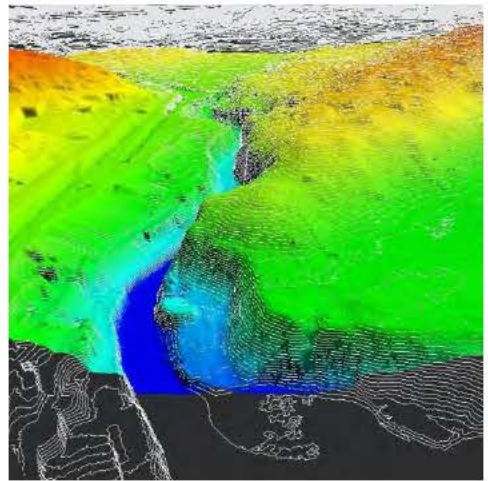
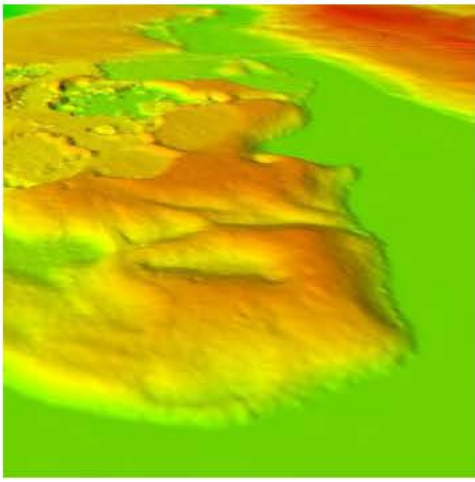


MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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**2024 ANNUAL REPORT
MAINE LIBRARY OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

*To the Joint Standing Committees of:
Environment & Natural Resources and State & Local Government
132 ST Legislature – First session*



CONTENTS

<i>HISTORY AND MISSION STATEMENT</i>	3
<i>A MESSAGE FROM THE GEOLIBRARY BOARD CHAIR:</i>	4
<i>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</i>	5
<i>OPERATIONAL SUMMARY 2024</i>	6
<i>ANALYSIS OF THE HTML SERVICES</i>	6
<i>GEOLIBRARY 2024 PROGRAM</i>	9
<i>IMAGERY DATA</i>	9
<i>IMAGERY BUY-UPS</i>	12
<i>ELEVATION DATA</i>	12
<i>DIGITAL ELEVATION MODEL</i>	13
<i>BATHYMETRY</i>	13
<i>PARCELS</i>	14
<i>LAND COVER</i>	14
<i>WEB SITE</i>	14
<i>HYDROLOGY MAPPING</i>	15
<i>SCHEDULE</i>	16
<i>BUDGET</i>	16
<i>STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT</i>	16
<i>FINANCIAL</i>	17
<i>BOARD AND STAFF</i>	18
<i>GEOLIBRARY STAFFING</i>	19
<i>CONCLUSION</i>	19

*THIS REPORT WAS PREPARED FOR THE LIBRARY OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE MAINE OFFICE OF GIS, OFFICE OF INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY, & DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES*



HISTORY AND MISSION STATEMENT

In 2001, the Legislature instructed the State Planning Office to convene what came to be known as the Resolve 23 Steering Committee (Committee) to study the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in statewide strategic planning. The Committee developed a needs assessment – the conclusion of which recommended the creation of the Maine GeoLibrary, its method of governance, and strategic focus. The Legislature and Governor concurred, and the [Maine Library of Geographic Information Act 5 M.R.S.A. Section 2001](#) et. Seq. became effective April 2002. The Maine Library of Geographic Information (“GeoLibrary” or “Board”) was established as a partnership of public and private stakeholders with the following guidance of purpose and duties. Current activities are below, and status remarks are included in following each enumerated item.

1. Operate a coordinated, cost-effective electronic gateway providing access to data custodians’ public geographic information.
 - a. See Web Site Activity and Project #8
2. Establish and maintain standards, rules, and policies for non-state data custodians’ geographic information.
 - a. Some standards are in place, MOUs (Memoranda of Understanding) are used to implement Non-State Custodial relationships as needed. Parcels are a focus. Coastal data will be a focus in 2025.
3. Reduce redundancies in the creation, verification, and maintenance of public geographic information and to enhance its utility for complex analyses.
 - a. Our Data Catalog Supports this item.
4. Set priorities and authorize the expenditure of State funds.
 - a. The priorities and expenditures are embodied in the Program Plan
5. Promote innovative uses of geographic information.
 - a. Working Groups have been established with a focus on understanding how the advances in 3DHP data (surface water data paired with elevation data) help shape our planets ecosystem. We will be focusing efforts in 2025 on coastal issues that can be supported by better mapping.
6. Enter partnerships to promote the purposes of the legislation.
 - a. This year we entered an MOU with the Maine Space Consortium
7. Hear and resolve disputes that may arise between data custodians or with respect to information to be placed in the Maine Library of Geographic Information, enforcement of geographic information GeoLibrary standards, rules or policies or other related matters.
 - a. We have not had any of these issues reported in 2024.
8. Conduct studies relating to the coordination, development, and use of statewide geographic information.
 - a. We are focusing on data quality, assuring that the full State is covered and that the coverages are seamless and of known accuracy.
9. Report annually by January 1st to the joint standing committees of the Legislature having jurisdiction over natural resources matters, and state and local government matters.
 - a. The 2024 Report is herein.
10. Develop appropriate internal services to facilitate generalized access for and use of data by governmental agencies and the public. <https://www.maine.gov/geolib/index.html>



