

FRAMEWORK DATA DISCUSSION PAPER

March 13, 2002

INTRODUCTION / DEFINITION (*From FRAMEWORK, Introduction and Guide, Federal Geographic Data Committee, 1997*) :

The Framework Is a Starting Point. ... The framework represents minimum requirements. Any data producer or consortium can build geographic data that have content beyond that of the framework. ... data production activities will be driven by the business needs of your geographic community... the framework's minimum requirements provide a good starting point.

The major point to understand is that the framework layers are the 'starting point' for GIS use and analyses....the means to an end, not the end in themselves.

RELATIONSHIP TO NRIS MANDATE

Section 90-15-301 of the 2001 MCA reads as follows:

Establishment of information system. (1) The library, in consultation with the committee, shall establish a planning framework for the implementation of a natural resource information system and shall begin implementation of the plan. *The system is to be a comprehensive program for the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of existing data relating to the natural resources of Montana. (italics added).*

We at NRIS, firmly believe that all framework data layers are part of our legislative mandate. The ones that are not overtly 'natural resource' related such as transportation, orthoimagery, and cadastral, are all certainly *related* to natural resources and the management of those resources. Ownership information is critical for land management activities, orthoimagery data can be used in multitudes of natural resource applications, transportation data is vital for fish and wildlife management, sediment control, etc. The list of applications of the framework data layers in natural resources is probably nearly endless.

CLEARINGHOUSE VS. CUSTODIANSHIP

It is vital to understand the NRIS is not proposing to include *custodianship* of all framework data layers into its mandate but rather the *clearinghouse* function. These are two very different functions. *Custodianship* includes the management, maintenance and updating of any particular data layer. Being a *clearinghouse* for those layers, is the foundation of the NRIS mission, and the foundation of the Montana State Library's mission as well. GIS data layers and resources are really no different than any other State information resource (books, videos, reports, audio tapes, etc.) that are housed and distributed from the State Library.