

June 2020

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June 2020 Newsletter

Dear NYS GIS Association Member,

Here are a few items of news for this month.

- Membership Renewal
- Meet NYS GIS Association Member, Erika Poulsen
- NYC GISMO President, Al Leidner Makes Recommendations to NGAC
- 2020 Geospatial Summit Canceled
- Upcoming Opportunities & Events

Read on and enjoy,

The NYS GIS Association Communications Committee

Membership Renewal

June 30th is the last day of the 2020 membership year. Take a moment to renew your membership now and cross that item off your To-Do list before summer gets busy. You'll be credited right through to June 30, 2021.

Use this link to

renew: <https://www.nysgis.net/joinus/join/login>

Know someone who is not a member? Please spread the word.

The more members we have, the stronger an organization we can become.

Use this link to join: <https://www.nysgis.net/joinus/>



Meet NYS GIS Association Member, Erika Poulsen

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?

I started out as a geology major at Salem State University, but after a couple of cartography/GIS courses with a professor, Dr. William Hamilton, I switched to geography. This was in the '90s and we had a digital geography lab that had terminals, SAS, a mapping software called MAP, and a digitizing table. I will never forget one of the projects he assigned, it was to create a raster map of the temperature distribution of New England with the effects of elevation removed. We had to figure out how to use all the equipment and software (without Google) to digitize the map, find the coordinates of weather stations, their elevation, and average temperature, and luckily someone in our group figured out we needed to use the adiabatic lapse rate. I really enjoyed that project and went all in for GIS and spatial analysis. I ended up returning to Salem State University for the Masters in Geographic Information Sciences, and then eventually my PhD in geography at Rutgers University.



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

I am the GIS Director for the Bureau of Environmental Surveillance and Policy in NYC's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. I am currently a member of the Informatics team and we build mapping applications, perform spatial analysis, and provide GIS support for the Division of Environmental Health.

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

Prior to working for NYC Health Department, I worked in emergency management for the Port Authority of NY and NJ. As a bi-state agency that covers many local governments, it was important to become a member of statewide organizations. I have mainly participated with NYC GISMO due to location, but recently had joined the Professional Development Committee before COVID19 and hope to become more involved in the near future.

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

That is hard, I have been extremely lucky with my jobs at NYC Health and the Port Authority and my previous academic work. Most of the projects have been interesting, from participating in emergencies, working on preparedness projects, research, and building mapping applications. I was even able to work with NYCEM for a month in the emergency operations center during Super Storm Sandy and I was able to go to Hart Island in NYC for another project.

5. What do you like most about mapping?

use other code like R to be able to discern patterns that may otherwise be hidden or solve a locational problem. But now with the incredible advancements of the last decade, it has also been enjoyable to build web mapping applications for users to have access to that data as well as allowing them to perform their own exploration of the data and/or analysis.

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

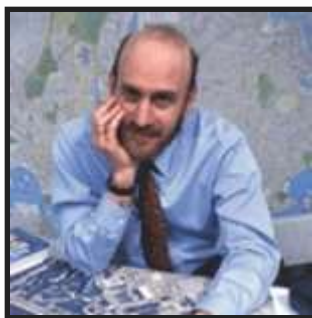
This is hard, it changes a lot. When I have some free time, I will use the street view feature in Google maps and just pick remote places and explore the user images. I think I would pick Svalbard to see the northern lights and the ghost towns.

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

Learn how to code and keep up with the technology. It changes fast! Understand your data and make sure it matches the problem you need to solve. Also, present your data in a way that is easy for a user to interpret.

NYC GISMO President, Al Leidner, Makes Recommendations to NGAC

Statement to NGAC from Alan Leidner, President, NYC GISMO, June 10, 2020



We all recognize that when it comes to emergency and disaster planning and response, geospatial data and analytics, at a high level of granularity, are indispensable. GIS-based 9-1-1 systems save hundreds of lives daily. I've personally witnessed the effectiveness of enterprise GIS in the responses to West Nile Fever, Nine-Eleven (9/11), and hurricane Sandy. But all of you have similar stories to tell. In almost every instance the standard for mapping in emergencies is to the address point, the x,y coordinate, or the building footprint because you really do need that level of detail.

With COVID-19 we are seeing disturbing problems with the use of GIS. Health departments at the state and local levels are using case data aggregated to zip code areas because they have been unable or unwilling to capture precise address information digitally and to then geocode it. Moreover, they are not reaching out to GIS experts in other agencies for help. GIS is being used for logistics support and to locate facilities, but precision mapping of the outbreak is rarely being done. We believe that failure to capture, analyze, and model precision case and contact tracing address data impedes the ability to maintain situational awareness and to take effective measures to control COVID. We believe that HIPAA is being used

The following are recommendations I hope NGAC will consider:

1. Provide HIPAA guidance, so it is clear that COVID-19 case related address data can be captured and shared for research and analysis, for public health purposes, behind an appropriate security fire-wall.
2. Tell the public health community that they should not refuse to collaborate with their GIS colleagues in other government agencies who have GIS resources and expertise needed to supplement their own efforts, now badly strained by the pandemic response.
3. Recommend that every state and local DOH, develop the means to digitally capture and geocode patient location information so that precision mapping becomes possible. Now is the time to finally develop a National Geocoding Application built upon The National Address Database (NAD).
4. Provide the general public with information about the pandemic aggregated to the census tract; an area large enough to anonymize personal information but small enough to provide improved detail about what is happening.
5. Recommend that the Federal government work to integrate pandemic response plans into the ICS, NIMS, and the DHS GeoCONOPS. Having CDC, and State and Local Departments of Health operate outside of established doctrine and collaborative norms have hindered pandemic response at all levels. We must also make sure that ICS, NIMS and the GeoCONOPS are integrated with and fully reflect how GIS is practiced by state and local governments.

The NGAC should take leadership roles in these matters, and speak out boldly whenever GIS is not being included in the operational areas and policy domains it is uniquely able to support.

2020 Geospatial Summit Canceled

Due to the COVID-19 health crisis, the 2020 Geospatial Summit is canceled this year. We look forward to seeing you again at future NYS GIS Association events. Information about the annual meeting is forthcoming.



Upcoming Opportunities & Events

meeting.

- Please be patient as the Communications Committee upgrades the Association's look!

