

MnGeo Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council

November 29, 2011 Meeting Minutes

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

Attendees

Members: Brad Anderson, City of Moorhead; David Arbeit, MnGeo; James Bunning, Scott County; Will Craig, University of Minnesota; Craig Erickson, Minnesota National Guard; Rick Gelbmann, Metropolitan Council; Jon Gustafson, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Blaine Hackett, GIS Rangers; Doug Hansen, Crow Wing County; John Mackiewicz, WSB & Associates; Stephen Misterek, City of Minneapolis; Tim Ogg, Board of Water and Soil Resources; Mark Olsen, Pollution Control Agency; Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County; Ben Richason, St. Cloud State University; Kirk Schneidawind, Minnesota School Boards Association; Terry Schneider, MetroGIS; Gerry Sjerven, Natural Resources Research Institute; Steve Swazee, SharedGeo; Kody Thurnau, ARDC; Michelle Trager, Rice County; Sally Wakefield, Envision Minnesota.

Non-Members: Jeff Bloomquist, Farm Service Agency; Christian Christensen, McLeod County (via cellphone); Chris Cialek, MnGeo; Brad Henry, University of Minnesota; Ann Higgins, League of Minnesota Cities; John Hoshal, MnGeo; Steve Kloiber, Dept. of Natural Resources; Fred Logman, MnGeo; Carolyn Parnell, OET; Nancy Rader, MnGeo; Miles Strain, Aerometric; Ron Wencil, U.S. Geological Survey

Welcome

David Arbeit called the meeting to order. Participants introduced themselves.

Council Background and Purpose

Arbeit reviewed the background and purpose of the Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council. It was authorized by [legislation](#) in 2009 and has been reauthorized until June 2015. It is part of “virtual MnGeo”, providing advice and facilitating communication with Minnesota’s geospatial community. The Chief Geospatial Information Officer (Arbeit) reports to the Chief Information Officer (Parnell). Organizationally, MnGeo is currently in the Department of Administration, but it will move to OET sometime in 2012. There is also a [State Government Geospatial Advisory Council](#) that focuses on issues of concern to state agencies and a number of [committees and workgroups](#).

Parnell welcomed council members and briefly described the [IT Consolidation Initiative](#), the state’s legislatively mandated initiative to consolidate all executive branch IT under the direction of the CIO. The geospatial community already provides many examples of the collaborative efforts that the initiative is designed to encourage. Parnell intends to be a champion for IT, including geospatial, and will carry our interests forward to the Governor and the legislature. She strongly encouraged members to let her know their ideas, questions and concerns.

Reinhardt added that much work over a number of years by many well-informed and innovative people laid the groundwork for where we are now. Arbeit then noted that about half of the members are new to the council so there should be many fresh ideas.

MnGeo Update

Arbeit highlighted six main areas for MnGeo in 2012:

1. **Transition to OET** in the context of IT transformation as a whole. The outcome promises to be good for MnGeo and for the geospatial community.
2. **Parcel Business Plan:** *Covered below.*
3. **Continued Acquisition of Orthoimagery and LiDAR:** *Orthoimagery covered below.* An emphasis for LiDAR will be to make the data available in more usable forms for decision-makers.
4. **Geospatial Commons:** The [Commons](#) is intended to provide a single place to find and share Minnesota's geospatial data.
5. **State Data Practices Act:** MnGeo and the councils will help advise the Information Policy Analysis Division as it works to revise the State's Data Practices Act to remove obstacles to data sharing involving issues of charges, liability, and protected data.
6. **Enterprise License Agreement (ELA) with Esri:** The current ELA expires in June 2012 and a subsequent agreement is being negotiated.

Arbeit plans to retire early 2012; the job posting for his successor as CGIO will soon be public.

Notes of June 30, 2011 Meeting

Craig requested that these documents be called "minutes" rather than "notes". No objections were raised.

Motion to approve the June 30, 2011 [council meeting minutes](#) (Craig/Gelbmann). Motion carried.

Discussion about Communications MnGeo/Stakeholders

Nine members spoke for a few minutes each about ways that they communicate with the portion of the geospatial community that they represent on the council. There wasn't time to have each member speak, so this will be continued at the council's next meeting.

