

# Government Boundaries Technical Working Group

July 21, 2010



## Attendees

Roger Kassens*	Idaho Transportation Department
Dan Narsavage	Ada County Assessors
Jack Clark	Ada County Assessor's Office
Kevin deRosso	BLM
Dawn Latham*	Bonneville County
Sarah Higuera	Canyon County
Jim Hetherington	City of Boise
Karla Baker*	City of Caldwell
Donna Phillips	City of Hayden
Frank Roberts	Coeur d'Alene Tribe
Bryant Ralston	ESRI
Linda Davis	Idaho Department of Water Resources
Gail Ewart	Idaho Geospatial office
Wilma Robertson	Idaho Geospatial office
Bob Smith	Idaho Geospatial office
Jeff Servatius	Idaho Tax Commission
Walt Bulawa	Idaho Tax Commission
Joe Johns	Kootenai County
Craig Rindlisbacher*	Madison County
Angie Hopf*	City of Caldwell

\*Attended by phone

## Structure of the Government Boundaries TWG

The current grouping is based on work done in Oregon, and can be adjusted to satisfy Idaho's needs. In

this figure the *theme* Government Boundaries is divided in *elements* such as "city limits" and "Counties".



The FGDC states requirements about content for each of the data elements which should be worked out by the people involved with the individual elements.

## **Issues and Priorities**

The word “boundary” can have different meanings such as “administrative unit”, “political unit”, “geographical areas bounded by legal or political limits”, “service areas” or “project boundaries”. To get away from the word “boundary” the federal government uses “government units” instead.

It is important to keep in mind that boundaries change over time.

Many boundaries have legal definitions so it is important to understand the Statutes that define boundaries, and required procedures to create or change such boundaries. Gail clarified that TIM’s goal to have a GIS representation of a boundary, not a legal boundary. There will be some errors that are result of inaccuracies in the underlying legal documents which would require a legal process to update. At the very least, GIS would expose such mistakes.

Census is the official steward for the State Boundary, although BLM may have better boundaries. We need to make sure we include the Census Bureau in future TWGs. Jeff Servatius mentioned that the Tax Commission is working with Census on City Boundaries.

Tribal Boundaries are mapped by the BLM, although not all the tribes agree with those boundaries.

## **Election Consolidation**

Working toward a comprehensive data standard, in light of the immediate need concerning elections consolidation, we need ensure that the Secretary of State and Clerks understand what GIS can and cannot do - it would be good if someone from the Secretary of State’s office could attend a future TWG. Gail offered to help make this contact.

The timing/workflow processes need to be carefully examined since accurate, real time information needs to be available at the time people register at a polling station during elections. For example, the timing of Tax Code Area approval needs to be adjusted. Counties may need to expedite the creation of certain boundaries to ensure up to date information before the next election cycle.

How do we integrate data from adjacent Counties, and how do we do that in real time? This is mostly an organizational issue where several processes need to be aligned.

## **General Discussion**

Participation of Cities is important since Cities are bounded by a city limit containing city service providers. Since this is a TIM dataset, and we want to make it as useful to as many people as possible, it is important to have input on the data needs of Cities. Some people expressed concern about the investment of time required to participate in multiple TWGs.

The Government Boundaries Data interacts with many other TIM datasets. For example, the City of Hayden has 6 water jurisdictions which would touch the water utility element of the Energy Theme. Another example is that part of the State Boundary follows hydrological features (for example the Snake River) which thus need to be coincidental. Wilma Robertson is working on such vertical integration issues and has created a survey to determine those relationships. It would be helpful if, before the next Government Boundaries TWG, people would use the survey to expose those relationships. A “super TWG” is planned for GIS week in October 2010, where multiple TWGs with strong vertical ties will meet together to talk about those issues.

For the next meeting, participants should look at GIS information in FGDC document: [http://www.fgdc.gov/standards/projects/FGDC-standards-projects/framework-data-standard/GI\\_FrameworkDataStandard\\_Part5\\_GovernmentalUnitBoundaries.pdf](http://www.fgdc.gov/standards/projects/FGDC-standards-projects/framework-data-standard/GI_FrameworkDataStandard_Part5_GovernmentalUnitBoundaries.pdf). Specifically, on page 20, this document lists a large variety of government unit types. People should look at this list and pick their top 10 priorities. Donna Phillips offered to set up a survey monkey survey that people can use to submit this data. The deadline for submission is August 4, so that the data can be compiled before August 25<sup>th</sup>

In the future it may be more efficient to meet in smaller groups to discuss specific elements. During the next TWG we should spend time on how to form TWG for those subcomponents. Gail mentioned that it is unrealistic to work on all elements at the same time. The survey mentioned above should help set those priorities. Some elements may be very easy to complete: for example many agency/program boundaries only have one source, and it is mostly a matter of making an inventory of the data.

Groups identified that should attend the next TWG: someone from Census, someone from the Secretary of State’s office and someone from the Department of Education (ITC has been working with Education).

### **Next meeting**

Wednesday September 8 from 10:30– 12:30 Mountain Time.