**NYS GIS association**

# January 2020 Newsletter

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

- Past President's 2019 Message
- Meet Wai Chan, NYS GIS Association Board Member
- NYS GeoSpatial Summit 2020
- NYS GIS Civil Service Tests

Read on, enjoy, and Happy 2020,
The NYS GIS Association Communications Committee

## Past President's 2019 Message

While my term as President of the NYS GIS Association has concluded, my appreciation for the hard work and efforts of our committee members remains strong. As we pass through this holiday season, I wanted to take a moment to express my deepest appreciation for what you have accomplished in this last year and what you will continue to accomplish going forward.

It should certainly come as no surprise that we would cease to exist as a viable organization without your commitment to the profession and to our organization. While we continue to grow and thrive, I look forward to the changes ahead. Anyone that works within our field for any length of time has certainly discovered the inevitability of change, and yet the flexibility and professionalism demonstrated by our committee members remains unmatched.  I wish you a belated Merry Christmas, and as we pass through this holiday, may each of you find yourself right where you most need to be.

Most sincerely,
Rick Reichert
Past President, NYS GIS Association

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 background is in natural resources management from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse. I had a required GIS course as part of the curriculum, and enjoyed it very much, but never expected to pursue it as a career. That changed during my first job working as a forester for the New York City Parks Department. I was responsible for inspecting street tree complaints from the public. I noticed that the other inspectors manually route every inspection that were assigned to them every morning. Depending on their expertise of the neighborhood they were assigned, the routing process could take quite a bit of time. And then I realized that the routing can be more efficient if we could use GIS to geocode these inspections on to a map. I never quite did an analysis on how much time or gas mileage the geocoding saved, but I like to believe it was significant. I thought this GIS is a very useful tool and continued doing more projects with the technology. I have not stopped since.

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

My academic background is in natural resources management from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse. I had a required GIS course as part of the curriculum, and enjoyed it very much, but never expected to pursue it as a career. That changed during my first job working as a forester for the New York City Parks Department. I was responsible for inspecting street tree complaints from the public. I noticed that the other inspectors manually route every inspection that were assigned to them every morning. Depending on their expertise of the neighborhood they were assigned, the routing process could take quite a bit of time. And then I realized that the routing can be more efficient if we could use GIS to geocode these inspections on to a map. I never quite did an analysis on how much time or gas mileage the geocoding saved, but I like to believe it was significant. I thought this GIS is a very useful tool and continued doing more projects with the technology. I have not stopped since.

3. **How did you get involved in the Association? If you serve or have served on an Association committee, why did you decide to volunteer your time and what did you find most enjoyable about it?**

I believe I first got interested in volunteering for the Association while reading a NYSGIS Association Newsletter, just like this one you are reading. One of the articles was asking for volunteers for the Membership Committee. I thought that may be a fun way to expand my horizons, meet other dedicated professionals, and contribute to the GIS community in the state, while also earning credits for my GISP certification. The most enjoyable part about volunteering for an Association committee is the ability to effect change for the betterment of the GIS profession in the entire New York State. And being part of the Membership Committee is a unique opportunity to strengthen the Association.

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

will ultimately arrive at bad quality decision. The most interesting project that I worked on was a data catalog database application for the New York City Emergency Management. It inventoried the enterprise GIS data repository (including their associated metadata), maintained data updates, and kept track of data disbursements. It kind of ties every data related tasks under one roof. It was also my first attempt into application development. From this application, we were able to build various data reports for analyses.

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

I think my favorite memory would have to be looking at the photos from the Association website after the events and wishing I was there. I did not have the opportunity to attend NYGeoCon or the Summit in previous years, but hope to make it to one of them in the near future. It is always fun to escape and enjoy the beautiful scenery these conferences have to offer, and not to mention the quality of the keynotes, workshops, and networking opportunities.

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

I like most about mapping is that every map tells a story. Whether it is a static paper map or an interactive web map or application, the effect is always the same - to tell a compelling story using points, lines, and polygons. The smart mappers make good use of colors, symbologies, and space, as well. Unfortunately, I am not one of the smart mappers. It is both an art and a science. I am okay with the science part, but still trying to master the art part.

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

This is the forestry in me talking. If I could visit one place in the world, it would have to be the Tarkine rainforest off the coast of Australia. We used to have weekly dendrology walk while studying forestry in Wanakena, New York. It was always fun to walk around the woods identifying trees, especially during the winter with 2 feet of snow on the ground and no leaves on the trees. The Tarkine has a nice mix of different types of forests. It would be amazing to do dendrology walks identifying exotic trees on the other side of the world.

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

I don't think I am qualified to give any professional GIS advice, but I do suggest that keeping up with the latest technology developments in the GIS industry should be one of them. GIS is advancing in a fast pace. It is important to stay current on new practices and industry standards. One way to do that is the professional development webinars that are offered by the Association, as well as attending the annual NYGeoCon and the Geospatial Summit conferences.

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!

## NYS GIS Civil Service Tests

Many of the GIS support jobs in New York State government are filled using the Information Technology State civil service title series.  At the entry level the Information Technology Specialist 2 (Programming) is often used.  This title has an online continuous application process.

https://www.cs.ny.gov/pstit/announ.cfm

For higher level the Information Technology Specialist 3 through the Director of IT services Titles are used.

Exams for IT titles Information Technology Specialist 3 and above are tentatively scheduled for April 25th. In the past the same exams were offered promotionally (to existing state employees) and open competitively (for non-state employees).  Read the announcements carefully when they come out because things can change each time.  You may qualify open competitively for exams above the level you qualify for promotionally.

https://www.cs.ny.gov/announ/tentative_schedule_prom.cfm

**Frank Winters**

Geographic Information Officer

**Office of Information Technology Services**

W. Averell Harriman State Office Campus

Bldg. 5 – Floor 1

Albany, NY  12226

518.242.5036 | 518.281.9140 m | frank.winters@its.ny.gov