

## Montana Land Information Advisory Council Meeting

Montana State Library | 1515 E 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Helena, Montana | Grizzly Conference Room  
Wednesday, November 20, 2019 | 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

### Executive Summary

#### **In Attendance:**

Council Members or Designees: Robert Ahl – GIS Professionals Representative; Dawn Anderson – State Agency Representative; 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; Frank Dougher – Local Government Representative; Elaina Graham – USDA Representative; Jerry Grebenc – Public Utilities or Private Business Representative; Carl John Healy, Sr. (online) – Indian Tribal Interests Representative; Matt Heller (online) – U.S. Department of Interior Representative; Molly Hirschi – GIS Professionals Representative; Valentijn Hoff – Montana University System Representative; Lee Macholz – Local Government Representative; Catherine Maynard – USDA Representative; Rhonda Sullivan for Quinn Ness – Chief Information Officer’s Designee; Eric Spangenberg – Local Government Representative; Dan Stahly (online) – MARLS Representative; Jennie Stapp – Council Chair; Kreh Germaine for John Tubbs – State Agency Representative.

Guests: Jenny Connelley – MAGIP; Kent Park – Woolpert; Gerry Daumiller; Dave Ritts – Department of Commerce; Bruce Newell – Montana State Library Commission; Ken Wall – Montana State Library Commission; Millie Heffner – Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.

Staff: Jessica Edwards, Erin Fashoway, Michael Fashoway, John Kilgour, Troy Blandford, Evan Hammer (online).

#### **Welcome & Introductions - Chair Jennie Stapp called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.**

The Council members and guests introduced themselves.

#### **Administrative Updates/Agenda Changes**

Erin Fashoway explained two changes to the agenda. Dave Ritts of the Montana Department of Commerce will present on the Department’s FY2019 MLIA grant in the Special Reports section of the agenda, and Millie Heffner of the Department of Natural Resources (DNRC) will give an informal presentation on the Water Rights System in place of Member Tubbs.

#### **Approval of Executive Summary**

There were no corrections or additions made to the September 11, 2019, Executive Summary.

**Motion was made by Member Cornish to approve the September 11, 2019, executive summary. The motion was seconded by Member Dougher and passed with all in favor, none opposed, and none abstaining.**

#### **Standing Reports**

- **House Bill 633 Interim Study Update**

Chair Stapp provided an update on the interim study exploring funding sources for the Montana State Library (MSL). The subcommittee of the Legislative Finance Committee has been very supportive of MSL and concerned

about its funding. The MSL Commission has proposed a budget that would approximately triple MSL's current budget, and MSL has submitted 8-10 recommendations for different funding sources. Chair Stapp explained that agencies that pass through funding to MSL would like to see a model in which all state agencies, rather than just a few, help fund the Library. The subcommittee's next meeting is December 16<sup>th</sup>, at which point MSL should know more about the subcommittee's views on budget increases and the proposed funding models.

- **Land Information Plan Subcommittee**

Member Maynard explained the work of the Subcommittee and noted that some of its work on the draft Land Plan was revised considerably by MSL. She suggested that in future years MSL create a draft first and then submit it to the Subcommittee for a less intensive review. Regarding the Plan's content, the previous year's Land Plan contained many references to GIS and GIS coordination, rather than just land information. The Subcommittee discussed whether the Land Plan is the right place to address overall GIS coordination rather than strictly land information. The Subcommittee made many revisions to substitute "land information" for "GIS," but in the final version, MSL reverted to referring to GIS. Member Maynard suggested that the Council consider how to address overall GIS coordination efforts in Montana while not diluting the Land Plan's focus on land information.

The Council and staff discussed Member Maynard's concern that the Land Plan is trying to do too much and therefore getting diluted. Chair Stapp felt it would be helpful to have a GIS vision statement or strategic plan that involves other stakeholders like MAGIP. That document could help inform the Land Plan, which is a more immediate plan that guides a specific fiscal year budget and grant program. Member Maynard suggested a broader, statewide strategic planning approach in the future. The Council and staff discussed updating the strategic plan and ensuring that the Land Plan is implementing the goals of the strategic plan.

Member Ahl asked if there is a training component in the MLIA grant program. Erin Fashoway explained that there is not currently such a component, although an applicant can request funding for training. The Grant Review Subcommittee is considering mandating certain training for grantees. Member Stahly mentioned that a challenge for small counties and towns is making sure their training is sustainable. Many of them don't have the staff resources to maintain projects beyond the grant period. Member Stahly suggested that data maintenance, particularly at the local level, is something that should be addressed in the strategic plan.

