

BACKGROUND: Maine GIS Technical Group, Town Boundary Subcommittee
October 14, 1999

The Maine Office of GIS has developed digital base maps, including town boundary coverage [METWP24](#), from the USGS 7.5 minute map series. Although every effort has been made to eliminate error in map compilation and the digitization process, the possibility of some error is expected. In addition, GIS data may retain any locational inaccuracy or discrepancy found in the USGS source.*

A Town Boundary subcommittee has been formed, by the state agencies represented in the Maine GIS Technical Group, to set standards and guidelines for the update of town boundary coverage METWP24. At the request of town officials, on behalf of the towns adjacent to the boundary in question, the map can be examined for mapping error. Subcommittee goals are: to provide information on coverage update to interested parties; to revise, correct, and update the coverage where documentation and description of a boundary line meets standards and guidelines; to maintain an up-to-date coverage and provide public access to same. The subcommittee has drafted informational *letters* and a *flow chart* on: the update process, the documentation needed to identify error and correct mapping of the town line, and on notification of map correction.

In order to implement map correction in an orderly manner and to eliminate subjective or unauthorized changes to mapped boundaries, the steering committee proceeds with map correction and/or update requests that are submitted with legislative documentation. The documentation submitted must include a description of the boundary as enacted by the Maine Legislature and approved by the Governor on behalf of the People of the State of Maine.

If such documentation is not available, it is necessary, for map correction to be implemented, to obtain the documentation through other sources. The subcommittee must depend on the ability of town officials to provide documentation of legal enactment of the boundary in question. Towns have access to a number of resources for help with research, interpretation, and clarification of historical government and legal records, and with legislative services and processes. These resources include field survey, the [Maine State Law and Legislative Library](#), the [Maine Municipal Association](#), the offices of legislators, and of the state legislature.

- The USGS 7.5 minute map series, at a scale of 1:24,000, meets a [National Map Accuracy Standard](#) (NMAS) of plus or minus 20 feet. Town boundary lines for the series were compiled from USGS 15 minute map series, at 1:62,500 scale, using aerial photo interpretation, and limited field verification. In the field, azimuths of the town lines were verified only where town lines crossed roads. Intersections of the town lines and roads were plotted by pinpricking and circling the location on aerial photos. Differences in azimuth between field results and the 1:62,500 scale maps were treated carefully. Field personnel were instructed not to attempt to recover bends and corners in the town lines.

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