A MESSAGE FROM THE GEOLIBRARY BOARD CHAIR:

As the environment around us has shifted, planning has played an essential role for the GeoLibrary Board in 2024. This was exciting because we invigorated programming, engaged with new partners, and explored new ideas. The need for GIS across the state remains strong, whether within the unorganized territories, smaller towns and communities, our urban centers, or the hierarchy of state government. On behalf of the Board, we thank you for your support, your commitment, and for ensuring this vital resource is available for all.

Leticia vanVuuren

Chair of the Board, Maine Library of Geospatial information



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report covers GeoLibrary activities from July 1, 2023 through December 2024.

The GeoLibrary plays a key coordination role in the provision of geospatial data to the State of Maine. Our customers include the Maine office of GIS, State Agencies, Counties, Cities, Towns, and the Public. Our web presence continues to expand with heavy usage in the US and some usage in 113 countries

Given the Legislature's biennial funding we have adopted a program planning process to make sure that the funds are expended expeditiously and with the greatest benefit possible to the State. This year we are targeting 8 projects. They are described in this report.

This year we started the process of moving our base data storage and management item to the Microsoft Azure Cloud, consistent with the State of Maine's cloud strategy led by the Cloud Center of Excellence initiative within MainelIT. The data transition is happening slowly, with significant testing taking place between each forward step. We are expanding the technology to allow more use of data services that require less data purchasing and more service access everywhere in Maine. We are taking a hard look at how we can provide more recent remotely sensed data to more people at less cost. The changes in our service model are indicative of the general trends in data sharing. Most importantly we will be providing better services to previously underserved areas.

The GeoLibrary appreciates the funding a provided in the First Special Session of the 131st Legislature. This funding has allowed us to expand services in 7 areas (see program plan below). Sustained funding will allow the necessary resources for future data collection, data sharing, and improvement of Maine's remotely sensed data. We anticipate consistent results through the next session assuming funding is continued.

There continue to be three openings on the Board. We are considering a targeted outreach campaign to fill all the seats.

Respectfully Submitted

Jay Clark
Executive Director
Maine Library of Geospatial Information



OPERATIONAL SUMMARY 2024

The Library of Geospatial Information hosts over twenty terabytes of geospatial data. These data are divided into 23,000 online maps and 2,700 enterprise mapping services.

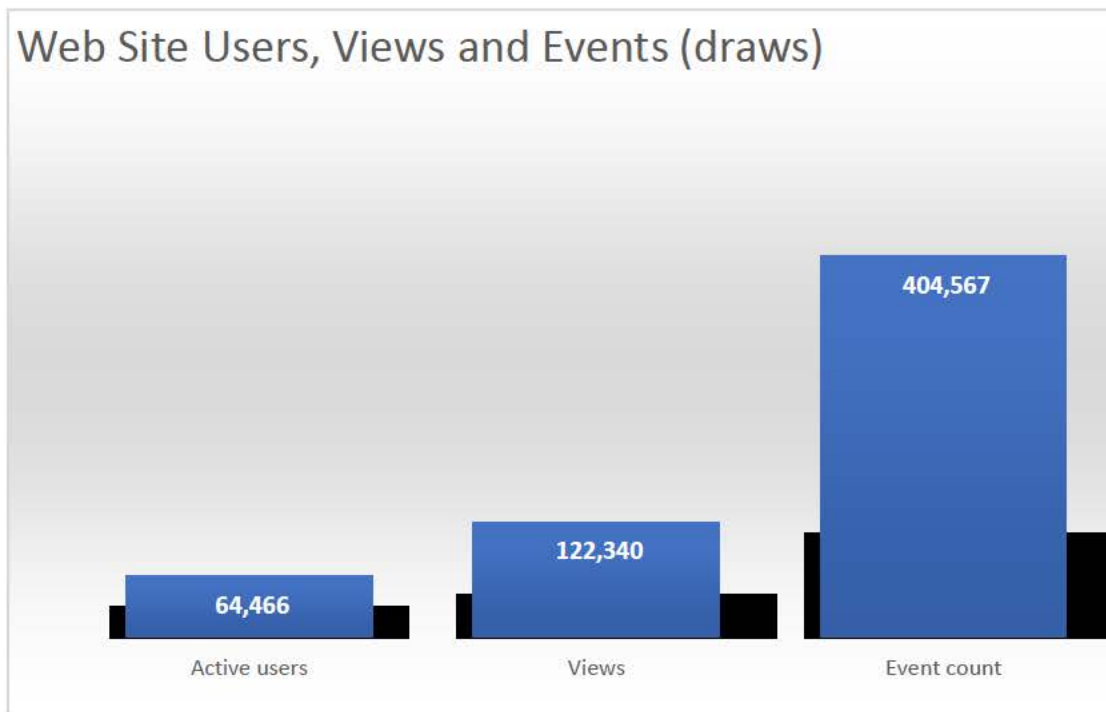
Viewable and downloadable data are available through the GeoLibrary Data Catalog found <https://www.maine.gov/geolib/catalog.html>

A note on the statistics below. Usage is viewed in 3 service environments, HTML, Enterprise Services (ESRI), ArcGIS On-Line (AGOL) and. MeGIS supports 1000 State users “in house”. Most of the Enterprise and AGOL users are in-house. Because the individual users are unknown to us on a per-session basis, the statistics need to be viewed as an overall view of traffic in the systems.

