

The Mountain State Geospatial Journal

The Official Newsletter for

West Virginia Association of Geospatial Professionals

Fall 2017 Newsletter

Save the Date:

GISday

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November 15th, 2017

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2017-2018 Board of Directors

Photo By: Pamela Hoskins



Name	Organization	Office/Committee Chair
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Jessica Perkins	DNR	Vice-President
Jessica Brewer	Region VII Planning & Development	Secretary
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John Barth	Kanawha County Assessor's Office	Conference
Barbara MacLennan	WVU	Election
Steve Harouff	Division of Forestry	Technical Issues
Jacob Darrah	Blue Mountain, Inc.	Training
Adam Cottrell	City of Charleston	
Frank LaFone	WV GIS Technical Center	
Kevin Kuhn	WV GIS Technical Center	

Member Spotlight

Frank LaFone, GISP



Bio:

I was born in Bluefield, WV to a college professor and nurse (which meant I could never skip school or fake being sick). As one could imagine, I was raised with a strong affinity for education which has resulted in a lifetime seeking formal education. My dad always told me, "if you're going to take a few classes, might as well get a degree out of it for the effort."

Thus far, I have taken that suggestion to heart. I have a BA from WVU in International Relations, a MA from Syracuse in International Relations, a second BA from WVU in Computer Science, a second MA from WVU in Political Science, and I am currently working on a PhD from WVU in Geography.

Our family consists of my wife (also a WVAGP member, so we're extra spatial) and myself along with two cats, Scratch Furry Destroyer of Worlds and Shadow Pryde.

How did you get into GIS?

I fell into GIS completely by chance. After completing my BA in Computer Science, I moved to the DC Metro area to start a new career as a software engineer with Lockheed Martin. It turns out this West Virginian native longed to move back to the mountains. I spent a brief year in south western Virginia in Blacksburg working for a company there, when a position at the WV GIS Technical Center housed in Morgantown came available. My wife and I both felt at home in Morgantown, so I applied for the job, was offered a position, and accepted, still woefully ignorant of GIS at that point. On the job training opened me up to this new to me field of GIS.

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How long have you been in your current position?

Thus far I've been here slightly over 17 years.

What do you enjoy most about your current job?

I thoroughly enjoy being able to teach up and coming GIS students about GIS. At the GIS Technical Center, we are incredibly fortunate to have access to a talented pool of students eager to learn about GIS and get some experience under their belt. I love helping them come into their own as GIS professionals with solid skills and confidence needed to step out into our professional world.

What do you find most challenging about your current job?

GIS has evolved rapidly and dramatically over the last 15 or so years. Keeping up with that rate of change is a real challenge. One of the reasons I helped co-found VerySpatial.com, a blog and podcast devoted to reporting on the geospatial industry, was to help me keep up with new technologies and techniques available to us in the industry. Keeping on top of all that stuff is a lot of fun, but it's definitely a significant challenge!

Do you have a career highlight, or something GIS related that you're exceptionally proud of?

I've already mentioned [VerySpatial](http://VerySpatial.com), but I'm

incredibly proud of the work we've done. We launched at the same time iTunes launched podcasts, so we have been at the forefront of podcasts for 13 years and counting! Through VerySpatial, we've had access to all sorts of industry and intellectual leaders which I never would have had access otherwise. We were even lucky enough to win an ESRI Special Achievement award, followed by an intimate interview with Jack Dangermond himself.

How long have you been involved with WVAGP?

Since day one. Kurt Donaldson and I shared an office during the early years of the WVAGP formation. He would sometimes bounce ideas off of me and I was there during most of the early meetings before the association became official.

What is your favorite part about being a WVAGP Member?

The fellowship of the WVAGP can't be beat. I can honestly say I know or have at least met nearly everyone engaged in GIS within our state. I can't fathom living somewhere else where that would not be possible. We come together regularly and chat both socially and professionally. It creates an atmosphere that makes you feel like you can call someone up with a technical problem or some guidance and get real help. We're all in this together!



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What is the most unusual job you've ever had?

