

**2004 NSDI Cooperative Agreements Program
Category 3: Institution Building and Coordination
Final Project Report**

January 18, 2006

Agreement #: 04HQAG0177

Organization:

East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC)
631 N. Wymore Rd., Suite 100
Maitland, FL 32751
www.ecfrpc.org

Project Leader:

Mr. Mark Sievers
phone: (407) 623-1075, ext. 310
fax: (407) 623-1084
email: sievers@ecfrpc.org

Collaborating Organizations:

Florida Department of Transportation, District Five (FDOT)
133 S. Semoran Blvd.
Orlando, FL 32807
Ms. Simone Babb
phone: (407) 482-7876
fax: (407) 275-4188
email: simone.babb@dot.state.fl.us
<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/publicinformationoffice/moreDOT/districts/dist5.htm>

Project Narrative

The Central Florida GIS initiative, begun in May 2001, is a regional GIS coordination effort encompassing 10 counties (Brevard, Flagler, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Polk, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia), with a primary focus on getting organizations to share data and work together on other common concerns. The initiative includes an

online data clearinghouse that has been an NGDC node since October 2003. The 2004 CAP provided funding for a major update of the initiative's strategic plan, new outreach efforts, and planning for an annual regional GIS conference. Progress on each of these efforts is summarized below.

Strategic Plan

The CFGIS Strategic Plan was originally drafted in January 2002, and was incrementally updated in early 2003 and early 2004. To begin the major update, the CFGIS Steering Committee held a 2 1/2 hour Strategic Planning meeting on March 22, 2005. A focus of discussion at that meeting revolved around coordination with other Central Florida programs such as myregion.org and the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council's Regional Mapping Program.

At the May 10 CFGIS Steering Committee meeting, staff presented draft questions for a survey of GIS users in Central Florida to provide newer information for strategic planning purposes. The draft survey closely followed survey questions from 2001, but also included new questions. Steering Committee members suggested several changes to the draft, primarily additional response choices for a number of questions. The Committee also decided at this meeting to hold a second strategic planning workshop.

A draft strategic plan update was presented to the Steering Committee at the June 7 Strategic Planning Workshop. One major topic of discussion was whether the ECFRPC board should serve as the policy board for CFGIS while the Steering Committee focused more on technical and coordination issues. Other topics included looking at broadening funding sources for the initiative, how the Regional Mapping Program fit in with CFGIS, and using annual action plans to help implement the CFGIS Strategic Plan.

The Steering Committee met again on June 28, with a revised draft strategic plan update provided prior to the meeting that included a new section on the Regional Mapping Program. Committee members recommended several changes to the draft. It was also noted by staff that over 100 survey responses had been received, and that the survey information would be incorporated into the plan update. A draft annual action plan was also handed out at the meeting. FDOT staff reiterated concerns regarding a policy board and the need for broader long-term funding.

ECFRPC and FDOT staff have exchanged further communications regarding some of these major issues, with agreement that CFGIS and the Regional Mapping Program should be combined into one single program. As it is difficult for a major structural reorganization to take place when the agency is operating without a permanent executive director, further details remain to be worked out once the ECFRPC has filled that position on a permanent basis.

Outreach

A variety of outreach efforts have been undertaken during the award period. Information regarding important outreach meetings and presentations during calendar year 2005 follows.

In January, meetings were held with the University of Central Florida's Metropolitan Center for Regional Studies (on January 4) and with placematters.com (on January 26). The Metropolitan Center for Regional Studies was established to provide a forum for addressing important community issues. Placematters.com, a program of the Orton Family Foundation, is a national organization that held its 2005 Community Planning Collaborative (CPC) in Orange County. The ECFRPC worked with those partners, along with myregion.org and Orange County, to promote the use of technical tools (including GIS) in decision making processes at the CPC held in Orlando from October 27 – 30.

Of the four CFGIS Users Group meetings held during the award period, two were held outside Orlando in order to bring them to different parts of the region. The April 5 meeting was held at the Seminole County Agricultural Extension Auditorium and attracted 92 individuals, the fourth highest attendance of such meetings to date. The November 17 meeting was held at Kissimmee City Hall (in Osceola County) with 52 attendees.

The CFGIS Project Manager and another ECFRPC employee involved with CFGIS attended the Florida Joint Mapping Conference in May, offering the opportunity to meet GIS professionals from around the state and to discuss the CFGIS initiative. On May 24, they gave a presentation on generalized Future Land Use shapefiles, noting that they could be downloaded from the CFGIS Data Clearinghouse.

On June 23, the CFGIS Project Manager took part in a Pre-Hurricane Geospatial Workshop convened by the U.S. Geological Survey in Tallahassee. Among the 30 participants were representatives of seven state agencies (including the Division of Emergency Management), three federal agencies, four water management districts, two university centers specializing in GIS data, and Tallahassee / Leon County GIS. A short briefing on the CFGIS initiative was included in the workshop. The CFGIS Project Manager conveyed relevant data needs of GIS users along with other information obtained through the December 8, 2004 special session of the CFGIS Users Group regarding GIS and hurricane response.

On June 30, the CFGIS Project Manager attended the quarterly meeting of the Northeast Florida GIS (NEFGIS) User Group and provided information to that group regarding CFGIS.