It is in that context that these statistics are provided.

ANALYSIS OF THE HTML SERVICES

In 2024 122,340 views were made on the GeoLibrary Web Site by 64,466 users who spent an average of 8 minutes over a total of 6 sessions with an average of 334 page views per session.

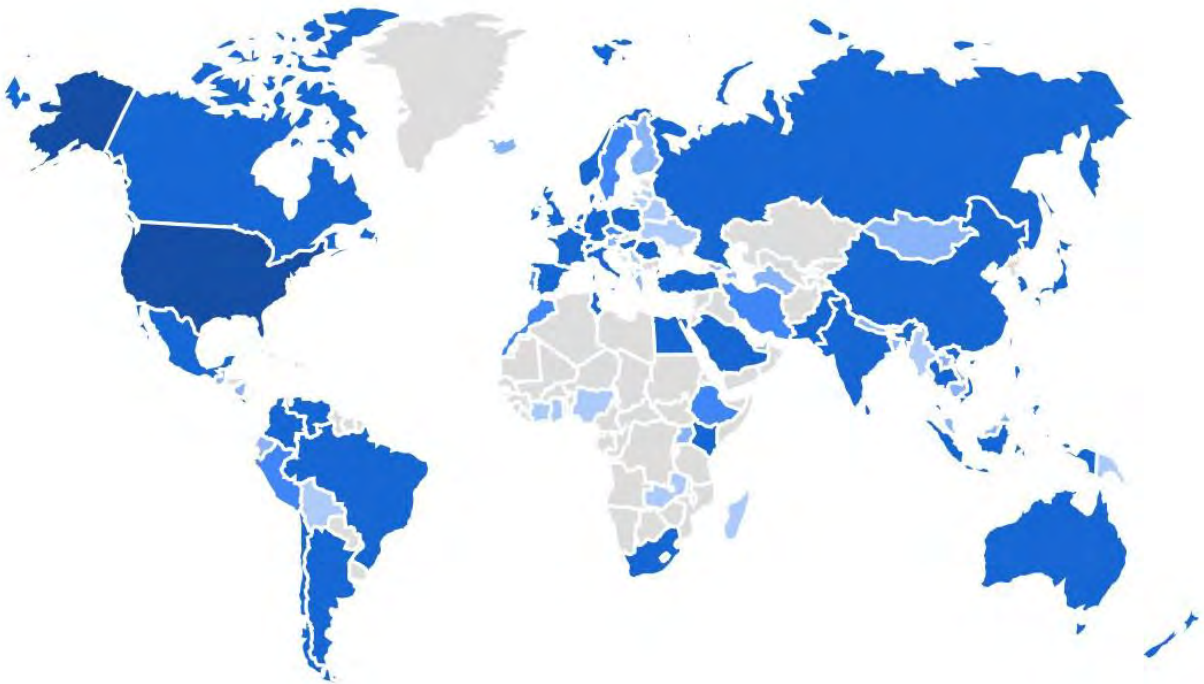




MAINE GEOLIBRARY

The GeoLibrary was used in 113 countries by 31,086 vistors, 1,838 repeats and 29,248 new. The average engagement time for all users was 145 Minutes.

The United States had the 17th most engagement time (123 minutes) and had the most users, at 29,120. Of those, 27,401 were new users. There were 386,884 engaged sessions from the US, by far the highest number worldwide.



Blue countries on this map show all the areas that visited and used our web site in 2024.

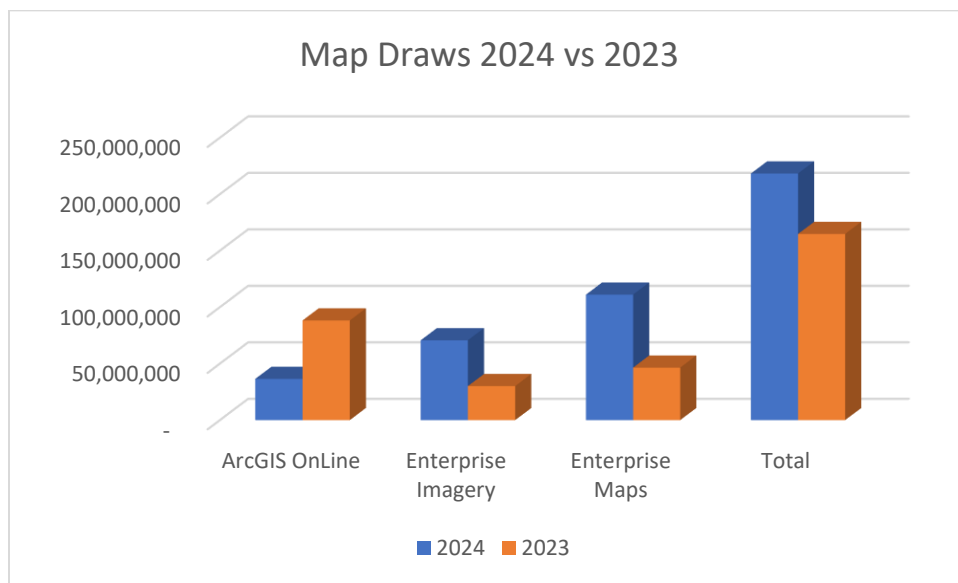
Portland	21,969
Boston	19,601
New York	18,948
Augusta	16,166
Bangor	11,926
Orono	10,554
South Portland	7,235
Ashburn	5,911
Chicago	5,022
Top 10	117,332
Users	29%
Total 3350	404,567
Users	100%



