

Montana Land Information Advisory Council (MLIAC) – Executive Summary

Wednesday, September 11, 2019

10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Headquarters

Helena, Montana

Attendees:

Members or Designees: Robert Ahl – GIS Professionals Representative; Kevin Nelstead for Allen Armstrong – U.S. Department of Interior Representative; Mike Bousliman – State Agency Representative; Gordon Conn – State Agency Representative; Janet Cornish – Public Utilities or Private Business Representative; Representative Julie Dooling – Montana House Representative; Frank Dougher – Local Government Representative; Elaina Graham – U.S. Department of Agriculture Representative; Jerry Grebenc – Public Utilities or Private Business Representative; Molly Hirschi (online) – GIS Professionals Representative; Valentijn Hoff – Montana University System Representative; Lee Macholz – Local Government Representative; Catherine Maynard – USDA Representative; Eric Spangenberg – Local Government Representative; Dan Stahly – MARLS Representative; Jennie Stapp – Council Chair; and John Tubbs – State Agency Representative.

Guests: Bruce Newell – Montana State Library Commission; Jenny Connelley – MAGIP; Jessica Mitchell (online) – MTNHP

Staff: Jessica Edwards, Michael Fashoway, Erin Fashoway, Malissa Williams, John Kilgour, Evan Hammer (online)

Chair Jennie Stapp called the meeting to order at 10:36 a.m.

Welcome & Introductions

The Council members and guests introduced themselves and explained who they represent. Chair Stapp acknowledged the new appointees to the Council and thanked the outgoing members of the Council for their service. She also explained that Montana State Library (MSL) staff will work with the new members to schedule an orientation before the Council's next meeting in November.

Administrative Updates/Agenda Changes

One correction was made to the agenda. The executive summary from the last Council meeting should be listed as the June 13, 2019, executive summary, not the April 2, 2019, executive summary.

Approval of Executive Summary

There were no corrections or additions made to the June 13, 2019, executive summary.

Motion was made by Member Cornish to approve the June 13, 2019, executive summary. The motion was seconded by Member Grebenc and passed with all in favor, none opposed, and none abstaining.

State Librarian's Report

Chair Stapp presented the State Librarian's report.

House Bill 633 Interim Study Update

Chair Stapp provided an update on the status of the House Bill 633 Interim Study. The study will begin on September 18, 2019, and is being conducted by the Education Subcommittee under the Legislative Finance Committee. Chair Stapp explained the representation on the study and its intent, which is to help find ways to provide more flexible and stable funding for the State Library. There is a draft outline for the study available online that explains the approach the study will take, which includes reviewing the financial data of MSL for the past decade. This review will be conducted as part of a larger legislative interim study of funding for all state agencies. They would like MSL staff to help provide information about costs for the State Library's services as well as costs for services not currently being funded, with the intent of determining the true costs of the Library's services and looking at different models for funding MSL in the future.

Chair Stapp then answered several questions from the Council about the State Library's funding. Member Cornish asked if fees are assessed on other state agencies who use MSL services, and Chair Stapp explained that currently there is a pass-through model in place where five other agencies pass through a set amount of funding to MSL for the Natural Resource Information System (NRIS). That funding amount has not changed since 2003. Chair Stapp explained that MSL does not favor a fee-for-use model for a variety of reasons. Member Tubbs added that the current pass-through model is a vulnerable source of funding and explained the limitations of the current pass-through funding model. The Council discussed this funding source and what it is used for, as well as the history of NRIS and its merger with MSL. The pass-through funding is currently used to pay for the Natural Heritage Program contract, which is a program of NRIS. Chair Stapp will continue to update the Council on the interim study.

State Library Restructuring

Chair Stapp updated the Council on MSL's restructuring process. She explained the previous divisions and structure and the current flattening process. The Library's goal is to facilitate more collaboration across the agency. This year the Library created a single agency budget and work plan, which will be presented to the State Library Commission in October. Chair Stapp also explained the new Data Coordinator position and introduced Jessica Edwards, who recently transitioned into that role.

MAGIP Report

Jenny Connelley presented the MAGIP update. There has been a lot of transition among board members, but the board is now full. Conference planning is well underway for the MAGIP conference in Missoula next year. The vendor prospectus has been released and Erin can provide copies of it to those who are interested. Jenny explained that MAGIP will be rewriting its by-laws to clarify ambiguities and update the document.