Reinhardt: As a Ramsey County Commissioner, she provides updates to the county board, whose meetings are televised, and to the Association of Minnesota Counties board, and participates in conferences, workshops and committee meetings. She helps develop legislative policy planks for issues of concern to local government. She continues to encourage the geospatial community to communicate what's involved in GIS and the benefits it provides so that decision makers see its value; often, it looks too easy!

Ogg: BWSR passes funding through to local entities for soil and water planning. They provide general GIS training, put on an annual conference, and answer questions.

Gustafson (new member): The Army Corps of Engineers has interagency programs to communicate about GIS; within the St. Paul District, they have a GIS community of practice.

Wakefield: The non-profit sector is comprised mostly of emerging users whose budgets are tight and uncertain. The [Non-Profit User Group](#) and the [Minnesota Council of Nonprofits](#) provide ways to share information. They are very interested in data access issues, especially since license agreements often apply only to government and/or academic sectors and do not cover nonprofits.

Richason (new member): The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system includes a diverse group of geospatial users, including surveying departments as well as geography. The University System's Esri ELA has been critical for providing students access to software. AutoCAD software is also widely used.

Gelbmann: The Metropolitan Council makes extensive use of GIS, including the areas of environmental services, transit and housing. The council facilitates MetroGIS and also has an internal users group.

Olsen: PCA communicates with the public via the web and public meetings; water quality is a very visible area of concern. Board meetings provide a mechanism to target resources to the most critical problems. PCA is also a liaison to the EPA's National Environmental Information Exchange Network ([NEIEN](#)) program which updates national databases with local information.

Trager (new member): She will provide increased representation from non-metro counties and is involved with the [Southeastern GIS Users Group](#).

Sjerven (new member): Through his connections with the NRRI and the GIS/LIS Consortium, he communicates with the education sector as well as Consortium members. As the Consortium's webmaster, he maintains their website, formats the GIS/LIS Newsletter, and sends out e-announcements. The website and newsletter are available to anyone via the web; e-announcements go to Consortium members. He noted that many decisions that affect GIS are made by public works and engineering staff and may not involve GIS staff at all, so we need to reach non-GIS staff more effectively.

Craig noted that the University of Minnesota has a listserv of about 80 people who are interested in GIS. Electronic copies of council handouts and minutes provide material to help council members communicate with their sectors.

Parcel Business Plan Project

Logman reported on the current status of the project [A Business Plan for Statewide Parcel Data Integration for Minnesota](#) – see his [overview](#) which includes a list of people participating on the project steering committee.

Discussion:

- Counties will benefit from this project too since they will not have to keep responding to repeated requests for parcel data from individual agencies. It may also help county-to-county and county-to-city data sharing.
- The [Digital Cadastral Data Committee](#) will be a core advisory body for this project. They will soon be forwarding a parcel attribute standard to the Standards Committee for review; the standard is intended to facilitate data sharing. The committee's next meeting is December 2.
- The [MetroGIS parcel data integration processes](#) will be examined as part of this project; they likely will form the core element of the statewide project and have provided the basis for the DCDC's proposed attribute standard.
- Since the status and policies vary widely between counties, the business plan will have to propose different strategies to account for these differences. For counties that do not yet have digital spatial parcel data, the strategies would aim to enhance their capacity to create it.
- The plan will be operational rather than high-level.
- West Virginia also has a [2011 FGDC CAP grant](#) to develop a statewide parcel business plan.

- Issues involved in parcel data sharing are examples of issues that may need to be addressed in the effort to revise the State's Data Practices Act (*covered above in the MnGeo Update*).
- This topic should be covered at the Association of Minnesota Counties annual conference.

Action Item: Reinhardt will suggest to the Association of Minnesota Counties that the parcel business plan project be a topic at AMC's annual conference December 2012.

Future Imagery Collects ([slides](#))

Kloiber provided an overview of Minnesota's [Spring Aerial Imagery Program](#). The program, co-managed by DNR and MnGeo, is an outgrowth of a multi-agency effort to update the National Wetland Inventory for Minnesota. Current leaf-off imagery is needed in order to identify and delineate wetlands; spring data collections show seasonal high wetland boundaries. The imagery is 0.5-meter resolution with four spectral bands (red, green, blue, near infrared), is orthorectified and stereo, and is tiled by USGS quarter-quadrangle. See slide 5 for a project status map.