WVU has an Executive Intensive English Program that is aimed at bringing in executives from around the world to do a 6-8 week intensive immersion into English. I was hired to be the van driver for a summer. My job was to drive them around from event to event, particularly on away trips to places like Pittsburgh or Washington DC. I learned a lot about the world outside WV and the US in general from that job. It's was a real eye-opener. Plus, executives with expense accounts dine well and expect their companions to dine with them, which wasn't too bad for a starving college student.

How you do spend your free time?

I'm currently working on a Ph.D. part time while working full-time. Between those two activities (and staying happily married), sadly there isn't a lot of free time left. I like to dabble in lots of different things, like wood working, golf, board games, cooking, auto restoration, and I'm never more than a couple of paces from one of usually three to four books I'm in the middle of trying to finish.

What is your favorite hobby?

I honestly rotate between hobbies on a regular basis. Lots of things get fairly even time and focus, although it far smaller amounts of either than I'd like. Cooking is probably my most consistent hobby. It's relaxing, can be challenging at times, and allows me to bring out a lot of creativity. Plus, you get to eat the results, which is never a bad thing!

What is the best book you've read lately?

There's an even split between two books.

The first is a book by an anthropologist named Setha Low called "Spatializing Culture: The Ethnography of Space and Place". It is a fascinating discussion about the philosophical differences between space and place. The second is a book called "Mistborn: The Final Empire" by Brian Sanderson. It's a fantasy series with an incredibly unique view on 'magic', which I found intriguing.

Do you have a favorite quote you'd like to share?

I actually have a quote file where I keep all my favorites. Here are probably my two favorites of all time.

"Never let your sense of morals get in the way of doing what's right." - Isaac Asimov

"Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance." - Will Durant

Upcoming Events

November 15, 2017—GIS Day! Register your event with ESRI [here](#).

December 18-20, 2017—GIS Foundations Training
WVU Beckley Campus - [Register Now!!!](#)

January 25, 2018— Legislative GIS Day, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV—to register contact [Chelsea White](#)

June 10-13, 2018— West Virginia GIS Conference, Charleston Marriott Town Center, Charleston, WV



Events in West Virginia

GIS Day provides an international forum for users of GIS technology to demonstrate real-world applications that are making a difference in our society.

For more information, or resources for your event, visit:
www.gisday.com

Local Events:

Hardy County Courthouse— Moorefield, WV; November 15th, 1:00pm-400pm.

At 2:00pm Melissa Scott will do a presentation on Hardy County GIS website features.

WV GIS Technical Center—Morgantown, WV; November 15th.

Tech Center Staff will host approximately 100 AP Human Geography students from Morgantown High School. Presentations will include background in GIS, examples of projects the Tech Center is currently working on, education and career opportunities within GIS, and cutting edge research in Virtual Reality and GIS.



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-Continued from Page 6– GISday Events

WVDOT—Charleston, Kanawha County—November 13th, 9:00am-4:00pm
(See Photo Below for more details)

GIS USER DAY 2017


Hosted by West Virginia Department of Transportation
Portals, Groups, and Scenes: The PROgression of GIS

