

FGDC Vegetation Subcommittee Charter

VEGETATION DATA

I. PURPOSE OF THE EXHIBIT

This exhibit addresses lead agency responsibilities for the coordination of terrestrial vegetation data-related activities among Federal agencies and establishes a mechanism for the coordinated development, use, sharing, and dissemination of terrestrial vegetation data financed in whole or in part by Federal funds.

II. AUTHORITY

Under the Office of Management and Budget Circular A-16, revised 2002, responsibility to coordinate vegetation data-related activities is assigned to the Department of Agriculture. This departmental government wide leadership for vegetation data coordination is carried out under the policy guidance and oversight of the Federal Geographic Data Committee (hereafter called the FGDC).

Pertinent enabling authority also resides in:

- The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA) of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1601 (Note), 1600-1614).
- The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 (Note), 1701, 1702, 1712, 1714-17, 1719, 1732b, 1740, 1744, 1745, 1751-53, 1761, 1763-1771, 1781, 1782; 7 U.S.C. 1212a; 16 U.S.C. 478a, 1338a).
- The National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 472a, 476, 500, 513-516, 518, 521b, 528 (Note), 576b, 594-2 (Note), 1600 (Note), 1601 (Note), 1600-1602, 1604, 1606, 1608-14).
- The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2101 (Note)).
- Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (43 U.S.C. 1752-1753, 1901-1908; 16 U.S.C. 1333(b)).
- Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742(a)-754).
- Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543).
- Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 715-715d).
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended (16 U.S.C. 703-711).
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661-667e).
- Coastal Barrier Improvement Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-591).
- Appropriations Act of 1879 (43 U.S.C. 31a and b, 41).
- Rural Development Act of 1972 (7 U.S.C. 1010a).
- Resources Conservation Act of 1977 (16 U.S.C. 2004).
- Executive Order 11990.

III. LEAD AGENCY

The lead agency responsible for the coordination, management, and dissemination of vegetation data is the Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service. This organization will develop and implement a plan to coordinate vegetation data-related activities among Federal and non-Federal agencies and will report on its activities to the FGDC. In carrying out its government wide leadership in vegetation data coordination, the U.S. Forest Service is directly responsible to the FGDC and ensures compliance with the objectives and guidance provided by the FGDC.

IV. SUBCOMMITTEE

A Subcommittee on Vegetation Data (FGDC-Veg--hereafter called the Subcommittee) will be established to promote standards of accuracy and currentness in vegetation data financed in whole or in part by Federal funds; to exchange information on technological improvements for collecting vegetation data; to encourage the Federal and non-Federal community to identify and adopt standards and specifications for vegetation data (including classification); and to collect and process the requirements of Federal and non-Federal organizations for vegetation data.

V. MEMBERSHIP

The Subcommittee shall consist of representatives designated by the Federal agencies that collect, or finance the collection of, vegetation data as part of their mission or have direct application of these data through legislated mandate. Each member agency of the Subcommittee shall designate its representative, an alternate if necessary, and changes thereto, by memorandum from that agency to the FGDC Executive Secretary (hereafter called the Executive Secretary). Other Federal organizations and interested parties may be added with the concurrence of the Subcommittee Chairperson. Federal organizations can request membership by writing to the Executive Secretary. The Subcommittee may also invite non-Federal participation in whatever form is necessary as determined by the needs of the Subcommittee.

The Subcommittee shall be chaired by the member from the U.S. Forest Service (hereafter called the Chair, FGDC-Veg).

VI. RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibilities of the Subcommittee include the following:

- A. Facilitate the coordination of agencies' activities and the exchange of vegetation data, by formal and informal means.
- B. Collect and compile information on Federal agencies' vegetation data activities.
- C. Develop, adopt, and promote the use of common standards of content, format, accuracy, and currentness for vegetation data for use by all Federal agencies and to

encourage use by non-Federal organizations, to increase their interchangeability and enhance their potential application for multiple uses.

D. Participate in the development and evaluation of data definitions and standards used by the United Nations and other international organizations, and make recommendations for their inclusion in national vegetation classification activities, as appropriate.

