

**NYS GIS State Agency Advisory Group**  
**Meeting Report**  
at NYS Thruway Authority, Building 10 & WebEx  
September 13, 2022

**Intro/Roundtable Discussion about use of Interns for GIS.** The group introduced themselves and discussed the use of interns for GIS work in their agencies. Eric noted that Drs. Lawson and Li from the University at Albany are active in trying to procure these positions for their students:

- **Eric Herman – NYSTA:** GIS Team has not made use of interns, though there could be benefits; have had good experience with interns with the Desktop Services part of IT
- **Marilyn Sango-Jordan – DOH:** Cancer patient contact studies; use of interns through the School of Public Health
- **Mike O’Neill – ITS (NYSDOT):** Can use many interns; had experience working with bridge points and linear referencing systems & editors, large datasets are always an issue
- **Lis DeGironimo – GPO:** Unaware of intern use status at GPO
- **Frank Winters – GIO:** Retiring on Friday, still very interested in GIS activities; experience with intern on-boarding process has been so slow that school deadlines were missed; Rajiv Rao (CTO) is interested in using interns as a learning experience - expect more from interns (not just data grunts) – look at “Student Assistant” Civil Service title
- **Jordan Garrison – NYSTA:** Started in May; interned at two NYS agencies (DOH & NYSDEC) to help with GIS – very beneficial experiences; was in U Albany master’s degree program and noted lots of talent/good pool of candidates for analysis, coding, data management (nice to provide interns with options for projects to work on)
- **Craig Fargione – GPO:** Streets and Addresses Team is hiring two grade 18s instead of interns, but have had interns successfully in past (& interned himself)
- **Jeff Langella – GPO:** Elevation program & hydro, orthos, emergency – no interns recently; several datasets on back burner could benefit from interns – good way for students to get a foothold
- **Molly Jordan – APA:** Don’t use interns, but have plenty of jobs that would be benefit from interns
- **Aaron Walters – Canal Corp:** Real Estate group interested in hiring at least one intern for the current semester
- **Anyée Fields – NYSTA:** GIS group doesn’t use interns, but have worked with them in other groups and had good experiences with them
- **Carol Hockeson – ITS (DOH):** Data Management Services unit has had interns in the past; education and experience are both important for future work
- **Christina Croll – Parks:** Have used interns through [SEA Hudson Valley Corps \(AmeriCorp\)](#) – 10 month internships of GIS & environment; have also used [FORCES](#) (in Central NY region, through SUNY ESF and other state schools); have used in main office and regional offices; have also tried to get interns through the [Civil Service Internship Opportunities](#) program.
- **Henry Kovacs – ITS/DOT:** Have not had interns in recent memory; was an intern himself, and it helped to launch his career
- **Hilary Papineau – OSC:** Haven’t had GIS interns; could be challenges, but may be a good fit
- **John Marino – NYNH (iMapInvasives):** Interns at NYNH do help with data reviews; great to develop skills
- **Kevin Hunt – ITS/DOT:** Deferred to Mike and Henry’s comments
- **Kian Sullivan – ORPS:** In Ray Brook office, have not had interns, though they could help
- **Mark Giddings – DOH:** No interns in Division of Nutrition
- **Mark Holt – ORPTS:** Not able to reply during go around

- **Matthew Sheperd – OPRHP:** Historic Preservation has had no interns recently; good for cleaning up GIS data
- **Mike Schifferli – OPRHP:** Historic Preservation has not made much use of interns specifically for GIS, but they do work in other Historic Preservation offices
- **Rebecca Newell – DOS:** No current GIS titles or interns, but have used interns in the past; have made use of NOAA Coastal Fellows; could use interns for work with the Geographic Information Gateway
- **Sean O’Connell – GPO:** Data improvement manager/Clearinghouse; had a few interns for automation and coding; could also use for smaller projects
- **Stephanie Rockwell – Canals:** Have a need for interns and just got approval to bring one on board
- **Tim Daly – ITS (DEC):** In past, DEC Division of Water has had many interns through an agreement with the University at Albany to update the National Hydrography dataset (Tim has supervised many interns); ITS hasn’t used them – onboarding is much more onerous now than in the past; should investigate further use of interns

**Changes at the GPO.** Frank is retiring as the NYS GIO on Friday. He noted that it’s important to focus on the large amount of great work that’s been accomplished. Frank’s available to talk if anyone has in questions and wants to discuss any GIS-related topics. Frank is leaving his Civil Service “Director of IT Services” title and noted the importance of keeping career ladders available—the GIO position critically coordinates with much of the state, and not just direct-line staff. He’d like to see this title continue to be used for the GIO. Frank has discussed this with his administration and feels that the GIS Client Office and GIS Program Office should both report through the GIO. Frank and Lis will inquire further as to where the GIO reports in other offices. Frank will be going to NSGIC on his own the day after he retires.

Lis has been with the GPO for six weeks now and has been “drinking from the firehose” to prepare. She’s been active on the Geospatial Advisory Council, NYSGISA, and GISCI. She’s interested in looking at grooming people for paths to GISP certification, has been working with NSGIC, and is excited for expanded networking opportunities.

