



*North Carolina*  
Geographic Information Coordinating Council  
• Local Government Committee

MINUTES  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE  
February 24, 2010

PROCEEDINGS

The quarterly meeting of the Local Government Committee (LGC), a committee of the Geographic Information Coordinating Council (GICC), was held on February 24, 2010.

PRESENT

LGC members:

Kat Clifton, City of Salisbury, representing NCLM  
Gene Hume, Buncombe County, representing Carolina URISA  
Alex Rickard, Eastern Carolina Council, representing ARCED  
Jerry Simmons, Pender County, representing NC PMA  
Julie Stamper, Pasquotank County, representing NC ACC

Others:

James Armstrong, Richmond County, LGC rep to the SMAC  
Chris Butts, Moore County, for LGC member Chris Koltyk, representing NCLGISA  
Wright Lowery, Wake County, LGC rep to the Stream Mapping Advisory Committee  
Tom Tribble, CGIA, Staff to the LGC

ABSENT

None

REPORTS

SMAC

James Armstrong provided the SMAC report. The meeting was held on January 13. The SMAC discussed the issue of local governments continuing to receive multiple requests for data from state agencies, including the Department of Revenue and Floodplain Mapping Program. The idea of using NC OneMap as a central place for accessing local data was again raised. NC StreetMap was mentioned as a model for dealing with this problem for street data. James reported that David Giordano, staff to the SMAC, said that this model could be adopted for other data layers. The SMAC noted that only about 30 counties / cities have posted data to NC StreetMap and that if this model is going to work, more local governments will need to post their data. The burden comes back to the LGC to encourage participation. A central access point is of less value if only 30% of the counties participate.

The issue of Ramona not meeting expectations was raised. There was agreement among the SMAC members. One idea is to somehow combine Ramona – the inventory tool – and NC OneMap – the data access tool.

James said that these were the issues at the SMAC meeting that were of direct concern to local governments.

Julie Stamper reported that these two topics were also discussed at the GICC meeting. She noted that about 60 counties participate in NC OneMap. The council discussed how to increase that number. Tom Tribble said that Tim Johnson, staff to the GICC, reported that staff made a concerted effort last year to add participants to NC OneMap, with some success and that it is time to make another push. Tom mentioned that PMA has scheduled 6 spring workshops across the state and that CGIA will have a spot on the agenda to talk about the benefits of participating on NC OneMap and to encourage counties to join. CGIA will make a concerted effort to attend local user group meetings and to generally increase outreach efforts. Tom also noted that a number of counties have asked to join NC OneMap in the last year but for technical reasons related to CGIA's transition to OITS, CGIA was simply not ready to bring them on. In the upcoming months, that may change so we may see a jump in the number of participating local governments.

Progress in bringing counties onto NC OneMap does not necessarily help the NC StreetMap situation. Tom expressed hope that if the WGRT's FGDC grant proposal is funded, then the translator tool may provide greater benefits to local governments and provide them an incentive to participate.

Julie noted that Ramona issue was also discussed at the GICC meeting but she will hold that topic until the GICC report.

James raised a new topic for the LGC. He is working with the Lumber River COG doing some GIS work for some of the smaller municipalities. The primary task is to update some of the utility datasets – water and sewer. He used as a starting point the water / sewer data collected in 1997 as part of a statewide effort funded by the Rural Economic Development Center. The data is a good inventory of what was available at

that time. One problem is that the data was stored as ‘coverages,’ which are now mostly obsolete. James and the Lumber River COG began discussing the topic of updating the water distribution system and sewer system standard. James suggested that the LGC propose that the standard be updated to better fit the current GIS environment. And also look at some of the gaps in the data and consider updating the content.

Julie asked what the mechanism for introducing new standard or editing an existing standard. Tom suggested that the SMAC is the place to start. James noted that he is not suggesting a new standard but that we revisit and update the existing one. There have been many changes since 1997. Tom noted the difficulty of finding funding to maintain the water / sewer inventory. Tom did not have a good answer to Julie’s question about the protocol for introducing this topic. Does the LGC take it to the SMAC or to the GICC, who then might hand it off to the SMAC? Julie noted that the WGRT and WGSP committees, working on roads and parcels respectively, are committees of the SMAC. Tom agreed that all standards fall under the SMAC. James said that the Lumber River COG has some grant funds to support updates on the water / sewer data and to update the content standard. James is doing some of that work for the COG. James expressed some concern to Lumber River COG about reinventing the wheel and that the existing standard should serve as a starting point. It may not take much to update the standard.