TOP 10 HITS BY CITY

On the MeGIS side there are two sets of Services, the ARC Gis local (large data sets stored locally), and Arc Gis on-line (smaller data sets shared through the internet). These services provide data to the 1000 or so users that work directly with GIS data in State Government as well as provision data to the GeoLibrary HTML web site.

Service	Map Draws
ArcGIS On-Line	36,531,412
Enterprise Imagery	70,678,828
Enterprise Maps	111,088,531
Total	218,298,771



The GeoLibrary has never been busier or more taxed in terms of the amount of data we provide. This has resulted in an increased load on the system used to provide the data for use. As part of the Azure Cloud migration a modern and scabale architecture will provide relief from some contraits currently being encountered.

We also expect that elements of our 2024 program plan will provide better access to more complete imagery and elevation data.



GEOLIBRARY 2024 PROGRAM

In the Spring of 2024, the Geolibrary Board asked that the Executive Director provide a Program Plan for the year, and in the Spring, for each year thereafter. The purpose of these programs is to have a process to order our priorities and to put funding into projects deemed to be high priority by the Board. It allows us to plan for expenses and to manage our budget in a year over year manner.

The 2024-25 Program Plan has 9 projects. Each is described below.

IMAGERY DATA

- 1.) PROVIDE RECENT (< 5 YEARS OLD), HIGH RESOLUTION (<= 12-INCH RESOLUTION), 4 BAND ORTHOGRAPHIC AERIAL IMAGERY FOR THE FULL AREA OF THE STATE OF MAINE

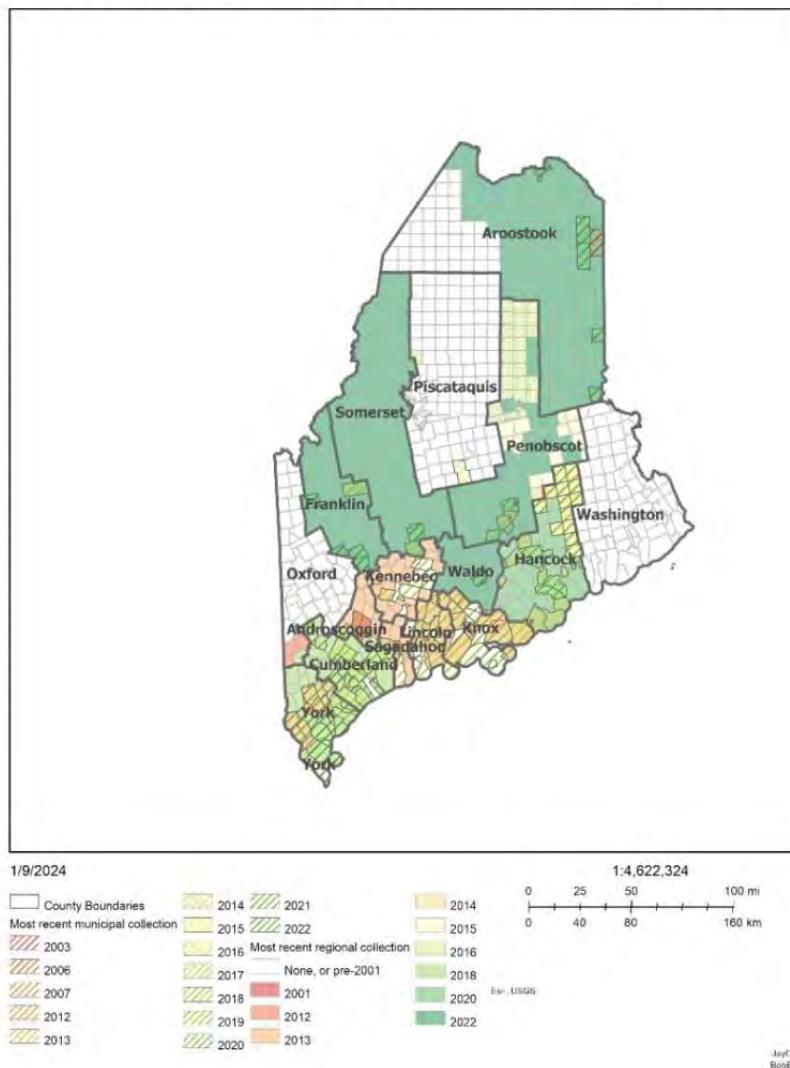
Usage: Basemap imagery for location of features and ground control and creating derivative data sets and analysis. Together with Digital Elevation Models provides proxy ground control for users.