E. Develop and test vegetation classification systems and vegetation information standards for eventual establishment as official FGDC standards in collaboration with Federal and non-Federal partners.

F. Determine which categories of vegetation data are to be included in a national digital data base and recommend the addition of other categories of vegetation data not currently being collected.

G. Promote government wide use of defined and published spatial data transfer standards for vegetation data.

H. Assist the U.S. Department of Agriculture in establishing and publishing standards and specifications for the data (for example, incorporating conversion to metric units), and assisting in establishing priorities for vegetation data production.

I. Establish and maintain mechanisms and reports to interface with data bases of other agencies participating in the National Spatial Data Infrastructure.

J. Facilitate the economic and efficient application of vegetation classification through the sharing of implementation experiences.

K. Support higher-order or crosscutting activities relating to vegetation classification established or recognized by the FGDC.

L. Ensure that the disposition of vegetation data is carried out in coordination with the National Archives and Records Administration in order to provide for the permanent preservation of historically valuable data and timely disposal of data lacking historical value.

VII. PROCEDURES

Subcommittee meetings shall be held at the call of the Chair, FGDC-Veg, and shall be held at least semi-annually. Normally, notification of meetings and an agenda will be distributed to members of the Subcommittee and to the Executive Secretary 14 days in advance of the meeting.

All decisions shall be on the basis of consensus agreement. Where agreement is not reached, the issue will be promptly referred to the FGDC for resolution.

Chair, FGDC-Veg, shall consult with the Chairperson of the Coordination Group to determine the need for further coordination prior to implementing Subcommittee decisions that impact the FGDC or its other subcommittees or working groups.

The Subcommittee may establish additional rules and procedures for conducting business.

VIII. SUBGROUPS

The Subcommittee may create work groups or task groups, or further subdivisions, at the discretion of the Chair, FGDC-Veg, as appropriate to carry out its activities and meet its responsibilities. The establishment of subgroups of more than 12 months duration that are in addition to any specified in this exhibit and the abolishment of any such subgroup requires the approval of the FGDC. Participation in these groups may be drawn from its member organizations, other Federal agencies, professional societies, and other non-governmental organizations as appropriate.

IX. COORDINATING MECHANISMS

The Subcommittee will employ those tools that are best suited to meeting its responsibilities, such as subcommittee meetings, national user forums, annual requirements solicitations, user surveys and analyses, spatial data user workshops, research initiatives, and cooperative ventures.

Chair, FGDC-Veg, will coordinate the Subcommittee's activities with other FGDC subcommittees, working groups, and other components by participating in the FGDC's Coordination Group.

X. REPORTS

The Subcommittee shall report to the FGDC annually, by December 31, describing the requirements for, production of, and availability of terrestrial vegetation data. This annual report shall be submitted to the Executive Secretary, and shall contain:

- accomplishments of the past calendar year,
- an operating plan for activities planned for the upcoming year,
- photographs, diagrams, and other materials that may be of value for inclusion in the annual FGDC report to the Office of Management and Budget,
- a brief discussion of problems encountered and other matters of interest.

The Subcommittee shall submit the operating plan for the upcoming year for FGDC review and concurrence.

Special reports and technical papers may be required by the FGDC during the reporting period describing special projects, coordination with other subcommittees, and the development of status graphics or catalogs and informational or educational brochures on the use and availability of vegetation data.

Chair, FGDC-Veg, shall provide a draft report of Subcommittee meetings, including Subcommittee recommendations and action items, to all Subcommittee members for review prior to approval.

Chair, FGDC-Veg, shall provide the final report of Subcommittee meetings to all Subcommittee members, the FGDC Chairperson, the Executive Secretary, and the chairpersons of the FGDC Coordination Group, subcommittees, and working groups.

XI. TERMINATION

The Subcommittee shall remain in existence until terminated by the FGDC. At that time, a new exhibit shall be developed by the Department of Agriculture describing how the coordination for terrestrial vegetation data will be undertaken.