Tom suggested that Julie and James schedule a phone call with Anne Payne, SMAC chair, to get her advice on how to raise this concern – through the SMAC or directly with the GICC. Depending on Anne’s advice, the LGC could prepare a one-page summary of the issue.

**Action Item** – Julie will schedule a time for James and Julie to talk to Anne Payne.

## TAC

Julie suggested that since Jason Mann was unable to attend that we hold the TAC discussion until the GICC report.

## WGRT

Alex Rickard announced that he was informed about 10 minutes ago that the WGRT proposal to FGDC is one of four proposals nationwide that will be funded under category 7 of the Cooperative Agreements Program (CAP10) solicitation. Alex expressed some concern about timing. The Working Group for Seamless Parcels (WGSP) was also funded to work on a translator tool and the WGRT hopes to leverage some of the technology work that WGSP plans so that the two groups are not replicating each other’s work. Unfortunately, the start of the WGSP project has been delayed while EPA selects a contractor and gets the contract in place. Alex is unsure how this delay will affect the work of the WGRT

A smaller technical group, comprised of the chairs of WGRT and WGSP and a few others, will start working on the technical design guidelines of the application. The

purpose is for the two groups to avoid duplicating efforts. The goal is to develop one translator that handles both streets and parcels.

Alex said that the WGRT application clearly states that their goal is to develop a street centerline exchange standard that closely follows the road segment portion of the FGDC standard. To accomplish this, the WGRT reviewed the FGDC standard and identified about 15 items and added them to the proposed NC street centerline standard, still in draft format. These 15 items are ones that a local government user would probably not store and that the translator will automatically create. An example will be the X/Y coordinates for the starting points of each segment. Typically these are not maintained as attributes but the coordinates are valuable for certain applications. The WGRT does not anticipate that adding these items will impact local government users but will want to get review before adopting the draft standard and before the contractor begins work developing a translator.

Julie asked if the translator is only a one-way tool for local governments to send their data to the state. Is there something that returns the data? What is the benefit to local governments? Alex suggested that everyone read the application, which will be posted on the GICC web site shortly. It does a good job of describing the long term vision for street centerlines. There are four steps. The first is to build NC Street Map, a method of getting local street centerline data to DOT. This step is complete. Step two is to build an exchange standard so that local governments could put data into a format that is consistent for DOT. This step is underway. Step three is to build the translator that will make it easier for local governments to put their data into that exchange format. Step four and beyond is for DOT staff to assemble local data into an ISRN file that enables local governments to pull down the DOT attributes. The goal is to have a statewide centerline file that has local attributes such as street names and address ranges but that also has DOT data such as traffic counts, pavement conditions and accident information. Whether the DOT data is actually in the attribute table or joined through a separate table has not been not determined.

Tom asked if one of the products will be a statewide file that any county could acquire. Alex says no, that's not part of the translator project. The goal is to put the data for all 100 counties into a standard format. Actually stitching all the data into a single file is not a deliverable on the CAP10 project. It will take at least a year to build the translator tool and get data for 100 counties into a standard format.

Tom also asked if one of the goals was not to provide error checking. Alex replied yes, that will be part of the translator process although it appears that it is beyond the scope of the project to check the geometry. Error checking will likely be limited to checking the attribute tables for consistency and misspellings.

Julie asked if this grant required 100% participation by counties. Alex replied no. He has committed to working with the 9 counties in the Eastern Carolina Council. At least four other COGs have agreed to include all of their counties. The first step will be to sit down with local government staff and instruct them on how to use the standard and the

translator. If county staff are unable to take on the responsibility of translating their data, then the COG staff could do it for them. Alex expects that about 30-35 counties will participate in this phase of the project.

#### SURVEYOR'S COMMITTEE

No report

#### STREAM MAPPING COMMITTEE

Wright Lowery reported that a pilot project is ongoing in Lenoir County to remotely sense wetlands and local stream resolution to build local resolution data for the NHD. One problem is that the FGDC standard for wetlands is higher than the Division of Water Quality (DWQ) field standard. DWQ is working to resolve this.

The committee is also working to synchronize the work of the federal Geographic Names Information System and the DWQ naming system.

