**The Mississippi Coordinating Council for Remote Sensing and Geographical Information Systems (GIS Council)**

**January 27, 2025**

Next Meeting Date: Monday, April 14th,2025 (Time TBD)

Council Members Present: Steve Gray (MS Association of Supervisors) Jim Steil (IHL-MARIS), Steve Champlin (MDEQ), Rebecca Powell (MDA), Sean Hodges (MFC), Scott Trapolino (MML- City of Olive Branch), Evan Wright (MDOT), Kristyn Gunter (SMPDD), Bill Cheney (SOS), Preston White (MEMA)

Council Members Absent: Mike Love (MS Association of Surveyors), Kelle Barfield (Supervisor District 5 Warren County), Wayne Williams (MS Board of Registered Professional Geologists), Blake Pickering (Assessor, Lincoln County), Shari Veazey (MML)

Other Attendees: Wyatt Dunn (AG Liaison), Haley Feather (MS811), Nathan Brownstein MS Oil & Gas Board) Will Grayson (MDOT) Ethan Adkins (MEMA)

1. **Welcome and Introductions** – Steve Gray
2. **Approval of Draft Minutes** (Bill Cheney – Motion / Jim Steil – Second)
3. **The GIS Council is now fully compliant with the official public meeting notice system.** The current system was established after the formation of the GIS Council.
4. **Introduction of Wyatt Dunn, the Attorney General Liaison for the GIS Council.** Wyatt has already proven to be an asset to Council leadership as our dedicated AG resource. An open question session was held by members with Wyatt committing to finding answers. Questions asked included:
   1. Does the Attorney General Office offer any training for general responsibilities, ethics, and data privacy?
   2. What else does the GIS Council need beyond current legislation to stay compliant?
   3. Do any templates exist for council by-laws?
   4. How to establish a DFA account for Council Use? *– Miss Code §25-58-21(4) enables the GIS Council to spend by statute. Mechanics and details TBD.*
   5. Can the State Prevent the Sale of Information Collected for the State by a Vendor? *– If the information is accessible to the public and the vendor is altering the information or “packaging” it differently it is perfectly legal unless there is a provision in the vendor agreement to prohibit the originating vendor from doing so.*
   6. Update on SB 2835 – *Brief Explanation: The short title is to create the Mississippi Emergency Communications Authority (MECA). MECA is written to be under MEMA.*
      1. *The legislation will create a Communications Service Charge*
      2. *Legislation will also require registrations with MECA from all the communication service providers*
      3. *Lastly, the legislation will require “all emergency communications districts to adopt a NextGen911 plan no later than December 31st 202X?”*
   7. What SB 2835 asks from the GIS Council*- §3(2)(a)(iii) line 223 of the bill states that the GIS Council will submit two nominations of which the Governor appoints one. §3(6)(j) lines 385-388 of the bill gives MECA the authority to, “Investigate and incorporate Geographical Information Systems standards and mapping and other resources into the State NG911 Plan and formulate recommended strategies for the efficient and effective delivery of NG-911 services.” §3(7)(b) lines 421-430 of the bill states, Identify and define all ECDs throughout the state by geospatial layer. The authority shall adopt a schedule for all zip codes plus four (4) designations for ECDs in the state as 424 required by the federal Universal Sourcing Act. Any ECD that has within its jurisdictions zip code designations that do not adhere to county lines shall assist the authority in determining the appropriate ECD for scheduling purposes. In addition to the provisions in this act, the authority shall use the distribution S.B. No 2835 formula to modify boundaries as necessary to provide an ECD map for publication.” These last two pieces may cross over into what the GIS Council is meant to coordinate.*
5. **GIS Council Legislative Issues for the 2025 Regular Session** – Steve Gray
   1. The GIS Council is not making a follow-up legislative ask this session for a strategic plan and clearinghouse support for MARIS despite the need. This has resulted from a combination of long-existing issues including:
      1. No dedicated GIS legislative advocate mechanism exists for the GIS Council – Council members each have pre-existing, full-time responsibilities outside of GIS when visiting the legislature.
      2. Accounting support issues – The Department of Financial Affairs determined all GIS Council accounting administration was under IHL, complicating potential funding structures. IHL has concerns like other member entities about not benefiting from this arrangement with likely expanding, open-ended responsibilities.
      3. Lack of GIS Council Support/Staff – Lack of dedicated staff beyond a legislative liaison slows ongoing interagency coordination activities between meetings.
   2. Interaction with Legislative Members – Scott Trapolino spoke with local MS Representative Dan Eubanks (Dist. 25) and Senator Mike McLendon (Dist. 1) about GIS needs. Legislators were enthusiastic, but unaware of the disparity in GIS capabilities between counites. The emphasis of the conversation was on the importance of GIS in next generation 911 (NextGen 911) and securing funding for support.
   3. Senate Affairs Committee Hearings:
      1. Potential efforts to dissolve or consolidate councils, task forces, committees, and boards.
      2. Importance of monitoring these developments to preserve council functions was discussed
6. **Appointment of the State Representative to the National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC)** – Jim Steil

