; a definition of which watercourses to include is still being developed. DNR staff is helping legislators and others involved to visualize and measure the outcomes of various definitions of watercourse depths and widths. LiDAR-derived elevation data may be able to provide some of the information used to define watercourses.

Member discussion:

- Has MN.IT's legislative liaison, Jon Eichten, been briefed about the buffer issue? Yes, initially. Communication about the effort will come from the Governor's Office and the DNR Commissioner's Office.
- How adjustable is the buffer strip width? In the proposal, it is flexible, depending on water quality protection needs.
- Does it apply to both public and private land? Yes.
- How will it be enforced? That will be specified in the legislation.

ACTION ITEM: Include an update on the buffer legislation in the June council meeting agenda.

3. Parks and Trails: A University of Minnesota Legacy-funded project is conducting user surveys to assess use of recreation facilities. It is being coordinated with the DNR and MnGeo parks and trails projects described above. It may help to further develop the prototype Legacy Fund Parks and Trails web application that Ross described above.

NSGIC Highlights ([slides](#) 18-24, and [NSGIC meeting archive](#))

Ross reported on highlights from the National States Geographic Information Council's mid-year meeting in Annapolis, MD. He is on NSGIC's leadership team which is doing strategic planning for the organization.

- Collaboration remains a critical theme, with the role of local data being increasingly emphasized.
- Several important reports have been issued recently (see slides and links for details):
 - [Geospatial Data: Progress Needed on Identifying Expenditures, Building and Utilizing a Data Infrastructure, and Reducing Duplicative Efforts](#), U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), March 18, 2015. "GAO suggests that Congress consider assessing statutory limitations on address data to foster progress toward a national address database. GAO also recommends that OMB improve its oversight of FGDC and federal agency initiatives, and that FGDC and selected agencies fully implement initiatives. The agencies generally agreed with the recommendations and identified plans to implement them."
 - [Report Card on the U.S. National Spatial Data Infrastructure](#), Coalition of Geospatial Organizations (COGO), February 6, 2015. The report card "depicts the condition and performance of the nation's geospatial 'infrastructure' which includes surveyed, mapped and remotely-sensed information." The intent is "to engage Congress, Federal agencies, and the FGDC to discuss and identify common sense improvements that will lead to a more robust National Spatial Data Infrastructure."
 - NSGIC has released a 2-page position paper titled, [Geospatial Data Act of 2015 \(S. 740\), Moving the National Spatial Data Infrastructure Forward](#). NSGIC seeks bipartisan support for the act as introduced.
- A National Address Summit will be held April 8-9 with the goal to identify possible alternatives for developing a National Address Dataset. Also see NSGIC's [Addresses for the Nation](#) paper.
- Ron Wencil, U.S. Geological Survey, provided slides on two programs:
 - [3D Elevation Program \(3DEP\)](#): This program was implemented in FY15 and included an announcement for partnership funding proposals. Planning for the next cycle is underway.
 - National Hydrography Requirements and Benefits study: This recent national effort (USGS, USDA co-lead) was modeled after the NEEA (National Enhanced Elevation Assessment) study to gather user requirements and needs and to prepare a cost-benefit

of developing a national program (not just the NHD dataset). Mark Olsen, Pollution Control Agency, coordinated Minnesota's input from nine organizations including State agencies, the Metropolitan Council and a watershed district. Participants will meet to review a state summary of survey results.

Audience question: Was the issue of the need to create a single, standardized, accurate map for driverless cars discussed at the NSGIC mid-year meeting? No, this issue was not raised.

Ross said that Minnesota's current participation in NSGIC includes five memberships; Reinhardt is one of the members. He is considering covering the cost to extend membership to all Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council members. Members would be able to participate in NSGIC events and email discussions, thus learning about issues and also being able to provide examples, experience and advice to other states. It would also show Minnesota's support for the organization. Members supported the idea.

Next Generation 9-1-1 ([slides](#) 25-28)

Hoshal provided an update on the Next Generation 9-1-1 project coordinated by MnGeo and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS).