The Geolibrary is chartered to provide geospatial data for all users in the State. Language in the legislation says in part, *“Imagery collected through this program must be from all areas of the State and be 4-band images that include the red, green, blue and near infrared bands; [PL 2013, c. 122, §1 (NEW).]”*

Currently there are large areas of the State that have not been covered by aerial imagery.



GeoLibrary Orthoimagery by Most Recent Collection Year



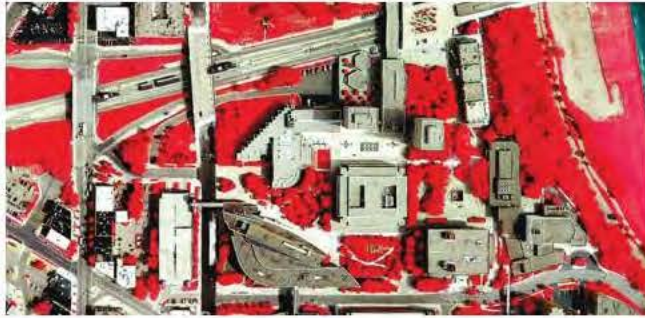
Although technically the National Agricultural Imagery Program (NAIP) program has fulfilled this requirement, (6,786,730 map draws this year) the combination of .3-meter resolution and Leaf On conditions make it sub-optimal for some uses. Higher-resolution 4-band data is needed for the entire State.

We are currently in the process of licensing 15 CM imagery from Vexcel/Carahsoft that cover *all areas of the State and will be 4-band images that include the red, green, blue and near infrared bands; [PL 2013, c. 122, §1 (NEW).]*

Along with the 4 Band Imagery coverage we are also provisioning a new Digital Surface Model, Building Footprints, and Disaster (grey sky) imagery for potential disasters that may take place.

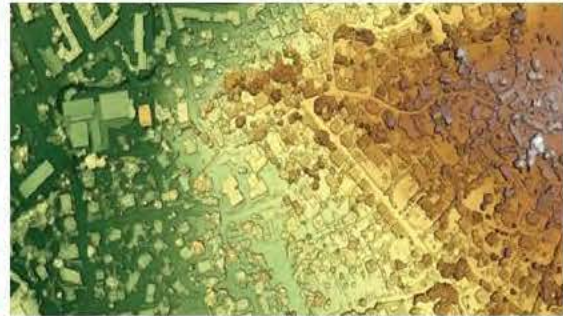


See below for descriptions of each item in the Vexcel contract.



Multispectral

See the unseeable. Vexcel offers near-infrared (NIR) and color-infrared (CIR) ortho imagery. Quickly categorize and identify vegetation, impervious surfaces and more.



Elevate

Understand the earth's surface and human-made objects with Digital Surface Model (DSM) and Digital Terrain Model (DTM) data. Take your project modeling to a new level.



Disaster (Gray Sky)

Vexcel collects high-resolution aerial imagery after major disasters impacting commercial and residential properties, including wildfires, hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods. Disaster imagery is regularly collected in the U.S., and on-demand in Western Europe, Australia, and Japan.



Building Footprints

Building Footprints data is created and derived from Vexcel's high-resolution aerial imagery and Digital Surface Model (DSM) data. Highly detailed geometries of buildings are accurately auto-generated so you can get information on a building's location, shape, and area. Plus, see footprints of primary and secondary structures within a parcel.



100% Coverage will bring High-resolution imagery to over 400,000 currently underserved Mainers.



IMAGERY BUY-UPS

- 2.) PROVIDE A FLEXIBLE BUY-UP PATH TO STATE, COUNTY, OR LOCAL JURISDICTIONS THAT ALLOWS FOR THE PURCHASE OF HIGHER RESOLUTION IMAGERY (\leq 6-INCHES).

Usage: Allows contracting for special requirements such as leaf-off or higher resolution imagery including obliques. This flexibility includes the ability to engage in cooperative funding for specialized circumstances such as leaf conditions, obliques, and other needs that may come up. A high-resolution resale program is offered by the Vexcel license that will be the backbone of our buy-up program. 7.5 CM resolution 4 band data will be available along with other useful derivatives made available to our local partners as buy-ups.

ELEVATION DATA

- 3.) PROVIDE ELEVATION DATA FOR THE STATE, PARTNERING WITH USGS FOR THE WESTERN MOUNTAINS.

Usage: Provides Digital Elevation Modeling (DEM) for use in building contour and hill-shade data as well as analysis of elevation and surface conditions.

The elevation data will be LiDAR and funded using grant monies from USGS. The State of Maine will provide a 51% match on cost with the USGS providing 49%. The captured LiDAR will be a minimum of quality level 2 (QL2 LiDAR has 0.59 ft Fundamental Vertical Accuracy). The contractor will provide the captured LiDAR via the USGS web site. The State will receive a Digital Elevation Model, and a machine generated contours file for the capture area. For this year the area chosen is the Western Mountains.



This area was last flown in 2016. The goal is to provide current LiDAR coverage rotating on a 6-year basis through the state.

