Nebraska GIS Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes -- March 1, 2001

Present were (authorized to vote +):

Judy Backhaus	+	Clerk of the Legislature
Mahendra Bansal	+	Nebraska Department of Natural Resources
McKenzie Barry		LPNNRD
Lash Chaffin	+	League of Nebraska Municipalities
Blaine Dinwiddie	+	Omaha Public Power District
Steve Frederick	+	Nebraska Health and Human Services System
Dick Genrich	+	Nebraska Department of Roads
Erik Hubl		Lancaster County Assessor
Ed Kelley		Nebraska Department of Roads
Carl Kinkade		Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Dept.
Mele Koneya	+	Nebraska Game and Parks
Mark Kuzila	+	Conservation and Survey Division - UNL
Bob Martin	+	Department of Property Assessment and Taxation
John Miyoshi	+	Nebraska Association of Resources Districts
Chris Nelsen		Sarpy County Surveyor Office
Dick Nelson	+	Nebraska Health and Human Services System
James Richardson		National Geodetic Survey
Scott Richert		Lancaster County Assessor's Office
Steve Schafer	+	Chief Information Officer
Duane Stott	+	Scottsbluff County
Stu Sutherland		Sarpy County Surveyor's Office
Wayne Vanek		Natural Resources Conservation Services - USDA
Cliff Welsh	+	Nebr. Association of County Officials
Dayle Williamson	+	Nebraska Department of Natural Resources
Paul Yamamoto	+	Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality
Larry Zink		GIS Steering Committee Coordinator

Complete Meeting Agenda

MAJOR MEETING TOPICS

Multipurpose Land Information System Guidelines
Dept. of Roads GIS Strategic Plan
NITC Technical Panel Request
Election of Officers
Update on Legislation
OMB I-Teams

National Hydrographic Dataset
LPNNRD Water Well Contamination Demo
Str. Cmte. Symposium Booth
Future Meeting Schedule
GIS/LIS Association and Symposium
Voting Record

NOTICE OF MEETING: A public notice of the meeting, pursuant to Section 84-1411 R.R. S. 1943, was published in the Lincoln Journal-Star on Thursday, February 22, 2001.

ROLL CALL: Chairperson Lash Chaffin called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 pm. Twelve duly authorized representatives were present at the time of the roll call. Therefore, a quorum was present to conduct business.

MINUTES: Chairperson Lash Chaffin asked for any comments or corrections on the minutes from the January meeting. Dayle said that the second generation of DEMs have been completed for a block, not statewide. Dayle Williamson moved for the minutes to be approved with corrections as noted. John Miyoshi seconded. The motion passed *(see vote #1 on Voting Record sheet).*

ADVISORY COMMITTE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT MULTIPURPOSE LAND INFORMATION SYSTEMS:
Erik reported there are three new draft sections available for Steering Committee's review, the introduction (I), a section describing GIS in general (II), and a section dealing with other data layers (IX). Any comments or suggestions should be submitted to the Advisory Committee by May so that this document can be presented for the Steering Committee's approval.

In addition, the Advisory Committee noted the need to periodically review the entire document for needed revisions and requests authorization from the Steering Committee to return to previous, already adopted drafts, to make corrections and edits as necessary. Any significant structural or policy changes would be referred back to the Steering Committee for approval.

Lash asked if there were any problems with allowing the Advisory Committee editing authority. No concerns were expressed.

Erik noted that the Advisory Committtee is committed to completing sections on "Implementation Plan and Strategies" and "Needs Assessment" and some additional items in the Appendix. Once these two sections are completed, the Advisory Committee will have completed at least a couple more sections than it had set as its initial goals and commitments relative to this project. Due to other time commitments, the Committee would like to dissolve itself in June or July of this year. Erik noted that this will still leave sections 10-13 of the original hypothetical outline unwritten. However, the Advisory Committee feels the document will stand alone, as it is, and that may be these sections can be written by another group.

Erik also suggested, that the Steering Committee needs to think about how the document will be maintained in the future and how the guidelines or standards adopted by the Steering Committee and incorporated in the document will be enforced.

The Steering Committee members expressed their appreciation and thanks for all the good work of the Advisory Committee.

NATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC DATASET (NHD): Larry reported that Josh Lear, DNR, has completed the revised line work for the high resolution NHD pilot project in the Logan Creek Watershed in NE Nebraska. In the next month they hope to arrange additional onsite training and complete the conflation of the attributes for this initial NHD pilot project.

Larry noted that the Steering Committee had previously approved the concept of a grant proposal to be submitted to the NITC Community Technology Grant Funds to seek grant funding for development of NHD for at least another watershed. Larry has been working with Lower Platte North NRD, DNR CSD, and DEQ to lay plans for follow-up proposals to build on what has been learned by and the momentum of the initial NHD pilot project. From the pilot project, it has become clear that the bulk of the staff time required to develop a high resolution NHD involves the on-screen digitizing of the stream locations and shapes. This is necessary because currently there does not exist comprehensive hydrographic digital line work, at the 1:24,000 scale, for Nebraska surface water features. In light of this, the agencies involved in this effort have decided to explore the feasibility of utilizing student labor for this part of the development process. Mark Kuzila, CSD, has been very helpful in exploring this approach. This new approach is reflected in the LPNNRD's NITC grant proposal, which is focused on the Salt Creek Watershed in Lancaster and Saunders County. It is hoped that the NITC will fund this next NHD watershed project, and that this will serve to build on the interagency cooperation and momentum, while more comprehensive funding for a statewide effort is explored.

In pursuit of more comprehensive funding for a statewide effort, Larry has also been working with these same agencies to develop a draft prospectus to share with Rep. Bereuter, in an effort to explore the possibility of securing federal funding for a statewide NHD effort. This prospectus is built around the same concepts in the LPNNRD NITC grant proposal, including the use of student digitizers, but expanded statewide. This propectus estimates that a high-resolution NHD could be developed for the entire state for approximately $1.8 million, over a 4-5 year period. This estimate compares with a USGS estimate of approximately $5 million.

Erik Hubl observed that there are two separate issues involved here. One is the completion of the Salt Creek project the other is completion of the hydrographic database statewide. If the state initiative goes through, then the question becomes would the Salt Creek initiative be threatened. Larry commented that they are operating on two different time lines. John Miyoshi added that the team working in this area needs to be kept together and working in case something does happen.

Larry noted that a major unknown with this project is how the use of student labor will affect the project and its outcome.

Larry and John Miyoshi indicated that the grant process has been helpful in terms of getting the interested parties together to get this project going. There appears to be support for moving forward with the project concept as developed from the Logan Creek project. Larry indicated that if the approach to Rep. Bereuter does not pan out, the next recourse will be to attempt to organize state, federal and local agency support for a watershed-by-watershed development effort. It appears likely that USGS will be very limited in terms of the resources that they will be able to apply to this effort.

Lash said that Mary Harding from the Lottery Commission is interested in funding an intergovernmental project with environmental impact.

Steve Schafer commented that it would be a good idea to keep Lieutenant Governor Maurstad informed about the progress of this project.

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF ROADS STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW: Dick Genrich reported that the Department of Roads hired a consultant and began development of their strategic plan last October. It was completed in January.

The reason they began creating the plan was to redefine GIS use in NDOR for the next five years. Dick indicated that he is getting close to retirement and there was a need to lay a solid organizational base and direction for the future of GIS within the agency. In addition, there was the intent to expand GIS use to the branch offices. The consultant approached the plan with a two step process. The first step was completion of a needs assessment, the second was creation of a plan.

The needs assessment began with educational meetings, visionary workshops, interviews with pertinent personnel, and prioritization workshops. Out of this assessment came a GIS vision for the department and a set of strategic goals. These include developing a realistic plan with a budget, establishing the use of GIS as an integral part of doing business, continuing to add to the GIS base map, building a widespread GIS team and attaining agency-wide buy in.

The main issues that surfaced were improvement of data access and creation of a GIS repository as well as the development of an easy to use web interface. The next step was to identify potential GIS projects and prioritize them. The criteria used were the degree of impact on business functions, the amount of data available, the number of possible uses for the data, and the frequency of use. From these criteria, the top applications to emerge were web access to a data repository, a GIS digilog, GIS base map enhancement, GIS pavement management interface and bridges. Dick noted that the commitment to incorporate the local road networks into the base map was included in the strategic plan.