**Latest Updates to the Building Footprint Services.** Although Jeff spoke to group about building footprints in April, but there have been many updates. He gave a presentation discussing the history of the building footprints project and web service, and the current product that is based on CIESIN’s 5.55 million footprints, supplemented by 607k footprints from Microsoft and augmented with populated data fields that provide a large deal of information about the buildings. He also discussed future improvement plans for the dataset.

**Orthoimagery and Elevation Updates.** Jeff then showed the latest status for the state’s orthoimagery program, and the counties that were [collected in 2022](#) and are currently under evaluation. Some of these counties will be released in October. He then indicated that for the 2023 planning of flights, counties last flown in 2018 should be updated as well as Long Island, and possibly portions of western and northern NY.

For the elevation data, Jeff noted that the 2019 USGS LIDAR collection, covering Lake Ontario & Hudson River region may be released soon, but had issues, so it will be re-flown again this fall to improve quality. The GPO contracted for lower Hudson Valley counties in 2022, and the data is in review now. 2021 NYC data has been received by the GPO, and the 2019 FEMA/USGS data, which covered a good portion of central NY may have pieces available by the end of the year.

**Hydrography Needs of State Agencies/Impacts of Changes to the National Hydrography Database.** Finally, Jeff discussed the status of federal hydrography programs. The GPO has been involved with making edits to the

National Hydrography Dataset (NHD). He noted that it was recently announced that the NHD program is shutting down edits at end of year. Next year, the USGS will begin implementing the 3D Hydrography Program (3DHP), which will provide national consistency, based on the 3DEP (3D Elevation Program) datasets. Whereas the sole costs for NY State's NHD participation consisted of staff time, the 3DHP model will need to be funded 70% by the state and 30% by federal government to have updates done. Any updates in NYS are likely several years out, perhaps longer if there is no funding from the state. The dataset is expected to take nine years to build. Jeff proposed that NYS continues to work on a statewide hydrography dataset, based on the NHD work done to date. This can be enhanced with other data and names, then provided back to USGS. He's very interested in getting feedback about how this data may impact state government, and if anyone knows of funding sources that could be used to participate in the 3DHP program. To discuss this with Jeff, contact him at [Jeffrey.Langella@its.ny.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Langella@its.ny.gov).

**Legislative Boundary Updates.** Sean then gave a brief overview of the legislative boundary data and [web services](#). The legislative boundaries for the state were changed recently, based on the 2020 census. The new boundaries will take effect in January 2023, when new representatives are sworn in. Until that time, the current boundaries are still active, and have the attribution regarding the district representatives. In the interim, the 2022 boundaries are available as web and feature services, so that people can see the alignments of the new districts (which the recent primary elections were based upon).

**ITS Title Series Updates.** Frank discussed the latest updates to the Information Technology Specialist (ITS) title series. This series is heavily used by GIS practitioners in NY State government. For the ITS1 and ITS2 titles, the old LERT process is now gone. Filling these titles is still based on an education and experience inventory but lists of scores (based on exceeding minimum criteria) are now published. Selective Certification can be applied to this list (as it has been for the higher-level exams in the series), and the inventories have been updated. Frank also received clarification that GIS education counts as "Computer Science" when applying to these exams. Degrees and coursework now only appear to apply for grades 14, 18, & 23. Certifications apply only at levels above the grade 25. The Selective Certification questionnaire from June is now being applied to the newly released ITS3 list.

**Maintaining State Streets with GeoComm's Contributor.** Craig provided a demonstration and overview of the newly released Contributor application from GeoComm. This application replaces GeoLynx and is used to provide external entities the ability to contribute to and update the NYS Streets and Addresses files. The application was designed to be more user user-friendly and intuitive than its predecessor. There are simplified feedback mechanisms within the tool, the ability to edit existing features, and add or request new features. Users can now add in all attribution values. The GPO gets notifications when new edits have been added with the tool and performs quality checks for it can be included into the Streets and Addresses files the following day. About 30 counties use the interface to directly supply their edits. About 8,000 edits are added each week.

#### **Open Forum.**

- Eric noted that the University at Albany is looking for people to participate in a showcase of applications for GIS Day
- Lis noted information regarding the [Geospatial Watch Party](#) – a free event that will be held on September 29 at seven venues across the state.
- Eric asked about how the hybrid (in-person/remote) approach worked for the meeting (about two-thirds attended remotely). Most felt that we should continue with this format to allow for personal interactions and flexibility.

A recording of the meeting is here: [Cisco Webex Meetings - Replay Recorded Meeting](#). Contact Eric (email listed below) for the password.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, January 10, 2023, from 9:30am-12:00pm at the NYS Thruway Authority Building 10 and via WebEx. If you have any ideas for topics or would like to provide a demonstration at this meeting, please let us know. Send any questions or concerns about any of these issues to the Advisory Group Chair, Eric Herman at the NYS Thruway Authority (518) 471-5890, or [eric.herman@thruway.ny.gov](mailto:eric.herman@thruway.ny.gov).