

Louisiana Geographic Information Systems Council

Digital Data Committee

Meeting of December 17, 2020

1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Warren Kron (LMA) called the meeting to order at 12:03 PM. A quorum was present via Webex for the meeting. The meeting was held remotely pursuant to the waivers of viva voce mandates of LA R.S. 42:11 *et seq.*, contained in 2020 JBE 41.

2. Attendance

Committee Members Present:

Chris Ard – City of New Orleans (NOLA)
Kathrine Cargo – Louisiana Chapter Emergency Numbering Association (NENA)
David Gisclair – Louisiana Senate (Senate)
Warren Kron – Louisiana Municipal Association (LMA)
Darryl Mack – Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD)
Josh Manning – Louisiana Association of Planning and Development Districts (PDD)

Others Present:

Phillip Breaux – LSU Center for Analytics & Research in Transportation Safety (CARTS)
Ashley Callahan – Terrebonne Parish Office of Emergency Preparedness (TPOEP)
Jason Carr – Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD)
Emily Dale – Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism (CRT)
Lynn Dupont – Louisiana Association of Planning and Development Districts (PDD)
Brad Mooney – Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF)
John Sheehan – Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Rachel Watson – Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism (CRT)

3. Meeting Summary

Mr. Kron (LMA) asked members to review the minutes from the November 19, 2020 meeting. There were several edits made to the draft minutes by David Gisclair (Senate) and Lynn Dupont (PDD). On a motion by Mr. Gisclair (Senate) with a second by Brad Mooney (LDWF) the November minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

For the remainder of the meeting, there were in-depth discussions involving the development of a land cover minimum schema. Mr. Kron (LMA) shared a spreadsheet he had created that compares several classification systems including:

- Anderson (Levels I and II)
- NOAA Coastal Change Analysis Program (C-CAP Tables 1 and 2)
- USGS National Land Cover Dataset (NLCD 2016)
- USDA Cropland Data Layer (CDL)

Each system was displayed as a column in the spreadsheet with the rows representing the various classes used in the classification. The Anderson system was used as the basis for correlating the classes of the other systems across the spreadsheet.

Ms. Dupont (PDD) commented that the spreadsheet definitely provides the type of information a user would want if they are trying to decide which classification system is best for their project. Chris Ard (NOLA) asked the committee about distinguishing a class for protected areas, and Ms. Dupont (PDD) clarified that protecting areas from development involves land use codes not land cover classes. Kathrine Cargo (NENA) and Mr. Gisclair (Senate) also participated in this discussion.

John Sheehan (DEQ) brought up fact that some land may serve different purposes at different times of the year. Mr. Sheehan (DEQ) commented that multi-temporal approaches to land cover classifications which may lead to strange results. Mr. Gisclair (Senate) used the example of a spillway that may be forested or agricultural for most of the year but could be inundated during floods. Phillip Breaux (CARTS), Ms. Cargo (NENA) and Brad Mooney (LDWF) also participated in this discussion.

For comparative purposes between land use and land cover, Ms. Dupont (PDD) shared an existing land use map of the Southeast Louisiana region. The coding used to produce the map came from the land-based classification standards (LBCS) which are meant to be general and will not suffice for use at a parish level. Josh Manning (PDD) commented about the LBCS and the need for finding a way to clearly distinguish between land use and land cover. Ms. Dupont (PDD) suggested that the LSDI should address land cover and include associated land use definitions with each land cover class. Also, because land use codes vary so much and there is so much change due to land development, the LSDI land use framework should clearly state that local authorities should be consulted when seeking land use data. Mr. Mooney (LDWF) and Mr. Sheehan (DEQ) agreed with this approach. Mr. Kron (LMA) asked whether the APA land use codes could be included in the LSDI, but Ms. Dupont (PDD) noted that local authorities dispute the meaning of those codes and the fact that the coding is very in-depth and specific.

