



1. Organizational Approach to GIT:

The Louisiana Office of Forestry (LOF) (<http://www.ldaf.state.la.us/forestry/index.htm>) is administratively located within the Agriculture and Forestry Department (<http://www.ldaf.state.la.us/>) under the direction of the Agriculture and Forestry Commissioner. The Agriculture and Forestry Department's Office of Environmental Science (OES) uses both GPS and GIS; however, the LOF's use of GIT is limited to GPS at this time. All of the LOF's district offices have and use GPS equipment. The LOF receives the bulk of its GI data from outside sources such as the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The LOF does not employ any GIT dedicated staff at this time. The Assistant Forest Management Chief administers the Forest Stewardship program and gathers information regarding all GIT needs for the LOF. He also attends meetings pertaining to GIT applications and advises the State Forester of these applications, works with others in the LOF to acquire funding for GIT hardware and software, and undergoes some basic GIS and GPS training. No policies regarding GIT use exist at present. The LOF's limited GIT capabilities hamper its ability to provide maps and other services for its management programs. Funding for GIT and training of staff are issues for the LOF in its attempt to increase these capabilities.

2. GIT Applications and Data Utilized:

The LOF uses GPS in its landowner management services to calculate the number of **private land** acres being treated with forestry practices under the state's cost-share program. The districts use Trimble GeoExplorer II GPS units for this application. Although the GPS coordinates serve to provide rough maps, the LOF does not have the GIS infrastructure to incorporate GPS data to create enhanced maps. Significant progress for most applications is dependent on GIS mapping capabilities, the lack of which hampers the LOF's ability to efficiently allocate resources for areas of concern. The LOF hopes to be able to address this shortcoming in the near future. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) (<http://www.dnr.state.la.us/>) was one of the earliest users of GIT in state government, implementing GIT for wetlands management as a result of the passage of Louisiana's State and Local Coastal Resources Management Act of 1978. DNR continues to use both GIS and remote sensing (RS) widely, and was involved in the Louisiana Gap Analysis Program (GAP). Additionally, DNR serves as the lead state agency in Louisiana's Atchafalaya River Basin Project (<http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/pao/bro/AtchafalayaBasinProject.pdf>), which is being conducted in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE), as well as several other agencies, including the LOF. The LOF is using GPS for **forest characterization** in a baseline inventory of timber type and quantities within the basin. Other agencies involved include the DEQ, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the State Land Office, and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development. OES, which is currently using both GPS and GIS for **forest health** in their Bo weevil program, is in the process of switching over from MapInfo to ArcGIS 8.0. In addition, the Tensas River Basin in northeastern Louisiana has been an area of in-depth study by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as well as several other local, state and federal agencies such as DEQ, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service. A collaborative effort involving EPA used satellite data from 1972 and 1991 to determine **land cover** change in an effort to identify potential locations for restoration of forested **wetlands**.

3. Statewide and Other GIT Linkages:

Louisiana does not have a designated statewide GI/GIT coordinator within state government. However, the newly-created Office of Information Technology (OIT), which contains the Louisiana Geographic Information Systems Council (LGISC), officially serves in the leading policy role in this regard. LGISC

also directs the operations of the Louisiana Geographic Information Center (LAGIC) (<http://lagic.lsu.edu/>), which is maintained under contract by Louisiana State University's (LSU) School of the Coast and Environment. LAGIC provides GI/GIT technical and staff support to LGISC, which also serves as the state's official GI/GIT coordination group. In this role, a key function of LGISC is to provide direction for LAGIC's operation. Staff members of the LOF attend LGISC meetings.

LAGIC and LSU manage an active National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) Geospatial Data Clearinghouse Node in Louisiana. LGISC and LAGIC have developed an online geospatial data catalog, which builds upon the existing NSDI node at LAGIC and provides an enhanced user interface that enables users to search for data using keywords and interactive maps (online GIS). Users are able to review the complete metadata record or directly download the data, if available. In addition, the ATLAS website at the Computer Aided Design and GIS Lab at Louisiana State University provides free raster downloads of digital orthophotos, digital raster graphics (DRGs) and digital elevation models (DEMs) covering the state of Louisiana (<http://atlas.lsu.edu>).