Montana Land Information Account, Grant, & Library Funding

FY2019 Fourth Quarter Financial Report and FY2020 Budget Financial Report

Chair Stapp explained that the FY2019 Fourth Quarter Financial Report and FY2020 Budget Financial Report are posted on the MSL website and available to the Council. The State Library is continuing to merge its financial reporting and overall budget to better understand how the budget is being used to address the State Library's priorities. Chair Stapp made the point that the State Library relies on funding sources in addition to MLIA funds to support the work of the

Library that falls under the purview of the Council. Moving forward, the State Library will work on presenting budgets and financial reports to help the Council understand what financial resources are available, as well as the funding gap, to meet the requirements of the Land Plan.

Member Cornish made a recommendation that the Council hold a strategic planning session to set forth more specific objectives and priorities within the Land Plan for the Council to achieve. Chair Stapp replied that the Council members are empowered to bring their priorities to the Council, and those priorities should be reflected within the Land Plan. Member Cornish would like to see the goals of the Land Plan broken down in a more finite way so that the Council has more specific tasks to accomplish. She offered to help with a strategic planning session or to facilitate one. Further discussion of the Land Plan was held until later in the meeting.

Commissioner Newell presented the perspective of the State Library Commission. The Commission's concern is that content and services are provided with the resources the Library has. One of his main concerns has to do with overall capability of the State Library and its ability to be responsive as projects present themselves. He felt that the Library has recently been driven by project money as opposed to infrastructure money. He would like to have the people and tools on hand to meet needs as they arise, rather than moving from project to project.

MLIA Collections Report

Erin Fashway presented the September 2019 MLIA Collections Report. MLIA collections are reported on the 20th of each month for the prior month's collections. June and July 2019 are higher than previous months, which is good. Erin presented a dashboard that she has started building that demonstrates MLIA account collections by county. Erin will add a link to the dashboard on the Council web page. Twenty-nine counties have 2019 collections under \$5,000. Seven counties make up the majority of MLIA collections. They are also the seven counties in the state with a significant GIS program. Erin welcomes suggestions from the Council for information they'd like to see in the dashboard.

Commissioner Newell mentioned that Census economic data would help provide some context for the MLIA collections. Real estate information, population changes, tax collections, and so on would all be useful.

Erin explained a recent meeting that she and John Kilgour had with Lewis and Clark County staff to discuss collection of recording fees at the county level. Erin presented the memo to the Council explaining the information gathered at the meeting and summarized how the fee collection process works at the county level. She also mentioned that there is currently an effort among counties to increase the fee collected for recording documents, and this might be something good for the State Library and the Council to partner on.

Erin responded to several questions from the Council about the document recordation process. Most documents recorded, at least in Lewis and Clark County, are related to real estate transactions. Erin explained possible outreach efforts to gather more insight from county clerk and recorders, such as the MACo conference. She would also like to use Dylan Cole's (Department of Revenue) projections presented at the last Council meeting and compare them to housing development in the state.

There was discussion of how much county GIS departments rely on the county portion of the recordation fee, and Member Dougher responded that it is an important part of his agency's (Gallatin County GIS) funding. Member Spangenberg noted that MLIA fees collected in Lewis and Clark County are set aside for special projects like imagery acquisition and for use as matching funds when applying for grants. Member Cornish suggested presenting case studies of how local governments are using the funds if an effort is made by the Council or State Library to promote legislative changes to the recordation fee. It would help illustrate the importance of the funds and the MLIA grant program. Member Tubbs suggested getting involved in discussions about raising the fee as soon as possible.

MLIA Grant Administration (FY2019/2020) Report

Erin explained that there is not much to report on the FY2020 grants, since they just got underway in July. Only one grant is still waiting to be signed. The PLSS grants were streamlined for this year, and the State Library is working on better reporting to have a better understanding of the grant process. All of the FY2018 grants are closed. MSL is still awaiting final data from a couple of those grantees. Erin will be working with Park County to make a field visit and work with their surveyor. Several FY2019 grants were extended. The first quarterly reports are due in October, and there will be more to report at that time.

The State is currently exploring a new grant management system, but in the meantime the State Library will be transitioning to WebGrants to manage the MLIA grant program. Member Cornish mentioned that the system is pretty difficult for applicants to use and suggested making reporting very easy and straightforward. Erin mentioned that the State Library has been working on developing reporting templates.

