Modernizing Access to Our Public Land Act
2023 Accomplishments Report

This report details the progress made by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service), in implementing the Modernizing Access to Our Public Land (MAPLand) Act in the year since its enactment on April 29, 2022, as required by Section 7 of the MAPLand Act, 16 U.S.C. 6856. Consistent with Section 7 of the act, this report is being submitted to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate; the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate; the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives; and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives.

The Forest Service, some bureaus of the U.S. Department of the Interior (National Park Service, U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the Bureau of Reclamation), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have participated in a series of meetings since June 2022 to implement the MAPLand Act. The agencies' accomplishments are enumerated below.

Coordination and Governance

In the past year, the agencies have:

- Developed a core implementation team with representation from each agency as well as the U.S. Geological Survey. The core team meets monthly to address interagency implementation issues, including interpretation of the MAPLand Act's requirements, providing guidance for subgroups, and determination of the requisite fields for compiling and electronically posting data as required by the MAPLand Act.
- Created and agreed on a charter for the core team.
- Established a MAPLand Act action plan.
- Determined milestones for MAPLand Act implementation.
- Established procedures for interagency coordination of implementation issues.
- Developed thematic subgroups for data standardization. Held initial meetings of the subgroups and outlined goals and timelines for implementation.
- Obtained support from Departmental and agency leadership for implementation.
- Determined that agencies will utilize a Geographic Information System (GIS) transfer standard[1]
- Identified strengths and weaknesses of current national GIS standards and incorporating transfer standards that will represent the strongest of our internal standards.
- Investigated the intersection of requirements of the MAPLand Act and environmental justice (which resulted in further discussions about data access and further planned discussions with Tribes).

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[1] Transfer standards are standards we are creating to transfer our data so that it can be ingested by systems and users as easily as it is transfers into our systems.

Standardization

Implementation of the MAPLand Act requires standardization of geospatial data relating to recreation, federal roads and trails, easements, rights-of-way, reservations, and restricted areas, in a short timeframe and across six agencies, all of which have been approaching this task differently due to variations in agency missions, technology, and capacity. Accomplishments towards standardization include:

- Development of a matrix of data sources, existing data standards, data gaps, and opportunities to learn from other agencies and their experience, expertise, and investments. See Table 1.
- Use of the matrix to develop an agreed-upon action plan for data standardization.
- Agreement on core fields for all categories of data.
- Establishment of teams of geospatial, data, and subject matter experts across the agencies to develop data standards. Each team has met at least three times to review current national GIS standards, agency participation in review of the current standards, and how closely those standards and agency data meet MAPLand Act requirements.
- Development of a schedule for meeting implementation milestones.

Challenges

Funding and staffing capacity affect the timing of implementation of the MAPLand Act. While the MAPLand Act authorized the expenditure of funds, it did not allocate funds for this work. Each agency is diverting capacity from other efforts to support implementation to the maximum extent practicable, as provided in the MAPLand Act. The Forest Service has dedicated 80 percent of one full-time employee's duties to management of MAPLand Act implementation. Each agency would benefit from additional resources to coordinate and develop interagency, interoperable data standards and internal data collection and digitization.

In some cases, interpretation of the MAPLand Act has been challenging, especially regarding the scope of the requirements regarding recreation data. The act requires collection and dissemination of data "relating to public outdoor recreational use on Federal land" and data "used to depict locations at which recreation uses are available to the public." The recreation team has been unsure whether to include data on certain types of recreation sites such as trailheads and fishing access sites in the standards. The agencies are seeking clarification of their interpretation of the act before they proceed with collection and posting of data on these types of recreation sites to ensure consistency across agencies.

The following table is intended to provide a high-level understanding of each agency's current data, data development needs, and data quality needs for each of the MAPLand Act requirements.

Table 1. Data Matrix

Data Element	Bureau of Land Management			Bureau of Reclamation			National Park Service			U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service			Forest Service			USACE		
	Data Standard Exists	Existing Data Available	Development Needed	Data Standard Exists	Existing Data Available	Development Needed	Data Standard Exists	Existing Data Available	Development Needed	Data Standard Exists	Existing Data Available	Development Needed	Data Standard Exists	Existing Data Available	Development Needed	Data Standard Exists	Existing Data Available	Development Needed
Recreation	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**
Easements	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**
Roads	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**
Trails	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**
Hunting and Rec Shooting Restrictions	**No**	Yes	**Yes**	**No**	**No**	Yes	**No**	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	**No**	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	**No**	**Yes**