



Information systems the key to managing licensing data

by [Carson Mettel](#), PE

Imagine this scenario

You are meeting to discuss the results of minimum flow studies conducted at two of your developments three months ago. Everyone took notes about the navigability of the river in a variety of reaches but as the discussion narrows, it's obvious that the difference between 2000 cfs and 2500 cfs is difficult to describe ... *and remember.*

You need to summarize the timber resources within the project boundaries of a development you are licensing. You find a map showing the timber resources and another (at a different scale) showing the project boundary but someone else has taken the file with the description of the timber species abbreviations from the file cabinet.

The nightmare

What do these scenarios have in common? They are each a data management nightmare – unless you have organized your reports, correspondence, maps, charts, photographs, video, audio and field study data in some sort of information system.



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"With a properly designed information system, all of your data can be housed in a single, easy-to-access database," said Terry Hampton, a Mead & Hunt vice president and manager of water resources. "The entire information system can be taken to public meetings allowing you to quickly respond to questions that arise."

It's all related

Mead & Hunt developed a geographic information system (GIS) to aid in the licensing of nine different hydroelectric projects. All of the information in the system is related by its geographic location providing you with powerful tools to access, analyze, and map the data. Instead of having to search several different places for the data you need, the GIS keeps it all together and up-to-date. You can easily control who has access to the data and who can edit the data. This system helps you avoid the problem of data camouflage where you know the data is around somewhere but you just can't seem to locate it when you need it.



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