He reported that the USGS topo production - a geopdf version of the quad maps – will be completed for NC in the spring of 1020. Steve Strader with USGS will be the NC contact for that work. The local NHD will be the surface water source for those maps.

Wright reported that one of the benefits of the committee's work will be the local resolution mapping of wetlands and streams. Julie asked about the remote sensing process for mapping wetlands because if this approach means that more wetlands are identified this will have an enormous impact on land owners and proposed use of the land.

Gene Hume asked if anyone had dealt with the geopdf format and asked if the topos will be very useable to anyone. The consensus is that the topos will not be particularly useful since the data cannot be extracted. Tom suggested that Wright ask 1) if the NHD layer will be made available to local governments and 2) what is the value of the geopdf topo to local governments. He presumes that the NHD is still the data layer that everyone can acquire and that USGS is simply using it to represent surface water on the topo geopdfs.

#### GICC REPORT

Enterprise License Agreement (ELA) Status - Julie reported that she gave CIO Jerry Fralick the letter of appreciation for the work of OITS and George Bakolia to include local governments in the next license agreement with ESRI. She noted that Mr. Fralick is really committed to including local governments in the negotiations and indicated that local governments may potentially save \$700,000. Julie reported that a conference call with ESRI was scheduled for February 12 and asked Tom if he had any feedback from that call. He did not. Julie noted that the OITS working groups know that local governments are currently in the process of developing next year's budget and hope to complete the negotiations as soon as possible. The goal is to develop a master purchase

agreement that local governments can use. Communities with a population of less than 100,000 may be best positioned to realize savings.

Tom noted that the letter of appreciation, which he thought was Chris Koltyk's idea, was a nice gesture and thanked the members for their edits to the original draft.

Ramona – At the GICC meeting, Julie expressed the dissatisfaction by the local government community about Ramona. She indicated that the GICC put the burden on the LGC to develop the justifications for a new product.

Julie reported that she and Tom have discussed some ideas for sharing data over the NC OneMap and GICC web sites using a "Wiki" approach that would allow users to correct or add information.

Tom reported on his suggestion, which have not been approved as yet. He has proposed that CGIA add a new link to the web sites that provides general information that Ramona collects. For example, there could be a list of county government GIS contacts. Julie's idea is that rather than post a pdf, a "Wiki" approach would allow Gene, for example, to correct an erroneous phone number or email address. Gene asked about the potential for mischief – people purposely introducing errors. Tom acknowledged this concern. The "Wiki" could be set up to allow access to anyone or there could be a "log-in." requirement. Whether this is practical is unclear. Tom reported that some another item could be a calendar of meetings and conferences for user groups and professional organizations. Julie asked if the list could include committee meetings. Tom said yes, even though they are already posted elsewhere on the GICC web site.

Tom continued that once we begin to post this kind of information, we will all have the opportunity to determine if this is useful and can it replace Ramona. Tom suggested that the charge that the LGC assess user requirements might be premature until CGIA can take a look at the concerns that has been raised about Ramona.

Alex asked if there is an example of a "Wiki" page that he could review. Julie replied that the NC property tax folks support a "Wiki" application for certain items on their web site. Julie will send out the link to the LGC members. Tom thought that you have to register before you can get into the site. Julie suggested that you may be able to set up the tool so that anyone could see the data but that only those who have registered and been approved could make changes. The idea is to have accountability. Alex asked about the time line. We agreed that it is long term. Alex suggested that perhaps someone who is registered could demo it to the LGC.

Julie mentioned that you could also post PPT presentations and others could add content.

Tom cautioned that he did not know yet if OITS would permit an open access policy to their web sites

James asked if this could be linked to the ncgis list serv. Julie suggested that the site could include a list of professional organizations and their list servs.

Census Bureau – Julie suggested to the GICC is that we work more closely with the Census Bureau and that we do it now or soon rather than wait eight years. Council member Kelly Laughton supported the suggestion saying that if NC supports a product called NC OneMap and if everyone serves their data to NC OneMap, then the Census Bureau can access the data without having to go directly to 100 counties and many municipalities.

Tom asked Alex when we will have a state centerline file that the Census could download from NC OneMap. Alex promised that it will be available before the next census. Tom also mentioned that the Census Bureau might be a source of funding to support our initiatives. He also said that the GICC was supportive of the LGC's idea that the GICC engage the Census Bureau.

