



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240



In Reply, Refer To:
FWS/IRTM

APR 27 2005

Memorandum

To: Service Directorate

From: Assistant Director – Information Resources and Technology Management and
Chief Information Officer

Subject: Geographic Information Systems Steering Committee Charter

A new charter for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Steering Committee has been approved by the Director. The attached Charter redefines the Committee's purpose, goals, authority, and scope of activities and enables its members to make a greater contribution towards improved management of GIS resources within the Service.

The GIS Steering Committee was established by the Director in 1991 to coordinate and develop policies and plans for the implementation of a Service-wide GIS Program. Service Manual Chapter 270 FW 8, *Geographic Information Systems*, outlines the primary responsibilities of the GIS Steering Committee, Service management, and the general user community in relation to Executive Order 12906 and OMB Circulars A-16 and A-130.

Over the past decade, the Service has undergone several reorganizations; as a result, some Committee members may no longer represent the original nominating Region or Program. In addition, more Programs are utilizing GIS technology than in the past; these Programs may wish to be represented on the Steering Committee. A list of the current Regional and Program GIS Steering Committee members is available at <http://www.fws.gov/data/scmem.html>. Please reconfirm these individuals or appoint new representatives to carry out the duties and responsibilities defined in this Charter and to speak for your entire Region or Program. The increased visibility of GIS within the Federal Government, and its relevancy to crosscutting E-Government initiatives and the Federal Enterprise Architecture, makes it vital that all Programs and Regions with an interest in GIS be represented.

Please coordinate the appointment of this Committee representative with your Regional or Program Chief Technology Officer and current GIS Steering Committee Representative. The name of your representative should be submitted in writing to Mike Howell, Chief Information Officer, by May 27, 2005. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Deb Green, National GIS Coordinator (303-274-3574).

Attachment



**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
Steering Committee Charter**

Statement of Purpose

The GIS Steering Committee provides leadership and direction regarding the use of GIS and related technologies to accomplish the Service's mission. This includes development of policy and procedures, assessment of needs and opportunities to apply GIS, identification of priorities, development of strategic and tactical plans, and development of organizational capabilities. The Committee also advises the Assistant Director - Information Resources and Technology Management and Chief Information Officer (CIO) and the Chief Technology Officer (CTO) Council on all major issues pertaining to GIS and geospatial data investments.

Goal

To improve the effectiveness and cost efficiency of the use of GIS and related technologies to support accomplishment of the Service's mission.

Objectives

The GIS Steering Committee will organize, coordinate, and integrate interrelated concurrent GIS activities in the Service.

- 1- Improve Spatial Data Management:** Promote the creation and use of data standards for FWS GIS data. Ensure access to FWS spatial data by developing protocols and infrastructure for spatial data management. Promote spatial data sharing and re-use within the FWS and with external spatial data owners.
- 2- Serve in a Technical Advisory Role:** Provide recommendations on policies and priorities for the direction of GIS in the FWS, on an ongoing basis, timely to strategic planning, capital planning, and budget development schedules.
- 3- Improve Communication:** Serve as a focal point for communications about GIS issues, programs, and policies within the FWS on an ongoing basis.
- 4- Facilitate the Integration of GIS, Science, and Land Management Practices:** Promote use of GIS in the FWS to provide the sound science needed to manage FWS lands and other trust responsibilities.
- 5- Promote Compliance with FWS IT Policies within the GIS Community:** Educate all FWS GIS users on the IT policies relevant to geospatial activities. Ensure that GIS projects comply with IT policies.
- 6. - Promote GIS Training and Skills Development:** Assess needs, identify opportunities, prioritize, and plan GIS training and other developmental activities to provide adequate skills and abilities within the Service to manage and use GIS. Monitor implementation and adjust strategies as needed on an ongoing basis.

7. – Assess GIS Technology Needs and Develop Modernization Strategies: In coordination with the CTO Council and the Service’s Enterprise Architect, identify what we have, what we need, analyze gaps, factor in technology and architectural changes (internal and external), and develop modernization/transition plans. Incorporate plans into capital planning and budgeting activities.

