



Wisconsin State Cartographer's Office



Your resource for mapping and geographic information in the state of Wisconsin

January 2013

Statewide Orthophotography Planning

In 2012, the State Cartographer's Office (SCO) began work on a Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) Cooperative Agreements Program (CAP)¹ project entitled "Business Plan Development for a Wisconsin Aerial Imaging Program."²

Fundamentally, the CAP project is examining existing models used to manage orthophotography projects in the state, and based on considerable community input, analyze the lessons learned from these past projects. The expected outcome is a formal implementation plan (a "blueprint") for an aerial photography program that meets the needs of the widest possible audience of users in our state.

Project builds on past work

Much groundwork has already been laid by successful initiatives such as the Wisconsin Regional Orthophotography Consortium (WROC)³, FlyDane, and the longstanding tradition of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission acquiring imagery on behalf of its member counties. All of these initiatives, and others, will be looked at as part of our project.

In 2007-2008 the Wisconsin Land Information Association (WLIA) sponsored an orthophoto task force⁴ formed to develop ideas and make recommendations on aerial photography programs. The CAP project will not repeat work of the WLIA task force, but rather pick up where it left off, and develop specific plans toward a program the community feels is beneficial. Developing a specific business plan for an imagery pro-

gram was not the intent of the task force, nor did the task force have time to perform an exhaustive analysis of the lessons learned in past projects.

The idea for our project grew not only from a desire to objectively analyze past orthophotography projects, but also from the emergence of several strategic plans in our state.

The State of Wisconsin Homeland Security Strategic Plan, for example, calls for the creation of a "land imaging strategy" that establishes a sustainable and recurring statewide aerial photography program. The statewide GIS strategic plan Wisconsin Location Matters⁵ promotes the creation of statewide and regional views of information, along with "reliable funding mechanisms dedicated to the coordinated development of GIS resources and activities in Wisconsin," both of which are directly relevant to an orthophoto business plan. Finally, at the SCO, one of our own strategic objectives is to "develop and promote the business case for an ongoing statewide aerial photography program."

Why create a plan now?

With the many Wisconsin orthophotography projects of 2010 behind us, now is the time to begin planning towards 2015 and beyond. Efforts such as WROC can take years to pull together, so it is never too early to begin planning.

Having a formal business plan in place now also better prepares Wisconsin for future national imagery initiatives like Image-



ry for the Nation (IFTN).⁶ As proposed by the National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC), IFTN will require a business plan as a prerequisite to participation. The lack of a formal business plan could risk any future IFTN funding if it becomes a reality.

Current Status

During the late fall of 2012, we completed an extensive information gathering process to better understand the imagery needs of the Wisconsin geospatial community. The process began with an online survey completed by nearly 1,000 people, followed by a series of regional meetings at five locations around the state, and three online Webinars.

We are currently analyzing the results of the surveys and meetings, and are developing a draft business plan for public review. The first draft is expected to be available during mid-February 2013.

For more information or to learn how you can help, please contact Jim Lacy, Associate State Cartographer, at (608) 262-6850 or Lacy@wisc.edu.

Visit the project Web site:
orthoplan.sco.wisc.edu

Web References

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www.fgdc.gov/grants
2. SCO Orthophotography Planning Proposal
www.tinyurl.com/SCO-Ortho-Planning
3. Wisconsin Regional Orthophoto Consortium
www.ncwrpc.org/WROC/
4. WLIA Orthophoto Task Force Final Report
www.tinyurl.com/WLIA-Ortho-TF
5. Wisconsin Location Matters GIS strategic plan
www.tinyurl.com/WI-Location-Matters
6. Imagery for the Nation
www.nsgic.org/index.php?page_id=664