TAC Recommendations – Kelly Laughton reported on the responses to the TAC questions about NC OneMap from the various committees. Prior to the meeting, Julie provided a summary of the responses to the LGC members. Kelly cleared up one point of confusion regarding the difference between a data clearinghouse – someplace to discover the data - and a data warehouse – someplace to get the data. One surprise from Julie's view is most people see NC OneMap as a resource for the GIS professional and not the casual user. Google Maps and Microsoft Earth will serve that market. The community feels that NC OneMap should be more of a data warehouse than a viewer.

The Management & Operations (M&O) committee was tasked with examining the NC OneMap vision and characteristics to see if they are still valid. Julie will attend the M&O committee meeting on March 5 and she asked if the LGC members had any thoughts about the vision and characteristics of NC OneMap so that Julie is prepared for the M&O meeting.

Tom apologized for the fact that the LGC members only learned about this issue yesterday. He suggested that instead of having the LGC members provide their thoughts after the meeting, that we take the time during this meeting to review the vision and characteristics.

Characteristics:

*NC OneMap data are free to view and download in accordance with federal and state privacy, security and data confidentiality laws.* Gene felt that this was valid and no one disagreed.

*NC OneMap data are redistributable without restrictions.* Julie doesn't think that it is possible to restrict the data. Jerry Simmons suggested that local governments that don't support this characteristic will simply not provide their data. Tom agreed with James and said that one way to overcome this resistance is to provide benefits for participating on

NC OneMap, such as the Census bureau idea noted earlier. James noted that in terms of restrictions, his concern is that users may use the data in ways that the data are not intended to be used. Tom acknowledged that bad science is a concern and said that good metadata will help prevent that. Julie suggested that users are occasionally going to use the data inappropriately anyway and cited the public's misunderstanding of the accuracy of parcel data. Tom noted that some counties will not participate because they want to sell their data and would not provide it to NC OneMap under this condition. Tom asked how the LGC members came down on this issue. All members agreed that local governments should not sell their data and that data should be freely redistributable.

Alex stated that he was still confused about government-to-government sharing and whether state agencies are required, if asked, to release the data that they have received from local governments. Tom replied that the legal opinion given to the GICC at one point seemed to indicate that state agencies would have to release data. Alex said that Mr. Billie Willis, formerly the OITS rep on the GICC before leaving state government, expressed the opinion that there is precedent for state agencies storing and managing local data without obligation to freely provide that data. Users that want the data could be directed back to the original source of the data. NC StreetMap was designed to be a secure, government-to-government resource so that local governments could provide street centerline data without fear that DOT would redistribute their data. This approach resulted in significant debate at GICC meetings as several members felt NC StreetMap violated the spirit of the NC OneMap characteristics. Given DOT's needs, the NC StreetMap hybrid was accepted as an interim solution. Perhaps Julie should raise the question of whether state agencies are required to release data that they acquire from local government. James asked if you can copyright data and therefore restrict access. No one knew the answer to this question.

In the interest of full disclosure, Julie reported that she did charge a fee for downloading data to a CD and providing that data. Alex said that this example is really cost recovery, not charging for the data. This example is very different than a county charging \$10,000 for a copy of their cadastral layer.

*NC OneMap is accessible 24 hours per day and seven days a week on the Internet and data are searchable using key word and geographic prompts.* Everyone agreed that this makes sense.

*NC OneMap includes the minimum of 7 framework data themes, including geodetic control, elevation, orthophotography, surface waters, cadastral, streets and other transportation features, and jurisdictions.* There was no disagreement.

*NC OneMap includes other critical and strategic data, such as land use, land cover, water lines and systems, sanitary sewer lines and system, and demographics, but is not limited to these themes.* Kat raised the issue that some jurisdictions are reluctant to serve water or sewer data because of security concerns. Alex acknowledged the security concerns but also noted that the data are critical to planning and economic development needs. What is the cost of restricting the data? Tom said that some years ago FGDC

generated a decision tree for data developers to follow to decide whether to provide open access to a data layer. Entitled “Guidelines for Providing Access to Geospatial Data in Response to Security Concerns, it was adopted by the GICC in February 2006. The GICC recognized that agencies may decide to restrict release of certain data to NC OneMap.

*Although map scale is not specified, NC OneMap data are derived from large map scales and/or high resolution sources that are typical of products traditionally derived by counties and municipalities.* Everyone agrees. This recognizes that local governments are the source of the most accurate and valuable geospatial data.