GIS Council Statute specifically charges the GIS Council with appointing the official NSGIC Mississippi representative. Jim Steil has been a NSGIC member since 1999 and represented MS for most of the GIS Council existence. Haley Feather has been an active NSGIC member for years, currently sits on the Board, and as such is fully qualified to represent Mississippi. There was a motion for ‘Haley Feather be the official MS representative to NSGIC’ (Jim Steil - Motion) / Preston White – Second). Passed with unanimous support.

1. **Addressing Update -** Haley Feather

Haley has been actively involved in addressing for years as one of the principal authors of the current state standard. Her recent involvement with the NSGIC NextGen working group has made her aware of upcoming changes at the national level.

* 1. Mississippi needs to be more aligned with the current focus on workflow development by 911 organizations like NENA, APCO, and NSGIC (as a liaison to individual state’s interests)
  2. Working with these groups ensures Mississippi will be able to leverage the open-source python scripting and toolboxes currently being cooperatively developed for quality assurance.
  3. 47 of 82 counties use point addresses.
  4. Limited volunteer staffing hinders sustained efforts, but our current standard needs to be brought into compliance with the emerging no-cost solutions.
  5. Haley discussed the need for a motion to reach out to the legislatively established GIS Council Technical Users Group (TUG) and Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) to be reinvigorated to build a larger base of technical and policy expertise for this task. The initial goal for these committees is to update our current state point addressing standard in alignment with national workflows. (Bill Cheney – Motion / Rebecca Powell – Second)
  6. Haley then identified Scott Trapolino as the best 911 addressing subject matter expert to represent the GIS Council in potential future appointments to any other MS 911 authority or board. – no action

1. **Other / New Business**
   1. **DEQ - Potential loss of NOAA Grant Funding**: DEQ expressed the uncertainty of continued NOAA funding for the collection of MDEM core layers. Risk of outdated or unavailable GIS data impacting thousands of users. There is a need to explore alternative funding mechanisms to ensure data continuity and consistency.
   2. **MARIS Update**:
      1. Ongoing funding challenges
         1. Vector data maintenance is no issue, raster and Lidar become challenging costs as MARIS receives no operational funds beyond salaries.
         2. Significant growth in use of MARIS FY19 vs FY24
            1. +250% Data Files distributed by hard drive
            2. +600% Unique Logins
            3. +800% Data Files
            4. +1,100% Map Service Visitors
         3. Importance of communicating the costs associated with maintaining high-quality GIS data to stakeholders and legislators
2. **GIS Council Meeting Scheduling and Structure:** 
   1. After discussion it was decided to set a goal of quarterly meetings unless urgent issues arise.
   2. Next meeting date is scheduled for Monday April 14th, time TBD. Hosting opportunities are available. (Bill Cheney – Motion / Preston White – Second)
3. **Adjournment:** (Jim Steil – Motion / Bill Cheney Second)