

# NGAC

## Cultural & Historical Geospatial Resources Subcommittee Report



NGAC Meeting  
September 6, 2018

# Original Problem Statement

There seems to be a lack of documented (or knowledge of) policies in place to address the protection of geospatial data assets that have cultural and historical significance. At a minimum, there is certainly no clear consistency concerning the management or protection of these types of geospatial data assets across federal agencies.

Audience: Federal agencies and/or agencies holding geospatial data assets that have cultural and historical significance.



# Our Approach

- Data Collection: Summer 2018
- Focused on federal agencies/divisions
  - Land holding agencies;  
Agencies with land stewardship responsibilities
- Used a standardized interview guide
  - Conversational interview, using the guide
- Analyzed interview notes
  - Identified points of convergence across interviews
- Plan to make recommendations



# Entities Interviewed

(12 Candidates interviewed to date)

- US Forest Service
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Department of Defense
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Indian Affairs (may be added)



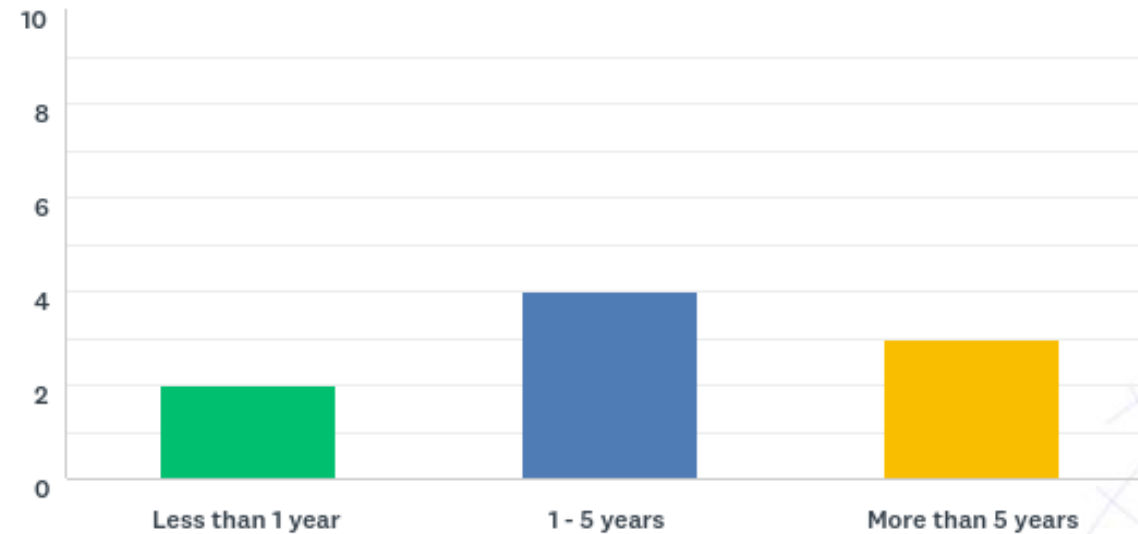
# Interview Guide - Themes

- Contextual Information
  - The work of the agency/department
  - The individual respondent's background and experiences
  - Their views about data use, protection, management
- Existing data use policies within the agency/dept/division
- Handling and denial of data requests
- Understanding and documenting best practices



