

**NY State Geospatial Advisory Council**  
**Minutes for March 13, 2019 Meeting**

NY Dept. of Agriculture & Markets, Pride of NY Room, 10B Airline Drive, Albany, NY

*Mission: Advise the State on effective use of geospatial technology resulting in tangible benefits to NYS.*

*In person:* Christina Croll, Mickey Dietrich, Eric Herman, Ana Hiraldo-Gomez, David Jorgensen, Todd Nelson, Julie O'Brien, Christopher O'Connor, Matthew Owen, Michael Praeger, Lindi Quackenbush, Chris Rado, Randy Rath, Richard Reichert, David Richardson, Michael Ross, Heather Weller, Frank Winters

*Via phone:* Kate Buss, Emily Fogarty, Ross Baldwin

*Minutes:* Christopher O'Connor

**10:30 Welcome / Agenda Review / Approval of Minutes (Richardson)**

- Introductions
  - Richardson reviewed the mission statement of the GAC and introduced the agenda.
  - Winters provided an overview on the role of the GAC, emphasizing the collaborative nature of GIS practitioners (e.g. stakeholder community / ecosystems). GAC is oriented toward local government, but covers multiple sectors (not-for-profit, private, state government, academia). Input from the GAC helps inform direction of the technology within the state.
- Approve previous meeting minutes
  - Herman suggested editing the previous minutes by removing specifically-named individuals from the "2019 Nominations" section's descriptive paragraph, as everyone is listed in the subsequent bulleted section. All agreed.
  - Nelson motioned to accept the minutes, Richardson seconded, unanimously approved.
- Ice Breaker (Weller)
  - Heather led a very engaging exchange amongst the participants.

**11:00 Reports**

- State Agency Advisory Group report (Herman)
  - Detailed notes from previous State Agency Advisory Group meetings are posted on the website<sup>1</sup>; Herman provided highlights from the last meeting held on January 8<sup>th</sup>:
    - Scott McDonnell and Gary McPherson (NYSDEC) provided a presentation on training and coordination for drone use. Topics included Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) overview, platforms, usage, mapping, registration and program implementation. NYSDEC, which has 30 trained pilots and 60 drones, has developed standards that are being used by multiple agencies. Cited substantial cost savings of 90% savings vs manned flight 95% to ground surveys.
      - GAC Open Discussion on UAVs:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://gis.ny.gov/coordinationprogram/workgroups/details/index.cfm?ID=7>

- General questions about AUV pilot licenses, training requirements, insurance, and evolution/future of the technology.
  - General suggestion that McDonnell could meet with the GAC at a future date to discuss select topics.
    - Winters provided a review of the GIS Strategic Plan and ShareGIS POC.
    - Winters and Tim Ruhren provided an update on orthoimagery.
    - Winters provided an update on filling NYS agency GIS positions with ITS1/2 Titles.
    - Herman led a review of base map options/needs.
    - Next meeting is scheduled for 4/9.
- NYSGISA Report (Reichert)
  - The NYS GIS Association Conference (9/23-25) will be held at the Marriott Syracuse Downtown; great opportunity for networking, training and keeping abreast of applications and technology advances. Conference will include a map contest.
  - NYSGISA wants to improve professional development education opportunities, including targeted professions (ex. surveyors, educators).
  - NYSGISA is recruiting for participation on committees, including the Professional Development Committee.
  - The Long Island GIS Conference is 4/17 at Farmingdale College; Fogarty is coordinating the conference and noted that registration is free.
- Federal Report (O'Brien)
  - Focus areas include the 3DEP Program with USGS and National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) studies for New York with FEMA.
    - O'Brien summarized the NFIP Map Modernization efforts. FEMA began redoing Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) in the 1990's, and focused on coastal studies in the early 2000's. FEMA's map release process includes release of a draft, three years for review and challenge, then finalization to become law. FIRMs impact community funding and participation in certain programs.
    - The coastal maps were challenged, resulting in a change in criteria and a remapping of coastal areas; expect new NY coastal maps to be published in 2023. Some New York State interior maps are also being redone.
- GIO/GPO/GCO report (Winters)
  - ITS GIS Client Office update
    - GCO brings together GIS teams within ITS and across the executive state agencies. No further progress on HR transactions that would organizational align ITS staff, but efforts to build out the GCO continue.
    - Team further expanded the statewide Esri ELA currently in use by executive agencies; a state contract is available as an alternative procurement vehicle.
  - Strategic Plan status
    - Winters expressed appreciation to GAC members for feedback on the plan; copies can be made available to new members (including Hiraldo-Gomez) who may not have seen it.

