

Federal Geographic Data Committee

July 25, 2005

Wetlands Data

I. PURPOSE OF THE EXHIBIT

This exhibit addresses lead agency and subcommittee responsibilities for the coordination of spatial wetlands data related activities among Federal agencies. It establishes a mechanism for the coordinated development, use, sharing, and dissemination of spatial wetlands data financed in whole or in part by Federal funds.

II. AUTHORITY

Under the Office of Management and Budget Circular A-16, revised August 19, 2002, responsibility to coordinate wetlands data related activities is assigned to the Department of Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This Federal government-wide leadership for spatial wetlands data coordination is carried out under the auspices of the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC).

III. SCOPE

Wetland spatial data describes lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface, or the land is covered by shallow water part of the year. The wetlands layer of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure also contains adjacent deepwater and riparian habitats.

IV. LEAD AGENCY

The lead agency responsible for the coordination, management and dissemination of spatial wetlands data is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). Pertinent enabling authority resides in the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986. The Service has designated its National Wetlands Inventory Project (NWI) to undertake the responsibilities to satisfy the requirements of Circular A-16. In carrying out Federal government-wide leadership in spatial wetland data coordination, the Service is directly responsible to the FGDC, and the NWI ensures compliance with the objectives and guidance provided by the FGDC.

V. SUBCOMMITTEE

The FGDC Wetlands Subcommittee was established to promote standards of accuracy and consistency in spatial wetlands data financed in whole or in part by Federal funds; to exchange information on technological improvements for collecting spatial wetlands data; to encourage the Federal and non-Federal community to identify and adopt standards and specifications for spatial wetlands data; and to collect and process the requirements of Federal and non-Federal organizations for spatial wetlands data.

VI. MEMBERSHIP

The Subcommittee shall consist of representatives designated by the Federal agencies that collect or finance the collection of spatial wetlands data as part of their mission or have direct application of these data through legislated mandate. Each member agency of

the Subcommittee shall designate its representative, and an alternate, if necessary, and changes thereto, [by memorandum from that agency] to the Subcommittee Chairperson.

Other organizations may be added with the concurrence of the Chairperson of the Subcommittee. Federal organizations can request membership by writing to the Subcommittee Chairperson. The Subcommittee may also invite non-Federal participants, on an ad hoc basis, to provide information and briefings, as determined by needs of the Subcommittee.

The Subcommittee shall be chaired by a NWI representative of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Members may invite other Federal employees to provide assistance at meetings, however, only the member or designated alternate may represent the agency.

VII. RESPONSIBILITIES

The spectrum of responsibilities of the Subcommittee includes the following:

- A. Facilitate the coordination of agency activities and the exchange of spatial wetlands data, by formal and informal means.
- B. Collect, compile, and report information on Federal agencies spatial wetlands data activities.
- C. Determine the level of detail of spatial wetlands and related habitat data that are to be included in a coordinated wetlands layer of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure and recommend the addition of other levels of detail of spatial wetlands data not currently being collected.
- D. Establish integrated priorities for the production of spatial wetlands data, and facilitate and coordinate partnerships for producing the data.
- E. Promote government-wide use of defined and published spatial data transfer standards for spatial wetlands data.
- F. Develop and adopt common standards of content, format and accuracy for spatial wetlands and related habitat data for use by all Federal agencies, in order to encourage use by non-Federal organizations, to increase interchangeability, and to enhance potential for multiple uses.
- G. Establish and maintain mechanisms and reports to interface with databases of other agencies participating in building the wetlands layer of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure.
- H. Facilitate the economic and efficient application of spatial wetlands data through the sharing of experiences and analyses involving applications.
- I. Support higher-order or crosscutting activities established or recognized by the FGDC.
- J. Encourage agencies to ensure that the disposition of spatial wetlands data is carried out in coordination with the National Archives and Records Administration in order to provide for the permanent preservation of historically valuable data.
- K. Participate in the development and evaluation of international data definitions and standards used by the United Nations and other international agencies and make recommendations for their inclusions in the spatial wetlands data as appropriate.

- L. Foster technology development to address wetland mapping needs or gaps in information.

VIII. PROCEDURES

Subcommittee meetings shall be held at the call of the Subcommittee Chairperson and shall be held at least quarterly. Notification of meetings and an agenda will be normally distributed to members of the Subcommittee and to the Executive Secretary 10 Federal workdays in advance of the meeting.

All decisions shall be on the basis of consensus agreement. Where agreement is not reached, the issue will be promptly referred to the FGDC Executive Secretary to be scheduled for resolution.

The Subcommittee Chairperson shall consult with the Chair of the Coordination Group to determine prior to implementing any Subcommittee decisions that may impact the FGDC or its other subcommittee or working groups.

The Subcommittee Chair is responsible for the development and implementation of the subcommittee's annual work plans to coordinate spatial wetlands data related activities among Federal and non-Federal agencies and the reporting annually of such activities to the FGDC.

The Subcommittee may establish additional rules and procedures for conducting business.

IX. SUBGROUPS

The Wetlands Subcommittee may create work groups, task groups, or further subdivisions, at the discretion of the Subcommittee Chairperson, as appropriate to carry out its activities and meet its responsibilities. The establishment of subgroups for more than 12 months duration that are in addition to any specified in this exhibit and the abolishment of any such subgroup requires the approval of the FGDC. Participants in any group may be drawn from its member organizations and from other organizations, as appropriate.

X. COORDINATING MECHANISMS

The Subcommittee will employ those tools that are best suited to meeting its responsibilities, such as subcommittee meetings, national user forum, annual requirements solicitations, user surveys and analyses, spatial data user workshops, research initiatives, and cooperative ventures.

The Subcommittee Chairperson will coordinate the Subcommittee's activities with other FGDC subcommittees, working groups, and other components by participating in the FGDC's Coordination Group.

XI. REPORTS

The Subcommittee shall report to the FGDC annually, by December 31, describing the requirements for, production of, and availability of spatial wetlands data. This annual status report shall be submitted to the Executive Secretary, and shall contain at least accomplishments of the past calendar year, an operating plan for activities planned for the next year, photographs, diagrams, and other materials that may be of value for inclusion in the annual FGDC report to the Office of Management and Budget, and a brief discussion of problems encountered and other matters of interest.

The Subcommittee shall submit the operating plan for the upcoming year for FGDC review and concurrence. Special reports and technical papers also may be required by the FGDC during the reporting period describing special projects, coordination with other subcommittees, and the development of status graphics or catalogs and informational and educational brochures on the use and availability of spatial wetlands data.

The Subcommittee Chairperson shall provide a draft report of Subcommittee meetings, including Subcommittee recommendations and action items, to all Subcommittee members for review prior to approval.

The Subcommittee Chairperson shall provide the final report of the Subcommittee meetings to all Subcommittee members, the FGDC Executive Secretary, and the Standards Working Group Chairperson.

XII. TERMINATION

The Subcommittee shall remain in existence until terminated by the FGDC.