

**Two Cents from Tim:  
Tribal GIS Procedures and Policies Discussion**  
(Generated for Tulalip meeting March 4, 2009)

The following are short recommendations that were largely compiled from experience regarding GIS implementation at tribes:

- Plant the seeds early for independence. You may not be able to do it right away, but in most cases tribal GIS is under Natural Resources or Planning. Later, this can cause problems, so when you are starting out make a point of future intentions and try to work that way by supporting other departments.
- GIS and Enterprise GIS needs to be thought of as a shared resource between departments: data, software, methods, disclaimers, protocols, etc. (really important for tribes)
- On the outside GIS may be under Public Works or IT - yes, there is a strong movement, particularly in the US government to locate GIS under IT. I believe the BIA has already done this. I strongly advocated for "equal and parallel" to IT. We need to make sure we control our own budgets and priorities; our jobs center around data and products. Often data that can be used in one department will benefit another, so GIS can be a place where this is acquired and controlled.
- If GIS is centralized other departments may be able to contribute from grants and line items to share the costs of equipment, software and data, where GIS is the official tribal contact and purchase point.
- Try to separate the short-term, product needs (quick maps) from long-term tribal needs (data, software, hardware life-cycles). Our focus on data needs to be paramount (most tribes don't have a legacy of parcel maps and spatial information like counties and cities). There is always a tug of war between short-term priorities and long-term priorities. Keeping track of how much time you have to devote to everyone's emergency is worthwhile.
- Tribal sovereignty is a huge issue, often overlooked by newcomers. Sharing data has to be carefully considered. As many tribes are sovereign nations, their GIS manager should have a philosophy of conservatism. (Also, since there are not a lot of people in many tribal GIS shops, you do not want to unwittingly start a public service.) Many people will contact a tribal GIS asking for data - and what they might want to do with it has to be legally ascertained.
- All products should be explicitly disclaimed. To start with: "NOT A SURVEY" should probably appear on any product with parcel lines. "THERE ARE ERRORS AND INCONSISTENCIES...", or "DRAFT" should probably appear in some form on most.
- Consider carefully any product they may wind up in the hands of outsiders. Any printed map has this potential, and can cause harm to the tribe - I know, I have a story about a Civil



Engineer I can share. Most products should probably have: "FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY".

- Require any outsider accepting data from you (even on behalf of the tribe) to sign an "NON-DISCLOSER AGREEMENT", and a "DATA ACCURACY UNDERSTANDING". I put both on one sheet, and anyone working for the tribe had to sign them to get our data. (Muckleshoot may be willing to share an example.)

The non-disclosure agreement says they can only use the data for work for the tribe, and that they have to delete the data when their contract concludes. It states that the data is specifically property of the tribe. The data accuracy understanding states that the data is "as is" and that they are responsible for acquiring data that is of adequate quality.

This also provides an extremely valuable tracking mechanism, so you can compile annual statistics about the maps and data you distributed.

That's enough - probably more than two cents worth. Hey, remember, I can still be had as a consultant! <http://timleachgis.com>