LiDAR is the most expensive product we purchase, and capture/recapture cycles are limited by financial resources.



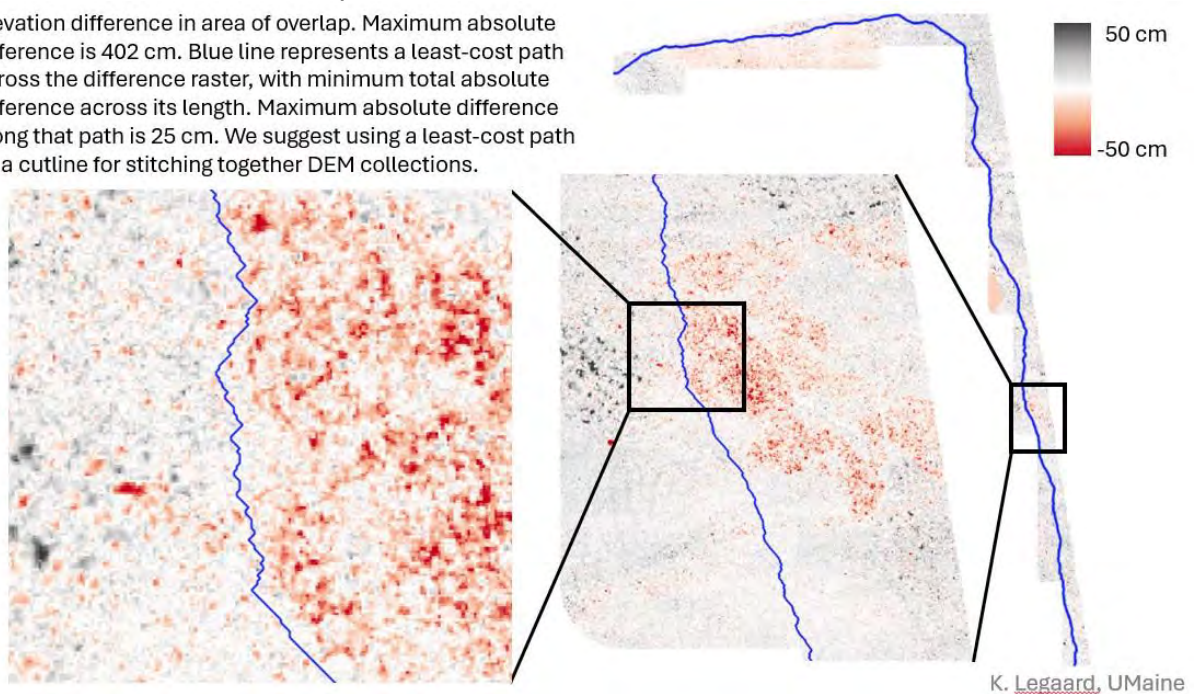
DIGITAL ELEVATION MODEL

4.) "SEW" THE EXISTING DIGITAL ELEVATION MODELS (DEMS) TO PROVIDE A SEAMLESS STATEWIDE DEM.

Usage: Allows use of the DEM without errors on areas where 2 tiles now overlap. Disambiguates the overlap condition. Dems are often used for making contour lines, without the sewing these contours can have unknown serious errors.

Currently every cycle of DEM production is overlapped on the bordering coverages with no edge matching. Similarly, the machine generated contours are developed from individual coverages. There are errors on these edges that are fatal to using the data in those areas. It must be corrected as soon as possible.

Elevation difference in area of overlap. Maximum absolute difference is 402 cm. Blue line represents a least-cost path across the difference raster, with minimum total absolute difference across its length. Maximum absolute difference along that path is 25 cm. We suggest using a least-cost path as a cutline for stitching together DEM collections.



BATHYMETRY

5.) BATHYMETRY DATA FOR THE FULL COAST WILL BE COLLECTED FROM PUBLIC SOURCES AND DEVELOPED AS BUDGETS ALLOW.

Usage: Provides details of sea floor at the edge of currently captured LiDAR data to implement a seamless model of the shoreline and adjacent sea floor. Used for analysis and monitoring of change for navigation and environmental awareness.

Maine has 3,478 mi (5,597 km) of coastline, making it the 4th largest state in that regard. There are details in mapping the coastlines that are different from other areas, namely tidal coordination and bathymetry among them. Provision for these data in the Data Catalog is of



importance. This year the Library will adopt public domain data from NOAA. The NOAA data should be available in January.

PARCELS

- 6.) KICK-OFF A PARCEL PROJECT IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE MAINE REVENUE SERVICE FOR A FEASIBILITY STUDY OF BUILDING A PARCEL DATA SET FOR THE UNORGANIZED TERRITORIES.

Usage: Provides more standardized data set for users, helps understand the scope of the issues involved.

Project activities are coordination between interest groups and the continuation of the working group and holding a series of meetings with the LUPC and MRS to create a common picture of the issues and levels of effort required to create a current parcel data set for the unorganized territories. This was a large demand item for the GeoLibrary this year (871,633 map draws). It is a sparse (incomplete) coverage and needs to be augmented to better serve the landowners and local communities in these areas..

