Vanishing History – Preserving GIS Data with GeoMAPP

North Carolina State Archives/Center for Geographic Information & Analysis

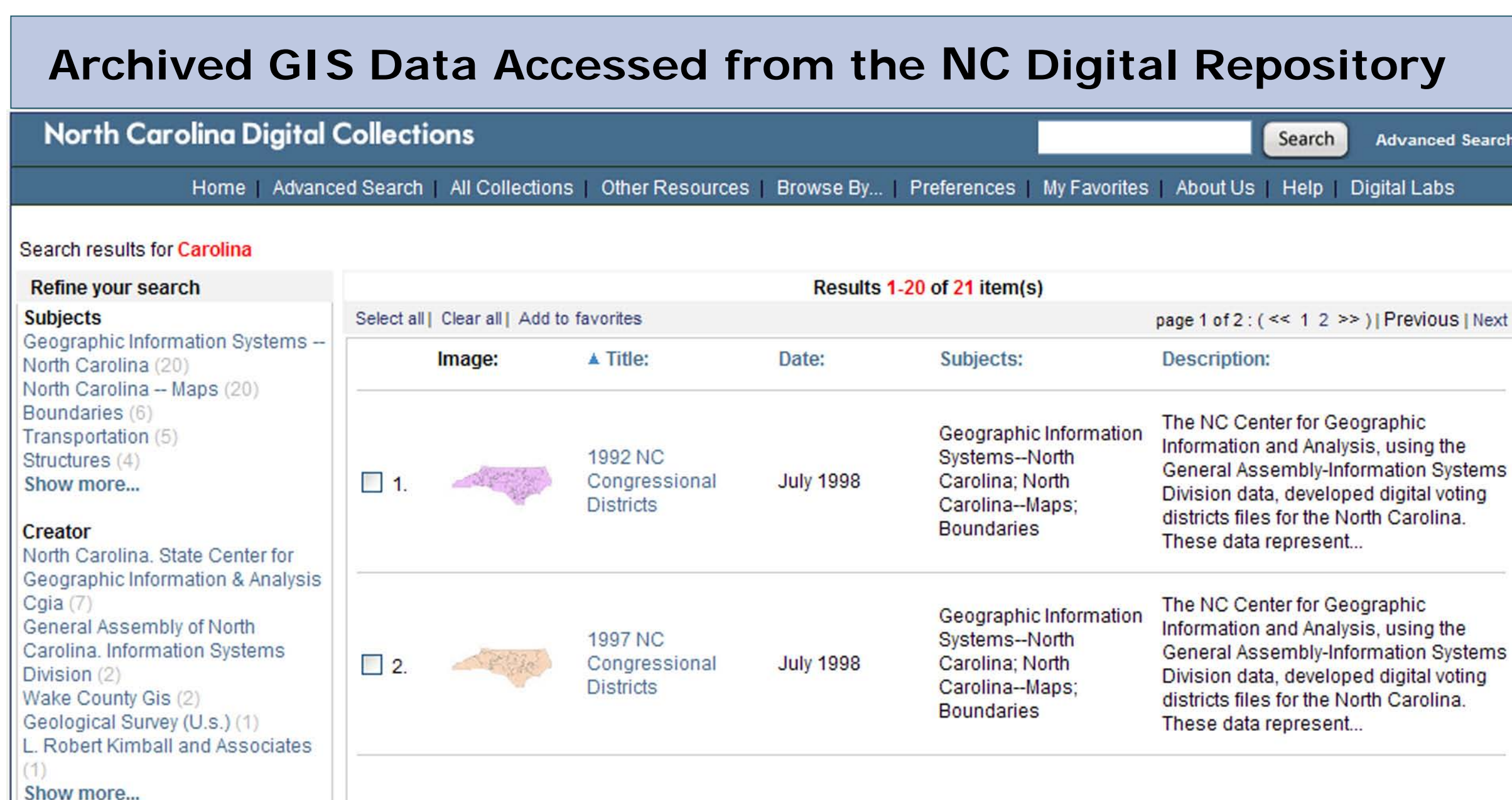**Geospatial Multistate Archive and Preservation Partnership**

Introduction

For the past four years CGIA, the NC State Archives and NCSU Libraries have been at the national forefront in the effort to preserve digital geospatial data. With support from the Library of Congress, the NC-led Geospatial Multistate Archive and Preservation Partnership (GeoMAPP) has investigated:

• Transferring data from GIS data creators and clearinghouses to archives organizations.
• Providing free public access to historic archived GIS data.
• Determining how to preserve this data "forever".
• Developing business case materials for sustainable geoarchives funding.