8. Develop, Maintain and Monitor Implementation of a GIS Strategic Plan: The GIS Steering Committee will be responsible for developing and maintaining a GIS Strategic Plan to accomplish the goal and objectives listed above. The GIS Strategic Plan will be integrated into the Service’s overall Information Resources and Technology Management Strategic Plan. The initial GIS Strategic Plan will be due within 120 days of the signing of this charter. The plan will be updated on an annual or more frequent basis if needed, timely to the capital planning and budget schedules. The Steering Committee will monitor the implementation of the plan and provide advice and recommendations to address deviations from the plan.

Authority

Service Manual Chapter 270 FW 8 outlines the primary responsibilities of the Steering Committee, FWS management, and the general GIS user community in relation to Executive Order 12906 and OMB Circulars A-16 and A-130. This charter will enable the GIS Steering Committee improve management of GIS resources within FWS, improve GIS support to the FWS mission, and increase compliance with external guidance.

Membership

Each Regional Director shall appoint a staff member to represent and speak for the Region on all matters relating to GIS. Assistant Directors of FWS Program Offices with an interest in GIS shall appoint a staff member to represent and speak for the Program on all matters relating to GIS. Program offices may choose not to participate; they can change their decision at any time. The FWS Science Advisor will be asked to provide a member to promote the use of GIS for the sound science needed to manage Service lands and other trust responsibilities. One member will be recruited from a field station active in GIS to serve in a one-year rotating term. Appointment of representatives to the Committee shall be made in writing to the FWS CIO.

Chairperson: The Committee will be chaired by the National GIS Coordinator, with a rotating co-chair selected from the Regional or Program representatives.

Oversight

An oversight committee comprised of the Service CIO, the Science Advisor, one or more Assistant Directors, and one or more Regional Directors will be established to guide the efforts of the GIS Steering Committee.

Coordination with Other Groups

Coordination with the CTO Council, the IT Investment Review Board, the National Conservation Training Center, and the FWS Web Publishing Council will be crucial to accomplishing the GIS Steering Committee’s goals. Each group will be requested to appoint a liaison to the Committee. Coordination with the U.S. Geological Survey, other DOI Bureaus, and potentially other external organizations may be needed as well. Additional liaisons from other areas of expertise will be appointed in the same way, as appropriate. Liaisons will not have voting privileges.

Task Groups

The Committee will establish permanent or ad hoc task groups as needed. Task Groups will be led by a member of the Committee but may consist of any FWS personnel with the necessary expertise. Task Groups will be given explicit assignments, deadlines, etc. by the full Committee, will report back to the Committee, and will only work within the scope of those assignments. Changes in the scope, schedule, or assignments to Task Groups, termination of Task Groups, or modification of membership will be done by the entire Steering Committee.

Decision Process

Generally, decisions will be made during an official GIS Steering Committee meeting or teleconference. Any Committee member can raise an issue to the full Committee for a vote. To the extent possible, actions by the Committee will be approved by consensus (mutual agreement). In the absence of consensus, a two-thirds majority vote of all Committee members (present or not) will be binding. If there is not sufficient attendance at a meeting to provide a two-thirds majority of all members, the vote may be completed by e-mail. Each GIS Steering Committee member shall have one vote.

Meetings and Notes

The GIS Steering Committee Chairperson will organize committee conference calls and meetings. Agendas will be established in advance, handouts and background information will be provided sufficiently in advance of meetings and conference calls, notes will be taken and posted to an internal FWS web site.

Dissemination of Technical Standards and Guidance

All GIS Steering Committee decisions that require technical standards or guidelines shall be presented to the CTO Council for formal review and approval. Approved standards and guidelines will be issued as Information Technology Bulletins, in accordance with the process described in 270 FW 3, Information Technology Governance, and the CTO Council Charter. The National GIS Coordinator and/or other GIS Steering Committee members will work with the CTO Council to author any required documentation and provide assistance throughout the process.

Amendments

Amendments to this Charter may be proposed in accordance with the decision process described above. Amendments approved by the GIS Steering Committee will be forwarded to the persons identified below for review and final approval.

Approved by:

Michael J. Howell Jr.

Michael J. Howell
Assistant Director - Information Resources and
Technology Management and
Chief Information Officer

3/18/05
Date

Michael P. J. Murr Jr.
Deputy
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

4/19/05
Date