The final recommendations ended with 29 stand-alone projects proposed. Each project has defined steps, a specific budget, schedules, expected benefits from completion, and duration. The consultant indicated that one of the most important elements to projects of this type is to obtain early success and follow through.

The proposed budget will be $3 million across a span of four years. To make the plan work, they need to keep up buy in at all levels and involve upper level management in the process as well as allocating appropriate staff. In addition, they will maintain realistic expectations and generate user involvement.

The guiding principal for the planning effort was to focus on the purpose of the application rather than on the technology.

Lash asked if they had any idea what it might cost to complete the proposed projects in a different way. Dick said they didn't know what the costs might be, but he did note that the bulk of the projected cost is for consultant labor and the department may not use that much consultant labor.

LOWER PLATTE NORTH ABIE WATER WELL CONTAMINATION PROJECT: John Miyoshi introduced Mackenzie Barry, wellhead coordinator for LPNNRD. She is here to explain how contaminants are located and how GIS is used to provide this information to the general public. Dayle added this is a good demonstration of how larger communities can help smaller ones.

Mackenzie explained that she works with three communities of varying sizes, Abie, population 100, Skyler, population 300, and Fremont, a much larger community. She noted that GIS graphic demonstrations were the easiest way to show them what is going on.

The federal government has mandated wellhead protection. The act is designed to help communities protect their public drinking water. Coordinators identify all sources of potential contamination in the last 20 years.

Abie is largely a farming community, including both a dairy farm and a hog farm. Specific points of contamination are marked with owner information and potential contaminants. Abandoned wells are also marked and are slated to be plugged.

Blaine asked how cooperative people are about giving out information and how she obtains her information. Mackenzie said that in small towns, people are readily willing to talk about such things. Steve asked how much time and effort it took to put the database together. Mackenzie said that Fremont took the longest to complete but Abie did not take much time.

Lash asked how they locate the abandon wells. Mackenzie said through old hand pumps and people who remember.

Larry asked if the data is available via a web. John says it is.

Erik asked if this presentation has been made to the city. Mackenzie says it has been. Erik asked what their reaction was. Mackenzie said they are amazed by the technology. They knew they had problems and that they were under federal mandate to clean it up so there was no ill will there.

Erik if there were any other issues or programs beyond well capping stemming from these database efforts. Mackenzie said that in Skyler, there were a lot of people interested in mapping sand points and in zoning.

Blaine asked if there were any privacy or regulation concerns by the citizens. Mackenzie said there were none.

NITC TECHNICAL PANEL REQUEST: Steve Schafer explained that Larry gave an update on the Steering Committee activities to the NITC's Technical Panel. Many things that are occurring with this body tie in well with efforts being made by the NITC, particularly in terms of standards and guidelines. The NITC has several work groups in place, but there is no one working on GIS standards. Because of this, the Technical Panel has adopted a formal resolution requesting the Steering Committee come forward with standards. They will then invite comments from the community and other interested parties and recommend adoption.

The main advantage to this action is that the NITC has the authority to set standards and agencies will be looking to them to serve this function.

Lash asked if reworking what has already been done and submitting it in the appropriate format would be acceptable. Steve said that the MPLIS committee has already done the initial work and that the federal government has completed standards regarding metadata.

Larry said the MPLIS committee is working on land record modernization and that the Steering Committee has already passed a resolution to forward the federal standards on metadata to the NITC. He noted that there is probably a need for a committee to be formed to look into Internet access guidelines. There are agencies working to web enable their GIS but little interagency dialogue is occurring.

Blaine said that developing statewide GIS guidelines is a very broad undertaking. It might be feasible to develop standards for a few databases but it is not really possible to create standards statewide. Steve said that standards are less important for a single entity developing a database or a series of databases. A database that relies on a number of entities needs to meet more stringent requirements in order to facilitate data sharing. The first question that needs to be answered is whether standards are needed in the first place.

Larry said there is merit in recommending the surface water database efforts follow the National Hydrographic Database guidelines.

Blaine said he is uncomfortable with the Steering Committee taking on such a major chunk of responsibility.

Mark asked who will be doing the work.