BUILDING 7, ROOM CAPITOL
1900 KANAWHA BLVD E.
CHARLESTON, WV 25305

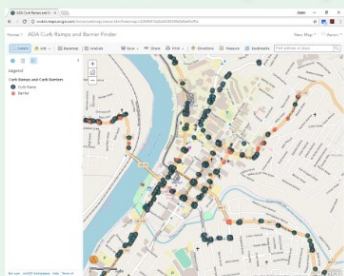
NOVEMBER 13, 2017
9:00AM - 4:00PM

Agenda

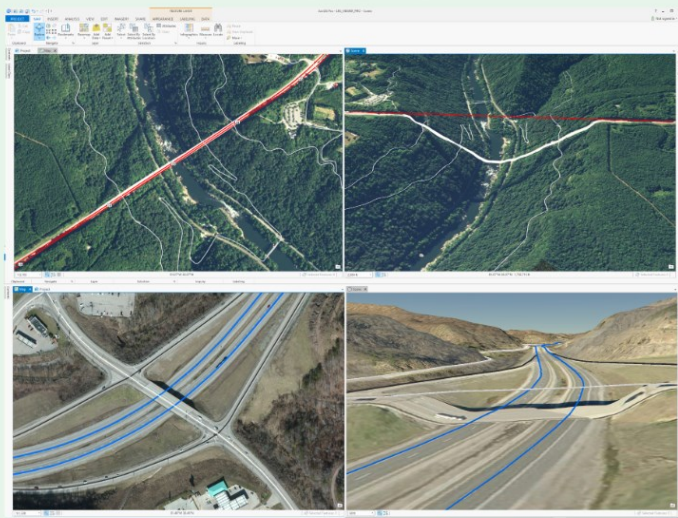
- 08:00a-09:00a Registration; Maps & Applications Display
- 09:00a-09:10a Introduction & Welcome
- 09:10a-12:00p Presentation by ESRI
- 12:00p-01:00p Lunch (On Your Own)
- 01:00p-03:50p Presentations by GTI
 - Introduction to Road Analyzer
 - Update on New General Highway Maps and Transition to ArcGIS Pro
 - ArcGIS Online Based WVDOT Web Apps
 - ArcGIS Online Based WVDOT Projects
- 03:50p-04:00p Wrap Up



ArcGIS Online (AGO)



ArcGIS Pro



2018 Legislative GIS Day

This past April, the WVAGP organized an event which took place in the West Virginia Capitol Building, which we have called "Legislative GIS Day." This event was very successful, with a number of federal, local, and state government agencies, along with private companies represented. The Association's goal with this event is to showcase GIS to the public along with state officials. The 2018 event is scheduled for **Thursday, January 25th**. If your organization is interested in participating in this event, please contact Communication & Outreach Committee Chair, [Chelsea White](#).

11th Annual Eastern Panhandle GIS User Group Meeting

Shepherd University—Shepherdstown, West Virginia

Submitted By: Jessica Gormont, GISP



This year, the EPan Committee joined forces with professors from the Institute of Environmental & Physical Sciences at Shepherd University to present the 11th Annual Eastern Panhandle GIS Users Group Meeting on September 14th, 2017. We had a robust schedule, with several professional and student presentations. These presentations focused on a variety of GIS projects, such as: storm water management, 3D VR modeling, remote sensing, GPS and GOES-16.

Former WVAGP President, Adam Cottrell was on hand with his Augmented Reality sandbox, which was a huge hit with at-

tendees. Professor Steven Shaffer took a group photo on Shepherd University's football field with his UAV.

The EPan Committee would like to extend a special Thank You to our sponsors: Shepherd University, WVAGP, Duncan Parnell, Michael Baker International, Precision Laser & Instruments, & Fugro.

Get Involved!

One of the best ways to get active within the Association is to join one or more of our 5 committees. Our committees are: Communications & Outreach, Conference, Training, Technical Issues, and Election. For more information on our committees please see our [website](#). Committee participation counts towards GISP points.

The Election Committee, chaired by Barbara MacLennan, has been very busy exploring potential ways to increase voter turnout for WVAGP elections. They have been reviewing the election methods of similar geospatial associations in other states and their by-laws. In the process, they have discovered that the WVAGP is one of the more vibrant geospatial organizations in the United States. If you're interested in helping this process please contact [Barbra](#) to get involved with the Election Committee.

Another committee that has been very busy is our Communications & Outreach Committee, chaired by Chelsea White. This committee has been putting together information about GIS Day, along with organizing Legislative GIS Day on January 25th at the WV State Capitol. [Chelsea](#) would love to have more help and input on planning these events.

Our Training Committee, chaired by Jacob Darrah, has also been busy exploring new venues for training opportunities around the state, while also developing new courses. If you'd like to have a voice about GIS Training opportunities, contact [Jacob](#).



Newsletter Contributors

Colleen Lemasters, GISP—Editor
Frank LaFone, GISP
Jessica Gormont, GISP

Barbara MacLennan, GISP
Chelsea White