Archived GIS Data Accessed from the NC Digital Repository

Why Preserve Geospatial Data?

So why should efforts be made to preserve geospatial data and make it available to users? Here are a few compelling reasons:

• Leverages past investments in geospatial development for future use.
• Gives researchers the ability to track changes over time; e.g. population growth, spread of disease, coastal shifts, or vegetation change.
• Helps provide a cultural record of place over time.
• Future uses of data are difficult to anticipate.
• Electronic geospatial records are subject to specific state and local statutes that require their preservation (NC Statutes: §121:Archives and History; §132: Public Records).

Municipal Growth-- Mecklenburg County 1989-2009
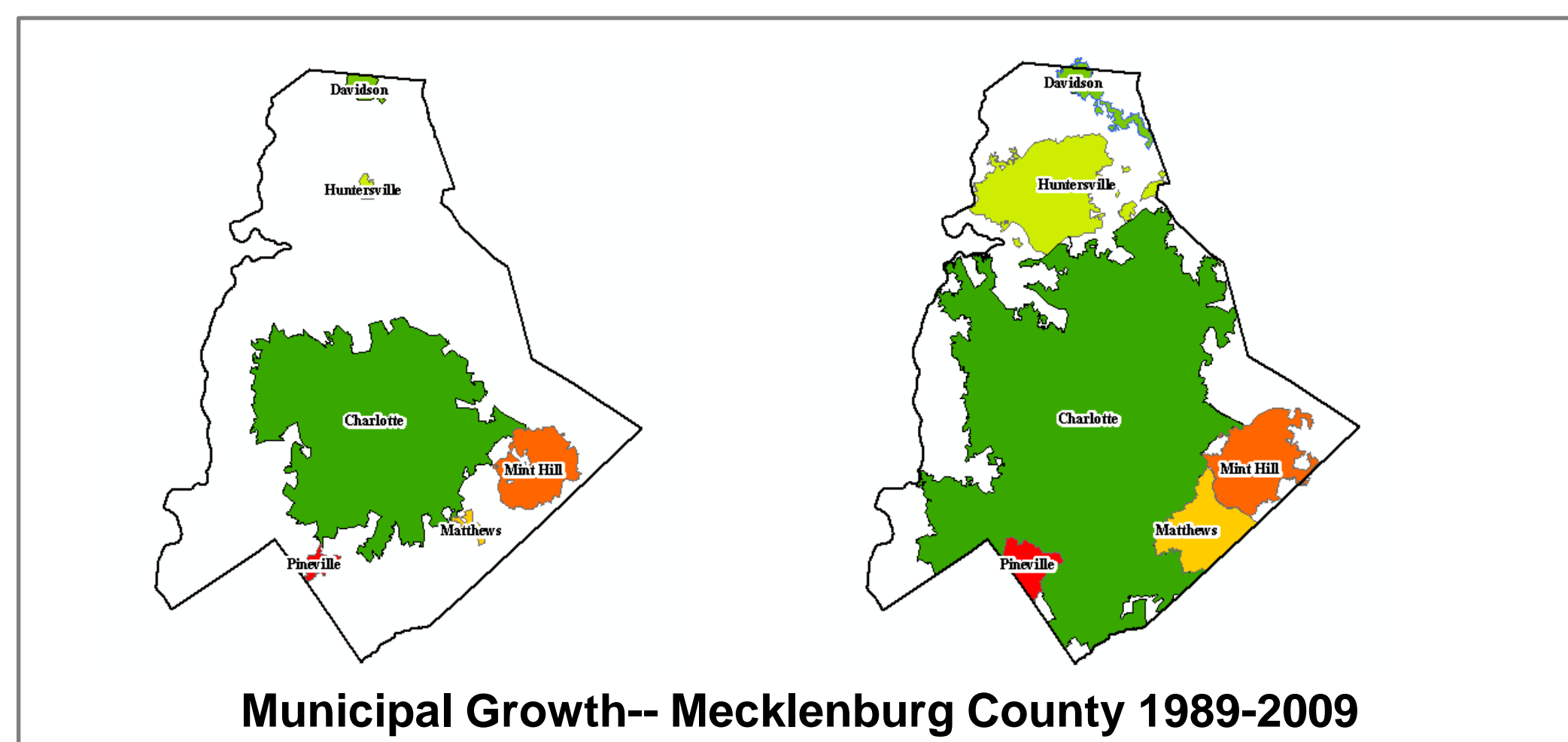
GeoMAPP: A National Effort

Led by CGIA and NC Archives, GeoMAPP pairs GIS and Archives specialists from the states of North Carolina ,Kentucky, Montana, and Utah to explore and implement tangible ways to acquire, preserve and providing long-term access to crucial geospatial data for future use and analysis.