- The plan is currently going through an ITS approval process; it was reviewed by the ITS PIO and is now with ITS General Counsel.
- Ortho imagery RFP status
  - The RFP was cancelled due to an administrative/structural issue in the RFP process, not due to lack of funding or general support; GPO will keep pushing forward but won't be ready for Spring 2019. Subsequently planned imagery collection should be considered pushed out a year. Herman noted that annual lot naming conventions should be adjusted to ensure alignment with collection year; Winters agreed.
  - 2018 Westchester aerial imagery was collected by the county and will be added to the NYS GIS Clearinghouse.
  - USDA is planning a statewide collection of NAIP for 2019.
  - Erie, Genesee, and Livingston Counties 3DEP funding was approved – state now needs to cover cost share; targeting Spring 2019 collection.
  - Cayuga and Oswego elevation data has been sent to USGS for review.
  - FEMA/USGS are planning a major elevation collection effort (~16,000 sq. miles) for the state starting in Fall 2019.
- News from NSGIC
  - NSGIC drives legislation (ex. supported the Geospatial Data Act), software trends, policies, etc. Winters was appointed to the NSGIC Board of Directors
  - Interest in geo-enabled elections; there is funding from Democracy Fund.
  - Geospatial Data Act was passed, which codified into law the FGDC and grants certain authority: requires that Federal geospatial investments are coordinated, including state and local partners; makes Director of the Office of Management and Budget Director and the Secretary of the Interior responsible for overseeing a coordinated implementation of the NSDI.
  - Demo from Ecopia – company automatically processing 50 million building footprints / month (machine learning for defining building foot prints and other imagery training).
  - Discussed Block Chain technology and its potential utility in transactions around spatial data (authoritative data with touch points).
  - National Insurance Crime Bureau, a not-for-profit that advises the insurance industry on rate settings, is promoting the value of imagery (cost savings on field visits, faster insurance adjustments, reduced insurance exposure) and will fly imagery after events with certain criteria (ex. after a F2 tornado). Winters to get the playbook on criteria from their lead.
  - 2022 Coordinate System and Datum changes are coming; NGS understands better where (2.2m adjustment) the center of earth is.
  - Quote of the Conference: Accuracy is telling the truth; precision is telling the same story over and over again. – Brian Shaw
- NHD stewardship update
  - GPO will be the NHD steward for the state, retiring other versions; GPO met and confirmed with DEC and USGS.
- Boundaries

- The Pennsylvania-New York border has been cleaned up, leading to a tighter boundary that will be presented to the US Census. Eliminated slivers and other errors with parcel and census boundaries.
- The Adirondack Park Boundary was submitted to Census and was accepted for when it builds new blocks or tracts.
  - Dietrich expressed interest in the same for the Tug Hill Region. Winters noted that counties can approach the Census individually to be included in PSAP<sup>2</sup> (prep for 2020 Census).

**11:40 Data Policy discussion (Winters) – occurred following lunch**

- Two state policies that created the GIS Coordinating Body and the Data Sharing Cooperative were changed to guidance documents and rescinded as ITS policy.
  - GPO will continue to initiate data sharing agreements with new participations to the Cooperative.
  - A possible alternative model would be the use of terms and conditions accepted by users when visiting the Clearinghouse or before downloading data.
  - In general, anything to streamline data access should be considered.
  - Open Data initiatives may eventually marginalize the need for the Cooperative.
- Seeking to expand permissions granted by local government that allow GPO to share parcels; all but one county allows GPO to share with other agencies, 22 allow public sharing. GAC conversation turned to an in-depth discussion around the New York State Assessment Community Enterprise System (ACES)<sup>3</sup> initiative and data availability/requirements:
  - GPO will provide parcel web map services to ACES, made available to the public as read-only
  - There are other GIS data layers that will be required to support the assessment capabilities of the system (ex. zoning, tax districts, school, flood plains, wetlands, etc.); it still needs to be determined how this data will be made available to ACES and users.
  - It was suggested that a future meeting could include an agenda item on ACES topics.
- GAC members had an open discussion on the possibility of policy requiring NYS executive agencies to provide GIS data sets to the public as map services (except for those exempt from FOIL). Questions/topics raised during the discussion included:
  - How to deal with the current password-protected datasets (there has been some success in reducing the number of password-protected datasets on the Clearinghouse, but some still exist).
  - How to deal with sensitive data and current agreements around non-disclosure; what constitutes “sensitive” data?
  - Would it disincentivize private organizations from sharing data with government organizations, for fear their data would then by default made available to the public?
  - What would be the impact on public organizations charging for value-added or enhanced data?