Erin informed the Council of the grant management training that she will be conducting on September 12th for the FY2020 grantees. Member Cornish wondered if there also needs to be a training for contractors so they understand their role in the grant projects and to define the line between contractor and grantee more clearly. There was discussion among the Council about why this line is often crossed by contractors and why other issues occur. Erin explained that the Grant Review Subcommittee is considering adding a planning grant option for grant applicants. Because education is lacking among many grant applicants, she would like to either require some type of training or require grantees to document that they've had appropriate training for managing their grants.

Break for lunch from 12:09 p.m. to 12:32 p.m.

Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure

Erin provided an update on the following aspects of the Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI):

NAIP 2017/2019

2017 NAIP had gaps in it due to snow and cloud cover. The gaps were flown in 2018, and that data is being made available through the State Library as downloadable images. It has not yet been updated in the State Library's service due to funding constraints in the managed services environment. The 2019 NAIP has been flown but is not yet available. Member Maynard explained that it is in the QA/QC process right now, and it will be a couple of months before it

is available to the State Library. Erin will be learning more about NAIP at the upcoming NSGIC conference.

MSDI Service Changes

Erin reminded the Council of upcoming MSDI service changes and reiterated the announcement that was made at the Council's June meeting. The State Library is updating its standards to the Web Mercator coordinate system, effective September 23, 2019.

MSDI Theme Leads Meeting Summary

Erin provided an overview of the MSDI theme leads meeting last week, which was a very productive meeting. Some topics discussed by the theme leads were developing use cases for each theme, understanding how the Council wants the theme leads to present their work to the Council, refreshing materials about expectations for theme leads and stewards, and conducting social media campaigns for each theme. Erin will provide a writeup of the meeting for the Council's review. Theme leads will be sending Erin their priorities for incorporation into the Land Information Plan. There was discussion among the Council members about how to prioritize the work of the theme leads and the best way for the leads to provide status reports to the Council. Erin mentioned that she would like to work with John to recover older documents addressing approved best practices and workflows and make them more accessible. Chair Stapp mentioned that it would be helpful for key information and stakeholders for each theme to be more readily available. Member Bousliman suggested having some kind of maturity assessment for the themes. Erin summarized the results of a recent maturity assessment conducted by NSGIC and suggested using it as a model. If a new sub-theme is being proposed, Erin would like that to be considered as an action item by the Council.

At Risk Themes: Geographic Names & Transportation

Erin explained that the 2017 budget cuts resulted in the leads for geographic names and transportation themes being laid off, placing these themes at risk. The State Library would still like to consider them at risk in next year's Land Plan and until the Library's staffing situation is clearer. Erin explained the process for making geographic name changes, which involves working with the USGS. The USGS is the official naming authority, but that agency delegates a lot of the groundwork to the states. Out of these two at-risk themes, the State Library will make transportation the priority and will work on geographic names as much as possible. The State Library would like to keep these themes designated as at-risk for another year and hopefully lift them out of at-risk status after that. Member Graham mentioned that she is interested in the possibility of the Council taking on the authority for geographic names. Chair Stapp suggested looking into the workflow that would be necessary if the Council were to take on this responsibility, and then making a recommendation to the Council about what the Council's role would be.

MLIAC Subcommittee Reports

Grant Review Subcommittee

The Grant Review Subcommittee met following the Council's June meeting. The Subcommittee is considering creating a planning grant, and Member Grebenc has prepared a draft of what that could look like. The Subcommittee will also be reevaluating the project management section of the application. Member Bousliman suggested incorporating grant information into the MLIA collections dashboard that MSL is creating to illustrate which counties are applying for and

receiving grants. New Council members Stahly and Dougher offered to join the Grant Review Subcommittee or other subcommittees as appropriate.

Land Plan Subcommittee

Member Maynard provided an update on the work of the Land Plan Subcommittee. Major takeaways from the process so far are the following:

- The Subcommittee has tried to make the document more focused on the original intent of the Montana Land Information Act, which was to support the MSDI. To that end, many of the references to “GIS” in the Land Plan have been replaced with “land information.”
- The Council members are encouraged to provide feedback on the Land Plan to the Subcommittee as soon as possible.
- At its next meeting, the Subcommittee will be looking at the section of the Land Plan addressing priorities for the Council. There needs to be greater specificity and some targeted tasks. There’s a potential need for policy recommendations for support for some of the themes. Some of the themes rely on data provided to the state by local governments, which often relies on their good will, not actual policy requirements.
- Much of the section about priorities for grants will remain the same, but there are other MSDI themes that need to be brought forward. There is a big-picture issue with the granting program, which is that it’s more suited to local government entities. The natural resource themes don’t lend themselves to the grant program. Out of fifteen themes, six of them are well suited to the grant program. They fit the federated model in which the federated partners are the state and local governments. With nine of the themes, the federated relationship is between the federal government and the state. These themes all have a federal basis for their initial development. It is very difficult for a local government to participate in those themes. Six themes are stewarded by the State Library and they fit well into the grant model; the other nine themes do not. Member Maynard recommended that the Land Plan address this discrepancy.