The main source of program funding is the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources ([LCCMR](#)). Additional funding was provided by partners: USGS, NOAA, DNR, PCA, Metropolitan Council, Metropolitan Mosquito Control District, and Dakota, McLeod, Murray, Rice, Scott, St. Louis and Sibley counties.

Cialek explained that partnership funding has been used to provide general support for the program and to improve imagery for specific areas above the basic specifications, including increasing resolution, completing a specific area of interest, and improving positional accuracy. Partnership opportunities will be available for the Central MN flights (2013) and the NW MN flights (2015) (see [map](#)).

Christian Christensen, GIS Director at McLeod County, coordinated his county's participation in the 2011 imagery buy-up. He had been invited to speak about the experience during the meeting, but due to difficulties with the phone connection, he was able only to listen but not to speak. Therefore, he was invited to submit a written statement [*add url when posted online*] afterward to be included with these minutes.

Anyone interested in more information about buy-ups or with a suggestion for improving the program should contact either Cialek or Kloiber. Completed imagery is available via [MnGeo's WMS service](#); the 2011 imagery for southern Minnesota is anticipated to be on the WMS in January 2012.

Discussion:

- Anyone interested in participating in buy-ups for 2013 imagery should indicate their interest to Cialek by the end of Fall 2012 (an exact deadline has not yet been determined). A commitment to participate and a signed Joint Powers Agreement are needed prior to finalizing the contract with the vendor in January 2013.
- The total cost of imagery varies depending on many factors including fuel prices, weather, compactness of the region to be flown and economies of scale.
- Consideration of buy-ups needs to be timed appropriately for local government budget cycles.
- In 2011, Rice County traded their proprietary LiDAR data for a buy-up to 1-foot resolution imagery. Trager felt that she was kept well-informed during the process and that the delivered imagery looks great.

- MnGeo may be able to host additional local orthoimagery on its WMS; anyone interested in discussing that option should contact Cialek.
- The Metropolitan Council saves significant time and money by using the MnGeo WMS rather than storing the imagery in-house.
- MnGeo will be exploring transferring the WMS into a more secure, reliable data center.
- It is possible that some of northeast MN could be flown in 2014 rather than 2015.
- The case for buy-ups needs to be made to the policymakers who decide budgets, and needs to be put in terms of other decisions that the policymakers need to make about issues such as crime, housing or transit. It would be helpful to have materials or a tool that would demonstrate what can be done with better resolution imagery.
- Has there been a statewide needs assessment for imagery? One effort at strategic planning for imagery was done in 2004 as part of the MSDI I-Plan initiative. Click [here](#) for more information.
- There is interest in forming an Imagery Committee. Cialek and Kloiber presented the idea as part of the “Aerial Imagery in Minnesota: Continued progress; improved collaboration” panel at the MN GIS/LIS Conference October 2011. If this idea moves forward, an organizing meeting would be held in early 2012.
- Informal communications among Metropolitan Council and metro county staff is helping to coordinate imagery collection plans for the next ten or so years.
- Oblique imagery is another issue.

Election of Chair, Vice Chair, and Liaison to State Government Council

Motion: Nominate Victoria Reinhardt to serve as chair of the Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council for FY2012-13 (Schneider/Mackiewicz). Motion passed unanimously.

Motion: Nominate John Mackiewicz to serve as vice-chair of the Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council for FY2012-13 (Gelbmann/Wakefield). Motion passed unanimously.

No member could commit to serving as liaison to all the meetings of the State Government Geospatial Advisory Council; however, Misterek volunteered to attend the January 10 meeting and likely several more if other members could cover the remaining meetings. This shared arrangement could be a good change as it would encourage more Statewide members to connect with State Government members.

Member Needs and Concerns

Swazee advocated that MnGeo and the Statewide Council regain more of a sense of advocacy on current geospatial issues. An example of a recent hot topic is the [controversy](#) surrounding the LightSquared company’s broadband proposal that may interfere with GPS use; see the Emergency Preparedness Committee’s [EPC Blog](#) for examples of other issues.

- Council members should more actively help MnGeo formulate meeting agendas and topics covered. There could be a standing agenda item for “hot topics”.
- Some topics may be better suited to communication in ways other than at the quarterly meetings.

2012 Statewide Council Meetings

- February 29, May 30, August 29, November 28.

Meeting Adjourned. Notes by Nancy Rader.