

April 2020

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## April 2020 Newsletter

Hello NYS GIS Association Member! Here's what's in the news...

- Meet Lis Degironimo, NYS GIS Association Member
- NSGIC Joint Statement on GIS in the Pandemic
- Upcoming Opportunities & Events
- NYS GeoSpatial Summit 2020

Read on and enjoy,  
The NYS GIS Association Communications Committee

Meet Lis Degironimo, NYS GIS Association Member

**1. What made you interested in taking up GIS/geospatial technology as a career and how did you end up in the field of GIS? What is your educational background?**

Once I learned about what GIS was, I was hooked! Soon after I graduated from SUNY ESF (Landscape Architecture), I was working as a site planner for a large architecture/engineering firm, when I was given a box of MapInfo and asked to evaluate it for use on a military base master planning project. I discovered that GIS was a very powerful technology and the perfect blend of my interests. I began to pursue formal education in GIS eventually getting my MS degree from SUNY ESF (my thesis studied spatiotemporal GIS data formats). I also shifted my career to work as a GIS analyst.



**2. Can you explain your job and what you do there?**

I am the Watershed / GIS Coordinator at the Mohawk Valley Water Authority (MVWA) in Utica. Our water source is a 374 sq. mi. watershed in the southern Adirondack mountains. When I first started at the MVWA, I created a watershed master plan and worked on several environmental studies. Now, I am in our engineering department and

**3. How did you get involved in the Association? Would you describe the many ways you have contributed to the Association over the years?**

I attended some of the early organizational meetings facilitated by Sam Wear, Larry Alber, & Bob Brower. I was elected to the Association board of directors in 2009 where I served as the Regional User Group Coordinator and was the board's liaison to the GAC. I've also served on most of the Geospatial Summit committees and am currently the co-chair along with Kate Kiyanitsa.

**4. How else do you share your expertise in GIS with NYS programs?**

I served on the NYS Coordinating Body (now the GAC) for 8 years. During that time, I participated in the development of the NYS GIS strategic plan. I've presented at the NYS GIS Conferences (GeoCon) on numerous occasions and in January, I delivered a course on the NYS GIS Clearinghouse at the NYSAPLS conference. I also teach GIS as an adjunct at SUNY Polytechnic in Utica.

**5. What's the most interesting project that you have worked on and why?**

I've had the opportunity to work on many interesting projects such as rolling blackout plan for the City of Chicago, a sedimentation study in El Salvador, and a USAID project in Egypt. But probably the most interesting was a project for the Venezuelan national electric company. Our company had designed several of the largest hydropower dams in the world. I was on the team that developed an environmental GIS model to determine the suitability of the various potential routes for the high-voltage electric lines that would run hundreds of miles from their newest dam to their population centers. We considered factors such as topography, land cover, and habitat. The vast watershed for their hydropower projects included Angel Falls and our team had the opportunity to tour the falls & watershed via helicopter.

**6. What is your favorite memory from NYGeoCon or the GeoSpatial Summit?**

I have twin favorite memories... The first is the panel discussion with Jack Dangermond and Vincent Virga, an author that wrote a book about historic maps in the Library of Congress. They discussed maps in the digital age and the legacy of those maps. The second was when we had Dr. Roger Tomlinson, the "father of GIS", host a Q & A after a viewing of "Data for Decision" about the first GIS (1967).

**7. What do you like most about mapping?**

That it's an art and science, **and** a means of communication. Maps outlive humans (at least paper maps did) and they're a rich source of human history.

**8. If you could visit any one place in the world, where would it be and why?**

Machu Picchu because I am awed when the built environment meets stunning natural beauty. Almost all architecture transports me back in time to ponder who, why, & how...

I've learned that one of the best things about GIS is the people. I know of no other profession that is so diverse in terms of practitioner backgrounds. The benefit of this diversity is the creativity that practitioners contribute when using GIS to solve problems. If you have the opportunity to collaborate on a GIS project, celebrate the unique perspectives of your team members.

## NSGIC News



On April 17th, NSGIC, the National States Geographic Information Council released a joint statement on the value of GIS in the pandemic:

- ***"The spread and effects of COVID-19 can be best understood considering space and time."***
- ***"We are committed to beginning the national conversation about leveraging the best available data to better understand the spread and impacts of COVID-19."***

The entire statement is available at the following link: <https://nsgic.memberclicks.net/joint-statement-on-the-value-of-gis-in-the-pandemic>

For more information on NSGIC: <https://nsgic.memberclicks.net/>

## Upcoming Opportunities & Events

- **Spring Forward with an Esri MOOCs:**
  - [The Location Advantage](#) | 16 May - 17 June 2020
- The [STRATUS 2020 Conference](#) scheduled for 8 - 20 May 2020 has been postponed to May 2021.
- [Spring NEARC Virtual Event](#) | Tuesday, 19 May 2020 | Stay tuned for details.
- [Esri User Conference](#) | Monday, 13 July - Wednesday, 15 July 2020 | Virtual Conference
- Save the date: [Fall NEARC](#) | Sunday, 15 November - Wednesday, 18 November 2020 | Omni Mount Washington Resort Hotel, Bretton Woods, NH



Stay tuned to save the date for the 2020 New York State Geospatial Summit at the Welch-Allyn Lodge in Skaneateles Falls, New York!



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