

# **Montana Geospatial Strategic Plan 2006 - 2010**

**NSDI Cooperative Agreements Program  
Institution Building and Coordination Project**

## **FINAL REPORT**

**Agreement # 05HQAG0131**

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## **Collaborating Organizations**

The Montana Department of Administration wishes to thank the following organizations that helped make this project a success:

The Montana Land Information Advisory Council (MLIAC)  
Jeff Brandt, Chair  
<http://itsd.mt.gov/policy/councils/mliac/mliac.asp>

The Montana Association of Geographic Professionals (MAGIP)  
Jerry Daumiller, President  
<http://www.magip.org/>

USGS  
Lance Clampitt, Montana NGPO Liaison

## **Project Narrative**

Creating a state geospatial strategic plan that has buy-in from the geospatial community is a much more difficult process than writing a plan from strictly one agencies perspective. The Montana Geospatial Strategic Plan for 2006 to 2010 attempts to facilitate Montana's participation in the development of the NSDI, and provide overall direction for the entire geospatial community regarding public policy, education, data stewardship, and coordination and cooperation. The plan includes goals and objectives as well as suggested implementation strategies that are intended to guide the community as annual work plans are implemented. As stated in the document's forward, the plan is intended to foster a "federated" model for sharing information among a variety of users, through data stewardship, education and collaboration. We believe this federated approach embodies the major goals of this CAP category to strengthen multi-organizational coordination and cross organizational councils that develop and advance the NSDI within the states.

The general format of the planning process consisted of hiring a consultant, Janet Cornish of Community Development Services who conducted the meeting facilitation, aggregation of results, and writing of the final document. Separate facilitated meetings were conducted with state agencies, federal agencies, local governments and the private sector. Individual visits were conducted with the tribal governments. Results of these meetings were compiled and vetted in a facilitated meeting with the Montana Land Information Advisory Council. An initial draft of the plan was assembled and passed back to the Council for revision. A final draft of the plan was completed in February 2007. The plan contains four major goals:

- Public Policy Goal - Incorporate GIS into overall public policy development and decision making.
- Education Goal - Encourage the development of GIS education, outreach and training programs.
- Data Stewardship Goal - Support standardized and sustainable methodologies to collect, maintain and disseminate land information.
- Coordination, Cooperation and Access Goal - Foster communication/collaboration/cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries among local, state, federal, tribal and private sector entities, increasing the accessibility of geographic products for all users.

Results of this plan have not been realized yet because it is just being implemented. However there was an attempt to crosswalk the draft goals and objectives of this plan with Montana's 2008 Land Information Plan (available at [http://giscoordination.mt.gov/Land\\_Plan\\_2008\\_final.doc](http://giscoordination.mt.gov/Land_Plan_2008_final.doc)). As the 2009 Land Information is developed, efforts will be made to implement the objectives of the strategic plan. Best practices in implementing the plan will be similar to the best practices for developing the plan - a federated inclusive approach to gathering information followed by policy analysis by the coordinating council.

Certainly data stewardship of the Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI) remains of the highest priority in the Strategic Plan, the annual Land Information Plan, and to the GIS community. Therefore the scope of the Strategic Plan is by nature statewide and inclusive of all MSDI data layers and all applications that rely on those layers. The attention that Montana pays to this goal is paramount to the MSDI being integrated into NSDI.

From a financial perspective the Montana Geospatial Strategic Plan was a bargain, as we used only \$9,896.02 of the \$20,000 grant funds for contracted facilitation, writing and print services. This was matched by in-kind funds associated with the time individuals from state agencies, local government, tribes and MLIAC spent in the facilitated sessions and the State GIS Coordinator spent working on the plan. These in-kind costs are estimated in the table below and included in Standard Form 269A.

Sector	# Participating	Hours	Total Hours	Cost/Hour	Total
State	15	4	60	30	\$1,800
Local	20	2	40	30	\$1,200
Tribal	7	3	21	30	\$630
MLIAC	22	4	88	50	\$4,400
ITSD	1	80	80	40	\$3,200
					\$11,230

## **Next Steps**

The next steps of this project are to incorporate the goals, objectives and potential strategies contained within the plan into meaningful actions. Certainly some of the objectives will require additional or continued funding however successful implementation may be more demanding of institutional resolve than funding. Montana's recent hiring of a Geographic Information Officer (GIO) may be the first step in implementing this plan as well as common operating procedures for the state. While Montana has made great progress on geospatial issues, stovepipes, communication and turf issues continue to impede progress and must be resolved.

## **Feedback on Cooperative Agreements Program**

From Montana's perspective the FGDC CAP program works well. The primary strengths of the program are ease of initial application, a minimum of bureaucracy in administering the program and a general understanding of geospatial issues. It is far different working with the FGDC than other federal agencies because the FGDC understands that geospatial issues, especially when intermixed with IT issues are very dynamic in nature. Sometimes the original technical proposal must be altered to keep pace with changes in the technical community, and the CAP grant process has proved fluid enough to accomplish this. Although it is probably a continual frustration of FGDC, CAP grants that attempt to improve GIS coordination are sometimes hindered by poor coordination, and therefore can take longer to produce a product than initially anticipated. The FGDC understands that providing grant extensions are sometimes necessary and we believe this type of flexibility enhances the ability of a recipient to produce a quality product. We believe that the CAP is successful as is and doesn't require change at this time.