Larry explained this is more of an invitation than a request and there is no one better suited to fill the gap than the Steering Committee. If there is wide discomfort with attempting to address guidelines statewide, one option would be to address a single area the Steering Committee would be comfortable working with. Steve added that if this issue is too large, the only way to make any progress is to throw resources at it. The Steering Committee can begin this process and provide much needed direction and guidance.

Duane commented that one means of funding an initiative toward creating GIS guidelines statewide would be the Regional Centers.

The Steering Committee agreed to explore the need for forming an Advisory Committee on Internet mapping. Lash said interested parties should contact Larry. This is an opening for the Steering Committee to address issues that have come up over the past three years but not resolved.

GIS STEERING COMMITTEE BOOTH: Larry said that the Nebraska 2001 Symposium will be held May 7-10. Currently

the Steering Committee is registered as a benefactor cosponsor and the Committee needs to decide whether a to sponsor a booth. It is an additional $125 to have a booth.

Mark commented that CALMIT will have a booth as will CSD.

Cliff moved for the Steering Committee to have a booth. John seconded. The motion passed *(see vote #2 on Voting Record sheet).*

Mark asked who would be staffing the booth. Larry said he envisioned having brochures on the table without anyone manning the booth. He added that it would be worthwhile for the Committee to consider investing in a reusable banner. Lash asked how much it would cost. Larry said in the neighborhood of $150. Lash volunteered to buy one for the Committee.

ELECTIONS: Larry explained that Steering Committee elections occur once a year with officer terms running from July to July. The May meeting is the last meeting before July, therefore, elections are scheduled for that meeting. A copy of Committee voting procedures has been included with the agenda packet for review.

PROPOSED MEETING SCHEDULE: Larry said that in the last few years the Committee has adopted a twelve month meeting schedule based on meeting the first Thursday of every other month. Larry noted that he was proposing such a schedule for the next twelve months. The only exception would be the May meeting, which will occur immediately following the close of the Symposium on May 10th.

Dick Nelson moved to adopt the proposed schedule. Dick Genrich seconded. The motion passed *(see vote #3 on Voting Record sheet).*

UPDATE ON LEGISLATION: Larry noted that he had compiled a list of proposed legislation that he thought might be of interest to the Seering Committee and it was attached to the agenda. He said that LB170/171 are of interest to the Committee. This is legislation submitted by Cathy Lang to add language that would provide the Dept. of Property Assessment and Taxation with the authority to use a particular fund for a land records modernization initiative. Larry indicated that it was his understanding that this would include all counties, not just the ones for which she has assessment responsibility.

LB617 is NACO's bill to add a $5 filing fee. $3 would go to the counties for an IT fund. This bill was killed in committee, largely because county officials were not in agreement. Larry quickly reviewed the other pieces of proposed legislation on his list.

NEBRASKA GIS/LIS ASSOCIATION AND SYMPOSIUM: Scott Richert reported that they have received 100 membership renewals for the GIS/LIS Association. He also noted that it is time for election of officers and the Association is looking for nominees. He also reported that there is still room for more presentations at the symposium if anyone is interested. Also, registrations are being accepted online now. Scott also reported that they have arrange for registrants to the ArcView class to receive three continuing education credits.

Larry said that the Steering Committee receives one free registration for being a sponsor and another free space for sponsoring a booth. Larry plans to use one of the free spots, which leaves the other one available for another Committee member.

BECOMING AN IMPLEMENTATION TEAM (I-TEAM) IN CONJUNCTION WITH OMB INITIATIVE: Larry explained that the OMB has launched an initiative designed to provide them with a more active role in encouraging and facilitating intergovernmental coordination. Up until now, the FGDC has tried to get coordination efforts moving but had limited real authority or motivating power. The OMB has significant influence over agency budgets and indicate they plan to use that influence to spur further spatial data coordination efforts.

A major conceptual tool OMB and FGDC are proposing to use is the formation of what they are calling "Implementation Teams" or I-Teams. The concept involves pulling together the relevant state, federal and local agencies for a given geographic area to identify and develop specific plans or proposals for developing priority spatial databases. As part of the concept, the OMB will then work at the federal budget process level to attempt to integrate support for these plans into the different federal agencies budgets.