- The project scope and work plan are complete.
- **Regional kickoff meetings** are beginning this month: NE region April 9, Metro region April 16, and other regions TBD – see slides for a map of the 7 PSAP (Public Safety Answering Points) regions. The purpose of the meetings is to describe the program and process and then to listen to how the local PSAP and GIS staff are doing their work and discuss how data sharing could best work. PSAP and GIS staff will receive an invitation letter from DPS.
- **PSAP GIS survey** to assess the status of GIS data and software at every PSAP will begin distribution in April 2015.
- **Initial GIS data assessment** will begin summer 2015.
- **Minnesota NG9-1-1 GIS standards** are to be complete October 2015.
- A website about the project is planned, likely on DPS's site.

Member discussion

- Important to keep in communication with NG9-1-1 activities in adjoining states, especially for cities such as Fargo that serve areas in both states. GeoComm is preparing data for North Dakota. Iowa has already started and is ahead of Minnesota; Wisconsin is not as far along.

Minnesota GIS/LIS Conference

Several topics were covered relating to MN GIS/LIS events:

1. Spring Workshops: Trager announced that this year's spring workshops (1 full-day; 11 half-day) will be held May 20. Several workshops will be broadcast to four remote locations: UofM-Duluth; MSU-Mankato; MSU-Moorhead; St. Mary's University (Winona). For details, see the [spring workshop webpage](#).

2. 2018 NSGIC and Mn GIS/LIS conference locations: Ross said that NSGIC is selecting the location for its September 2018 annual meeting and is considering Duluth. (NSGIC's 2010 meeting was in Minneapolis; meeting attendance is estimated to be 250-325 people.) Ross asked members for comments on that idea. Sjerven could provide more details about the Duluth Entertainment Convention

Center, although members had reservations about possible conflict with the annual Minnesota GIS/LIS Conference.

Sjerven said that the location for the 2018 Mn GIS/LIS conference is still being determined; the GIS/LIS board is considering Bemidji as a possible new venue. Considerations include:

- Convenient location for attendees from NW Minnesota and North Dakota, including staff from several of DNR's regional offices.
- Could attract some new attendees.
- Conference attendance would likely be lower, but attendees would stay in the area, instead of many of them going home each night.
- Member survey was generally positive about the idea.
- Need to verify that the exhibit space would work well.

3. 2015 GIS/LIS conference: Sjerven, 2015 conference chair, reported that there are already eight confirmed workshops and that the call for papers will go out in two weeks. Since it will be the Consortium's 25th annual conference, there are plans to reflect back on the organization's history; if anyone has suggestions for historical materials that could be used, please let him know. The Thursday 3:30 – 5:00 timeslot is planned to have fewer sessions, likely just one track of lightning talks, to encourage further networking. For more information, see the [conference webpage](#).

Other suggestions from members:

- Spotlight volunteer GIS, perhaps via lightning talks, to illustrate how attendees find ways to use GIS to contribute to their communities outside their jobs.
- Bring K-12 teachers into the conference to talk with others who are interested in bringing GIS into the classroom.
- Demonstrate editing using Open Street Map.
- Increase participation from the utility and healthcare industries. For example, a presentation at the December Pine to Prairie user group meeting explored how GIS is being used in hospitals via sensors to track the real-time location of equipment to improve care and increase efficiency.

Governor's Geospatial Commendation Award ([slides](#) 31-33)

Rader notified members that nominations for this year's Governor's geospatial commendation awards are due June 30, 2015. The award is for activities that exemplify the use of GIS to improve services within Minnesota. Criteria, information on how to nominate a project and a list of past winners are on the [award webpage](#).

A Council awards committee evaluates the nominations and makes recommendations to advise the CGIO, the CIO, and the Governor's Office. Volunteers are needed for this year's committee. Geurts volunteered.

ACTION ITEMS:

- **Members:** Consider nominating an organization or project this year, and publicize this to your sector.
- **Ross, Rader:** Recruit several more volunteers to serve on the committee.

