



Attendees: Dan Linscheid, Yamhill County  
Marc Thomas, BLM  
Cy Smith, GEO  
Kuuipo Walsh, INR  
David Mather, GEO  
Brett Juul, DOR  
Brent Blair, BLM  
Byron Clayton, BLM  
Terry Hobbs, BLM  
Gail Ewart, GEO (scribe)

The Public Land Survey System spatial dataset is a Framework element in the Cadastral theme. Oregon's Framework is part of the NSDI. Brett is the chair of the Cadastral FIT. For the past 18 years, Marc has generated township data at BLM. BLM is the current steward of the PLSS data and the geospatial derived from it due to its designated role as the federal agency responsible for tracking public lands ownership.

**ISSUE:** BLM is concerned about its shrinking budget and the backlog of work associated with maintaining the PLSS dataset. Marc is retiring on April 3, 2006, and his successor, Orrin Frederick, will assume Marc's responsibilities. Who will be responsible for maintaining the PLSS dataset into the future?

**Background:** The beginning of the meeting was devoted to educating some attendees about the nature and specifics of PLSS data, and the programs and roles of existing players. The PLSS was created for land settlement primarily in the west. Before that, many Donation Land Claims were granted and later knitted into the PLSS. GLO contains the original surveys. Those coordinates are updated continuously, using GPS and traditional surveying methods. The Geographic Coordinate Data Base (GCDB) is the software that calculates coordinates for monuments, government lots, etc. Those coordinates are used to create the geometry for the spatial expression of the PLSS. In getting from ORMAP Goal 2 to Goal 4, counties provide improved coordinates to BLM, if asked. Remonumenting is fairly rare.

County Surveyors are empowered to perpetuate, remonument, and restore GLO corners in their counties. They can charge a recordation fee, on certain documents, to fund these efforts. GLO corners are defined as any monuments set by US Gov't surveyors or under federal authority. They include the rectangular survey corners, Donation Land Claims, and Mineral survey corners. When county surveyors determine a corner position, it is subject to judicial review.

Any land information system needs the PLSS as a base to automate lands and realty records, manage tax lot parcels, manage resources, and produce maps. The PLSS is the base for the National Spatial Data Infrastructure. Framework data developed and maintained in navigatOR is Oregon's part of the NSDI.

There is a distinction between work of the land records unit at BLM, which has a legal effect, and the GIS expression of that work in the PLSS dataset, which does not. These discussions refer to the GIS dataset. INR keeps the public lands management dataset for Oregon. The BLM GIS dataset Land Line Inventory (LLI) portrays information related to the PLSS, jurisdiction, land category, rights, and subsurface minerals information for federal lands in Oregon and Washington.

**Current Status:** BLM cannot continue to maintain the PLSS under current conditions. The State and counties are better able to take on data source stewardship. BLM must transition from collection to maintenance. They can integrate county data. Data sources are 22 counties, DOR (14 counties) and BLM. There are 36 county surveyors, some of whom are private contractors. Some county surveyors don't participate in their survey community.

Stewardship involves having an authoritative source for the PLSS dataset.

**Solution:** If counties, through the County Surveyors, can take responsibility for some of the position maintenance work now performed by BLM, BLM will be able to perform data stewardship for the PLSS dataset. This includes continuing maintenance for the corners that BLM is responsible for plus horizontal integration of each county's contributions. **If county surveyors provide source data, BLM could act as horizontal integrator for PLSS. GEO is willing to publish the data.**

**Stewardship Model:** Could PLSS stewardship use ORMAP as a model? County boundaries need to edgematch. Tax lots are based on PLSS. ORMAP refers county boundary conflicts to the counties involved. Legislation is required to change a county boundary. The key idea here is that the data sources affected agree between themselves and report back the result to the integrator.

What data would county surveyors provide? [Marc has put our meeting conversation in words in lieu of having a graphic to insert here.]

County Surveyors would provide (1) coordinates they have collected themselves on GLO corners, (2) coordinates stored in a database and collected from various sources, and (3) coordinates produced for the PLSS by other departments in their county as a part of their stewardship role in QA/QC'd coordinate data. In cases where multiple monuments for a PLSS/GLO position exist, the County Surveyors would be involved in determining which monument represents the "best available evidence of or the proper restoration of the original GLO corner position."

What are the issues associated with implementing stewardship with county surveyors? Funding, and some surveyors are part-time. We can begin to implement a stewardship model with willing and able counties and add others later. Corner restoration dollars can be used.

USFS and BLM are poised to sign a stewardship agreement for maintenance of PLSS data within National Forest boundaries. Marc warned that USFS may not have the funds to implement the agreement.

Deschutes County is GPSing PLSS (GLO corners). There are now two versions. The County needs to resolve the conflict or determine the official version.

How do we engage the county surveyor community?

**Action:** Get on the agenda and attend the OACES conference in Eagle Crest June 12-14. Orrin Frederick might be persuaded to give a presentation in this regard. The state BLM director, Elaine Marquis-Braun, might also put in an appearance. Gail is penciled in as a placeholder. Dan will put this topic on the OACES agenda.

What are other states doing?

**Action:** Marc will collect info from Montana, Utah, Arizona & Wisconsin and send to Gail. Everyone review the online demo of Arizona (user name and password = cadnsdi).

Arizona publishes its PLSS in geographic coordinates. What coordinate system would be best for publishing the statewide dataset?

Resolve data issues in stewardship agreements with data sources.

**National PLSS Portal:** BLM will host the portal, but it wants each state to develop access and distribution. In Oregon, BLM would look to GEO for this.

The PLSS standard is an FGDC standard requiring FGDC-compliant metadata.

We need to specify a minimal set of attributes.

**Action:** All to review and comment on attributes included in portal demo.

**Suggested Workflow:**

Surveyors create plat and notes

Coordinates are generated

BLM integrates coordinates (puts them together in the same dataset)

GEO distributes/serves the dataset for Oregon to users

Topic for OACES conference – room for more coordination in workflow

**Next Meeting:** Look for day and time during the week of May 8.

Time did not permit discussion of public lands ownership stewardship and related issues. The participants thought this should be handled in another workgroup.

The county boundaries stewardship topic was referred to the ORMAP technical group.