The CFGIS Project Manager was part of a panel on July 25 at the Transtat (Transportation Statistics) 2005 Conference held in Kissimmee. The panel focused on

data partnerships, and topics included an overview of CFGIS, the CFGIS Data Clearinghouse, and the online interactive Development of Regional Impact (DRI) Tool that is part of the CFGIS website.

On August 1, the CFGIS Project Manager met with GIS librarians from four state universities (Central Florida, Florida, Florida International, and South Florida) with a combined enrollment of over 150,000 students. The meeting included a presentation on CFGIS, focusing on the initiative's components and the CFGIS Data Clearinghouse.

At the District Five FDOT Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Meeting held in Cocoa Beach on August 3 and 4, the CFGIS Project Manager gave a presentation that included information on the CFGIS initiative, the CFGIS Data Clearinghouse, and the DRI Tool.

On September 9, the CFGIS Project Manager took part in a session entitled "Bringing Technology to Your Planning Department" at the Florida American Planning Association (FAPA) Conference in Sarasota. The presentation by the CFGIS Project Manager focused primarily on interactive mapping, with the CFGIS DRI Tool being used as an example.

On September 29, the ECFRPC hosted a focus group consisting primarily of individuals who have GIS responsibilities in county emergency operations centers. From that meeting, the need for local emergency management officials to have accurate regional GIS datasets was established. An October 3 follow-up conference call conducted by ECFRPC staff with the GIS Manager at the Florida Division of Emergency Management also offered the opportunity to provide details regarding the CFGIS initiative.

The FDOT Environmental Management Office held its annual conference in Sarasota in early October. On October 5, as part of the conference, the CFGIS Project Manager gave a presentation that included an overview of CFGIS, CFGIS data collection efforts, and the DRI Tool.

The CFGIS Project Manager attended the annual conference of the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) in October and, as part of the conference, gave a presentation on the Development of Regional Impact Tool.

An ECFRPC employee involved with CFGIS attended the 2005 SHRUG (Seven Hills Regional User Group for GIS) Workshop in November and gave a presentation on the generalized Future Land Use shapefiles and their availability on the CFGIS Data Clearinghouse.

Also during the year, staff attended meetings of the local GIS users groups organized by governmental agencies in Brevard, Seminole, and Volusia counties.

Regional GIS Conference

A long-term goal of the CFGIS initiative has been to hold an annual regional GIS conference in the area. Significant progress has been made toward holding the first such conference, to be known as the Central Florida GIS Workshop, in October 2006.

In fall 2004, an ECFRPC staff member was able to attend the two current regional conferences in Florida in a volunteer role to learn about how those conferences are organized and run.

Within a month of the 2004 South Florida GIS Expo, a subcommittee of the CFGIS Steering Committee met online (on November 5) to begin planning the Central Florida conference. The subcommittee met again in person on November 30 shortly after the SHRUG (Seven Hills Regional User Group for GIS) Workshop which was held earlier that month.

At the regular CFGIS Users Group meeting held on December 8, 2004, feedback on some major points regarding the future conference was obtained from those present, in the form of a survey as well as through some more open-ended questions. Additionally, volunteers were sought for an expanded committee.

The expanded committee, now known as the Central Florida GIS Workshop Committee, is comprised of 22 individuals and six subcommittees supported by staff at the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council and the Florida Department of Transportation. The Workshop Committee met on March 22, 2005 to create subcommittees and begin work on determining the date and location for the first conference.

Follow-up Committee meetings were held on April 5 with 27 interested individuals in attendance, and on May 17 with 18 Committee members in attendance. These meetings made progress in terms of subcommittees, subcommittee chairs, breakeven attendance projections, and passing on lessons learned from volunteering at other conferences.

Prior to the first meeting of subcommittee chairs, staff met in person or via conference call with the six individuals to discuss their particular subcommittees. The first meeting of subcommittee chairs was held on June 28. A spreadsheet of potential revenues and expenditures with tabs for each subcommittee was created. Preliminary facility needs were determined, and details of items to include in the Request for Proposals for the workshop venue were determined. The Program Subcommittee met later on June 28, sketching out a preliminary schedule of events.

The subcommittee chairs held additional meetings on September 13, November 17, November 29, and December 19. Topics covered in these meetings included the workshop dates, responses to the facility Request for Proposals and an initial selection

of venue, selection of training courses, vendors, registration options, registration form, and registration deadlines.

An ECFRPC staff member involved with CFGIS attended the 2005 SHRUG Workshop and discussed planning issues with volunteers for that group. The CFGIS Project Manager was able to listen in on the wrap-up conference call for the SHRUG Workshop on December 8 and then forward relevant details to the subcommittee chairs.

Feedback on Cooperative Agreements Program

The kickoff meeting for 2004 CAP awardees was very helpful to agencies as an introduction to the CAP. Not only was it useful for learning about the program's administrative procedures, but it provided a forum for meeting individuals focused on building the same aspect of the NSDI. Having a substantial amount of time set aside for concurrent sessions concerning the specific CAP categories was particularly beneficial, allowing individuals involved in similar activities to address shared issues.

The 2004 CAP proved effective in helping ECFRPC staff to focus on two areas that will be beneficial – better promoting CFGIS to the regional community (through outreach and the planned regional GIS conference) and long-term planning to help guide the initiative through the next few years. The 2004 CAP also provided highly visible evidence to the primary funding partner that other organizations support goals such as datasharing and standardization.