

**NYS GIS State Agency Advisory Group**  
**Meeting Agenda**  
at NYS Thruway Authority, Building 10 & WebEx  
May 23, 2023

**Intro/Roundtable Discussion about GIS Training Methods.** The attendees introduced themselves and discussed the GIS training methods that they are using in their agencies.

- **Eric Herman – NYSTA:** For custom web-based applications, pre-recorded video tutorials are used; There has been no formal desktop GIS training for several years, but the team is currently planning a live, recorded class via Teams, to assist with migration to ArcGIS Pro
- **Mari-Sango Jordan – NYSDOH/HRI:** Use ITS for training; For large GIS database work, use a contractor who manages the training
- **Jordan Garrison – NYSTA:** See Eric's comments; Also noted that NYSTA now has licenses for Udemy at NYSTA
- **Furrina Lee – DOH:** New to ArcGIS with interest in using the tools; Trying to move to ArcGIS Online for current projects
- **Lis DeGironimo – ITS/Acting GIO:** Enterprise licensing agreement (ELA) with Esri includes training for agencies that are included in the ELA; Taking the pulse of which tools people are using; Have training classes lined up for ArcGIS Pro & looking for training for web development
- **Brian Fleury – ORES:** Brent established online ArcGIS training for ORES
- **Brent Kinal – ORES:** About a year into getting staffed up and have site specialists using ArcGIS Pro; Set up Esri training with some lesson plans from Esri's web site as well as field tools; Also planning in-person classes and looking to get onto the state ELA
- **Rebecca Newell – DOS:** Leveraging free training through the ELA; Have a few paid courses; Using Pro more and more
- **Tim Daly – ITS:** Extensive use of online training available through ELA; No recommended tracks at this point/allow people to take what they want; Some register for the online courses; About one-third of GIS staff are using ArcGIS Pro
- **Bobby Sayers – DEC:** At Marine Resources, and deferred to Melissa
- **Melissa Albino-Hegeman – DEC:** Rely on ITS for all GIS training
- **Craig Fargione – ITS (GPO):** See Lis' comments
- **John Marino – NYNHP:** Use ITS for access and try to get staff to go to one conference per year for training
- **Christina Croll – Parks:** Esri training done through the ELA, and provide a list of training opportunities to staff; Lots of ad-hoc training (for data collection, etc.); Also utilize Esri classes
- **Jeff Herter – DOS:** Planning, Development & Infrastructure – see Rebecca's comments
- **Molly Jordan – APA:** Molly typically does personal training for new staff; Has done larger Esri trainings
- **Anyée Fields – NYSTA:** See Eric & Jordan's comments
- **Carol Hockeson – DOH:** Working with Pro through Esri's online courses; Looking for some refresher info on ArcGIS Pro
- **Chris Leo – OGS (Real Estate):** Not much GIS capacity currently; Building that out, and will assemble a training plan for four licensed surveyors who use CAD
- **Gerry Engstrom – ITS (GPO):** Supporting Police, DHSES, etc.; See Lis' comments; Assists NYSIC use of ArcGIS Pro and supplements their training; Set up classes with Mike Martel, to get analysts up to speed
- **Gwen LaSelva – DOH:** See colleagues' comments about online training; In-person in past with MapInfo & other platforms
- **Mark Giddings – DOH (Nutrition):** Lots of ad-hoc free training; Mentorships
- **Katherine Barnes – DEC:** Although no formal agency training, they can take some of the online courses; Has also found YouTube to be a great resource, and directs many there; Many new people already have experience with ArcGIS Pro

- **Matt Shepard – SHPO:** Using Pro since 2021; For training, uses Google searches and Esri documentation; Lots of Ad-Hoc training
- **Matthew Smith – Tug Hill Commission:** Planner – Uses QGIS; Most training is through online courses and in-office assistance; Also uses YouTube for assistance
- **Peter Lauridsen – DOS:** See Rebecca’s comments; Also uses Esri’s free documentation online
- **Sean O’Connell – ITS (GPO):** A lot of inter-group communication and assistance at the GPO between groups; More formalized training is through Esri; Lots of online training and have had onsite offerings in the past; See comments from Gerry mentioned

