

February 27, 2006

To LIO's, RPC's, Municipalities, Tribes, State agencies, et. al.,

Over the coming weeks and months you will no doubt hear mention of a GIS data inventory system called *Ramona* that will be officially released for public use on March 21st. *Ramona*'s design and programming was done through the guidance of the National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) under a grant from NOAA at the U.S. Dept. of Commerce.

Ramona is primarily intended to be a nationally consistent inventory tool for state and local agencies to use. *Ramona* has many nice features including the graphic display (via a map interface) of information entered into the system, and building a simplified compliant metadata file from entered information. Wisconsin was one of thirteen states that tested *Ramona* before its final design was completed. A small group of us submitted many suggested changes, only some of which were incorporated into the final product.

As most of you are aware the annual Wisconsin Land Information Program Survey has not been conducted for two years. We are seeing a growing need for documenting the current status of GIS data in Wisconsin, especially local data. An ad hoc group of agency and university staff has been looking at ways of resurrecting the survey, and we had thought that *Ramona* might have potential as a replacement. Our conclusion at this time is that *Ramona* has too many questions surrounding its design and content to satisfy Wisconsin's needs. We are currently looking at ways to potentially combine or link the two so that both state and national needs can be satisfied.

Jerry Sullivan (DOA) and AJ Wortley (SCO) will give a presentation on *Ramona* at the WLIA meeting next week in Wisconsin Dells. We are also interested in feedback on and participation in on-going discussions about how to meet the statutory obligation of the WLIP for annual reporting.

Certainly, when *Ramona* comes on-line in the next month you are free to test it and use it, you may find it useful. We just want to let you know that we are looking at *Ramona*'s possibilities in light of our needs in Wisconsin. If you do test *Ramona*, we would be interested in your experience, as well as your insights on the future of the WLIP survey. We will keep you apprised of our findings and recommendations in the months to come.

Sincerely,

Ted Koch, State Cartographer
David Mockert, State Geographic Information Officer
Steve Ventura, Professor, UW-Madison