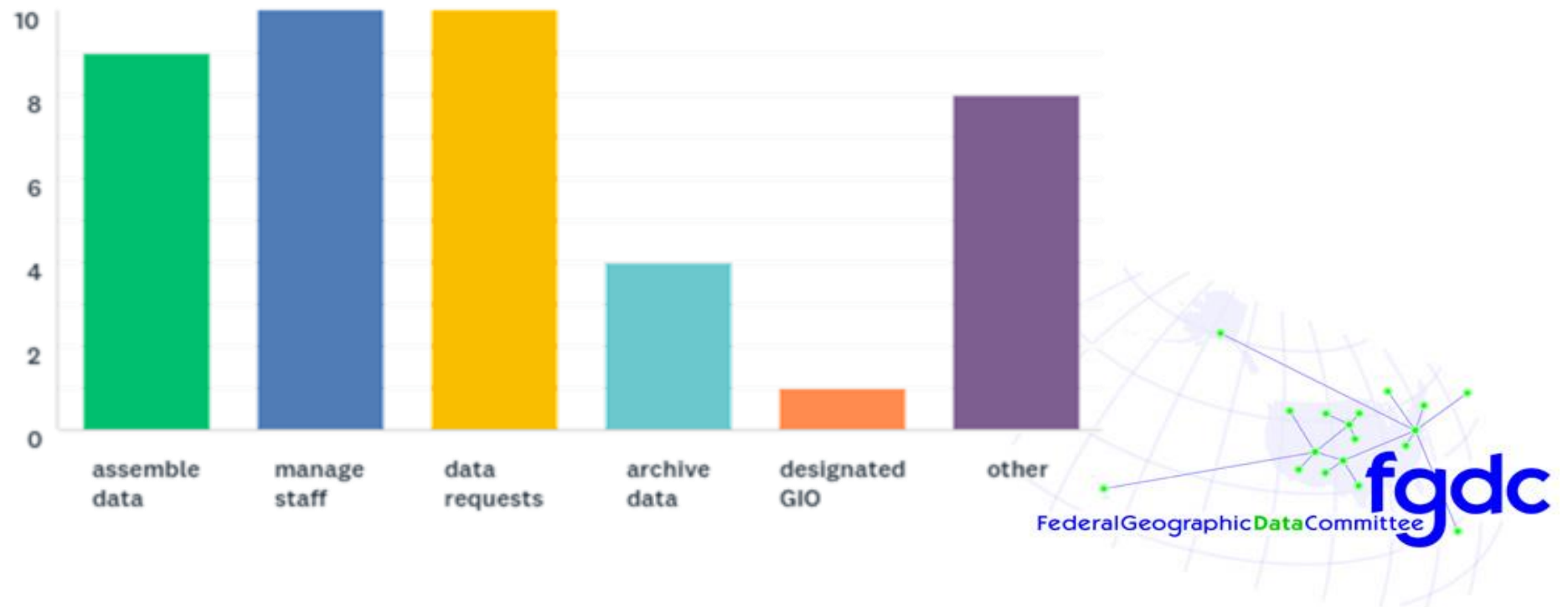
# Profile of Respondents

Q7 How long have you worked at this agency in your current position/status?



# What Respondents Do

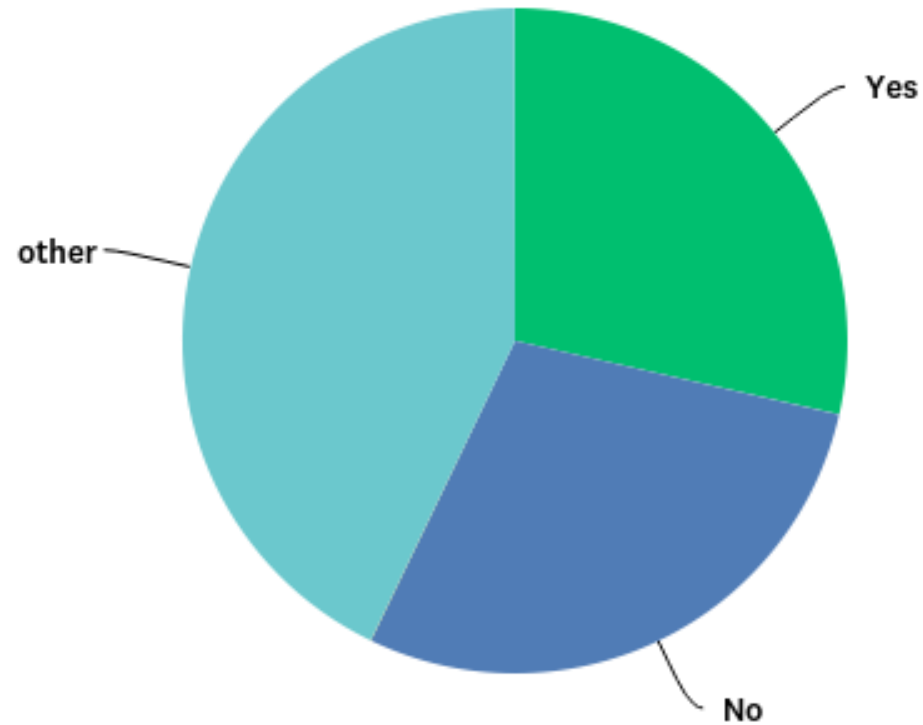
Q8 Typically, your work involves (select all options that apply)



“Other” usually involves coordination or liaison responsibilities

# Definitions

Q10 Is there a working definition of "a culturally or historically significant geospatial dataset"?





# Working Definitions

(As reported through interviews)

- Data that includes locations and boundaries
- Data that describes the character (historic/cultural) of a specific location
- Highly restricted data
- Identified using a data standard that prevails throughout the organization
- NHPA, although geospatial is not specified



# Findings in Brief

- Ambiguity & contradictions in applicable federal laws
- Clear need to develop a definition defining cultural & historical geospatial data
- Confirmed lack of consistency in procedures (if they exist) across agencies regarding cultural & historical geo data
- Identified that almost every agency possesses large amounts of highly detailed data cultural & historical geospatial data that is not included in national inventories and likely resides on individual computers
- Security issues related to derived data  
(possible NGAC topic, Larger than just cultural)



# Preliminary Recommendations

(To be included in our report – Likely more recommendations to come)

- Develop a definition for cultural & historical geospatial data
- Provide guidance to agencies to develop policies or procedures
  - Recommend organization develop formal guidance to identify cultural and historical geospatial data and further define how said data should be protected and what process should be followed if data is to be released
  - Recommend to utilize documented data sharing agreements
    - Including defined guidance on when and how said documents should be used
    - Including defined guidance regarding agreement tracking (lifecycle tracking)
  - Recommend to implement non disclosure agreements with organization staff including volunteers that have access to cultural & historical geo data
  - Recommend organization consult with potentially affected entities (states, tribes, local) that have an interest in the resources included in a potential data release
- More education and training needed (multiple focus areas)

# Next Steps

- Finish analyzing interview data
- Develop draft report
- Present initial draft report at webinar meeting in December
- Receive feedback from reviewers and NGAC
- Develop 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft report to present at 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 NGAC meeting



# Committee Membership

- Garet Couch, Chair
- Frank Harjo, Vice Chair
- Gar Clarke
- Laxmi Ramasubramanian
- Jennie Stapp

Federal Liaison: Deidre McCarthy

