

Montana Land Information Advisory Council

Issue Action Form
For Council Resolution Date
(Date of next MLIAC meeting)

1. What action is requested of the council?

2. Please attach a brief (One-page or less) narrative describing the issue. This form and the narrative must be provided to MLIAC staff so that it can be provided to Council members no less than one week in advance of the scheduled meeting.

3. The following organizations endorse this action:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> MAGIP | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MARLS | <input type="checkbox"/> University |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Agency | <input type="checkbox"/> Private |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State Agency | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Agency | |

Specify:

4. What are the benefits of supporting this issue?

5. What are the costs or resource requirements to support this issue?

6. Signature of Submitter

7. Signature of Council Member if different than 6

8. Date

This portion to be completed by the MLIAC Chair and forwarded for action.

This Issue has been presented, discussed, and voted upon by The Montana Land Information Advisory Council and has been: accepted for council action. denied for council action

The following action will be taken and reported on at the next council meeting:

This action is assigned to: _____ Date: _____.

Seeking a Solution to MSDI Land Cover Data Theme Stewardship for Montana

Requested action: A motion to advise the department on behalf of the Land Information Advisory Council to solicit the Montana Forest and Conservation Station's assistance in accepting theme stewardship for statewide land cover.

Need: Montana currently lacks a steward for the MSDI land cover theme. Land cover assessment and monitoring of its dynamics are essential requirements for the sustainable management of natural resources. The advancement of the land cover theme requires long-term, consistent, proactive leadership. As a Montana designated framework theme, land cover would benefit from a sustained coordination effort through a State of Montana entity.

Background: There have been federally-led efforts to classify vegetation for federal and state land management. These include, in part, the USGS Gap Analysis Program, the USFS Satellite Image Landcover Classification (SILC), and more recently the USFS VMAP program and the USFS\USGS\TNC Landfire effort. These efforts have contributed greatly, but do not necessarily meet land cover information needs in Montana.

Proposed Solution: In response to this need, a motion is respectfully requested to advise the department on behalf of the Land Information Advisory Council to solicit the Montana Forest and Conservation Station's assistance in accepting theme stewardship for statewide land cover and increase the reliability of land cover information for a statewide user community. The Montana Forest and Conservation Station resides within the College of Forestry and Conservation at The University of Montana. The Montana Natural Heritage Program also resides at The University of Montana and could be a significant collaborator.

Benefit: A long-term designated steward could develop a well-defined scope for land cover, advance effective communication links with relevant organizations, provide direction on the harmonization of land cover mapping methodologies, coordinate data collection and ground-truth efforts, coordinate cost-sharing, oversee the dissemination of products, and develop feedback mechanism from a very diverse user community. State entities and citizens would benefit from having a state-level voice in land cover data acquisition and maintenance. A consistent, state-led effort would best support the business process of multiple state entities requiring current and historic land cover information. A common approach would improve communication, increase utility, and reduce costs. A number of state agencies could contribute as well as utilize land cover information, including the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Department of Revenue, and the Department of Transportation.

Potential Cost: The minimum coordination requirements would be a total program cost of approximately \$100,000 per year (1.0 FTE and operating). Some cost may be assumed by existing programs, but cost and resources would need to be negotiated with the Montana Forest and Conservation Experiment Station.