GIS DATA DIRECTORIES AND FILE NAMES

I. PURPOSE

This document is primarily for ARC/Info system managers and technicians.

The directory and file naming conventions recommended here are used by VCGI. Communications with VGIS sites and user support will be simplified if these conventions are followed. Also, any applications, software or SMLs/AMLs developed by VCGI will use these conventions. Most importantly, if these conventions are followed, this document can serve as part of your system documentation for future users at your site.

Although this document uses pc-DOS pathnames, the discussion applies to any operating system. The term "<COVER>" is used throughout to denote an ARC/Info coverage name.

II. DIRECTORY STRUCTURE

A. Several considerations dictate the choice of a directory structure:

1. Subdirectories should not be too large. A good rule of thumb is to have no more than 25 to 50 files in a subdirectory.
2. ARC coverages are often divided up geographically into tiles. For example, soils data for Vermont are divided up by county.
3. Commonly used ARC coverages, such as logos and scale bars, can be grouped together for simple access.

B. Town directories

VCGI and the Regional Service Centers use a separate top-level directory for each town. These pathnames are listed in the *VGIS Handbook*, Part 2. Section E., **Community Codes**. For example, coverage RDS (roads) for Plainfield might be stored with pathname PLAINFLD\RDS.

C. Directory D:\LEGEND

Directory D:\LEGEND is used to store north arrows, scale bars, and other legend coverages. Variations are serially

numbered (NORTH1, NORTH2, etc.) or named by the scale (SCL5000, SCL1250, etc.).

D. Directory D:\STATE

At VCGI, directory D:\STATE is used for statewide coverages of general utility. Many SMLs reference this directory. Some of the coverages in D:\STATE include:

TB250	Town boundaries at 1:250,000
CNTY250	County boundaries at 1:250,000
STATE250	State boundary at 1:250,000
RPC250	Regional planning commission boundaries, 1:250,000
ORGRID	1:5000 orthophoto edges
GRID	U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute quadrangle edges
DLGTILES	Digital Line Graph tile boundaries

E. Regional directories

VCGI foresees the use of regional directories ACRPC, BCRC, CCRPC, CVRPC, NWRPC, LCPC, NVDA, RRPC, SWCRPDC, TRORC, UVLSC and WRC for each of the GIS Regional Service Centers. The corresponding Regional Service Centers are named in the *VGIS Handbook*'s standard Community Codes.

F. Directory C:\ARCEXE\UTOOL

This directory exists within the ARC software and is used to store SMLs which may be called from any other directory. VCGI maintains a library of SMLs stored in this directory. See the *VGIS Handbook*, Part 2. Section F., **Maintaining an SML Library**, for more information.

G. Directory D:\PROJECT

Files used with the ARC/Info PROJECT command are kept here. Their names reflect the source and destination coordinate systems. For example, file LLDMS-SP.SML is for projecting from Latitude-Longitude (in Degrees-Minutes-Seconds) to State Plane coordinates. These files are available from VCGI, as described in the *Data Catalog*.

III. FILE AND COVERAGE NAMES

A. Several considerations dictate the choice of ARC file names:

1. All files directly associated with a coverage should have the same name as the coverage with a different extension. When coverages are copied or EXPORTed, all files with the same name will automatically be copied with the coverage. Also, you will know which coverage the file is associated with when you (or someone else) finds it much later.
2. pc-DOS 3.3 limitations should be followed since most VGIS sites use pcARC/Info.
3. The limitations of dBase should taken into consideration, since most sites will be using pcARC/Info version 3.4D.
4. INFO file names should have no extension, since dBase files will be given the .DBF extension. The exception is for INFO files related to ARC/Info coverages; these INFO files can have extensions up to 8 characters long since the extension becomes the dBase file name (for example, INFO file <COVER>.DATA becomes dBase file DATA.DBF in the coverage's subdirectory).
5. It is generally unnecessary to pluralize a coverage name with 'S', since the plural can be assumed. For example, use coverage name LAKE instead of LAKES.

B. File naming conventions (n is a digit from 1 to 9)

1. Coverage names: <COVER>
Coverage names follow pc-DOS 3.3 conventions: 8 characters or less, not including **.** **"** **/** **** **[** **]** **:** **|** **<** **>** **+** **=** **;** **,**. If a data layer exists at two different scales (rarely the case), the smaller (less accurate) scale may be indicated in its coverage name. For example, TB250 is used for town boundaries at 1:250,000.
2. Lookup tables: <COVER>.LUn
Note that one coverage may have several lookup tables. A single lookup table for a coverage may be named <COVER>.LUT.

3. Documentation files:
   Documentation files exist for the coverage, attribute tables, annotations and coverage updates. See the VGIS Handbook, Part 2.D., **Data Layer Documentation**.
4. FREQUENCY files: <COVER>.Fn
5. STATISTICS files: <COVER>.Sn
   Files generated by the FREQUENCY and STATISTICS commands are often left behind without being erased. These extensions make it easy to identify them.
6. Temporary files: <FILE>.TMP
   These are for temporary use and can be deleted when you've forgotten what they're for.
7. Files JUNK.* or coverage JUNK:
   If you want a temporary file or coverage with no future use, name it JUNK. Other users will know they can delete it.