Preparing for the Next Term of the Statewide Council ([slides 34-35](#))

Rader reminded members that all council member terms expire June 30, 2015. The next member terms run two years, through June 30, 2017. All members are appointed through the Open Appointments process administered by the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State (OSS). The OSS press release will be out May 4 and the application deadline is May 26; applications can be accepted until positions are filled. Applications and additional information are on the [OSS website](#).

ACTION ITEM: Members: Consider whether you want apply for the next two-year term on the council or who else you would recommend to represent your sector.

Minnesota Geospatial Commons – Release to Others ([slides 36-41](#))

Ross noted two milestones made possible by the Commons: The DNR Data Deli and the GeoGateway search tool have both been retired. For 14 years, the Deli distributed geospatial data about Minnesota's natural resources; that data has now been migrated to the Commons. For many years, the GeoGateway provided the capability to search many data sites simultaneously; this function is now provided by the Commons. A press release to more widely publicize the Commons was sent out in mid-March.

Rader said that more detailed guidance is needed on what metadata is required for publishers to participate in the Commons. Existing metadata created by several potential publishers is too minimal but there is not enough guidance on what else they should do. The current guiding principle in the [Commons governance document](#) states that "Resources published on the Commons must have sufficient documentation to allow a potential user to determine if they are fit for a particular use." She showed several examples of how metadata on the Commons has been essential to answer user questions.

Member discussion:

- Important to follow the current guiding principle in order to maintain the quality of the Commons.
- Metropolitan Council staff cannot use data from some other organizations because the metadata is insufficient.
- Is more metadata training needed?
Yes. Metadata educational materials and training have been on the back burner for a long time and need attention. Publishers who want to create sufficient documentation don't have enough guidance to do so. Metadata creation software also needs attention. This is a great "teachable moment"!
- Is MnDOT's geodetic data on the Commons?
The data itself is not, but there is a good [overview metadata record](#) on the Commons which then points users to a MnDOT website for more details and data access. If an organization already has an excellent website, particularly for the distribution of complicated and detailed data, there is no need to duplicate that on the Commons. Instead, users of the Commons should be able to find the site and have enough information to decide whether or not the data would likely be useful for their purposes.
- The Metadata Workgroup should reconvene to recommend more specific guidance on what metadata is required for the Commons.

ACTION ITEM: Rader and Kotz will convene the Metadata Workgroup to recommend specific metadata requirements and guidance for the Commons.

Data Sharing Discussion ([slides 42-46](#))

Free and Open Data Initiative update: Maas submitted an updated status map as of March 20 (slide 43). For more information on the initiative, see Maas' [presentation](#) from the January 10, 2014 council meeting as well as the [MetroGIS Free & Open Data Resource Page](#).

Data sharing: Ross provided an update on MnGeo's interim project to collect available parcel, road centerline and address point data from counties until the NG9-1-1 project develops an on-going process for collecting the data (see slide 44 for a status map; note that the "refused to provide data" category can mean that the county is currently unable to share or that they feel their data isn't good enough yet to share).

He then posed the following questions:

As we request data sharing, we will be asking:

- Is it OK to share your data with other governments? (for example, the Census Bureau has requested data from 14 Minnesota counties; 12 counties approved of MnGeo sharing their data with the Census and two preferred that MnGeo refer the Census directly to them.)
- Is it OK to share your data beyond government?

Due to time constraints, this discussion was postponed until the next meeting.

MnGeo Priority Projects and Initiatives ([slides 47-57](#))

See slides and [handout](#) for descriptions and status of each of MnGeo's main priority projects (all projects are done in partnership with other organizations): Addresses; Air Photos; ArcGIS Online; Drainage Records Modernization; Geospatial Commons; NG9-1-1 (including Parcels, Street Centerlines and Address Points).

Next Meeting

The council's next meeting will be June 24, 2015, Blazing Star Room, Ground Floor, Centennial Office Building, 658 Cedar St., St. Paul, MN 55155

Meeting adjourned. Minutes by Nancy Rader.