The Council engaged in extensive discussion of Member Maynard’s concern that the MLIA grant program addresses certain themes more than others. Council members offered ideas and suggestions for addressing natural resources information through the grant program. Member Maynard did not see a clear answer or solution to this problem, but she would like to add a section to the Land Plan that speaks to her concerns.

The Council discussed ways in which partnerships could be used to help address some of these concerns. Chair Stapp cited the Montana Lidar Plan as a good example of coordination of different funding sources and different levels of government. Member Dougher noted that it’s important that the grant program not be structured in a way that excludes certain types of projects. It needs to be flexible enough to adapt to changing needs and priorities.

Erin explained some of the history of the MSDI, which was modelled on the NSDI and began with eight layers. The Council deemed it important to add additional layers. Those layers might not easily lend themselves to federation. She explained that hydro work was previously prioritized in the grant program, but the State Library has not received many applications for hydro grant projects. Most groups doing hydro work are private entities and are not eligible for the grant program. Erin and Chair Stapp also explained some of the history of the MLIA grant

program and how it has shifted over time. Theme leads are not permitted to apply for grants. Commissioner Newell asked about adding new themes to the MSDI, and Erin explained that there is an established process for doing so. Chair Stapp added that the goal isn't necessarily to add new themes, but rather to maintain the existing themes. Erin offered to possibly present NSGIC's geospatial maturity assessment to the Council, and Montana could potentially do something similar for its own layers.

The Council continued to discuss possible ways that partnerships could be formed to address some of the natural resource themes, such as a local government partnering with a water district or conservation district. These types of partnerships are allowed in the grant program, and applications based on partnerships are prioritized. Member Maynard stated that there are still concerns because a local government can't collect the data to the same standard that is required by the federal government.

Chair Stapp presented the FY2020 MLIA budget and informed the Council that the FY2021 budget will be approximately the same. The Council will need to determine how much of the budget is allocated to grants. There is opportunity for the Council to identify significant needs and dedicate funding to meet those needs.

The Council agreed that the Land Plan Subcommittee's draft Land Plan will be shared with the Council for their review. Separate documents will be maintained for the Subcommittee and the full Council.

Member Cornish suggested adding an agenda item to the next Council meeting to focus on the "Priorities for the Montana Land Information Advisory Council" section of the Land Plan. She would like to set aside time to develop measurable benchmarks. She suggested that it be done in conjunction with the Council's next meeting on November 20, 2019.

GIS Coordinator's Report

STEM Girls in State Government Camp

Erin informed the Council of this project being undertaken by the State Library, DNRC, and Department of Revenue. The camp will host students from Gardiner High School and the Salish and Kootenai Upward Bound program. The students will be meeting with state government employees on September 16th and 17th to learn about STEM jobs in state government. This is the first time the State of Montana has undertaken a project like this. Erin will share photos and story maps afterward.

NSGIC GeoWomen Committee

Erin provided an overview of this group and explained her involvement as co-chair of this committee. Member Macholz will be joining the group at the NSGIC fall conference later this month.

Fall Outreach Activities

Erin explained upcoming MSL outreach efforts, including the MACo fall conference in late September and the Montana League of Cities and Towns conference in early October. State Library staff and Member Macholz will also be attending the NSGIC conference in Utah in late September. Erin is also working on a two-part workshop at the Billings Public Library in early

November to train librarians on how to use the Montana Cadastral application and to conduct a public training on the Cadastral application. Michael Fashoway mentioned that Meghan Burns is working with the Montana Watershed Coordination Council, and he will be attending a Montana 9-1-1 meeting in October. The State Library is also working with the Census Bureau on its complete count efforts.

Public Comment

Chair Stapp asked for any public comment on matters within the Council's jurisdiction. Commissioner Newell thanked the Council for its work. There was no other public comment.

Chair Stapp announced that the next Council meeting on November 20, 2019, will be held in the Grizzly Conference Room at the Montana State Library.

Chair Stapp adjourned the meeting at 2:26 p.m.