*Historic and temporal data will be maintained and available.* Everyone agreed.

*NC OneMap provides data that represent the most current version of a data holding.* Julie expressed concern that this ideal may not be practical. She noted that state agencies continue to call and ask for data, even though it is accessible through NC OneMap, because they know that the data layer on NC OneMap is likely not current. Can we say that what is on NC OneMap is that best data available so don’t call me? James suggested changing the phrase to “NC OneMap *strives* to provide data . . .” Alex noted that the data available through the ftp site are not always the most current but that data served by a county through a web mapping service would actually be the most current data. Tom suggested that perhaps the M&O does need to revisit this characteristic because in 2002 the vision of NC OneMap was not as a ftp download site but more a web mapping service. If the vision of NC OneMap is that it is less of a viewer and more of a data warehouse, then does this characteristic need to be changed?

*NC OneMap data are reliably maintained by the data provider organization through partners and formal arrangements.* Julie and Alex noted that the data sharing committee suggested dropping formal arrangements. This is another item to raise with the M&O.

*NC OneMap data are reliably funded through partners and cost shares.* Alex suggested that the General Assembly needs to be a funding partner. Can this characteristic be changed to identify the sectors that should be contributing cost share funds? Alex suggested that any General Assembly funding for GIS and geospatial data should be funneled through NC OneMap and the GICC and not managed separately from the established coordination structure.

*NC OneMap provides data that are based on accepted and published standards.* There was no disagreement.

*NC OneMap data are documented using published standards.* This means metadata.

*Policy oversight for NC OneMap is provided by the GICC and administrative oversight is provided by CGIA.* No disagreement.

Tom asked if there are characteristics that are missing that Julie needs to encourage the M&O to add. Alex suggested that the vision include a reference or a formal link acknowledging support of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure or higher level federal efforts that often provide funding. Tom suggested that this can be an addition to the vision statement. Tom did note that USGS and GICC have signed a partnership agreement so the history is there to include in the vision statement that NC supports the NDSI.

Julie thanked the members for their input and feels better prepared to represent the LGC at the upcoming M&O meeting. Julie asked that everyone read the vision statement and submit thoughts or suggestions to her. Julie expressed concern about the statement that reads “Security measures will be implemented to protect confidentiality /restricted data and to limit access to any user’s esoteric, local data.” Does this contradict the idea of data being redistributable? Tom wondered if this statement was developed to address those data sets that may be restricted by law, such as the location of endangered and threatened species. Julie will raise this question.

FGDC Addressing Standard – Julie noted that Anne Payne reported that a new FGDC addressing standard will be released soon. Julie suggested that we ask the A Team to review. Tom is waiting on Anne to provide it.

**Action Item** – Tom will ask the A Team to review the new addressing standard.

## STATEWIDE ORTHO PROJECT

Tom reported that the NC OneMap web site includes a link to the Ortho project. It now includes a project status section. The plan is to update the status report weekly. The contracts have all been signed. The camera calibration range in Surry County is operational and will be used to validate all the cameras, under the oversight of NC Geodetic Survey. Installation of the Continuously Operating Reference Stations, to ensure accurate GPS, is underway. Contractors have submitted flight and ground control plans for the entire state and 97% of them have been reviewed and approved. Survey and ground control targets were 62% complete as of last week. Flights are underway in both the eastern and western section. There are two groups of contractors that are acquiring the digital imagery. The status report shows maps of the flights lines flown and approved to date. About 49% of the eastern region has been flown. In the western region, progress is significantly less, likely due to snow cover.

Gene asked about how the QA will occur. Tom does not have additional information yet but will find out and report back. Gene recalled that the QA process that Buncombe County accomplished with in-house staff for the 2006 imagery was labor intensive.

## LGC WORK PLAN

Julie noted that the LGC meeting agenda included action plans from the draft work plan and thought that it worked well. Tom reported that, after the December LGC meeting, he

had planned to revise and finalize the LGC work plan based on input from the LGC members. However, the CGIA Coordination Team suggested that work plans not be finalized until the Coordination Program Manager position is filled, which should be soon. The idea is to design a format and process that is consistent across all the committees.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

Julie noted that the Obama administration had announced significant budget cuts to USGS, including the state liaisons. This is not good news.

#### NEXT MEETING

The next LGC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 26, 2010.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.