

From the Air: The Photographic Record of Florida's Lands
Update to Final Report
January 13, 2011

Phase III of the “From the Air” project had the following stated goals: 1) expand the digital photographic aerial collection to include 1971-1990, 2) expand the technology infrastructure to include a file server that will permit users to independently download images and to add an advanced GIS data server, and 3) create a new user-friendly interface using Google API. The University of Florida has succeeded in fulfilling these goals outlined in the grant application and has also made additional progress filling in remaining gaps within the entire resource.

When the term of the project was complete there was still some work left to do. As reported in the Annual Report, the project had unforeseen delays “caused by the contracting out of CNS virtual servers, staffing challenges, and the addition of approximately 1,000 more aerial photographs than were originally projected, there are some activities left to be completed. As some delays occurred, dependent workflows and components were also delayed.” Below is an accounting of the activities completed to finish out the project. No additional resources beyond current staffing were required to complete these activities.

- Programming: The Google Maps API interface was updated to include the aerials from 1971-1990. This was done by matching the tiles with coordinates provided by the GIS staff. All the aerial photographs from all three phases are now searchable and downloadable through the new user-friendly map interface.

- Website Development: The website has now been updated to include educational resources developed through the course of the project. The “Resources for Teachers” portal is now online and accessible. It can also stand on its own so that K-12 educational sites can link through to the portal page (<http://ufdc.ufl.edu/aerials/teachers>). The resource includes the updated education modules which have also been added to UF’s Institutional Repository. Also, the Ask-A-Librarian email service is now available on the website through a partnership with the Tampa Bay Library Consortium.

- GIS Interface and Server Upgrade: For the continued use of the GIS interface, 132,770 photo tile records within the database from all three phases needed to go through a quality control/quality assurance process. As part of QA/QC process, the match between Digital Library Center scanned images and the GIS database required a name by name match of each tile. As with any large data base during QA/QC various anomalies, i.e. duplicates, unmatched names, etc. are found which must be reviewed and adjusted. The extensive QA/QC process has proven more difficult than anticipated given the larger than expected number of tiles overall and thus larger number of tiles and tile naming conventions. Also as part of UF’s independent commitment to the collection the scanned tiles from Phase I and II were migrated to a new JPG2000 format and server which resulted in some naming anomalies that also need to be resolved. Once the QA/QC is complete and anomalies resolved (i.e. duplicate records removed) the final total number of records may be slightly less than 132,770. At this time, 97% of the names conform. Additionally we experienced GIS Internet Map Server installation issues during migration of Library IT systems to virtual machines/servers (CNS). Since the annual report, the GIS web interface has been migrated to the new platform but unanticipated GIS configuration issues with the new server will require additional programming by our IT department. We are actively working towards resolution to complete the upgrade to the GIS server and it is expected that this and the remaining naming anomalies will be taken care of by January 31, 2011.

- Marketing: Publicity featuring the new interface and new resources such as the 1971 - 1990 photography and educational website was delayed until the website was complete and functional for all of the loaded tiles. The dramatic increase in the total number of tiles, as compared to the initial projection, led to this delay. Electronic fliers and announcements were sent out to various list-serves, including MAPS-L to reach the map community, fl-lib for Florida librarians, GEOGD-L to reach educators interested in geography resources and also distributed to organizations such as the Florida Association for Media in Education. The resource was also promoted on Facebook.com and during the annual GIS Day celebration at UF. Publicity is ongoing and we expect also to be presenting the project at various conferences, including a poster presentation at the Florida Library Association and possibly presenting at the Florida Council for the Social Studies. The Florida Department of Education has agreed to list the website on their resources page which has replaced the SUNLINK catalog. In addition, on Feb. 25, 2011 the website will be promoted and demonstrated in a live webinar "Hot Topic" presentation to Ask-A-Librarian participants around the state. We will be discussing the project, its goals and how AAL participants can tap into the historic aerial photography of Florida resources.

Since the final resource ended up with over 300% of the expected total additional resources, it caused a time delay and the resource is only now fully available. A final reporting of the remaining indicators listed in the Outcomes Chart will be provided to the granting agency by March 15, 2011 or as soon as they are available.

Beyond the initial activities outlined in the grant, UF seized opportunities to further increase the value of this resource. The original plan was for the Digital Library Center to ingest 7,473 digital images of historic Florida aerials from the Department of Transportation. However, this number only accounted for the time frame of 1971 - 1990. To make the resource as complete as possible, the decision was made to also include previous years of aerial photography which represented an additional 30,000 files from the Department of Transportation. Since metadata and a clear organizational structure were not present for the files on the DOT hard-drive, these files required a lot of effort on the part of DLC staff. Also, a labor intensive clean-up process to take care of duplication and error files was undertaken and required visual inspection of every image. These actions brought the total processed aerial files for this grant project up to almost 60,000 which is 300% of the projected amount for this project. Thus, while the project has encountered some minor delays, all project goals have been met and exceeded with three times the number of tiles added to the aerials digital collection.