Member Stahly asked if the Land Information Plan Subcommittee needs new members, and Member Maynard said it will during the next revision for FY2022.

- **Grant Review Subcommittee**

Member Bousliman updated the Council on the Subcommittee's work. The amount available for MLIA grants in FY2021 will be \$250,000. The Subcommittee has decided to add planning grants for an amount up to \$1,000 each. PLSS grants will be a separate category again. The application will be released January 15, 2020, and due February 18, 2020. Members Armstrong and Stahly both expressed interest in joining the Subcommittee.

MSL Commissioner Ken Wall asked how priority is given to multi-jurisdictional grant applications. Erin Fashoway and Member Bousliman explained the scoring process. Fashoway said that if a multi-year or multi-jurisdictional grant is scored well and approved for funding, it will rise to the top. There is not a formula for prioritizing multi-jurisdictional or multi-year grants, but they generally are approved for funding unless some aspect of the application is unacceptable.

- **MAGIP Report**

Jenny Connelley presented the MAGIP report and provided an update on the 2020 MAGIP Conference in April. The conference coincides with the University of Montana's workforce week, and that will be the focus of public night. MAGIP is working to coordinate with the University, Chamber of Commerce, and Job Service to get GIS

students into the workforce sooner after college. Connelley also reported on MAGIP's revision of its bylaws and recent GIS Day activities.

Chair Stapp asked Connelley if MAGIP would be interested in a joint strategic planning process with MSL, and Connelley said that it would. She has already started a conversation about greater coordination with Erin Fashoway.

- **GIS Coordinator's Report**

Erin Fashoway presented the GIS Coordinator's Report. She and Amelea Kim (MSL's lifelong learning librarian) recently completed a successful Cadastral training session at the Billings Public Library for library staff and the general public.

Fashoway updated the Council on MSL's new process for major MSDI announcements, which will now be posted on the State Library's news page. MSL recently posted an update about the 2019 NAIP imagery, which was incomplete due to early fall snow. Gaps will be flown in 2020, but no dates are available yet.

Fashoway presented MSL's draft MLIA Collections Dashboard and updated the Council on FY2020 MLIA collections, which are currently similar to FY2019. Member Germaine suggested adding a feature to the dashboard indicating how the current year's collections compare to previous years.

Fashoway presented the MLIA grant status report for FY2019 and FY2020. Quite a few FY2020 grants are behind schedule; one is completed. All FY2019 grantees requesting extensions were extended until May 1, 2020. Fashoway answered questions from the Council about specific grants and aspects of the grant program. Member Cornish wondered if a list of reasons why grants fail could be included in training for grantees. Fashoway said that in the past, training has focused on why applications fail, but this year, it should focus on how grantees can manage their projects well.

Fashoway updated the Council on a statewide RTN project that has been approved as a Department of Transportation (MDT) research project. The project will result in a business model for implementing statewide RTN. Member Stahly asked what MDT's long-term goal is for the RTN network, and Fashoway replied that the defined long-term goal is to have a statewide network operated by the state or an entity within the state, but beyond that it is undefined.

Chair Stapp explained that there is no MSL financial report in the Council materials for this meeting because the first quarter report has not yet been approved by the MSL Commission. First and second quarter financial reports will be shared with the Council at its spring 2020 meeting. Chair Stapp also notified the Council of a recent orientation conducted for new MLIAC members, which is available for all Council members if they would like to view it.

## **Special Reports**

- **Department of Commerce Report**

Dave Ritts presented on the Department of Commerce's (Commerce) FY2019 MLIA Grant Census 2020 Voting District Project. This project was part of the Census 2020 Redistricting Program. Ritts reviewed the goals and objectives of the project and explained how they had been achieved. Next steps in the project include MSL adding voting districts to the MSDI administrative boundaries framework and MSL and Commerce updating voting districts during the final verification phase between December 2019 and March 2020.

Erin Fashoway explained that MSL will make a recommendation to the Council for this to become an official MSDI administrative boundaries layer. Local and state election officials are very interested in using it. It has not been published in full yet.

Ritts and Fashoway responded to questions from the Council regarding some of the challenges of the project, improving county participation in the project, how the application will be used, who will have access to it, the timeline for redistricting, and so forth.

**Break for lunch from 11:53 a.m. to 12:26 p.m.**

### **Special Reports (continued)**

- **Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure Steward Reports**

Chair Stapp explained that MSL intends to provide more frequent updates on MSDI themes. Erin Fashoway added that the two layers under discussion—transportation and geographic names—are at risk due to past MSL budget cuts. The transportation framework has not been updated since 2017, and the geographic names framework has not been updated since 2016.