**Intra-Agency GIS User Forums.** John and Melissa then kicked off discussion of interagency user forums. They’d started an agency-wide group at the DEC using Microsoft Teams to discuss GIS topics, starting with mobile data collection for a field inspection program. They have also used this group for interagency GIS-related announcements. The group consists of about 400-500 people and meets monthly. Melissa generally leads the group. Training issues often come up. Melissa pointed out that people who show up are typically looking for information and are not necessarily there to provide any. Eric noted how the NYSTA and DOT tend to get information out through a network of GIS Coordinators, who serve as liaisons to their program areas’ overall user population. Christina mentioned that she’d tried to start an in-person user group at OPRHP’s headquarters, but the group but never really took off. Suggestions for ways to improve the quality of meetings like these included go-arounds on a specific topic, drafting speakers who have projects worth noting, and creating an overall theme for each meeting.

**GPO/GCO Merger & Current Topics.** Lis talked about the evolution of the GIS organization at ITS. The GIS Program Office (GPO) manages the foundation data programs is located under Shared Platform Services under the Chief Technology Officer (CTO). When Frank Winters retired, Lis took over the GPO. Chris O’Connor headed GIS Client Services, which coordinated programs in the agencies. Chris was recently promoted, the state’s CIO retired, and the CTO resigned. With all these changes, and efforts to update the state’s GIS Strategic Plan, Lis has been working to merge the GIS functions to help put the GPO team members in closer touch with the GIS practitioners in the agencies. She spoke with Jen Lorenz, the new Acting CIO, and Rebecca Kai, the new Chief Data Officer (CDO), about the GIS function. It now appears that the GIS function may move under the Chief Data Office as a Bureau. As a part of this restructuring, Lis would head “Geospatial Services”, which would be composed of three groups: Geospatial Data Services, Geospatial Client Services, and Geospatial Enterprise Services. This may happen as soon as sometime next month.

Lis’ team has done a lot of analysis to develop a clear path forward and a cohesive message. There are currently about 40 staff at the GPO with about 10 additional vacancies. Roughly 45% work in Client Services, 35% in Client Services, and the remainder in Enterprise Services. She is looking to use the office’s new Hub site on the Clearinghouse for subcommunities and as a forum for exchanging ideas. She’s also looking to create a YouTube channel for the office, and to provide links to other valuable tools through developer tools and links to communities. She encourages attendance at GIS conferences and user groups as well as conversations at in person meetings and hopes to be able to schedule monthly webinars for information sharing.

**Update on Orthoimagery & Elevation Data.** Sean discussed the latest updates on the orthoimagery program. The 2022 imagery is complete, and the office is just finalizing a few counties for the color infrared coverage, which should be ready by next week. The 2023 flight collections have now been completed, and he showed the coverage maps for those flights.

In terms of elevation data, the Lake Ontario project has been completed as well as the USGS LiDAR in central-eastern NY. All this data is at 1-meter data resolution, and the entire state is now fully covered with either 1 or 2-meter resolution elevation data. Sean also noted that the FEMA data is now posted to the FTP site. Brent

asked about the availability of packaged tile files for portability in mobile applications, to make them more portable. Sean noted that these can be created for specific uses but are not currently pre-built for distribution.

**New Feature Services for Streets and Addresses.** Craig discussed the new feature services that the GPO has posted for street and address data. He started off with an overview of the familiar standardized symbology for the streets and addresses, then described the new feature layers which are available on the newly redesigned Clearinghouse and allow users to filter by type and customize symbology. He also noted that Esri is now using the state's data in their own services, and that many address-focused organizations such as OpenAddresses, the National Address Database, Google, TomTom, and Here are also using the state's address data. Craig reviewed the many different download options that are available for this data through the website. The services are updated twice each month, and quarterly updates are posted online for FTP download. The dataset has a very rich set of attribution. Craig also noted that quarterly updates from NYC are added into the file.

