

DRAFT
MINUTES OF THE
MISSISSIPPI COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR
REMOTE SENSING AND GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

JUNE 3, 2004

PRESENT

Charles Chisolm, Chair, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
David Litchliter, Vice Chair, Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services
Jeanie Smith, Mississippi Municipal League
Joel Yelverton, Mississippi Association of Supervisors
Chuck Carr, Central Mississippi Planning and Development District
Clay Lewis (for Leland Speed), Mississippi Development Authority
Jim Crout (for Robert Latham), Mississippi Emergency Management Agency
John Simpson (for Larry L. "Butch" Brown), Mississippi Department of Transportation
Barbara Collier, Tax Assessors/Collectors Association
Rick Ericksen, Mississippi State Board of Registered Professional Geologists
Andy Taggart, Madison County Board of Supervisors
James Sledge, Mississippi Forestry Commission
Jim Steil, Technical Users Group Chairman
Phil Sullivan, Policy Advisory Committee Chairman

ABSENT

David Shaw, Mississippi State University
Dannie Reed, Representative, Mississippi House of Representatives
Alan Nunnelee, Senator, Mississippi State Senate
Eric Clark, Secretary of State
Shirley Hall, Mayor, City of Richland
Alice Gorman, Mississippi State Tax Commission

Chairman Charles Chisolm called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. and asked for introductions by those present. Cragin Knox then presented a review of past activities beginning with the 2002 study of the benefits of the Mississippi Digital Earth Model (MDEM) and ending with an address of ongoing Coordinating Council issues and activities.

Charles Chisolm asked for a brief discussion on each of these listed issues. MDEM development was the first issue. John Michael Simpson of the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) said MDOT needs orthoimagery and the cadastral information and needs to know the costs. He suggested a work group be formed to create a plan on how the Council will develop MDEM, to include time frames, costs, and strategies. Jim Steil stated that the method or process to develop such cost estimates already exists. John Michael agreed to lead this work group effort.

The next issue was the coordination of data acquisition. Although the Council sent letters to all levels of Mississippi government requesting information about remote sensing/geographic

information systems (RS/GIS) activities, there have been very few responses with the exception of the Department of Marine Resources. Joel Yelverton suggested the initial effort of determining activity be focused on the vendors doing the work, then approach the active government entity. David Litchliter asked for the local government point of view on this issue. Phil Sullivan stated that there is a large need to educate the people affected. They don't want the state telling them what to do. There needs to be a trust developed between the state and these affected parties. Jeanie Smith said the Mississippi Municipal League is available to help with this effort.

Another issue on the list is standards development. It was noted that many other states, as well as the federal government, have been very active in this arena. The Council's development of the "Request for Qualifications" (RFQ) somewhat established standards for the orthophotography. During the next six months to one year, each of the seven MDEM layers will have standards assembled for Council adoption.

The development of the state's warehouse/clearinghouse was the next item for discussion. This subject involves hardware, software, and the statewide distribution system. It was stated that the data will reside where it is most needed. Claude Johnson said this is a major project in the Department of Information Technology Services (ITS), and they are seeking a lot of participants to help develop this important asset. To this end, ITS plans to hold workshops around the state in order to determine the business needs. The warehouse/clearinghouse will be designed to meet those needs. Andy Taggart pointed out that the sensitive issue about data should focus on accessibility rather than location. Phil Sullivan said that many local officials don't want to give up control/ownership of their data. The possibility was mentioned that the technical staff might tell their supervisors misleading information about the state effort and recommend not participating. This is the type of situation that the education effort will address. There was a brief discussion about dealing with or determining the quality of local data sets.

The last item on the list was developing the express products list (EPL). The EPL approach is commonly used successfully in state government and is being expanded for GIS to include the local governments. The EPL makes it faster, easier, and cheaper to buy hardware and software. Chairman Chisolm declared that this list of issues will be the focus of this year's Council activity.

Cragin Knox noted the major role that the Department of Public Safety plays since they are now responsible for homeland security. He suggested that with that responsibility, they should be represented at the Council table. Jim Sledge pointed out that the Mississippi Institute for Forestry Inventory will be heavily involved in remote sensing and, therefore, should participate in the process. Mr. Chisolm said they should be participating in the Policy Advisory Committee.

With a quorum present, Charles Chisolm asked for a motion to invite the Department of Public Safety to sit at the Council table as a non-voting member. The motion was made by Andy Taggart, seconded by Rick Ericksen, and approved unanimously. The Chairman then asked for a motion to approve the January 26, 2004, meeting minutes. The motion was made by Andy Taggart, seconded by Chuck Carr, and approved unanimously.

Cragin Knox, Steve Champlin, and Bill McDonald presented a PowerPoint report on the Flood Map Modernization Initiative and the statewide Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) project. These DFIRMs will be hosted on the clearinghouse.

Phil Sullivan followed with a discussion on the activities of the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC). He feels the PAC is in an education phase and is not ready to make policy recommendations. He said that a data distribution policy is the first issue the PAC wishes to pursue. The PAC also supports a non-technical survey of who has data and the contact information. The Technical Users Group (TUG) and ITS will conduct the survey. A brief discussion followed on inventories, the need for asking basic (simple) questions, and getting an idea of what data are out there.

Jim Steil gave a report on the Technical Users Group and a PowerPoint presentation on warehouse/clearinghouse concepts. The TUG obtained permission to develop a public web portal. Jim also informed the Council that the PAC, TUG, and ITS were pursuing a small grant to be used for outreach efforts.

Claude Johnson reviewed the progress that ITS has made on developing the GIS-related hardware and software EPL. They should be ready to request Council approval to launch the EPL at the next Council meeting. All present supported the development of the EPL.

Joel Yelverton informed the Council that he has been selected to participate on a National Association of Counties Task Force on RS/GIS coordination.

David Litchliter then requested feedback on proposed dates for the next two Council meetings and agenda items. Suggested dates are September 2, 2004, and December 2, 2004, both at 1:30 p.m.

Joel Yelverton asked if the Council should consider making an effort in Washington, D.C, to obtain funding for MDEM. The Vice Chairman will discuss this issue with the Chairman.

Vice Chairman Litchliter adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.