Working Group Report Summary

8 of 13 Working Groups responded:

- **Current Plan/Charter – 100%** have a current plan or charter for collection.
- **Performance Measures – 38%** have performance measures
- **Metadata - Only the Biological Data Working Group** had metadata discoverable through the FGDC Clearinghouse. (The other working groups focus on standards development, not data development).
- **Data Sharing Policy - Only the Standards Working Group** has a data sharing policy. (The other working groups believe data access information policies vary by program and agency).

Recommended for Discontinuation:

- **Earth Cover Working Group**
- **Tribal Working Group**

No Response From:

- **Clearinghouse Working Group** (the questions did not apply to the working group's activities)
- **Earth Cover Working Group**
- **Facilities Working Group**
- **Sustainable Forest Working Group**
- **Tribal Working Group**

Areas of Concern:

- Need process for "'fast and broad' consensus" – Homeland security activities include a large number of public, private, and non-profit organizations whose responsibilities range from local to international in geographic scope and whose potential roles and contributions vary significantly in type and size. Achieving consensus among these different parties is a challenging task. This challenge is compounded by the urgency of the activity, which requires quick action to stay ahead of this quickly developing field. In addition, security concerns that restrict the sharing of working group information outside the group inhibit the ability of members to represent their constituents.
- Need for continual resources for standards – As a consequence of the factors described above, standards that support homeland security applications are likely to require continual support for development and implementation. In part this is a consequence of "fast and broad" consensus. This approach likely will result in a triage of action, in which standards will be achieved for those items for which consensus can be reached quickly. These items will require continual attention as homeland security needs and applications mature; meanwhile, more contentious issues will require additional attention. For items for which no single solution can be found, it will be helpful to support registries of solutions to aid the community. In addition to support for this baseline of standards and registries, resources will be needed for outreach, training, and implementation of standards and related approaches, and to ensure that the standards are kept current with maturing applications.

- Hydrologic Unit Codes – There is interest in updating standards for Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUCs), but no commitment of personnel to develop standards. USGS, USDA, and EPA have strong interest in HUCs, but there is need for management to commit time to update HUC standards.
- Address Data Standard – Resolution is needed for further processing of the Address Data Standard, which completed public review in 2003. Key people in URISA object to this standard because it "does not support best practices in local government addressing activities" (see http://groups.yahoo.com/group/URISAAddressStandards/message/6), but is this an obstacle to FGDC endorsement of the Address Data Standard?

Lessons Learned:

- Security concerns – A unique factor added by homeland security applications is the need to safeguard some information and processes. Challenges in this area include different views regarding what is sensitive and authorities for protecting information, and contradictions between the need to restrict access to information and to provide for broad participation in processes and data development and sharing.
- Tabular/statistical databases/tables, with geospatial attributes or referencing, are not held to Circular A-16 metadata requirements. "Stove-pipes" are an obstacle to providing training to the statistical data community within agencies where GIS applications operate apart from statistical research applications.
- Standards development takes time – ISO directives recommend three years between approval of a project proposal and final approval and publication of a standard. While the standards process is presented as a sequence of steps, the need to reiterate steps often lengthens the time for standards development.
- The framework standards effort that began under Geospatial One-Stop and was later transferred to FGDC demonstrates the need for a "middle way" for standards development. That effort was top-down in directing organizations to develop standards, but did not collect requirements for standards, which made it difficult to justify the need to develop these standards.