



## *West Virginia*

### ***1. Organizational Approach to GIT:***

The West Virginia Division of Forestry (Division), (<http://www.wvforestry.com/>) located within the Bureau of Commerce, currently makes limited use of GIT. Although the Forestry Division works with the state Division of Natural Resources (DNR) (<http://www.dnr.state.wv.us/>), they exist as separate entities within the Bureau of Commerce. The Division is divided administratively into four Sections, the State Lands Management Section, the Industry Assistance Section, the Fire Management Section and the Logging Sediment Control Section. The Division's scope of GIT usage is limited to specific applications. The Division contracts many GIT services, including GIS, to DNR. The Division's only GIT-related staffing is through a cooperative agreement with DNR, from which the Division is aided by a DNR GIS technician. The Division is in the process of developing an additional agreement with the West Virginia University (WVU) Division of Forestry (<http://www.forestry.caf.wvu.edu/>) to have access to a dedicated GIS staff person. There is little or no GIT use in regional offices. Assessment of GIS needs for the Division is handled by the State Lands Management Supervisor, who coordinates needs, then submits requests for data to DNR. The Supervisor also serves informally as a liaison for the heads of the Division's other Sections in regards to GIT matters. There are no policies concerning GIT use in the Division, and given the challenges to using this technology, there are several problems and issues. Most issues are centered on the lack of funding for additional staff, including a GIT specialist within the Division, as well as hardware, software and training needs.

### ***2. GIT Applications and Data Utilized:***

Though usage is limited, the Division of Forestry uses GIS for various applications. To date, **state lands** and **fire** control mapping have been the primary applications. Additional applications include effects of commercial harvesting on the **landscape**, forest stewardship plan development on non-industrial **private lands**, and development of **forest health** programs, particularly for gypsy moth control. Primary efforts have focused on documentation of state forest and management boundaries, and **forest characterization** for the revision of state forest management plans. Historical compartment and stand information has been digitized from legacy plan maps, and one of eight **state** forests has completed a recent forest inventory in a digital format to be used with GIS. At least one more state forest inventory is planned to be conducted using GIS.

The Division acquires data from internal work products, the public domain, DNR, and resource information from the WVU GIS Technical Center (WVGISTC), described below. Technical assistance is provided to the Division by DNR and WVGISTC, while the state GIS coordinator provides advice. The Division also maintains cooperative agreements with DNR and the WVU Division of Forestry, and will be working with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) on forest characterization in the statewide Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA) program. Projects are now being developed to use available remote sensing (RS) that is not currently utilized. The Division has, however, utilized GPS in some capacity for the past four years and has equipped each of its six districts with Trimble GeoExplorer 3c GPS units, with plans to purchase more. These will be used primarily for **fire** control and timber industry uses. Plans are being developed to construct a Timbering Operation Notification database and map timber harvest activities, including permitting on **state** and **private** lands, and map timber mills and concentration yards on private lands. The Division is currently working with WVU in an **educational** application of GIS by creating a website dedicated to Division GI uses, including trails, forest inventory and cover-type data, most of which will be accessible to the public at no charge. In addition, some Division personnel have attended GPS training at WVU.

### ***3. Statewide and Other GIT Linkages:***

The West Virginia State GIS Coordinator (<http://wvgis.wvu.edu/coordinator.html>) is located within the West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey (GES), which is the focal point for GIT coordination activities in West Virginia. The State GIS Technical Center (WVGISTC), mentioned above, is located at the Department of Geology and Geography at WVU. It complements the Coordinator and is the main gateway for State efforts to coordinate the development and distribution of geospatial data that conform to national mapping and digital data standards. The Office of the State GIS Coordinator currently is a "one-person" operation with no additional support staff. However, the Coordinator receives administrative and technical assistance through the GES and has a working relationship with WVGISTC and the State Tax Department. The State GIS Coordinator does not develop or collect digital data for any specific GIS project, but is responsible for the promotion and implementation of GIS activities that integrate all levels of data development and varying types of GIS applications within the State. The Coordinator plays a principal role in several ongoing GIS database initiatives primarily through the purchase of existing data sources or allocation of funds for contractual and consulting activities. The West Virginia GIS Steering Committee is the leading GIT coordinating group in the state. Division representatives participate in the State GIS Steering Committee and the Bureau of Commerce Information Technology Committee. Additionally, WVGISTC serves as the designated NSDI clearinghouse node for West Virginia (<http://www.wvgis.wvu.edu>). Links to Division data will be added to this site as coverages become available.