



Natural Resources Conservation Service
375 Jackson Street, Suite 600
St. Paul, MN 55101-1854

Phone: 651-602-7900 Fax: 651-602-7914

Transmitted via Email

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MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 170-5-2

SUBJECT: CGI – GIS – MAP LAYOUT STANDARDIZATION

Purpose. To standardize map layouts when sharing between USDA agencies and offices outside USDA.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2005

NRCS often needs to share its Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis through the creation of map layouts. These maps are shared between USDA agencies and also with employees from outside the USDA. These maps can be in **draft** format as well as **final** map documents.

To ensure that all **draft and final map documents** have a standardized look and can be read and understood by non-GIS users, as well as used as a reference in the future, the following cartographic major and minor elements must be included on each map:

1. **Map Title** – explains the map purpose. This should include the area, type of analysis (e.g., Soil Slope Analysis – Ottertail County, 2004), and the year if it pertains to either data from previous years (e.g., census data from 1990 or 2000) or when maps will be made for consecutive years (e.g., CSP 2004 versus CSP 2005).
2. **Map Display** – the largest portion of the map layout which shows the “picture” of the analysis.
3. **Legend** – should include symbolization and clear descriptions for each feature on the map not easily recognizable or understandable by a non-NRCS employee (e.g., soil name instead of Code).
 - a. Symbolization specifically pertaining to the analysis should always be included in the Legend.
 - b. However, symbology not necessary to include in the legend are those datasets commonly known to all, such as streams, lakes, county boundaries, etc.
4. **North Arrow** – use any ArcGIS template choice; but size should be limited to width of scale bar. This is an optional element; if you feel your audience is sufficiently knowledgeable about the area included in your map, the North Arrow can be excluded.
5. **Scale Bar** – use any ArcGIS template choice. Make sure the scale type selected makes sense for the purpose of the map. This is an optional element; if the purpose of the map is not intended for any analysis of distances between features by the audience, the Scale Bar can be excluded.

6. **Data Source(s)** – include the name of the organization for each dataset used in the map layout, whether from NRCS or any other agency.
7. **Date Created and Publisher** – always include the date the map was created; also identify the name of the field/area/state office where map originated - never use individual employee names.
8. **NRCS Logo** – the State Office has a printer-friendly NRCS.jpg.
9. **Disclaimer** – All map layouts should include the following disclaimer text: “Maps are for graphical purposes only. They do not represent a legal survey. While every effort has been made to ensure that these data are accurate and reliable within the limits of the current state of the art, NRCS cannot assume liability for any damages caused by any errors or omissions in the data, nor as a result of the failure of the data to function on a particular system. NRCS makes no warranty, expressed or implied, nor does the fact of distribution constitute such a warranty.”
10. **Toolkit 2004** – When creating layouts for conservation plans in the new Toolkit, the following cartographic elements are automatically added: teardrop logo, legend, scale bar, north arrow. A popup dialog box allows for the addition of a Title and date, which should be included, along with a number of other optional features.

Questions on the information in this bulletin can be directed to Banette Kritzky, State GIS Coordinator at (651) 602-7905.

WILLIAM HUNT
State Conservationist

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