LAND COVER

- 7.) CONTINUE TO PARTNER WITH NOAA AND UMAINE ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND RELEASE OF HIGH-RESOLUTION LANDCOVER DATA. FOCUS ON WETLAND DATA DEVELOPMENT.

Usage: Support the identification of impervious surfaces. Support higher resolution data for wetlands and sensitive environments. These data provide much better clarity on land use and environmentally sensitive areas.

Land cover classification data is a visual representation of the Earth's surface that categorizes it into distinct classes, such as forest, water, and crops. This data is created by classifying remotely sensed data into "land use and land cover" categories. We have been partnering with NOAA and UMAINE on Landcover projects and will continue that effort. We expect deliveries from NOAA and UMAINE this year. This project is dependent on project # 4 to be completed.

WEB SITE

- 8.) UPGRADE THE GEOLIBRARY WEB SITE TO REFLECT CURRENT STANDARDS FOR WEB DEVELOPMENT AND GEOSPATIAL PORTALS. UPDATE CONTENT AND IMPROVE FUNCTIONALITY ACROSS SEVERAL CLASSES OF SERVICE.

Usage: Bring the web site up to current technology standards. Provide an organization of "Framework Layers" that presents the data in a user-friendly manner. Provides temporal updates to content and refocuses the site on Data. Assure compatibility with Maine IT current policies and requirements. Provide better experience for users outside MeGIS needing on-line data to support project work.



MAINE GEOLIBRARY

The web site and portal will need to be updated for content and capabilities. This modernization is needed due to enhancement in usages, aging hardware, changes in ESRI licensing and stronger security compliance to name a few. In collaboration with MeGIS the GeoLibrary will be presented with a complete modernization plan to specify the technical, policy compliance and functional requirements. Once the specifications are agreed on and confirmed with OIT, budgetary items will be identified and planned for prior to work execution.

HYDROLOGY MAPPING

- 9.) PARTICIPATE IN A 5 STATE PROJECT TO DEVELOP 3DHP DATA FOR THE SOUTHWESTERN AND SOUTH-CENTRAL MAINE COAST.

In July 2024 the GeoLibrary was approached by the Geographic Information Officer for the State of MA regarding our participation in a 6-state cooperative project to do 3D Hydrology work with USGS by way of the DCA in September 2024. We joined the team and developed a proposal. The states involved were MA, CT, RI, VT, NH, ME. Prior to the submission, NH dropped out. We submitted our proposal to the USGS with the 4 remaining States.



The area planned for the 3DHP project 2025.

The award announcement will be made in January 2025.



SCHEDULE

Schedule	Start	End	Notes
Item			
1 - Imagery	11/15/2024	11/15/2025	Initial 1 year license with intent to move to 3-year contract.
2- Imagery Upgrade	12/01/2024	6/15/2025	Needs approved contract and marketing lead time
3-Elevation	1/24/2024	6/26/2027	Ongoing contract with USGS for 3DEP and new 3DHP contract if awarded.
4-Sew DEMs	11/1/2024	12/1/2025	UMaine will be the contractor. Covers both sewing and Carbon Mapping projects
5-Bathymetry	01/1/2025	06/15/2025	On hold till Azure cloud migration is complete. New NOAA data will be available in 2025.
6-Parcel	6/1/2024	Ongoing	Ongoing with LUPC and MRS to complete data layout and specifications
7-Land Cover	6/1/2024	12/1/2025	Follow-up work with UMAINE after sewing DEMs
8-Web site	6/1/2024	Ongoing	Concurrent with Azure project/dependencies

BUDGET

Item	Committed Funds	Notes
1 - Imagery	\$ 200,000	Covered by MeGIS
2- Imagery Upgrade		Assumes positive revenue from buy-up
3-Elevation	\$ 230,000.	Western Mountains region capture
4-Sew DEMs	\$ 42,000.	May be done in-house or contracted
5-Bathymetry	NA	Public domain data available at no charge
6-Parcel	Delayed	Covers analysis work possible contractor
7-Land Cover	Waiting on #4	High resolution species level product
8-Web site	NA	Requirements Phase No Budget Yet
9- 3DHP	\$ 175,125.	Award is announced in January 2025
Total	\$ 647,125.	Assumes General Fund monies

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement is managed by the GeoLibrary website. The intention is to expand that capability by improving the functionality to include Social Media outreach as part of the GeoLibrary's web presence.

A contact list of all County and Local governments that are interested in taking part in GeoLibrary projects has been compiled and used for direct communication between the



MAINE GEOLIBRARY

GeoLibrary and constituents who will take part in any project(s) that are implemented under this program.

The working groups established by the GeoLibrary include stakeholders from MeGIS and may from time to time include guests invited to provide information to the Board regarding specific needs for project data.

Upon the successful completion of projects, the GeoLibrary issues communications on the specifics of each project and the benefits to the public.

Each year in October the Annual Report is drafted by the GeoLibrary Director, approved by the Board, and submitted for the consideration of The Legislature.

The Program Plan, and each Project herein, will be reviewed and updated on an ad hoc basis by staff as needed to record substantial changes with action and implementation.

A formal review of the Program will be undertaken by the Board in December of each year, including a content analysis of the Data Catalog. The findings of this review will be used to inform the Program plan for the following fiscal year.