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/about/psap.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.tax.ny.gov/research/property/assess/aces.htm>

- What mechanisms would allow for the efficient and easy update of data being provided as services by the data custodians?
- How to designate data as being appropriate to share; curated vs. non-curated data?
- How to define what constitutes GIS data versus extended attribute information that potentially sources for other information systems, or unstructured data?

#### **12:15 Concerns, issues, and feedback from other sectors**

- Hiraldo-Gomez asked if there was known legislation that could help local government encourage cooperation amongst local government organizations. The example provided focused on county projects and trying to promote outreach and coordination with the County GIS Division for assistance. GAC Member comments included:
  - Investigating the use of Executive Orders to facilitate coordination and governance.
  - Sometimes specific projects drive coordination (ex. NYS 2017 Lidar capture).
  - Projects or initiatives that come from the top-down lend themselves to better coordination.
  - Data Requests to GPO from private firms working for government can sometimes result in connecting those projects with GIS leads within government.
  - Home-rule law has a significant impact on local government governance and coordination. County-level government typically plays more of an advisory role. It would be good to create a policy that establishes a structure or governance process to address this.
  - One challenge is that a policy might not be effective due to a lack of awareness of the GIS capabilities and services – outreach is a key component. For example, GPO works to educate developers on the use of their web services.
  - Government auditors might be leveraged to help identify opportunity areas. Winters will follow-up with the Office of the State Comptroller about where this might fit within their audit processes. A future GAC agenda item might be to discuss further.
- Jorgensen thanked the GPO team for support on a GPO web service that returns assessment attribute data (not the actual parcel boundaries). Jorgensen suggested example uses of the service made available from the website would make it easier to use. Winters will work to improve the utility of the service.
- Dietrich commented on the Tug Hill local government turnover rate and the need to re-train new officials. Dietrich suggested introductory GIS training be provided at local government conferences like the Association of Towns Annual Conference.
  - Rado emphasized the need for basic outreach and training on GIS and the importance of not assuming a baseline level of understanding amongst staff.
- Quackenbush emphasized the importance of academic institutions staying relevant regarding the student population and changes in technology. Changes in curriculum and programs can take time, presenting a challenge of staying current. Quackenbush also noted that some students lack an understanding of basic technology and skills (ex. what is a zip file) that educators assume they'll have it. Fogarty shared her work at Farmingdale on the development of a degree program where students can follow current and modern career paths in geospatial technology.

- Hiraldo-Gomez reminded members about the Westchester County GIS Users Group meeting on 5/16 at SUNY Purchase College.

**12:25 Group picture**

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**12:30 Break for lunch**

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**1:30 ShareGIS update and demo (Jason Baum, GPO)**

- Jason Baum (ITS GIS Program Office) provided an overview of GPO’s ShareGIS, including details on Phase 1 and Phase 2 of their Proof of Concept.
  - Phase 1 is complete and being used, including a handful of services. It fulfilled 40 Million requests last month.
  - Phase 2 is targeting an enterprise-class platform, focusing on availability, compatibility, reliability, elasticity, scalability, and performance.
  - Baum provided an overview of the ShareGIS architecture.
  - <Live Demonstration of ShareGIS and Open Sensor Hub>
  - The API gateway will allow certain users to be throttled and will authenticate through ny.gov.
  - The Open Sensor Hub will include data from Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) on snow plows, NOAA weather bodies, and stream gauges. Plans to fold in a demo of drone and bodycam live images.
  - The Phase 2 90-day POC will end April 15<sup>th</sup> and will be followed by six months of service time for continued experimentation and testing.
  - Rado shared that NYC is attempting something similar; Baum and Winters are happy to share and partner.

**2:30 Planning session (Richardson) – deferred to next meeting due to time constraints.**

- *GAC Work Groups*
  - *Purpose of Work Groups in GAC advisory role*
  - *Review of past and currently active Work Groups – status and membership*
  - *Open discussion around topics and needs*
- *Brainstorming Topics for Future Meetings (briefings and discussions)*

**3:15 Meeting adjourns**

*Upcoming 2019 Meetings:*

- June 4 (Tues)
- Sept. 11 (Wed)\* (proposal to shift to Tuesday 9/10 instead)
- Dec. 11 (Wed)