

Common GIS-Related Acronyms

June 3, 2015 (Montana State Library)

Agencies/Organizations	
BGN	Board on Geographic Names, U.S. Department of Interior
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of Interior
BLM	Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of Interior
DMA	Defense Mapping Agency
DOA	Montana Department of Administration
DOR	Montana Department of Revenue
DEQ	Montana Department of Environmental Quality
DNRC	Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESRI	Environmental Systems Research Institute
FGDC	Federal Geographic Data Committee
FWP	Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
GNA	Montana Geographic Names Advisor
GWIC	Ground Water Information Center of the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology
ITSD	Information Technology Services Division of the Montana Department of Administration. Now SITSD.
MACO	Montana Association of Counties
MAGIP	Montana Association of Geographic Information Professionals
MARLS	Montana Association of Registered Land Surveyors
MBMG	Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology
MCO	Montana Climate Office
MDT	Montana Department of Transportation
MLIAC	Montana Land Information Advisory Council
MSL	Montana State Library
MWCC	Montana Watershed Coordination Council
NGA (Formerly NIMA)	National Geospatial-Information Agency (formerly National Imagery and Mapping Agency), U.S. Military
NGS	National Geodetic Survey—part of NOAA, the NGS defines, maintains, and provides access to the National Spatial Reference System
NHP	Montana Natural Heritage Program—a part of NRIS
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
NRIS	Natural Resource Information System of the Montana State Library (see also NHP and WIS)
NSGIC	National States Geographic Information Council

SITSD	State Information Technology Services Division of the Montana Department of Administration (formerly ITSD)
URISA	Urban and Regional Information Systems Association
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
USNFS	U.S. National Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
USGS	U.S. Geologic Survey, U.S. Department of Interior
WGA	Western Governors' Association
WIS	Water Information System of the Montana State Library—a part of NRIS
File Extensions	
DBF	Data Base File—the dBase file format used with shapefiles. See also SHP
DGN	Design file—the Microstation drawing format
DWG	Drawing file—the AutoCad drawing format
DXF	Drawing Exchange Format—an AutoCad export file
E00	An exchange format for ESRI coverage and grid datasets
EPS	Encapsulated Postscript file—a file format favored for graphics exchange
GDB	ESRI file geodatabase
GIF	Graphic Interchange Format—a format for web graphics
JPEG (JPG)	Joint Photographic Experts Group—a format for web graphics
MDB	In GIS, a nearly obsolete type of ESRI geodatabase (“personal geodatabase”). However, more generally the extension refers to a Microsoft Access database
PDF	Portable Document Format—an Adobe file format used for document publishing/sharing and is readable with free software (Acrobat Reader)
PNG	Portable Network Graphic—a format for web graphics
RTF	Rich Text Format—a generic word processing format
SBN	Part of a shape file—one of the files that store the spatial index of the features, also see SHP
SBX	Part of a shape file—one of the files that store the spatial index of the features, also see SHP
SHP	Shape file—an ESRI published spatial data format (comprised of multiple support files). See also: DBF, SBN, SBX, & SHX
SHX	Part of a shape file—the file that stores the index of the feature geometry, also see DBF & SHP
SID	An image format created by Lizard Tech that dramatically reduces the disk size of image files (see also MrSID)
TIFF (also TIF)	Tag Image File Format—an image format commonly used in GIS
General	
3DEP	3D Elevation Program of the USGS
CAD	Computer Aided Dispatch—a term for computer enabled dispatching

CAD	Computer Assisted (or Aided) Design (or Drafting)—a generic term for computerized drawings
CADD	Computer Assisted (or Aided) Design and Drafting
CadNSDI Montana	CadNSDI is a term used nationally to mean the spatial dataset representing the Public Land Survey System (PLSS). In Montana, this dataset is referred to as CadNSDI Montana
CAMA	Computer Aided Mass Appraisal—MT DOR database storing parcel tax information
CIR	Color Infrared Imagery
DEM	Digital Elevation Model—typically produced by USGS in 30 or 10 meter cell size
DLG	Digital Line Graph—a vector GIS format produced by USGS
DOQ	Digital Orthophoto Quadrangle—a quadrangle-based orthographic air photo from USGS typically 1 meter resolution delivered as 7.5-minute quad or 3.75-minute quarter-quad (DOQQ) images
DRG	Digital Raster Graphic—a scanned image of a USGS 7.5-minute quad
DSM	Digital Surface Model—typically produced by USGS
DTM	Digital Terrain Model—a generic term for software terrain modeling
FIPS	Federal Information Processing Standards—public U.S. federal government standards for use in federal computer systems (i.e. census FIPS code)
GCDB	See CadNSDI. Geographic Coordinate Database (GCDB)—a now obsolete, measurement-based digital representation of the Public Land Survey System created by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, which served as a basis for CadNSDI Montana
GIS	Geographic Information System or Geographic Information Science
GNIS	Geographic Names Information System—USGS database storing the official names of Geographic Places in the United States (see also MGNF)
HTML	Hypertext Markup Language—a language used to build web pages
HUC	Hydrologic Unit Code (watershed identifier). A series of HUCs representing nested watersheds are stored in a watershed boundary database (see also WBD)
IfSAR	Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar—airborne ifsar is a remote sensing method using radar
LiDAR	Light Detection And Ranging—a remotely-sensed digital product that is similar in principle to radar, using light instead of the microwave part of the radio-frequency spectrum
LPC	LiDAR point cloud
MCPD	Montana Control Point Database
MGNF	Montana Geographic Names Framework—Montana’s database of geographic names (see also GNIS)

MLIA	Montana Land Information Act—passed by the 2005 Montana Legislature to provide source funding for GIS coordination and for MSDI data collection, integration, maintenance, and distribution
MrSID	Multiresolution Seamless Image Database—an image format created by Lizard Tech that dramatically reduces the disk size of image files
MSDI	Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure. See also NSDI
NAD	North American Datum
NAIP	National Agriculture Imagery Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture
NED	National Elevation Dataset (USGS)
NHD	National Hydrography Dataset (USGS)
NG9-1-1	Next Generation 9-1-1
NSDI	National Spatial Data Infrastructure (see also MSDI)
NSRS	National Spatial Reference System
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
PRISM	Parameter-elevation Regressions on Independent Slopes Model—a tool used for climate mapping
PLSS	Public Land Survey System (see also CadNSDI Montana)
RAWS	Remote Automated Weather Station
REST	Representational State Transfer—a communication protocol (most often partnered with HTML) facilitating communication to and from web mapping services
SDE	Spatial Database Engine—an ESRI software package for serving data
SDTS	Spatial Data Transfer Standard—the vector format USGS uses for DLG version 3
SSURGO	Soil Survey Geographic database—digital soils data produced and distributed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service
TIFD	Tax Increment Financing Districts
TIGER®	Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing—U.S. Census Bureau vector data format
TIN	Triangulated Irregular Network—a generic term for terrain modeling using triangles
WBD	Watershed Boundary Dataset (see also HUC)
XML	Extensible Markup Language—a language used for online applications and the internet