FINANCIAL

The GeoLibrary is successful in building partnerships and leveraging funding from cooperating partners to finance our operations. The Legislature is a key partner in that effort. The GeoLibrary maintains a positive balance in its Geospatial Reserve Fund. This balance results from good fiscal control, strategic planning, and engaging partners by providing community outreach.

Adding the new Legislative funding allows us to function much more strategically in our planning, particularly when it comes to large multi-year investments.

Future sustained funding allows us to future proof the effectiveness of Geospatial Information.

	A	B	C	D	E
	Cash Balance Projection	Vendor	Agreement	End Date	Amount
1	OSR Revenue				
2	Beginning Cash Available (7/1/2024)				\$ 617,649.22
3	Total Revenue				\$ 125,000.00
4	Total Expenses				
5	Contract Liability	US GEOLOGICAL SURVEY	Mid-Coast Mapping		\$ (44,999.99)
6	Cash Balance at Yearend (6/30/2025)				\$ 697,649.23
7					
8	General Fund Allocation				
9	Beginning Cash Available (7/1/2024)				571,598.00
10	Prior Year Encumbrance				198,000.01
11	Total Revenue Balance				769,598.01
12	Total Expenses				
13	Contract Liability	US GEOLOGICAL SURVEY	Western Mountains		(445,500.01)
14	Cash Balance at Yearend (6/30/2025)				\$ 324,098.00
	Notes:				
	1. This report is based on actual Cash Flow				



BOARD AND STAFF

CURRENT TO DECEMBER 2024

Board NOTE: Seat 3 was eliminated by Legislature

Seat	Member	Term Ends	Representing	Appointed By
1	Sharon Horne Executive Director of Enterprise Shared Services, DAFS (207) 624 9925 Sharon.Horne@maine.gov	Permanent	Dept. of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS)	DAFS Commissioner
2	Brian Guerrette Enterprise Shared Services Department of Administrative and Financial Services (207) 624-3335 Brian.Guerrette@maine.gov	Permanent	State CIO	State Chief Information Officer
4	Nate Kane* Dept of Transportation (207) 624-3297 Nate.Kane@maine.gov	8/14/25	Governor	State GIS Functions
5	Vinton Valentine University of Southern Maine (207) 228-8455 vinton.valentine@maine.edu	6/22/2025	University of Maine Chancellor	University of Maine System
6	Greg Copeland GIS Manager, City of Biddeford (207) 710-6666 Gregory.Copeland@Biddefordmaine.org	1/25/2025	Senate President	Municipal Government
7	VACANT		House Speaker	Municipal Government
8	Leticia vanVuuren CHAIR Knox County EMA (207) 594-5155 vanvuuren@knoxcountymaine.gov	10/28/2025	House Speaker	Statewide Association of Regional Councils
9	Walter Anderson Private Citizen apatite30@gmail.com (207) 232-8131	8/14/2025	Governor	Statewide Association of Counties
10	Vacant		Senate President	Real Estate and Development Interests
11	Sarah Haggerty Maine Audubon (207) 781-2330 x225 shaggerty@maineaudubon.org	6/17/2023	House Speaker	Environmental Interests
12	VACANT		Governor	Utility Interests
13	Aaron Weston Cartographics Associates, Inc. (207) 944-5898 aweston@cai-tech.com	9/21/2025	Senate President	GIS Vendors
14	Patrick Cunningham Blue Marble Geographics (207) 622-4622 patrickc@bluemarblegeo.com	1/30/2025	House Speaker	GIS Vendors
15	Mal Carey Newcastle ME (207) 586-5008 malcarey@tidewater.net	4/28/2022	Senate President	Public
16	Maria Jacques* Maine PUC (207) 287-6083 Maria.Jacques@maine.gov	9/12/2021	Governor	State GIS Functions



GEOLIBRARY STAFFING

The Department of Administration and Financial Services provides staffing support for the GeoLibrary in day-to-day operations for staffing and extended contracting support, budgeting, administrative assistance, and other DAFS personnel support. Operations staffing in 2023 was provided through the Maine Office of GIS (MeGIS) with appropriated staffing levels of 1.5 full time equivalency. In 2024, operational staffing will be enhanced by the addition of a full-time director of special projects and a GIS systems analyst position that will be focused on the GeoLibrary mission work. These additions will bring staffing support of the GeoLibrary to 3 FTE.

CONCLUSION

Legislative funding is crucial to the long-term stability of future work as we establish protocols for deploying the funds into multi-year projects. As we develop teaming agreements, funds are pooled with stakeholder's resources and applied as the match for grant funding to develop data products such as orthoimagery, landcover mapping, elevation data, parcel mapping, and environmental data to name a few. This foundational infrastructure supports state agency services, economic development, scientific studies, emergency services statewide and Maine's citizens.

The GeoLibrary is grateful for the funding and additional positions provided by the Legislature in the FY 2024-25 budget. We are working to apply these funds into our existing operations as well as increasing outreach to stakeholders. As we amplify these efforts by collaborating on projects between the GeoLibrary and the Maine State Agency's leveraging the funds provide for that purpose through DAFS general fund and coordinated by MeGIS, the value proposition to State services will increase. Your continued funding of these efforts in future budgets will ensure we maximize the return on these investments.