**New Clearinghouse Website.** Sean gave a presentation of the new [New York State GIS Resources website](#). This is the overhaul of the Clearinghouse that he'd discussed at the last meeting that was officially launched in March. He noted that although the URL is the same, many of the pages within the site have changed, so it's likely that bookmarked URLs will no longer work. The site is divided into Coordination, Data, and Programs pages. The Coordination section includes information about groups such as the Geospatial Advisory Council, the State Agency Advisory Group, and a Who's Who for GIS in NY State, with additional functionality. The Programs section gives a great deal of in-depth information about the various programs that are coordinated through the State's GIS program. The Data pages provide access to live, interactive exploration of myriad datasets, including access to several download options, spatial filtering, and ways to bring data directly into a variety of GIS platforms. Rich metadata is available to help users better understand the information they are working with. The data on the site also provides links to connect directly to agency dataset service feeds and those of county hubs and federal data sources. At the top of the Data page is an "overview document" that explains how to access the data. The FAQ and About Us pages round out the site. None of the data hosted on the site is password protected, as it is all freely available to the public. A short discussion ensued regarding state agency access to parcel data. Interested parties should contact [Kate Kiyanitsa](#) directly to learn how to access this service.

**DOS Gateway updates.** Next, Jeff gave a presentation of the newly revised [Geographic Information Gateway](#) hosted by DOS. The latest revision was released a few weeks ago (on Earth Day), and several additional changes will be coming over the next month or two. The application has been moved from ArcGIS Enterprise, hosted on the Amazon cloud to an ArcGIS Hub application, hosted on ArcGIS Online. It now serves up feature services, hosting over 800 datasets. It is built atop a new StoryMap template and includes partner resources that are now readily available. The primary customers are decision makers and the public. Data is pulled from a large variety of sources. Jeff then provided a demo of the Gateway. The data is clearly provided right up front. The major sections of the site include four primary "cards": Explore, Learn, Engage, and Plan. There are featured stories highlighted, as well as ways to find non-spatial resources. Explore Data provides interfaces to two map sites: View Data and the Coastal Atlas (the Coastal Atlas consists of about ten coastal-specific datasets). Users can click Dive-In to explore details of specific datasets more fully. Jeff showed the map interface, and noted that many more improvements are planned, and should be released in about six weeks. He noted that DOS and ITS are working on establishing a solid connection between the Clearinghouse and the Gateway. A new Community of Practice page is in the works to encourage engagement, as well as a credentialed MySpace mapping tool for ability to do analysis with your own data, and a kid-friendly version of the Gateway.

#### **Open Forum.**

- Molly mentioned that she's interested in using scripts to do large batch uploads of the many regular transactions that occur within the APA, so that they can be made available publicly through an online mapper. Also sought advice for how to do these with Python scripts for the agency's multiple internal

applications. Tim noted that he could share code that DEC uses for tasks like this. Jordan also said that he could share some Python and C# development code. Lis was interested in posting scripts and tools that others have written and would be willing to share and part of the searchable inventory of tools that she'd earlier described for the new website.

- Melissa asked about using public-facing web services to publish information to Open Data. Lis and Eric both discussed their own efforts, and how the Open Data office now has tools to directly ingest GIS web services into the Open Data format for a seamless process.
- Eric mentioned that he'd been chairing the group since August 2001, and that this was the final meeting that he'd be chairing (his 70<sup>th</sup>) for this group, as he prepares for retirement. He thanked everyone for their participation, and handed the reins over to Christina, who will be the Advisory Group's new Chair.

*A recording of the meeting is here: [NYS GIS State Agency Advisory Group-20230523 1334-1 - Webex](#). Contact Christina (email listed below) for the password.*

*The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, September 12, 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, Christina Croll at the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation 518-473-7787, or [christina.croll@parks.ny.gov](mailto:christina.croll@parks.ny.gov).*