GeoMAPP also partners with 13 additional states, academic partners, the National Archives, and the Library of Congress for Informational Partner sessions.

■ GeoMAPP Partner States
■ GeoMAPP Informational Partner States
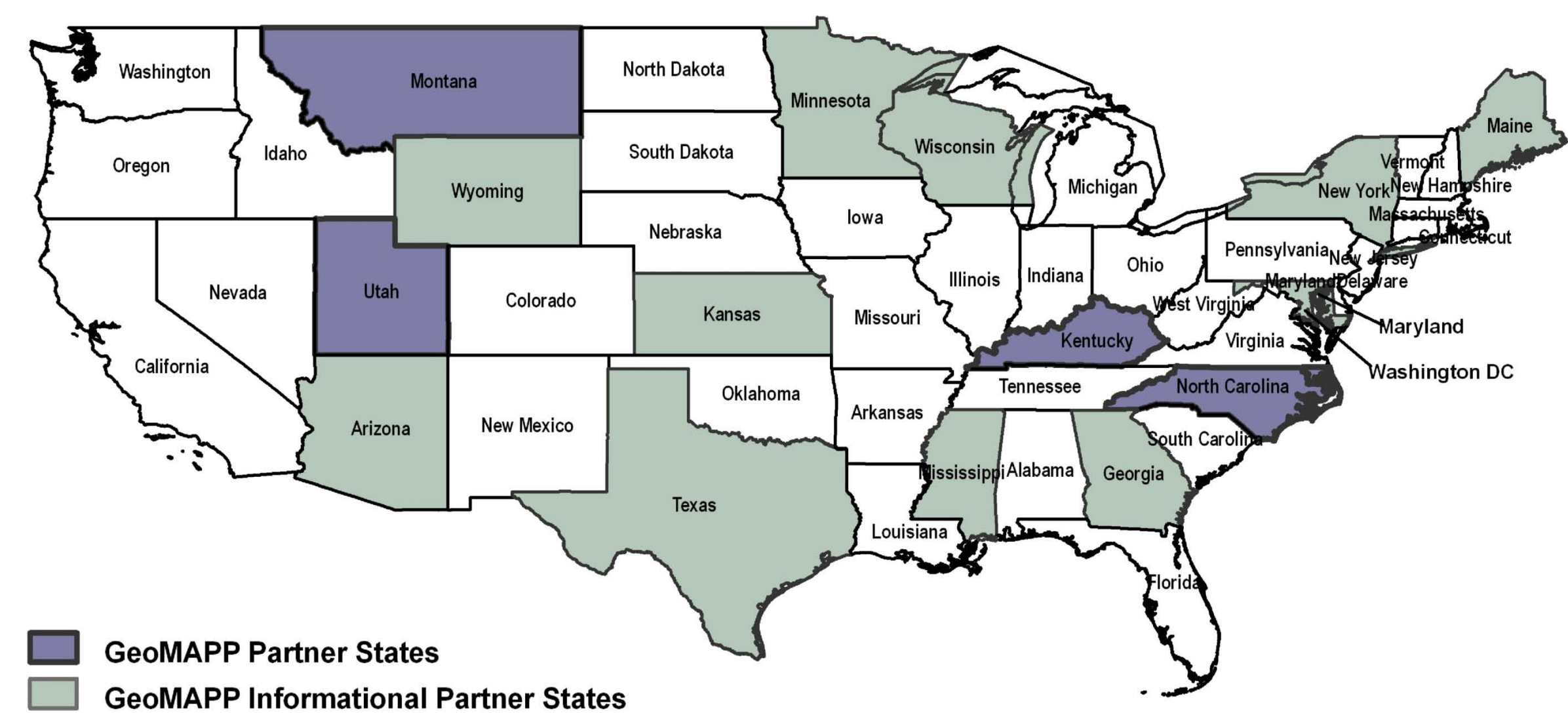
Preservation Challenges

Metadata – what key information best ensures preservation and enables user search and access?
Digital Formats – what are the best formats for long-term preservation and to deliver this information to users? Will these be the best formats for preservation and access in the future? Proprietary software may be unavoidable.
Naming Conventions – how should geospatial datasets be named and organized so that they are "human readable"?
Access – how can users find geospatial data, and then how should it be served to them?
Support – ongoing organizational and funding support to ensure that the geospatial data is made available for future use, and sustains preservation and access for the long term.

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www.geomapp.net