Larry reported that some states are already moving in the direction of I-Team development, but the door still seems to be open. Larry noted that this initiative started in the final days of the Clinton Administration, and it still is not clear what level of support it will have from the new Administration. The Steering Committee's strategic plan could provide the foundation upon which to build an "I-Team" plan. Overall coordination with the federal government agencies has the potential for being

highly beneficial, though up to now not much has been done to that end on either side.

Duane asked what the process is to initiate action on this issue.

Larry said there is no set defined process at the moment. OMG/FGDC seem to be opening a door and looking for state and local GIS organizations to create the process. One of the problems has been a desire at the top level of federal agencies to coordinate but little information seemed to flow down to the lower levels. At this point, the initiative is entirely at the Steering Committee's discretion. One approach would be to convene a broader meeting of interested agencies to discuss the I-Team initiative, priority databases, and identify individuals interested in working to develop more detailed implmentation proposals. We would need to be careful so that we don't just spend time duplicating what we already have done with the Strategic Plan. We could possible start by getting feedback on the concepts and proposals put forward in the Strategic Plan. Larry also noted that since Nathan McCaleb has moved out of the state, it could also be a good time and process to identify a possible replacement federal agency representative to the Steering Commiittee.

Larry commented that from his perspective there appeared to be three main areas that could potentially really benefit from increased collaboration: a surface water database, local land records, and roads.

Duane said that it is important for the Steering Committee to take advantage of this invitation. It was generally agreed that Larry should pursue this avenue to the extent that he has the time.

REPORTS ON GIS ACTIVITIES FROM MEMBER AGENCIES: Mahendra reported that in working with the DEMs, the USGS changed their scale measurement from feet to decimeters. The first generation was done in feet and they have agreed to continue to do the DEMs in feet but will also have them done in decimeters. The national database will be in decimeters, the state in feet.

Dayle said the USGS is looking at a 22% cut in funding. That could stall many cost sharing programs that they are involved with. Mahendra added this is the last time the USGS will provide training at no charge.

Larry commented that the potential cuts are one reason the NHD grant proposal includes minimal USGS involvement.

Dick Genrich reported that they have 51 maps online now and are working on getting all 500 city maps online.

Larry noted that Jim Merchant has in the past represented Nebraska during planning sessions for the regional MidAmerican Symposiums. However, Jim has indicated that he is currently over committed and can not take on this responsibility. Larry indicated that he felt Nebraska should be involved and that he will assume that role unless unless someone else is willing to do so.

Dayle Williamson said he is retiring and this will be his last Steering Committee meeting. The other Steering Committee wished Dayle well and thanked him for his involvement and leadership in Nebraska GIS development.

There was no further business. The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 10th, 1:30 pm in the Cornhusker Hotel, immediately following the close of the GIS Symposium.

	Roll Call	Min. #1	Symposium Booth #2	Prop. Meeting Schedule #3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8
Vote Tallies for 3/1/01 GIS Str. Cmte. Meeting									
DAS - Steve Schafer (Lori McClurg)	P	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	.
DEQ - Tom Lamberson Dennis Burling, Paul Yamamoto	P	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	.
CSD - Mark Kuzila Jim Merchant	A/P	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	.
NGPC - Mele Koneya Bruce Sackett	P	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	.
NRC - Dayle Williamson Mahendra Bansal	P	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	.
PTD - Cathy Lang Bob Martin, Scott Gaines	P	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	.
PRO - Lauren Hill Dan Hoffman	A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
DOR - Dick Genrich Ed Kelley, (John Craig)	P	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	.
St.Surv - Jim Brown	A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Clk of Leg. - Pat O'Donnell Judy Backhaus	P	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	.
Nathan McCaleb Steve Peasley, Wayne Vanek	P	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	.
John Miyoshi Doug Steinke	P	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	.
Blaine Dinwiddie Steve Larson	A/P	NV	+	+	.	.	.	.	.
Cliff Welsh	P	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	.
Larry Worrell Jim Langtry	A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Lash Chaffin	P	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	.
Duane Stott	P	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	.
Scott McIntyre	A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Dick Nelson Steve Frederick	A/P	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	.
TOTALS	**12/15 - P**	**13 - +**	**15 - +**	**15 - +**	.	.	.	.	.

"P"=present, "A"=absent, "+"=voting for, "-"=voting against, "NV"=not voting