- **Transportation Framework Report**

Michael Fashoway updated the Council on the status of the MSDI transportation theme. He explained the uses of the road centerlines data, such as next generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1), geocoding, mapping, and geo-enabled elections. The transportation framework is largely made up of local government datasets and relies heavily on the goodwill of local governments. The existing dataset does not meet current needs very well, and Fashoway explained some of its issues and shortcomings. The current schema is not compliant with current next generation 9-1-1 standards. Fashoway noted that a lot of different agencies maintain some amount of roads data, and it would be good to have a statewide dataset to better integrate them all.

For next steps, Fashoway recommended developing a new schema incorporating local datasets and certain other datasets like MDT's, the Forest Service's, BLM's, etc. The goal would be to create a single dataset that is easily updated as well as NG 9-1-1 compliant. 9-1-1 datasets also include extra roads that might not be open to the public, so figuring out how to filter out those roads on base maps would be good. Developing that schema would require GIS analyst-level work, but it could then be taken over by a technician.

- **Geographic Names MSDI Framework Report**

Michael Fashoway updated the Council on the status of the geographic names theme. He explained the history of this theme, which grew out of the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) federal dataset. Montana wanted to have a statewide framework layer with additional features and names that the USGS wouldn't incorporate into the GNIS.

- **Land Information Plan Council Priorities**

- **Discussion of At-Risk MSDI Themes: Transportation and Geographic Names**

The Council discussed how to best address the two at-risk themes. Erin Fashoway explained that the Geographic Names Advisor position resides within MSL, and that work could come under the purview of the Council. DNRC was named the state geographic names advisor decades ago, but MSL has had an MOU with DNRC to fulfill that role. That MOU is in need of updating. Fashoway provided a short overview of the type of work the Geographic Names Advisor would do.

Gerry Daumiller, former Geographic Names Advisor, explained that the position grew out of a fracas between the state of Montana, the US federal government, and Canada over the renaming of the North Fork of the Flathead River to just Flathead River. In the wake of that conflict, Montana established a geographic names advisor to provide input to the USGS on proposed name changes. The US Board on Geographic Names (BGN) seeks local input before making decisions on geographic names. Many changes need to be made to the GNIS, but the USGS doesn't have the staff to do more than a few at a time. There

is a big disconnect between the GNIS and Montana geographic names framework. Since 2016, the USGS has made 2,800 name changes in Montana, which all need to be reconciled with Montana's framework.

Chair Stapp asked Daumiller to explain aspects of the name change process, and Daumiller discussed the method by which the BGN receives requests for name changes and processes them. The process allows for local and state input, but the BGN has the final say on a proposed change.

Member Cornish asked what MSL envisions the Council's role being in this process. Erin Fashoway replied that MSL would present proposed name changes to the Council, and the Council would then make a recommendation on them. As an aside, Daumiller mentioned that he has never been able to find the original governor's proclamation or legislation establishing the geographic names advisor position. Daumiller explained that there would be anywhere from two to twelve recommendations to the BGN annually, and the Council would serve in a naming advisory role. Fashoway added that the work would involve reviewing materials presented by MSL and voting on any recommendations. Chair Stapp noted that the Council would also hear public comment on any proposed name changes. She prefers having a representative body like the Council serving in this role, rather than just a single staff person. According to Daumiller, about 20 states have boards that perform this function.

The Council and staff discussed other aspects of the geographic names advisory role, including the need to update the Library's MOU with DNRC; the plan for addressing the backlog of proposed changes; staff capabilities for handling geographic name changes; and so forth. Chair Stapp stated that MSL has the capacity to undertake geographic names responsibilities. Commissioner Newell asked if MSL does any naming work for the Library of Congress and suggested that serving as a geographic names advisor would be a very similar function. He saw the geographic names role as a natural fit for MSL.

The Council and staff discussed the relative importance of each of these themes, and several members expressed their view that the transportation framework should be made a greater priority. Council members voiced concerns and asked questions about the current backlog on the transportation framework, the potential for MDT collaboration/input on the transportation framework, the role of local governments in maintaining the framework, the importance of the framework for fuel-tax distribution, MSL staffing needs for updating the transportation framework, and so on. Commissioner Wall noted that these layers are well suited for consideration by the Council and the interests its members represent. He suggested a task force to dig into the issue in detail, as well as presenting it to the GIS managers for discussion. Presenting it to MACo or at the MAGIP conference might also be a good way of raising awareness.

