

February 2020

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February 2020 Newsletter

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

- Meet Tao Tang, NYS GIS Association Member
- ITS Press Release on GIS
- GIS-SIG Conference
- Upcoming Opportunities & Events
- NYS GeoSpatial Summit 2020

Read on and enjoy,
The NYS GIS Association Communications Committee

Meet Tao Tang, 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?



My academic education is in Geography, in particular Environmental and Physical Geography. After I earned my Bachelor of Science degree in Geography, I started building my career along the line of geographical analysis or spatial analysis for environmental research. I earned my first Master's (MS) degree at the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resource Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences. I was awarded a one-year fellowship by the Chinese Academy of Sciences to study soil erosion at the University of Toronto. Then, the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada offered me a fellowship to study for another Master's degree. After earning the second Master's degree, I worked for a few years out of the discipline of Geography. Then, I pursued my Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee specializing in physical geography and limestone dissolution. During my Ph.D. studies, I learned GIS/geospatial technology by taking courses offered by Professor William Huxhold, one of the pioneers of GIS applications in urban planning. I

application of digital geographical analysis to solve problems regardless of discipline. As I always illustrate to my students, GIS is the marriage of geography and information technology (IT). It is the wide-ranging applications that drew me to the field of GIS.

2. Would you explain your job and what you do there?

I am a professor in the Department of Geography and Planning at SUNY – Buffalo State College. In this capacity, I teach GIS, Remote Sensing, and Physical Geography classes and conduct research in the application of geospatial technology to environmental conservation, natural resource management, and the impact of air and water pollution on human health.

3. How did you get involved in the Association?

In my early years at Buffalo State, many GIS professionals who work at the local and state government level helped me either through collaborations or providing me GIS spatial data for teaching. To name a few, Dr. Graham Hays, Mr. Brian Barnes, Mr. Eric Herman, Mr. Jim Jones, Mr. Michael Gangemi, and Mr. Jeff Herter were of great assistance to me. These people have all been very active in the New York State GIS Association. I was inspired by them to join and participate in the Association.

4. You were a member of the Board of Directors several years ago. Why did you decide to volunteer for the Board?

I thought the interactions and connections between the faculty and students at the higher education institutions in New York State and the professionals in the New York State GIS Association were not very strong. One former faculty member at SUNY – Fredonia tirelessly volunteered for many different committees of the Association. These activities enhanced the interactions of the two sectors and demonstrated student success, too. I wanted to contribute more along this line, so I decided to volunteer.

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

The most interesting project I have worked on is the "Pilot LiDAR Survey Project for 3D Mapping for the New York State Thruway Authority." Students and faculty in our study team conducted a feasibility test of 3D data collection and mapping for the management of the New York State Thruway using borrowed LiDAR equipment. In addition to the opportunity to work with the highway field maintenance crew, the spatial database managers, and analysts at the Authority, we recognized the needs

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

My favorite memory from the NYGeoCon or the GeoSpatial Summit conferences is the "State of Union" keynote presentation normally made by the Geographic Information Officer in the New York State Office of Information Technology. This is a collection of PowerPoint slides showcasing the current GIS and geospatial technology from every corner of New York State and from many different sectors including local governments, state and federal agencies, private companies, and educational institutions.

7. What do you like most about mapping?

I like the emerging three-dimensional (3D) mapping that is enabled by GIS/geospatial technology. We are in the transitional period between 2D mapping and 3D mapping/visualization. The boundary between them is going gradually fade away in the digital environment. In the near future I suspect that we will be able to map and present the geographic features in their original 3D shapes in the digital mapping environment.

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

I would like to visit the places (workplaces) of the professional teams who manage and maintain Google Maps and Google Earth. and talk to the people there. Google Maps is the front window of one of the most extensive GIS databases, covering the entire world and providing a service to every user. Google Earth is the front window of a comprehensive remotely sensed imagery database. These two windows expose the significance of GIS/geospatial technology to people worldwide and improve their everyday life. I believe the work that the professionals behind Google Maps and Google Earth is on par to what we GIS professionals do much of the time. Although we use different software and may interpret the concepts and theories differently, I would like to visit these people and thank them for their efforts. Because of the people at Google, I can explain what we are doing to everyone easily now.

9. Do you have any specific advice or philosophies from working in the GIS world?

I believe GIS is critical to the information technology (IT) world. One of the major efforts of GIS professionals, of course, is to keep up with the latest IT technology and developments of GIS technology while maintaining our unique spatial perspective. No matter how much the IT industry changes, no matter how much artificial intelligence (AI) is utilized, it is important to remember that without

ITS Press Release on GIS



On February 6th, Frank Winters, the New York State Geographic Information Officer, recently shared the following praise with GIS practitioners...

I wanted to share a press release issued by the NYS Office of Information Technology Services this morning that makes me both proud and grateful for our community. There is a nice quote from the State CIO: <https://its.ny.gov/press-release/new-york-state-recognized-leading>.

While we continuously work hard to improve New York's GIS programs and partnerships, it is important to take a minute to reflect on the cumulative value this entire community brings. Credit goes to everyone who contributes to the partnerships which make our GIS programs strong. You are having an impact and people are noticing.

Please take a moment to read the press release and don't hesitate to share it widely!

GIS - SIG Conference

**Register for the 29th Annual GIS/SIG Conference**

31 March 2020, Tuesday | 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Burgundy Basin | 1361 Marsh Road, Pittsford NY 14534

Keynote Speaker: David J. Kraiker, U.S. Census Bureau

[Register here by March 22nd to save \\$10.](#)

The [Draft Agenda](#) is available!

- [CNYRGIS Mappy Hour](#) | Wednesday, 4 March 2020 | 5 p.m. | The Blue Tusk in Syracuse
- [Free ESRI ArcGIS User Seminar & Workshops](#) | Friday, 20 March 2020 | 8 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. | Hyatt Regency Rochester
- [STRATUS 2020 Conference](#) | 18 - 20 May 2020 | Center for Tomorrow, University at Buffalo



Geospatial Summit 2020

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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NYS GIS Association · PO Box 17 · Cohoes, NY 12047-0017 · USA