Mr. Sheehan (DEQ) commented that even the Federal Government has not solved the issue of clearing defining land covers from land uses in its classification systems. As a result, people ask state agencies questions related to the difference between land use and land cover. Mr. Sheehan (DEQ) also remarked that the State of Louisiana has made a land cover classification that meets its satisfaction and the LSDI should be more focused on land cover with a caveat about land use. Ms. Dupont (PDD) agreed that the LSDI could just state that land use is for planning purposes which is a responsibility of local and regional government agencies. Mr. Gisclair (Senate) commented that this is exactly why the land cover and land use frameworks were not developed originally due to how complicated it is.

Mr. Kron (LMA) shared a document about the NOAA C-CAP wetland classes and asked the committee whether these too should be included in the land cover comparison spreadsheet. Mr. Sheehan (DEQ) commented that a disclaimer should be considered for all wetland classifications as to not consider it a legally-binding delineation for purposes of development. Ms. Dupont (PDD) agreed with this idea and thought it would be a great service to make this a clear point because people do use data like land cover to their advantage in court cases.

Mr. Mooney (LDWF) rehashed the purpose of developing land cover standard stating that the comparative table that Mr. Kron (LMA) had created should just serve as a guideline for users. Ms. Dupont (PDD) concurred and added that the classes should be clipped to eliminate any that do not exist in Louisiana (ie: Perennial Snow or Ice). Mr. Breaux (CARTS) suggested to leave all classes in the

table, but denote which ones are not typically found in Louisiana. Mr. Gisclair (Senate) also recommended including the NOAA wetland classes in the C-CAP classification system.

Mr. Kron (LMA) asked the committee whether any classification systems were missing from the comparative table. Ms. Dupont (PDD) noted that the USGS GAP Analysis Project classification system was not provided, and committee members agreed that it should be included. Mr. Kron (LMA) also noted that the many discussion points which have been brought up during meetings should be written to be part of the land cover framework. This discussion would include: appropriate uses of the classification system; the source of the classification; resolution of the data; and the update cycle.

Darryl Mack (DOTD) provided insight into what DOTD does with land cover data. DOTD staff do not perform land cover classifications and only utilize state-level data. Mr. Sheehan (DEQ) recommended that DOTD use the USGS NLCD as the standard for serving land cover data through the DOTD GIS Open Data Portal. Mr. Breaux (CARTS) also recommended that DOTD publish the LSDI land cover framework in conjunction with the NLCD. Mr. Sheehan (DEQ), Mr. Gisclair (Senate) and Mr. Mack (DOTD) all spoke about the need to clearly state the owner and custodian of each land cover dataset in order to remove all responsibility from DOTD for errors, discrepancies and other data issues. Mr. Mack (DOTD) added that DOTD already uses disclaimers for datasets it serves such as the National Hydrographic Dataset (NHD) that is provided courtesy of USGS. Basically, the disclaimer states who the authority is for the source data and that DOTD provides the data because it fulfills the requirements of the Topographic Mapping Layers.

Mr. Sheehan (DEQ) noted that US Fish and Wildlife manages the National Wetlands Inventory which is another excellent source of land cover data. Ms. Dupont (PDD) remarked that the new classification that is being created by NOAA is supposed to include an updated NWI.

Mr. Sheehan (DEQ) suggested the committee finalize its land cover discussion and initiate a new discussion about land use. Further, the land use framework could provide information that may not apply to the entire state, but perhaps for particular areas of the state such as the urbanized areas. Mr. Mack (DOTD) asked Mr. Breaux (CARTS), Ms. Dupont (PDD) and Mr. Manning (PDD) if their regional agencies had developed land use layers. Only the Regional Planning Commission had such a layer, but Ms. Dupont (PDD) noted it was eight years old. It was brought up once again how difficult it is to standardize land use across various jurisdictions.

4. Action Items

Mr. Kron (LMA) will incorporate the USGS GAP Analysis classes and the various wetland classes from the NOAA C-CAP classification system into the land cover metadata worksheet.

5. Next Meeting

Scheduled for Noon on Thursday, January 21, 2021 and the location will be determined later.

6. Adjourn

The meeting ended at 1:04 PM after the committee voted unanimously on a motion made by Mr. Manning (PDD) and seconded by Mr. Gisclair (Senate).