Chair Stapp said that these two themes have different workflow and staffing needs. She asked the Council if it would be worthwhile for MSL to have a discussion with DNRC about MLIAC serving in a geographic names advisory role. There was general support among the Council, and MSL will follow up with DNRC and Member Tubbs. Chair Stapp also asked for the Council's feedback on the transportation theme, particularly the approach that Michael Fashoway described of scrapping the current model and starting from scratch. Members Armstrong and Stahly mentioned that they see the transportation framework as more suited to MLIAC and a greater priority. Chair Stapp concluded discussion of the topic, saying that MSL will discuss the geographic names role with DNRC and bring it back to the Council as an action item. MSL staff will discuss the transportation theme further and bring it back to the Council for more discussion.

## **Unfinished Business**

- **Montana Land Information Plan Budget**

Erin Fashoway provided an overview of the memo "FY2021 Land Information Plan & Land Information Act FY2021 Budget." No public comment was received about the draft Land Information Plan Priorities.

The Council discussed how to best allocate the unallocated \$30,000 line item in the Land Plan budget. Main suggestions, concerns, and questions about the allocation included the following:

- Member Cornish wondered if proposed budget items 2 (Improve MSDI Elevation Framework) and 4 (MLIA Grants) could be combined in some way to direct grant funding toward addressing the elevation framework. She also wondered if a separate category for planning grants could be made a priority.
- Member Ahl expressed concerns that planning grants still wouldn't address the need for training on how to properly write a grant. Member Stahly suggested that grant management is an area where training is needed, and \$30,000 could go along way toward providing that.
- Member Maynard recommended using the funds for lidar storage and dissemination needs. Member Germaine added that, from DNRC's perspective, the cost of hosting and disseminating lidar data is very important. Member Ahl also expressed support for dedicating the funding to lidar dissemination needs. Member Macholz asked what MSL's anticipated needs are for storage and dissemination and what solutions MSL is looking at. Chair Stapp responded that MSL's intent is to use the state data center for storage and build those costs into MSL's IT budget request to the state legislature.
- Member Anderson recommended using the funds for the transportation framework, and Member Macholz agreed that the funding would help address the needs for that layer.
- Chair Stapp explained that the funding would not become available to MSL until July 1, 2020, so the Library could spend the next eight months examining in more detail how the funding could be used.
- Commissioner Wall expressed concerns about providing services to local governments and wondered if the funding could be used to partner with MACo to initiate more collaboration with local governments.
- Member Anderson suggested approaching nontraditional partners, such as ONX Maps, to see if they would be willing to contribute to the state's GIS infrastructure. Member Armstrong mentioned that the BLM recently reached a successful data-sharing agreement with ONX.

**Member Cornish moved that the \$30,000 be distributed between number 1 (Complete MSDI Transportation Framework Review and Modernization) and number 2 (Improving the MSDI Elevation Framework: storage, acquisition, and dissemination of statewide lidar data) without splitting it between them because the Council doesn't have all the information. The priority for the \$30,000 is in completing the transportation framework and in improving the MSDI elevation framework. The motion was seconded by Member Grebenc. Chair Stapp asked if Member Cornish intended a specific distribution between the two priorities, and Member Cornish responded that it is to be determined later when more information is available. Chair Stapp clarified that the motion is to prioritize numbers 1 and 2 for the unallocated portion, and at the next Council meeting MSL would bring back recommendations for how to use those monies to have the greatest impact, knowing that the Council would then be able to weigh in on exactly how MSL would use those funds. The motion passed with all in favor, none opposed, and none abstaining.**

- **Montana Land Information Plan**

Erin Fashway presented the draft FY2021 Land Information Plan and explained changes to the grant priorities, MSDI priorities, GIS coordination priorities, and the budget. The Council discussed the plan and asked for clarification of several aspects of it. Member Dougher asked if there is a weighting difference between the Tier 1 and Tier 2 grant priorities, and Fashway said that it still needs to be determined by the Grant Review Subcommittee. The Council discussed Goal #2 on page 8 of the Land Information Plan and how it might be condensed and clarified, but ultimately it was decided to leave it as is. Chair Stapp highlighted changes to the Land Plan budget, one of which is a line item for strategic planning and one of which is increased funding for the Montana Natural Heritage Program. Several Council members expressed confusion about the public comment period and concerns about not clearly understanding when they had an opportunity to comment on the plan. Member Cornish recommended that, in future years, the Council have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft Land Plan before it is released for public comment, and Chair Stapp suggested moving up the work of the Land Plan Subcommittee to allow for Council review and comment.

