Soils Workgroup Meeting, NRCS, Portland, Oct 21, 2014, 10:00am – 12:00pm

Attendees: Bob DenOuden (GEO), Ian Reid (NRCS), Ron Raney (NRCS), Steve Campbell (NRCS), Diana Walker (ODA),

By telephone: Myrica McCune (INR), Ian Madin (DOGAMI), Bill Clingman (LCOG)

A=action items:

Ian Reid started the meeting off with a summary of what the soils workgroup has accomplished to date toward the compilation of a statewide SSURGO/STATSGO soils dataset for Oregon. Steve Campbell then reviewed the current draft of that dataset, which is available on the GEO FTP site in the Soils_Framework_Data folder in the FITUSER share. Since the previous meeting, Steve has created a new feature class in the soils framework geodatabase with the map unit aggregate table joined to the geometry. A document describing the fields populated within that feature class was also created as were a number of layer files useful for quickly mapping some useful attributes. At the workgroup meeting Steve walked the group through these attributes and we discussed whether there were any major omissions. Diana Walker suggested adding the soils data derived elements of the definition for high value soils, since this is something she regularly provides. Because the definition of high value soils includes elements that are not part of the soils dataset, there is some concern that this could be misleading (high value soils are defined in state statute and only some of the definition can be automated through analysis of SSURGO data). A modified feature class name that conveys the partial definition might alleviate some potential future issues. Ian Madin noted that the structure and approach of this dataset is similar to that of DOGAMI's Geology compilation product and makes sense.

The group generally thought the supplied dataset was sufficient and praised Steve and Ian for their work on this effort to date. There were suggestions to provide training to Soil and Water Conservation District staff in the future, on both the full SSURGO data as well as the framework product. We also discusses data updates and agreed that an annual cycle, timed to correspond to SSURGO updates in October, would be best unless major additional certified soil survey data is added mid-year, in which case an off-cycle update might be warranted.

In order to complete this effort, it was suggested that participants review the full summary list of soils data elements in SSURGO – which will be provided. Many of the data elements in SSURGO do not lend themselves to aggregation and should not be included in this generalized compilation product. There are other alternatives for those needing these types of data elements. It was also noted that in the compilation dataset, items requiring interpretation by the soil surveyor are populated only in areas where SSURGO data is available, these items will be null where only STATSGO data exists until those surveys are completed.

A Next steps in this effort are to update the FTP site with a revised dataset including the joined feature class and some of the most useful layer files, distribute the complete list of available soil data elements for review by the workgroup to determine if any additional items should be added, and present a summary of the activities of this workgroup at the Framework Forum on November 5th (Ian Reid will present). Based on feedback from the workgroup and from the forum, we may further modify the framework soils dataset. The plan will be to finalize this work at the spring forum, held in conjunction with the URISA Oregon-Washington GIS Conference in early May.