**Public Comments On the Email sent to the List serve**

04.07.21

Good Morning All,

In case you haven't heard I was elected Chair of the GeoLibrary Board in January. We are embarking on a strategic planning process and have issued a request for proposals and hope to have a contractor on board by the end of June to assist with this project.

If you are a vendor interested in submitting a proposal you can find the RFP posted on the State of Maine Bureau of purchasing website.

I had an interesting conversation with a couple board members the other day. I offered that I thought the GeoLibrary should be a resource for more than just state geographic data. It should also provide linkages to non-state data where possible but it should also host geographic data created for other governmental entities that do not have the resources to publicly host the data. I think it should also be a resource for other public data created for many other purposes.

I found that at least these two board members did not agree.

I am curious,  as a member of this list serve and presumably a user of geographic data in your GIS applications, should the library host non-state data or should only host state data, provide links to any other non-state data and ignore all other geospatial data being developed. Especially the Maine related data which may be one small subdivision of the state or something regional in scope.

I am very interested in hearing your thoughts.

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**Response 1**

“I would favor providing at least our bordering state/countries and/or perhaps New England to start!”

**Response 2**

“I haven’t read the mission of the GeoLibrary lately, but I do know that Auburn has re-written it’s GIS mission statement and goals several times over the last few years. Geospatial doesn’t mean the same thing and certainly has more widespread use than it did even 10 years ago. I suspect this is just one of several areas that the library might want to re-examine.”

Response 3

“I believe the GeoLibrary should grow in its scope to be a central repository for any known and useful information that users or those interested in the State GIS data.

How that takes shape will look different in terms of each dataset:

1) Maybe it’s a description and link to the DEP website (no need to pull their data and provide it)

2) Maybe it’s one time created data (i.e., depth to water table from UMaine CFRU)

3) Maybe it’s a link to USGS National MAP

4) Maybe it’s a link to NOAA Coastal Program with a description and how to for how to access relevant datasets.

The GeoLibrary cannot and should not only serve up state generated datasets – because it doesn’t even do that now. BPL, IFW, DEP, DOT all have their own data that they put out there separate from the GeoLibrary. Also the GeoLibrary should be geared to serve “the public” and not just the state agencies.”

**Response 4**

“I guess I agree in concept that it’d be nice if the GeoLibrary could be more of a true clearinghouse for Geospatial data for the state but, I’m concerned that you couldn’t marshal the resources to make this happen effectively. The GeoLibrary has always been strapped for funds and hosting data, to me, comes with a long term commitment to ensure that you are both keeping up-to-date with the latest data -both new datasets and updated existing data- and maintaining relationships with the publishers of these data. This seems like a stretch when the GeoLibrary struggles from grant to grant to make ends meet for its core mission.

I also feel like, yeah, you know all this – so, if this is a play to expand the GeoLibrary mission and perhaps thereby expand its clientele and funding prospects, then, yeah, I think it’s worth exploring.”

**Response 5**

“I think it would be an incredible resource to have the Library host non-state GIS data. And I think it should be done.

I also think it would be difficult to decide what to host and what not to host. Data would need to be appropriately vetted and be for the common good. Those two statements there could take up a lot of discussion time by a sub-committee. Many, many details to figure out. But all possible and worthwhile, in my humble opinion.”

**Response 6**

“I am of the opinion that the state will be better served by an expanded role of the GeoLibrary.

The COVID situation has forced an unprecedented upheaval on how we work, especially tele-work and tele-commute. I know both Maine Senators are trying to fund high speed broad band throughout the state to give Mainers better access and speed to needed information to perform their tasks. I feel GIS is essential for all workers and citizens. I also feel most if not all of us prefer to do one stop shopping.

It would be of tremendous value if GIS data is in one easy to find super GIS store (for lack of a better visual).”

**Response 7**

“As a citizen observer of GeoLibrary matters, I have long been struck by the limitations under which it operates.

1) Budget -- both operations and acquisition budgets have been meager at best.

2) Constituency -- the GeoLibrary needs clarity about who it serves. At times, it has seemed that the public has been an afterthought. Full access to State produced or procured geo-data has considerable value to non-State tax paying constituencies, citizens, non-profits, and local government. The income and non-cash benefits to the public of having free access to high quality geo-spatial data are hard to measure with assurance but are not insignificant. In this era of growing environmental concern, citizen and NGO actors are dependent on the State for appropriate GS data.

3) Climate Change -- I can't explain the lack of interest in geo-spatial data acquisition needs assessment. Carbon sequestration in natural systems IS rocket science, or at least yet to be done science. Funding for projects which link spatial data to on-the-ground, over-time physical measurements is needed, The science will take time. Some macro-level models are telling us we face significant changes as soon as 30 years and most likely in 50-60 in the absence of major changes in our carbon economy. Maine's efforts, alone, won't bend any IPCC curves, but methodology developed here may contribute to such a desired outcome. Tempus fugit.

4) Serving Data -- Some non-State constituencies' usage patterns are better served by having own copies on hard drives. That certainly is my circumstance. I understand that the State doesn't want foreign disks brought into its environment in this era, but, hopefully, the price for a State-supplied hard drive will be reasonable. (A totally safe, physically segregated, means of copying from a House drive to a Customer drive seems do-able, however.)

5) Archiving Community Geospatial information -- Yes, it should be done, but the GeoLibrary is presently ill-equipped to undertake such work. Cooperating with the State Archives seems a reasonable approach. They would be better staffed to handle classification of historic documents, maps, and plans.

6) Parcel Maps -- One of the "problems" I encounter locally is the use of tax maps, created and maintained for the convenience of the Assessor, used for zoning with the zoning metrics applied to assemblies of lots of record, not individual lots. At least it avoids litigation over forced mergers of LOR. Are you aware of any towns which actually map LOR or even note that their "parcel" map does not look below the Assessor's amalgam of tax parcels to see formerly recognized Assessor parcels of below that to known and un-delineated LOR. My town has a real mishmash -- all of the above. Yup, into the weeds again.”