Member Cornish moved to adopt the Montana 2021 Land Information Plan as presented by the Land Plan Subcommittee to the Council and, with respect to the public comment received, that the Council duly approve the plan. The motion was seconded by Member Armstrong. The motion passed with 1 opposed (Member Anderson), 4 abstaining (Members Ahl, Armstrong, Dougher, and Stahly), and all others in favor.

- **MLIA Grant Benchmarks**

Member Cornish provided a brief overview of her memo on establishing grant program benchmarks. Chair Stapp delegated review of the memo to the Grant Review Subcommittee, which will report back to the Council at the next Council meeting.

## **New Business**

- **Water Rights System Integration With Cadastral**

Member Germaine explained that DNRC is currently upgrading its water rights database. The database has some ties to the cadastral application because of water rights' attachment to parcels and their ownership. Member Germaine explained some of the challenges with maintaining the data integrity between the water rights and pieces of land. The geocode in a parcel's cadastral information is what DNRC uses to connect water rights ownership with parcel ownership.

The legislative Water Policy Interim Committee (WPIC) meets on November 21, 2019, and Millie Heffner (DNRC) provided an explanation of what WPIC wants to address with respect to DNRC's geocoding process, such as what problems exist and how they can be addressed. Heffner summarized the underlying causes of ownership discrepancies and the difficulties of correcting them. She explained some of the recommendations DNRC will present to WPIC, such as having a more direct connection to the Department of Revenue's data. Another recommendation is to expedite the exchange of deed and title information from the county level to DNRC. In conclusion, Chair Stapp said that the Council may be asked to weigh in on geocoding decisions in the future.

- **Creation of the MSDI Review Ad Hoc Subcommittee**

Chair Stapp explained the goal of creating a subcommittee to review the MSDI themes and the role of the theme stewards and to create a framework for evaluation of the themes. She asked for feedback on the need for an MSDI review, and Member Dougher said it is a good idea and offered to help with it. Member Ahl asked how a subcommittee would handle a situation like the loss of the transportation theme, and Chair Stapp explained that creating a framework for review could help assess how to respond to that type of situation. It would basically entail more consistent and careful scrutiny of the themes. Member Bousliman asked if there's a way to quantify the return on investment for certain layers and whether the subcommittee could look at ways to fund layers that might be funded elsewhere. Member Armstrong mentioned that the BLM and Forest Service could probably lend a lot in terms of data stewardship and management. BLM has a lot of training materials on data stewardship. Chair Stapp stated that MSL will be looking for volunteers for this subcommittee.

- **2020 Council Meeting Dates**

- **January Working Meeting Proposal**

The Council discussed the possibility of scheduling an additional working meeting. Several members voiced a desire to designate time on each meeting's agenda for working discussion but not to schedule an additional meeting. Member Macholz mentioned that development of a strategic plan would be a valuable reason for holding a special meeting. Member Stahly proposed an extra meeting to accomplish the work that isn't currently being addressed by the subcommittees. Chair Stapp suggested creating a document outlining the roles and responsibilities of the subcommittees and explaining the Council priorities not addressed by the subcommittees. Erin Fashoway noted that the Council's June meeting usually has a shorter agenda, so that meeting might be a good time for a working session. Chair Stapp said that MSL will have an internal discussion of the strategic plan and will return to the Council to discuss the issue.

- **2020 Meeting Dates**

The Council briefly discussed the 2020 meeting dates set forth in the “Proposed 2020 MLIAC Meeting and Other Important Dates” memo.

**Member Spangenberg moved to approve the meeting dates as laid out: Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>; Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>; Wednesday, September 16<sup>th</sup>; and Wednesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>. The motion was seconded by Member Grebenc, and the motion passed with all in favor, none opposed, and none abstaining.**

- **Fair Library Access Resolution**

Commissioner Newell presented the Fair Library Access Resolution and explained its background. It is intended as a statement of principles and also for use as a planning, evaluation, and communications tool. The resolution basically says that all Montanans deserve services from MSL, and success should be measured by the end-user’s experience and how well their needs are met. Commissioner Newell explained that the intent is to shift MSL’s focus from what the Library does and has to how effectively the Library serves all Montanans. This change can disrupt the planning process, but it will hopefully lead to new views of success and strategic planning.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Adjournment**

Member Cornish moved to adjourn, and Chair Stapp adjourned the meeting at 3:40 p.m.