

Montana Geospatial Information Advisory Council (MGIAC) Meeting Minutes

Date: September 25, 2025

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Place: Department of Military Affairs (HAFRC), Room 209, 1956 Mt. Majo St., Fort Harrison, MT 59636

Recording Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d66vU1Q3W4k>

Attendance

- **Council Members:** Jennie Stapp (Chair), Erin Fashoway, Adam Carpenter, Maureen Celander, Lee Macholz, Valentijn Hoff, Joe Kaufmann, Allen Armstrong, Eric Spangenberg, Brian DeMarco
- **Council Members Absent:** Karen Coleman
- **Staff:** Victoria Gersdorf (Admin), Evan Hammer, Matt Trebesch, Rebecca Kamp, Sean Anderson

Call to Order and Introductions

Timestamp: 00:00:00

- Chair Jennie Stapp called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees.
- Victoria Gersdorf was introduced as the new administrative assistant.
- Council members introduced themselves.

Agenda Changes

Timestamp: 00:04:42

- The full MGIA grant recommendation report was deferred to the November meeting. A memo regarding this was included in the agenda packet.

Approval of May 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Timestamp: 00:05:14

- No corrections or additions were noted.
- **Motion:** To approve the May 15, 2025 Executive Summary.
 - **Moved by:** Maureen Celander
 - **Seconded by:** Erin Fashoway

- **Vote:** Approved by unanimous consent

Montana Geospatial Information Plan (2025–2028)

Timestamp: 00:05:42

- Chair Stapp introduced the 2025–2028 Montana Geospatial Information Plan, highlighting the transition from annual to multi-year planning. The plan includes case studies to improve accessibility for non-GIS professionals and outlines
- Council members praised the inclusion of case studies and emphasized the importance of measuring success through both data and narrative.
- strategies for measuring success through both qualitative and quantitative data.
- Council members discussed the importance of broader outreach beyond the GIS community, including elected officials, university departments, and occasional GIS users. Suggestions included leveraging local government listservs, newsletters, and professional associations.
- The plan also includes a financial gap analysis to illustrate the resources needed for a fully resourced GIS infrastructure. Council members supported the transparency of this approach and emphasized the importance of communicating the impact of funding shortfalls, particularly the suspension of the grant program.
- Discussion focused on outreach strategies to non-GIS audiences, including elected officials, university departments, and occasional users.
- The financial gap analysis was discussed as a tool for transparency and advocacy.
- Public comment was invited; none was received.
- **Motion:** To recommend the forwarding of the 2025–2028 Geospatial Information Plan to the Montana State Library Commission for adoption.
 - **Timestamp:** 01:14:06
 - **Moved by:** Adam Carpenter
 - **Seconded by:** Allen Armstrong
 - **Vote:** Unanimously approved
- **Next Steps:** The plan will be presented to the State Library Commission for adoption at its October 8, 2025 meeting.

Internal Review of the MGIA Grant Program

Timestamp: 01:15:59

Staff presented findings from a comprehensive internal review of the MGIA grant program. Eight past recipients were interviewed across the state. Key feedback included:

- Simplified application and reporting processes
- Standardized templates and tools
- Regular check-ins and peer collaboration
- Improved invoicing and reimbursement guidance

The Council discussed transitioning to a two-year grant cycle to improve project flexibility and reduce administrative burden. A draft report will be shared in October for Council review ahead of the November 13 meeting.

- **Next Steps:**
 - Final report to be distributed by mid-October.
 - Council members Allen Armstrong and Valentijn Hoff volunteered to review the draft.
 - Additional volunteers welcome.

GIS Governance Policy Update

Timestamp: 01:52:00

Matt Trebesch presented the draft GIS governance framework, distinguishing between “Big G” (policy-level) and “Little g” (operational-level) governance. The Montana State Library (MSL) hosts 10 agencies and over 5,700 public items in ArcGIS Online. A hybrid governance model is being implemented, with MSL managing security and agencies managing content.

Key goals include:

- Reducing data duplication
- Ensuring authoritative/public data
- Improving metadata compliance
- Supporting future ArcGIS Hub deployment

Next Steps:

- Council support was requested for policy adoption, working group participation, and outreach.
 - Governance documents will be shared for review.

Financial Report

Timestamp: 02:45:00

- Jennie Stapp presented the FY25 Q4 financial dashboard.
- Revenue is rebounding after a significant drop in FY24.
- A recordation fee increase took effect October 1, 2025.
- FY26 budget includes \$2.2M in authority, with \$1.3M budgeted and \$900K held in reserve.

MGIA Collections Dashboard

Timestamp: 02:56:00

- Erin Fashoway demonstrated updates to the dashboard, now covering seven years of data.
- Yellowstone County leads in collections.
- Dashboard updates weekly.

Strategic Plan Updates

Timestamp: 03:09:00

Erin Fashoway reviewed progress on the five strategic goals. Highlights included:

- Implementation of ServiceNow for tech support
- Tiered staffing model for user services
- Lightning talks for MSDI theme updates
- Outreach to new sectors (e.g., engineers, planners, ranchers)
- Coordination with Rock Technologies on cloud architecture

National Coordination (NSGIC) and Conferences

Timestamp: 03:22:05

Council members Eric Spangenberg and Maureen Celandier shared takeaways from the NSGIC conference, noting Montana's leadership in parcel and address data.

- The Council discussed the upcoming NSGIC Midyear Meeting in Washington, D.C., and Montana's hosting of the 2025 NSGIC Annual Conference in Bozeman.
- State's membership was renewed and council members are to be registered.
- There are opportunities to get involved as a council.
- Future meetings: Midyear meetings – Washington, DC – February 22-26, 2026 and November 2026 – Annual Conference will take place in Bozeman

Council Member Updates

Timestamp: 04:00:00

- **Local Government:** Challenges with city-county data alignment, staffing shortages, and addressing standards.
- **Federal:** BLM reported progress on parcel fabric integration and transportation data alignment.
- **University:** University of Montana GIS certificate has 67 students; new faculty hire: Jonathan Bachelor.
- **Tribal:** Ongoing coordination with BIA and tribal GIS staff.
- **MAGIP:** Spring 2026 conference to be held in Whitefish; scholarships and meetups planned.

Other Business & Announcements

Timestamp: 04:31:00

The Council discussed future meeting scheduling.

- September was favored; July was noted as difficult due to budget cycles.
- A winter meeting focused on professional development (e.g., AI, storytelling) was proposed.

Adjournment

Timestamp: 04:39:48

Chair Stapp adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.